

# The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWS PAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

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"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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## THE INTELLIGENCER.

### THE CATACOMBS OF ROME.

It was customary with the opulent Roman citizens, who had no immediate natural connections upon whom dependence could be placed, expressly to enjoin in their wills the parties to whom they bequeathed their property, to build a tomb for them. Compliance with the direction is frequently paraded in pagan inscriptions. But sometimes the heir was in no hurry to discharge an expensive obligation. To guard against the mischance referred to, many individuals erected tombs for themselves in their lifetime, and magnificently adorned them.

At length, in the midst of its imperial profligacy and heathen idolatry, a Christian population sprung up at Rome—a poor and oppressed flock generally—leaving neither the means nor the inclination to give a costly appearance to the grave, assured that while their dead brethren had triumphantly overcome the sharpness of death, to the living in Christ its sting was taken away. Their proscribed profession speedily connected them in life and death with subterranean excavations around the city; and their remains, consisting of skeletons, bones, lamps, and inscriptions, discovered in the sixteenth century, in those dark and silent retreats, have conferred singular interest upon the Roman catacombs. To these remarkable memorials of a band of despised and persecuted men, witnesses for their Lord in dark and troublous times, public attention was called by the early explorers, nor has the subject been lost sight of in later days.

Catacombs appear in connection with many ancient and modern cities—Rome, Paris, Naples, Syracuse, and Alexandria; and have been appropriated to receive mortal remains, rather than excavated for that purpose. Those of Paris were originally the quarries out of which the stone was obtained employed for building, and were formed as accident or the facility of working determined. Upon becoming exhausted, the quarries were abandoned, and gradual accumulations of rubbish closing up the entrances, their existence was almost forgotten. But accidents occurring through the falling in of houses built over the underlying hollows, they were examined by the municipal authorities, and at an immense expense converted into subterranean streets and galleries. The government finally resolved to empty the over-crowded burial-places of the metropolis of their contents, and transfer them to these extensive vaults. The principal entrance is at the Barriere d'Enfer, by a descent of seventy feet, from which a long gallery conducts to a vestibule with a black gate, on which a Latin motto is inscribed, signifying, "Beyond these bounds rest those waiting the blessed promise," and a fine in French from the poet Delille, "Stop! here is the empire of death!" On passing the gate, the visitor finds the passages lined, from the floor to the roof, with the bones of more than two millions of human beings, arranged in a manner that is grotesquely horrible, although pointing also, with deep solemnity, the lesson of human mortality.

The story of the Roman catacombs is soon told.

In the latter days of the republic, the city rapidly increased in extent and grandeur; and the neighbouring plain was largely quarried for building materials, especially for the pozzuolana or volcanic earth used in forming cement. The subterranean passages are said to follow the veins of the pozzuolana, which will account for the perplexed and tortuous course attributed to them. Thus, the volcanic sand which forms the subsoil of the Campagna became perforated with a perfect network of excavations, so intricate as only to be readily threaded by the workmen constantly accustomed to its windings, affording a tolerably secure retreat from all but the *arcarii*, or sand-diggers, themselves. Cicero refers to these gloomy vaults in one of the greatest of his judicial efforts, in which he unfolds a frightful and entangled labyrinth of domestic crime, one act of which transpired in their recesses. Oppianus, anxious to obtain the wealth of a young citizen named Asinius, employed an individual to personate him, and execute a will in his name, in favour of himself. The document was prepared, and some strangers attached their signatures to it as witnesses, upon which Asinius was inveigled into the gardens of the Esquiline, and murdered in one of the sand-pits. Another occurrence is mentioned by Suetonius the historian. Nero, flying disguised from the exasperated senate, in the midnight thunder-storm, across the Campagna, being discovered by an old soldier, was advised by his freedman, Phaon, to hide himself in a sand-pit; upon which he replied, that he would never go under ground while alive.

Christianity is generally supposed to have been first planted in the city by some of those "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," who heard Peter preach, and were converted at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. To the church thus formed in the metropolis of the ancient world, Paul addressed an epistle; at which time, its place of assembly was a private house. Rom. xvi. 5. According to ecclesiastical tradition, both apostles laid down their lives for the truth, and were added to the noble army of martyrs, at Rome. This is highly probable with reference to Paul, for he was a prisoner within its walls; but no evidence of the same kind sustains the idea that Peter ever passed its gates, or was even in Italy. As in other places, while a few persons of conspicuous station and middle rank received the faith, its converts were principally from the common people; and the conjecture is likely, that the gospel very early reached the *arenarii*, a low

