

an uncertain ray upon some vacant tomb, or the receding wall; and we are free to recollect that those cavities in the walls once contained the bodies of those who were valiant soldiers of the cross, and of whom the world above them was not worthy. This is the place for self-examination. The Christian who penetrates to this point will find this question forced home upon him: Does my faith resemble that of the primitive followers of the Lord? Could I endure to forsake family, and friends, and the gladsome light of day, and the green earth, and the hopes and the feelings that cluster around me, and for the sake of my Lord and Master descend into these dark caverns and there remain subject to pain and suffering, and if it be His will, to death itself? It is a question which conscience presses upon the heart, but it is not so easily answered; and the visitor who feels the inward appeal can only trust that grace may be given him, and strength to enable him to stand in the evil day, if it should please his Master thus to try him. And yet the early Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their earthly goods, they were ready at all times to take up their cross, to leave family and friends, or with their families to desert their cheerful homes, and wonted occupations, and live and die in these dungeons. Who could separate them from the love of Christ? "Could tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No,—not even Cæsar on his imperial throne with all his legions. They "had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, more-over of bonds and imprisonment; they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," but through all, and in all, they could say, as the apostle said in writing to this very Roman Church, "nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But there is another view in which this trial of faith is to be considered. Were there no allurements of pleasure in the voluptuous city,—no "primrose paths" of sin to seduce the young believer? The inscriptions tell of a martyr, who was