

limits of prudence, and did damage to the tombs. In a well-known inscription in the Catacombs of Callixtus, Pope Damasus I. very mildly checked this course of action, saying that he himself wished to be buried there, where so many of his saintly predecessors rested, but that he feared to disturb their holy ashes :

*Hic fateor Damasus volui mea condere membra,
Sed cineres timui sanctos vexare piorum*

But it was reserved to an archdeacon named Sabinus, of the Church of St. Lawrence, on the Tiburtine Way, to give this imprudent class of the faithful a good, strong lecturing. This he did in a metrical epitaph placed on his own tomb. He reminds them that it will be no advantage, but will rather be a disadvantage to them, to be near the graves of the saints, unless they be near to them also in the holiness of their lives. It is not with the body, he adds, that we pass onward to the saints, but with the soul, which, being once saved, can well be the salvation of the body.

However fiercely the storm of persecution raged without, within the precincts of the cemeteries, which the law recognized as inviolable, a haven was opened to the endangered Christian. It was as unnecessary as it was impossible to keep the pagans in ignorance of the existence, or the whereabouts of the Catacombs. Accordingly, a gateway opened from them into the public road ; and little