grade of the populace, probably a distinct class, and was welcomed by them. To these men, the subterranean scenes in which their employment lay, were places of refuge when persecution arose; and they naturally put their brethren in possession of an asylum in the same obscure retreats. Often was the cry heard in the streets of the capital, "Away with the Christians!" "Death to the Christians!" "To the lions! to the lions!" and, without mercy, they were butchered to grace a Roman holiday. As opportunity offered, the mangled remains of the martyrs were collected by surviving friends, who deemed it a pious duty to show respect to the body that had nobly suffered; and they were secretly removed to the excavations without the walls to receive honourable interment, and be protected from further violence, as the vengeance of the heathen government warred even with the dead. Others, permitted to die peacefully, wished to have their bones laid by the side of such honoured brethren; and thus the catacombs became converted into ranges of Christian sepulchres, receiving the entire Christian population of the city, till some time after the faith escaped from the bonds of persecution.

But the fact rests upon good evidence, that here the living frequently conducted their prescribed worship, having taken sanctuary "in dens and caves of the earth," from the violence of their enemies. Thousands of *terra cotta* lamps have been found, used by those who were compelled to retreat from the light of day. Wells and springs in various parts of the corridors ministered to the support of life in the subterranean haunts; and heathen edicts, prohibiting entrance into the cemeteries at the beginning of a persecution, proclaim the customary flight of the Christians to them, and the ignorance of the authorities of their intricate windings. Yet many a time did the emissaries of the emperors fall upon the track of the refugees; and the catacombs became a scene of martyrdom. The following inscription tells a tale to this effect. It refers to the fifth persecution, which began A. D. 161, under the second Antonine.

"In Christ, Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He lived under the emperor Antonine, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For, while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, afford no protection to life. What can be more wretched than such a life? O what can such a death? When they could not be buried by their friends and relations? At length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times."

Cyprian tells us of Quartus and Sistas, unknown persons, whose names are written in heaven, who were put to death in the catacombs, whither they had fled; and it is recorded of a bishop named Stephen, that he was there beheaded, while sitting in the episcopal chair, after divine service had been performed.

A popular representation of a Scottish pilgrim who visited the graves of the Cameronian martyrs, to keep their monuments in repair, renewing the inscriptions, is a sketch from life; and the same feeling that actuated the enthusiastic wanderer, led the Roman Christians, in tolerant times, to pay honourable attention to the sepulchres of those who had jeopardized their lives unto the death for the truth's sake—a practice which, however abused to superstition, sprung from a natural and religious impulse. Jerome, of the fourth century, relates:—"When I was at Rome, still a youth, and employed in literary pursuits, I was accustomed, in company with others of my own age, and actuated by the same feelings, to visit on Sundays the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs; and often to go down into the crypts dug in the heart of the earth, where the walls on each side are lined with the dead; and so intense is the darkness, that we almost realise the words of the prophet, 'They go down alive into hades,' though here and there a scanty aperture, ill describing the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns around; and as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words of Virgil, 'Horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind.'" Prudentius also, about the same period, states:—"We have seen in the city of Romulus innumerable remains of saints. You ask what are the names of those buried? a question difficult for me to answer—so great a host of the just did the impious rage of the heathen sweep away, when Trojan Rome worshipped her country's gods. Many sepulchres marked with letters display the name of the martyrs, or some anagram. There are also dumb stones closing silent tombs, which tell only the number buried within; so that we know how many human bodies lie in the heap, though we read no names belonging to them. I remember finding that sixty were buried under one mound, whose names Christ alone preserves as those of his peculiar friends." Again, of the tomb of Hippolytus, he records:—"Among the cultivated grounds, not far outside the walls, lies a deep cavern with dark recesses. A descending path with winding steps leads through the dim turnings; and the daylight entering by the mouth of the cavern somewhat illumines the first part of the way. But the darkness grows deeper as we advance, till we meet with openings out in the roof of the passages, admitting light from above; there have I often prayed prostrate, sick with the corruption of soul and body, and obtained relief."

