

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01189175 1

83

5842

THE GOLDEN AGE OF
CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Plate 1



Art
R5357g



THE GOLDEN AGE OF CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

BY

JEAN PAUL RICHTER

AND

A. CAMERON TAYLOR



LONDON

DUCKWORTH AND CO.

3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

1904

82590
6/6/07



THE GOLDEN AGE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
THE COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS ARE COPYRIGHT

N
7832
R5
cop. 2

BALLANTYNE PRESS
LONDON & EDINBURGH

P R E F A C E

THIS study is an attempt to appreciate a large and homogeneous group of classic pictures from the points of view of art, archaeology, and theology, from each of which aspects they are of unique value.

The date of the great pictorial cycle of mosaics decorating the interior of the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, has been hitherto universally accepted as fixed by the inscription on the Arch, as of the fifth century therefore. At the commencement of our studies we accepted this natural and apparently well-established conclusion; but on comparing the pictures in question with the works of art of the fifth century, both pictorial and plastic, and the theology they embody, with that of the great fifth-century theologians, Jerome and Augustine, we found that their artistic affinities were with the more classic art of the Antonines and their successors, and that the theology they clearly reflect was that of the age of the Apologists.

Our work, which was considerably advanced before this opinion grew into a conviction, had to be thrown on one side therefore, and our studies recommenced from a new standpoint.

Nor was the task on which we were embarking an easy one, as it was necessary to both project and design the path through the country which we were hereafter to explore as pioneers.

The first principles underlying the critical analysis of the pictorial material had to be discovered.

Two types of fact had to be investigated: (1) the specific type of thought embodied, for the successive phases in the evolution of Christian theology are of a marked character, and represent points of view which never recur in precisely the same form; (2) the artistic character, not only of the general effect of the pictures, but of their component parts, for in the course of centuries these mosaics have

P R E F A C E

been so often restored and interpolated as to have acquired something of the nature of palimpsests composed of strata of very varied character, any one of which would be most misleading if taken as a basis for the appreciation of the picture, still more of the series, as a whole.

The outcome of our researches was surprising. We were forced to antedate the mosaics in question by some two centuries.

During the last half of the past century three archaeologists of note, Padre R. Garrucci, Giovanni Battista de Rossi, and Prof. Ainalof, have published important works on these mosaics. Padre Garrucci's opinions are in large part reproduced in de Rossi's publication. Prof. Ainalof approached the subject from a quite independent and Russian point of view. In the appendices we give a *résumé* of the opinions of the last named writers, opinions often incompatible with ours, and not always noted in the text, the aim of which is constructive, not destructive.

The illustrations published by the two Italian archaeologists are too inaccurate to subserve any artistic purpose, or to give any idea of style. We have used those of Garrucci merely as indications of the general disposition of the figures and masses, and have supplemented them with coloured reproductions of almost all the surviving fragments of the original pictures, and of several of such interpolations as are characteristic of their times.

These reproductions were made either from coloured tracings, or from water-colour paintings on a photographic basis. Their preparation was attended by innumerable difficulties, not the least of which was due to the position of the pictures above the architrave of the Nave, and above the High Altar at which the ritual of the Church is daily celebrated. We were able to bring this part of our work to a successful conclusion, thanks to the courtesy and aid of the late Mons. P. Crostarosa, and of Mons. Pinchetti, Canons of the basilica, who advised the Chapter to permit the erection of scaffoldings (disfiguring, and sometimes inconvenient though they were), for limited and intermitting periods of time; or, when this was not feasible, to permit us to be let down through the ceiling in a cage, and to continue our work thus suspended before the object of our studies. We also owe much to the courage, resource, and skill of the artist whose services we were fortunate enough to secure, Signore Carlo Tabanelli, illustrator

P R E F A C E

of Mons. J. Wilpert's magnificent work on the pictures in the Roman catacombs. His water-colours, which were made under conditions of great discomfort, and sometimes even of actual danger, have been admirably reproduced under his direction in the three-colour process by Signore Giulio Danesi, of Rome.

We have further to express our gratitude to His Eminence Cardinal Francesco Vannutelli, to Mons. J. Wilpert, to Padre Ehrle, to Dr. A. Haseloff, to Prof. Ch. Hülsen, to Baron R. Kanzler, to Prof. E. Petersen, to Prof. A. Morani, under whose superintendence some of the pictures in the Nave were reproduced, to Fraülein E. M. Stiffel, who kindly translated Prof. Ainalof's Russian treatise for our benefit, to Comendatore C. Tenerani, and to Dom-Vicar Dr. Wiegand.

CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER	PAGES
I. Method	I-7
II. Historical Considerations ; Stylistic Considerations ; Monumental Art of the first Three Centuries	8-17
III. Domestic Christian Art	18-23
IV. Xystus III.	24-35
V. Liberius	36-39
VI. The Basilica Sicinini	40-46
VII. Artistic Considerations	47-51

PART I

THE PROTOTYPICAL DECORATIONS OF THE NAVE

THE FIRST TYPOLOGICAL SERIES : ABRAHAM

I. Introductory	55-57
II. Abraham, Melchizedek, and Christ	58-66
III. Abraham and the Three Angels	67-80
IV. The Separation of Lot from Abraham	81-88

THE SECOND TYPOLOGICAL SERIES : JACOB

I. Introductory	89-96
II. Jacob and Rachel, Leah and Laban.—Esau	97-119
Jacob's blessing.—Esau receives Isaac's blessing.—Rachel announces Jacob's arrival.—Jacob enters Laban's household.—Jacob serves for Rachel.—Jacob asks the hand of Rachel.—Jacob's marriage with Rachel.—The compact between Jacob and Laban.—The dividing of Jacob's sheep from those of Laban.—The incident of the rods.—God commands Jacob to depart.—Jacob communicates the command of God to Leah and Rachel.—Jacob sends messengers to Esau.—The meeting of Jacob and Esau.	
III. Jacob as Shepherd and Bridegroom : a Type of Christ	120-125
IV. Hamor, Shechem, and the Sons of Leah	126-136
Hamor and Shechem before Jacob.—Jacob and his sons.—Negotiations between the King of Shechem and the sons of Leah.—Hamor and Shechem address their subjects.—The typological significance of the relation between Hamor and Shechem and the sons of Leah.	

CONTENTS

THE THIRD TYPOLOGICAL SERIES: MOSES

CHAPTER	PAGES
I. Introductory	137-141
II. The Adoption of Moses	142-150
III. Moses among the Philosophers	151-160
IV. Moses' Marriage	161-168
V. The Calling of Moses	169-173
VI. Passage of the Red Sea	174-179
VII. The Covenant between God and His People	180-183
VIII. The Miracle of the Quails	184-185
IX. The Bitter Waters of Marah	186-189
X. The Rejection of the Embassy of Israel by Edom	190-193
XI. The Defeat of Amalek	194-197
XII. The Mission of the Envoys	198-201
XIII. The Stoning of Moses	202-206
XIV. The Second Covenant, and the Passing of Moses	207-211

THE FOURTH TYPOLOGICAL SERIES: JOSHUA

I. Introductory	212-214
II. The Passage of the Jordan	215-221
III. Jesus' Envoys	222-225
IV. Joshua before the Angel of the Lord	226-229
V. The Return of the Envoys	230-231
VI. The Fall of Jericho.—The Procession of the Ark	232-238
VII. The Siege of Gibeon.—Delivery of Gibeon	239-243
VIII. The sudden Appearance of "Jesus" Nave.—Pursuit of the Enemy.—The Hailstorm	244-250
IX. The Staying of Sun and Moon	251-254
X. The Condemnation of the Five Kings.—The Division of the Spoil	255-257
XI. The Typological Aspect of the History of Joshua	258-272

PART II

THE ANTITYPICAL DECORATIONS OF THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH: THE ADVENT OF THE LOGOS AND HIS RECEPTION

I. Introductory	275-276
II. The Mystery of the Virgin-Birth	277-294
III. The Mercy Seat	295-312
IV. The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews. Simeon's Prophecy	313-328
V. The Coming of the Orient to Christ	329-344
VI. Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ	345-353
VII. The Martyrdom of the Innocents	354-360
VIII. Herod, Priests, and Magi	361-365
IX. Jerusalem and Bethlehem	366-370
X. Summary	371-380

Cop.

CONTENTS

CONCLUSION AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

CHAPTER	PAGES
I. Conclusion	383-391
II. General Considerations	392-400

APPENDICES.

I. Chronological Table of Notes on the later History, Restorations, Bibliography, and Reproductions of the Mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore	403-405
II. Documentary Evidence concerning recent Restorations	406-410
III. Abstract of de Rossi's Mosaici di S. Maria Maggiore	411-414
IV. Abstract of Ainalof's Studies on the Mosaici of S. Maria Maggiore	415-419
V. Table of Synchronous Events	420-421
Index	423-428

ERRATA

- Page 14, line 10, *for* 'endurable' *read* 'durable.'
- Page 22, line 13, *for* 'backgrounds' *read* 'background.'
- Page 23, line 5, *for* 'the scenes' *read* 'scenes.'
- Page 75, line 24, *for* 'has been' *read* 'is.'
- Page 75, line 25, *for* 'is' *read* 'has been.'
- Page 116, line 6, *for* 'on' *read* 'in.'
- Page 122, note, *for* 'δουλεύει' *read* 'δουλεύει.'
- Page 154, line 15, *for* 'speakers ; but of his ability' *read* 'speakers, but of his ability ;'
- Page 181, line 4, *for* 'are' *read* 'were.'
- Page 181, line 31, *for* 'an' *read* 'one.'
- Page 208, line 20, *read* 'modern picture below.'
- Page 227, line 28, *for* 'were' *read* 'are.'
- Page 268, line 32, *omit* 'rather.'
- Page 279, line 23, *after* 'looped' *insert* 'and spotted.'
- Page 282, line 2, *for* 'his' *read* 'their creator's.'
- Page 288, line 11, *for* 'beautiful human beings' *read* 'a beautiful human being.'
- Page 295, line 13, *for* 'and' *read* 'in.'
- Page 297, line 28, *for* 'to' *read* 'with.'
- Page 301, line 14, *for* 'and the' *read* 'and in the.'
- Page 311, line 31, *for* 'into reminiscence' *read* 'a reminiscence.'
- Page 312, line 9, *for* 'veiling the' *read* 'veiling their.'
- Page 317, line 6, *omit* 'black.'
- Page 346, line 9, *for* 'presentation' *read* 'representation.'
- Page 346, line 23, *for* 'paludamentum' *read* 'paludamentum.'
- Page 348, line 9, *for* 'their' *read* 'its.'
- Page 350, line 8, *for* 'Matthei' *read* 'Matthaei.'
- Page 358, line 19, *for* 'those' *read* 'that.'

ILLUSTRATIONS

The outline engravings of the Mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore are taken from Garrucci's 'Storia dell'Arte Cristiana,' Vol. V., the drawings in which are based on seventeenth-century water-colours made by order of Cardinal Barberini, and at present in the Vatican. These, although of no stylistic value, are important as preserving the compositions, and as showing how fragmentary was the condition of the mosaics even three hundred years ago.

The reproductions of mosaics in S. Maria Maggiore from photographs are chiefly taken by kind permission from plates by Comm. C. Tenerani; some are from other private sources (copyright).

All the coloured plates are published here for the first time (copyright).

In the following table of illustrations each picture, unless part of the decorations of S. Maria Maggiore, is accompanied by a statement of its 'provenance.'

All reproductions from the Catacombs are taken, by kind permission, from Mons. J. Wilpert's 'Le Pitture delle Catacombe Romane,' Rome, 1904.

PLATE I.

Bust of Angel, from Abraham and the Three Angels (see p. 70). In the mosaic in its present state this Angel's head is silhouetted against a gold interpolation. This is replaced here by an aerial blue background similar to that of the group of Angels in the upper part of the same picture, the Angels on the Arch, &c. *Title-page*

PLATE II.

TO FACE
PAGE

No. 1, Barbarian Prisoners and Roman Soldiers, relief on the Column of Marcus Aurelius; No. 2, Figure of Melchizedek, detail from Abraham, Melchizedek, and Christ; No. 3, Abraham and Melchizedek, detail from a miniature in the Vienna Genesis 16

PLATE III.

No. 1, The Decorations of a Wall in the Catacombs of Domitilla (from a water-colour in possession of Mons. J. Wilpert); No. 2 and No. 3, reliefs with the Story of Jonah, etc., on sarcophagi in the Museum of the Lateran 22

PLATE IV.

No. 1, View of the Nave of S. Maria Maggiore; No. 2, section of the windows in the ancient wall of the basilica, from H. Grisar's 'Rom beim Ausgang der antiken Welt.' 26

ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
PLATE V.	
No. 1, Abraham, Melchizedek, and Christ; No. 2, Abel, Melchizedek, and Abraham, mosaic in S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna; No. 3, Abel and Melchizedek, mosaic in S. Vitale, Ravenna	62
PLATE VI.	
Bust of Christ in clouds, detail from Abraham, Melchizedek, and Christ. The golden clavus on the pallium of Christ (an obvious interpolation) is omitted. The effect of the clouds and sky is far finer in the original, in which the reds and blue purples are more saturated, and the sky by contrast clearer, colder, more translucent than in the reproduction	64
PLATE VII.	
No. 1, Abraham and the Three Angels; No. 2, Vintage scene with figures of the Good Shepherd, sarcophagus, Lateran Museum	70
PLATE VIII.	
The Separation of Lot from Abraham. In the mosaic in its present state the central stratum of translucent yellow middle distance is disfigured by an opaque patch of gold; this has been here replaced by the original tints of graduated yellow. Some few cubes have fallen out of Sarah's face; these have been replaced. The effect of the light but vivid yellow cubes associated with orange, in the faces of Lot's daughters, has been lost in the reproduction. The patch of restoration in stucco, which represents the body of Isaac, and part of the front of the church, has been omitted	82
PLATE IX.	
Busts of Lot and his suite, detail from foregoing mosaic	86
PLATE X.	
No. 1a, Jacob's blessing; No. 1b, Esau's blessings; No. 2a, Rachel announces Jacob's arrival; No. 2b, Jacob enters Laban's household; No. 3, Jacob serves for Rachel; No. 4a, Jacob asks the hand of Rachel; No. 4b, Jacob's marriage with Rachel; No. 5a, The compact between Jacob and Laban; No. 5b, The dividing of Jacob's sheep from those of Laban; No. 6a, The incident of the rods; No. 6b, Jacob communicates the command of God to Leah and Rachel	104
PLATE XI.	
No. 1, Fresco of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs of Domitilla; No. 2 and No. 3, Reliefs in the Christian Museum of the Lateran; No. 4, Medallion in the Christian Museum of the Vatican; No. 5 and No. 6, The dividing of Jacob's sheep from those of Laban, miniatures in the Vienna Genesis	122
PLATE XII.	
No. 1a, Jacob sends messengers to Esau; No. 1b, The meeting of Jacob and Esau; No. 2a, Hamor and Shechem before Jacob; No. 2b, Jacob and his sons; No. 3a, Negotiations between the King of Shechem and the Sons of Leah; No. 3b, Hamor and Shechem address their subjects	126

ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
PLATE XIII.	
No. 1a, The Adoption of Moses; No. 1b, Moses among the Philosophers; No. 2, Head of a lady-in-waiting; No. 3, Head of Pharaoh's daughter; No. 4, The three Graces, fresco at Pompeii; No. 5, Theodora and her suite, mosaic in S. Vitale, Ravenna	144
PLATE XIV.	
No. 1a, The Adoption of Moses; No. 1b, Moses among the Philosophers; No. 2, Figure of Moses, detail from Moses among the Philosophers; No. 3 and No. 4, Meeting of Philosophers, classic mosaics in the Villa Albani, Rome, and in the Museum at Naples	152
PLATE XV.	
Moses' Marriage. The disturbing gold interpolations surrounding the heads on either side of Jethro have been replaced in the reproduction by the graduated tints which occur in all such backgrounds as are undisputably original. The gold interpolation which destroys the architectonic effect of the wall of the Apse has been replaced by dark cubes of the colour of the few remaining which are antique. The restored stucco portions of the heads of Moses' attendants have not been reproduced	160
PLATE XVI.	
Head of Jethro, detail from Moses' Marriage. The original mosaic is free from the tendency to purple which is conspicuous in the print	162
PLATE XVII.	
No. 1, Pagan Marriage Scene, with Juno Pronuba, sarcophagus in the basilica of S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome; No. 2 and No. 3, Roman medallions with figure of Concordia; No. 4, Detail from Arch of Constantine	166
PLATE XVIII.	
No. 1, The Calling of Moses; No. 2, Same subject, from Comm. C. Tenerani's photograph; No. 3, The Good Shepherd, mosaic in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna; No. 4, The Calling of Moses, mosaic in S. Vitale, Ravenna	168
PLATE XIX.	
No. 1, The Paschal Lamb (see p. 138 f); No. 2, Passage of the Red Sea; No. 3, Group of <i>flamines</i> from the Ara Pacis; No. 4, Passage of the Red Sea, relief on sarcophagus in the Lateran Museum	174
PLATE XX.	
Moses and Aaron, detail from the Passage of The Red Sea. The lights on Moses' draperies are more flashing in the original than in the reproduction	176
PLATE XXI.	
Pharaoh, detail from The Passage of the Red Sea	178
PLATE XXII.	
No. 1a, The Covenant between God and His People; No. 1b, The Miracle of the Quails; No. 2a, The Bitter Waters of Marah; No. 2b, The Rejection of the Embassy of Israel by Edom; No. 3a, The Mission of the Envoys; No. 3b, The Stoning of Moses; No. 4a, The Second Covenant, and the Passing of Moses; No. 4b, Procession with the Ark (the mosaic is a late interpolation, and therefore, has not been commented on in the text)	184

ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
PLATE XXIII.	
No. 1, The Defeat of Amalek ; No. 2, Orans, from a painting in the Catacombs of Pietro e Marcellino (third century) ; No. 3. The Crucifixion, relief on the doors of S. Sabina, Rome (fifth century) ; No. 4, Resurrection of Lazarus, from a painting in the Catacombs of Pietro e Marcellino (third century)	194
PLATE XXIV.	
Original background, detail from The Stoning of Moses	202
PLATE XXV.	
No. 1a, The Passage of the Jordan ; 1b, Jesus' Envoys ; No. 2, Passage of a River, relief on the Column of Marcus Aurelius	216
PLATE XXVI.	
No. 1a, Joshua before the Angel of the Lord ; No. 1b, The Return of the Envoys ; No. 2a, The Fall of Jericho ; No. 2b, The Procession of the Ark ; No. 3a, The Siege of Gibeon ; No. 3b, Delivery of Gibeon ; No. 4a, The Sudden Appearance of "Jesus" Nave ; No. 4b, Pursuit of the Enemy ; No. 5, The Staying of Sun and Moon ; No. 6a, The Condemnation of the Five Kings ; No. 6b, The Division of the Spoil	226
PLATE XXVII.	
No. 1, Joshua before the Angel of the Lord, miniature in the Joshua Rotulus of the Vatican ; No. 2, The Fall of Jericho, miniature in the same Manuscript	232
PLATE XXVIII.	
No. 1, Siege of a Town, relief on the Column of Marcus Aurelius ; No. 2, The Siege of Gibeon ; No. 3, The Siege of a Town, from the Arch of Constantine	240
PLATE XXIX.	
No. 1, The Sudden Appearance of "Jesus" Nave ; No. 2, Battle between Romans and Barbarians, from the Column of Marcus Aurelius ; No. 3, Battle between Alexander and Darius, a Pompeian mosaic in the Museum at Naples	248
PLATE XXX.	
No. 1, The Staying of Sun and Moon ; No. 2, An Allocutio from the Column of Marcus Aurelius ; No. 3, The Staying of Sun and Moon, from the Joshua Rotulus in the Vatican Library	254
PLATE XXXI.	
View of the Triumphal Arch, left-hand side ; The Mystery of the Virgin Birth ; The Coming of the Orient to Christ ; The Martyrdom of the Innocents ; Jerusalem	274
PLATE XXXII.	
No. 1, The Mystery of the Virgin Birth ; No. 2, The Prophecy of the Virgin Birth, fresco in the Catacombs of Priscilla (second century) ; No. 3, The Annunciation, relief on a Sarcophagus at Ravenna ; No. 4, Procession of Virgins ; and No. 5, Palatium, mosaics in S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna	282

ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
PLATE XXXIII.	
Bust of the Holy Virgin in The Mystery of the Virgin Birth	288
PLATE XXXIV.	
No. 1 and No. 2, The Mercy Seat; No. 3 to No. 6, Roman coins, with representations of thrones, and emblems; No. 7, The Mercy Seat on signet ring in Berlin Museum; No. 8, Throne of Neptune, and relief from a pagan temple, in S. Vitale, Ravenna; No. 9, Mercy Seat, from sarcophagus in Umbria; No. 10, Scenes from the Passion of Christ, reliefs on sarcophagus in the Lateran Museum	296
PLATE XXXV.	
View of the Triumphal Arch, right-hand side: The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews, and Simeon's Prophecy; Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ; Herod, Priests and Magi; Bethlehem	312
PLATE XXXVI.	
No. 1, The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews; Simeon's Prophecy; No. 2, Statue of Rome in the Villa Medici, Rome; No. 3 to No. 6, Busts of Barbarians, on the Column of Marcus Aurelius	314
PLATE XXXVII.	
Bust of Simeon, detail from The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews, and Simeon's Prophecy. In the reproduction the interpolated gold background is replaced by aerial blue cubes, the usual background of original heads in this series	318
PLATE XXVIII.	
Busts of Jews, detail from The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews	320
PLATE XXXIX.	
View of the Temple, from The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews	322
PLATE XL.	
No. 1, The Coming of the Orient to Christ; No. 2, Augustus and Roma enthroned, cameo in the Imperial Museum, Vienna; No. 3, Adoration of the Magi, from a fresco in the Catacombs of Pietro e Marcellino, Rome	328
PLATE XLI.	
Busts of two Angels, detail from The Coming of the Orient to Christ	330
PLATE XLII.	
Busts of two Angels, and Head of the Sibyl, detail from The Coming of the Orient to Christ	334
PLATE XLIII.	
Bust of Sibyl, detail from The Coming of the Orient to Christ	336
PLATE XLIV.	
No. 1, Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ; No. 2, Philosopher, Prince and suite; No. 3, View of the town: details from Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ; No. 4, Christ in a philosopher's pallium, fresco in the Catacombs of Callixt; No. 5, Boy with a bird and a grape, relief in the Museum at Aix	344

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE XLV.

TO FACE
PAGE

Two Angels, detail from Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ 346

PLATE XLVI.

Bust of a figure in the Suite of the Prince, detail from Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ. In the original the background consists of heads and draperies 350

PLATE XLVII.

No. 1, The Martyrdom of the Innocents; No. 2, Herod, Priests, and Magi; No. 3, Massacre of the Innocents, on ivory book cover in Milan; No. 4, Head of Mithras, in the Lateran Museum; No. 5, Daniel between the Elders, relief on casket in S. Nazaro, Milan; No. 6 and No. 7, Figures of Mithras, in the Museums of the Vatican and of the Lateran 354

PLATE XLVIII.

The Women of Bethlehem, detail from The Martyrdom of the Innocents. In the mosaic in its present state this group is silhouetted on a glittering gold interpolation; the graduated scale of colours by which it is replaced here is a reconstruction on the basis of genuine backgrounds 360

PLATE XLIX.

Busts of two Magi, detail from Herod, Priests and Magi 362

PLATE L.

No. 1, Jerusalem; No. 2, Bethlehem; No. 3, The Good Shepherd, fresco from the Catacomb of Pretestato; No. 4, Susanna and the two Elders, from a fresco in the Catacomb of Priscilla; No. 5, Procession of lambs, a frieze, detail from the mosaics of SS. Cosma e Damiano 366

PLATE LI.

No. 1, Reliefs on the Arch of Septimius Severus on the Roman Forum; No. 2, Battle of Constantine and Maxentius, reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, Rome; No. 3, Theotokos and Life of the Holy Virgin, reliefs in ivory in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris 382

PLATE LII.

No. 1, Scenes from The Life of Moses, panel from the doors of S. Sabina, Rome; No. 2 and No. 3, Scenes from The Life of the Holy Virgin, and of Christ, reliefs in ivory, Milan Cathedral; No. 4, Adoration of the Magi, relief in the Lateran Museum 390

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

METHOD

- I. The mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore unique examples of monumental Christian art.
- II. Restoration and interpolation.
- III. Necessity for distinguishing between original workmanship and subsequent restoration. Comparative method.
- IV. Present embryonic condition of the history of Classic Christian art.

I. RESEARCH into the origin of early Christian art leads inevitably to the study of the paintings of the Catacombs: these, however, though of immense interest and importance, yield but a one-sided and inadequate conception of the art-methods and art-ideals of the Christians of the first centuries of our era, their æsthetic value and historical significance being limited by their purpose and position.

Leaving them on one side therefore it will be found that monumental early Christian art in Rome is represented by the mosaic decorations of a few great churches; and by a reflex art, little studied as such, that of the Roman sarcophagi.

Of the former the most important example is the detailed series of Biblical pictures preserved in S. Maria Maggiore, the unique historical value of which has been inadequately recognised in the past; and this for three reasons: (1) The pictures of which it is composed are exceedingly difficult to see, being placed high and badly lighted. (2) Gross injustice has been done to their artistic qualities in all generally accessible reproductions. (3) Little distinction has been drawn between original workmanship and that of subsequent restorations, although these have too often been but coarse caricatures of an original, which, if not entirely lost, was so injured that its reproduction was a matter of reconstruction, rather than of restoration.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

II. The extent to which these pictures have been restored has not been recognised.

With the object of determining their historical position we have subjected each of them to minute critical examination, from the points of view of style, execution, and preservation ; the result of this analysis being the conviction that they are riddled with heterogeneous matter.

Connoisseurs of Renaissance art have been forced by the confusion reigning in the attributions and appreciations of its pictures to submit them to a process of detailed examination, comparison, and elimination, often stigmatised as mechanical or pedantic.

They have confined themselves to considerations which are purely artistic. But these mosaics cannot be so approached ; the modes of life and thought of which they are the outcome are too remote.

He who would see them with the eyes and intelligence of the Roman Christians for whom they were composed must be guided by the literature and history, both religious and secular, of their day.

Archæological and historical researches are indispensable also, not only because of their direct results, but as an education ; for pre-occupation with objects far removed from modern life is an educative force by which the sympathies and susceptibilities are so harmoniously attuned to the life of a distant civilisation, that its artistic products are not provocative of crude surprise, or of mere intellectual apprehension, but of appreciative and pleasurable comprehension.

The *basis* of critical appreciation must, however, be the work of art itself ; for its speech is clearer and more authoritative than that of its commentators ; it speaks in unequivocal terms to those who have taken the trouble to learn its language—no easy task in the case of the much interpolated pictures in question.

In the present absence of an established chronology of early Christian art the attempt to distinguish between original workmanship and clever interpolations of a later date is both daring and difficult : it must however be made, for the recognition of such distinctions is a necessary preliminary to the investigations we are about to make.

It is undeniably in the nature of things that the passage of more than fifteen centuries should necessitate the frequent restoration, both on a large and on a small scale, of pictures executed in a material at once so permanent and so fragile as that of mosaic. The necessity for such

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

restorations is postulated by the mere dissolvent lapse of time, without taking into account the numerous external accidents and intentional injuries to which these pictures are known to have been exposed; such as those which must have resulted from the riot which took place at the election of Damasus (366), when his partisans tried to force an entrance into the church by lighting fires at its doors, and, climbing on to the roof, tore off the tiles and hurled them on to the heads of their opponents within:* such also as the mutilation of the Triumphal Arch by Alexander Borgia (1492-1503); the deliberate destruction of groups of pictures by Sixtus V. (1585-1590), and by Paul V. (1605-1621), in order to make place for the archways leading to their chapels; the extensive restorations conducted by order of Cardinal Pinelli, Benedict XIV., and others.

It is instructive in this connection to consider the history and condition of the mosaics of the Lateran, and of S. Paolo; and the scale and destructive efficiency of the restorations to which it has been found necessary to submit the mosaics of S. Marco (Venice) in order to prevent them from falling to pieces after only seven hundred years of existence. Significant also is the fate of Giotto's "Navicella." Even the modern mosaics of S. Peter's require constant attention.

III. It should be unnecessary to insist on the truism that the art of the second and third centuries must be distinguished from that of the fifth, of the eighth, of the twelfth, and of the sixteenth centuries; but, strange to say, these distinctions have not been observed by critics of these much restored pictures.

When internal evidence is supported by the testimony of documents the chronological classification of the parts of an interpolated original is easy and convincing, even to the lay mind; but not so when this corroboration is lacking, in which case the public is slow to persuade, being wisely shy of subjective opinion.

The distinction between what is antique and what is a later adjunct is not infrequently ignored in appreciations of classic Christian art, the study of which has not reached the level of that of classic antiquity, or

* See report of the incident made to the Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius by members of the party opposed to Damasus, 'Epistolae Imperatorum Pontificum Aliorum,' vol. xxxv., in 'Corp. Ecc. Lat.' (Vienna ed.), p. 49.

Ammianus Marcellinus, a quite impartial pagan historian, relates that on this occasion a hundred and thirty corpses were left in the "basilica Sicinini" (L. xxvii. chap. 3).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

of the Renaissance. The products of the latter are approached in a scientific spirit, distinctions being carefully drawn between originals, copies, forgeries, interpolations, and repairs.

Early Christian art must be put on the same footing.

One analytic method is common to the criticism of these three phases of pictorial art. The first step to be taken must be the discovery of some intact and original fragment, some representation of landscape or architecture, some portion of a figure, or, better still, some whole figure; for these alone are representative, and may be used as touchstones by which the genuineness of other examples can be tested.

This step, the result of the study, examination, and comparison of a large body of material, is one of great difficulty, and involves time; for it predicates the growth of a new sense in the student: when, however, it has been taken, and the necessary standard evolved, the completion of the task is comparatively easy. A rock has been found in the morass, on which the future edifice may be safely raised.

This initiatory phase has to be passed through, not once, but many times in apprising so composite an amalgam as these mosaics, in which the varied art-phases of many epochs are united, which contain specimens, not only of the fine art-utterances of early Roman Christianity, but also of the paralytic speech of its decadence; of the artificial charm of Byzantinism; of the barbaric art of the eighth century; of the *banal* eclecticism of the time of the Carracci, and finally of the unmitigated and characterless badness of the handiwork of the nineteenth-century restorer.

We have endeavoured to put the results obtained before the reader in such a form that he may pass through the same discipline as ourselves. Thus trained he will be in a position to test the conclusions drawn; for no man is profitably convinced except on the evidence of his own senses; conviction on authority, like all other forms of vicarious experience, is sterile.

IV. Much is written now on the relative positions of the various schools which flourished in the first centuries of our era: Roman, Alexandrine, Antiochian, and Byzantine.

The question whether the type which finally survived originated in the East or in the West is much disputed.

Such discussion is in our judgment premature; it is impossible to

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

form an opinion as to which of the rival schools survived until a clear idea of the qualities which characterised each of these schools has been gained. What is needed now is the searching critical analysis and systematic classification of all accessible material. By this means only can a correct conception of the characteristic peculiarities of each school be won, and the eye so trained that its judgments shall be objective rather than subjective. A general history of the development of the Christian art of the Roman Empire may be safely founded on such a basis. The present work claims to be nothing more than a cut stone carefully prepared for future use in such an edifice.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- I. The mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore have been characterised as historical continuous pictorial sequences, such as those of the "Vienna Genesis," and of the "Joshua Rotulus."
- II. They are not historical, but didactic.
- III. At what period was the didactic tendency they reflect dominant in the Christian community? Not in that of Jerome or Augustine (fourth and fifth centuries).
- IV. But in that of Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and others.
- V. It is improbable that an artist of the fifth century should have drawn his inspiration from writers of the second century.
- VI. It does not necessarily follow that the composition and the execution of pictures in mosaic were contemporaneous; on the contrary, it is probable that generally time-tested compositions only were thus immortalised.

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

- VII. With what examples of Constantinian or Post-Constantinian art can these mosaics be associated?
- VIII. No uninjured great pictures of this period exist.
- IX. Illuminated manuscripts are not to the point.

MONUMENTAL ART OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| X. | GROUP I | GROUP II |
| | A.D. 81. Arch of Titus. | A.D. 161-168. Column of Marcus Aurelius. |
| | A.D. 114. Column of Trajan. | |
| | Anaglypha Trajani on Forum. | A.D. 203. Arch of Septimius Severus. |
| | GROUP III | |
| | A.D. 312. Arch of Constantine. | |
| | A.D. 379-385. Reliefs on the basis of the column of Theodosius, Constantinople. | |
| | Arch at Salonica. | |
- The affinities of the art of S. Maria Maggiore are with the second group.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

- XI. They have no connection with the mosaics of S. Vitale, Ravenna, or of SS. Cosma and Damiano, Rome.
- XII. The characteristics of the classic decadence as formulated by Prof. Riegl.
- XIII. Freedom of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore from the peculiarities characteristic of the sculptures of the fourth, and of the paintings of fifth and sixth centuries.
Its affinities with the art of the Early Empire.

I. It has been accepted as a fact, both in art-history and in art-archæology, that the pictures in mosaic which decorate the walls of S. Maria Maggiore are early examples of continuous historical series, such as are found in illustrated Bibles; and that the determining thought in their arrangement is that of chronological sequence, an obviously necessary corollary to the continuous method of pictorial narrative. Colour has been given to this view by the circumstance that the dates with which they are generally associated* (Liberius, 352-366; Xystus, 432-440) are approximately synchronous with those of the earliest illustrated Bibles, viz., the "Vienna Genesis," and the lost prototype of the "Joshua Rotulus."

II. This plausible hypothesis must, however, be put on one side as incompatible with the choice and arrangement of the subject-matter of these mosaics, and with the peculiar mode in which scenes and persons are characterised. The chronological sequence of events is not observed, neither is it possible to accept each scene as a simple representation of a historical event; such an interpretation does not stand the test of examination, but is wrecked on the difficulties it creates. These vanish, and the significance, not only of single compositions, but of groups of pictures, and of the entire cycle, becomes evident when the idea of historical narrative is abandoned, and the cycle is accepted as didactic, as composed of "Tendenzbilder."

Detailed examination of each picture makes it evident that the artist viewed his historical subject-matter as the vehicle of a theological concept, and that he produced the mental impression at which he aimed either by entirely recasting his Biblical material in the crucible of his imagination, or by deliberately eliminating everything which did not

* De Rossi quotes the suggestion, very tentatively hazarded by Garrucci, Dobbert, and others, that the mosaics of the Nave are anterior to those of the Arch (see de Rossi, 'Mosaici dell' Arco triomfale, e delle pareti laterali di S. Maria Maggiore,' 2). This view is supported by Padre Grisar, and others.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

further his purpose, did not illustrate his often somewhat recondite idea.

To take an example at random: the items essential to the historical representation of the scene in which Jacob succeeds in his fraudulent attempt to obtain his eldest brother's birthright by exploiting his old father's blindness are the meal which precluded the deceit, and the materials used as a disguise; but these are ignored in the picture: a table, it is true, stands by Isaac's couch, but it is empty; Jacob is represented, without any attempt to veil his identity, as a young shepherd prince.

The subject-matter of this scene is rendered obscure—if viewed as an historical episode—not only by the absence of characteristic accessories, but by the presence of others which seemingly have no intrinsic relation to the story, a park-like garden, vine pergolas, and birds, accessories due to the imagination of the artist. These, however, must not be ignored as unimportant, for they are vitally necessary to the expression of the theological idea, for the sake of which this subject was represented.

This picture, which is unintelligible if viewed as historical illustration, was clearly composed from a point of view other than that of conformity with recorded fact.

Knowledge of its true subject-matter discloses the paramount importance of the landscape setting, also the peremptory need for the repression of the meal and of the disguise.

To take another example: in the series connected with Jacob's marriages, the artist forces Leah to yield precedence to Rachel in a manner which is an exaggeration of the position allotted her in the Biblical narrative. He does this both by accentuating the actual circumstances in his own sense, and by the introduction of episodes which may be deduced from the narrative by one who is anxious to give colour to a subjective interpretation, but which are never expressly recorded. In the scene, for instance, in which Laban receives his kinsman Jacob into his house, Leah is represented in an attitude of tragic foreboding, but Rachel in one of joyous welcoming. There is no hint in the story of this difference in their demeanour; but without it, it would have been impossible for the artist to suggest the allegorical undercurrent, which is the *raison d'être* of the picture.

All attempts to force the artist's creation into the position of a literal

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

translation of the Biblical text into pictorial form end in a deadlock ; but if it be accepted as the embodiment of a theological or didactic thought, its significance becomes evident.

III. It is the critic's task to trace the especial didactic tendency here reflected to its historical source, and to discover the period at which it not only swayed the Church, but held such a place in the life of the community and in the popular imagination as to mould the art of the day.

The history of theological thought yields material from which it is possible to infer the date, not necessarily of the execution but of the invention of these compositions.

By a general consensus of opinion, based on data which will be examined later, their execution is placed in the pontificates of Liberius (352-366) and of Xystus (432-440); during the period, therefore, in which Augustine and Jerome were universally recognised as pillars of the Church.

Augustine (354-430) died two years before Xystus' pontificate, leaving Latin Christianity deeply influenced by his personality and modes of thought. His classic work, "De Civitate Dei," contains numerous comments on the stories and persons represented here; but though his books are a mine of original interpretations of Old Testament history, and although he devotes considerable space to the subject-matter of these pictures, it is lost labour to try to bring his views into harmony with those they reflect.

Strikingly different, for instance, are the two interpretations of Jacob's double marriages; this is true also of the story of Moses, which is treated in a singularly original and independent manner by the artist. He even goes outside the limits of the canonical Old Testament writings in the choice of his material, selecting for representation incidents which Augustine chose to ignore, and, in a notable instance, one against which he inveighed (Moses with the Philosophers). The thought of the theologian and of the artist do not run in the same channel; their works do not mirror cognate tendencies; the one does not serve as a commentary on the other.

Jerome (340-420)—the most learned representative of Latin Christianity, who, like Augustine, lived in Rome for considerable periods of time and frequently visited it—held an important post under Liberius'

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

successor, Damasus. The spirit of his numerous Biblical commentaries has nothing in common with that of the author of these mosaics ; they cannot be brought into connection with each other.

At this period, moreover, the diffusion of heretical and apocryphal writings gave impetus to a movement, warmly supported by him, in favour of the establishment of an authoritative canon. How widespread and popular were the apocryphal versions of New Testament history at this date is witnessed to by one of the minor arts, that of workers in ivory. It is comprehensible that irresponsible craftsmen should have drawn their inspiration from extra-canonical sources, but in the highest degree improbable that a Bishop of Rome and his immediate advisers should popularise theological views, against which they were protesting, by embodying them in the decoration of one of their principal churches.

IV. The art of this series being didactic, and therefore intellectual, it must have had its literary equivalent. The preceding considerations make it evident that this must be sought for in a cycle of writings earlier than that of Augustine or Jerome.

Nor is the search long or difficult, for the tendencies which are conspicuously absent from the works of the two great Latin Fathers are well-known and characteristic peculiarities of the mental attitude of the leaders of Christianity of two centuries earlier.

Justin Martyr (about 115-165), both in his *Apologia* dedicated to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and more remarkably in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, in which he naturally treats of incidents and persons figuring in the Old Testament narrative, deals with the subject-matter of these mosaics in a manner which is not merely harmonious with the general tendency embodied, but coincides with the pictures in question in the treatment of detail. So constantly does this occur that it is evident that either the mental habits of the author and of the artist were formed in the same environment, that they belong to the same intellectual stratum, or that the one consciously drew his inspiration from the other.

Other links connect these mosaics with writings of the second and third centuries; with those of Clement of Rome (91-100); of Clement of Alexandria (145-220); Irenaeus (115-195); Hippolytus (end of second and beginning of third century); Origen (185-253); with the "Letter of Barnabas" (130); with the "Shepherd" of Hermas (end of first or

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

early part of second century); and with the archetypes of the Protevangelium Jacobi, and of the Pseudo-Matthew.*

The identity of the thought mirrored in these mosaics with that reflected in the theological writings of the Apologists is inexplicable if the date to which the former have hitherto been attributed be correct.

Justin taught in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Rome, as Tatian and Eusebius state. He died as a martyr in Rome, and his writings were immediately accepted as authoritative, being even classed with those of the Apostolic Fathers.

V. Nevertheless it is as improbable that the theological conceptions of an artist of the fifth century should have been moulded by the writings of a teacher who flourished two centuries previously (and that at a time when theological interests were paramount, and phases of theological development pressed on each other in hot succession), as that a scientist of the nineteenth century should revert to the phrases and conceptions of one of the seventeenth. This dilemma forces us to question whether the invention of these compositions, which, according to received opinions, were executed in the time of Xystus, was contemporaneous with their execution?

