

archeologist of the eighteenth century, was forced to confess that he had only met with one inscription recording the deceased to have been a *freedman*. "During the thirty years I have studied their cemeteries," he writes, "I have only found one inscription in which we read the profession of freedman."

Edmond Le Blant had "only met with two which mention *slave or freedman* as applied to a Christian summoned before his God."

De Rossi, who in thirty years has made more discoveries in the Roman Catacombs than his predecessors had in two centuries writes: "In the new Christian society freemen and slaves were brothers and served the same God together. Amongst the faithful of the Roman Church the spirit of fraternity triumphed over that spirit of pride which infested the social institutions of Republic and Empire. We find an eloquent proof of this in the thousands of epitaphs found in the catacombs, which preserve a religious silence concerning the condition (when in the flesh) of the departed. Were they slaves? freedmen? They do not say, I have never met an *undoubted* mention of *slave*; very rarely and exceptionally of *freedman*; whilst we cannot read ten Pagan epitaphs of the same period without finding the designation *slave, freedman*."

It must not be supposed that this absence of all mention in the Church of the state of servitude was after *any law* of the Church. It was stronger than law because it sprung as a logical deduction from first (Christian) principles, and so thoroughly was it carried out, that it required no law to enforce it.

But there was another way whereby the Church opposed, and opposing destroyed slavery. Hitherto we have seen her raising the slave to the equality of freeman—*levelling up*; we have now to note the opposite process *levelling down* the Roman patrician and matron to the servitude of Christ—*servi et ancillæ Dei*. And as in the case of levelling up it was through a logical deduction from a first principle (viz.: Christian equality and fraternity) that she effected her object, so in this case of levelling down it is through a logical deduction from a

first Christian principle—humility, that she works her end.

It is almost impossible at this period of the world's history to understand fully the tremendous counter-movement of Christian humility against Pagan pride which pervaded the primitive Church. To the senseless excesses of Pagan pride which amounted to unreason, the Church opposed *the folly of humility*, just as to the senseless excesses of Pagan voluptuousness she opposed what St. Paul calls *the folly of the Cross*; or mortification. This shows itself even in their christian names. The first Christians received often at baptism a name by which they were to be known in the Church, whilst in the Pagan world they retained their legal name. Some of these assumed names are touching in their beauty—Wisdom, Faith, Love, Hope, Light, Peace, &c.,—whilst others springing from this desire of self-abasement, are in a certain sense repulsive: Injurious, Calumnious, Insupportable, Senseless, Mean, Beast, Fetid. Others again were taken in order to preserve the memory of a former abject state, such as Projectus, Projecta, (cast away, or child found on the street—Waif or stray as our modern vocabulary has it) and Servus, Fugitivus. (Slave, Fugitive.)

So thoroughly indeed did the Christian idea change the Pagan meaning of this word *slave*, that with Christians it held exactly the opposite meaning to that which it expressed to the Pagan mind. What Pagan moralist would have offered voluntary slavery as the highest ambition of man?

"He that will be first amongst you, shall be your slave," said Christ.

What Pagan priest would have thought of comparing even the lowest of his gods to a slave? "Jesus Christ has taken the form of a slave," says St. Paul. "Jesus Christ made himself the slave of slaves" says St. Augustine. What Pagan philosopher would have written to his disciple "I become your slave?" "We are made your slaves in the name of Jesus Christ," wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Our Lord has made me the slave of the people of Hippo," wrote St. Augustine. What pontifex maximus of the Pagan hierarchy would have