During the stormy period of the decline and fall of the empire, the catacombs were lost sight of, and continued almost unknown till the revival of letters—an interval of a thousand years. Upon

their discovery, a controversy concerning relics, in the pontificate of Sixtus the Fifth, which commenced in 1585, called the attention of antiquaries to these long-neglected sites; and they were carefully explored, the rubbish by which their entrances had become closed up, and the passages themselves, in many places, being removed. The learned Bosio spent thirty years in opening and examining them, meeting with adventures which rival in interest those of Belzoni among the tombs of Thebes. His results were published in a posthumous work in 1632. Fabretti, appointed curator of the catacombs, prepared a collection of the epitaphs; and most of the antiquities, with plans of the ranges, are minutely described by Bottari. The crypts were rapidly despoiled of their monumental treasures, which went to enrich private collections of the antique, and the Vatican museum. The latter abounds with sarcophagi, bas-reliefs, and inscriptions, taken from these recesses and galleries, ranged in an apartment appropriately called the Christian museum. A long corridor at the entrance contains on the one hand Pagan, and on the other Christian sepulchral remains, to which the name of Galleria Lapidaria has been given, from its sepulchral stones. In 1841, Dr. Maitland obtained permission to copy some of the inscriptions in the Lapidary Gallery; and collected the materials of his well-known work, "The Church in the Catacombs."

The excavations now shown are in separate ranges, but a general communication between all is said to have existed, interrupted by the falling in of the soil. Those most commonly visited are entered from the church of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way, at a short distance from the city. The galleries are generally about eight feet high and five wide. The graves are in the side walls, and consist mostly of three tiers of apertures cut horizontally, and shut in by slabs. At irregular intervals the passages converge, and expand into large chapel-like apartments, many of which have doubtless resounded with the voice of prayer and praise. Nothing is any longer to be seen in the tombs but a few ashes of the skeletons in some of the compartments. Occasionally, a portion of the skeleton is met with, the bones of which retain their original form and relative position, but on attempting to lay hold of them they crumble to powder in the fingers, so completely has time reduced the bodies to dust. The entire extent of the subterranean retreats and graves of men, "of whom the world was not worthy," includes several miles, but they are only very partially accessible, owing to the dilapidation consequent on centuries of neglect. Solemn thoughts crowd upon the mind of the wanderer in these windings, as to the strength of that Christianity which animated the dwellers in these recesses, who were willing to sacrifice all that was dearest to human nature rather than part with their religious convictions. How would our Christianity, reader, stand such a test!

### DEATH AND BURIAL OF LUTHER.

His death at length drew near. About one o'clock of the morning of February 18th, 1546, the pain at his chest became intolerable. He frequently prayed, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit. My heavenly Father, eternal and most merciful God, thou hast revealed to me thy dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Him have I preached. I adore him as my only Saviour and Redeemer. I know I shall be forever with Him, for no one can pluck me out of his hand." Dr. Jonas said to him, "Beloved father, do you still hold on to Christ the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer?" "O, yes," was his last utterance. He then folded his hands on his breast, turned his face on one side, and fell asleep softly as an infant on his mother's breast. The Countess of Mansfeld, who was present, would scarcely believe he was gone, till the icy coldness of death under her touch chilled all hope. She wept as one that refused to be comforted. On February 19th, his body was borne in a leaden coffin to St. Andrew's Church, Eisenach, where Dr. Jonas preached from 1st Thessalonians, 4th chapter, 13th and 18th verses, and next day the body was borne to Wittenberg. As the procession proceeded, one of the crowd unexpectedly gave out and began to sing the first hymn composed by Luther:

"From deep distress I call to thee,  
My God regard my crying."

And the whole multitude joined in the hymn, till their voices were choked with weeping. The body was finally taken to the Castle Church, which was crowded with weepers. Bugenhagen and Melancthon successively entered the pulpit. The former gave out his text, but the moment he attempted to address the audience he was overcome by weeping. The congregation joined in his burst of feeling, and from thence the crowd in the streets caught the solemn sympathy, and the whole city became literally a *Bochim*. Martin Luther fell asleep in Jesus. . . . His ashes repose peacefully in a hope of a resurrection in Wittenberg. His living voice consecrates its churches, and his dead dust endears its soil. Kings and emperors have made pilgrimages to the tomb of that monk, and nations cherish in their hearts his imperishable name. Charles V. Frederick the Great, Peter of Russia, and Wallenstein, and lastly Napoleon, visited the spot where the remains of the reformer lie; and even these names, the sound of which still shake the casements of the world, seem but ciphers beside the dust of Martin Luther. The moral grandeur of an Augustinian monk dimes the lustre and diminishes the greatness of heroes, consuls, and kings. Nobler far is moral than mere physical dominion. He is the true ruler who sways mind with truth, not he who restrains with a rod of iron. We may applaud the energy which subdues rebellions pro-

vinces, and clothes with golden harvests otherwise arid fields. But we must admire and infinitely prefer that more glorious might which throws into other minds kindling thoughts—awakens in human hearts a sense of their lost prerogatives, and moulds society into all the forms of truth, and beauty, and order. The Pauls, the Luthers, the Calvins, the Cranmers, and the Knoxes are the true sovereigns of the earth; the Napoleons, and Caesars, and Alexanders, are not to be compared with them. The former shall only begin to approach their meridian glory, when the latter sink into midnight oblivion.—*Dr. Cumming.*

