



Circular Burials

The vexed question of whether the Christian dead should be buried at Whitebridge Cemetery in ranks with feet pointing east, according to custom, or in circles, has reminded me of a somewhat similar situation that arose when I was in Paris several years ago.

To save the almost microscopic amount of space left in the overcrowded cemeteries it was decided that for all future burials the coffins would be placed perpendicularly. This caused an immediate outcry, especially from age pensioners who asserted, with Gallic justification, that since they had worked in an upright position during their long lifetime, they surely deserved the privilege of being allowed to relax in a horizontal position after their demise.

Unlike certain of our local authorities, the civic fathers of Paris acted quickly to solve this problem. They proclaimed death within the confines of Paris a grave breach of the law, with such heavy fines and long jail sentences even for first offenders that the Parisian doctors and undertakers were soon forced to pack up and offer their services elsewhere.