The Origin of the Idea of Purgatory

The early Christian Chrusch did not believe in purgatóry. The doctrine was not fully established in the Christian Church until the time of Gregory the Great (590 A.D.). In the time before the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) there are no quotations that can be given teaching that any believers at death enter a place of suffering. On the contrary the early Church Fathers specifically say that believers at death enter at once into the presence of Christ in blessedness. This was the explanation of the confidence of the martyrs who repeatedly said they desired death in order to be with Christ. Not one of that noble throng said that he desired this particular type of death in order to escape purgatory. But merely because they saw death in its true perspective for the Christian as a gateway to heaven, they welcomed death. Thus Ignatius in about 117 A.D. says, "It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ than to reign over all the ends of the earth...while I desire to belong to God, do not ye give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light, when I have gone thither I shall indeed be a man of God." (Epistle to the Romans Ch VI) Justin Martyr in about 170 A.D. in writing a defense of the Christians to the Roman Senate speaks similarly of the expectation of heaven for all Christians. In his "Second Apology," he tells how the Roman official Urbicus condemned a Christian