

religion from the faiths of antiquity, which gave nothing but the blankness of despair to the immortal spirit. We come, then, to this burial place of the early Christians, expecting to find this belief plainly set forth. We are not disappointed. On every side it is repeatedly and distinctly affirmed. These departed ones were not regarded as dead. They had "fallen asleep" until He who is "the Resurrection and the Life" should say, "Awake, Arise!"

The divinity of Jesus is constantly proclaimed. A few examples forcibly prove this. We find the expressions, "May you live in God Christ—in God the Lord Christ—in Christ God." Again we find, "God holy Christ, only light;" "To Christ, the one holy God."

One epitaph, in which the deceased is said to sleep in Deo—in Christo—in Spirito Sancto, is sufficient to quote to prove belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Church of Rome, that great self created mistress and only infallible explainer of the vast store-house of traditions, finds in the antiquities of the catacombs many so-called proofs of the apostolic character of her peculiar dogmas and usages. But, thanks to nineteenth century erudition, these self-appropriated weapons are taken from her hand and given to those who oppose her haughty pretensions.

Few representations of the cross are found in the catacombs, and these are all of late date. For this, two reasons may be assigned: The abhorrence with which the cross was regarded by the Greek and Roman mind, and the sanctity which, through the sufferings of Christ, it possessed to the heart of Christians. To the Roman it was a badge of infamy and shame—the punishment of the basest and the vilest criminals. Therefore, while the Christians cherished it in their hearts, they gladly kept it from the

sight of scoffing eyes. As E. Scherer says, "Christianity was at the time too simple, too serene, too healthy to lay hold of such a souvenir. It preferred the master teaching and healing, the Christ reigning and triumphing, to the victim nailed to the bloody tree." The cross was only introduced after it had become clothed by superstitious minds with the power of a sacred talisman to banish demons, avert evil, and the like.

During the early ages the death of the Saviour was recalled by a lamb, not represented as slain, but living. There is only one representation of Christ on the cross, and this certainly was not earlier than the seventh century. As the early Christians were loth to represent the sufferings of the Saviour, so were they careful not to portray the death of the martyrs, or to claim for them any august titles. Not more than half-a-dozen genuine martyrs' epitaphs have been discovered.

The worship of Mary finds no sanction, but rather condemnation in the catacombs. Here we find neither the Holy Family, nor Joseph, nor the virgin, with the nimbus. We do find the mother of Jesus with the child in a very ancient fresco, but without any of the attributes of glory or holiness, nothing more than the Christian mother holding her child—a simple picture of a biblical scene. The silence of the catacombs, as well as the primitive fathers concerning the worship of Mary is a striking evidence of its non-existence.

These early Christians of the first three centuries knew nothing of Mary as a goddess. Neither are they aware of the primacy of Peter, or the invocation of the Saints—a heresy of the fourth century growth—or of the intercession of the dead in favour of the living. "It is in the third century," says E. Scherer, "that the expression of wishes in favour of the