VI. When a new building furnished the decorative classic artist with an opportunity for exercising his skill on a large scale, he was neither required, nor even permitted, by his classic patron to follow the promptings of his imagination in the invention of original compositions.

The boundless liberty now associated with artistic creation is a thing of the last four centuries only; the opulent fantasies of the Baroque are due to it, and also the licence of modern art.

The art of the rising Church was certainly permitted no such freedom.

As Pre-Giottesque paintings conformed themselves to Byzantine tradition, so early Christian art, following the classic custom of submissive loyalty to tradition, saw no disgrace in the repetition of time-honoured formulas. Conservative as the new Church was from her origin (if we may be permitted the paradox), is it probable that her art, the direct heir of classic tradition, and therefore essentially conservative, should have striven after the modern goal of originality?

* Justin Martyr quotes from these archetypes.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Not only does it not follow that a picture, to which permanence was given by its execution in mosaic, was necessarily designed at the time at which it was executed, but the mere fact of its translation into a material of almost eternal durability is, *à priori*, an argument in favour of the supposition that as a composition it had already existed for some generations, possibly in the same church, and in the same position, but in fresco. Having stood the test of time, and having received its consecration, it passed into the category of things proven and classic, and was considered worthy of transposition into the richest and most enduring medium of artistic expression.

The teaching and discipline of the Church was never provisional in character. Ideas lived a protean life in the popular imagination for years, but once received within her pale, and stamped with her image and superscription, their form was fixed for ever. Hence her predilection for a technique of which the note was permanence and immutability, as well as material magnificence.

It being established that not only is there no *à priori* reason why the compositions of these mosaics should not be anterior to their execution in mosaic, but that even there is a certain probability in favour of this supposition, the evidence of the pictures must be received.

VII. Do stylistic peculiarities predicate their execution in the fourth or fifth centuries?

With what fourth- or fifth-century monument can they be brought into connection?

What Christian monuments of the Constantinian or Post-Constantinian period resemble them in character, or stand on the same level of artistic achievement, or are so free and original in conception and treatment?

VIII. It is difficult to find an answer to this question, for such examples of fourth-century Christian monumental art as have survived are either in so fragmentary a state as to present little material for comparison, or have been so completely disfigured by restoration that they are no longer of any value as examples of style.

We speak of the two single figures which are all that remains of the great mural decorations of S. Sabina, and of the mosaics of S. Costanza, of the Lateran, of S. Pudenziana, and of S. Paolo.

IX. Early Christian picture-cycles in illuminated manuscripts exist,

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

but miniatures throw little light on the style and development of the great art with which they are contemporary, for the reason that miniaturists are seldom men of power; their art is of value from the especial point of view of the student of monumental art, only as reflecting the spirit of their day, and as showing how its great art was reflected and refracted in the mirror of inferior minds.

This observation is admirably illustrated by the art of the Renaissance, which was not only uninfluenced by the craft of its miniaturists, but most inadequately reflected in it.

The "Vienna Genesis," an illustrated manuscript, generally ascribed to the fourth or the fifth century, is a work which it would seem fitting to examine in this connection, for it contains scenes pictured in the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore, those from the lives of Abraham and of Jacob.

The mere juxtaposition of the representations of The Meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek in this church and in the illustrated book suffices to show that they belong to very different epochs and cultures. In each case the sacramental import of the scene is recognised; but in how different a manner! In the one the Old Testament scene is treated as a mystic foreshadowing of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; in the other, is an old man before an altar, who receives the Sacrament. Centuries separate the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore from the Vienna miniature, from which all poetry has evaporated, leaving only a sediment of sentimental prose.

X. No pagan pictures of this date, which might afford a basis for comparison, have survived. In this dearth of material we are constrained to turn to pagan sculpture in the hope that it may yield points of contact; for although the contemporaneous practice of painting and sculpture may be on different levels of excellence, and even embody ideals which are not identical; still the great art of a given period is, as a whole, on a certain *niveau*.

The monumental art of the second, third, and fourth centuries falls into the three groups:

- (1) The Classic Art of the Empire;
- (2) That of its Epigones;
- (3) That of its Decadence.

* See Plate 2, No. 2 and No. 3.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

To the first belongs the Arch of Titus (81), the Column of Trajan (A.D. 114), and his Anaglypha on the Roman Forum ; to the second, the Column of Marcus Aurelius (161-168), the Arch of Septimius Severus (203), and the numerous fine portraits of this date of which a good selection is preserved in the Louvre ; to the last, the Arch of Constantine (312), the reliefs on the base of the Column of Theodosius at Constantinople (378-383), and on the Triumphal Arch of Salonica.

The art of the first two groups is closely connected ; the figures represented are well proportioned, firmly knit, classic in type, the landscape accessories indicated with charm ; the action of the figures and their relation to each other clearly expressed ; but in the latter the figures, although based on good prototypes, are clumsy, thick-set, and coarse in execution ; composition is reduced to the mere juxtaposition of figures seen *en face*, to a parade of beings who, having no relation to each other, are composed with reference to the spectator only, a peculiarity of all barbaric art, whether embryonic or moribund.

The mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore belong unquestionably to the second group ; *i.e.*, to the art of the second and third centuries.

XI. The pictorial art of the fifth and sixth centuries is better represented in Italy than that of the third and fourth, two magnificent examples having survived, namely the mosaics of SS. Cosma and Damiano in Rome (526-530), and those of S. Vitale in Ravenna (547). In what relation do the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore stand to this later art ?

XII. The chief formal peculiarities which distinguish the art of the Decadence from that of the early Empire have been ably formulated by Prof. Riegl,* who notes the following traits :

(1) Compositions are so constructed that the entire scope of the action of the figures pictured is not confined within the limits of the space they are designed to decorate ; the persons represented are drawn *en face*, confronting the spectator, whose complimentary presence seems predicated. In order to correct this impression the artist frequently turns the eyes of his puppets in an exaggerated and unnatural manner towards that part of the composition in which the object is pictured which he desired should be accepted as the mainspring of their action.

* A. Riegl, 'Die Spät-römische Kunstindustrie,' Wien, 1901, p. 126.

1.



2.



3.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

(2) The head and trunk move together on one axis, producing a rigidity which is in striking contrast with the untrammelled movements of the human body in great classic art.

(3) The power of expressing the rhythmic equilibrium of the body in movement by the counterpoise of the limbs is lost.

(4) The figures no longer stand, but owing to the unskilful foreshortening of the feet seem rather to float.

Decoratively magnificent as are the state pictures of S. Vitale*, and of SS. Cosma and Damiano, the subject of which also is essentially a court ceremony, they are characterised by the peculiarities enumerated.

XIII. These indictments cannot be brought against the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore, which consist of tightly knit compositions, complete in themselves, both in action and interest, and of figures which are not conceived frontally but stand firmly, and move freely.†

* Compare the extensive use of the frontal posture in the court scene, of which Theodora is the centre, at Ravenna, with the freedom and variety of movement and gesture in the representation of the court of Pharaoh's daughter in S. Maria Maggiore, in which, however, the head of the Princess, a sixth-century interpolation, which obviously *falls out* of the rest of the composition, is designed frontally (Plate 13, No. 1a, No. 3, and No. 5).

† Curiously enough it is Prof. A. Riegl's opinion that all these peculiarities are exemplified in the representation of the *Presentation* on the Arch (in which the figure of Simeon occurs, Plate 36, No. 1). He asserts that the persons pictured are represented as turned three-quarters or full face towards the spectator, their eyes forced in an unnatural manner towards the point which is the dramatic centre of the composition. From the absence of the "floating gait" which he has rightly observed usually accompanies the frontal posture, and which results from the same defective habits of visualisation, he concludes that the picture belongs to an earlier phase of development, though not necessarily to an earlier date "than other compositions of the decadence": a statement so strangely incorrect that it can only be explained as founded on an imperfect reproduction.

CHAPTER III

DOMESTIC CHRISTIAN ART

- I. The Christian community neither exclusively composed of the poor and ignorant,
- II. Nor continuously persecuted.
- III. The character of the pictorial decorations of the houses of wealthy Christians of the second and third centuries, probably adiaphoristic.
- IV. Decorations of the houses of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Rome.
- V. The reliefs of the Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius.
- VI. The frescoes of Pompei.
- VII. Decorations of sarcophagi a reflex of earlier pictorial art. Jonah.
- VIII. The originals of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore probably designed to decorate the rooms or halls of a Roman palace.

HARDLY more tenable than the exploded belief that the early Christians sought refuge in the gloomy vaults of the Catacombs, where they lived, and where the community furtively assembled at stated intervals for the celebration of religious rites, is the later supposition that the art-activity of a great religious body, which reckoned some of the most cultivated and distinguished personages of Rome in its ranks, was summed up in the slightly sketched frescoes of their subterranean cemeteries.

It is abundantly proved that before the great Christian basilicas were built, the periodical assemblages of the Christian communities took place in the private basilicas forming an integral part of the palaces of nobles: for great Roman patricians early formed an important feature of a congregation which by no means consisted exclusively of slaves or of illiterate persons, nor lived permanently in fear of persecution. As early as the reign of Domitian (81-96) it included worshippers who were not merely members of the Imperial household, but near relatives of the Emperor himself; two of them indeed, sons of

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

his cousins Flavius Clemens, the consul, and of Domitilla, both Christians, were at one time heirs to the Imperial Throne.

After the persecution of Marcus Aurelius (161-180), which did not extend to the Roman Church, the Christian world enjoyed a long peace of ninety years, broken only by Septimius Severus' short persecution (193-202), which also, to all intents and purposes, left the Roman community untouched. According to Eusebius the Church of the time of Marcus Aurelius' son and successor Commodus (180-192) was enlarged by the adhesion of "persons of all conditions, and in Rome by the conversion of *whole families* among the noblest and richest" (H. E. v. 21).

Caracalla (211-217) left it unmolested.

Under Heliogabalus it shared in the general toleration which was involved in his attempt to merge all religions in an eclectic mysticism, of which the central symbol was the sun.

Alexander Severus (222-235), son of Julia Mamaea, the patroness of the Christian philosopher Origen, included Christianity in *his* eclectic scheme for the union of all religions on a Platonic basis; and placed the bust of Christ together with that of Orpheus and of Abraham in his Lararium.

After the short-lived but fierce persecution under his murderer Maximinus, the Christian community again enjoyed peace; it was protected by Gordianus (238-244) and by his successor Philippus Arabs (244-249), whose attitude was so indulgent that Eusebius and Jerome make the erroneous assertion that he was a Christian.

III. It is *a priori* improbable that cultivated and wealthy Christians occupied whitewashed houses at a time when the pictorial arts were pressed into the service of daily life to a degree which is almost inconceivable now, when every inch of household wall was decorated with marbles or painted stucco, at a time too of such universal interest in religion, and of such philosophic toleration of every shade of opinion. Neither is it likely that they surrounded themselves with decorations of a licentious character like some at Pompei; or with scenes from the lives of gods to whom they refused to sacrifice even at the risk of death; or with architectonic decorations founded on especial heathen cults, like those connected with the worship of Isis preserved at Naples and in the Museo delle Terme in Rome; but rather with representations of scenes conformable to their beliefs, the full significance

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

of which was probably intelligible to initiates only. Neither is it likely that the cultured Christian patricians, whose private basilicas were the general meeting-places of the faithful, decorated them with pictures which were below the general level of the culture and decorative art of the day. There is therefore a strong probability in favour of the existence of an early aristocratic Christian art ; that but little remains of it, and that little chiefly in the form of late copies, is not surprising : what remains of the strong masonry walls of which we lament the lost stucco and mosaic surface ? Did Christian gentlepeople fear to picture scenes of an obtrusively Christian character, surely they would have turned to neutral subject-matter, to which however a secondary significance might be attached, to events recorded in Jewish history, for instance : to incidents drawn from the lives of Jacob and Joshua ; or from that of the universally admired legislator Moses, who was currently believed to have laid the foundations of Hellenic civilisation as well as that of the Jews ; or to the military exploits of the Hebrew soldier Joshua. Or, if such subjects were too definite to be wholly free from peril, surely they would have pictured bucolic scenes associated with the lives of the Patriarchs ; or what were apparently mere genre pictures, the occult significance of which was known to initiates only, such as a shepherd carrying a lamb ; a nude youth sleeping in the cool shade of foliage ; vintage scenes ; or, seemingly even more colourless, studies of fish, still life, birds, flowers, baskets of bread, or amphoræ of wine.*

It is certain, moreover, that when free from offence they retained the original decorations of their halls, such as the circus scenes and studies of wild animals which co-existed in the basilica of Junius Bassus with the absidal figures of Christ with SS. Peter and Paul.

IV. An early Christian house with wall-decorations was discovered comparatively recently under the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Caelius.

The second century decoration of one of its rooms is an instance in point ; it consists of almost life-size figures of graceful nude winged youths, who stand, each with a bird on either side, between boldly swung garlands of flowers.

Such a scheme, though its pagan connections be many, may be

* Plate 3, No. 1. The decoration of a wall in the Catacombs of Domitilla, possibly reproducing wall paintings in the house of a Christian.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

interpreted in a Christian sense : trees, birds, and flowers, are used in the Catacombs and elsewhere to foreshadow the Paradise lying beyond this world of trial, and winged youths may well have been deemed suggestive of the super-terrestrial powers, the good Angels whose existence was accepted by Christians.

Whether they were designed to be thus interpreted or not, it is impossible to decide—as was perhaps intended. It is, however, to be observed that as a scheme of domestic mural decoration these paintings have a dignity, we had almost said a solemnity, which seems to lift them out of the category of such ornament as is the outcome of idle fancy. It is, moreover, remarkable that they should be free from subsidiary ornament based on mythology (in frieze or panel), such as generally lent similar decorations the dramatic interest demanded by the taste of the time.

V. It is difficult to evoke a mental image of the monumental pictorial art of the second and third centuries of our era, so little having survived, even of what is pagan.

The magnificent compositions in relief which commemorate the exploits of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius show, however, that the times were not artistically impotent, and that Roman artists, when committed to a task involving originality, could rise to the occasion.*

VI. Nor is it easier to reconstruct the original pictorial art of the foregoing century—the treasure of imagery preserved at Naples, Pompei, and elsewhere, consisting chiefly of more or less skilful variations of traditional compositions.

VII. But although so much has been swept away, little more remaining of the period in question than a few frescoes in the Catacombs, and in the house of a Roman patrician, the reflex of what has perished survives in later art.

The densely packed and awkwardly arranged medley of disconnected figures and scenes which encrust the Christian sarcophagi of the fourth century testify to a very low level of taste and to poverty of the inventive faculty, the repertoire of stereotyped scenes and figures being small, though the number of sarcophagi preserved is large.

It would be obviously absurd to make the artisans who executed

* See Plate 2, No. 1 (to be compared with the figure of Melchizedek from the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore; Plate 2, No. 2; Plate 28, No. 1; Plate 29, No. 2; Plate 30, No. 2).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

these oft-repeated scenes responsible for their invention; they only reproduced popular compositions of an earlier date.*

Although these late versions of cyclic illustrations are ill executed and awkwardly pressed into spaces too small for them, the groups, and more especially the single figures of which they consist, are sometimes so well constructed, so fine in type, and testify to so harmonious a sense of proportion, that it is obvious that they were originally designed to be placed either in landscapes, or in more spacious architectonic settings.

Earlier examples, standing nearer to their prototypes, make it evident that the originals of these reliefs were mural paintings; in the instance of the Sarcophagus in the Lateran Museum, recording the story of Jonah, a wall-painting with wide landscape backgrounds.† An attempt to reconstruct its central scene after the model of the frescoes of the Naples Museum, of the Museo delle Terme of Rome, or of the so-called Domus Liviae, results in the evocation of a vision of a nude youth, sunk in sleep under the shelter of deeply overshadowing foliage, with long pendent fruit, silhouetted against the pale radiance by which classic art so admirably synthetised light-veiled landscape.

The series of unintelligent copies, each of decreasing ability, which separated this southern idyll from the fossils which encrust later sarcophagi, but which, like it, were once living and beautiful, cannot but have been long. The lapse of centuries surely is predicated by so complete a collapse of taste and skill.

But even these petrifications stand on a higher level than that of contemporary plastic art as revealed—for instance—in the reliefs of the Arch of Constantine those of the sarcophagi are of better race; they are the fallen descendants of an art which flourished before the Decadence; their ancestors probably adorned the homes and basilicas of the Christian aristocracy of the second and third centuries.

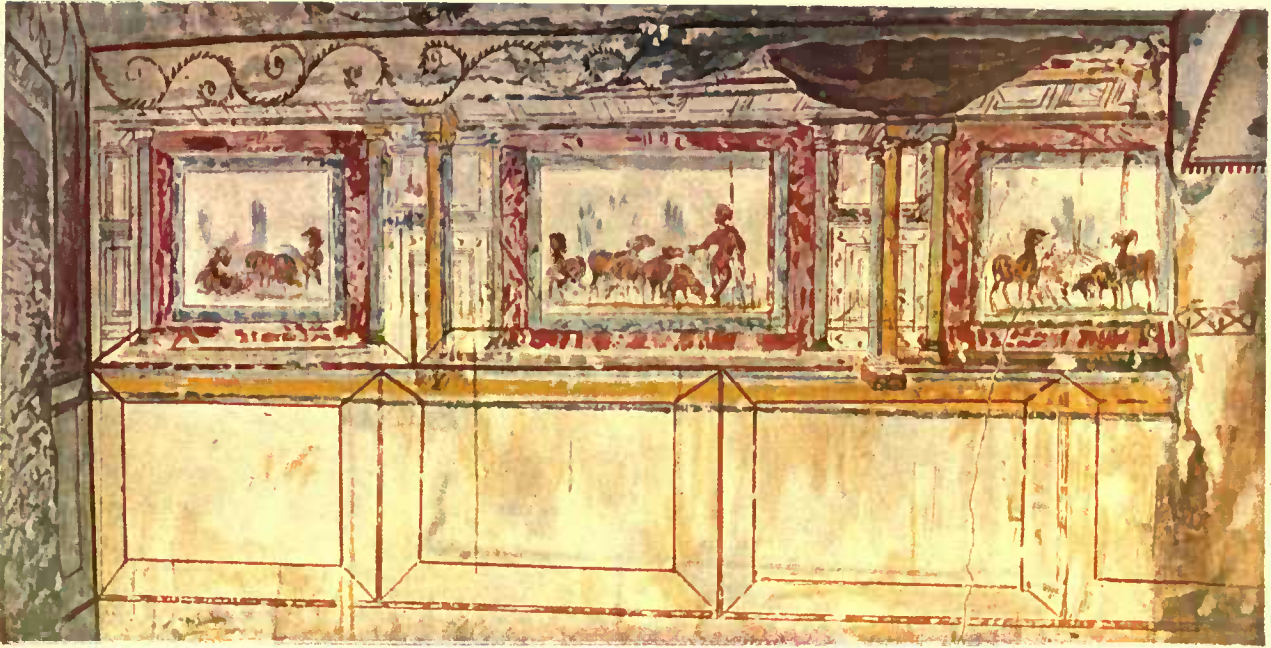
VIII. The originals of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore were probably designed to fulfil a similar purpose; to decorate the large wall-surfaces of the public rooms, lecture-rooms, halls, and basilicas, of some great palace belonging to a Christian patrician.

Their subject-matter is admirably adapted to such a purpose, being

* Plate 3, No. 3.

† Plate 3, No. 2; No. 3 contains a later version of the same subject.

1.



2.



3.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of a character at which no pagan could take offence : pastoral scenes, embodying the idyllic rural sentiment which Virgil had rendered popular, which sentiment may be the source of the lingering garrulity with which the artist, who, after all, was an artist and not a theologian, has pictured the story of Jacob ; the scenes from the life of a world-famous legislator, martial scenes representing a successful campaign. Could literary material be found the choice of which would more immediately recommend itself to the ordinary Roman ?

Equally appropriate would have been the representations of the Divine Beings in the clouds, whose presence, far from engendering suspicion in the mind of the pagan onlooker, would have allayed it ; indeed their absence might have suggested atheism, the most telling charge brought against Christianity.*

* Busts of Olympian deities appearing in the clouds, as do the Logos or the "Angel of the Lord" in S. Maria Maggiore, occur in the illustrated Iliad in the Ambrosian library, ascribed by modern scholarship to the first century, and not as formerly to the third or fourth. This change of date is based on the wider knowledge of Greek paleography due to recent discoveries of papyri.

CHAPTER IV

XYSTUS III

- I. The style and subject-matter of these mosaics point to the second and third centuries as the date of their origin ; they are, however, associated with a votive inscription of the time of Xystus. This may be explained by the hypothesis that pre-existing pictures were translated into mosaic during his pontificate.
- II. Parallel instances.
- III. This hypothesis is negated by considerations of style and technique ; and by the relation of the pictures of the Arch to the space they decorate.
- IV. The date of the building of the basilica.
- V. Tiles of the second century.
- VI. The masonry of the Nave is of the second century.
- VII. The architrave a peculiarity of Pre-Constantinian architecture.
- VIII. Xystus' inscriptions on Arch and Nave.
- IX. Position of Xystus' lost votive picture.
- X. Letter of Hadrian I. (772-795) to Charlemagne.
- XI. Old Testament subjects of the Nave unconnected with the THEOTOKOS ; its pictures therefore cannot be attributed to Xystus.
- XII. The same reason excludes those of the Arch.
- XIII. Xystus' relation to the Council of Ephesus, and to the THEOTOKOS dogma.
- XIV. Apocryphal sources of the subjects represented on the Arch.
- XV. Docketism.
- XVI. Heresies concerning the nature of Christ.
- XVII. Subjects of the decorations of the Arch, Christ as the fulfilment of prophecy and the supersession of the Jews by the Christians, the true PLEBS DEI.
- XVIII. Xystus' activity in the basilica confined to the restoration and renaming of the basilica, to its adornment with the votive pictures he describes, and (possibly) to the restoration of the pre-existing mosaics of the Arch and Nave.

I. It has been shown that for reasons of style the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore cannot be Post-Constantinian, and also that it is quite impossible that the theological views they reflect, which are those of the period

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

called Post-Apostolic, should have been sources of pictorial inspiration after the Council of Nicaea ; and yet Xystus seems to lay claim to them in the undoubtedly authentic inscription XYSTUS EPISCOPUS PLEBI DEI, which runs along the top of the Arch. The student is thus placed on the horns of a dilemma.

II. The hypothesis that they were not invented, but merely translated into mosaic during his pontificate, has much to recommend it : parallel instances are not uncommon. The broken surface of the walls exposed in the recent excavations of the Church of S. Maria Antiqua for instance, in the Forum Romanum, show that when it was necessary to repair pictures in fresco (or some cognate technique requiring a fresh and possibly damp surface for their execution) they were actually re-covered with a thick coating of plaster on which the original design was exactly reproduced, different strata of plaster showing accurate repetitions of the same composition. Similar instances occur in the Church of S. Clemente, and elsewhere. It is evident, therefore, that the practice of repeating a picture *in situ*, by giving it a fresh surface on which the original design was repainted, was not unusual. What more probable than that such repetitions were sometimes executed in the costliest, most decorative, and most permanent of art materials, namely, mosaic ?

III. An insuperable obstacle to the application of this hypothesis to the mosaics under examination is the brilliantly impressionistic execution of some of the best preserved heads, which are of a daring cleverness inconceivable at so late a date as the second quarter of the fifth century. The date to which the foregoing considerations have pointed is the end of the second century, but the construction of the basilica is generally attributed to the fourth. The idea of the decoration of a fourth-century basilica with second- or third-century pictures is only tenable on the hypothesis of their pre-existence and translation from an earlier site ; the celebrated "Battle of Alexander," which was made in Alexandria, transported to Pompeii, and is now in Naples, is an instance in point.

This supposition, however, is not applicable to the pictures of the Arch, for the manner in which they are compressed into the diminishing space they decorate shows that they were executed to occupy their present position, for it is impossible to admit the hypothesis of their translation from an arch of the exact size and form of that of S. Maria Maggiore.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

This being so, it is all important that the date of the construction of the basilica should be established.

IV. In the *LIBER PONTIFICALIS*, the earliest source of information about the churches of Rome, it is written, under the heading of the works of Xystus, "hic fecit basilicam sanctae Mariae, quae ab antiquis Liberi cognominabatur." Xystus is therefore accredited with a building previously called "of Liberius"; *i.e.*, with having made important additions to a pre-existing basilica. We learn from the same source that Liberius, who preceded Xystus by some eighty years, "built" the basilica: "fecit basilicam nominis sui juxta macellum Liviae." The use of the expression "fecit" was evidently lax.

In the "Gesta Liberii" it is stated that during the pontificate of Liberius an apse was erected in the fifth Region, *i.e.*, on the Esquiline.*

The addition of an apse to an already existing basilica generally meant, at this date, its conversion from pagan to Christian use.

A great secular basilica, the basilica Sicinini, is known to have stood on the Esquiline.†

Christian and pagan writers of the fourth century, when speaking of the building now called S. Maria Maggiore, describe it as consecrated to Christian worship, and call it sometimes the Basilica Sicinini, and sometimes the Basilica Liberiana.‡

It is probable, therefore, that the apse added by Liberius to a pre-existing basilica was added to the Basilica Sicinini, which for some time bore two interchangeable titles, the one derived from its founder, the other from its enlarger.

V. Researches made by Mons. Crostarosa into the condition and history of the tiled roof of the church have brought to light facts which illuminate the question of the date of the original basilica.§

He discovered that of the 110 diversely stamped antique tiles still *in situ* no less than seventy-six are of the first four centuries, and that of these more than half the number belong to the second century, the reign of Septimius Severus (193-202). Strangely enough, Mons. Crostarosa did

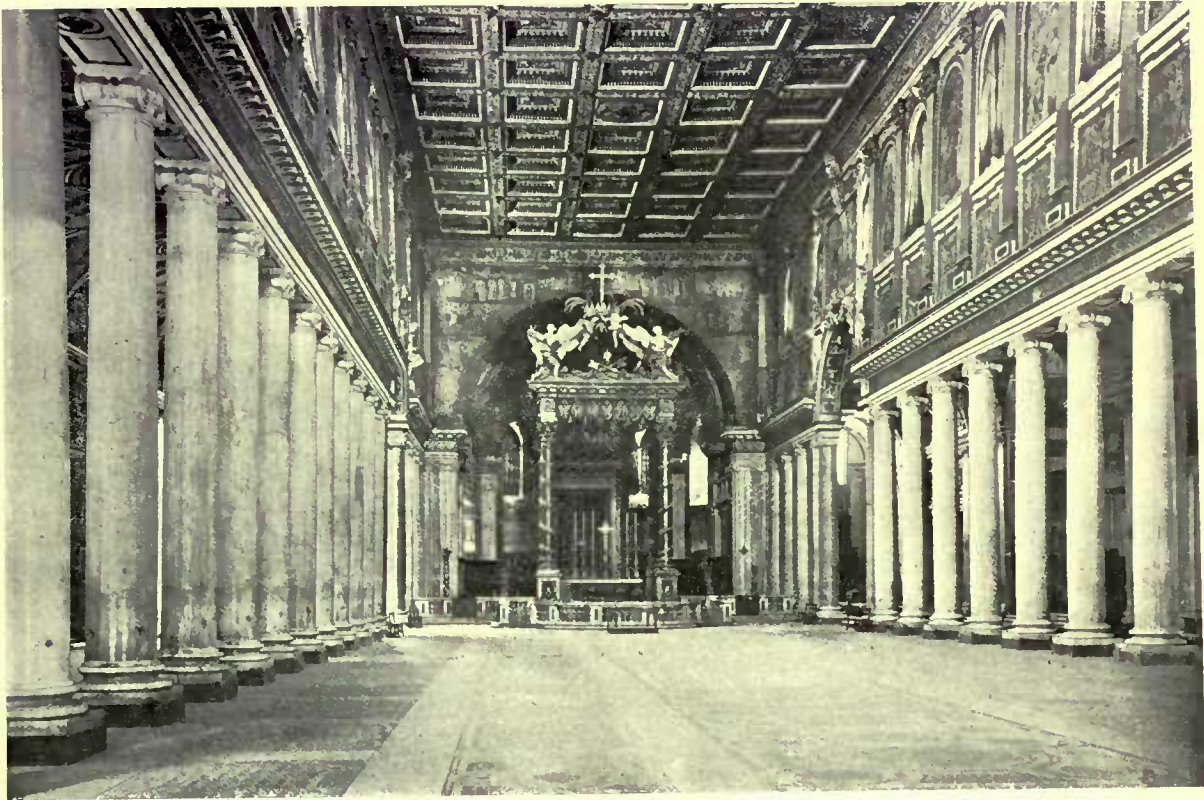
* Duchesne, 'Le Liber Pontificalis,' vol. i. p. 209. "C'est sans doute à la fondation de la basilique Libérienne que se rapporte l'indication des Gesta Liberii sur une absis bâtie par lui 'in urbe Roma, in regione quinta.' S. Marie Majeure est en effet dans la cinquième région d'Auguste."

† See Gaddi, in the 'Bullettino Comunale,' 1899, p. 231.

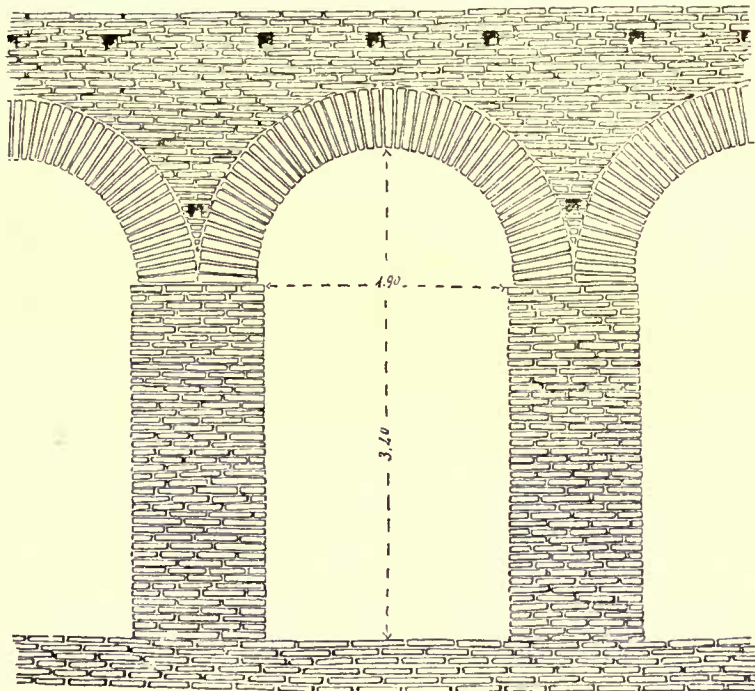
‡ Plate 4, No. 1.

§ See Crostarosa in 'Nuovo Bull. di Arch. Crist.,' 1898, pp. 52-98.

I.



2.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

not conclude that the basilica is older than the time of Liberius, but put forward the curious hypothesis that the tiles were material which had been stored in warehouses for some 160 years.

VI. The beautiful brickwork of the nave, with its unbroken series of arched windows, clearly seen from the outside of the building, recalls the fine masonry of the time of Hadrian, but may be some fifty years later. The evidence of the brickwork, therefore, points to the same date as that indicated by the stamped tiles, namely, the end of the second century.*

VII. The columns, moreover, which decorate the interior of the church are connected by an architrave—a structural peculiarity of early buildings, which was replaced in the fourth century by rounded arches.

VIII. The expression “fecit basilicam,” in which Xystus’ relation to the church is summed up in the “Liber Pontificalis,” being equivocal, it is fortunate that the most authoritative of all documents on the subject have been preserved, namely, two contemporary inscriptions, one placed by Xystus himself over the entrance to the basilica, in which he enumerates his services to the Church he consecrated to the Virgin, and the other a dedicatory inscription placed by him upon the Arch.

The latter is peculiar in that, whereas dedicatory inscriptions either follow the curves of their architectonic environment, as in S. Paolo, or are placed within prominent tablets, as in S. Sabina, to take examples approximately contemporary with Xystus, this inscription is thrust, unframed, into the midst of the decorations of the Arch in such a way that it cuts off the right foot of S. Peter, and the left foot of S. Paul. Paradoxical as the assertion may appear, there is no stronger argument against the attribution of these mosaics to Xystus than his dedicatory inscription, which it is incredible should have been associated by their creator in so clumsy a way with pictures designed as monumental mural decoration.

In the inscription† placed by Xystus over the entrance doorway he dedicates the basilica and its pictorial additions, which he enumerates, to the Virgin. It ran as follows :

* Plate 4, No. 2.

† Aldemus (eighth century) quotes this inscription. See de Rossi, ‘*Ins. Christ.*,’ II. p. 60. In 1480 Pietro Sabina quotes the first distych only. In 1593 nothing remained of it except the first line as far as “*nuova tecta.*” This was destroyed by Cardinal Pinelli.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Virgo Maria tibi Xystus nova tecta dicavi
Digna salutifero munera ventre tuo.
Tu genetrix ignara viri te denique facta
Visceribus salvis edita nostra salus.
Ecce tui testes uteri tibi praemia portant
Sub pedibusque iacet passio cuique sua.
Ferrum flamma ferae fluvius saevumque venenum
Tot tamen has mortes una corona manet.

Its first words, therefore, record the dedication of the basilica to Mary, after whom it was renamed.

After an outburst of praise addressed to the Virgin-Mother of the Redeemer, the character of which doubtless reproduces the spirit of the central group representing the THEOTOKOS, he describes a procession of martyrs,* "who bring gifts to her of whom their Redeemer was born; at their feet lie the symbols of their passion: a sword; a flame; a wild beast; a river; horrid poison; but beyond these many modes of death is the Crown."

The image these poetic but somewhat obscure words were intended to produce can be evoked by the aid of two later Christian mosaics: one in the Church of S. Agnese, in which the martyr is represented in gala robes with the emblems of her passion, the flame and the sword at her feet; the other at Ravenna, where a long procession of maidens carrying crowns† move towards the enthroned Madonna, on whose knees is seated the Divine Child in royal robes, his right hand raised in blessing, a figure of which the original probably corresponded with Xystus' perished Virgin.

IX. The distribution of these lost pictures has been a matter of controversy.

De Rossi advances the following supposition based on Xystus' inscription, and on the analogy of the mosaics of Ravenna; he suggests that the spaces between the windows on the left of the Nave (the side on which the women sat) were decorated by a procession of women, and those on the right by one of men; both processions, broken at intervals by the recurring arches of the windows, moved, according to this hypothesis, towards a great figure of the Virgin with the Child on

* As the inscription was in mosaic it may reasonably be supposed that the picture was executed in the same technique, although this is not expressly stated.

† See Plate 32, No. 4.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

her knees which dominated the apse; a truly splendid and hieratic scheme of church decoration.

Two grave defects render this attractive hypothesis inadmissible.

There is no instance of the decoration of an apse of this period by a representation of a Virgin and Child; such a subject, used to decorate a central apse, does not occur even during the Middle Ages.

The Virgin, imaged as the Queen of Heaven, the mystic bride of Christ, the Church, occurs frequently: in the apse of this very church is a notable example (A.D. 1295), characteristic of the sentiment of eight hundred years later.

Moreover, the spaces between the windows which de Rossi's hypothesis postulates, which are now decorated by Baroque paintings, did not then exist; the series of arched windows lighting the Nave was continuous. It was not until the Middle Ages that every alternate window was blocked in, and their numbers thus reduced by half.

This supposition being wrecked on two rocks, historical improbability and material impossibility, the question of the position of Xystus' mosaics remains open. They cannot have been in the apse; the triumphal arch was decorated as now; the arched windows of the nave formed a continuous series; the intercolumnar spaces above the architrave were occupied as now by isolated historical pictures usually attributed to the time of Liberius: the only wall-space undecorated was that over the central entrance, in the neighbourhood of the inscription, which it is surely *a priori* probable would have been placed near the votive pictures to which it referred.*

X. That Xystus' inscription should have been misinterpreted in later times, and misunderstood as referring to all the mosaics of the church, is easily intelligible. It is an error, however, which is not met with before the ninth century.

Hadrian I., writing to Charlemagne, ascribes some pictures in S. Maria Maggiore to Xystus III. "The blessed Xystus," he writes, "built the basilica dedicated to the Holy Mother of God, which is called 'the great,' and also 'of the cradle,' and adorned it with gold, and with various and sacred pictures."

It will be observed that the good Bishop's statement, though not

* Padre Grisar also is of opinion that this group of votive pictures decorated the entrance wall. See his 'Rom beim Ausgang der antiken Welt' (Freiburg, 1901), p. 302.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

otherwise remarkable for accuracy, is correct in so far as Xystus' pictures—which were probably still *in situ* in his day—are concerned.

Xystus himself lays no claim to the pictures decorating the Arch and Nave; there is no word in his inscription which can be interpreted as referring to them, a strange omission surely in so full an account of his munificence towards the basilica, had they been part of his votive offering.

XI. Not only is there no reason to believe that they were executed during his pontificate, but there are reasons which prove that they cannot be ascribed to his initiative.

Not only does the testimony of style and technique of the pictures of the Nave prove them to be unconnected with Xystus, but the testimony of their subject-matter also, which it is impossible to bring into connection with the history of the Virgin, in honour of whom Xystus' mosaics were designed, as he himself expressly states.

To meet this difficulty, art historians have attributed the Old Testament series to Liberius, giving the decorations of the Arch only, on which the Virgin is frequently represented, to Xystus. But the interconnection of these two series in style, costume, type, and thought is too close for it to be possible to believe that the one originated more than four generations before the other.

XII. Nor are the data correct on which the attribution of the mosaics of the Arch to Xystus is founded.

The theological purpose of this cycle is generally accepted as being the glorification of the Virgin; but it will be found on analysis that its subject-matter and the manner in which it is handled do not support this belief.

Although there would have been no difficulty in allotting a leading *rôle* to the Madonna in a series of pictures connected with the childhood of her Son, this has not been done; on the contrary, she is represented three times only, and that in a subordinate *rôle* in a series of nine pictures, in one of which, the Annunciation, her absence is unthinkable. In the representation of an incident which occurred during the flight into Egypt she does not carry the little Child in her arms, but walks behind Him. Not only does He not sit on her knees in the Adoration of the Magi, but she is not even represented as present.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Inexplicable also is the omission of the Nativity from a cycle of which the central thought, according to the hypothesis, is her divine Motherhood, recently acclaimed by the title *THEOTOKOS*, at the Council of Ephesus (431).

XIII. Although Xystus was not present at this Council, as one of Caelestinus' (422-432) envoys, as has been asserted, yet his letters show that he followed the progress of the struggle with the keenest interest. Directly he ascended the seat of S. Peter, he threw all his weight into the scales in favour of the tenets there promulgated.

The object of the Council was the definition of the exact relation of the divinity to the humanity of Christ, which point had been obscured by the teaching of Nestorius.

The tendency of its verdict is shown in what was merely a by-product of the discussion, namely, the emphatic re-association with the Virgin's name of a title already connected with it—"Theotokos" ("Bearer of God"), which became a rallying cry, to the sound of which the orthodox rallied.

Is it likely, therefore, both the word and the dogma, the perfect divinity and humanity of Christ, being of such importance, that an artist commissioned to compose a cyclic pictorial decoration in honour of the Virgin should omit to represent the Nativity, the event on which both the title and the dogma were based?

It is obvious that had this series really been the fruit of the conditions to which it has been attributed, the part allotted to the Virgin, and the subjects represented would have been different.

XIV. A third consideration of weight makes it difficult to accept the attribution of the decorations of the Arch to the time of Xystus. Their subject-matter is drawn from apocryphal writings which had been condemned more than fifty years previously by Liberius' successor, Damasus, under whom a Council of Bishops (*de explanatione fidei*) was held in 382, in Rome, for the purpose of fixing a Biblical Canon, of drawing a dividing line between such books as were binding in matters of faith, and such as were not.

The list then made of books to be generally accepted holds good to the present day: that of the books condemned has not been preserved, but its contents may be approximately reconstructed by collecting the names of the Gospels, Epistles, Acts, etc., which were popular at the

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

time, but are excluded from the Canonical list, and also by reference to the very full tale of books forbidden to Catholics (*catholicis vitanda sunt*) at the Council called by Gelasius (492–496), at which the decisions of the Councils of Damasus were confirmed and extended.

Among these are the Epistle of Barnabas and writings on the archetypes of which the stories of the Arch and Nave are founded, *i.e.*, the apocryphal Gospels of Matthew and James.

