

idolaters. The author of the book, however, interprets it as sacrificing for the dead so that in the resurrection their sins would be forgiven. It says nothing about helping poor souls then in purgatory by the prayers of those on earth. Indeed, we might feel that to pray for these souls was useless as they died unconfessed in shameful idolatry. It would seem that they died in mortal sin and if these souls actually were good enough to go to purgatory, nobody could be worse and go to hell! The fact is that nobody can fairly argue from these or any other Biblical verses that there is a purgatory.

Jesus Christ not only spoke of Abraham's bosom as a place of bliss for Old Testament believers, but declared that paradise is such a place for New Testament believers. This is taught in Luke 23:43 a verse about which Roman Catholic ^{versus} authorities disagree. "This day", said Christ to the penitent thief, "Thou shalt be with me in paradise." The Douay version in a footnote explains paradise as "the happy state of rest, joy, and peace everlasting. Christ was pleased, by a special privilege, to reward the faith and confession of the penitent thief, with a full discharge of all his sins, both as to guilt and punishment; and to introduce him immediately after death into the happy society of the Saints, whose limbo, that is, the place of their confinement, was now made a paradise by our Lord's going thither." That is, the dying thief received a kind of extreme unction and skipped purgatory altogether. The Confraternity edition footnote says "Paradise: i.e., ^{the} ~~its~~ abode of the just souls under the old dispensation, who were waiting in limbo for the coming of the Messiah ^{and} lead them to heaven." This says the dying thief went straight where all the just souls of the Old Testament time went and makes no provision for a purgatory for Old Testament believers. This would make the dying thief receive equal blessing to Lazarus discussed above. And strangely this blessing of the Old Testament time is higher than that Roman Catholics allow for just souls today who are said to have to go through purgatory! A strange teaching indeed.

Christ gave further teaching concerning heaven and the future when He spoke to His aged and beloved apostle John on the island of Patmos. John's visions embodied in the Apocalypse give us several pictures of heaven and hell. It opens with a vision of our glorified Lord declaring that He holds "the keys of death and of hell."