GIVING GOLD TO THE LORD.—One of the most interesting gifts that we have heard of for a long time, was presented by a poor woman at Brighton. After a church missionary meeting, in that town, one of the poorest widows in the parish where it was held, brought a sovereign to her pastor, as her offering. He knew her deep poverty, and declined to receive it, saying that she must not think of giving so much, for he was sure she could not afford it. Her countenance fell; she appeared disappointed and distressed; and with irresistible eloquence—the eloquence of a full heart—she thus pleaded with him to accept it: "Oh! sir," she said, "I have often given copper to the Lord; and two or three times I have had the pleasure of giving silver; but it has been my earnest desire to have the great happiness of giving gold once before I die. I have long been engaged in saving every little mite that I could spare, that I might give this sovereign to-night. You must take it for the missions."

Her pastor could no longer refuse the gift. It was added to the collection—the precious offering of a loving heart.

Reader, never be content with giving that to the Lord which costs you nothing. He gave himself for you.

"Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."  
—English Psalm.

### THE DAILY PRAYER MEETING.

"BEFORE THEY CALL I WILL ANSWER."

One day last week the hour of prayer was interspersed with testimonies of wonderful answers to prayer.

A gentleman said, "You will remember that a few days ago I asked you to pray for a class of seventeen young ladies. I am here to-day to tell you that ten have been converted, and I ask you to pray for the conversion of the remaining seven."

Another gentleman at once arose and said, "You will remember me as from Boston. A few days ago I was here on a Saturday, and I asked you to pray specially for the labors of the day following in Tremont Temple. This is a Baptist congregation. I told you that I wanted prayer for the children and youth of the Sabbath School, who the next Sabbath evening were to hold a meeting for their own particular benefit."

"When I went back to Boston, early in the following week, I mentioned in a meeting that I had asked prayer for pastor and people, and the Sabbath School. 'I thought,' said the pastor, 'all that Sabbath day that somebody had been praying for me. I felt it in my own soul, and my mind was exceedingly solemn on that account, and I felt greatly assisted in my preaching.' Now hear," continued the speaker, "what I have to say about that Sunday night meeting of the children and youth and teachers of the Sabbath School, for special blessing upon which I asked you to make earnest supplication. That meeting was characterized as a wonderful meeting, on account of the manifest presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is believed that at least twelve of those children and youth were that night converted."

After prayer and thanksgiving had been offered, a young man arose and said, "I am not often in this meeting, living as I do in the country. But whenever I am in the city I always make it a point to come to this meeting. Some time ago I came here and asked you to pray for three young men, my friends. I now have good news to tell you. All the three young men are converted. The last to come to Christ is in the army; and I have a letter that was written by him, informing me that he hopes he has become a Christian since he has been in camp."

Another arose and said, "I come from Paterson, New Jersey. I understand that you have been solicited to pray for a revival in Paterson. It has come, but not beginning in the church for which prayer was asked, or members of which made the request. It began in a church whose pastor felt it to be his duty to go as chaplain to one of our New Jersey regiments. The church felt much discouraged by this, but they procured the services of a young minister, and his labors are blessed with a spiritual refreshing poured out upon the church. This revival influence is extending to the other churches of Paterson. I come to ask you to pray for a mighty shower upon the city."

Several other cases of answer to prayer were mentioned in the same meeting, going to show how God fulfills his promise—"Before they call I will answer."

### THE BEAUTY OF HUMILITY.

At one of the meetings a gentleman stated that Ex-Gov. Pollock, of Pennsylvania, was in the room, and expressed a hope, in somewhat complimentary terms as to his Christian character and influence, that we should hear from him. He arose with a shadow of pain evidently imprinted upon his face.

"I would have much preferred," said he, "to have come in here and engaged in the devotions

of the hour in my humble way, unannounced and uncalled for. I have had position and honor, but I can say from the bottom of my heart that I consider no honor like that, or comparable to that, of being an humble disciple and follower of the Lord Jesus. All worldly distinctions vanish among Christians. To be numbered among those whom Jesus owns as his, is an honor above all earthly honors. To sit in the lowest place among Christians, to be one of them, to be one with them, to join with them in prayer, to feel the bonds which bind all in one brotherhood in Christ,—all redeemed sinners by the same precious blood—on the same journey homeward, through the same trials to the same triumphs, oh! this is a joy and an honor which is far above comparison with all earthly honors."