The words in which these writings are condemned are very strong; “*Cetera quæ ab hæreticis sive schismaticis conscripta vel prædicata sunt nullatenus recipit catholica et apostolica ecclesia. E quibus pauca, quæ ad memoriam venerunt et catholicis vitanda sunt . . .*”

Such being the verdict of the Church of which Xystus was the official head, is it likely, or even possible, that he would have ornamented his basilica with pictures, the object of which was didactic as well as decorative, of which the subject-matter was drawn from these forbidden sources? They must have been composed before sharp distinctions between Canonical and Uncanonical writings were drawn.

The chief churchmen of the fourth and fifth centuries played a leading *rôle* in the formation and popularisation of the Canon.

Augustine put all his genius and energy into its service. Jerome, Damasus' learned secretary, was the heart and soul of the Council.

It is characteristic of the Latin Doctor's many-sided personality that he translated one of the books he condemned into Latin, the Gospel of pseudo-Matthew, which contains a later version of one of the subjects represented.* He did so at the request of two Bishops, Cromatius and Eliodorus, who begged for it in order that, being versed in the contents of schismatic writings, they might be the better equipped for the refutation of heretics. “We find,” they write, “‘The Birth of the Virgin’ and ‘The Childhood of Christ’ among apocryphal books. Perceiving that much contrary to our faith is written therein, we believe that they should be repudiated as a whole, lest on the very subject of Christ joy should be prepared for the antichrist.”

Jerome sent the translation for which they begged, together with a letter couched in somewhat equivocal terms, in which, after appreciating the Gospels in question, he expressly states that they are not to be accepted as canonical.

* On the Arch.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Is it probable that these apocryphal writings, which had apparently fallen into oblivion in Italy, and had been condemned by a Council of leading theologians, would have been chosen by the Bishop of Rome as the literary source of didactic church decorations?

XV. Although the distinction between the apocryphal and canonical writings was not sharply or officially drawn before the fourth century, they co-existed at no period on a footing of equality. It follows, therefore, that the selection of apocryphal sources as the basis of these church decorations is symptomatic of the desire to embody some tendency to which the canonical writings did not lend themselves.

The apocryphal books used were written in the interest of Docetism, an early heresy, which was not so much a body of general theological teaching as an unorthodox attitude towards the humanity of Christ, the reality of which it impugned, teaching that His body did not exist materially, but only as an illusion.*

S. John combats it in his letters. "Every spirit," he says, "which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which annulleth Jesus is not of God: this is the spirit of the Anti-Christ." Ignatius, to quote one among many of the Fathers, speaks of "men who blaspheme my Lord, not confessing that He was a bearer of flesh." Improbable as it would *a priori* seem, the scenes pictured on the arch seem to show traces of this tendency: it may be the source of the emphatic isolation of the Child in the representation of the Epiphany, and in the Meeting with Affrodosius, in both of which he is represented as standing outside the laws of ordinary development; though only two years old he sits alone on "the throne of his father David," and leads the way as *ὁδηγός* into Egypt, Mary and Joseph following.

If this heresy be suggested by what is represented, it is more strongly so by what is eliminated, namely, the Nativity, which is replaced by a symbol of the power of Christ.

It cannot, however, be too emphatically asserted that whether traces of Docetism can be detected in these mosaics or not they were not the outcome of that heresy, but of a clearly defined and very different current of thought.

* "It was founded," says Cruttwell, "on the prevailing philosophic idea that matter contained the original principle of evil, and that therefore the real union of the Divine and human natures was impossible." 'A Literary History of Early Christianity,' vol. i.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Docetism was as short-lived as wide-spread ; as early as the end of the second century, the mental condition, of which it was the product, had passed into another phase. In the fifth century it was relegated to the limbo of discarded opinions. The interest of theologians was then concentrated, not on the philosophical question whether the union of the Divine with the material were possible, but on the manner in which that union was effected.

XVI. Nestorius solved this difficulty by asserting that two essentially diverse natures co-existed in the person of Christ : the Divine, which had existed from eternity, and the human, which was created ; and that these two did not mingle, but simply subsisted side by side. Holding this view he necessarily rejected the title, already occasionally associated with the Virgin's name, "Theotokos" (Bearer of God), preferring to it that of the "Mother of Christ."

The orthodox party, on the other hand, repudiated the Nestorian theory of the duality of Christ, and asserted that two natures were *united* in His person, the human and the Divine ; they adopted the word "Theotokos," as synthetising their belief. It thus acquired something of the character of a party cry.

In spite of the Emperor's protection, Nestorius' teaching was condemned at the Council of Ephesus (431), called to arbitrate this point. On its suppression a new phase of opposition to orthodox opinion arose, Monophysitism, a heresy which taught the singleness of Christ's nature ; His divine humanity was tumultuously proclaimed by its followers at a synod which Leo the Great, Xystus' successor, stigmatised as the "Synod of Robbers."

The orthodox party under Leo succeeded in subduing these heretical phases of theology, one of which confused, while the other dissociated the two natures united in Christ.*

Xystus followed this struggle with passionate sympathy. How unmistakable was the significance of the pictorial forms into which he pressed his convictions is shown by his description of his votive picture.

The very equivocal language of the decorations of the arch (if forced into connection with the Theotokos dogma) would certainly not have met with his approval.

* Fourth Œcumenical Council, Chalcedon, 451 A.D.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XVII. But in truth their speech is very clear, and has no connection with the Theotokos dogma.

Their subject-matter is philosophic, Christ the Logos, the fulfilment of the prophetic revelations vouchsafed to all peoples of the earth, and accepted as such by Greeks and Orientals, but rejected by the Jews,—a complex of thought and feeling characteristic of early Christianity, which was superseded by dogmatic interests in the fifth century.

It is surely in the highest degree improbable that a practical and energetic ruler like Xystus, who not only lived at the height of his times, but aspired to mould them, should have elected to adorn his newly dedicated basilica with records of a past phase of religious thought, and this at a period when theological disputation had taken the place of political effort in a Rome which was a provincial dependant of Ravenna ; a Rome he had seen ravaged by Alaric, and the long agony of whose dissolution, its gradual depopulation and devastation, he had watched from his youth up. The fifth-century Bishops of Rome were not then in a mood for antiquarian revivalism ; the present and its needs demanded all their energy.

The conviction forced on us by the complete dissimilarity of the modes of thought prevalent at the time of Xystus with those reflected in these pictures is re-enforced by the technique in which they are executed, which is of a type and audacity pointing to the art procedures of some centuries earlier.

XVIII. Xystus' activity in connection with the basilica must be reduced therefore to the limits he himself indicates : he dedicated it to the Virgin, and decorated it, in commemoration of the event, with votive pictures, representing the "Bearer of God," to whom martyrs offer their hard won crowns. It is probable also that he restored the mosaics of the arch, to which he appended a dedicatory inscription, which shows, as will be seen, how perfectly he grasped their inner significance.

CHAPTER V

LIBERIUS

- I. Liberius' troubled life.
- II. His struggle with the Emperor on behalf of the teaching of Athanasius.
- III. His exile.
- IV. His recall.
- V. Reign of Julian the Apostate (360-363).
- VI. Improbability of the supposition that a man, who so passionately participated in the religious controversy of the day, should have ordered a series of didactic pictures recording obsolete phases of thought.
- VII. The attribution of the decoration of the Nave to Liberius is supported by no documentary evidence.

I. LIBERIUS (352-366), like Xystus, is accredited by the Liber Pontificalis with having built the basilica called after him; *he* also "fecit basilicam." As he reigned fourteen years the hypothesis that he decorated the church which bore his name is not unreasonable. His lot, however, was cast in troubled times little suited to art-patronage. The burning question of his day was the Arian heresy.

II. The first years of his pontificate were spent in determined struggle with the Emperor Constantius, whose religious sympathies were Arian, and who, attaching political importance to the religious unity of the Empire, purposed to make Arianism predominate.

Although Liberius had presided at a Council held in Rome, at which Athanasius' teaching had been declared orthodox, the Emperor commanded him to ratify the contrary decisions of various Councils, which, under imperial pressure, had condemned the same.

He declined this *rôle* of perfidious subserviency, and refused the bribes pressed upon him by the Imperial eunuchs.

Constantius responded by ordering the principal officials of Rome

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

to seize his person, by treachery, if need be, and to convey him to the camp. These instructions could only be acted on with the greatest secrecy, for the Romans would not have tolerated the open seizure of their Bishop. Liberius in the meantime lived in a state of siege; he was not permitted to see his friends; the harbour and gates of Rome were frequently closed. His capture was eventually effected; he was smuggled out of the city, and brought before the Emperor.*

A memorable interview between Constantius and Liberius took place at Milan; the Emperor proved impotent to bend the captive Bishop's will. Threatened with exile, he replied, "I have already bidden farewell to my brethren in Rome; the laws of the Church are more important than my sojourn there." He was accordingly banished to Boraë, in Macedonia, in the fifth year of his pontificate.

The somewhat shamefaced Emperor sent him large sums of money on which to subsist in exile; these he returned. "Hast thou robbed the Church," he cried, "and dost thou offer me bribes?"

A similar gift sent by the Empress met with a similar fate.

During his absence the Roman community struggled against the rule of a creature of Constantius, Felix, whose introduction into the city was accompanied by a riot in which lives were lost.†

In 357 Constantius visited the once imperial city.

"Why will ye not rest content with your lawful Bishop?" he asked of a deputation of aristocratic ladies, who waited on him to beg Liberius' release.

"When Felix is in the Church," they replied with pointed indirectness, "no Roman will enter it."

IV. The embarrassed Emperor was constrained to yield. Liberius was permitted to return to Rome. He and Felix were appointed joint Bishops, a compromise which was received with shouts of derision when proclaimed in the Circus.

V. Constantius was succeeded by Julian the Apostate (360), at whose command the closed and deserted temples were re-opened, sacrificial flames gleamed again upon the altars, and solemn processions

* See the impartial account given by the pagan historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, 'Hist.,' xv. 7.

† Sozomenos, 'Hist. Ecc.,' iv. 15.

‡ (1) Athanasius, 'Hist. Arian. ad Monach.,' n. 35 foll. and n. 75; (2) Theodoret, 'Hist.,' ii. 13; (3) Sulpitius Severus, 'Chron.,' ii. 39; (4) Socrates, 'Hist. Ecc.,' ii. 37.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

of priests wound through the streets of Rome. According to Libanius the votaries of the pagan gods triumphed throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. Liberius survived this period of trial three years.

VI. His religious views were exceedingly defined, and held with the constancy of a martyr.

The Nicene Creed was the keystone of his arch of faith, and he was steadfastly purposed to keep it intact.

The greater the triumphs of Arianism in the East, the more determined his vigilant opposition in the West. He regarded the Nicene Confession with an almost fanatic reverence, and believed that phases of its history were foreshadowed in the Old Testament. "It was not by accident," he wrote to "all the Bishops of the Orient," "that three hundred and eighteen Bishops assembled at the Council, at which it was attacked,"—did not Abraham destroy three hundred and eighteen hostile men by faith?*

So saturated was he in the controversial theology of the day that he was unable to keep definitions of the nature of Christ framed on the model of the Nicene Confession out of an address to a young girl, Ambrose's sister, on the occasion of her dedication to the religious life.†

It is surely probable that church decorations, executed under the patronage of a man such as he showed himself to be both in word and deed, would embody truths by which he and his times were deeply moved. But the subject-matter of the mosaics attributed to him is of a character far removed from the interests of the day; it is drawn from the history of Old Testament heroes, and consists of scenes to which especial importance was attached by early theologians as being occultly prophetic of the life and doctrines of Christ. The manner in which these incidents are represented is deeply tinged by animosity against the Jews, who are pictured as a people whose perversity estranged the favour of God, and who were superseded by a spiritual "plebs dei," the Church of Christ. "They are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children . . . It is not the

* Gen. xiv. 14.

† It may be noted in passing that in this sermon, which was preached in Rome on Christmas Day, and is preserved in the works of S. Ambrose ('De Virg.' iii. 1-3), he recommends Leah and Rachel as models of reticence and of modesty, from which it is evident that he did not look on them as personified prototypes of the Church, as did the designer of the mosaics.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

children of the flesh which are the children of God, but the children of the promise." * These words, which synthetise a prominent aspect of these didactic decorations, embody a point of view of which the interest at Liberius' time was purely archæological, and in recalling which it is unlikely he would have spent the property of the Church.

Moreover, it is difficult to see at what period of his career a work on so vast a scale as this basilica with the decorations of both Arch and Nave could have been executed. Not during his struggle with Constantius, which ended in banishment; and certainly not during the reign of Julian the Apostate.

Even in times of peace his position was precarious. Before his banishment he wrote to an exiled Bishop: "In the past nothing was to be feared but the sword of the persecutor, but now the malice of false friends is more redoubtable."

VII. No ancient source is to be found which justifies the assertion that the mosaics decorating the basilica called after Liberius are to be ascribed to him; it seems based on the inference that as the subject-matter of the pictures of the nave is unconnected with the Virgin, they therefore cannot be attributed to Xystus, and must therefore have been executed by orders of Liberius.

* Rom. ix. 7, 8.

CHAPTER VI

THE BASILICA SICININI

- I. Different lines of research point to the end of the second or the beginning of the third centuries as the date at which these mosaics originated.
- II. The Basilica Sicinini.
- III. The classic character of the basilica in spite of baroque additions.
- IV. The conception and execution of these mosaic decorations not synchronous.
- V. The five series may be reproductions of small independent series designed for the decoration of houses.
- VI. The size of the Basilica. The Christian population of Rome.
- VII. Is it possible that a basilica decorated with pictures of the pronouncedly Christian character of those of the Arch should have survived the reign of Diocletian ?

I. It has been shown that the attribution of these mosaics to the time of Xystus is inadmissible on account of their subject-matter, which is drawn from apocryphal sources ; and that this objection applies with still greater force to their ascription to that of Liberius, for it was during his pontificate that the Church seriously set itself to the task of distinguishing authoritatively between canonical and uncanonical books ; and in the reign of his successor that the Council was held at which this much disputed point was settled.

It would appear, therefore, that the time at which these pictures originated lies not only behind that of Xystus, but behind that of Liberius also.

Can it not be precised more closely ?

(a) We have seen that the literary material of these mosaics is frequently drawn from sources repeatedly condemned as heretical.

(b) When drawn from canonical sources it is treated from a point of view which is not that of the religious leaders of the fourth

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

and fifth centuries, Augustine (354-430), and Jerome (340-420), but is that of writers of the second century, Clement of Rome (91-100), Justin Martyr (about 115—about 165), Clement of Alexandria (145-220), Irenæus (115-195), Origen (185-254), the writer of the Letter of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas (before the middle of the second century).

(c) That one idea knits the decorations of the Arch and Nave into an organic whole. That idea was the life-blood of the religious thought of the first three centuries of our era; but in the fourth and fifth was superseded by others of a very different character.

(d) That their artistic affinities are not with the mosaics of S. Pudenziana, or of S. Sabina (end of fourth and beginning of fifth century); still less with those of SS. Cosma and Damiano (525-530), or of S. Vitale (Ravenna); but with reliefs of the time of Marcus Aurelius, of Septimius Severus, and with fine busts of the second and third centuries preserved in the Louvre, and elsewhere.

(e) That the fabric they adorn existed before the time of Liberius, and was called "of Sicinius."

(f) That a number of the tiles of which the roof is composed are of the end of the second century.

(g) That the fine brickwork of the nave is of the end of the second century (117-138).*

(h) That the columns of the interior are bound together by an architrave, and not as in Constantinian churches by arches.

A number of independent lines of internal evidence lead therefore to approximately the same date, the end of the second or the beginning of the third century.

II. Is this date substantiated by the history of the basilica?

Certain historical facts are documented as we have seen. Xystus restored a basilica called "of Liberius" which however was not built, but merely enlarged by him; and which immediately after Liberius' pontificate figures in the works of contemporary writers under the title of the "basilica Sicinini." †

* See Plate 4, No. 2.

† Ammianus Marcellinus, xxvii. 3, 13; Rufinus, 'Hist. Eccl.', ii. 11; Hier., 'Chron.', ad an. 366; Socrates, 'Hist. Eccl.', iv. 29. The edict of the Emperors Valentinianus, Valens, and Gratianus of the year 367 has the inscription "ubi redditur basilica Sicini." "Epistolae Imperatorum pontificum aliorum," vol. xxxv., in the 'Corpus Scr. Ecc. Lat.,' Vienna ed. p. 49.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

A group of buildings, or rather a whole quarter in the sixth Region, was called "of Sicininus."*

Prominent among these buildings was the Basilica Sicinini, which however is not mentioned in any ancient list of *classic* buildings, an omission which has led to the hypothesis of its identity with some building well known under some other name.†

Of Sicininus himself nothing is known, although he must have been a personage of wealth and position, as an important quarter of the town drew its title from his palace and its appurtenances. His name even is uncertain, sometimes appearing as Sicininus, and sometimes as Siciminus; some authorities consider it corrupt. It is neither Greek nor Roman in origin, but possibly barbarian.

A name of similar sound, Sisininus, occurs in the "Acts of Clement," it is borne by a noble Roman who was first a persecutor of the Church, and then a member of it. His conversion is represented in a fresco of the lower church of S. Clemente.

The question whether the individual from whom the basilica drew its name is known or unknown is, however, one of minor importance. What is important is that the building known as the Basilica Sicinini is identical with the basilica added to by Liberius, restored by Xystus, and now called S. Maria Maggiore,‡ and is consequently one of the few classic basilicas which were converted into Christian churches.§

III. In spite of disfiguring accessories the structural features of the building still testify to its origin.

The two and forty Ionic columns of Hymettic marble which adorn its interior are not a fortuitous collection of the *débris* of earlier buildings as are those of most other Roman churches. They are all of one size, design, and marble; are well proportioned, and form a homogeneous suite.

The character of the building is, however, chiefly due to the architrave which connects the columns, a peculiarity of early classic architecture, which is absent from Constantinian churches, such as S. Paolo, S. Sabina, S. Pudenziana, S. Apollinare, and other churches

* This appellation is first met with in the account of the Pontificate of Sylvester (314) in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and on fragments of inscriptions. See 'Bullettino della Commissione Arch. Comunale di Roma, Seria Quinta,' anno xxvii. (1899), pp. 230-253.

† Jordan's 'Topography of the City of Rome,' vol. ii. p. 310.

‡ See p. 26.

§ J. Prestel, 'Des M. Vitruvius Pollio Basilica zu Fanum Fortunae,' Straszburg, 1891, p. 31.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of Rome, Ravenna, and elsewhere, in all of which the columns are bound together by arches. This is true even of the Palace of Diocletian in Salona.

Greatly as the purity of its internal effect is injured by baroque additions, altars, side chapels, paintings, and obtrusive architectonic trimmings, yet its essentially classic character is still predominant.

The impression it now produces, of something grandiose, but artificial and derivative, is less due to its fine coffered ceiling, a good example of the learned classicism of the Renaissance, than to the wholesale restorations of Benedict XIV.* (1740-1755), who restored the basilica in the taste of the Salon classicism of the eighteenth century, correcting the forms of the columns, adding bases and capitals, and polishing the time-worn surfaces of the marbles.†

IV. Riddled with restoration, placed high, practically out of sight, encrusted with dust, these antique mosaics "tell" as dark rectangular patches in the midst of gold and white baroque mouldings which seem purposely designed to place them at a disadvantage; it is not surprising that in a city which is a mine of more accessible treasures, they have heretofore won but a cursory glance, even from art-lovers.

Two questions should be kept apart in the discussion of their chronology: the question of the date of their conception; and that of their execution. Considerations of a general character have been advanced which militate against the acceptance of the fifth century as the date of their conception. In the following detailed examination of each picture facts will be brought to light which confirm these considerations.

The question of the date of their *execution* is more difficult to establish.

Indeed, it is rendered well nigh impossible by their condition, which is in part that of styleless and ill-preserved copies, and in great part that of interpolated and much injured originals.

But scattered through this confused medley of the varied phases of the art of seventeen centuries, are fragments belonging to an earlier art-stratum, which alone can claim to be considered in this connection.

* Plate 4, No. 1.

† The following lines occur in the laudatory inscription over the doorway: "Columnis ad veram formam redactis et ex politis nova capitula imposuerit novas bases subjecerit. . . ."

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

It has been seen that the theological affinities of these compositions are with the Christian thought of the second century; and their æsthetic affinities with the art either of the same date or of some decades later. Also, that although minor differences exist, the art of the Arch and of the Nave is homogeneous.

Further, that the manner in which the figures in the lower pictures of the Arch are pressed together so as to enable the compositions in which they occur to be fitted into the gradually diminishing space it is their present function to decorate shows that they were not *designed* to adorn the space they now cover, but are second or third century copies of pre-existing, though almost contemporary, compositions.

V. The four series of the Nave and the cycle of New Testament scenes on the Arch are intellectually mutually complementary; but it does not follow that they were designed with this intent. It may be that each series was originally independent, and that the harmonious cooperation of these five cycles in the expression of a complex theological thought is due to their common origin, to the circumstance that they illustrate the same phase of religious belief.

It is possible that each of these cycles was composed as an independent unit designed to decorate some part of a dwelling-house, a hall, or room.

A wealthy Roman convert to Christianity, wishing to decorate his triclinium with pictures of not too obtrusively distinctive a character, could hardly have found compositions more suited to his purpose than those which here illustrate the story of Jacob. He may have arranged them not in pairs, as now, but singly, each pastoral idyll being framed in the rich blues and reds of the counterfeit columns and pilasters of the later Pompeian style, in the manner of the sepulchral chamber of the catacomb of Domitilla.* Equally suitable to the decoration of a hall, used as a place of worship, would have been the more definitely Christian pictures of the Arch, with the Epiphany, treated philosophically, as here, as an apsidal decoration.

The existence of such pictures at so early a date undoubtedly involves a modification of the popular conception of the character of the Christian community in the Rome of the Antonines, and of their immediate

* See Plate 3, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

successors, a modification on the necessity of which modern historians of the early Church insist.*

VI. The size of this basilica is considerable, and must always have been so, as is proved by the size and distribution of its columns.

This, however, should not be a matter of surprise, for it is known that the private basilicas of wealthy Romans were as great as they were splendid. Vitruvius speaks of them as rivalling public buildings in extent and magnificence, and states that they were used for the transaction of public business, for the meeting of councils, and as halls in which legal judgments were passed, and cases submitted to arbitration.†

Neither is it disproportionate to the size of the Roman church of the time of a Commodus (180–192), or of a Heliogabalus (218–222).

The Christian community of a generation later numbered twenty thousand souls; or even, according to another computation, fifty thousand, that is to say, a twentieth part of the entire population of Rome, which, in the year 251, numbered a million inhabitants.

Clergy to the number of one hundred and fifty-five ministered to the needs of this religious "sect," which, as a body, supported one thousand five hundred poor of their faith.

Cornelius (251–252) states that the Roman Church, of which he was Bishop, employed forty-six presbyters.‡ It has been suggested that this assertion points to the existence of as many centres of public worship; be this as it may, it is certain that fifty years later the Christian ritual was celebrated in forty or more basilicas,§ a figure which points to a large religious body.||

VII. The existence of private houses decorated with the originals of the pictures of this basilica will probably be conceded; possibly also a Christian basilica of the size of the Basilica Sicinini; but it may well appear incredible at first sight that a basilica of such magnitude decorated with pictures of so suggestive a character should have eluded

* Zahn, 'Skizzen aus dem Leben der Alten Kirche,' Leipzig, 1894. Harnack, 'Die Mission u. Ausbreitung des Christentums,' Leipzig, 1902, p. 377 ff.

† 'De Architectura,' vi. 5, 2. "Nobilibus vero . . . facienda sunt . . . basilicae, non dissimili modo quam publicorum operum magnificentia comparatae, quod in domibus eorum saepeus et publica consilia et privata iudicia arbitriaque conficiuntur."

‡ Eusebius, 'H. E.' vi. 43. § Optatus, ii. 4, "quadraginta et quod excurrit basilicas."

|| Harnack, 'Mission des Christentums,' p. 498 ff.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the vigilance of Diocletian's inquisitors, should have survived a well planned attack of which the aim was the extirpation of Christianity.

The terms of the Imperial Edict, published Feb. 24, 303, are explicit; the destruction of all churches was ordered, and the burning of all copies of the Sacred Writings. Christians were warned that persistence in their perverse belief involved the forfeiture of civil rights.

This persecution raged fiercely in the East. In Rome it was short-lived, lasting only a few months; and though excellently organised * by the head of a powerful executive it failed. Christianity has survived, and the Sacred Writings are not extinct.

Had the Basilica Sicinini been Christian, what is likely to have been its history during this period of trial?

It was probably confiscated; and as its new owners would have derived no advantage from the destruction of the splendid hall, admirably adapted to public purposes, it was no doubt devoted to some secular use.

As to the pictures, why go to the trouble of scratching fitted cubes out of their setting of tenacious cement, when such things as plaster and whitewash were at hand?

Why not treat them as the Turks treated the mosaics of the Hagia Sophia on a similar occasion?

When Sultan Abdul Medjid restored the mosque in 1847, its mosaics, uncovered for a time, † were found to be intact. To-day they are re-coated with plaster; and thus masked and well protected await the time when they may share the fate of the mosaics of the Basilica Sicinini.

* Langen, 'Geschichte der röm. Kirche,' vol. i. p. 373 ff.

† This opportunity was not lost. Copies were made on the initiative of the Prussian Government, and at its expense. See Salzenberg, 'Altchristliche Baudenkmale von Konstantinople (Berlin, 1854). Fossati's 'Aya Sofia, Constantinople,' published by Messrs. P. & D. Colnaghi in 1852.

CHAPTER VII

ARTISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

- I. On interpolations, and restorations.
- II. Gold, an interpolation.
- III. Landscape background.
- IV. Comparative study of the representation of clouds in the third, fourth, sixth, and ninth centuries.
- V. Table of original fragments, interpolations, and restorations.

I. THE mosaics we are about to study are disfigured by repairs, and by the frequent intrusion of styleless or anachronous restorations sometimes so extensive and repeated that the picture in which they occur is reduced to the level of a badly preserved copy.

But they are on the other hand classic in conception and composition. Moreover, scattered here and there through the wreckage is a head, a fragment of drapery, or of background, occasionally a whole figure, sometimes even a group, and once an entire picture. These fragments are typical, and show the level of excellence at which the series originally stood.

It is essential therefore to its just appreciation that the eye should be educated to discriminate finely and decisively between the art of one period and that of another, between one technique and another; but above all that it should be swift to recognise, even when partially disfigured, those classic fragments out of which an image of a lost phase of art may be constructed.

The power of intelligent and authoritative discrimination in so virgin a field is difficult of attainment; it can only be gained by constant pre-occupation with the objects to be understood. In time faculties of sight and intelligence are evolved which are the pre-requisites of just judgment.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

It is with this object that so much space has been devoted to the examination of the condition of each picture. The result is a series of observations which form a discipline to which the student, like ourselves, would do well to submit himself.

Although a guide cannot conjure the traveller to his journey's end, he has the value of a finger-post; therefore we have thought it well to preface the detailed analysis of the pictures in question by a few general remarks on their qualities, which may help the student to recognise the original elements which are the object of his quest.

II. All patches and touches of gold are interpolations.

In their original state these compositions were uncontaminated by gold, the intrusion of which is anachronous, and discordant with the peculiar colour-scheme in which they are composed.

III. As certain musicians of the middle of the last century inlaid the heavier pattern of their melody upon an æolian background of sweeping scales and arpeggios, so the artist here has inlaid his foreground figures upon a graduated scale of melting colours, a synthesis of a spring landscape, an impressionist's recollection of a sunny day in open country. The foreground colours are a heavy green, and a heavy red, which pass by rapid but fine gradations into the sun-bathed amber of the middle distance; this gradually sinks into aerial grey-purples which brighten into the clear pallor of the sky.*

Such landscape details as are necessary adjuncts to the story are woven into this impressionist's vision, the main features of which remain constant; and which is so constructed that the sunlit middle-distance and sky form the background against which the heads and shoulders of the personages represented are silhouetted.

Unfortunately, no single entire landscape background has been preserved intact: we have to content ourselves with a fragment here and a fragment there, thankful, as are the discoverers of a mutilated inscription, for sufficient original material, to render mental reconstruction possible.

The gradual extinction of all sentiment for landscape is a significant symptom of the decadence of classic Christian art: the process was slow, but uninterrupted: landscape-forms first petrified, then dropped away, and were replaced by plain sheets of colour or of gold.

* See Plates 8 and 24.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

IV. This process is clearly illustrated in the gradual decreasing quality of cloud representation in Roman mosaics, ranging from the third to the ninth century.

The figure of Christ in Abraham and Melchizedek in this church is associated with finely observed fiery clouds, with blue-purple shadows, burning on a clear, cold sky; they are the work of one who not only had felt the beauty of clouds at sunset, but had the power of suggesting it pictorially.*

The Cross and great baroque beasts of the apse of S. Pudenziana are silhouetted against a sky of which the pale prismatic radiance is classic in intonation. Beautiful as it is, a gulf separates it from the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore; the small super-imposed clouds with which the concha is filled are vague and uncertain in form; the artist evidently repeated a formula the outlines of which had grown indefinite from long handling.

Like a turgid river, a stream of red and indigo clouds flows about the feet of the solemn Christ of SS. Cosma and Damiano; very splendid they are as patches of rich colour, but they are mere schematic recollections, the children of a long race of copies from which all sentiment of the form and quality of real clouds has evaporated.

After this, landscape art sinks rapidly into complete senility.

The aerial blue of the sky makes way for sheets of colour or of gold, to which adhere what appear parti-coloured balls of red and blue, or variegated bits of stuff, or the clumsily executed feathers of a macaw.†

The sense of the sentiment and charm of nature has fled, together with the power of its suggestion.

The relation of these clouds to those of S. Maria Maggiore is that of a prune to a plum; of a raisin to a grape; of a fossil to a living leaf.

The successive phases of degeneration in the representation of a landscape detail thus yield a chronological table of the successive levels of decadence to which belong the pictures in which they occur.

V. In the following table comparatively little-injured specimens of the art of the second and third centuries are enumerated. These are the elements upon which the student must form his taste, educate his eye; out of which, if he have the faculty, he may reconstruct a vanished art;

* See Plate 6.

† S. Paolo, S. Prassede, S. Marco, etc.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

and the touchstone by which the inferior art in which they are imbedded is to be detected.

STANDARD WORKS IN GOOD PRESERVATION.

BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INTONATION.

1. The Stoning of Moses. A vertical strip between the two groups is intact. (Plate 24.)
2. The Separation of Lot from Abraham. Abstraction must be made of a patch of gold in the middle distance. (Plates 8 and 9.)
3. The Procession of the Ark, beneath the Fall of Jericho. (Plate 26, No. 2.)

LANDSCAPE.

1. Aerial Mountains in the Crossing of the Jordan. (Plate 25, No. 1.)
2. Sky, in Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ. (Plate 6.)
3. Cave on the right, in The Sudden Appearance of Jesus Nave. (Plate 26, No. 4.)

FIGURES.

1. All the figures in The Separation of Lot from Abraham. (Plates 8 and 9.)
2. Moses, Aaron and Israelites; also Pharaoh, in The Passage of the Red Sea. (Plates 20 and 21.)
3. The Angels, upper group in Abraham and the Three Angels. Injured. (Plate 7, No. 1.)
4. Anna, in The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews. Injured. (Plates 35, 36, No. 1.)
5. Roma on the Pediment of the Temple, in The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews. (Plates 35 and 39.)

BUSTS.

1. Christ in Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ. (Plate 6.)
2. The seated Angel on the extreme right in Abraham and the Three Angels. (Plate 1.)
3. Two of the Ladies in Waiting in The Adoption of Moses. Injured; compare with Pompeian fresco; Plate 13, No. 4. (Plate 13, No. 1 and No. 2.)
4. Head of one of the Philosophers, and the onlookers outside the hemicycle; in Moses among the Philosophers. Injured. (Plate 14, No. 1 and No. 2.)
5. Heads of the Spies and of Joshua, in Joshua's Envoys. (Plate 25, No. 1.)
6. The Four Angels in the Coming of the Orient to Christ. One much injured. (Plates 41 and 42.)
7. The Angel before the Temple in The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews. (Plate 39.)
8. The Heads of the Angels in Occidental Philosophy, a Guide to Christ. (Plate 45.)
9. One of the Magi, in The Magi, Priests and Herod. (Plate 49.)

ARCHITECTURE.

1. The Town of Gibeon. (Plate 26, No. 3.)
2. Town in Occidental Philosophy, a Guide to Christ. (Plate 44, No. 1 and No. 3.)
3. Pediment of the Temple in The Repudiation of Christ. (Plate 39.)

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

INTERPOLATIONS MARKEDLY IN THE STYLES OF LATER DATES.

1. PROBABLY OF THE TIME OF XYSTUS III. :

- Affrodosius and Courtiers. (Plate 44, No. 1 and No. 2 ; Plate 46.)
- The Women of Bethlehem. (Plate 48.)

2. AFTER XYSTUS III., AND BEFORE THE MIDDLE AGES :

- The head of Pharaoh's Daughter. (Plate 13, No. 3.) Compare with Theodora and suite. S. Vitale, Ravenna. (Plate 13, No. 5.)
 - The Virgin, Joseph and the Building behind him ; in The Mystery of the Virgin-Birth. (Plates 31, 32, No. 1, and 33.)
 - The Mercy Seat. (Plates 34, No. 1 and No. 2.)
 - Jerusalem. (Plates 31 and 50, No. 1.)
 - Bethlehem. (Plates 35 and 50, No. 2.)
 - Moses and his Companions, in The Miracle of the Quails. (Plate 22, No. 1.)
- } on the Arch.

3. POST-RENAISSANCE :

- The Egyptians, in The Passage of the Red Sea. (Plate 19, No. 2.)
- The Armies, in The Defeat of Amalek. (Plate 23, No. 1.)
- The Army, in the Fall of Jericho. (Plate 26, No. 2.)

4. RECONSTRUCTIONS OF DOUBTFUL DATE :

- The head of the Sibyl. (Plates 42 and 43.)
 - Simeon. (Plate 37.)
 - The Jews. (Plate 38.)
- } in The Repudiation of Christ.

5. IN STUCCO, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY :

- The Virgin, in The Coming of the Orient to Christ. (Plate 31 and Plate 40, No. 1.)
- The Priests, in The Magi, Priests and Herod. (Plate 35 ; Plate 47, No. 2.)

PART I

THE PROTOTYPICAL DECORATIONS
OF THE NAVE

THE FIRST TYPOLOGICAL SERIES :

ABRAHAM

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

- I. Diversity of these pictures in size, structure and form.
- II. Unveiled juxtaposition of type and antitype in the first picture.
- III. Dissimilarity, but essential unity of the parts of this series.
- IV. Preservation.

I. THE mosaics of the nave fall into four groups, not divided from each other by any material barrier, but nevertheless distinctly differentiated by their subject-matter.

The centre of each is a notable figure from the Old Testament, —Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua.

The first of these groups is incomplete : it consists of three pictures only, each of which differs from its companion in size, shape and structure.

In the subsequent series, the framed surface to be decorated (the size of which is constant throughout the cycle) is uniformly divided into two horizontal strata, *i.e.*, into two frieze-like pictures of similar size and form. But the *whole* of the surface of the first picture in this group is occupied by a single composition.

This occurs in exceptional instances in other series also, in The Crossing of the Red Sea, The Victory over Amalek, The Staying of the Sun and Moon ; but Abraham, Melchizedek, and Christ cannot be classed with these on account of compositional dissimilarities, its structure being symmetrical, and its figures of monumental proportions, whereas the figures in the pictures just quoted are many and

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

small, and their arrangement naturalistic, rather than hieratic or conventional.

The *structure* of the second picture is unique in this church. Whereas the framed space to be decorated is, as has been said, usually divided into two strata, on each of which a scene, complete in itself, with its own particular landscape and sky, is depicted; here, although the picture consists of two strata, the landscape background is common to both; the sky is pictured not twice, but once; or in other words, the event depicted on the lower stratum is treated as a foreground incident, a convention common in classic art, but not repeated in this cycle.

The third picture is unique in *form*. It is neither high in proportion to its width, as are those which precede it; nor long, narrow, and frieze-like, as are those by which it is followed; but square, with the result that its figures differ in size from those of the pictures both before and after it, and are larger than those of any other double picture in the cycle, The Marriage of Moses, alone excepted. This cannot be attributed to the importance of its subject-matter, The Parting of Abraham and Lot, a possible explanation of the size of the figures in Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ.

The narrow frieze-like picture below seems to have been added in order to make the framework of the composition with which it is associated uniform in size with those of its companions. It is unimportant; in its present form modern, and executed in stucco.

II. Not only does the first picture of this series consist of figures which are unique in size and arrangement, but it is composed from a unique point of view.

For whereas the artist elsewhere, while appearing to offer nothing but a record of historical facts, manipulates his literary material, subjecting it to so subtle a process of elimination, adjustment and addition, that a sense of its secondary mystic significance is inevitably evoked in the minds of initiated spectators, here he clearly and formally expresses both the fact and its significance. He places the figure of Christ above that of Melchizedek, whose oblation therefore cannot but be understood as foreshadowing the self-sacrifice of the great High Priest of the New Testament.

In this single instance only has the artist openly juxtaposed type and antitype.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

This series therefore curiously enough consists of a small group of three pictures forming part of a comprehensive cycle, each of which differs from the other in form : the first being unique in the size of its figures, in the symmetry of its composition, and the point of view from which it is composed ; the second differing from its companion in structure ; and the third in size.

III. The natural conclusion that they were not originally part of this series, and are only accidentally associated with it, and with each other, being negatived by peculiarities of colour, style, and type, which bind them to their fellows, we are forced to conclude that their intellectual connection with other pictures of this cycle is so close, because they are the fruit of the same *Zeit-geist*, that their identity of execution * is due to the fact that as copies they are synchronous ; and that they differ from each other in structure and size because their originals were destined to fill especial positions in the hall or gallery for which they were originally destined. Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ, for instance, may well have been composed to decorate an apse.

IV. They are obviously of higher artistic value than the pictures they precede. This is due to their preservation, for, though injured by repairs and restorations, they consist in great part of original workmanship ; whereas the pictures of the following series have been so restored and mended both in stucco and mosaic that they have the value only of ill-preserved copies.

* Compare the Angel, Plate 1, from the second picture of this series, with those of the Arch, Plates 41, 42, 45 ; the heads of Abraham and Lot, Plate 8, with that of Simeon in Repudiation of Christ, Plate 37 ; the head of Christ, Plate 6, in Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ, with that of The Philosopher on the Arch, Plate 44, No. 2, in Occidental Philosophy, a Guide to Christ.

CHAPTER II

ABRAHAM, MELCHIZEDEK AND CHRIST

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.-XVIII.) :—
- IV. Reconstruction of composition.
- V. Its sacramental character.
- VI. Letter to the Hebrews.
- VII. Pictures treating similar subject-matter : S. Vitale ; S. Apollinare in Classe.
- VIII. Contrast.
- IX. Justin Martyr's account of the Eucharist.
- X. Artistic considerations.
- XI. Facial type of Christ.
- XII. Decorations of Roman houses.
- XIII. Statue of Christ belonging to Alexander Severus.
- XIV. Eusebius' testimony to the existence of ancient pictures and statues of Christ.
- XV. The type of Christ that of a Philosopher.
- XVI. Such a conception consistent with the thought of the third century.
- XVII. The suffering Logos.
- XVIII. This composition erroneously characterised as not typological, but simply historical, by de Rossi, and others.

ABRAHAM, MELCHIZEDEK AND CHRIST.

Plate 5, No. 1 ; Plate 6.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought bread and wine ; and he was Priest of God Most High.”—Genesis xiv. 18.

“Christ having come, a High Priest of the good things to come, thro' the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands . . . thro' his own blood entered . . . into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption.”—Hebrews ix. 11, 12.

“We have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.”—Hebrews x. 10.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

II. DESCRIPTION.—The High Priest Melchizedek advances from the left towards Abraham, who, accompanied by armed attendants, moves towards him from the right. In his raised hands is a basket of bread ; at his feet a large amphora.

In the clear sky above, Christ appears, surrounded by reddened clouds.

Melchizedek, a powerful and venerable figure, wears a white belted tunic (*tunica cincta*), adorned with wide purple bands (*lati clavi*), a white mantle with dark purple borders, and purple hood, which is fastened on the breast by a large round brooch consisting of a red stone in a wide golden setting. Similar dresses are worn by the High Priests in The Presentation in the Temple, on the Triumphal Arch ; and by Jethro in The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah,* that is to say it is used throughout as the distinctive dress of Priests. His strong solemn face is framed in long brown hair and beard.

