

be released. In other words, the practice of praying for the dead is essentially based on the belief in a middle state, in which those who are not sufficiently guilty for eternal condemnation, nor sufficiently pure to enjoy the vision of God's face, are for a time punished and purged so as to be qualified for this blessing. We may seek in vain among all Christ's sayings, as recorded in the New Testament, to find one which rebukes a belief He knew the Jews held in His own time. On the contrary, we find him confirming them in their belief: "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the next."* As if He were to say: "Some sins may be forgiven either in this world or in the next, but this one shall not be forgiven either here or hereafter."

During the three hundred and fifty years, since Luther's death, the principles of the Reformation have had time to ripen and develop, and are now being worked out to their legitimate conclusions. The present generation of non-Catholics, who still persist in the denial of a Purgatory, recognizing, as they do, on the one hand that "nothing defiled can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,"† and on the other that it is repugnant to all idea of justice that God should, for slight offences only, unatoned for before death, inflict eternal punishment, seek for a solution of the difficulty by rejecting the doctrine of everlasting perdition. Logically, a hell, eternal in its chastisement, implies for us a purgatory with its temporal pains, would we safeguard God's attribute of justice.

* Math. XII. 32.

† Apocal. Ch. XXI. V. 27.