

Many were the quarrels and wars over these pictures, and finally these wars resulted in the division of the church into the Greek and Roman.

The discovery of the Holy Sepulchre caused a heavy pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and to all places which had become noted through the Bible. Even the heap of dirt upon which Job was supposed to have sat was a centre of attraction. These pilgrimages came still more into vogue when indulgences were connected with them. Indulgence is the outcome of oral confession and belief in Purgatory. Originally those who were, on account of crime, expelled from the church, had to confess their sins openly if they wished to be reinstated. When the priests became mightier they changed this into secret confession, which increased their power over their unfortunate believers. Pope Innocent III. decreed, however, that every one must confess his sins to a priest at least once a year, and carry out the penance imposed upon him. Whoever omitted this was excommunicated. Everybody will readily understand how great was the power thus put into the hands of the priests; for, apart from the fact that they found out all kinds of secrets, which they were at liberty to use for their own ends, they had the power to give absolution or refuse it, as they saw fit, and they used this prerogative according to the amount of ransom paid by the poor sinner.

Purgatory was an invention of the Roman Bishop Gregory the Great. This was, according to his explanation, a place where souls were purified to fit them for heaven—a sort of “soul laundry.” Whoever thus found himself midway between heaven and hell could be certain of being detained a considerable time in this uncomfortable place, unless the priests (who must have been on a footing of intimacy with the laundry devils) caused his release, and had him forwarded to heaven on a through ticket, which, of course, had to be paid for. The regulations of purgatory must have been well known to the priests, for they knew exactly how many masses would be required to release a poor soul.

There were few who were not quite convinced of the