He raises in both hands, and “ offers ” a gilt wicker basket containing bread ; the two uppermost loaves, which alone are visible, are divided into four quarters by intersecting lines. Similar baskets occur in The Annunciation and in The Adoption of Moses.

On the sky, which is light and transparent in tone, float heavy blue-purple and crimson clouds, their rich warmth contrasting splendidly with its cold and crystalline purity.

Leaning waist-deep out of these clouds is the figure of Christ. A yellow nimbus and full brown hair and beard frame the face, which is not of the radiant Apollo-like type of the Angels of the later series, but tragic and pensive, the head of a sufferer and thinker. It is Greek in type ; the low brow full and prominent over the straight nose. He wears a purple pallium and tunic,† ensigns of royalty, always associated with the direct representations of Christ, the Logos.‡

His right hand is stretched palm outwards and downwards with a pathetic gesture ; it would seem that in some mysterious way He identified Himself with the offering of Melchizedek.

The amphora which forms the centre of the foreground is of great size.

* Plates 15, 16, 36, 38.

† The narrow gold clavi are obviously interpolations, and therefore omitted on the coloured plate No. 6.

‡ When the words “ the Lord appeared ” are translated by the artist into an apparition of an Angel, the pallium and tunic are white. (See Jacob series, No. 6.)

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

III. CONDITION.—Only two-thirds of this picture can be accepted as antique; its right side has been reconstructed in stucco, in which a few stones of uncertain date are embedded.

A narrow band of stucco imitation of mosaic runs along the top of the picture, widening as it sinks on the left; it encloses Melchizedek's legs, from the hem of his tunic downwards; the chalice, a few stones in the handles excepted, and the greater part of the equestrian group on the right.

The wide band of gold, which crosses the centre of the picture horizontally, is not antique.

Antique are, only (*a*) the bust of Christ, the yellow nimbus (it is injured and occasionally interpolated with gold); (*b*) the greater part of the figure of Melchizedek; (*c*) a few stones in the white sleeve of Abraham, and his large hand, which show that Melchizedek was faced by a figure of similar size, almost certainly on foot; (*d*) also one and possibly two of the heads of the lance-bearing soldiers, which are, however, so injured that it is difficult to judge them with anything approaching certainty.

Two-thirds of the noble figure of Melchizedek may be characterised as well-preserved; his fine and rugged face, though restored, is classic in expression and type. The contours of both basket and hand have been impinged upon by gold interpolation; the loaves of bread are antique, and do not correspond in form with the small hieratic loaves in the succeeding picture, but both basket and bread are similar to those pictured in the second-century fresco "Fractio Panis" of the catacomb of S. Priscilla.*

The size, shape, and position of the amphora, which are perfectly adapted to the space to be filled, seem to show that the restorer worked on the traces of a now lost original.

The sky and the figure of Christ (though slightly injured by repairs) are fine specimens of Pre-Constantinian Christian art.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Although the right side of this picture has been completely remodelled, still the general character of the composition as a whole is so symmetrical that its approximate reconstruction is not difficult.

Enough has survived to show that the original composition was pyramidal: two figures (one possibly with attendants) below; and a

* See Wilpert, 'Le Pitture delle Catacombe Romane,' Rome, 1903, Tav. 15.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

third, above and between them. Confronted with the figure of Melchizedek must have been that of Abraham on foot, so placed as to compose rhythmically with the Old Testament High Priest and his New Testament antitype.

The solemn effect produced by this simple and symmetrical distribution of lines and masses accords well with the character of the subject-matter, the sacramental nature of which the artist has not merely suggested (as in all other pictures of this series), but clearly expressed.

V. In the centre of the picture are the elements of the Eucharist, bread and wine; and among the reddened clouds above appears a Divine figure, unmistakably characterised as that of Christ, who stretches His right hand towards Melchizedek's oblation with a touching and tragic gesture of acceptance and self-identification.

That the historical scene which is the basis of this representation—in itself realistic enough, the gift of the elements of life bestowed by the King of Salem on a successful soldier, should have been transmuted into a mystic foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ, and then by a further process of idealisation into a prophetic image of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, is not surprising; so significant is the description of Melchizedek in the Old Testament; so strangely mystic the titles enumerated by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, "Priest of God Most High, without father or mother, or beginning or ending of days."

VI. Indeed, the *use* made of the incident by the same writer made this interpretation inevitable; his words are the inspiration of this picture.

He speaks of Melchizedek as a prototype of Christ, of Abraham as the father of the then unborn multitude of the People of God, and of Christ as a Priest of the order of Melchizedek, made not after the law, but after the power of an endless life, "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners," for whom He once for all offered Himself.

This picture is the direct outcome of these three thoughts.

VII. The conception of Melchizedek as a prototype of Christ, and of his oblation as prophetic of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, is mirrored in later pictures which decorate the apses of Post-Constantinian churches; and in words still daily spoken in the celebration of the Mass, at the culminating moment of which the Priest, having consecrated the elements, raising his arms in the ancient gesture of prayer, and elevating the Host, prays that it may be made acceptable, "as was that Thy holy

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

priest Melchizedek offered unto Thee, a holy sacrifice, an immaculate Host."

The pictures of Ravenna and these words stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect.*

VIII. Their subject-matter and that of the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore is one, the sacramental character of the offering of Melchizedek ; but how different is its expression !

The mosaics of Ravenna are the reflex of a developed ritual ; an altar is their centre, draped with cloths, purple and white, with ecclesiastical embroideries ; a chalice stands upon it ; and the " Hosts," of pronouncedly hieratic character, into which the bread of the original offering was translated. But in the Sicinian mosaic there is no altar, but a basket of household bread, and a large amphora, the common classic receptacle for wine.

The milieu such accessories evoke is not a taper-lighted apse with officiating Priests, but the celebration of a simple and holy rite such as Justin Martyr describes.

IX. " Having ended the prayers," he says, " we salute one another with a kiss. Bread and a cup of wine mixed with water is then brought to the brother who is presiding ; and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the Universe, through the name of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks, . . . and when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings all the people express their assent by saying ' Amen,' . . . then those who are called by us ' deacons ' give to each of those present . . . of the bread and wine mixed with water, over which the blessing was pronounced ; and a portion is carried to those who are absent.

" This food is called amongst us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but he who believes the things which we teach to be true, and has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration ; and is living as Christ has enjoined.

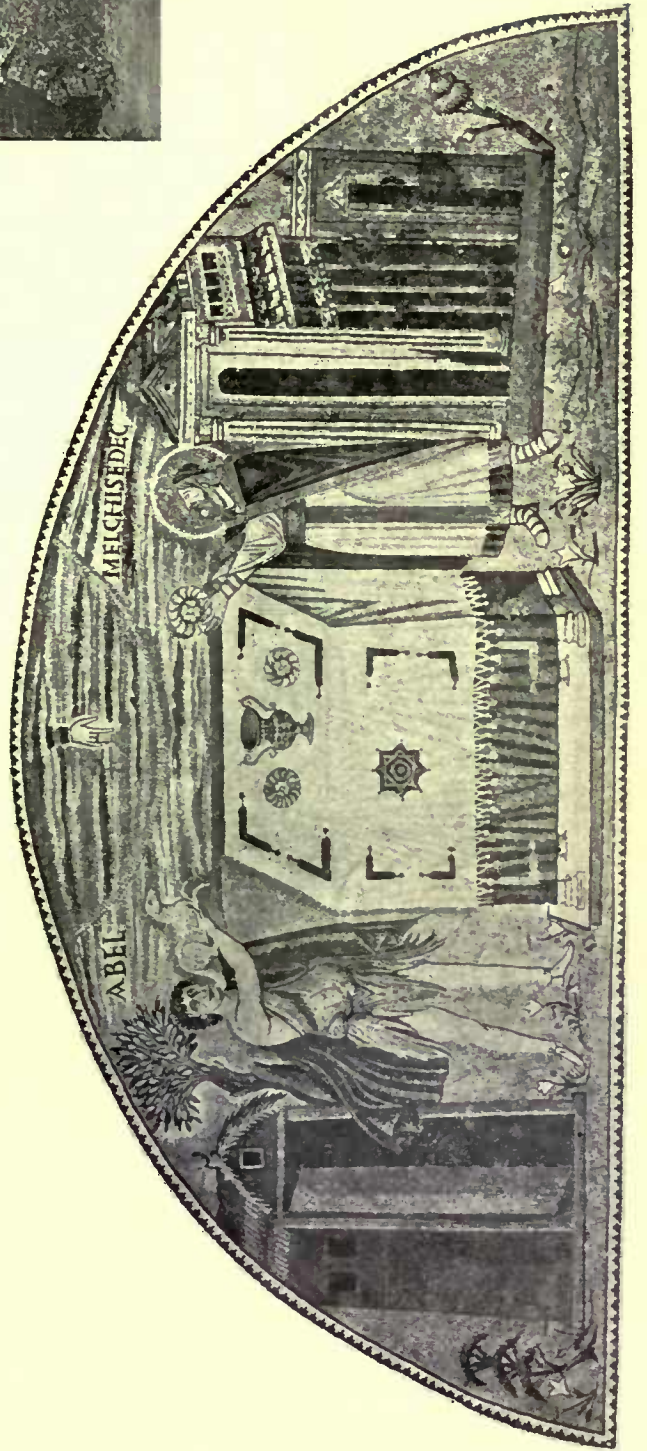
" For not as common bread and common wine do we receive this, but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, took on both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food, that has been blessed by the

* Plate 5, No. 2, mosaic in S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna ; Plate 5, No. 3, mosaic in S. Vitale, Ravenna.

2.



3.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

prayer of His Word (and on which our body and blood are nourished by transmutation), is the flesh and blood of that Jesus Who was made flesh.

“For the Apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them, namely: that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, ‘This do ye in remembrance of me, this is my body,’ and after the same manner, having taken the cup, and given thanks, He said, ‘This is my blood.’”*

These two types of composition stand for phases of Christianity separated from each other by some centuries.

X. Purely artistic considerations also point to the separation of these compositions from each other by a long lapse of time.

The symmetry and equilibrium of the picture in Rome are rhythmic rather than formal; in Ravenna they are formal.

In the Roman picture the figure of Melchizedek is energetic and naturalistic, he moves forward with a certain passionate energy, his body slightly turned towards the spectator; the movement is well understood, the body correctly if roughly rendered. Similar figures belonging to the same phase of Hellenistic art occur on the Column of Marcus Aurelius.†

But in the mosaic of S. Vitale, although the head, shoulders, arms and mantle of Melchizedek are drawn in absolute profile, his body, from the waist downwards, is pictured *en face*. This is true also of the corresponding figure, Abel. The source of such errors of construction is mental, and has been admirably analysed by a modern critic.‡ Suffice it here to say that the processes of visualisation to which they testify are characteristic of an art either in its infancy or senility.

XI. The facial type of Christ appears incompatible at first sight with the early date to which we ascribe it.

It stands alone in the fifth as in the third century, no analogous head occurs in the pictorial cycles of the Catacombs; but this only proves the contemporary existence of independent types in Christian art, of which what has survived is so fragmentary that negative evidence is of little weight.

* “First Apology of Justin Martyr,” ch. lxxv. and lxxvi.

† See groups of barbarians, Plate 2, No. 1; compare page 15.

‡ Julius Lange, ‘Darstellung des Menschen in der älteren griechischen Kunst. Aus dem dänischen übersetzt von M. Mann, herausgegeben von A. Furtwängler.’ Strassburg, Heitz, 1899.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

XII. What has survived of the decoration of the Christian houses and palaces of this date?

And yet it is improbable that wealthy and picture-loving Christians whose craving for pictorial decorations was so great that they covered the walls of their subterranean burial vaults with pictures, either whitewashed their pillared palaces, or lived in halls decorated with representations of the amours of the gods they repudiated.

The accidental preservation of the walls of dwelling rooms decorated by the votaries of a religion contemporaneously in vogue, that of Isis, teaches that classic homes reflected the beliefs of their owners.*

XIII. It is recorded that statues of Christ and of Abraham stood in the lararium of Alexander Severus (222–235).†

XIV. Eusebius, writing early in the fourth century, speaks of having seen similar classic representations. "It is not surprising," he says, "that in those early days—those who had received the good gifts of the Redeemer should have ordered representations of Him. I myself," he adds, "have seen coloured pictures of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and even of Christ Himself, and it is very intelligible that the ancients, following pagan usage without scruple, should have placed these before them as aids to devotion."‡

XV. The type of Christ in the Sicinian mosaic is that of a Greek Philosopher.§ Among the many facial types represented in this basilica there is only one which can be placed beside it, that of the Philosopher who leads the Hellenistic king to Christ (in the fifth picture on the Arch). ||

XVI. A Christ of Philosopher-like type is in harmony with the tone of the religious thinkers of the third century, of a Justin, and of an Irenæus, of a Clement and of an Origen, to whom Christ, the Logos, figured as the Incarnation of the Divine Reason, invisible but omnipresent in creation.

In thus picturing Him the artist realised one of the deepest thoughts of the day; the "Gleichsetzung des geschichtlichen Christus mit der in der ganzen Welt wirksamen Vernunftkraft," to use Bonwetsch's formula.

* Frescoes associated with the cult of Isis are preserved in the National Museums of Rome and Naples.

† Lamprid. 'Vit. Alex. Sev.,' c. xxix.

‡ 'Hist. Ecc.' viii. 18.

§ Compare the picture of Christ in the garb of a Philosopher in the Catacombs, Plate 44, No. 4.

|| Plate 44, No. 2.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XVII. Much that has been said of the distaste shown in early Christian art for the emblems and scenes of anguish or humiliation, which were so popular at a later date, must be received with reserve, for there is no doubt that the idea of suffering was constantly associated, as here, with the thought of Christ, the incarnate Logos.

“Next to God,” says Justin, “we love and worship the Logos . . . since He became a man for our sakes, in order to bring us healing, being a partaker of our sufferings.”*

Such a type of Christ, therefore, far from presenting a difficulty, was the simple and natural outcome of the thought of the day; for when ancient religions lost their authority, and ancient usages their constraining power, when men, thrown back on themselves, had to seek for first principles, it was natural that they should conceive One who introduced order and faith into their lives as the personification of Wisdom; and, as Eusebius says, should set the image thus conceived before them as an incentive to virtue.

If the *ancient* pictures and statues the Christian historian refers to were a hundred and fifty years old when he wrote, they would have originated in the lifetime of Justin Martyr, or, if a hundred, in the reign of Alexander Severus, at whose time a philosophic Christian patrician would have been quite *en règle* if, loyally following in the steps of his Imperial master, he had placed statues of Abraham and Christ in a hall of which the apse was decorated with a scene in which Abraham and Christ were associated with the Priest-King of Salem in a representation of a mystic oblation of bread and wine, a sacrificial act not peculiar to the Christian community, but shared by them with the “*Cultores solis invicti Mithrae*.”

XVIII. Misled by the valueless stucco interpolation on the right (the group of little figures of which the centre is Abraham on horseback, possibly borrowed from a Post-Constantinian Picture-Bible), earlier students of these mosaics have interpreted this picture as a realistic illustration of the Biblical text; and this, in spite of the figure of Christ, whose presence in a representation of an Old Testament scene obviously proclaims the picture in which it occurs as not *purely* historical in character.

De Rossi is very explicit in the ascription of a historical character, both to this picture and to the series and cycle in which it occurs:

* ‘Second Apology,’ chap. xiii.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

“La série a absolument un caractère historique. Elle a été composée en suivant avec ordre les narrations de la Bible;”* a statement made in face of the fact that the subject of the first picture is taken from Genesis xiv. 18, that of the second from Genesis xviii., and that of the third from Genesis xiii. 7-12.

He goes on to connect and contrast these mosaics with such mutually incongruous material as the Genesis of Vienna, the Cotton MS. of the British Museum, the Asburnham Pentateuch, the Joshua Rotulus of the Vatican, and the Greek Octateuchs of the Vatican (Nos. 746, 747), and to associate them with the three latter.

* ‘Mosaïques de S. Maria Maggiore’ de Rossi, pp. 7, 8. He dismisses the picture itself with a few curt words: “Le sujet représenté est le sacrifice de Melchisedec en présence d’Abraham. Cette dernière figure, excepté le bras droit, est presque toute moderne.”

CHAPTER III

ABRAHAM AND THE THREE ANGELS

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-XXII.) :—
- IV. Peculiarities of the Biblical subject-matter treated.
- V. This subject-matter accepted in Post-Constantinian literature and iconography as prototypical of the Trinity, and of the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.
- VI. In the second century viewed as a Theophany of the Logos.
- VII. Religious thought of the Second Century.
- VIII. Justin Martyr.
- IX. His conception of Christ, and of the Logos.
- X. Post-Constantinian religious thought.
- XI. Arianism.
- XII. Triumph of Trinitarianism.
- XIII. Attitudes of Liberius and of Xystus.
- XIV. Augustine.
- XV. Mosaic in question generally accepted as composed from the Trinitarian point of view.
- XVI. One person characterised as pre-eminent.
- XVII. Its subject, a Theophany of the Logos.
- XVIII. Justin Martyr's treatment of the incident.
- XIX. He views it as a Theophany of the Logos.
- XX. Sacramental significance of the lower group.
- XXI. Significance of the figure of Sarah, and of the building and tree behind her.
- XXII. Aureola.

ABRAHAM AND THE THREE ANGELS.

Plate 7, No. 1; Plate 1.

I. SUBJECT.—“The Lord appeared unto Abraham by the Oaks of Mamre . . . and he lift up his eyes, and looked; and, lo, three men stood over against him . . . and he ran to meet them . . . and bowed himself to the

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

earth and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant."—Gen. xviii. 1-3.

"And he took . . . the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree."—Gen. xviii. 8.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture consists of two compositions, placed one above the other. In the one, Abraham, reverently bowing, moves rapidly towards a group of three Angels; in the other, they accept his hospitality. Two incidents are included in the lower composition: Sarah, with a solemn gesture, offers the bread she has prepared, and Abraham presents the calf to his three guests as they sit at table.

These two pictorial strata are not to be understood as two separate pictures included within a single frame, as are the majority of the mosaic pictures which decorate this church, but as a single composition, an organic unit, representing three episodes, one of which takes place in the background, and two in the foreground; all of which, however, have their landscape setting (green foreground, trees, and sky) in common.

In the scene in the background, which takes the precedence in point of time, Abraham, a gray-bearded, gray-headed old man of venerable aspect, with veiled hands outstretched, and body bent in reverent obeisance, moves rapidly from the left towards a group of three young men. He wears the classic dress of ancient Rome, retained throughout Pre-renaissance Christian art for the characterisation of the leaders of its heroic periods, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, etc.; *i.e.*, a long tunic (*tunica talaris*), with purple clavi, and pallium; the ends of his pallium (each of which is decorated with a dark purple mark) flutter in the air, and accentuate the agitation which possesses his whole person. Both pallium and tunic are of a pale yellow, an exceptional circumstance, and unique in this church, possibly due to the artist's desire to accentuate the steel-like blueness of the cold and terrible radiance, which, like the ominous shining of a lightning-illuminated storm-cloud, envelops the angelic apparition before which Abraham bows in such fearful adoration.

Like a vision floats forward the closely knit group of three young men, who move together with the rhythmic harmony of a single organism; they have no wings, all are youthful, of noble classic type, their garments are precisely alike, each wears a long white tunic (*tunica talaris*) with purple clavi, and white pallium, adorned at its ends, after the almost

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

invariable classic custom, with the purple letter-like mark, the significance of which has so far eluded the researches and ingenuity of archæologists. The flesh-tints of face, hands, and feet alike are of a reddish bronze, like that of the youths in Pompeian paintings ; the head of each is enclosed in a pale-blue nimbus ; each alike, therefore, is characterised as super-human ; the centre Angel is, however, distinguished from his fellows by an oval "glory," enveloping his entire person ; it resembles that later form commonly called "mandorla" ; it is translucent, of a pale, cold, aerial gray, deepening towards its centre into a dense blue, is struck diagonally across and across by a number of white lines, and is bordered by a clear white line.

All the Angels wear sandals ; the feet of those to the right and left tread the earth, but those of the central figure rest on a bank of fiery clouds ; He does not walk, but is carried forward by the force of His volition ; the clouds beneath Him announce that it is God enthroned from eternity above the clouds, Who is here borne upon them over the earth.

He, too, only of the group has the hand uplifted in the gesture of speech. He is the spokesman ; more, He is the Word, the Logos, "who was with God, and became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory." To Him the two Angels on either side bear witness ; the one standing on His right in mute adherence, the other with hand stretched forward, palm outwards, as if in solemn affirmation.*

About the group float flaming clouds, such as throughout this cycle accompany the Divine Apparition only.*

Below, and on the right, the three Angels, reverently served by Abraham, are represented as seated at a table, on which lie three loaves. Their attributes are precisely similar to those associated with them in the upper picture, with this exception only, the oval glory, encircling the central Angel, is omitted ; the head of each is enclosed, as above, in a pale-blue nimbus ; each again, therefore, is equally characterised as a Divine being.

The central Angel is, however, distinguished from his fellows by the movement of his right hand, which he stretches towards Abraham's offering with a gesture weighted with solemn significance ; the Angels,

* See foregoing picture ; the first of the Jacob series ; and, in the Moses series, The Adoption of Moses, The Covenant between God and His people, and The Bitter Waters of Marah.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

his companions, as above, only assent to his spoken word, the one raising his hand in the common gesture of speech, the other, as in the foregoing scene, stretching his open hand forwards and downwards, as if in passionate affirmation.

Below, and in front of the table, on which lie the three loaves of bread, is a large amphora or wine-vessel.

Abraham approaches the table from the left, and, with solemnity, presents the dish, upon which lies the body of the victim, complete, so that it may be recognised as such. It is towards it that the Divine Man extends His hand, as if in acceptance, but with some other sublime and tragic meaning on His grave upturned face.

To the extreme left of the foreground is the figure of Abraham ; he stands before Sarah with hand upraised in speech, who, also standing, stretches her hands, with the reverent gesture of one who offers a holy thing, over three loaves ; these are pyramidal in form, and on each of them are two dark spots, separated by vertical gold lines. She wears a white under-tunic, of which only the tight white sleeves are visible from the elbow downwards ; an orange dalmatica, with wide purple clavi, and wide loose sleeves. On her head is the white coif worn by matrons.*

Immediately behind her, overshadowed by the finely executed foliage of the Oak of Mamre, is the temple-like façade of her home, with pediment, marked with a cross, and gilt bronze roof ; transparent curtains are draped on either side of the open doorway.†

III. CONDITION.—The fine remains of the original picture are enclosed in an irregular band of stucco imitation of mosaic ; narrow to the right and above, wide to the left, and widest below, where it covers almost a fourth of the picture.

The patch of gold background behind the seated angels is not antique, and is most disturbing to the colour-harmony of the composition.

The heads of two of the seated Angels are much injured, but that of the Angel on the extreme right, with sanguine skin, flaming locks and gleaming eyes, is in superb preservation (see Plate 1).

* Compare the representations of (1) Leah ; (2) Rachel ; (3) Zipporah's mother ; (4) Anna, in The Presentation (on the Arch).

† Compare the numerous representations of temples in this church : (1) Temple behind Joseph in the Annunciation (Plate 32, No. 1) ; (2) Temple in the Presentation (Plate 36, No. 1) ; (3) Temple behind Rachel and Leah (Plate 10, No. 6b) ; (4) Temple in the Stoning of Moses (Plate 22, No. 3b).

I.



2.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The figure of Abraham in the immediate foreground, which is represented in such proximity to Sarah as is incompatible with her fine gesture of solemn "presentation," is an interpolation executed in mosaic originally, but in mosaic embedded in such poor cement, as is often the case with interpolations, as to have needed constant restoration; the lower part of the figure has been reconstructed in stucco, the upper part is studded with mendings.

This part of the picture is to so large an extent a patchwork of repairs and interpolations that its detailed reconstruction is impossible.

It can only be affirmed that the gesture of Sarah makes it impossible that a figure like that of Abraham stood, as now, immediately in front of her, his disproportionately large hand, raised in speech, almost touching her face.

Two representations of the same person, placed as here back to back, one figure almost concealing the other, do not recur in this series; and in the one instance in which it occurs in this church, half of the one of the figures in question is in stucco, and what remains of it is anomalous in form and in execution, and the other is much injured.

The table across which Sarah leans, and such of her draperies as appear below it, are executed in stucco.

Fine and unusual in treatment is the tapestry-like foliage of the oak-tree overshadowing the house behind Sarah. The windows are interpolations.* The gilt bronze roof and transparent curtains, draping its dark entrance, are, on the other hand, antique, and in fine preservation.

COMMENTARY.—IV. This picture is obviously founded on the incident related in the Book of Genesis, in which the appearance of "the Lord" to Abraham by the Oak of Mamre is described.

Through the primitive, and somewhat realistic account of the visit in which household details are dwelt on with complacency, there runs a shining thread of mystery, impossible to ignore, and difficult to explain.

Were Abraham's guests one or three?

They are first distinctly spoken of as three, "*three* men stood over against Abraham, and he ran to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth;" but suddenly the narrative lapses into the use of the singular; Abraham says, "My Lord, pass not away from thy servant."

* For similar interpolations see Plate 10, No. 4.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

And again later, "*They* said unto him, Where is Sarah, thy wife?" Then the pronoun changes, the solemn promise is given in the singular, "I will certainly return to you—and Sarah shall have a son."

And finally, in the description of the departure of the Angels, the singular and plural pronouns alternate significantly.

"The men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom, and Abraham went with them to bring them on their way. And the Lord said to Abraham, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and their sin very grievous, *I* will go down and see."

During this speech the Angels were evidently together, for the text continues, "and the men turned from thence, and went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

V. This enigmatic handling of the singular and plural pronouns, and the circumstance that Abraham's guests partook of a meal under the Oak of Mamre, has rendered this subject a favourite allegorical theme; it figures constantly both in Christian literature and in Christian iconography as prefiguring both the dogma of the Trinity and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

VI. But these are not the only ideas with which it has been associated. The Angel who appeared to Abraham was looked on in the second century as a manifestation of God, as the Logos, incarnate on earth in order to declare His Father's will.

As there are therefore two points of view from which this incident may be viewed, one characteristic of early Christianity, and one of later theology, it would be well to evoke distinct images of these two phases of thought, and of the circumstances of which they were the product; after which, analysis of the picture should make it possible to determine which of the two it reflects.

VII. Christianity was first a reform in the Jewish Church, and then the creed of an independent body of religious thinkers.

These monotheists, struggling for existence in a polytheistic world, some of the beliefs of which they rejected, but of the general culture of which they were the outcome, were not concerned with niceties of dogmatic distinction, but with the building up of a cosmic theosophy on the threefold basis of the teaching of Christ; of the general philosophic conceptions of the day; and of an allegorical and prophetic interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VIII. The classic exponent of this phase of thought is Justin Martyr, a professed philosopher, who accepted and taught Christianity as the highest philosophy of life ; who cried to his audience, " Be wise ! Be converted ! " and who, like Socrates, testified by his death to the sincerity of his beliefs.

It was as a philosophic explanation and rule of life that he accepted his new faith ; and to the reasonable alone that he addressed himself.

" The *teaching* of Christ appeared to him of such infinite importance that he valued its miraculous adjuncts, even ' the Divine Sonship,' chiefly as certifying to its Divine origin, its truth, and unconditional reliability ; " * in short, its intrinsic reasonableness ; for Reason he conceived as the Divine Principle in the world by which men are enabled to choose good and oppose evil.

IX. This Principle of Reason immanent in all things he calls the Logos, using the term in a cognate though somewhat different sense to that given it by Philo. In its partial human manifestations he calls it the " Logos spermaticos," the Logos as Seed, in contradistinction to the Logos as incarnated in Christ, who was not reasonable, but Reason ; not wise, but Wisdom.

" We have been taught," he says, " that He is the Logos, of which the whole human race is participator. They who have lived reasonably are Christians, even though they may have been thought heretics ; as Socrates, Heraclitus, and others : and likewise those who lived before Christ in a manner contrary to reason were His enemies." †

" The Logos incarnated in Christ," says a commentator, synthesising Justin's view, " was from the beginning the active inspiration of all moral and spiritual powers, and evoked the knowledge of God and of Truth in both Gentiles and Jews by means of Lawgivers, Philosophers, Poets, Sibyls, and Prophets." ‡

Justin defines the Logos as pre-human, and super-human ; and, being the power that makes for good, as akin to the Divine, which kinship he expresses by calling Christ the Incarnation of the Logos, the Son of God.

* Moritz v. Engelhardt, ' Das Christenthum Justins des Märtyrers ' (Erlangen, 1878), p. 107.

† First Ap. ch. xlvi.

‡ M. v. Engelhardt, *loc. cit.* p. 115.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“It is in the Son,” he taught, “that men divine the nature of the Unknowable Ineffable Father, the Unbegotten First Cause.” “We follow the Unbegotten Father, through the Son,” he says.* And elsewhere he calls Christ “the first Power after God the Father and Lord of all.”†

X. As Christianity gradually took shape and was diffused among peoples of divers races and cultures, forms of thought, and their reflex in literature came into being, many of which were incompatible with each other and with the teaching of the founders of the Church: these, though sometimes protested against as heretical, subsisted side by side until the Constantinian period, in which the Church, secure from external enemies, set herself to the work of regulating her private affairs, and formulating her beliefs: a task urged on her by the Emperor, who looked to the religion of his huge realm to give it stability and unity.

The fourth and the fifth centuries were thus naturally periods of religious controversy, the age of Councils, of Synods, of the refutation of heresies, and of the repudiation of apocryphal books.

XI. The nature of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity, these were the points about which the war of opinion raged most fiercely.

To Arius the Divine Sonship presented a difficulty.

Christ, he said, was either begotten or unbegotten; if begotten, then He was not eternal; His nature, therefore, differed essentially from that of God, the Unbegotten, Always-existing, First Cause.

The conclusion at which he arrived is not easy to distinguish from that of Justin Martyr, but the *Zeit-geist* of the fifth century was not that of the second; religious opinion then demanded the recognition of the absolute equality of the Father and Son.

XII. Although his adherents were many and powerful, and the schism he produced in the Church great, his teaching, nevertheless, was finally condemned; and the orthodox faith on two important points—the Incarnation and the Trinity, as defined in the first four General Councils—was synthesised in the Athanasian formula, in which the equality and unity of the Three Persons of the Trinity is declared.‡

* First Ap. ch. xiv.

† *Ibid.* ch. xxxii.

‡ The Athanasian Creed is believed to have been composed in Gaul, in the fifth century. The doctrines it contains, however, are those taught by Athanasius.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XIII. Zealous Roman participators in this struggle, which lasted for generations, were Liberius and Xystus, Jerome and Augustine.

We have seen with what passion Liberius fought on the side of Trinitarianism; how he went into exile rather than abandon an iota of his allegiance to Athanasius, and how he considered the number of the members of the Council of Nicaea sufficiently important to be prophetically foreshadowed in the number of men (318) with whose aid Abraham defeated his enemies.

If the picture we are about to study be inspired by him, we will undoubtedly find it a categorical embodiment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

XIV. Augustine, writing nearly a century later, after the battle had been fought, and the tenets of Athanasius had prevailed, treats the three Angels as obviously prophetic of this doctrine.

“Were not,” he asks, “the three men who came to our father Abraham, one guest? One who visited him? One who supped with him? One who abode with him? To this Trinity in Unity shall all honour be paid of man, for resplendent is its glory”!

“The patriarch offered a three-year-old calf; three measures of meal were besprinkled (*conspersit*) by the future mother, bearer of a son, in whose stead the father will sacrifice a lamb. And thus the body of Christ was then constituted a Sacrament.”*

XV. At first sight this picture seems a close and vivid rendering of these words. Indeed, the incident has been so generally interpreted in S. Augustine's sense that it is accepted as self-evident that it is thus treated in the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore.

“The appearance of the three Angels to Abraham was commonly regarded by the ancients as a manifestation of the Holy Trinity; and there is no doubt that as such it is represented in the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore, a work of the fifth century,” write the learned authors of the “Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.” †

* “Nonne unus hospes erat in tribus, qui venit ad patrem Abraham? hospes, et amicus pransor, et mansor, et omnia illi in Trinitate sunt exhibita humanitatis obsequia, quia Trinitatis gloria refulget. Trinum attulit vitulum pater, tres mensuras similaginis conspersit futura mater, paritura filium, pro quo pater mactaret agnum; et ipsum corpus Christi in Trinitate jam fecerat Sacramentum.” (August., serm. 171, circa medium.)

† See Smith and Cheetham, ‘Dict. of Chr. Ant.’ vol. i. p. 997; also, Kraus, ‘Real-Encyklopädie der Christlichen Alterthümer,’ vol. i. p. 370.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

XVI. If, however, the picture be analysed, the close correspondence which is presumed to exist between it and the words of Augustine becomes doubtful. In the upper part of the composition the Angels whom Abraham advances to meet are pictured as a compact group of wingless young men; the head of each is encircled by a nimbus; each, therefore, is characterised as belonging to a sphere other than terrestrial; but the central figure is further distinguished by an aureola, which encircles His entire person. His feet rest on crimson clouds, whereas those of His companions tread the common ground. He alone speaks, His companions seeming merely to confirm His word.

The impression made by this group is not that of three celestial beings of equally exalted position, but of one of acknowledged pre-eminence, accompanied by two attendants.

Indeed, so exclusively and lavishly has the artist endowed the central figure with distinguishing attributes, that it is difficult to believe that he intended its attributeless and silent subordinates to represent God the Father and the Paraclete.

We doubt that such a representation of the Trinity would have met with the approval of either Liberius or Xystus.

XVII. It is impossible to accept this group as representing the Trinity. Its subject-matter is clearly a Theophany: Christ with attendant Angels.

XVIII. We have already quoted Justin Martyr as the classic exponent of the philosophic Christianity of the second century. He speaks repeatedly and at length on the incident represented in the upper part of this picture, in a discussion of which the subject-matter is the Divinity of Christ, and the manner in which it was foreshadowed in the Old Testament.*

The monotheistic Jew, Trypho, repudiates the idea of any God except Jehovah. But Justin undertakes to prove the existence of "another God and Lord, subject to the Maker of All Things;" and this from the Hebrew Scriptures.

He first makes it clear that the Almighty of whom he speaks is no other than the Jehovah of the Jews.

"There will be no other God, oh Trypho!" he says, "nor was there

* See 'Dialogue with Trypho,' chap. lvi.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

from eternity, but He Who made and disposed the universe. Nor do we think there is one God for you, and another for us."*

But he contends that when the expressions "God spoke" or "God appeared" are used, it is not the great First Cause that is meant, but another Being, called variously "Angel, God, Lord, and Man, who appeared in a human form to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob, and in a Flame of Fire from the bush."†

"It was not the Creator of All Things," he says, "who was the God who said to Moses, 'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, but . . . He who ministered to the will of the Maker of All Things' . . . for he who has the smallest intelligence will not venture to assert that the Maker, and Father, of all things, having left all super-celestial matters, was visible on a little spot of the earth."‡

He not only undertakes to demonstrate the existence of this secondary Being from the Old Testament account of the Visit of the Angels to Abraham, but also to prove that He is called "God" and "Lord"; and further, to show that Christians are right and reasonable in worshipping the perfect human manifestation of the same God, and Lord, *i.e.*, Christ.

Having examined many Hebrew prototypes of Christ, and having convinced Trypho that the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Him, he proceeds to discuss the subject-matter of this picture.§

"Show us that the spirit of prophecy admits another God than the Maker of all things,' said Trypho.

"I will bring forward proofs, Trypho,' he replied, . . . 'they will appear strange to you, although you read them every day . . . pay attention therefore.

"Moses, the blessed and faithful servant of God, declares that He who appeared to Abraham under the Oak at Mamre is God, sent with two Angels in His company to judge Sodom, by *ANOTHER*, Who remains always in the super-celestial places, invisible to all men, Whom we believe to be the Father and Maker of All Things,

"For he speaks thus: God appeared to him under the Oak at Mamre . . . and behold three men stood by him, and when he saw them he ran to meet them, and said, 'My Lord,' and so on, quoting the

* 'Dialogue with Trypho,' chap. xi.

† *Ibid.* chap. xl.

‡ *Ibid.* chap. lix.

§ *Ibid.* chap. lvi.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

passage from Genesis until it is said, 'Abraham saw the smoke of Sodom go up from the earth like the smoke of a furnace.'

"When I had made an end of quoting these words I asked Trypho and his friends if they had understood them.

"They said they had understood them, but that the passage quoted adduced no proof of the existence of any God or Lord beside the Maker of All Things, or that the Holy Spirit says so.

"Since you understand the Scriptures, I shall attempt to persuade you of the truth of what I say, namely, that there is and that there is said to be, another God and Lord, subject to the Maker of All Things, who is called an Angel, because He announces to all men whatsoever the Maker of All Things (above whom there is no other God) wishes to announce to them,

"And quoting once more the previous passage, I asked Trypho :

"Do you think that God appeared to Abraham under the Oak at Mamre, as the Scriptures assert?'

"He said, 'Assuredly.'

"Was he one of those three,' I asked, 'whom Abraham saw, and whom the spirit of prophecy describes as Men?'

"He said, 'No; but God appeared to him before the vision of the three; the three whom the Scriptures call three were Angels; two of whom were sent to destroy Sodom, and one to bear the joyful tidings to Sarah, that she should bear a son, for which cause he was sent, and, having accomplished his errand, he went away.'"

Justin, however, proves that this Angel was God, that He it was who said He would return; who did return; and who when He returned was called God (Genesis xxi. 12.) Trypho is only partially convinced.

"You have proved,' he admitted, 'that we were wrong in believing that the three who were in the tent were all Angels, but you have not proved that there is another God beside Him who appeared to Abraham, and to the other patriarchs and prophets.'

"I replied, 'I shall endeavour to persuade you that He who is said to have appeared to Abraham, and to Jacob, and to Moses, is distinct from Him who made All Things . . . numerically I mean, not distinct in will, for I affirm that He has never at any time done anything other than that which He Who made the world, above Whom there is no other God . . . wished Him to do.'"

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

After discussing other episodes from which he draws similar conclusions, Justin examines the Biblical account of the destruction of Sodom.

“After a pause,” he says, I added, ‘Have you not perceived, my friends, that one of the three, who is both God and Lord, and ministers to Him who is in heaven, is Lord of the two Angels; for when the Angels proceeded to Sodom, He remained behind, and communed with Abraham in the words recorded by Moses . . . when He came to Sodom, He, and not the two Angels, converse with Lot. . . . He is the Lord, who received commission from the Lord Who remains in the Heavens, the Maker of All Things, to inflict judgment on Sodom and on Gomorrah.’”

XIX. Justin Martyr therefore, and the composer of this picture, looked at the incident they treat from the same point of view: they both saw in it a Theophany of the Logos accompanied by two attendant Angels.

The thought of the Trinity is equally far from either of them.

XX. In the lower picture the three Angels are represented as seated at a table, each of their heads is encircled by a nimbus, but the aureola of the central figure is lacking.

As the entire group is silhouetted on a blank sheet of unmodulated gold (an interpolation), it is impossible to say with certainty whether this aureola were absent in the original picture or not; the lack of any traces of it at the sides of the central figure, and the form of the space to be filled, point to the latter conclusion.

Even without the help of the aureola the artist has perfectly succeeded in indicating the pre-eminence of the central figure. It is clearly He who, in accepting Abraham's offering, invests with tragic import a scene of which the significance is obviously sacramental, even if abstraction be made of the stucco amphora in the foreground, which may or may not reproduce a vanished original.

In discussing this incident Justin Martyr makes no reference to its sacramental nature, probably because he was speaking to an uninitiated Jew, and possibly also because he did not thus conceive it.

XXI. A third incident is pictured on the left.

Beside a much-restored temple-like building, with cross-signed pediment, is a tree, the Oak of Mamre. Such a tree associated with

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

such a building indicated a shrine in classic art. Justin, moreover, associates the Oak of Mamre with the Tree of the Cross.*

In front of this house and tree is Sarah, her arms solemnly extended, as if "offering" the loaves, which lie on the table before her, as a ceremonial act.† It is probable that she is conceived as representing the Church.

XXII. The oval light-filled emblem which encircles the "Angel of Jehovah," whose feet rest on reddened clouds, and distinguishes Him from His companions, is an unmistakable symbol of essential difference of Being; it points to super-terrestrial existence.

The origin of this emblem, probably Oriental, is as obscure as its significance is obvious.

The prototypes of the smaller nimbus encircling the head only, and common to all the Angels of this series, are frequent in antique classic art; but not the "glory" encircling the entire figure.

Virgil, however, when he describes Juno as "girt with clouds" (*nimbo succincta*), seems to think of the whole figure.

