

Rome. (We quote from the report of the lecture in the *Daily Globe*, of the 19th January):—

"The discussion of Rome's purgatory would not, even in outline, be complete without a passing notice of the testimony for truth borne through the silent sleep of centuries, by the dead themselves, in the stony volumes of the Roman catacombs.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, some openings in the earth, near to the Papal capital, led the curious to the discovery of dark subterranean passages, of immense extent, filled with monuments and inscriptions. Here, in the days of persecution, the early Christians found shelter and safety, and here they entombed their dead. Upon the walls of these dark and gloomy sepulchres they engraved the hope the Christian hath in his death. After eight centuries of buried silence, these monuments of the past, in the very ceremonies of the tomb, come forth as from the unseen spirit world, to testify how much modern Romanism differs from ancient Christianity. "He who is thoroughly steeped," says the eloquent writer on Eastern churches, "in the imagery of the Catacombs, will be nearer to the thought of the early church than he who has learned by heart the most elaborate treatise given of Tertullian or of Origen." We cannot expect to behold in these gloomy realms the full-orbed glory of gospel truth; but we may, without disappointment, anticipate testimony as to the virtues and character of the dead, and the expression of those hopes which the gospel received begets in the sorrowing, yet comforted bereaved. The silent testimony, written by hands long long centuries before mouldered into dust, proclaims, in the light of reformation times, how much that reformation was needed. These ancient testimonies altogether repudiate the worship of the Virgin Mary. The inscriptions in the Lapidarian Gallery, within the Papal Palace, contain no address to the mother of our Lord. They point, as if they had been written by Paul, or Peter, or Luther, or Calvin, or Knox, to Jesus, and to Him only, as the great Mediator, Redeemer and Friend. In their sad and gloomy receptacle from primitive times, they have even from the grave spoken in the cheerful tones of the Christian's holy, holy. But their voice is hushed and tuneless regarding masses for the repose of the spirits passed from the earthly tabernacles here entombed. No glance even of purgatorial fire penetrates the darkness of these subterraneous caves: no wail of suffering, or sympathetic agony evoked by purgatorial writings, breaks the peaceful repose of this quiet resting-place of those who in the time of Rome's early Christianity fell asleep in Jesus. The earliest inscription bearing on doctrine is of the date 217, and testifies of "Prosenes, received to God on the 5th day before the nones of—." There is assurance expressed of the spirit's peace and happiness—such as A.D. 339, "Resting well in peace;" "Departed in peace;" A.D. 348, "He departed in peace;" A.D. 355, "He rests in peace." Not as Rome now has it, "May he rest in peace." A.D. 359, "He went to God;" and many more of similar import. The first example which even seems to favour Romish doctrine is dated A.D. 380, "Here rests a handmaid of God, who, of all her riches, possesses but this one house; whom her friends bewail, and seek for consolation. O pray for this thine only child, whom thou hast left behind. Thou wilt remain in the eternal repose of happiness." This bitter cry of an orphan to a departed mother, is a very slender support for invocation of saints; and even here a testimony against purgatory. In all the earlier inscriptions there is absence of countenance to Romish errors. In the later