

But Cardinal Bellarmino, the great supporter of Roman falsehood, quotes from St. Paul what he calls a clear text in support of purgatory, where St. Paul says that the work of every man shall be proved by fire. But St. Paul commences by saying, that nobody can put any other foundation than was put before, namely, Christ; and any one who builds on this foundation, and his work stands, shall be tried by fire, and rewarded. He that builds on this foundation wood, hay, stubble, shall suffer great loss, but shall be saved so as by fire. This text, says Cardinal Bellarmino, proves the fire of purgatory. No, not at all. It proves the fire of probation, not the fire of purgation. This only proves that all human work should be proved by fire. But in the belief of the Roman Catholic Church, all works shall not be proved by the fire of purgatory; because the right man, the just man, in the opinion of Rome, after death goes directly to heaven; and therefore the text of St. Paul will be false if it refers to purgatory. Because St. Paul says, all works, all human works, shall be proved by fire; and he says that this will occur at the great day of manifestation, or only once as the last day when all mankind shall appear before Christ, the Judge of quick and dead. But now at present, the fire of purgatory works against the souls in purgatory and therefore it is false. The text of St. Paul says, that this fire will work only on the day of manifestation. The conclusion is, that you have no purgation by this fire; but only probation, by which the ministers, the preachers of the Gospel, who build upon Christ pernicious doctrines, false doctrines, notwithstanding their faith in Christ will suffer great loss in the day of manifestation; but shall be saved because they believed in Christ. This is the true meaning of the text of St. Paul. I cannot more fully explain it; but you know better than I do the true sense of these words; and therefore Cardinal Bellarmino, if you have not another scriptural text for your doctrine of purgatory, your purgatory is false. Purgatory is not supported by the New Testament, or by the Word of Christ. On the contrary, the Word of Christ, and the New Testament, excludes any purgatory. You have this word by Christ himself—"He who hears me and believeth in me shall be saved, and shall not enter into condemnation, and after death he shall have eternal life." You have the words of St. Paul to the Romans—"There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." You have the words of St. John, in the book of Revelations—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; because all their troubles, all their tears, all their pains are at an end." And therefore, by the Word of Christ, and the New Testa.