Servius, his early commentator,‡ describes the nimbus (literally "clouds") as "the shining light with which the heads of the gods are encircled," and adds, "as they are represented in pictures."

The double image involved, that of gleaming light, and of cloud, is synthesised in the long oval, shot with light, resting on clouds glowing with sunset fires, of this picture.

Two variations of this emblem occur in this church: in The Stoning of Moses, in which Moses, enclosed within it as in a sheath, is safe from the attacks of his enemies; and on the Arch, on which the Theophany of Christ, the Mercy Seat, is similarly enclosed.§

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxxvi.

† Abstraction must be made of the figure of Abraham, whose large hand almost touches her face, and who is pictured as if addressing her on the subject of making cakes. This part of the picture is so full of interpolations and restorations that our attitude towards it is perforce negative. (See "Condition," p. 71.)

‡ About 355 A.D., in Aen. II., 615.

§ Its form is circular there on account of the shape of the object it encloses. (See Plate 34, No. 1 and No. 2, and Plate, 22 No. 3b.)

CHAPTER III

THE SEPARATION OF LOT FROM ABRAHAM

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.—XIV.) :—
- IV. Arrangement of subject-matter not chronological.
- V. Why has this seemingly unimportant subject been pictured ?
- VI. Noble aspect of both Abraham and Lot.
- VII. Its subject a dividing of ways.
- VIII. The thought embodied.
- IX. Isaac.
- X. Lot viewed in the Jewish Book of the Jubilees as Abraham's kinsman,
- XI. Who by his action forfeited his birthrights.
- XII. Justin's attitude towards the Jewish opponents of Christ.
- XIII. Lot here represented as noble.
- XIV. This historical subject associated with the thought of the voluntary separation of the Jews from the spiritual PLEBS DEI ?

THE SEPARATION OF LOT FROM ABRAHAM.

Plates 8 and 9.

I. SUBJECT.—“ Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot . . . moved his tent as far as Sodom.”—Gen. xiii. 12.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Abraham and Lot stand at the head of their respective families ; they have bidden each other farewell, and separate ; Lot, with his wife, servants, and two little daughters, move towards Sodom ; Abraham and Sarah, with their hands on the head of Isaac (the Child of Promise), remain outside his temple-like house beside the Oak of Mamre.

It is impossible to imagine motion more dignified and disciplined than that with which these two patriarchal family-groups move asunder. It recalls the rhythmic music of strophe and antistrophe in a Greek

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

chorus. This same admirable spirit of self-control finds noble expression in the figures of the two patriarchs in the foreground; they stand together, with faces still turned towards each other, but Lot's body already vibrates with the movement which he has willed shall permanently separate their lives. There is no suggestion of a quarrel; no touch of temper or of anger in their aspect; circumstances have rendered it impossible that their common life should continue, and without reproaches or lamentations they conform themselves to these altered conditions.

Both Abraham and Lot are represented as old, but vigorous; with full short hair and beards. They wear the characteristic dress of classic antiquity, traditionally retained in later art for the characterisation of men held in especial veneration, Patriarchs, Apostles, Prophets, etc.; *i.e.*, a long sleeveless tunic (*tunica talaris*) with narrow purple stripes (*clavi angusti*); and a pallium, decorated at its ends by an ornament, like a letter; on their feet are sandals.

Behind them are their respective families, headed by Sarah and Lot's wife, who exchange glances charged with meaning. They wear the coif entirely covering the hair, distinctive of married women,* and red shoes, indications of rank.

In the forefront of each group are the children; to the right, Lot's little daughters, one in an orange, the other in a blue dalmatica, with purple clavi; their faces are turned in delighted converse towards each other; to the left, Isaac, a lad of some ten summers, in a shepherd's tunic (*exomis*), which is short, belted, and leaves the right shoulder and breast bare.

Architectural masses close the composition on either side: To the right, in the middle distance, the town of Sodom; to the left, in the foreground, a temple-like house, with pediment, frieze, and open door with draped curtains; it is overshadowed by a tree, which, in accordance with classic convention, further designates it as a holy place.

This picture is one of the masterpieces of early Christian art. It is unsurpassed by any in this cycle, whether as regards execution, modelling, brilliancy, and harmony of colour, or the construction and rhythmic movement, not only of individual figures, but also of groups. The characteristics of the two patriarchs are realised with classic direct-

* See Zipporah's mother in *The Marriage of Moses* (Plate 15); Leah throughout the *Jacob series* (Plate 10); and Rachel in the last scene (Plate 10, No. 6b).



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

ness and precision; the figure of Abraham, immovable as a rock, breathes his inflexible determination to *remain* in the land given to the "Child of Promise," on whose head his hand is laid. Neither does Lot yield an iota as he turns away from his kinsman, pointing towards Sodom, towards which he and his family are already in motion.

The emphatic assertion of the steadfastness of Abraham, and the introduction of the yet unborn Isaac, serve as indications that this picture is not the representation of an event conceived historically, but of that event in its didactic aspect.

III. CONDITION.—The best preserved, as it is the most beautiful, picture in this series, it may be accepted as a magnificent example of the monumental art of its time.

It is enclosed on three sides by an irregular band of stucco restoration, in which are included a large portion of the town to the right, part of the sky above, part of the house to the left, and the little person of Isaac, with the exception of his head, chest, and left shoulder. Some of the heads have been injured by time and repairs. Lot's hand has been restored. A patch of gold separates Lot and Abraham.

COMMENTARY.—IV. The arrangement of the pictures in this cycle is not chronological.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the opening series, of which the centre is the forefather of the Chosen People, Abraham. The third picture of this series represents an event related in the thirteenth chapter of Genesis, whereas the materials for the first and second pictures are taken from the fourteenth and eighteenth chapters.

In other words, the series is opened by a representation of an event which took place after Abraham had freed Lot from the hands of the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah; whereas Lot's separation from Abraham, with the purpose of going to Sodom, is represented in the third picture, in which, strangely enough were the subject-matter historical, Isaac appears as a boy of about ten, although the incident depicted took place before his birth, the prophetic fore-announcement of which is the subject-matter of the immediately foregoing picture.

It is clear, therefore, that chronological considerations did not determine the arrangement of the parts of this series; which arrangement being neither accidental nor arbitrary, but the expression of a definite purpose, is a clue to the discovery of that purpose.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

V. Why, we cannot but ask ourselves, has this event been first passed over, and then pictured in the third place, whereas it would have been accorded the first place in this series had historical considerations been paramount?

For what reason, indeed, does it obtain a footing at all, in a cycle which does not aim at historical completeness, but only at the presentation of such material as is part of the warp and woof of a closely woven web of mystico-allegoric interpretation of Old Testament history, viewed as "a shadow of the good things to come," not as the "very image" of them?

It is from the picture itself, alone, that an answer can be wrung, and that by objective analysis of its component parts, and of the peculiarities both of expression and repression in the treatment of its literary material.

VI. The interest of the spectator is focused on the majestic figures of Abraham and Lot. The conception of the former is nobler and more imposing than in the preceding pictures, nor is the person of Lot in any way inferior to that of the Patriarch in the expression of dignity and of conscious worth. Indeed, it would be difficult to find the counterparts of these two figures in early Christian art; we know of no representation of the Princes of the Apostles which bears comparison with them.

They are evidently conceived as the heads of two families, or clans, which, moving in closely compacted masses, are carried apart by the imperious wills of their leaders.

Such a picture would fitly prelude the epic of some great "Völkerwanderung."

The grave figure of Abraham is stationary, immovable as a rock; he clearly remains where he is, his hands laid on the head of his little Isaac; most admirable is the expression of his resolute determination to accept, and abide, and wait.

More passionate is the movement of Lot, who turns swiftly from Abraham with a decision, which is not without a touch of scorn. In spite of its quietness and dignity his figure vibrates with antagonism, and the dissident group, of which he is the head, sweeps away as if carried on the wings of irrepressible repulsion.

VII. Clearly the subject represented is a dividing of ways. It is evident that the point of difference is one involving issues of deep and wide reaching importance.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The motive given in the Biblical narrative, the friendly separation of kinsmen for convenience of pasturage, is all too trivial to have produced passions on so grandiose a scale, or to have clothed them in gestures speaking of such noble self-restraint.

An outwardly similar circumstance is pictured in the Jacob series—the separation of the flocks of Jacob from those of Laban. But how different is the treatment!—the one scene an idyl of pastoral life, the other the tragic and determined separation of men united by the closest ties of blood. The difference between these pictures, the subject-matter of which is so externally similar, shows how far the artist's ideal was from the simple translation of the verbal narrative into pictorial form. It is clear that here, as in the previous pictures, the outward circumstances are considered as nothing more than the vehicle of some especial thought.

VIII. What is the thought or tendency pictured?

In the centre of the composition are two family groups, one of which moves solemnly and emphatically apart from the other.

The group to the right, headed by Lot, *moves* towards a town in the background—Sodom.

Abraham, on the other hand, is stationary, quiet and steadfast. He stands outside a building characterised as a sacred place by its architecture, and by the tree by which it is overshadowed. His hand rests on the head of the little Isaac.

IX. Now Isaac was not yet born at the time of the separation of Abraham from Lot; his birth was foretold by the Angels who visited Abraham on their way to destroy Sodom, where Lot then lived. Such divergences from fact are never purposeless. He assuredly stands here for the promised offspring of Abraham, for the People of God, who were to be as numerous as the stars of Heaven.

Two races seem to be here contrasted: this unborn people, with Abraham their father; and Lot and his people, who turn passionately from them.

S. Paul, in his letter to the Christians of Rome, after having expressed his overwhelming love for his kinsmen "after the flesh," writes: "But they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are the

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

children of God, but the Children of Promise." And he goes on to say that the Children of Promise are "even *us*, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles."*

Justin Martyr expresses the same thought in his pungent way.

"The true spiritual Israel and descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham . . . are we," he cries, "who have been led to God through this crucified Christ." †

As to you, he adds, addressing the Jew Trypho, you have disobeyed His law, and slighted His covenant, your ears are closed, your eyes are blinded, and your hearts hardened.

X. In the Book of Jubilees, a "Volksbibel" of ultra-Jewish tendencies compiled in the first century, Lot, Abraham's brother's son, is spoken of as his natural heir, and the Patriarch's grief, when he separated himself from him, is expatiated on.

"And in the fourth year of this week of years Lot separated from him, and dwelt in Sodom; and the people of Sodom were great sinners, and acted wickedly in their hearts. And Abraham grieved that his brother's son should separate himself from him, for he was childless. In this year . . . after Lot had separated himself from him . . . God spake to Abraham, and said unto him, Lift up thine eyes upon the place where thou art, towards the north, and the south, and the west, and the east. All this land which thou seest will I give to thee; and I will make thy seed as numerous as the sand of the sea." ‡

XI. According to the point of view embodied in this apocryphal writing, Lot deliberately cut himself off from his race, and thereby forfeited his inheritance.

This view, if Lot be taken as representing the race of Abraham "according to the flesh," harmonises with that taken by S. Paul in his letter to the Romans. "The Gentiles," he says, "attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law" § . . . "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, ears that they should not hear, unto this very day." ||

XII. A deep and irrepressible strain of indignation against the Jews breaks out again and again in Justin's argument with Tryphon. "Other

* Romans ix. 7, 8.

† 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xi.

‡ 'Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments,' edited by E. Kautsch, I., p. 64.

§ Romans ix. 30, 31.

|| *Ibid.* xi. 8.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

nations," he cries, "have not inflicted on us and on Christ such wrongs as you have, who in very truth are the authors of the wicked prejudice against the Just One; and us who hold by Him. . . . You selected and sent from Jerusalem chosen men through all the land to spread the report that the atheistic heresy of the Christians had sprung up. . . . You displayed great zeal in publishing through all the lands bitter and dark and unjust things against the only blameless and righteous Light sent by God." *

XIII. A calmer and more aristocratic spirit inspired the author of this mosaic, who pictured Lot as noble; an attitude harmonious with that of S. Paul towards his kinsmen. "I bear them witness," he cries, "that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

XIV. The subject-matter of the Apostle's letter is, in part, that of the picture, namely the voluntary separation of the Jewish people from the Promised Child, by which act they forfeited the promises, and cut themselves off from the 'Plebs Dei.'

PASTORAL SCENE BELOW THE "SEPARATION OF ABRAHAM AND LOT."

Almost entirely re-executed in coloured stucco.

In mosaic are only the recumbent and grazing sheep behind the shepherd, and the head of the white sheep to the right, which the restorer has represented as gambolling. There are traces of mosaic near both plants. The figure of the shepherd has no connection with antique art, and is to be attributed to the fancy of the restorer.

All that can be learned from the fragments that remain of this picture is, the fact that a pastoral scene was originally depicted below The Separation of Abraham and Lot.

CONCLUSION

This brief survey of the three pictures, which are all that remain of the mutilated series by which this great picture-cycle is inaugurated, has disclosed the period at which it was composed.

It is evident that the stratum of thought to which it belongs is not that of the fifth, but of the second century, or of the beginning of the third.

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xvii.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is not pictured as the priestly oblation of a Host at an Altar, but as the offering of Bread and Wine in considerable quantities, in accordance, not with the ritual of the fifth century, but with the simple practice of the second, as described by Justin Martyr.

The visit of The Three Angels to Abraham is not pictured as pre-figuring the doctrine of the Trinity, according to the interpretation universally accepted from the fifth century onwards, but as a Theophany with attendant Angels; a conception current at the time of Justin Martyr.

The Separation of Lot from Abraham is associated with the thought of the rejection of Abraham's Child, the Child of Promise and Faith, by his kinsmen according to the flesh.

In the fifth century the Jews played no *rôle* in Christian thought; but at the time of Hadrian the dramatic fulfilment of the prophecies of Christ, the complete destruction of Jerusalem, the building of the Temple of Jupiter—the Abomination of Desolation—on the site of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the extinction of the Jews, not as a race, but as a nation, had lifted them into the forefront of Christian observation, which was fixed in awed horror on the retributive disasters which had befallen them.

“Your land,” says Justin Martyr to Trypho, “is desolate; your gardens burned with fire; strangers eat your fruit in your presence: not one of you may go up into Jerusalem . . . these things have happened to you in equity and justice, for you have slain the Just One . . . and now you reject those who hope in Him, and in Him who sent Him, God the Almighty, and Maker of All Things—cursing in your Synagogues those that believe in Christ.”*

Considerations of a very varied character point therefore to the same period as the date at which the pictures in question were designed, namely, the second century, or the beginning of the third.

Artistic considerations of type, style, composition, technique, and above all, quality, indicate the same date, the age of the Antonines, or the epoch immediately subsequent to it.

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xvi.

THE SECOND TYPOLOGICAL SERIES :

JACOB

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

- I. Fulness and length with which the story of Jacob is pictured.
- II. The Picture-Bible theory.
- III. Is this series historical, or does it consist of "Tendenzbilder" ?
- IV. Augustine's view of Jacob's marriages,
- V. Not reflected in the Sicinian mosaics.
- VI. Jacob's ownership of the flocks.
- VII. The subject-matter of these pictures only intelligible when judged by third century standards.
- VIII. Jacob in Justin Martyr's typology.
- IX. Jacob in the Book of the Jubilees.
- X. Bishop Caesarius.
- XI. Bucolic character of the series, its mystic undercurrent.
- XII. Jacob as Bridegroom and Shepherd.
- XIII. Characterisation of the persons represented.
- XIV. A comparison between the typology of the Epistle of Barnabas, and that of this series.
- XV. Its artistic value merely that of ill-preserved copies.

I. THE series recording the life of Jacob as shepherd consists of seven double-pictures ; that is to say, of fourteen compositions, two only of which are too ruined to be objects of interest.

It is, moreover, approximately complete, the original decorations of two entire picture-spaces only being lacking : one filled by a worthless representation of Jacob's Dream, of the time of Cardinal Pinelli (about 1600) ; and a second a fantastic subject of the same date which succeeds The Meeting of Jacob and Esau ; a third half-panel is undecorated, that under Jacob's Service. If these spaces were occupied, as are other similar

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

spaces, by two pictures each, and the third by one, and if to these be added the four pictures in which Jacob appears as an accessory, necessary only to the intelligibility of the scene pictured, then this series originally numbered no less than twenty-two pictures, and probably more; whereas the Abraham series consists, in its present state, of four only, the Moses series of twenty, the Joshua series of twelve: it is treated therefore with a fulness and breadth not accorded to the history of any other Patriarch or leader.

II. It has been suggested, and the theory has obtained credence, that the decorations of S. Maria Maggiore are copied from an illustrated Bible of the type of the illuminated Octateuchs of the Vatican.

This theory is discredited by the unequal accent laid on the circumstances of Jacob's life, some being treated with a fulness and breadth certainly not due to their intrinsic value, while others of not minor interest are ignored; whereas, inseparable from the idea of book-illustration is that of a series of compositions in which all the salient features of the narrative are reflected in the sequence in which they are related.

III. The didactic character of the preceding series makes it *a priori* not improbable that the incidents chosen for representation were selected because they illustrated some theological idea; it is important therefore to determine whether the scenes pictured are conceived realistically and historically, or mystically and didactically.

The events from the life of the first of the Patriarchs pictured in the foregoing series are treated typologically; and this is not surprising, for the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek is expressly characterised as mystic in the New Testament; and The Visit of the Three Angels was early accepted as of similar character; but it is otherwise with the story of Jacob, of whom S. Paul alone of the Apostles speaks, and then only as an example of election, as "a vessel of grace" not because his works were meritorious, but because of the "purpose of God." *

IV. Augustine deals with Jacob's relations to Laban's daughters fully, but in an apologetic tone: he explains that he wished to marry only one of Laban's daughters; but Leah was imposed on him by a fraud. His wives' maids also bore him children; this Augustine attempts to excuse by the plea that this was in accordance with the wish of his wives,

* Romans ix. 11.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

and that thus alone could he establish the people of Israel on the basis of twelve tribes.*

Virginity or ascetic monogamy being the Christian ideal of the fifth century, what wonder that a commentator who treated Jacob's history realistically, and yet wished to recommend it to the admiration and imitation of his readers, found his matrimonial history embarrassing. It is a subject to which neither Prudentius, nor Paulinus of Nola, nor Ambrosiaster allude in their metrical accounts of religious pictures.

V. But the composer of the Sicinian mosaics, far from sharing this feeling, dwells on Jacob's connection with Leah and Rachel with leisurely complacency, representing him no less than six times in the company of his two wives. Obviously he did not share Augustine's scruples about these marriages.

VI. Jacob's struggle with Laban about the ownership of the sheep is also pictured with a completeness difficult to account for, its subject-matter being, one would have thought, out of place in a series of which the aim was the representation of a few chosen subjects, illustrating an especial point of view.

VII. The difficulties and anomalies inseparable from the consideration of these representations of Jacob's history from the realistic standpoint of the fifth century vanish if they be judged by the standards of the second or third, the theologians of which viewed the Old Testament as a mine of typology, and pressed its incidents, even when most prosaic, into the service of a predetermined mystic conception, making but short work of difficulties arising from the unpoetic "letter," of which Justin says: "We will be able to rise above it, even if slightly acquainted with figurative modes of expression:" and by a "figurative mode of expression" he means what to the modern eye seems the direct expression of a simple fact.

VIII. In his typology Jacob figures as a prototype of Christ.

Being anxious that Trypho should view him in this light, he develops this point fully,† speaking of him as a type of Christ (*τύπος*) and as Christ in an "allegorical sense" (*ἐν τροπολογία*).

His point of view being that of the composer of these pictures, it is worth while to quote in full one of the chief arguments he uses.

* 'De Civitate Dei,' Lib. xvi. 38.

† See chapters xxxvi., c., cxxx., cxxxiv., cxxxv.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“Your blind and ignorant teachers,” he says, “permit . . . each man to have four or five wives, and if any one sees a beautiful woman and desires to have her, they quote the doings of Jacob . . . and of other Patriarchs, and maintain that such things are not wrong. . . .

“But each act of this sort was the accomplishment of a mystery.

“I will indicate what dispensation and prophecy was fulfilled in Jacob’s marriages, in order that you may realise that in dwelling only on the base and grovelling passions by which they were prompted, your teachers lose sight of the divine motive for the sake of which they were permitted.

“Attend therefore to what I am about to say.

“The marriages of Jacob were types of that which Christ should accomplish. It was not lawful for Jacob to marry two sisters at once.

“He served Laban for one of his daughters, and, being deceived in obtaining her, he served again seven years.

“Leah is your people and congregation, but Rachel is our Church. For these and for the servants in both Christ serves, even now.

“Moreover, whereas Noah gave his two sons the seed of the third as servants, Christ came to restore freedom both to the sons, and to the servants . . . conferring the same honour on all who keep His commandments.

“Thus the children of the free women and of the bondwomen born to Jacob are all sons, and equal in dignity.

“Thus, what was to be, was foretold . . . according to foreknowledge.”*

Irenaeus speaks in a similar tone :

“Jacob bore all things for the sake of the youngest, who had beautiful eyes, even for Rachel, who typifies the Church, for the sake of which Christ suffered.” †

Justin treats of Jacob’s relation to Laban also in the chapter from which we have quoted.

“Jacob,” he says, “served Laban for speckled and spotted sheep.

“Christ served, even to the slavery of the Cross, for the various and many formed races of man, acquiring them by the blood and mystery of the Cross. Jacob was called Israel ; Israel has been shown to be Christ, who is, and is called ‘ Jesus ’ ” ‡

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxxxiv.

† Migne Patr. S. G. vii., 1046.

‡ ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxxxiv.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

He goes on to show that all Isaiah's prophecies in which "Jacob the servant of the Lord" is spoken of, refer to Christ.

"Jacob," he quotes, "is my servant, I will uphold him; and Israel is my elect, my soul shall relieve him; I have given him my spirit, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . . and in his name shall the Gentiles trust. Is it Jacob the Patriarch," he asks, "in whom ye and the Gentiles shall trust, or is it not rather Christ? . . . If, therefore," he adds, and this thought is the basis, not of this series only, but of the entire cycle, "Christ be Israel and Jacob, we are the true people of Israel." *

IX. Justin Martyr was born in Palestine in about 110 A.D., and was consequently probably familiar with a popular Jewish version of the Book of Genesis, the "Smaller Genesis," or "The Book of the Jubilees," probably compiled a generation or two before his time. †

In this book, which has only recently been re-discovered, and the preservation of which is due to the interest with which it was regarded by the Christian Church, a disproportionately prominent *rôle* is allotted to Jacob. Incidents and conversations are recorded of which there is no hint in the canonical writings.

Abraham recognises him as his true heir, and the founder of the Promised People. "Thou shalt build up my house," he cries, "thou and thy seed shall abide for ever." And to Rebecca he says: "I know that God has chosen him to found the people that shall rise over all the people that are on the face of the earth . . . for he will be a blessing to us, and to all people."

It may be that the prominence given to Jacob, and the belief prevalent among Jews that as the Children of Israel they were the Chosen People (a belief presumably held by the Jew Trypho), may have induced Justin to dwell at such length on his history, and, while accepting the leading part allotted him, to deduce from it the diametrically opposite conclusion, that the earth is destined to be the empire, not of the material people of Jacob, which was accursed, but of the spiritual seed of Israel.

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cxxxv.

† Schürer, 'Geschichte des Jüdischen Volks im Zeitalter Jesus Christi,' vol. iii., p. 274 ff., third edition, Leipzig, 1898. Charles, 'A New Translation of the Book of Jubilees,' *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1893-95. E. Kautsch, 'Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments,' vol. ii., p. 31 ff. Tübingen, 1900.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

In this connection he says :

“There are two houses of Jacob, the one begotten of flesh and blood, the other of faith and the spirit ; of the one it is written, ‘ He has sent away his People, the House of Jacob, because the land was full of soothsayers and diviners ;’ but to the other, God saith, ‘ Come now, O House of Jacob, let us walk together in the light of the Lord.’”*

The expression of these thoughts in this series, not merely in their generic form, but precisely in the phases and aspects through which they pass in the hands of Justin, is a proof that his conception of Jacob as the mystic Israel, which is Christ, was not a weapon forged by himself for service in the war then raging between Christianity and Judaism ; for the artist would not have made use of types and images of which he was not sure that they were generally intelligible to his Christian spectators.

X. A somewhat similar interpretation of the story of Jacob is to be found more than two centuries later in the writings of the Bishop Caesarius of Arles (died 452), who speaks of Rachel as representing the Gentiles, and Leah the Jews. But the simplicity of Justin’s conception has evaporated ; there is something forced and artificial in the Bishop’s development of the theme. He shrinks from too close an identification of Jacob with Christ, but lays stress on the circumstance that the three Patriarchs, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, found their wives by wells, as the Church, the Bride of Christ ; is found by the waters of baptism.†

XI. The affinities of the composer of the Sicinian mosaics are not with Caesarius, but with Justin Martyr, whose learned and pungent polemic he has transmuted into a bucolic idyl, with an illusive, yet ever present current of deeper meaning. So skilfully has he followed the philosopher’s parable from step to step, wisely rejecting that which lies outside the range of pictorial suggestion, that he has succeeded in reconciling the expression of an abstract idea with the direct presentment of a number of simple scenes. He has followed Justin Martyr also in underlining the diversity of the parts played by Leah and Rachel.

XII. Christ as Shepherd, a poetic conception which the frescoes of the Catacombs has rendered familiar, is a figure which should reign in

* This second house of Jacob says Justin, are one. (‘ Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxxxv.)

† ‘ Homilies of Caesarius,’ Migne, vol. xxxix. p. 1759 ff.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

our imaginations while our bodily eyes follow this series of representations of scenes from the life of the Shepherd Jacob.

But, whereas the Good Shepherd of the Catacombs, although endlessly varied in gesture and pose, is always isolated,* the Shepherd of the Sicinian mosaics is invariably grouped with other figures, to whom he stands in vivid and human relation.

However, Jacob is not conceived realistically; although the events pictured cover a long period of time (Jacob was forty years old when he served for Rachel, fifty when he shared Laban's flock), his appearance never varies, he is pictured throughout as a beardless youth, in the typical shepherd's dress. This uniformity of representation emphasises the artist's intention to invest his person with allegorical significance.

Nor is he conceived as shepherd only, but also as bridegroom—the mystic bridegroom of Rachel and of Leah.

XIII. The object of these mosaics being edification and instruction as well as decoration, pains have been taken to individualise and characterise each of the persons represented, and, as far as possible, to indicate the point of view from which they were conceived.

One of the chief means the artist had at his disposal was costume.

The dress of each person represented is carefully particularised, and is constant in detail, varying only when such a variation is necessitated by a variation of the conception. When it occurs, therefore, it is intentional, significant, and must not be overlooked.

Jacob, as the "Good Shepherd," wears the shepherd's *exomis*, an orange mantle, and carries a crook.

Leah, who is imaged throughout as a tragic figure, with something of the abstract dignity of a personification, wears sombre, but honourable robes, a purple *dalmatica*, and blue purple *palla*; also a matron's cap, even in the scene before the arrival of Jacob, so completely was she associated in the artist's mind with the idea of the unloved and abandoned wife.

Rachel, on the other hand, wears a gay bride-like *dalmatica*, with wide royal purple *clavi*. Her movements are young and vivid; she gleams like an embodiment of youth and hope, beside the gloomy and retrospective melancholy of her elder sister.

XIV. A modern critic has characterised the contents of the Epistle

* Plate 11, Nos. 1-4; Plate 50, No. 3.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of Barnabas in words which might be applied without essential modification to this series. "No doubt, to the modern reader . . . many of the analogies insisted upon . . . are not merely unconvincing but ridiculous ; but in an age which delighted in mystic exposition, and found latent spiritualities in the barest numerical statistics, the same applications may have seemed instances of the profoundest wisdom ; and in any case they affect the scaffolding of the argument rather than the edifice itself, for there is no want of real insight . . . into the connection between the Old and New Dispensations, by which the former receives its meaning as well as its completion only in the latter."*

XV. As nothing remains of their original workmanship it is difficult to appreciate these pictures artistically.

They have the value only of much restored copies.

* Cruttwell, 'Literary History of Early Christianity,' vol. i. p. 47.

CHAPTER II

JACOB AND RACHEL, LEAH AND LABAN.—ESAU.

II.—JACOB'S BLESSING.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.—XI.).
- IV. The Biblical account realistic.
- V. The absence of certain realistic details ; the introduction of others.
- VI. Is this picture realistic, or a "Tendenzbild" ?
- VII. Its subject the Blessing of Jacob, and not the Fraud.
- VIII. Hand of God in the sky.
- IX. The sacramental significance of the ears of corn, of the vines and of the birds which feed on them.
- X. S. Augustine's sacramental interpretation of this incident.
- XI. Conventional rendering of the locality.

III.—ESAU'S BLESSING.

- I. CONDITION.
- II. COMMENTARY—Jacob's Ladder.

IV.—RACHEL ANNOUNCES JACOB'S ARRIVAL.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY—Garrucci and Ciampini misinterpret the figures of Leah and Rachel.
- V. Character of these figures.

V.—JACOB ENTERS LABAN'S HOUSEHOLD.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY—Character of the two figures which shut the composition in on either side.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

VI.—JACOB SERVES FOR RACHEL.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY—The Shepherd.

VII.—JACOB ASKS THE HAND OF RACHEL.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY—De Rossi's interpretation incorrect.

VIII.—JACOB'S MARRIAGE WITH RACHEL.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY.

IX.—THE COMPACT BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

X.—THE DIVIDING OF JACOB'S SHEEP FROM THOSE OF LABAN.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV. and V.).
- IV. Mystical character of the Blessing of Isaac.
- V. Typological character of Leah and Rachel. Typological significance of the dividing of Jacob's sheep from those of Laban.

XI.—THE INCIDENT OF THE RODS.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY—The Tree.
- V. The Angel of the Lord.
- VI. The treatment of the same subject in the "Vienna Genesis."

XII.—JACOB COMMUNICATES THE COMMAND OF GOD TO LEAH AND RACHEL.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

III. CONDITION.

IV. COMMENTARY—The Lamp.

XIII.—JACOB SENDS MESSENGERS TO ESAU.

I. SUBJECT.

II. DESCRIPTION.

III. CONDITION.

IV. COMMENTARY—Jacob and Esau conceived as antitheses.

XIV.—THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

I. CONDITION.

II. SUBJECT and COMMENTARY.

II.—JACOB'S BLESSING.

Plate 10, No. 1a.

I. SUBJECT.

“God give thee of the Dew of Heaven,
And of the fatness of the Earth,
And plenty of Corn and Wine.
Let peoples serve thee,
And Nations bow down to thee.
Be Lord over thy brethren,
And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.
Cursed be every one that curseth thee,
And blessed be every one that blesseth thee.”

Gen. xxvii. 28, 29.

II. DESCRIPTION.—In the centre of the composition, in front of the draped and columned portico of a large house, is the aged and blind Patriarch, Isaac, stretched on a *cline* of classic design. Beside him is a small gilt tripod.

His hand rests in blessing on the head of Jacob, a boy of some ten years old, in the characteristic dress of a shepherd-prince: the tunica exomis (*i.e.*, a short belted tunic so arranged as to leave the right arm and chest bare), and an orange mantle. A diadem, almost concealed by the locks of his short thick hair, encircles his head.

To the right of the composition stands the much injured figure of Rebecca, almost entirely enveloped in the voluminous folds of a palla of cloth of gold, beneath which the hem of her purple dalmatica is visible. Her gestures express amazement, not untinged with fear or awe. Behind her is the female attendant without whom ladies of rank were rarely

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

pictured. The figure of Rebecca, although much injured, is imposing, and has something of the dignity of a personification.

A garden, rich in birds and flowers, occupies the left half of the picture. In the sky there floats a bank of crimson clouds. Beneath it are the blessings promised Jacob: the fatness of the earth; ears of corn; trellised vine; and also birds.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of a well-preserved early copy, which is impinged upon on three sides by stucco imitation of mosaic.

Antique in sentiment are the central figures, especially that of the blind and venerable Patriarch. The figure of Rebecca has been much injured, and badly restored; of the servant nothing remains but a few stones which serve to show that a similar figure probably once filled a similar position in the original mosaic.

The house, with fine columned and curtained portico, is in good condition, and it is on this model that the other ruined houses which occur in this series should be mentally reconstructed.

The colour-equilibrium of the picture has been destroyed by the intrusion of streams and spots of gold, introduced at a later date in order to give relief to the figures.

The touches of red which convert the ears of corn in the foreground into the semblance of a gigantic heath, are not antique.

The pergolati, with the large birds which are perched upon them, have been renewed, but correspond to the original they have replaced.

The reddened clouds in the sky have been rendered indistinct by restoration; and the hand of God, to which they are accessories only, has been effaced.

COMMENTARY.—IV. The Biblical account of the incident of which this picture has been hitherto accepted as an illustration (namely, the fraud to which Jacob subjected his blind father, and the blessing he obtained thereby), is rich in realistic detail: it speaks of a meal, of "savoury meat," and of Jacob's disguise, the skins of kids used to conceal the smoothness of his hands. All this the artist has chosen to ignore.

V. Comparison of this picture with the representation of a cognate subject, The Visit of the Three Angels to Abraham, and the solemn meal of which they partook, which also terminated with a blessing, reveals surprising divergence of treatment.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

In the one case the food offered, bread, wine, and the "flesh of the sacrifice," are pictured; in the other is nothing of the kind. A table, it is true, stands near Isaac's couch, but it is empty. Jacob holds no dish in his hands; neither is there any suggestion of a disguise.

Indeed, so anxious has the artist been to avoid the details so circumstantially set forth in the Book of Genesis that he has composed a picture the subject-matter of which it would be difficult to identify apart from its setting. This is the more curious, as it is rich in accessories which occupy an unusually prominent position, and almost rival the central group in interest. So much so, indeed, that it is quite intelligible that it should have been interpreted as a fragment of antique genre, a domestic scene within the precincts of a "villa," with wide spreading gardens, gay with vine-pergolas, and birds. "The artist has beautified this scene," says a commentator, "by picturing Isaac's home as set within a pleasant garden, rich with birds and flowers."*

VI. This picture admits of two types of interpretation. The scene is either conceived realistically, in which case the artist has thrown the reins to his imagination, giving much that is charming, but withholding what is essential, to the extent of making his historical subject-matter unintelligible—a capital crime against the canons of antique art; or, the interpretations hitherto put forward are not correct, and the composition is didactic, consisting, like the pictures which have preceded it, of parts as carefully chosen and put together as the words of a poem, and so arranged as to beautifully illustrate a given theme.

VII. The account of the incident in the Book of Genesis falls naturally into two parts: the story of the means by which Jacob deceived his father, and the blessing bestowed on him.

All reference to the first phase of the story has been purposely avoided: the second alone is pictured.

VIII. Above the garden in which Isaac blesses Jacob float reddened clouds, which seem at first sight nothing more than a natural adjunct to the tended landscape below. It is strange, however, that they should be the reddened clouds of sunset, whereas landscape throughout the cycle is depicted with reference to its permanent features only, with no regard to any passing effect of light, or time.

* Garrucci, 'Arte Cristiana,' vol. iv. p. 314.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Clouds, moreover, are never used in this art as mere landscape accessories, but always as a symbol of the Divine Presence, sometimes indicated by a hand, as in *The Presentation of Moses*; sometimes by a bust, as in *The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek*; sometimes by a whole figure, as in *The Visit of the Angels to Abraham*. They are always of a form similar to that which the restorer has not succeeded in obliterating here, namely, small, connected clusters of cumulus clouds.

The existence of many analogous examples makes it impossible to doubt that the Hand of God was originally stretched out of the midst of these fiery vapours; and that it signified here, as elsewhere, the presence of the Almighty, and His participation in the event pictured, which is thus designated as in a peculiar sense the outcome of His will.* In this picture it signifies that the Almighty is the source and giver of the blessing of which Isaac was but the mouthpiece, uttering words of the depth and far-reaching import of which he was not aware.

"God give thee of the Dew of Heaven,
And of the fatness of the Earth,
And plenty of Corn and Wine.
Let Peoples serve thee,
And Nations bow down to thee."

IX. Ears of corn (not flowers, as has been both said, and pictured) and vine-pergolas occupy a prominent position in the foreground. The landscape did not figure in the artist's imagination as Garrucci's "ameno giardino." † It is something of deeper import than an appanage to a rich man's house. It is the translation into pictorial form of the blessing with which God blessed Jacob . . . "the Dew of Heaven, Corn, and Wine," which the Church did not hesitate to transmute into the "good things" on which the spiritual life of man is nourished, the Corn and the Wine of the Sacrament, which is the body and blood of the Saviour of whom Jacob was a prototype, and whose sacrifice it was that Isaac, unknowingly, prophesied.

The presence of Birds proves that this was the artist's thought, for they are his invention, no reference being made to them in the Biblical text. They are intended as a clue, being the universally understood early Christian symbol of the soul, occurring in innumerable frescoes, reliefs,

* Compare Plate 13, No. 1, and Plate 52, No. 1.

† 'Arte Crist.,' vol. iv. p. 314. Ears of corn are depicted in a similar way on the column of Marcus Aurelius. (See Plate 25, No. 2.)

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

and church decorations.* They feed, in the mosaic, on the fruit of the vine, that is to say, on the mystic body of Christ.

X. S. Augustine, always explicit, writing in the fifth century, with possibly just such an ancient picture in his mind, translates its illusive imagery into pellucid speech.

“The Blessing of Jacob,” he explains, “is the message of Christ to all people. The World, like a field, is filled with the sweet odour of the Name of Christ. His is the abundance of Corn and Wine; that is, the Abundance of those who are united in the Corn and Wine of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. People serve him, and princes adore him.” †

XI. Although the central group is placed outside the pillared portico of a temple-like building, the artist did not intend to suggest that the blessing bestowed upon Jacob was conferred out of doors.

In classic art, locality is conventionally indicated by a symbol: the sea by a dolphin; a temple by a building overshadowed by a tree, representing a sacred grove; etc.

This convention was naturally part of the speech of contemporary Christian classic art, and is constantly met with, especially in compositions which, as here, besides being subject-pictures, are architectonic decorations, on which, therefore, a certain uniform scheme of colour is forced. It is for this reason that these mosaics are composed in three bands of colour—green, sunlit yellow, and blue-grey, which run in continuous horizontal strata throughout the entire cycle.

As the foreground, therefore, necessarily consisted of a uniformly green strip of grass in which the *dramatis personæ* stood, the artist, if he wished to indicate that the scene took place within doors, could do so only by using some conventional sign. He actually did so by placing an unmistakable attribute in the background: an Apse in The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah; an Exedra in that of Jacob and Rachel; a Palace in The Adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's Daughter, etc. The presence of these accessories informed the spectator that the incident pictured took place within a house, a public building, or a palace, as the case might be.

* Plate 7, No. 2. Plate 44, No. 5.

† “Benedictio igitur Jacob predicatio est Christi in omnibus gentibus. Odore nominis Christi, sicut ager, mundus impletur, ejus est multitudo frumenti et vini. Hoc est multitudo quam collegit frumentum et vinum in sacramento corporis et sanguinis ejus. Ei serviunt gentes, ipsum adorant principes.”—‘De Civ. Dei,’ Bk. xvi., chap. 37.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

In like manner, the disciples actually stand in a green meadow, in the Appearance of Christ to His disciples in an "Upper Chamber," a mosaic in the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, but a closed door rising solitary against a blue sky shows us that that they are to be understood as behind "closed doors."

In pictures of towns in the Virgil of the Vatican statues of the gods stand either on the apex of the pediment of their respective temples, or between the columns of their porticoes. The artist obviously did not wish the spectator to believe that they were actually thus placed, but to realise to whom the temples in question were dedicated.

III.—ESAU RECEIVES ISAAC'S BLESSING.

Plate 10, No. 1b.

I. CONDITION.—Nothing remains of the mosaic copy by which the original picture was replaced except a small portion of the building behind Isaac, a few gleaming stones in his head, and part of the curtain behind Rebecca.

The remainder of the picture has been reconstructed in coloured stucco-imitation of mosaic.

II. COMMENTARY.—It would seem that the restorer to whose lot it fell to make the last reconstruction of this ruined picture, of which only a few stones remained as an indication of its original design, did not succeed in divining its subject-matter correctly. It is improbable that the lost picture, which supplemented a representation of the Blessing of Jacob so interpreted as to signify the Sacrifice of Christ, should have been followed by a representation of the Blessing of Esau.

It is more likely that Jacob's departure for Syria was pictured.

"And Isaac called Jacob," it is written, "and blessed him, and charged him and said unto him, . . . Arise, and go."*

JACOB'S LADDER.—The following composition in stucco, representing Jacob's Ladder, is of no value, being a poor example of Post-Renaissance art. It proves that the original had already perished three hundred years ago.