As the speaker went on in this strain, the lines of discomfort fled from his face, and a satisfied and pleased expression took their place, which made all feel that he spoke out of the abundance of his heart. The meeting was much moved by the kind and humble manner of the man whom thousands in his own native State had delighted to honor.—*N. Y. Observer.*

### SAINT JOHN FEMALE REFORM SOCIETY.

The following is the first Report of the Directors of the "Female Reform Society," which was presented at the Annual Meeting held on the 9th April, 1862; and we have great pleasure in giving it publicity in our columns:

At the termination of the first year of their labors the Directors of the Female Reform Society beg respectfully to submit the following brief Report of the progress and actual state of the Institution. In doing so, they are thankful for the liberal pecuniary assistance they have received, and for that measure of success which, by the Divine blessing, has attended their exertions to relieve the unfortunate. During the year there have been 30 females admitted. Three of these have been restored to their relatives; eight provided with suitable situations, and eight still remain at the Home. Thus we expect that at least fourteen out of the thirty received have abandoned their sinful ways, and been restored to a useful position in society. Ceasing to do evil, they have learned to do well. A result which, notwithstanding some trials and discouragements, is as satisfactory as the most sanguine could have anticipated. Besides what has been directly accomplished by the society, the Ladies' Committee have visited the localities where this class of persons generally reside. Tracts have been distributed, and a Sabbath class organized for the particular instruction of their children. Also, through the energetic interference of members of the Board of Directors, some interesting young females, led astray by the seducer and destroyer, have been snatched from a life of sin and misery regular to the haunts of vice, and restored to their once sorrowing but now rejoicing parents.

As appears from the Treasurer's Report, the sum of \$921.86 has been expended in the purchase, repairs, fitting and furnishing of the Home, and \$857.49 for the regular support of the Institution. Of this amount, about \$1462.50 has been raised by subscriptions and donations, and \$816.85 from such work as washing, ironing, knitting, and needle work of various kinds, done by the inmates.

The property which originally cost over \$5000, was purchased for \$2000; on which there is still due \$1000. There are outstanding debts to the amount of about \$350. It is estimated that about \$800 will be sufficient to meet the expenses of the ensuing year; of which sum probably \$400 will be realized from the labors of the inmates: and it is hoped that subscriptions and donations will make up the balance.

The sum expended during the year may seem large, but it is to be recollected that much of this was required to pay for the purchase and permanent improvement of the property. It may to many persons who are not entirely acquainted with the matter appear unwise to have invested so much in an institution of this kind; but it is also to be remembered that it was impossible to rent a suitable house for the purposes of the Society on reasonable terms.

The annual liabilities will probably be much less in succeeding years—at least when the remainder of the purchase money is paid, which the Directors feel ought to be done as soon as possible.

It is also expected that in future, under the judicious management of Mrs. Maxwell, the newly-appointed Matron, the regular yearly income from work will be considerably increased. Indeed, it will doubtless be the object of the Board of Management to make the Institution, as far as possible, self-supporting.

The Directors beg to present their most grateful thanks to those ladies of the Committee who, with untiring zeal and energy, have given attention to the affairs of the Society during the past year; to the clergymen by whom religious instructions have been regularly imparted; and to other friends too numerous to mention, for various gifts of books and tracts, as well as other necessary and useful articles. They have likewise to acknowledge their obligations to the Common Council and to the Commissioners of the Water Company, for the aid furnished in supplying the Home with water.

The thanks of the Board are likewise hereby tendered to Colonel Cole, and the Officers, and Band of H. M. 15th Regiment, for the Concert so kindly given by them in aid of the funds of the Society.

The Directors beg, in conclusion, to appeal to the Christian community for continued support and charitable aid, to relieve them from pressing claims, and thus put the Institution on such a basis as may reasonably be expected to ensure its continued and increasing prosperity.

We rejoice that our lot is cast in a city where there are such agencies for doing good as the Ragged School, the Orphan Asylum, and the Female Reform Society, and we trust that those who are exerting themselves so wisely and so well, in these schemes of Christian philanthropy, may receive that encouragement which they desire, that success which they pray for, and be cheered above all by the promise, "he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

In conclusion, the Directors commend the Female Reform Society to the enlightened benevolence of their fellow-citizens, and to the blessing of the Friend of the outcast, who came to seek and to save the lost, and who has left us an example that we should follow his steps. "Let us, therefore, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;