

inscriptions there are traces of these changes from the Catholic Apostolic faith, which have marked the history of the Church of Rome. Even in the fifth and sixth centuries, the vast majority of the inscriptions are as Evangelical as if they had been written by the Synod of Dort, or the Westminster Assembly; and are as decidedly antagonistic to the present doctrines of the Romish Church. It is true that then there are some traces of that departure from Apostolic doctrine and practice which, alas, early marked the career of the church of Christ. We know how many were the errors of early times; and we cannot expect that error advancing in the church and city of Rome, would be wholly excluded from the catacombs. But if the present faith of the Romish Church were the primitive faith of the faithful at Rome in Apostolic times, it is utterly impossible to account for the fact that the invocation of saints should rest upon some half dozen of inscriptions, and these by no means of the early dates; while thousands of inscriptions plainly and unmistakably declare the reverse. The celibacy of the clergy was unknown to the church of the catacombs, for there is a monument "to Basilus, the Presbyter, and Felicitas his wife." On another, dated A.D. 472, we read, "Petronia, a deacon's wife, the type of modesty. In this place I lay my bones. Spare your tears, dear husband and daughters; and believe that it is forbidden to weep for one who lives in God." "Here," says another epitaph, "Susanna, the happy daughter of the late Presbyter Gabinus, lies in peace along with her father." Well may the author of the "Ancient Church" add, "In the Lapidarian Gallery of the Papal Palace, the curious visitor may still read other epitaphs of the married ministers of Rome." And we may add that while superstition early used the wailing weakness of the bereaved to apostrophize the departed—and in the sense of desolation offered thanks for all the happiness of past fellowship—it was but an easy descent, when once the path of inspired truth had been left, to descend through the intermediate stages of prayers for the dead, and prayers to the dead till purgatory itself should be reached, the stage next to the perdition of the damned itself. We have searched the whole field of inspired truth and find in it no purgatory. This testimony of Macabees is inconsistent in itself and professedly unworthy, and historically (the Fathers themselves being witness) of no authentic value. From the sepulchral vaults of Rome's buried saints, the testimony of early Christianity is in favour of our Church's faith. Heathenish in its origin, purgatory heathenized Christianity. Taught by inspired documents, and by those alone, we discard the clumsy machinery of Rome for the soul's purification; and whether to the living word of inspired men we appeal, to the testimony of the early Christian Church, or to the stony inscriptions of the Christian catacombs, we can be led by each and by all to only one result—that the Romish doctrine of purgatory was not the doctrine of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

THE VATICAN DECREES.—No pamphlet from a statesman has produced a more widespread or profound sensation than the ex-Premier's pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees. Mr. Gladstone has been suspected, and accused from time to time, of a leaning towards Romanism; but no one can read his pamphlet without being satisfied of his utter opposition to the extreme sacerdotal pretensions and arrogant claims of the Roman Pontiff. The Ultramontanes and their partizans have raised a storm of disapprobation.