IV.—RACHEL ANNOUNCES JACOB'S ARRIVAL.

Plate 10, No. 2a.

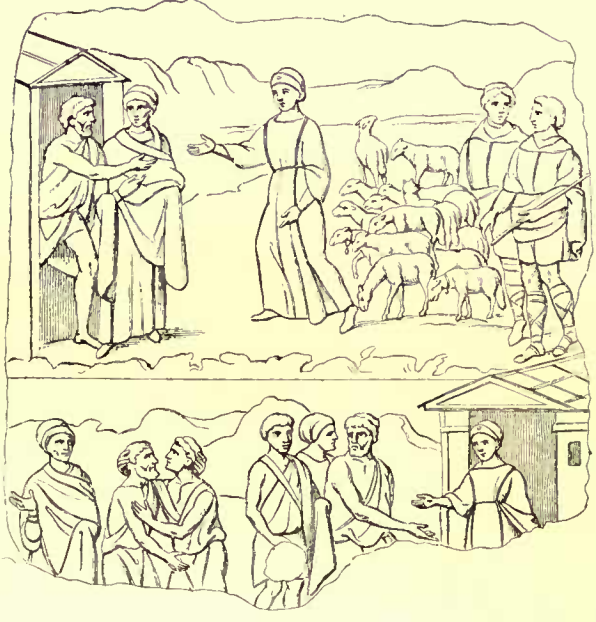
I. SUBJECT. "And Jacob told Rachel . . . and she ran and told her father."—Gen. xxix. 12.

* Gen. xxviii. 1, 2.

1.



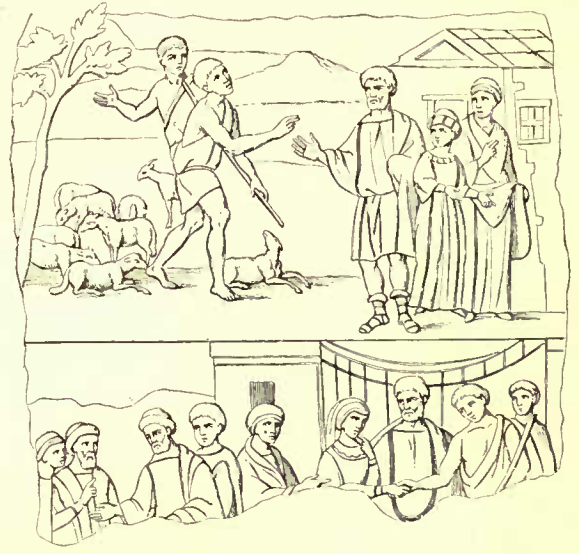
2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

“Now Leah is your People, and your Synagogue, but Rachel is our Church.”*

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture is composed of two distinct groups, connected by the vivid figure of a young woman.

The group on the right consists of a flock of sheep, accompanied by their shepherd, who wears a short white tunic (*tunica exomis*), an orange mantle, and is shod in purple; a crook is in his hand, and he is accompanied by a subordinate who turns to him with reverent and submissive gestures. His mien is solemn, his gestures not without a hint of tragedy, as of one embarking on a perilous enterprise.

On the extreme left is a temple-like building, from which issues an old man, who stretches a questioning hand towards the young girl who approaches him eagerly.

To his left is an elderly woman soberly clad, in purple dalmatica and palla (therefore a woman of rank), and matron's cap. She does not share the old man's joyful excitement, but turns towards him with an expression of pained apprehension.

At the head of the flock of sheep, and serving as a *trait d'union* between the two groups, is the radiant figure of a young woman in an orange dalmatica, with broad purple clavi (the festival dress of a lady of rank). Her hands are raised in speech addressed to the old man. She seems a delegate of the shepherd who follows her.

The persons represented are obviously Jacob and Rachel, Laban and Leah.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of a copy, of which all that remains are a strip of sky and land on either side of the horizon, and a band of pale green in the foreground.

The figures of Leah, of Rachel, of Laban, of Jacob, and of the shepherd have been restored in stucco, in which, however, fragments of mosaic are still embedded, showing that the original colour-distribution and the movements of the persons represented have been approximately retained; their actual execution, however, is characterised by the complete absence of any sentiment of style.

COMMENTARY.—IV. If to see clearly and to interpret objectively be necessary to the understanding of historical compositions, how much more are they to the correct interpretation of pictures of which the

* Justin Martyr, 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cxxxiv.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

significance is typological; and in which an error as to a personality, or as to the character of a detail, may involve a false conception of the significance of an entire cycle of representations.

The recognition of a point of view separated from modern habits of thought by a gulf of seventeen hundred years is in itself difficult. This difficulty is immeasurably heightened here by the form in which that point of view is presented—in that namely of an unintelligent translation. So poor was this translation that Ciampini mistook the figure of Rachel for that of Jacob, an error which sheds a sinister light on its condition at his time, and bids us accept the present state of the picture cautiously. Garrucci, after correcting this mistake, goes on to explain the figure beside Laban as that of Rachel's nurse, whereas a parallel figure characterised by similarity in every detail of dress and bearing appears in every scene of this sub-series, and, without doubt, represents Leah. According to this theory Rachel was attended by her nurse when she went to water her father's sheep, but on meeting her cousin sent the servant home to prepare her father for Jacob's arrival.*

Thus Ciampini and Garrucci eliminated one of them Rachel, and the other Leah.

V. The manner in which these two sisters are respectively characterised gives a clue to the thought, which is the *raison d'être* of the prominence given to their connection with Jacob.

Leah wears sombre but honourable robes, a purple dalmatica, and blue-purple palla (garments which characterise their wearer as a person of position), and a married woman's cap, even in the scene representing Jacob's arrival; before her marriage therefore.† It would never have occurred to an antique spectator to interpret a stately woman thus characterised as a nurse, however respectable.

Rachel, on the other hand, with her gay bride-like dress, and young vivid movements, is a personification of youth, and hope, and success, in

* "Il pittore ha supposto che Rachele non andasse sola appresso la greggia ma insieme colla sua serva, o nutrice, la quale è stata avviata da lei per avvisare il padre."—Garrucci, 'Storia dell Arte Crist.,' vol. iv. p. 24.

† This dress is worn by the Prophetess Anna, and by the Sibyl on the Arch, and by the Personifications of the "Ecclesia ex Gentibus" and the "Ecclesia ex Circumcisione" in the churches of S. Sabina and of S. Pudenziana.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

designed contrast to this sombre embodiment of retrospection and resignation.

“Leah is your People and your Synagogue, but Rachel is our Church,” says Justin Martyr to the Jew Trypho,*

V.—JACOB ENTERS LABAN'S HOUSEHOLD.

Plate 10, No. 2b.

I. SUBJECT.—“And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. . . . And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.”—Gen. xxix. 13, 14.

“Now Leah is your People and your Synagogue, but Rachel is our Church.”

II. DESCRIPTION.—Two figures, evidently juxtaposed with a view to contrast, shut in this composition on the right, and on the left. The one, grand, tragic, draped in purple, with despair on her countenance and in her gestures; the other, young, radiant, dressed in orange, her hands raised in joyous welcome, her figure breathing buoyancy, rapture, life. Obviously Leah and Rachel. Between them are two groups. In the first, Jacob and Laban embrace. In the second, Jacob is led by Laban to a house, in front of which stands radiant Rachel. Behind him is a shadowy figure so restored as to suggest Leah, but which more probably originally represented the attendant shepherd without whom he is never pictured.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value of a much injured copy, of which but little is free from subsequent restorations. The general distribution of the figures has evidently been retained.

Of the antique copy nothing remains in the figures of Laban and Jacob embracing, except a few stones in their heads, which prove that originally two heads, one with white, the other with brown hair, were represented in close proximity to each other. The head of Rachel is much disfigured by restoration; her bridal dress is modern. The fine figure of Leah, which has all the tragic grandeur of a personification, retains evident traces of its classic origin.

The opaque sky, the mountains, and fragments of the figures are executed in mosaic, but are not original, though earlier than the lower

* Justin Martyr, ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxxxiv.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

part of the picture, which has been entirely reconstructed in stucco. The window, let into what was probably originally a column forming part of a portico, the roof and pediment of which are correctly rendered, bear witness to the restorer's lack of archæological knowledge.

IV. COMMENTARY.—This picture consists of two groups, each of which is associated with one of the two female figures which shut it in on either side.

The significance of the group on the left is obvious: Jacob is lovingly welcomed by Laban; while Leah stands aside, a Cassandra-like figure, foreboding woe.

Garrucci interprets the incident represented on the right as the introduction of Jacob into Laban's house, and in this inevitable and, as far as it goes, correct explanation, he is followed by de Rossi, "en bas Laban et Jacob s'embrassent, et Rachel reçoit Jacob dans la maison." Surely, however, this conception of Rachel, as having run home to apprise her father of Jacob's arrival, and then, her preparations made, running brightly out to welcome her cousin, is too slight and banal to have been translated into imperishable stone, and woven into the decoration of one of the great basilicas of Rome. Surely the artist connected his subject-matter with thoughts which lifted it on to a higher level.

The sisters are significantly characterised in this double picture. In both instances apprehension, growing in intensity, is the note of Leah's figure, and joy that of Rachel's.

Although they form part of different scenes, yet the artist has availed himself of the possibilities of the composition viewed as an æsthetic whole, to underline their personal characteristics by placing them as pendants to the extreme right and left of the picture, to which they thus give a unity it would otherwise lack.

VI.—JACOB SERVES FOR RACHEL.

Plate 10, No. 3.

I. SUBJECT.—"Jacob loved Rachel, and he said (to Laban), I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter. . . . And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."—Gen. xxix. 18, 20.

"Jacob serves Laban for one of the daughters; and, being deceived

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

in the obtaining of the younger, he again serves seven years. Now Leah is your People and Synagogue ; but Rachel is our Church. And for these Christ . . . even now serves." *

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture consists of three parts: a central group of four persons ; a group of three shepherds on the right ; and a single shepherd guarding his sheep on the left.

The central group consists of the young girl Rachel ; her father on her right, and her elder sister on her left. Behind them is an injured head of indeterminate character.

In the group of shepherds to the right, one, Jacob, is prominent ; his right hand is raised in solemn and emphatic speech ; Rachel and he are connected by the gestures, which reveal the subject-matter of the scene—their union. Rachel's hands are stretched towards him, but her father draws her attention to a scene on the left, the figure of a young shepherd leaning wearily on his staff as he keeps watch over his sheep ; an eloquent symbol of the long seven years' service by which she is to be earned. Leah's movement and expression breathe apprehension.

III. CONDITION.—Like its companions this picture has only the value of a copy, of which little remains except the composition, and possibly a narrow strip of sky and hill-top bordering the horizon, which resembles the sky in *The Parting of Abraham and Lot*, both in technique and colour. All the figures have been reconstructed in stucco, in which fragments both of the original mosaic and of later restoration are embedded ; these fragments show that the general lines of the original picture have been retained.

IV. COMMENTARY.—The centres of this composition are Jacob and Rachel. Jacob asks her hand in marriage ; Laban points to a scene which may at first sight be mistaken for a genre representation of the life of a shepherd.

The elements of which it is composed, the tree, the sheep, the shepherd leaning on his staff, are frequent in the art of the Catacombs, and of the Sarcophagi.

The following picture has utterly perished. It may have represented Jacob as the shepherd of Laban's flock, as the next composition pictures an event which followed immediately on the completion of his seven years' service, namely, his demand for Rachel's hand.

* Justin Martyr, 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cxxxiv.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

VII.—JACOB ASKS THE HAND OF RACHEL.

Plate 10, No. 4a.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled.”—Gen. xxix. 21.

II. DESCRIPTION.—In the centre of the picture are Jacob and Laban, their hands raised in animated dialogue.

Behind Laban is his home, and his two daughters ; Rachel in her brilliant dalmatica ; Leah, though unmarried, in a matron's cap, and sombre tunic and palla. The hands of both are uplifted with an expression, the precise nature of which, in the present patchwork condition of the mosaic, it is impossible to determine ; they seem to recoil as if in amazement ; Jacob's words evidently relate to weighty matter. Their emotion is reflected in the agitated and emphatic gestures of the shepherd by whom Jacob is attended. Behind Jacob, who wears the exomis, are his sheep, and the fellow-shepherd to whom allusion has been made, without whom he is never represented.

III. CONDITION.—Nothing can be accepted as part of the classic copy except the composition, and possibly some of the sheep to the left.

The figure of Jacob, in spite of the black lines of its contour, has been repaired with intelligence, and has retained much of its pristine character. Constant repairs have rendered the group outside Laban's house styleless. The entire composition is enclosed on three sides in a dark framework of stucco restoration.

Behind Rachel's head is a white patch, converted by the restorer into a sort of veil : it is possibly a portion of the curtain which originally draped Laban's portico.

The gold-barred windows of singularly unclassic form prove that this picture has been restored in mosaic as well as in stucco.

The tamperings of the restorer have seriously affected Rachel's equilibrium ; her head and shoulders are well in front of Laban and Leah, but her feet are distinctly behind them.

IV. COMMENTARY.—This picture was accepted by de Rossi, who followed Garrucci* and Ciampini,† as representing Jacob's outburst of indignation against Laban on the discovery of the fraud practised on him in the matter of Leah. “Nel piano superiore Giacobbe si querela

* ‘Arte Crist.,’ vol. iv. p. 216, No. 2.

† ‘Vet. Mon.,’ vol. i. chap. 22.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

a Labano della sostituzione di Lea a Rachele ; nell' inferiore Giacobbe riceve definitivamente in moglie Rachele."

This explanation is obviously incompatible with the typological signification which we believe to underlie, not only the series as a whole, but each of the links of which it is composed. Moreover, it is not acceptable, even if the realistic interpretation of these pictures were correct ; for it is incredible that the marriage-feast of Jacob and Rachel should have been represented as taking place after the stratagem by which Laban imposed his elder daughter on Jacob ; for in that case we should have to imagine that Laban gave two wedding-feasts for his younger daughter in one week, to both of which the neighbours were invited to witness her marriage and re-marriage to Jacob. Nor is Laban accused of any such absurdity in the Biblical text.

De Rossi's interpretation is open to another objection. According to his hypothesis Jacob had entered Laban's house in marriage on the previous day. Why is he represented in rapid movement across a wide landscape? Such movement is not expressive of anger. According to the conventions of the art of this time the excitement of a verbal struggle is indicated by the movements of the hands only, and not by the agitation of the body.*

Such a movement is, however, essential to the representation of the scene which we believe to be pictured, namely, the moment in which Jacob comes forward to claim his bride, while behind him stretches the wide field of his past seven years' labour.

VIII.—JACOB'S MARRIAGE WITH RACHEL.

Plate 10, No. 4b.

I. SUBJECT.—"And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast."—Gen. xxix. 22.

"And he gave him his daughter Rachel to wife."—Gen. xxix. 28.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This composition consists of two groups, the one representing the invitation to the marriage ceremony ; and the other, the marriage ceremony itself.

Laban, accompanied by an attendant, addresses two friends whom he invites to the marriage feast.

* See for instance the representation of the passionate scene between Moses and the King of Edom, in which the chief actors are remarkable for their self-possession. Plate 22, No. 2b.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

To the right is represented the ceremony of the marriage which is celebrated by Laban himself. The young bride and bridegroom stand before him with clasped hands; behind Jacob is the head of a young man, his "companion"; behind Rachel is the dignified figure of Leah, who stands at her right, in the place of honour.

The background consists of the curved recess of an exedra.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of an antique copy, of which little remains except the composition, and patches of mosaic in some of the heads. All the figures have been subsequently re-executed in stucco, from the throats downwards.

Most of these heads, together with the background on which they are silhouetted, have been so injured by repeated repairs that nothing remains of their former brilliancy of colouring and precision of drawing.

Single heads, however, such as those of Rachel and of Jacob, are still antique in character, indeed a shadow of the charm of the original still lingers about the central group, an idea of the pristine quality which may be gleaned from a similar representation of a parallel subject in a better state of preservation, namely, The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah.

White semi-transparent gauze originally veiled Rachel's head, and floated about her person, as it does about that of Zipporah. Indications of it still remain, which in de Rossi's reproduction have been converted into a nimbus.

IV. COMMENTARY.—The ceremony of the marriage of Jacob and Rachel, which corresponds in type with that of the representation of The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah, is performed by Laban himself, before whom the young couple stand with clasped right hands.

The locality in which the ceremony is celebrated—an exedra, or deep semi-circular niche—proves it to be of a solemn and imposing character. The apse in The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah is intended to produce the same impression on the spectator. The prototype of this composition, common on Roman sarcophagi, on which married couples are constantly represented as standing with clasped hands before Juna Pronuba, is fully discussed in the commentary on its better preserved variation, The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah.

It is at first sight surprising that the place of honour at the bride's

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

right hand, should be accorded to Leah. This is to be ascribed to the secondary mystical meaning underlying and moulding these representations of historical scenes.

The Synagogue preceded the Ecclesia, and may be looked on as its mother.

IX.—THE COMPACT BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN.

Plate 10, No. 5a.

I. SUBJECT.—“Laban said unto Jacob, . . . What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, . . . I will pass through all thy flock to-day, removing from thence every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep . . . and of such shall be my hire.”—Gen. xxx. 31, 32.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Jacob and Laban stand facing each other in the centre of the picture, their right hands raised in the gesture of speech; behind each of them are two shepherds, and a flock of sheep. In the middle distance are buildings, to the right a stone house, to the left what were originally wattle huts, such as are represented in the illustrated Virgil of the Vatican Library.*

III. CONDITION.—Nothing remains of the classic copy, which replaced the original picture at an early date, except the composition. All charm of colour and precision of outline has been destroyed by repeated repairs, and by restoration and reconstruction in such alien materials as stucco and gold.

X.—THE DIVIDING OF JACOB'S SHEEP FROM THOSE OF LABAN.

Plate 10, No. 5b.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Laban removed that day (all) that were ring straked and spotted . . . and gave them into the hands of his sons, and set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob.”—Gen. xxx. 35, 36.

II. DESCRIPTION.—In the centre of the picture stand Laban and Jacob in converse. On either side of them are flocks of sheep, driven by shepherds in opposite directions.

III. CONDITION.—Nothing, except the composition, remains of the classic copy, which has been almost entirely reconstructed in stucco.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Analysis of the first picture belonging to this series led to an unlooked-for conclusion. The able writings of de Rossi, and of other archæologists, had led to the conclusion that it

* MS. Lat. 3867. See also Plate 11, No. 3.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

was a realistic representation of the fraud practised by Jacob on his blind father; but on examination it became clear that its subject-matter was Isaac's Blessing conceived mystically, that Jacob was imaged as a prototype of Christ, that the corn and grapes of his father's prophecy were the bread and wine, which are the mystic sustenance of souls.

The manner in which the apparently simple incident is here handled, and the choice of such accessories only as admit of typological interpretation, prove its purpose to be didactic.

V. The circumstances connected with the marriages of Jacob with Leah and Rachel, which are related in the Bible in a few words, are pictured in this series with a fulness which verges on prolixity; whereas the account of the birth of his children, so pertinent to the Jews, to which thirty verses are granted in the Book of Genesis, is ignored, and this because a mystic significance was attached to the figures of Leah and Rachel, but none to those of Jacob's children. The consistency and unity of the typological point of view from which the varied literary subject-matter of each link in each series is regarded, makes it impossible to doubt that the entire cycle was composed with didactic purpose.

Improbable as it appears at first sight, it is because they lend themselves to the allegorical interpretation needed, that so much stress is laid on the circumstances relating to the separation of Jacob's sheep from those of Laban, and the building up of his own flock.

This subject will be reverted to in the exposition of the typological significance of the series as a whole.

XI.—THE INCIDENT OF THE RODS. GOD COMMANDS JACOB TO DEPART.

Plate 10, No. 6a.

I. SUBJECT.—(1). "And Jacob took him rods . . . and he set the rods . . . over against the flocks . . . in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink."—Gen. xxx. 37-38.

"Hear then how this man, of whom the Scriptures declare that He will come again in glory after His crucifixion, was symbolised both by the tree of life . . . and by events. . . . Moses was sent with a *rod* to effect the redemption of his people . . . he cast a *tree* into the waters

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of Marah. . . . Jacob by putting *rods* into the water-troughs caused the sheep of his uncle to conceive.*

“Jacob served Laban for speckled and many-spotted sheep; and Christ served, even to the slavery of the Cross, for the various and many-formed races of mankind, acquiring them by the blood and mystery of the Cross.” †

(2). “And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return to the land of thy fathers.”—Gen. xxxi. 3.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This composition consists of two scenes, separated from one another by a tree.

(1). To the left a flock of sheep, tended by three shepherds, who hold rods in their hands, approach enclosed water.

(2). To the right stands Jacob, behind whom are two shepherds and a flock of sheep; his right hand is raised, and almost touching that of “the Angel of the Lord,” who, seen from the waist upwards, leans toward him from the midst of crimson clouds.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value of a fairly well preserved antique copy, in which possibly an injured fragment of the original picture is embodied, the white robes of the Angel in the sky. Although poor in execution, and much disfigured by extensive interpolations of gold, its antique charm is not effaced.

IV. COMMENTARY.—The tree which is so striking a feature in this composition, dividing it into two halves, is a sign to the spectator that two incidents are represented, such being the conventional means of dividing, or isolating, incidents in classic continuous pictorial narratives, such as those of Trajan’s Column, of the Column of Marcus Aurelius, of the Joshua Rotulus, etc. It is thus used more than once in the mosaics of this church. ‡

It is not placed here in the middle-distance, but springs up in the immediate foreground, an unusually prominent position when used for this mechanical purpose.

V. Jacob, apprising his wives of his proposed departure in obedience to the command of God, says, “The Angel of the Lord appeared to me in a dream.” In his pictorial rendering of these words the artist has robed the Divine messenger in white tunic and pallium, the

* Justin, ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ ch. lxxxvi.

† *Ibid.* ch. cxxxiv.

‡ Plate 12, No. 1; Plate 26, No. 3b.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

garments of an "Angel,"* but not of Christ, whose dignity is indicated by an imperial purple pallium.†

The head of the Angel has been remodelled by the restorer; doubtless a fair-headed youth of the Apollo type was originally represented.‡

Separated from this scene by a tree is another on which Laban's sheep, accompanied by shepherds bearing rods, are led to water.

VI. COMMENTARY.—The treatment of this incident appears strikingly realistic at first sight. It differs, however, from the treatment of the same scene in the avowedly realistic "Vienna Genesis," in which a wide landscape is pictured, and grazing sheep, which browse not only on the grass, but on the trees.§ They are tended by many shepherds, some of whom repose at full length on the flowery hillside; one of them breaks branches from a tree; another peels poplar wands with a knife; a third drags sheep up to an elderly man holding a striped wand in his outstretched hand; another holds a similar stick over a group of sheep. In short, the scene is pictured with an abundance of trivial detail, which has been ignored by the Sicinian artist, who has retained nothing but what is essential to his purpose: water, the shepherds with rods in their hands, the sheep, and the tree. So severe a process of elimination speaks of a purpose.

XII.—JACOB COMMUNICATES THE COMMAND OF GOD TO LEAH AND RACHEL.

Plate 10, No. 6b.

I. SUBJECT.—"And Jacob . . . called Rachel and Leah . . . unto his flock, and said unto them . . . The Angel of the Lord said unto me in the dream . . . I am the God of Bethel . . . now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy nativity."

"And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him . . . Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."—Gen. xxxi. 4, 11, 13, 16.

II. DESCRIPTION.—To the right is Jacob, associated, as always, with his flock, and with his assistants, who are occupied with the sheep in the background. His figure is grave, imposing; his right hand is raised in solemn speech addressed to his wives, who listen, and answer,

* Incorrectly reproduced as a "Christ" by Garrucci, compare Plate 10, No. 6a of the present work; and by de Rossi.

† Plate 6.

‡ Compare Plate 1.

§ Plate 11, Nos. 5 and 6.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Rachel with alacrity, Leah with hesitation. Their children cling about the women's skirts.

Behind them is their home, a temple-like building with pediment and gilt bronze roof; it is characterised as a shrine by the pendant lamp in the doorway.

All the persons represented are individualised, as throughout the series, by their dress. Jacob wears the shepherd's exomis, and carries a staff. Rachel and Leah are draped, as before, in orange and purple; one change, however, has been made, Rachel is pictured as a married woman, and wears a matron's cap.

III. CONDITION.—Like its companion, this picture is a fairly preserved antique copy, disfigured by gold interpolations.

It has been restored in the left corner in stucco.

IV. COMMENTARY.—The burning lamp in the doorway may be interpreted realistically, as showing that Jacob's plans for departure were made by night; an hypothesis which is not supported by the character of the scene, the interview in the open fields in the near proximity of shepherds occupied with their sheep.

The original façade of the building probably consisted of a pillared portico, with curtains between the columns.* The addition of a burning lamp, the symbol of a shrine or church, is significant.†

The artist who conceived Rachel and Leah as personifications of the Gentile and Jewish Churches, and Jacob as a prototype of Christ, consistently pictured their home as a temple or church.

Even Garrucci, in spite of his interpretation of this series as historical, perceived that it stands for something solemn and significant; *what*, he was unable to discover.

"In the background (?), to the left," he writes, "is a house, or rather chapel, or shrine, from the roof of which hangs a cylindrical lamp suspended on three chains. This shrine may be intended to represent the presence and command of God."

The following picture, which may have represented Jacob's struggle with the Angel, has been destroyed, and replaced by another executed by order of Cardinal Pinelli, which has no reference to the history of Jacob.

* Compare Plate 10, No. 1.

† See the Tabernacle in The Stoning of Moses, Plate 22, No. 3b.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

XIII.—JACOB SENDS MESSENGERS TO ESAU.

Plate 12, No. 1a.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother.”—Gen. xxxii. 3.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Two scenes, divided from each other by a tree, are embodied in this picture.

In that on the right, Jacob forms the centre of a group of five persons, two of whom seem to be women, Leah and Rachel; and two, messengers, whom he sends before him to Esau.

To the left, Esau, accompanied by armed attendants, stands outside a gateway to receive his brother's delegates, who, clad in the poor garb of shepherds, approach him with deprecating gestures. His dress is that of a contemporary prince, or general; he wears a short white tunic, armour of gilt leather and metal, an orange under-tunic (*subucula*) of which only the tight sleeves are visible, and long purple mantle (*paludamentum*) with large golden tabula, fastened on the shoulder with a golden fibula, and soft white boots, laced on to the foot with red ribbons. Similar dresses are worn (1) by Affrodosius on the Triumphal Arch; and (2) with variations by Justinian in S. Vitale (Ravenna), and by (3) S. Theodorus in SS. Cosma and Damiano (Rome).

III. CONDITION.—Nothing remains of the original picture; and of the classic mosaic copy, only a few stones in some of the heads in the right-hand group centering about Jacob, a few stones in the head of the shepherd in the orange mantle, and the general rendering of Esau, which is classic in character, together with his background of soldiers and of architecture, both of which, however, have been injured by repairs.

The rest of the picture has been entirely reconstructed in stucco imitation of mosaic.

IV. COMMENTARY.—In Esau's genealogical table his descendants are called “Kings,” “Princes,” and “Dukes.” “These are the Kings,” it is written, “that reigned in the land of Edom.”*

Jacob and Esau figure as antitheses in the New Testament, and consequently in the early literature of the Church. They are evidently thus conceived in this sub-series, Jacob being represented as

* Gen. xxxvi. 31.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the guileless shepherd, simple and unassuming; Esau as a prince, surrounded by his warriors, and invested with all the trappings of royalty.

The artist emphasises this point with intention. Jacob and Esau are purposely placed in juxtaposition; Jacob in his shepherd's exomis, Esau, not in the heroic garb of antiquity, the toga and the pallium, but in the full dress of a contemporary king. The thought thus underlined is not merely that of the differing condition of the two brothers, but of the essentially different ideas they represent—Esau, the warlike potentate, Jacob, the landless pilgrim, whose kingdom nevertheless proved more enduring and more powerful than that of his brother Esau.

XIV.—THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

Plate 12, No. 1b.

I. CONDITION.—The original picture has perished. Nothing remains of the antique copy by which it was replaced, except a few stones in some heads at the back of the group to the left.

II. SUBJECT AND COMMENTARY.—The reconciliation of Jacob and Esau was probably the subject-matter of the lost lower picture.

It is impossible now to determine what may have been the original manner of the greeting of the brothers; suffice it to say that the sentimentality with which it is at present characterised is to be ascribed to the modern, and not to the antique artist. More anachronous than the pose chosen by the restorer is his treatment of the landscape. He has scattered trees, treated realistically, about the background with park-like effect, thus ignoring their architectonic function, in antique compositions of this kind their *sole* function, unless they were an essential element in the story, as was for instance Abraham's Oak at Mamre, or the tree which characterises Abraham's house as a shrine or temple in The Parting of Abraham and Lot.

CHAPTER III

JACOB AS SHEPHERD AND BRIDEGROOM : A TYPE OF CHRIST

- I. This series a paraphrase of the Biblical story, made from the point of view of second and third century Christianity.
- II. No contemporary parallel cycles exist.
- III. Parallel literary utterances common.
- IV. Realistic in expression, typological in intention.
- V. The Coming of the Shepherd.
- VI. Rachel (the Church) receives him with joy. Leah (the Synagogue) with foreboding.
- VII. Jacob chooses his work, the care of the flock, and his reward, Rachel (the Church).
- VIII. Jacob claims his Bride.
- IX. Marriage of Jacob and Rachel.
- X. The formation of Jacob's flock. Hippolytus. The Ecclesia and the Synagogue. Eusebius.
- XI. Mystic significance of the episode of the Rods.
- XII. Last three pictures connected with the thought of the completed mission of Christ.
- XIII. Subject-matter : Such scenes from the history of Jacob as may be associated with the life and mission of Christ.

FIVE pictures (originally six) are devoted to the representation of Jacob's marriages, and four to the formation of his flock.

They are based on the account given in the Book of Genesis, with which their connection is constant and obvious, but of which they form no echo, or translation, but a paraphrase rather, composed under the influence of an especial point of view.

Their true subject-matter is not derived from the Old Testament, but read into it.

II. No parallel contemporary cyclic representations of Old Testament history viewed typologically is known ; nor is this surprising,

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the remains of classic Christian art being both fragmentary and scanty.

III. A far fuller reflex of Christian life has been preserved in the literature of this time, notably in the writings of Justin Martyr, of Clement of Rome, of Clement of Alexandria, of Irenaeus, of the author of the Letter of Barnabas, and others. These reveal, together with a peculiar trend of thought, a peculiar form of Biblical exegesis, by which the events of the Old Testament, seen from the point of view of the needs, circumstances and theology of the third century, are interpreted as foreshadowing the events of the New Dispensation.*

IV. The pictures in question are evidently the fruit of this tendency to typify and to allegorise.

To moderns, who test everything by standards of logic, and demand of an art that it should be either allegoric or realistic, there is something disconcerting in an art which, while typological in intention, is realistic in expression. The antique mind seems to have been less fastidious; for the same disharmony between form and substance is to be found in contemporary Christian literature; as when Irenaeus, having said that Rachel had beautiful eyes, and was therefore loved by Jacob, adds that Jacob is Christ, and Rachel the Church; but his hearers seem to have found nothing incongruous in the phrase. These pictures are, strictly speaking, neither purely realistic, nor purely allegoric. Their subject-matter, emphatically and in the first place, is the history of Jacob; but that history is so treated that it should evoke thoughts of Christ, and of Christian mysteries in the initiated only; their mysticism is probably intentionally veiled; the series is purposely designed to appear nothing more than a mere bucolic idyll to a pagan visitor.

Having thus warned the reader that the typology imaged is at once as realistic and fantastic, naive and evasive, as are its literary equivalents in the pages of a Justin or of a Barnabas, and that the form in which it is rendered is realistic after the manner of contemporary classic art, we will sketch in broad lines the general trend of the allegorical significance of the series.

* As the pre-dogmatic philosophic Christianity of the second and third centuries differs strikingly from the dogmatic theologic Christianity of the generation succeeding the establishment of the religion of Christ as a State religion by Constantine, its expression is naturally confined within strictly defined time-limits. The reflection of certain forms of religious thought in works of art of this period may, therefore, be accepted as reliable evidences of the date at which they originated.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

V. In the first picture,* that of his arrival, Jacob is represented as pasturing his flock, staff in hand; an attendant, without whom he is never represented, looking towards him, lifts his hand with a gesture of attestation and devotion.

Rachel, that is the Church, moving at the head of the sheep, leads the way. Laban, the old father of Leah and Rachel, worn and spent, welcomes the newcomer with joy. The keynote of the composition is joy, joy at the coming of the shepherd. Leah alone, the Synagogue, is filled with apprehension.

VI. The same thought is developed in the next picture.† Laban embraces the shepherd, his kinsman. Jacob and Rachel come into nearer relation: she welcomes him gladly, whereas Leah recoils with agonised foreboding. The contrast between these two figures is woven into the very structure of the composition.

VII. In the third,‡ Jacob chooses his work, the care of souls; and his reward, the Church. Christ lowered Himself to become "a servant, a slave, for Rachel's sake and for Leah's," says Justin, "for whom," he adds, "he serves even now."§

In order to make his meaning clear the artist has added an isolated picture of the price to be paid for the prize to his representation of Jacob's demand; this representation of his "service" may at first sight be mistaken for a piece of mere genre, but it is too solemn and tragic to be so interpreted. The heat and burden of the day, the weary toil to which Christ subjected Himself, is imaged in the shepherd, who, tired, leans on his staff in the midst of his sheep.

Behind him rises the tree which, according to Justin, foreshadowed the end of his labours, the Cross. "Christ being crucified on a *tree* has redeemed us,"|| he says.

And again, in connection with Jacob's labours for his flock, "Christ acquired the various races of mankind by the blood and mystery of the Cross." Trees, moreover, are associated with the Cross by Irenaeus, Barnabas and others.

VIII. In the next picture Jacob, having fulfilled his labours, claims his reward, the Church.¶

* Plate 11, No. 2a.

† Plate 11, No. 2b.

‡ Plate 11, No. 3.

§ *καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτων δουλεύει μεχρὶ νῦν ὁ Χριστός*, 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cxxxiv.

|| 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxxviii.

¶ Plate 11, No. 4a.

3.



6.



4.



5.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The figures of Rachel and Leah are too injured for it to be possible to interpret the sentiments they embody. The vigour and energy of the shepherd and the passion with which he pleads for Rachel are evident.

His companion seems to point to the tree and the flock, to which the same significance should be attached as in the previous picture.

Such an interpretation may seem fantastic; it is, however, in harmony with Justin's modes of thought. He and other contemporary writers so constantly connect the idea of a Tree with that of the Cross that it is improbable that it should figure here as a mere accessory to a flock of sheep, which, after all, is the Church of God.

IX. In the lower picture the mystic marriage of Jacob and Rachel is represented.* The honourable place allotted to Leah is significant; she (the Synagogue) was Jacob's wife before Rachel.

With this representation the first part of this picture-poem is brought to a close. The keynote was struck in the first picture, and the strain is sustained until it reaches its climax in the union of the Church with its Shepherd.

X. In like manner a single thought has presided over the choice, arrangement, and connection of the following sub-series, which consists of four pictures representing the formation of his peculiar flock by Jacob.

The first double picture † deals exclusively with the selection of Jacob's sheep from among those of Laban, a circumstance to which the artist evidently attached importance, as he chose to dwell on it at such length.

Hippolytus, commenting on the passage in the Song of Songs ‡ in which a bride is described as not knowing where her lover tends his flocks, says, "from henceforth Israel was not reckoned among the sheep of the shepherd." In the same connection he continues "Jacob was to receive the ring-straked, speckled and grisled as the hire of his labour, while Laban kept those without spot. The spotless shalt thou pasture bare-foot. Go forth to the heathen, and to the dispersed among the people."

As the passage is obviously corrupt its significance cannot be determined in detail; it points clearly, however, says Hippolytus' editor, to the passing of salvation from the Jews.

* Plate 10, No. 4b.

† Plate 10, No. 5a and No. 5b.

‡ Chap. i. 8. 'Bonwetsch, Studien zu den Kommentaren Hippolyt's,' p. 55 (Leipzig 1897). Berlin edition of the works of Hippolytus, p. 346.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

At the beginning of the third century, therefore, the two flocks formed by Jacob and Laban were looked upon as prototypical of the two Churches: the Church of Christ, which Eusebius affirms was formed by selection (*ἐκκλησία*); and the Synagogue, which was merely a gathering together, a collection (*συναγωγή*).*

Barnabas speaks of the foundation of the Church as one of the supreme objects of the Incarnation.† “For to this end did Christ deliver His flesh to corruption,” says he . . . “that He might prepare *a new people for Himself*.” The thought of this *Plebs Dei* is repeated by Xystus in an inscription on the Arch, which is synthetic of the purport of the whole cycle.

Behind the group of men and sheep of which Laban is the centre are temporary wattle huts, whereas behind Jacob and his flocks is a quadrangular stone building, of basilica-like form (in its present state much restored). This suggestion of the permanence of Jacob's building, and its juxtaposition for the purpose of contrast with the temporary erections designed for the followers of Laban, is significant.

Clear narrative being a characteristic requirement of classic art, accessories were not left, as now, to the arbitrary fancy of the artist, but served the distinct purpose of elucidating and annotating the main subject.

XI. In the following picture,‡ in which two distinct subjects are represented, Jacob's flock is still the centre of interest. Jacob with two servants places staffs in water-receptacles—an act foreshadowing a mystery, according to Justin. In his disputation with the Jew Trypho he reminds him that prototypes of the Cross are to be found in the Old Testament: after having spoken of the Tree of Life, of Moses' rod, by which the redemption of Israel was effected, he connects the “rod” by means of which Jacob formed a flock for himself with the Cross, by the power of which, he says, souls are born into the flock of Christ.§

We are not concerned to justify or criticise Justin's typology; if we succeed in showing that such views were current in the third century and are reflected here, our purpose is accomplished.

XII. Separated from this scene by a prominent tree—which may have been associated in the artist's mind, as it was in Justin's, with the Tree of the Cross—is another, in which Jacob is represented as speaking with an Angel, who tells him that the purpose for which God sent him

* Theoph. syr. IV., 12.

‡ Plate 10, No. 6a.

† Chap. iv.

§ ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. lxxxvi.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

to that distant country was fulfilled, and that he may return to the land of his fathers.

Had the artist been concerned to render this scene realistically, he would surely have pictured it differently. In the text Jacob is spoken of as dreaming; but he is not so pictured here, but as standing upright, his sheep and servants near at hand, in speech with the Angel, from whom he does not shrink in awe as if from a higher being, nor bow in reverence, as do Joshua * and Abraham †; his attitude speaks rather of equality; it is that of a son who receives his father's ambassador.

XII. In the following picture ‡ he tells Rachel and Leah—whose significance throughout this series is typological, and who stand with their children outside a shrine—of his departure.

"The Angel of the Lord said unto me," he says, "Arise . . . get thee out of this land, and return to the land of thy nativity."

Rachel and Leah answered him and said, "Is there any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? . . . whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do" (Gen. xxxi. 15-16).

Unfortunately a gap occurs here, the whole double picture which followed has perished, and has been replaced by a worthless painting in stucco, which has no connection with the story, and lays no claim to any relationship to the original composition. It is impossible to divine what parts of the rich material offered by the thirty-first and thirty-second chapters of Genesis were chosen for illustration.

In the last picture, Jacob sends two of his followers to encounter his brother Esau, who is conceived as a personification of power, Imperial and military.§

Is the thought of the last acts of the life of Christ associated with these scenes? The thought of an angelic assurance of a fulfilled mission, connected with the idea of the Cross; of the communication of the tidings of His departure to the Churches, and the sending out of the disciples two and two. "Go your ways," said the Master; "behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke x. 3).

XIII. In conclusion, we would again repeat, this series is not a reasoned allegory of the life of Christ, but a history of the life of Jacob the shepherd, a prototype of Christ, each scene in whose history is associated with some thought concerning the life and mission of his antitype, the Good Shepherd.

* Plate 26, No. 1.

† Plate 7, No. 1.

‡ Plate 10, No. 6b.

§ Plate 12, No. 1.

CHAPTER IV

HAMOR, SHECHEM, AND THE SONS OF LEAH

XVI.—HAMOR AND SHECHEM BEFORE JACOB.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- IV. COMMENTARY—Garrucci, Ciampini, and de Rossi.
- V. Jacob conceived not as the young shepherd, but as a patriarch.

XVII.—JACOB AND HIS SONS.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

XVIII.—NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE KING OF SHECHEM AND THE SONS OF LEAH.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

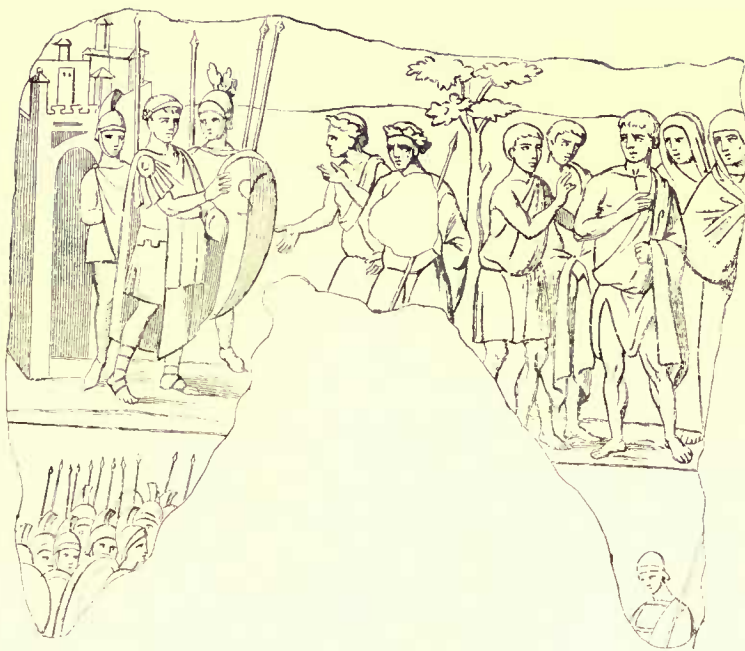
XIX.—HAMOR AND SCHECHEM ADDRESS THEIR SUBJECTS.

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

XX.—THE TYPOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RELATION BETWEEN HAMOR AND SHECHEM AND THE SONS OF LEAH.

- I. The dramatis personae all new, except Jacob, who plays a subordinate rôle, and is represented as an aged Patriarch.
- II. The story as told by the pictures.
- III. Character of Leah, the Synagogue.
- IV. Circumcision.
- V. Justin Martyr on circumcision.
- VI. Persecutions of Christians attributed to Jewish machinations.

1.



2.



3.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

- VII. The story of Dinah as treated by Clement of Alexandria.
VIII. The story of Dinah the subject of heroic poems by two Hellenistic Jews, Demetrius and Theodotus.
IX. Shechem identified with Flavia Neapolis, the birthplace of Justin Martyr. Demetrius.

HAMOR AND SHECHEM BEFORE JACOB.

Plate 12, No. 2a.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob to commune with him.”—Gen. xxxiv. 6.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Hamor and Shechem his son, at the head of a group of citizens, leaving their city behind them, advance as suppliants towards Jacob, who, with three young men in attendance, is seated outside a building pictured on the extreme left.

Shechem wears white dalmatica and purple paenula. Hamor a white dalmatica and orange paenula. The accompanying Hivites wear dalmaticas and coloured paenulas.

III. CONDITION.—Embedded within the stucco imitation of mosaic, of which this picture is now largely composed, are fragments of antique mosaic, which show that the original distribution of the figures has been retained.

The figure of Shechem, the group of Hivites accompanying their King and his son, have retained something of antique character. One head, that of a young man in green on the extreme right of the group, is well preserved.

Of the city only a few stones remain. Nothing antique has survived in the group on the right, except a few stones in the head of Jacob, which are, however, important, as proving that a similar head in mosaic originally occupied a similar position.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Garrucci and Ciampini interpret this picture differently. Garrucci thinks that its subject-matter is Jacob's negotiation with Hamor and Shechem concerning the purchase of land. “Jacob bought a parcel of land where he had spread his tent, at the hands of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money.”—Gen. xxxiii. 4.

This interpretation is, however, negatived by the gestures of the King and of his son, which are evidently those of entreaty; whereas Jacob's

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

self-contained and of somewhat reserved bearing clearly shows that he is no suppliant, but the receiver of a petition, a possible benefactor.

Of the lower picture he says, "Jacob is told of the rape of his daughter, and receives the intelligence with solemn indignation. Ciampini, in opposition to whom Garrucci puts forward his views, refers to the text we have quoted.†

De Rossi merely says, "Au plan supérieur Jacob traîtant avec les chefs et les peuples de Sichem. En bas le rapt de Dinah." He therefore connects the picture with the story of Dinah; indeed, in his coloured reproduction of this picture he introduces her prostrate form into the foreground. There is no reason to believe that such a figure formed part of the original composition; the pose and the manner in which it is conceived are contrary both to the canons of classic art, and to the taste of primitive Christianity.

V. Whether Ciampini, or Garrucci, be right, or neither, it is clear that the incident represented is part of the Hamor-Shechem episode, which, although unconnected with the meeting of Jacob and Esau, follows closely upon it in point of time. This circumstance makes the sudden change in the presentment of Jacob surprising. In the one picture he is depicted as a young shepherd, in the other as a Patriarch. This is the stranger, when we consider that the type of Moses in the corresponding series dedicated to his history is invariable; he is conceived as eternally young, and pictured as such even at the moment of his death as a centenarian.

Why this strict adherence to an ideal type in spite of facts, in one case, and divergence from it in another?

Because of an essential difference in the mode in which, as types, Moses and Jacob were regarded.

The ideal image of Moses never changes; his life-history, from beginning to end, is treated as prototypical of that of Christ; he is the saviour of his people, who leads them out of the Land of Bondage into the Promised Land. But the life of Jacob, *as a whole*, admits of no such interpretation; it is only as shepherd and bridegroom that he is a prototype of Christ; it is impossible to connect any such thought with the aged father of Joseph and Benjamin.

Bearing this in mind we ask ourselves wonderingly why this

* 'Arte Cristiana,' vol. iv. p. 217.

† 'Vetera Monumenta,' vol. i. chap. xxii.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

unpleasant Hamor-Shechem episode, so discreditable to all the persons concerned, should have been represented in a series of which the interest is typological; and in which it is not only touched on, but dwelt on at length.

JACOB AND HIS SONS.

Plate 12, No. 2b.

I. SUBJECT.—“And the sons of Jacob came from the field . . . and they were very wroth.”—Gen. xxxiv. 7.

II. DESCRIPTION.—To the left is the aged Patriarch, Jacob, on a seat with a large suppedaneum; behind him is a male attendant. Before him are four young men, whose vivid gestures express excitement.

III. CONDITION.—Nothing remains of the classic copy, which early replaced the original, except a few stones in the head, beard, and draperies of Jacob, and in the faces of his sons; these are of value as showing that the present distribution of heads corresponds to that of the original composition, the character of which has, however, been entirely lost.

The prostrate figure in the foreground is a modern addition.

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SHECHEM AND THE SONS OF LEAH.

Plate 12, No. 3a.

SUBJECT.—“And Hamor communed with them, saying, . . . Make ye marriages with us . . . dwell with us . . . and the land shall be before you . . . get you possessions therein.”

“And Shechem said, . . . Let me find grace in your sight, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

“And the sons of Jacob answered, . . . Only on this condition will we consent unto you . . . that every male of you be circumcised; then . . . we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.”—Gen. xxxiv. 8–16.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture consists of two groups: to the left, Jacob and his sons; to the right, Hamor, King of the Hivites, with his son and attendants.

Jacob, who is conceived as the typical Patriarch, wears the heroic dress of Roman art, *i.e.*, the long white tunic, with purple clavi (*tunica talaris*), and white pallium; he is aged, and white bearded, a mere

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

spectator of the scene which takes place in his presence. Slightly in front of him are his sons, who, clad as shepherds, hold animated converse with the king and the people of the Hivites, who address them with vivid gestures.

Hamor wears, as before, a white dalmatica and orange paenula, Shechem a purple paenula. Behind them arise their city walls, above which two large palaces are visible, samples, according to the conventions of classic art, of the size and wealth of the houses of which it was composed. The Hivites, therefore, are to be understood as citizens of no "mean city."

III. CONDITION.—This picture is in better condition than those by which it is preceded, being executed in great part in mosaic. Time and restoration, however, have robbed it of brilliancy of colour, and definiteness of outline.

Such parts of the town on the right, as have survived, are in fair condition.

HAMOR AND SHECHEM ADDRESS THEIR SUBJECTS.

Plate 12, No. 3b.

I. SUBJECT.—"And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city."—Gen. xxxiv.20.

II. DESCRIPTION AND CONDITION.—The original picture has perished: so little remains of the classic copy by which it was replaced that it is impossible to say in how far the present picture reproduces the lost composition. Its style, if style can be predicated of so poor and ruined a thing, is that of the Post-Renaissance. The upper part of this picture is represented in the Barberini Codex; it is probable therefore that the original composition has been reproduced.

XIX.—THE TYPOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN HAMOR AND SHECHEM AND THE SONS OF LEAH.

I. Although the history of Jacob is continued in the following group (of which four pictures only are preserved), all connection is broken with the previous series dedicated to the relations of Jacob to Laban and his family.

The *dramatis personæ*, Jacob alone excepted, are new; and he is

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

pictured as an old man, although the incident represented followed immediately on his meeting with Esau; he plays, moreover, quite a subsidiary part, the action of the story depending on his sons. Indeed, in appearance and character he is so entirely a new creation, that but for the unmistakable evidence of the Biblical narrative it would have been difficult to divine his identity with the young shepherd of the previous pictures.

The artist's intention is clear; it is obvious that the point of view from which Jacob is regarded is no longer typological, but simply historical; he is only represented because his presence is necessary to the identification of the incident pictured, in which his sons are the motive force.

The analogy of the previous groups makes it *a priori* probable that the significance of this sub-group will be typological also; the change in the appearance of Jacob, and unimportance of the *rôle* he plays, proves him no longer its centre. The clue to the thought embodied will be found in the deviations of the pictorial narrative from the text on which it is ostensibly founded; for such deviations are never arbitrary, but are made in the interest of the special tendencies which it is the artist's aim to illustrate.

II. If these pictures be interpreted on the evidence of the eye alone without any reference to an explanatory text, it will be found that they contain the following subject-matter.

A king and his son, accompanied by a train of courtiers, visit Jacob, and with gestures of entreaty beg for something; but are met with cold reserve.* In the next scene Jacob's sons address their father with considerable freedom and violence of gesture.† In the third, the king and his son revisit Jacob, and urge their suit with renewed insistence; although Jacob is present, it is with his sons that they negotiate.‡ In the fourth, the same king and prince address their people; they evidently communicate the terms of the compact which was the fruit of their two visits to Jacob.§ The subject-matter of the last picture corresponds closely with the text.

"Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city," it is written, "and communed with the men of their city, and said, These men are peaceable with us . . . therefore let them dwell in the land . . . only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, and become

* Plate 12, No. 2a. † Plate 12, No. 2b. ‡ Plate 12, No. 3a. § Plate 12, No. 3b.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

one people . . . if every man among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised."

Hamor and Shechem are therefore represented as Gentiles, who wished to become one with the people of Israel, even at the price of submitting to the ordinances of their law.

They had expressed the same willingness to Jacob and to his sons in a scene recorded in a foregoing picture. "Ye shall dwell with us," they had urged, "and the land shall be before you:" "let us find grace in your eyes, what ye shall say unto me I will give." "Only on this condition will we consent unto you," replied the sons of Leah, "if ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised." And it is recorded that "their words pleased Hamor."

There is not a hint in the pictorial narrative of the centre of the incident as recorded in the Book of Genesis, Dinah.*

This series is incomplete: the two following picture-spaces are occupied by modern substitutes.

III. We have seen that in the preceding pictorial series, in which Jacob figures as the "shepherd of Israel," and Rachel as "our Church," Leah, unloved and desponding, is accepted as the personification of the Synagogue. Her mental attitude finds drastic expression in the first picture; she turns from Jacob with terrified foreboding, the expression of which grows in intensity.

This conception of her character is not derived from the Book of Genesis, in which she figures as unhappy, slighted, but thirsting for affection.† It is the outcome of the artist's antagonism to the Jewish people, of whom she was the personification; an antagonism which is consistently inherited by her sons, in the rendering of whose story, re-moulded in the crucible of hatred, it reaches its climax of expression: for whereas Dinah, the mainspring and justification of their action, is ignored, they are allotted the *role* of treacherous enemies, whose malice is masked under the semblance of zeal for the Law. Doubtless the series terminated with the representation of the bitter fruit of the faith of the Gentiles in the word of the "Sons of Leah," of whom it is written "that each man took his sword, and came upon the city unawares . . . and they slew all the males . . . and spoilt the city."

* Abstraction must of course be made of the modern addition to the second picture made by a restorer who had Dinah's history in view.

† Gen. xxix. 32; xxx. 15-20.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

IV. The strong feeling in the early Church against the imposition of the Jewish law, and more especially of the rite of circumcision, upon Christian converts, is too well known for it to be necessary to dwell on it at length. It was a burning question in Apostolic times.

“Certain men came down from Judæa,” it is written, “and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses ye cannot be saved, . . . Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them.”* And elsewhere it is said that “the Apostles and elders were gathered together to consider of this matter.” “And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up and said unto them . . . God, which knoweth the heart, bare the Gentiles witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us, making no distinction between us and them . . . Now therefore, why tempt ye God that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”†

V. Justin Martyr characteristically goes much further. He maintains that the imposition of the rite of circumcision on the Jews alone is a proof of their inferiority, and innate viciousness. “This circumcision is not necessary for all men, but for you alone,” he says to Trypho. “You, who are circumcised according to the flesh, have need of our circumcision; but we, having the latter, do not require the former. For if it were necessary, as you suppose, God would not have made Adam uncircumcised; would not have had respect to the gifts of Abel when, being uncircumcised, he offered sacrifice; and would not have been pleased with the uncircumcision of Enoch, who was not found, because God translated him.” After giving a number of examples of the righteous uncircumcised, he adds: “Therefore to you alone was this circumcision necessary.”‡

And again, with still greater animus: “For the circumcision which is according to the flesh, which is from Abraham, was given for a sign, that you may be separated from other people, and from us, and that you alone may suffer that which ye now so justly suffer; and that your land may be desolate, and your cities burned with fire, and that strangers eat your fruit in your presence, and not one of you may go up to Jerusalem. For you are not recognised among men by other sign than your fleshly circumcision.

* Acts xv. 1, 2.

† *Ibid.* 7-10.

‡ ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xix.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“For none of you, I suppose, will venture to say that God neither foresees the events which are future, nor fore-ordained his deserts for each one. Accordingly these things have happened to you in equity and fairness ; for ye have slain the Just One, and His prophets before Him, and now you reject those who hope in Him, and in Him who sent Him, God the Almighty and Maker of all things, cursing in your synagogues those that believe on Christ.”*

He is explicit also as to the reason of his animosity against the Jews. “For other nations,” he says, “have not inflicted on us and on Christ this wrong to the extent you have, who in very deed are the authors of the wicked prejudice against the Just One, and us who hold by Him. . . . For after you had crucified Him, the only blameless and righteous Man . . . when you knew that He had risen from the dead, and had ascended to heaven, as the prophets foretold He would, you not only did not repent of the wickedness you had committed, but at that time you selected and sent from Jerusalem chosen men throughout the land, to tell that the atheistic heresy of the Christians had sprung up, and to publish those things which they who know us not speak against us. So you are the cause not only of your own unrighteousness, but of that of all other men. You displayed great zeal in publishing throughout the land bitter and dark and unjust things against the only blameless and righteous Light sent by God.” †

VI. It is intelligible that the sacrifice of the Gentiles to a malicious ruse of the sons of Leah should have been interpreted as a fore-announcement of outbreaks of intolerance of Christianity, such as Nero's persecution, which modern research tends to show was the result of Jewish intrigue ; ‡ especially at a time when circumcision was a burning question, and when the Old Testament was looked on as a prophetic drama in which the incidents, not only of the sacred story, but of the history of the Church, were foreshadowed.

VII. The episode here depicted is in itself of such small importance that it is not surprising that no reference is made to it by any of the Apostolic Fathers. Neither is it mentioned by Justin Martyr, although the manner in which it is here treated, and the use to which it is put, is quite in his spirit.

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xvi.

† *Ibid.* chap. xvii.

‡ See Aubé, ‘Histoire des Persécutions de l’Eglise,’ Paris, 1875, p. 421, and Langen, ‘Geschichte der Römische Kirche,’ Bonn, 1881, p. 48, foll.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The incident of Shechem is spoken of by Clement of Alexandria,* but from a standpoint which Justin Martyr would never have adopted, and which differs widely from that of the author of this series. He treats it historically, regards the massacre of the Hivites as the righteous judgment on the wrong done the "holy virgin," as he calls Dinah; Dinah, who is not so much as once pictured in the mosaics, so little did the artist wish to dwell on the part she played in this episode.

VIII. Eusebius states that two writers of the Pre-Christian Hellenistic period, Demetrius and Theodotus, treated of the history of the town of Shechem.

Demetrius, who lived at the time of Ptolemy IV., wrote a history of Israel, in which he dwells on the settlement of Israel at Shechem as an epoch-making event in Jewish history; he uses it as a corner-stone in a complicated statement of Jewish chronology, thinking it worth while to note Jacob's age at the time (one hundred and seven years), and that of each of his sons.†

Theodotus, an epic poet of the second century, sang Shechem in a heroic poem in Homeric metre, written in the interest of Jewish propaganda. According to his account, Jacob commanded the King of Shechem to be circumcised after the manner of the Jews; such a command he declared had been received by the "godlike" Abraham (*δῖος Ἀβραάμ*), and was eternally binding, since promulgated by God Himself (*ἀστεμφές δὲ τέτυκται ἐπεὶ θεὸς αὐτὸς εἶπε*).‡

He has no word of blame for the massacre of the Hivites; on the contrary, he praises the extirpation of a godless people, and described the scene of carnage in words and phrases borrowed from Homer's descriptions of the bloody encounters of heroes before Troy.

IX. Shechem or Sikima, founded, according to Theodotus, by a son of Hermes, was destroyed by Titus during his Jewish campaign, and rebuilt under the title of Flavia Neapolis.

Flavia Neapolis was the birthplace of Justin Martyr, who was therefore probably familiar with a poem in which the daughter of Jacob figures

* 'Paedagogos,' Lib. iii., chap. ii., § 14.

† Eusebius has preserved this fragment in his 'Praep. Evangelica,' Lib. ix., chap. xxi., §§ 8, 9. He divides the life of Jacob into three periods: his life with Isaac, his life with Laban, and, lastly, his life at Shechem; of his emigration to Egypt, and his life there with Joseph, he only speaks incidentally.

‡ Euseb., 'Praep. Evang.' Lib. ix., chap. xxii., § 7.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

as a second Helen, and Shechem, like Troy, is spoken of as the "holy city."

It has been shown that the pictorial presentment in this church of the pastoral phase of Jacob's life is similar in spirit to its literary treatment by Justin Martyr; indeed, so close is the connection between the two that it seems probable that the Sicinian pictures were conceived under his direct influence.

It is perhaps not going too far to suggest that the representation of so unpromising a theme as the circumstances which led to the pillage of Shechem may be due to a reaction on the part of the philosopher of Flavia Neapolis against the manner in which a scandalous episode in the history of his native town is vaunted in a well-known Jewish poem.

THE THIRD TYPOLOGICAL SERIES :

MOSES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

- I. The richest of the four series of the Nave.
- II. Lost pictures. The Barberini reproductions.
- III. The Passover. Justin Martyr.
- IV. Sequence, character, and choice of the subjects represented.
- V. Moses not conceived as a personification of the Law, but as a Saviour ;
- VI. As a prototype of Christ.
- VII. The evidence of the Apologists.
- VIII. The Christian conception of Moses affected by the writings of Hellenistic Jews. Philo. Josephus.

I. THE story of Moses as it at present stands consists of thirteen pictures ; if to these be added the six which were destroyed to make room for the Arch leading to the Sixtine Chapel, and a seventh, possibly a double picture, the first of the series, which has perished, and is now replaced by a valueless Annunciation, it will be seen that not less than twenty or twenty-one pictures were dedicated to the representation of the life of Moses ; whereas the history of Jacob as Shepherd is told in fourteen pictures ; that of Joshua in thirteen ; and that of Abraham in three only, if it be accepted as complete in its present state, or, at the utmost, in ten.

II. The opening picture of this series has been effaced without record ; but as the second represents the Adoption of Moses by the Egyptian Princess, it is reasonable to conclude that it represented some earlier event of his childhood, probably his discovery by Pharaoh's daughter among the reeds of the Nile.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The following pictures, four in number, of which two represent events from his childhood, and two from his Ethiopian exile, are at present isolated; the three compositions by which they were followed having been destroyed by Sixtus V.

Before their destruction, however, water-colour copies were made; these are preserved among the Barberini Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, and show that the lost mosaics represented incidents prefatory to the delivery of the Israelites from Egypt. They also prove that the original pictures had been replaced by copies before the sixteenth century.

As all the mosaics of the Nave are reproduced in the Barberini water-colours, it is possible to judge of the accuracy of the copyist's work by comparing it with existing originals; thus tested it proves to be most careless and incorrect. His representations of the draperies for instance, which throughout the series are of distinct and significant character, are so arbitrary and fantastic that they have no scientific value, and are no clue to the lost forms they profess to reproduce.

The first of these six lost pictures represents the meeting of Aaron with Moses, Zipporah, and a band of followers; its antique character is so completely defaced that it is no aid to the reconstruction of the lost original. In the picture associated with it, Moses stands at the head of his people before Pharaoh.

It is useless to speculate on the subject-matter of the two following pictures, so unintelligently have they been restored and reproduced.

III. Upon these follows a subject of obviously allegorical significance. Moses, his hand stretched forward with a pathetic gesture, is its centre; on either side of him are men, and behind him a large pillar, surmounted by a lamb. This has been interpreted as an "allocutio" on the Paschal Lamb.*

What is represented as a pilaster of unusual size was probably originally a door or gateway.†

On the night on which all the first-born of the Egyptians died, Moses commanded the Israelites to kill a lamb, and to "strike the lintel, and the two side posts" with its blood, for he said, "the Lord will pass

* Plate 19, No. 1.

† Compare Apse in The Marriage of Moses, Plate 15; the Exedra in The Marriage of Jacob, Plate 10, No. 4b; the door in the representation of The Risen Christ of S. Apollinare Nuovo of Ravenna.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

through to smite the Egyptians ; and when He seeth the blood . . . He will pass over the door, and will not suffer the Destroyer to come in.”*

The typology of this composition being obviously sacramental, and the representation of Christ as a lamb belonging to one of the earliest phases of Christian pictorial typology, it is probable that the lamb figured as now in the original picture.

Justin speaks very clearly of the symbology of the rite of the Passover. “The mystery of the lamb which God ordained to be sacrificed as the Passover,” he writes, “was a type of Christ, with whose blood—in proportion to their faith in Him—they, who believe in Him, anoint their houses, *i.e.*, themselves.” †

IV. From the following picture, a representation of the Passage of the Red Sea, to the Death of Moses, this series is uninterrupted ; not a single composition is missing.

Every link of the chain of thought being preserved, it is possible to form a clear idea both of its general scope, and of the intellectual goal towards which it tends. The bare enumeration of the subjects represented renders this evident; what is eliminated being as significant as that which is accepted.

The Plagues are not represented, nor the Giving of the Law from Sinai, nor the Adoration of the Golden Calf, nor the Elevation of the Brazen Serpent, nor many other incidents which figure prominently in the narrative ; but the Sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, the Passage of the Red Sea, the Covenant made by God with His people, their miraculous sustenance in the Wilderness, the Battle won through the power of the Cross, the enmity of a people of the seed of Abraham, the Salvation of God’s delegate from the fury of his compatriots, the Sending out of the Envoys, and, finally the Ratification of a second and wider Covenant between God and all people, present and to come, together with the passing of the leadership of Israel from Moses to “Jesus.”

V. It will be seen that Moses is not conceived as the personification of the Law, of retributive justice, terrible and inflexible, the antithesis of the Gospel of Love.

The modern imagination is so dominated by Michel Angelo’s sublime realisation of this conception that it is well nigh impossible to elude its empire, and to realise the very different group of ideas of which Moses

* Exodus xii. 22, 23. † ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xl. See also chap. cxi.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

was the embodiment in the first centuries of our era. He reigned in the imagination of early Christians, not as a suffering Titan, but under the aspect of a Greek deity, young, radiant, beautiful, strong, supernaturally gifted, a Saviour, an Emanuel.

This conception has its root in the New Testament description of him as "exceeding fair," as "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and as "mighty in words and works."*

VI. Christ was universally accepted as the antitype of this beautiful figure of a Prince who renounced a kingdom in order to redeem his people, a thought which underlies the argument of the letter to the Hebrews, though not expressed in so many words.†

VII. Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and other apologists, give expression to the general thought of their time when they write of Moses as the first and greatest of the prophets, in whose character and history were foreshadowed not only the character and history of Christ, but His teaching also, and the means of grace appointed by Him. This idea, the inspiration of the whole cycle, is unmistakably expressed in the representation of the battle of Rephidim, and is involved in the choice of scenes from his childhood, which are conceived as parallels to scenes from the childhood of Christ.

In harmony with this tendency is the prominence given to events invested by S. Paul with a sacramental character, which are here torn out of their natural historical sequence, and grouped together; and finally also the circumstance that the series closes with the representations of events similar in character to scenes from the close of the life of Christ.

VIII. The Biblical text does not however suffice to evoke the many-coloured image of Moses which floated before the minds of the Christians of the second and third centuries; it must be supplemented by the current literature of the time, more especially by that branch of which the purpose was the recommendation of the law and philosophy of Moses to the cultivated Hellenistic world.

Early Christian literature was in part, both by assimilation and reaction, the product of proselytising Hellenised Hebrewism.‡

* Acts vii. 20, 22.

† See Zahn, 'Einleitung in d. N. Testament,' ii. 129.

‡ *Ibid.* ii. 393-399. "Über das gegenseitige literarische Verhältnis."

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Parts of Josephus' life of Moses read to modern ears like an echo of the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ; certain incidents appear obvious plagiarisms, such, for instance, as the pre-annunciation of Moses' birth to his father; the prophecy of the imminent birth of one who should wrest the dominion from the hands of the reigning king, in consequence of which the latter condemned all infants to death; the revelation of Moses' great future to his father in a dream; his surprising beauty and strength; and, finally, the supernatural close of his life, his farewell to his people, not on a hill-top, but in a valley, after which he was wrapped from their sight in a cloud.

CHAPTER II

THE ADOPTION OF MOSES

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.-XIII.) :—
- IV. This picture interpreted as the Bringing of Moses to Pharaoh's daughter.
- V. This view untenable : (a) The ladies are characterised by their dress and jewels as aristocratic, and as belonging to one class ; (b) The Hand of God is incompatible with *genre*.
- VI. "Adoptio",—
- VII. A subject not treated by Christian writers before the end of the fourth century ; but spoken of by Philo, and by Artapanus.
- VIII. 'The Exodus,' a Drama by Ezekiel.
- IX. Jewish propaganda in the Hellenistic world.
- X. Typological significance. Christ and Moses viewed as antitheses by the New Testament writers, and by the Apostolic Fathers.
- XI. The letter to the Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria, Moses and the Logos idea.
- XII. Moses identified with Christ on sarcophagi, in the Cosmas Indicopleustes, and on the doors of S. Sabina.
- XIII. Condition. Affinities, not with the Theodora mosaic of Ravenna, but with the frescoes of Pompei, the "Fractio Panis."

THE ADOPTION OF MOSES.

Plate 13, No. 1a.

I. SUBJECT.—"I (Pharaoh's daughter) . . . have thought fit to adopt him as my son, and . . . heir."—Josephus, 'Ant.' ii. 10.

II. DESCRIPTION.—To the extreme left of the composition is Pharaoh's daughter, seated in rich robes outside a palace with polychromatic decorations. She is accompanied by five ladies, one of whom leans caressingly over a boy of about ten, standing in princely robes in their midst.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

In the sky above is the fiery hand of God, issuing from reddened clouds.

Pharaoh's daughter is seated on the red and gold embroidered cushions of a high-backed lightly-constructed white ivory chair, from the upper bar of which a white curtain seems* to depend; it is drawn to one side, and exposes what is apparently an Oriental rug hanging in the doorway.

The palace behind her, inside which the scene must be understood as taking place, is a quadrangular building of classic type, with pediment, and architrave, decorated with a coloured inlaid ornament. Its proportions have been affected by restoration. Its much injured façade is covered with a highly-coloured decoration, consisting of superimposed and alternating light-blue and orange conventional flowers on a dark blue background, barred with red lattice work; marble incrustations may be represented (*opus sectile*)—such as decorate the spandrils of S. Sabina, the Baptistry of the Orthodox, the church of S. Vitale, both in Ravenna—but more probably Oriental hangings, as has already been said.

The Princess's left hand rests on her knees, her right is raised in the gesture of speech, evidently addressed to the child. Her head is an interpolation which has all the characteristics of Justinian art. It is represented full face, although the hands and body are pictured in profile; her eyes, instead of expressing her participation in the scene in which she is the principal actor, seek those of the spectator; in a word, this head is conceived frontally. Her face is Oriental in type—*i.e.*, of a broad oval, tapering to the chin. Her eyes are unnaturally large and widely opened, and are outlined in black.†

Her dress is much injured, and difficult to decipher; it seems to have consisted of embroidered robes of cloth of gold, similar to those worn by Zipporah in the following picture—*i.e.*, of an under-tunic, of which only the light orange sleeve is visible from the elbow downwards: a loose tunic of transparent white, of which only the wide sleeve is visible; and the dress proper, the details of which are impossible to decipher.

Her jewels and the heavy necklace about her throat seem to be of the same date as the head. The head-dress and the arrangement of the

* This part of the picture is much injured, its details are practically undecipherable.

† Plate 13, No. 3.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

hair recall that of Theodora's ladies-in-waiting in the celebrated mosaic of S. Vitale.*

Moses, who forms the centre of the group, is represented as a child of nine or ten, dressed as a reigning prince, *i.e.*, in a short white tunic embroidered with a flower, and long purple cloak (*paludamentum*) decorated with golden tabulæ; the coverings of his feet are dark.

All the ladies of the Princess's entourage wear dresses of similar type; though distinct from each other in colour; each consists of a coloured dalmatica (orange, green, or pale blue), with wide clavi, (either dark purple or orange); their hair, like Zipporah's, is dressed high and full on their heads, and is adorned with star-like jewels. Their faces, in type and brilliancy of colouring, resemble those of the following picture. The eyes of the lady next to the Princess are turned inquiringly on to her mistress, she holds a casket in her hand; evidently gifts are about to be exchanged, for the graceful figure to the extreme left, with the charmingly draped orange-red shawl, carries a wicker basket containing presents.

In the sky is the Hand of God stretched from out a cluster of reddened clouds.

III. CONDITION.—Although this picture has suffered greatly, it is nevertheless of precious quality, for its defects are due to time rather than to the restorer.

The cubes of which it is composed, especially in its lower part, are frequently discoloured and dislocated, they have in some places fallen out, and have been replaced by others of a dull drab: nevertheless, enough remains to testify to the character of the original, an admirable example of which is the head of the fourth lady; her luminous face, of an ivory whiteness, with brilliant carnations suggesting rouge, is framed in full masses of dark hair, her shadowed eyes gleam, bright points in the midst of luminous pallor.†

This ideal of beauty—the translucent whiteness of the skin, contrasting with the brilliant rose of the cheeks, the feverishly shining eye—is antique, it is to be met with in Pompei,‡ in the Museum of the Baths of Diocletian, in the antique frescoes of the Vatican, and in certain early pictures of the catacombs, the “*Fractio Panis*,” etc.

Such sudden contrasts of light and shade, and their corollary, a

* Plate 13, No. 5.

† Plate 13, No. 2.

‡ Plate 13, No. 4.

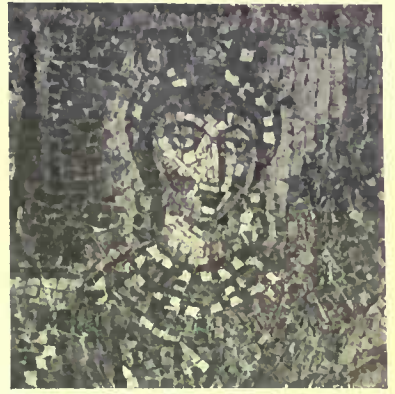
1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

gleaming effect, is characteristic of the technique of all the pictures of this church in so far as they are original.

If this vivid head be taken as a standard, that of the Princess, wooden, opaque, expressionless, falls naturally into another category. It is an interpolation, with all the characteristics of type and pose, of Justinian art.* The other heads in this picture approximate, more or less closely (according to their condition), to the antique original, which, though defaced, is never wholly effaced.

The architectonic background behind the Princess is so much injured as to be hardly decipherable.

Interpolations are: (a) the head of the Princess; (b) the broad band of gold, crossing the picture horizontally; (c) the stripes of gold in the dresses; and (d) all spots and touches of gold scattered about the picture.

COMMENTARY. IV.—The theory that these mosaics are derived from an illustrated Bible, and the foregone conclusion that they were designed as the literal translation of its text into pictorial form, have resulted in the misconception, here, as elsewhere, of the true subject-matter pictured.

“Mosè adolescente consegnato alla figlia di Faraone;” such is de Rossi’s terse adaptation of Garrucci’s explanation.

Ainaloff also is of opinion that nothing more is represented than the boy Moses with his mother before Pharaoh’s daughter. He looks on this composition as the expansion of the Biblical words “She brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son,” into a charming picture of an informal reception at the court of a Hellenistic Princess; as a fragment of aristocratic classic *genre*. And such undoubtedly it primarily is.

V. There are, however, two reasons which make it impossible to accept M. Ainaloff’s explanation unconditionally.

(a) The Egyptian Princess is the centre of a group of ladies, with jewelled hair, and softly-tinted robes; their dresses and jewellery resemble each other in design; they are therefore characterised as of the same social position.

According to the hypothesis one of these ladies is an obscure foster-mother of a race of slaves; it would follow therefore—the persons

* See Description, p. 143.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

represented being all of the same race and class—that the Princess received, not only Moses and his mother, but a bevy of their female relations.

Such an assertion discredits the premises from which it flows. The ladies who surround the Princess are evidently persons of distinction; their grace and simplicity testify to their familiarity with princely surroundings.

The mother of Moses must be eliminated from this company; the scene pictured is one in which her son was associated with the Princess and her ladies; but at which she did not assist.

(b) Secondly, the presence of the Hand of God is incompatible with the interpretation of the picture in which it occurs, as mere *genre*.

This emblem, naturally never an accessory, but always a dominating factor, proclaims the intervention of God in the scene represented in a very especial and active sense; it converts the actors into mere vehicles or channels of the divine will. It invests the incident with which it is associated with universal import. In *The Blessing of Jacob* it converts the material Corn and Vine of the patriarchal blessing into a prototype of the mystic sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.

It proves the subject-matter of this picture therefore to be one of deep and transcendental significance.

VI. The centre of the picture is the little Hebrew boy, dressed as a Hellenistic Prince; he stands before the seated Princess in the midst of a group of ladies-in-waiting. The moment is evidently a solemn one, some pact or rite is about to be celebrated, for gifts on both sides are present. The Princess's ladies are five in number. This number is not accidental: five was the number of witnesses, the presence of whom was necessary to the legality of a formal "Adoptio," a ceremony common in Rome, the adoption of an heir being the customary means by which a decadent aristocracy preserved their names from extinction, and their properties from dispersion.

The assemblage therefore of five persons with the intention of performing a solemn act, to be followed by the exchange of gifts, would have been as immediately suggestive of an "Adoptio" to a Roman of the time of Hadrian, as a roll with seven seals would have been of a will.

That such a ceremony was performed, and that Moses was formally

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

and legally adopted as heir by Pharaoh's daughter was the natural conclusion drawn from the words used in the Biblical narrative "The child became her son," in a country in which the succession to the Throne even was based on adoption.*

VII. No Christian writer before the end of the fourth century speaks of the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, not even Clement of Alexandria, or Eusebius, both of whom have preserved somewhat prolix legendary accounts of his infancy; but it is spoken of by later Latin writers, S. Augustine for example, who says: "A filia Pharaonis adoptatus atque nutritus etiam liberaliter educatus est."†

Philo, in his classic *Life of Moses*, neither mentions the Princess nor her father by name; he says she was an only daughter, married but childless, and that she adopted Moses in order that her race should not become extinct.‡

A pre-Philonic writer on the legendary history of Moses, Artapanus, a Hellenistic Jew of the century preceding the Christian era, describes the adoption of Moses by Merris,§ the daughter of Chenephres, and ascribes the foundation of civilisation, both social and religious, to the Hebrew Lawgiver.||

VIII. Both Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius quote a long monologue in which Moses gives an account of his youth, from the lost drama, "The Exodus," by the Alexandrine tragic poet Ezekiel. In the fragment thus preserved no reference is made to Moses' adoption; but it does not follow that it was ignored in the drama, for the Christian writers naturally only quoted what was to their immediate purpose. Strikingly different in style and manner as are the Biblical story and the drama, Ezekiel has adhered fairly closely to the facts related in the Old Testament; and that he should have done so is very intelligible if we remember that his play was written to be acted in an Alexandrine theatre, before an audience largely composed of Jews, more than a million of whom, according to Philo, lived in the city and surrounding country. These "Hebrews of the Dispersion," bred on the Scriptures,

* Augustus was the adopted son of his great-uncle Caesar, Tiberius of his step-father Augustus. During the hundred years which separate Nerva from Commodus there is no instance of inheritance on the basis of conquest or consanguinity, but only on that of adoption.

† 'De Civitate Dei,' xvi. 43, and xviii. 37.

‡ 'Biog. of Moses,' chap. i.

§ Suidas (Lex.) calls her Thermouthis.

|| See Schürer on Artapanus, 'Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes,' 3rd ed., vol. iii. pp. 354-356.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

would certainly not have permitted the poet to throw the reins to his imagination in the delineation of their national hero, but would have insisted on the conformity of his portrait with that drawn in their great national epos.

IX. This social obligation to literary conservatism was minimised by an opposite tendency; Ezekiel's play was written, not for Jews only, but for a mixed audience of Jews and Gentiles; and its object, the common object of the Hellenistic Jewish literature of the day, was the recommendation of the religion of Jehovah to the civilised world as the universal religion. It shares the characteristics of the phase of Jewish literature represented by Philo; its substance is Hebrew, its form and decoration Greek; or in other words the Hebrew material, which is its basis, is selected and handled from the point of view of propagandist "apologia" by a writer whose culture is fundamentally Greek, and who is careful not to offend against the preferences and prejudices of his fellow-citizens.*

X. The subject-matter of this composition being clearly the adoption of Moses as her heir by a Hellenistic Princess, the question arises what mystic thought is embodied in this link in a chain of pictures of typological purport, which represents an action invested with transcendental significance by its association with the symbol of the Divine Presence, the Hand of God. This Hand is represented as turned palm outwards; it is not pictured therefore in the gesture of speech; but, as the Neapolitan Garrucci remarks with point, in that of affirmation, confirmation, or of solemn declaration.†

Adoption is a term constantly used by S. Paul to express the new relation of man to God in Christ. He uses it almost in the modern sense of naturalisation, as the obtaining of a better fatherland and of privileges, not due by right of birth.‡

Moses was the child of a race of slaves, who was adopted as heir by the ruler of the land. Is he conceived here a prototype of Christ, in whom human nature was lifted into sonship with God?

* Schürer, l.c., iii. p. 375.

† 'Teorica,' p. 132. "Non ometterò di notare che la mano celeste sporgendo dalle nuvole o dal segmento della sfera celeste suole avere le due dita spiegate, il pollice e il medio, e però diciamo che parla; ma non di meno talvolta si rappresenta del tutto aperto della quale attitudine dobbiamo tener conto considerando che l'aperatura è simbolica, gesto della manifestazione e dichiarazione."

‡ See Romans viii. 23, ix. 4; Gal. iv. 5. Compare Delizsch, 'Die biblisch-prophetische Theologie,' pp. 231-257.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XI. Although the chief figures of the Old and New Testaments are generally conceived as antitheses, as representatives of two opposing principles, the Law and the Gospel, yet the opposite point of view is not unrepresented. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Moses in terms which show that he regarded him as a forerunner of Christ, who "hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much the more as he that built the house hath more honour than the house."* It was especially at the time of Clement of Alexandria that the Hebrew law-giver was conceived as the instrument of a prefatory revelation, as prompted by the Logos, and in this sense as one with Him. It was He who taught Moses, he says; † and again: "It was really the Lord who instructed the ancient people through Moses"; ‡ and again: "The Law is ancient Grace given through Moses by the Logos"; § and yet again: "He of old taught through Moses, and through the prophets (Moses, too, was a prophet), for the Law is the training of refractory children." (As S. Paul says: "The Law has been our tutor to bring us unto Christ.")|| And then he goes on to speak of Him of whom Moses was the prototype, "His Son Jesus, the Word of God, our Instructor, to whom God saying, 'This is my beloved Son,' hath entrusted us."¶

And elsewhere he says: "To us Moses is prophet, lawgiver, leader, general, statesman, philosopher." In his royalty there is a divine commixture, like that of the Son of God.**

XII. This note, once struck, is constantly repeated. Moses is identified with Christ on numerous sarcophagi, in the Cosmas Indicopleustes, and in a remarkable series on the doors of S. Sabina, on which his divine mission is represented: his calling, the giving of quails and bread to the Israelites in the Wilderness, both of which scenes are invested with sacramental significance; and lastly, in juxtaposition to each other, the giving of the Law and the gushing forth of the life-giving waters.†† The subjects, both mystic and realistic, of the small cycle decorating this door-panel are summed up in the words, "This is my Beloved Son."

XIII. Although this picture has suffered much, as we have seen—the head of the Princess being an interpolation, the figure of Moses

* iii. 3. † 'Instructor,' Book I. chap. ii. ; chap. vii. ‡ Book I., chap. vii. § *Ibid.*
|| Gal. iii. 24. ¶ Chap. xi. ** 'Strom.,' Book I. chap. xxiv. †† See Plate 52, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

having been rendered almost unintelligible by the dropping-out and dislocation of cubes, and the heads of the ladies having suffered in a similar way, though in a less degree—there nevertheless remains enough to characterise it as belonging to a phase of art which is nearer to the frescoes of Pompei than to the mosaic of S. Vitale, Ravenna, with which it has been compared.*

In this "Imperial Presentation of Gifts" at Ravenna the figures are designed not with reference to each other, nor to the incident in which they are actors, but to the spectator whom their eyes seek. They are long, inarticulated, and rigid; the composition is formal; the persons represented are seen *en face*, and ranged in rows, like a regiment on parade; the colouring is gay, but neither harmonious nor tender; they are, in short, good examples of the ostentatious and fast petrifying art of the Eastern Empire of the time of Justinian. Their analogies are with the saints of S. Venanzio and of S. Prassede; whereas the easy and spontaneous grace with which the ladies here are grouped about the Princess and her heir, the manner in which they bend to address him, or turn to speak to each other, the brilliant translucency of their faces, framed in rich and sombre masses of hair,† their simplicity, and the tender colouring of their draperies, put them into the category of classic art. Their affinities are with the frescoes of Pompei, certain early frescoes of the Catacombs, and even with the Fayûm portraits.

* Plate 13, No. 5.

† Compare the head No. 2 in The Adoption of Moses with the heads of The Three Graces in the Pompeian fresco No. 4.

CHAPTER III

MOSES AMONG THE PHILOSOPHERS

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (III.-XXI.) :—
- III. This picture ill-preserved.
- IV. Variety of gesture.
- V. Its subject-matter derived neither from the Old, nor from the New Testament.
- VI. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and others accentuate the priority of the Mosaic revelation to Greek civilisation.
- VII. The Sicinian mosaic an embodiment of the idea they combat.
- VIII. The introduction of Greek philosophers in this connection as representatives of philosophy in general, incompatible with the thought prevailing at the end of the second century.
- IX. Moses is represented as a prodigy. This is not the conception of Christian writers.
- X. The idea embodied is Philonic.
- XI. Philo's account of the supernatural intelligence of the boy Moses.
- XII. His enthusiasm for philosophy.
- XIII. His conception of Greek philosophy as derived from Hebrew revelation.
- XIV. His position in the history of Hellenistic culture.
- XV. He conceives Moses as the source of civilisation, Hebrew, Greek, and Egyptian ;—
- XVI. And as taught in his boyhood by Greek philosophers.
- XVII. Cognate Alexandrine representations of meetings of philosophers. Naples. Rome.
- XVIII. The affinities of this picture, and of the "Adoptio," which is coupled with it, are with the thought and art of Alexandria in the first century.
- XIX. Their subject-matter not necessarily Christian.
- XX. Why was this Philonic composition inserted into a typological Christian series ?
- XXI. The Logos idea.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

MOSES AMONG THE PHILOSOPHERS.

Plate 13, No. 1b; Plate 14, No. 1b and No. 2.

I. DESCRIPTION.—The child Moses, royally robed, standing in the centre of a hemicycle, seemingly instructs a group of Greek philosophers, who, either standing, or seated about him, respond with vehement gestures.

The heads of interested auditors outside the building are visible.

Moses is represented as a fair boy, of about twelve, in princely vestments, his right hand raised in authoritative and dignified speech.

He wears a gold-wrought tunic, of which only the tight, glittering sleeve is visible; a white, girded, wide-sleeved tunic (*tunica cincta manicata*), embroidered on the skirt with a golden ornament; and purple mantle (*paludamentum*), with golden tabula; it is fastened on the shoulder with a golden fibula; a golden band encircles his red-gold hair.

Opposite him is a philosopher with hand upraised in eager speech; another stands behind him; and seven are seated or recline on the steps of the hemicycle; their vehement gestures show of what burning interest is the point under discussion.

They either wear the pallium only—arranged after the fashion especially affected by the stoics, but commonly used by the professors of other philosophic tenets, *i.e.*, so worn as to leave the right shoulder, breast, and arm bare, and carry the philosopher's staff,—or they wear the pallium and tunica of an ordinary citizen of the Empire.

All have long beards, and hair, which hang in locks.

The hemicycle in which the scene takes place is furnished with three superimposed rows of seats, arranged about a free central space.

A much-injured broad red band, edged by white lines, runs along the upper border of this low "stand"; it seems the decorated horizontal upper surface of a parapet.

II. CONDITION.—A broad band of stucco imitation of mosaic encloses this picture on three sides, to the right, to the left, and below; it is widest below, where it is exceedingly irregular in form; it includes the feet of the child Moses, and of the sages standing on either side of him.

The antique mosaic work bordering on it is in a very imperfect state, many of the cubes of which it is composed having fallen out, leaving an uneven surface, which has sometimes been unskilfully patched.

1.



3.



2.



4.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Both the figure and face of Moses are much restored. The touches of gold in the dress and fibula are interpolations. In perfect condition are the heads of the crowd on the right.

Indistinct and injured as is this picture, it is practically free, Moses' robes excepted, from interpolations in the style of other periods, and from the intrusion of gold. It is remarkable as containing one of the best representations of aristocratic childhood classic Christian art has produced.

COMMENTARY. III.—Not only is this composition ill-preserved, and the faces blurred and distorted by the dislocation of the cubes of which they are constructed, but it is placed at so high a level, and at such a distance from the eye that the small figures of which it is composed are barely distinguishable. Its importance has therefore escaped the eyes of archæologists. With good glasses, however, its general arrangement is clear.

In its centre is a slim young figure in princely robes, whose words excite a dramatic reaction in an audience of philosophers, standing or seated on the steps of the hemicycle in which the scene takes place.

IV. Throughout the series of the Nave, in which the representations of colloquies and dialogues between groups of persons are frequent, the speaker is characterised as such in a uniform manner, the body is pictured either as erect, or bent slightly forward, according to the exigencies of the story;* the right hand raised. But no scene can rival in variety of manual expression with that pictured here, in which ten right hands are outstretched in the varied and individual expression of doubt, surprise, reflection, excited acclamation, and expostulation. It is clear that the subject under discussion is one of vital importance. We naturally turn to the great treasury of information concerning Moses, the Bible, to learn its nature.

V. There is no hint in the Old Testament of any scene of which this may be interpreted as the pictorial rendering.

Nor is it possible to establish more than a very slight connection between it and S. Stephen's description of Moses as "learned in the Wisdom of the Egyptians," † a remark which occurs parenthetically in his public denunciation of the treatment of their leaders by the Jews

* See Plate 10, No. 4a and 6a; Plate 12; Plate 22, No. 1a and No. 3a. † Acts vii. 22.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

from time immemorial ; for Moses' companions are not conceived as Egyptian priests, but as Greek philosophers ; and no one who allows the picture to speak for itself can receive the impression of a passive boy surrounded by teachers from this representation of a young prince, whose hand is raised in a gesture which is almost insolent in its calm assumption of authority ; who stands within a hemicycle, on the steps of which, in the place of *learners* therefore, and not of instructors, his supposed teachers are seated. Neither do these seem, strictly speaking, pupils or disciples ; the freedom of their gestures, and the implied vehemence of their speech, make this impossible.

What is represented is clearly the discussion of a burning question by learned equals ; one of whom however is pre-eminent, not by virtue of his rank, for, though this is insisted on, the absence of restraint in the manner with which the prince is approached shows that it took but a small place in the consciousness of the speakers ; but of his ability it is he who propounds and demonstrates, they who listen and comment, possibly oppose.

It follows therefore that either the artist has allowed himself unprecedented latitude in his representation of the Biblical text, or that the Biblical text is not the source whence his inspiration was drawn.

VI. The Christian writers who have most frequently furnished clues to the significance of these compositions have been Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria :

Justin constantly speaks of Moses ; both in his dialogue with the Jew Trypho, and in his two Apologies ; in the latter chiefly in connection with the relation of Greek thought to the philosophy of the Hebrew sage.

In his opinion Plato's theory of the origin of the world is so similar to that of Moses that its source is self-evident ; the first Chapter of the Book of Genesis.*

Moreover, he held that " whatever philosophers have said concerning the immortality of the soul, or punishment after death, or contemplation of things heavenly, or doctrines of the like kind, they first received as suggestions from the prophets.† He excludes the theory that Moses was influenced by early Greek thought ; expressly stating that " he is more ancient than any Greek writer."‡

His pupil Tatian is still more explicit ; he sets himself the task of

* 'Apol.' i., chap. lix.

† *Ibid.* chap. xlv.

‡ *Ibid.*

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

proving that such an influence is chronologically impossible, asserting that Moses lived many years before the fall of Troy; before the fabulous men to whom the Trojans traced their descent; before Dardanus even, who was the grandfather of Tros, who was the father of Ilos.*

Clement of Alexandria treats the subject with equal detail.

He precludes his discussion of the "plagiarism of Mosaic teaching by philosophers" with the expression of his intention to establish the date of what he calls the "epoch" of Moses.

With this end in view he states on authority that Moses was contemporary with Inachus; hence it follows that he preceded the foundation of Attica by forty generations; the siege of Troy by twenty; the deification of Dionysos by six hundred years, and those of Hercules, Æsculapius, Castor and Pollux, Isis, Apes, Orpheus, by many "generations"; he was separated consequently from historical or pseudo-historical thinkers, such as Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, etc., by an immense gulf of time.

"We have demonstrated," he concludes, "that Moses was more ancient, not only than those called poets and wise men among the Greeks, but than most of their Deities. Nor he alone, but the Sibyl also."†

VII. Obviously these second century Apologists were concerned to combat the idea that Hebrew revelation was contemporary with Greek philosophy, or influenced by it. But this is precisely the thought embodied in the Sicinian mosaic: Moses and the Greek philosophers are pictured together in ardent discussion.

VIII. But, it may be urged, the artist's aim not being the representation of an event, but the expression of an idea, he was justified in introducing Greek philosophers as a generic symbol of philosophy.

This argument would be weighty if the approximate date of the cycle in which this picture occurs were not that of Justin Martyr and of Clement of Alexandria. The anachronism in question embodies a conception current at an earlier epoch, but against which theologians of the second and third centuries declared war.

IX. A second element in the picture is inharmonious with the sentiment of the second century.

* 'Oratio ad Graecos,' chap. xxxvi.

† 'Strom.' I. chap. xxi.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Moses is represented as a prodigy; at a tender age he instructs the venerable professors of an ancient philosophy.

This is not at all the point of view from which any Christian writer regards him; far from suggesting that his learning was supernatural, Clement emphasises the long and laborious processes by which it was acquired; he speaks of his education as "encyclical," *i.e.*, as embracing the various co-related courses which composed the curriculum of an Egyptian savant; like Stephen, he conceives him as "*instructed*" in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*

X. As clearly as the conception of the boy Moses here mirrored is not that of Justin or of Clement, so evidently is it one which flourished a century earlier, of which the ablest and best known exponent is Philo of Alexandria.†

XI. In his "Life of Moses" Philo enumerates the different branches of learning into which the boy was initiated, adding, however, that his gifts were miraculous, that his God-like intelligence outstripped that of his teachers, each of whom was the highest authority in the branch of learning he professed.

"In a short time," he writes, "their acquirements lay behind him; he anticipated their teaching, divining what was to be known by some supernatural faculty, for learning with him seemed to be a process of recollection, rather than of acquirement. Unassisted by teachers, and guided only by knowledge which seemed to be innate, he solved many arduous problems."

He further characterises him as great morally as he was intellectually. "Keeping guard over his passions as over a restive horse, he completely subdued them to his spirit."

"Naturally," he continues, "all who associated with him marvelled; and being amazed at so novel a spectacle, questioned what manner of Mind it was which was housed in his Body, being set up therein like an Image within a Shrine."

XII. Philo's enthusiasm for the divinely-gifted boy was heightened by his personal attitude to Wisdom, which he considered literally God-inspired, "God-like philosophy," he calls it, "of its nature divine"; and again he writes: "Philosophy (as the sweetest of all writers, Plato, has said) is of all things nearest God, and life-giving."

* Acts vii. 22.

† Died after 40 A.D.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The figure of Plato seemed almost superhuman to him ; he speaks of Parmenides, Empedocles, Zeno, Kleanthes, as of the nature of gods ; they form a " holy guild."

XIII. Nevertheless, he conceived their philosophy, like that of the philosophers of this picture, as dependent on that of Moses, who was in all things their guide and forerunner, the able exponent of that which they but dimly perceived ; for he looked on the Hebrew prophets as God's interpreters in an especial sense, as His mediums, almost we had said His mouthpieces, and their words, therefore, as the perfect expression of the divine will.

These views, however, were the fruit of his patriotism rather than of his intelligence ; he was only able to hold them by aid of a process of allegorical and mystical interpretation, in the light of which he read the most cherished tenets of Hellenistic philosophy (which were the true breath of his intellectual life) into the Hebrew Scriptures ; for his Judaism, as a German critic remarks, " practically consists in the mere formal assertion that by virtue of their possession of the Mosaic revelation the Jewish people were the depositories of the highest religious knowledge, of what might almost be called the only true religious revelation." " Otherwise he was so much a Greek, so completely saturated in Greek literature and philosophy, that he must be enrolled in the ranks not of Hebrew, but of Greek thinkers." *

XIV. The same learned historian adjudges him elsewhere " the most important of the men who endeavoured to unite Jewish theology with Greek philosophy, to render Greek thought accessible to the Jews, and the religious experiences of the Jews intelligible to the Greeks." †

XV. Having by a process of allegorical exegesis discovered the Platonic doctrines in the teaching of Moses, Philo declared that the Hebrew Lawgiver had not only anticipated the tenets of the Athenian thinker, but had arrived at deeper and more essential truths. " In other words," to quote the same writer verbally, " Philo categorically asserts that the teaching which he had seemingly adopted from Greek philosophic thought was really derived from the Old Testament."

XVI. If to this conception of Moses as the founder of Hebrew Wisdom and the source of the deepest Greek religious thought be added Philo's statement that wise men from Greece were

* Schürer, *Gesch. d. jüd. Volks*, vol. iii. p. 550.

† *l. c.* p. 489.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

tempted to Egypt by gifts and money in order to superintend the education of the adopted heir, then surely the intellectual pre-requisites of this picture are to hand, both the material fact, the personal contact between Moses and the Greek philosophers, and the gloss to which it owes its especial character.*

The boy wears royal robes. He was early styled "the young King," says Philo. He communicates wisdom to the representatives of Greek philosophy who are assembled to teach him. They assent to his conclusions with enthusiasm, for he formulates the truth they had but dimly apprehended. The gestures of each express the individual measure of his amazement and admiration.

The noble and energetic head of the philosopher standing opposite Moses recalls that of Plato, whom it may possibly be intended to represent.†

XVII. In the Museum of Naples ‡ is a Pompeian mosaic of Alexandrine origin, of which a second version exists in the Villa Albani.§

Their common subject-matter is a meeting of philosophers in the Academy of Athens, the scene is localised by the epistyle, the olive tree, and sundial in the background, also by an indication of the Acropolis and of a theatre and other buildings (the latter in the Roman example only).

As in the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore, two of the philosophers stand on the right and left of the picture, while their fellows are seated on the steps of a hemicycle with curved back and sides. Their number is the mystic seven, possibly associated in this connection with the Seven Sages, or with the Pleiades of the Tragic Poets of Alexandria. It is possible also that Plato, who, like Apollo, is called *ἑβδομαγενής*, may have been conceived as the leader and harmoniser of philosophic councils. ||

These two pictures are clearly variations of an original connected with the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore.

* "Immediately he had all kinds of masters . . . some even, tempted by large presents, being procured from Greece." Philo, *Life of Moses*.

† In the present ruined state of the mosaic it is impossible to speak with greater certitude.

‡ Plate 14, No. 4.

§ Plate 14, No. 3.

|| E. Petersen in 'Mittheilungen des K. Deutschen Arch. Inst. Röm. Abt.,' xii. p. 328-334 (1897); 'Monumenti antichi pubbl per cura della R. Accad. dei Lincei,' vol. viii. (1898), p. 389-416; A. Sogliano, 'L'accademia di Platone rappresentata in un mosaico pompeiano.'

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

It may be that the idea of Apollo, the youthful god of order and purity, of rhythm, music, and prophecy, was associated in the artist's mind with the figure of the long-cloaked Prince who is here represented as leading a council of nine Sages, as the Cithar-player led the chorus of the Muses.

XVIII. Both the thought expressed here and the manner of its expression lead to a date earlier than that postulated by the contents of any picture hitherto discussed; they lead, moreover, definitely to a phase of Hellenistic art to which reference has constantly been made, the Alexandrine.

This is true also, though in a less degree, of the picture associated with it, The Adoption of Moses.

XIX. It is possible that these two compositions, neither of which represent conceptions which are essentially Christian, are fragments or variations of a pre-Christian series illustrative not of the Biblical account of the life of Moses, but of such a drama as the "Exodus" by Ezekiel, designed to decorate some hall or basilica belonging either to the wealthy Hebrew community of Alexandria, or to some rich private Jew.*

If this hypothesis be correct, they are unique illustrations of a most interesting phase of religious thought, of which no other pictorial reflex has survived, if exception be made of the splendid frieze of which a late copy is preserved in the "Joshua Rotulus" of the Vatican.

We speak only of the *invention* of these compositions; their execution is similar in every detail with that of the other parts of the series in which they are embedded, and is undoubtedly synchronous with them.

XX. There must have been some reason why a composition of such descent as this *Disputa* should have been woven into the texture of a series of pictures in which Old Testament heroes are treated as prototypes of Christ. The parallelism of this scene with an incident from the childhood of Christ might be put forward as such. But the dispute of Christ with the Doctors is a motif never met with in classic Christian art; neither did it occupy the pen of any of the early Fathers.

XXI. The explanation is to be found in one of the fundamental

* The upper picture may well have represented nothing more originally than an incident from the Childhood of Moses. The Hand of God may have been added when the composition was pressed into the service of Christianity. The lower picture has no exclusively Christian characteristic.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

conceptions of contemporary patristic theology ; in the current thought of the Logos as the expression of divine Wisdom, and the source of all human knowledge.

“Christ,” says Justin, “was partially known even by Socrates, for He was and is the Word which is in every man.”*

And again, “The teaching of Christ is not precisely similar to that of Plato, nor to that of others, whether stoics, or poets, or historians, although these spoke well according to the proportion and power of the Word dwelling in him . . . for all perceived . . . (even though imperfectly) . . . through the indwelling Logos.” †

Christ therefore was conceived, at the time at which there is reason to believe the Sicinian mosaics were executed, as Wisdom, and as the source of all Wisdom, ‡ and thus formed a fitting antitype to the lesser figure of Moses, the Hebrew source of Greek Wisdom. To this conception must be attributed the adoption into the ranks of Christian art of a picture of which the centre is the youthful Moses leading and illuminating the councils of philosophers.

This Philonic composition is a tool forged in the Jewish camp ; but hung by right of conquest in a Christian basilica, not as a trophy only, but as a serviceable weapon.

* ‘Apol.’ ii., chap. 10.

† *Ibid.* chap. 13.

‡ This thought is repeated in the didactic decorations of the Arch.



CHAPTER IV

MOSES' MARRIAGE

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.-XIV.) :—
- IV. The composition similar to that of Raphael's Sposalizio.
- V. Cognate compositions on sarcophagi ;
- VI. On coins ;
- VII. On late sarcophagi : the Juno Pronuba in the background.
- VIII. Zipporah placed at the priest's right hand.
- IX. Fulness of treatment.
- X. Contrasted with The Marriage of Jacob.
- XI. Why is the subject treated with such wealth of detail ?
- XII. Its typological significance. Irenaeus.
- XIII. Moses' companions.
- XIV. The point of view from which this picture is composed—not that of the time of Philo, but that of Irenaeus.

THE MARRIAGE OF MOSES AND ZIPPORAH.

Plates 15 and 16.

I. SUBJECT.—“(The Priest of Midian) . . . gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.”—Ex. ii. 21.

II. DESCRIPTION.—On either side of a stalwart and venerable old man stand a youth and a maiden with clasped right hands ; behind them are attendant companions, women accompanying the bride, men the bridegroom. The wedding-party stands on a strip of grass. Above the central group rises what seems to be the interior of a concave building ; an apse, or a niche, or a section of a cupola.

The centre of this composition is an old man, with flowing silvery hair and beard ; his hands are laid on the shoulders of the young couple,

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

the ritual of whose marriage ceremony he conducts ; obviously, Jethro, the Priest-King of Midian, the father of Zipporah.

His dress is remarkable. It consists of a wide-sleeved, white, girded tunic, with purple clavi ; a red girdle, of which the pendant ends are visible in front, and a dark purple white-edged mantle thrown back over the shoulders. It is fastened on the breast by a large golden medallion-like brooch ; on his feet are high white boots, laced with red.

Melchizedek and the priests in The Presentation in the Temple are similarly dressed ;* this is therefore the costume distinctive of priests throughout the cycle.

To his right stands Zipporah, a dainty spring-like figure, breathing the charm of youth and spontaneity.

She is richly dressed in a yellow dalmatica (or a tunica), with spots and vertical lines of a darker colour ; and a late variation of the palla contabulata ; it is yellow, embroidered with black and red ; beneath it full white transparent sleeves fastened at the wrist are visible. Gems shine in her dark hair, and a heavy ornament composed of quadrangular precious stones encircles her neck ; a long white veil with a square embroidery at one end flows from her head ; she has evidently just stepped impulsively forward to lay her hand in that of her bridegroom, and the movement has thrown the white gauze floating mistily about her, into delicate motion ; her left hand is raised to her chin with a pretty shrinking girlish gesture.

It is difficult to find either the prototype, or the artistic progeny of this vivid little bride, the outcome of a sensibility to the charm of wayward and immature youth, with which classic art has not hitherto been accredited.

Behind Zipporah stands her mother, who, her hand outstretched in a protective gesture, commits her to the care of her new guardian.

To the extreme left are her two sisters, both very slim and girlish ; one of them already, like her mother, wears a matron's cap ; the other is dressed, like the bride, in gold brocade with gems in her hair, and a heavy jewelled necklace about her throat.

To the right is a group of young men of fine classic type. Their oval shaven faces are wide at the brow, and taper to the chin, their foreheads are low, their eyes quiet ; the type is that of the Gens Julia.

* See Plate 5, No. 1, and Plate 36, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Foremost among them is Moses, his right hand clasping that of his bride. Each wears the usual dress of a Roman citizen, *i.e.*, a dark purple under-tunic, of which only the tight-fitting sleeve is visible, the common white tunica talaris, and pallium. Peculiar in their costume is the purple-black sash worn over the tunic, and under the pallium; it passes over the right shoulder before and behind the torso, and is gathered together on the left hip under the pallium, its pendant ends reaching nearly as low as the left knee. These ends only are visible, and the broad black band where it crosses the shoulder. Dark boots, also unique in this series, complete this "wedding garment."

III. CONDITION.—Although some of the heads in this picture (all of which, with the exception of that of Jethro, are executed in a daring colour scheme, in which a bright red plays a prominent *rôle*) are disfigured by clumsy restoration, they are either almost entirely antique, or, in spite of repairs, have retained their antique character*; the flesh tints are brilliant, the colouring rich, the light and shade daringly juxtaposed. The movement of the figures, notably that of Zipporah and of Jethro, is free and spontaneous.

The head and the figure of Jethro may be said to be fairly intact.

With these exceptions this picture is a typical example of a most misleading form of restoration (of which examples abound in this cycle), namely, one which is the result of the restorer's conscious intention to remodel in the taste and costume of an earlier date.

The male figure on the extreme right being the most obviously remodelled, it will be well to study it first. The foreground on the right is occupied by three male figures. The torsoes of Moses and of the young man beside him face the spectator, their heads are slightly turned towards the centre of the picture.

The pose of the third youth corresponded to theirs originally, as is shown by the position of the sash which crosses his right shoulder, and of the folds of his pallium, both of which, like those of his companions, are seen absolutely *en face*. His head and feet, however, have been re-executed *in profile*, and his draperies so retouched as to give the impression of a figure seen from behind, and to correspond with the restorer's conception of the garments worn.

Sashes such as are worn here are an unknown adjunct to antique

* Exception must be made of the last male figure on the right in profile.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

dress. The surface of the cubes of which they are formed is higher than that of its surroundings. The senses of touch and sight therefore confirm the suspicion that they are additions, additions moreover which must have been made before the reconstruction of the figure on the extreme right.

The heads of these young men are ill preserved. Twelve cubes have fallen out of the throat of the last but one, and about fifteen cubes out of the hair of the last two. The cubes in the neighbourhood of these gaps are not antique. Moses' head is well preserved, and antique in intonation.

Moses and his companions obviously wore the white *tunica talaris* and pallium; the restorer, however, has added touches and lines which make the upper folds of the pallium approximate to the form of a *pallium contabulatum*, and the lower part to that of an apron, or the skirt of a frock coat; and this, although the manner in which the left hand is involved in its folds, show that the garment in question was originally of the nature of a pallium. An early form of this *pallium contabulatum* occurs several times on the Arch of Constantine.*

The heads of the women are much patched with red of a particularly crude shade, which was probably originally used sparingly and associated with orange.† Their eyes are executed in a technique which never recurs in this basilica. Six or seven narrow dark cubes are so arranged as to form an outline; the eyeball itself consists of three stones, two quadrangular, black and green, and one white, approximately triangular in form. The pupils of one of Zipporah's eyes is executed in painted stucco.

Their dresses, as they at present stand, consist of the *tunica talaris* or possibly dalmatica, and a badly understood rendering of the *palla contabulata* of the late form of which examples occur in the Church of S. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna.‡ The construction of this palla was not understood by the restorer. That of Zipporah is touched here and there with meaningless patches and lines of white.

In all probability these women wore long tunics, like those of Merris' Ladies in Waiting, or like those of the Women of Bethlehem; and pallas like those worn by Leah and by Anna.§

* See Plate 17, No. 4. † See head of one of the Magi, Plate 49. ‡ See Plate 32, No. 4.

§ Zipporah's dress, as is shown by its white patches, must have been originally white, and those of

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The upper part of this composition has perished; a patch of dark blue replaces the clear pallor of the sky, and a patch of the red which has been so lavishly used in the faces, replaces, without any attempt at modelling, the usually elaborate upper curves of the conca.

A long patch of gold forms the background of the heads.

A patch of dark blue replaces the sunlit middle-distance on the extreme left. The walls of the Apse, probably dark in tone, on which the white draperies of the three central figures were relieved, have been swept away, and replaced by a sheet of gold, above which the conca floats like an umbrella.

The lower parts of the three male faces on the extreme right are modern.

COMMENTARY. IV.—Although the elements of which this picture is composed—the Priest-King in its centre, with a prominent architectonic background, and the two processions of men and women advancing, headed by the bride and bridegroom, from the right and left—are not exactly those which go to form a marriage ceremony of to-day, yet this representation of a wedding evokes no sense of surprise, but rather of familiarity; and this because its plan is that of Raphael's *Sposalizio* in the Milanese Gallery, the scheme of which dates from classic antiquity.

V. Cognate compositions on antique sarcophagi are many. The Priest-King is replaced by the goddess Juno Pronuba, before whom husband and wife stand with interlocked right hands, *dexterarum junctio*.

VI. Similar representations, of which the central figure is accompanied by the legend "Concordia," are to be found on the coins of a limited period, that restricted by and embracing the reigns of Antoninus Pius (138–161), and Alexander Severus (222–235), during which they are frequent.*

VII. The man and woman are placed so close together on sarcophagi of the fourth and fifth centuries that the Juno Pronuba is pushed into the background, to the detriment of the structure of the composition,

her companions white and purple. The general colour-scheme of this composition was therefore that of the picture on the opposite wall, Abraham and Lot; of which the prevailing colour is white.

* Plate 17, No. 2 and No. 3. See also 'Catalogue of the Roman Coins in the British Museum Roman Medallions,' H. A. Grueber, especially Plate 14, No. 3, Plate 37, No. 10, Commodus and Crispina. Rossbach, 'Römische Hochzeits-und Ehedenkmaeler.'

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

the married couple together with Juno no longer forming a pyramidal line-scheme of which the goddess's head is the apex, after the pattern both of the coins to which reference has been made, and of the Sicinian mosaic.

The degradation of this composition is a symptom of the growing decadence of the Empire, religious, social, and artistic. Romans no longer demanded that the representations of their marriages should be sanctified by the presence of a divinity; that the shadowy and circumscribed majesty of Juno still lingered in the background was due to the conservatism of artistic tradition. Artists moreover had learned so to pack the area to be decorated with picture pressed against picture, that the space-arrangement could no longer be thought of.

The "dexterarum junctio" of S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura,* and of the Hermitage of St. Petersburg may be mentioned as good examples of the representation of this subject on sarcophagi.†

VIII. In the Sicinian mosaic Zipporah is placed at the Priest's right hand, whereas on the sarcophagi the woman stands at the goddess's left: this would seem to indicate the desire to give prominence to her figure.

IX. In no cognate pagan representations is the marriage ceremony conceived as a scene of such festal, yet solemn magnificence as here. The number of the figures; the rhythm of their movements; the richness of their dresses; the strict symmetry ruling the structure of the composition; its imposing architectonic centre; the converging processions, which add a hieratic solemnity to its splendour, these form an *ensemble* in which freedom and spontaneity are combined with a something awe-inspiring and mystic, which is not characteristic of classic pagan art.

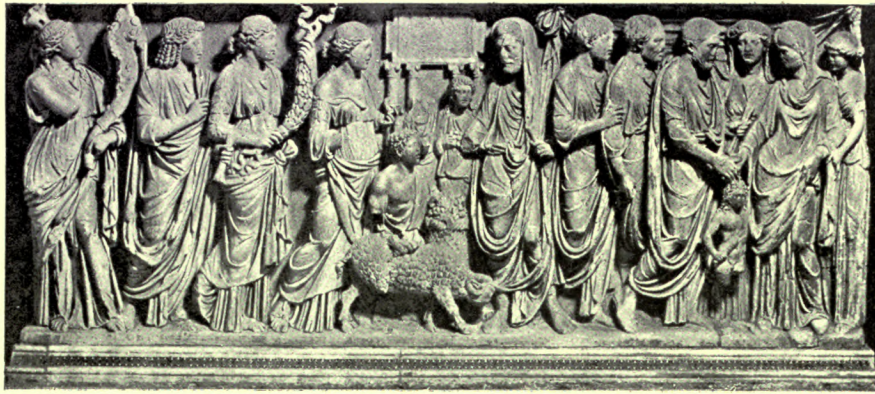
X. Comparison of this composition with the representation of The Marriage of Jacob in the preceding cycle is instructive, for though there can be no doubt that the marriage of the Shepherd to Rachel is conceived as foreshadowing the union of Christ with the Church, yet it is not underlined and emblazoned as an event of such importance as is this marriage of Moses with a woman of an alien race; a marriage which the Hebrew law regarded with doubtful eyes.

The artist left no means of attracting and riveting the spectator's

* Plate 17, No. 1.

† Room 3, No. 192.

I.



2.



3.



4.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

attention unexploited ; not only is the composition rich in colour and detail, and its component figures individually of unusual size, but the space allotted to the picture as a whole is larger than that of any other twin-composition in the series, space being filched in its interest from the representation below, The Calling of Moses, to which a most misleading appearance of an accessory is thus given.

XI. Throughout the long period of Greco-Roman culture, pictorial and plastic composition was governed by a law dictating the elimination of all that was not strictly necessary to the clear presentment of the chosen incident : the empirical and arbitrary accessories of modern art were unknown ; the exigencies and purport of the story, together with the character of the space to be decorated, alone determined the mode and fulness of its representation.

Why therefore, we ask ourselves, is this "sojourner in a strange land" * attended by four young men, each wearing an official robe similar to his, whereas in the parallel scene from the history of Jacob, Jacob has but one attendant, who like himself is poorly dressed as a shepherd ?

Indeed, why does this dress, which is unique in this series, occur at all ? In the picture immediately following, which belongs to the same phase of his history, Moses wears a shepherd's dress. Why not here also ?

XII. The key which revealed the point of view from which the Jacob-series was composed was an exclamation made by Justin in his discussion with the Jew Trypho, "Leah is your Synagogue, but Rachel is our Church."

In like manner the prominence accorded to the subject-matter of this picture is accounted for by the mystical significance attached to it in contemporary thought.

The marriage of Moses, writes Irenaeus, foreshadowed the marriage of the Logos, his Ethiopian bride prefigured the Church drawn from among the Gentiles.†

He goes on to speak of the marriage of the prophet Hosea with an outcast, with the intent to prove that the character of the mission of the Logos was foreshadowed by the prophets, not in words and visions only, but in their acts, and in the incidents of their lives.

* Ex. ii. 22.

† 'Against Heresies,' Book iv., chap. xx.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

He justifies his interpretation of the mystic character of Hosea's marriage by quoting S. Paul's assertion that the unbelieving wife is justified in the believing husband ; and also by reference to his simile of the wild olive which was ennobled by union with the fruitful olive.

Christ, he states, actually performed that which the acts of the prophets foretold. As Moses by marriage lifted the Ethiopian into the position of an Israelite, so Christ wedded His Elect among the Gentiles, and lifted them into the mystic family of the People of God.

When Christ was born in the flesh, he argues, men sought to take His life, but He found safety in Egypt, that is, among the Gentiles, and there He founded the Church ; for Egypt, like Ethiopia, was originally Gentile. And then he draws the conclusion already quoted, that the marriage of Moses foreshadowed that of the Logos ; Moses' Ethiopian wife being the Church.

It is very intelligible that the artist should have used every means in his power to give prominence to a representation of a subject foreshadowing the mystic marriage of Christ to the Ecclesia ex Gentibus in a series of which the leading thought is the election of the Gentiles to be the People of God.

XIII. If the idea of Christ, or in other words of the Logos, is to be associated with the figure of Moses, it is not impossible that the thought of the twelve Apostles may be connected with his four companions, for four is the symbol of totality.*

XIV. It has been shown that the foregoing double picture representing The Adoption of Moses, and The Discussion with the Philosophers, reflects a phase of thought which must be termed Philonic, and as such occupies a unique position in this scheme of didactic church decoration.

But the thought embodied in the picture under discussion belongs, as does the cycle as a whole, to the time of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, etc., and not to that of Philo ; this is shown by the very different point of view from which Philo treated Moses' marriage.

"Jethro gave Moses his most beautiful daughter," he says, "showing by this act what is due to virtue, which needs no recommendation, but is its own best certificate."

* See 'The Mystery of the Virgin Birth,' § 12.

1.



4.



2.



3.



CHAPTER V

THE CALLING OF MOSES

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.-XI.) :—
- IV. Much repaired, but not reconstructed.
- V. The central figure, as is shown by the raised upper part of the leg, originally represented Moses in the act of removing his shoes.
- VI. Prominence of the landscape points to an early date.
- VII. Relation to similar pastoral scenes in the Catacombs.
- VIII. Subordination of the Burning Bush.
- IX. The office of Shepherd associated with Christ.
- X. Justin Martyr.
- XI. Cosmas Indicopleustes.

THE CALLING OF MOSES.

Plate 18, Nos. 1 and 2.

I. SUBJECT.—“God called unto him out of the midst of the bush . . . and said . . . Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. . . . I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob . . . I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry . . . I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them . . . and to bring them . . . into a good land.”—Ex. iii. 4-8.

II. DESCRIPTION.—In the centre of a pastoral landscape studded with sheep and with shrubs,—the leaves of several of which have a tendency to autumnal colouring, notably one, which is veritably flame-coloured,—is the disproportionately large figure of a shepherd in a tunica exomis, the drawing of the foreshortened skirt of which seems to show that the leg was originally raised, and makes it possible that he may have

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

been represented in the original picture in the act of removing his shoes.

To the left is the almost undistinguishable figure of a shepherd chiefly executed in stucco.

To the right is the charming figure of a youthful shepherd, reclining gracefully on the uneven ground, among his sheep, one of which he caresses; this fragment is antique in character although dust-bitten and discoloured.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of a badly preserved copy, executed in opaque mosaic of inferior quality. The cubes of which it is composed are carelessly and unsystematically set. The figure of the reclining shepherd on the right is more carefully executed than are its surroundings, and is possibly antique in part.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Although this picture has been so thoroughly repaired that no part of it can be pointed to as certainly in its original state, still it has been patched and mended with the purpose of preserving the antique composition, and has not been consistently reconstructed in the taste of a later period; it is therefore possible, the materials of early Christian iconography being limited and familiar, to discard the restorer's errors, and to force his ineptitudes to yield hints of the nature of the lost figures they travesty.

V. Clumsy restoration has destroyed the character of the head of the central figure, the type of which is no longer that of other representations of Moses in this series.

The legs from the knees downwards have been destroyed, but the drawing of the upper part of the leg (in the mosaic, and not in the reproductions published by Garrucci, by de Rossi, and by Ainaloff), seems to show that it was originally drawn up as if the foot were either simply raised, or rested on a stone, or hillock.

If this be so, as is probable (in the present condition of the picture it is unwise to dogmatise), then Moses was represented as taking off his shoes in obedience to the divine command, his face lifted in the direction of the voice, represented in the upper part of the picture by a cloud-girt hand; a common 'motif' in Christian art.

VI. The prominence given to the landscape and its naturalistic character—undulating pastoral land studded with shrubs—points to its conception at an early date; for the art of the first centuries of the

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Christian era passed quickly from a synthetic naturalism in the representation of landscape to its schematic presentation; which in its turn gave place to a plain sheet of colour, or of gold, forming a fitting setting to the fossil figures which were all that later impotence could produce.

Notwithstanding the charm of its pastoral subject it cannot be denied that the general effect of this picture is unpleasant; the inequality in the size of the figures, the clumsy gesture of the large central shepherd, the spotty colouring of the landscape, emphasise an inherent defect; it is overcrowded; its points of interest are pressed too closely together.

The impression received is that of a contracted version of a broadly conceived pastoral scene designed to decorate a large wall-space, and not intended to be pressed, as at present, into a narrow frieze-like slip under a larger picture.

VII. If our hypothetical reconstruction of the central figure be correct, then, as has been said, it repeats a 'motif,' which frequently occurs in the Catacombs, but without a landscape background; which was omitted because its subterranean location necessitated the greatest clarity and simplicity of presentment, the reduction of the subject to its pictographic elements. It is possible that the Catacomb frescoes may be abbreviations of the type of composition preserved here.

VIII. The subject, Moses, who bends to loose his shoes from off his feet, predicates the representation of the Burning Bush.

Small isolated leafy trees are scattered about the landscape, the branches of the third from the left are alternately green, brown, and fiery red; above it, but more to the right, are crimson clouds, the constant symbolic accompaniment of the Divine Presence.*

It represents, therefore, the Burning Bush; which was probably originally more definitely characterised, though certainly not represented as in later art, as a cluster of flames, still less as a fire-enclosed angelic apparition, but as a mass of red leaves, such as the uninitiated might well mistake for mere autumnal foliage.

It is evident that the artist has elected to subordinate the especial element in this story to which prominence is usually given, namely the

* See Adoption of Moses, Plate 13, No. 1; Jacob's Blessing, Plate 10, No. 1; Abraham and the Three Angels, Plate 7, No. 1; Abraham and Melchizedek, Plate 5, No. 1 and Plate 6.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

miracle, in order that nothing should distract the spectator's attention from the aspect of the story he wished to underline; namely, the calling of a Shepherd to be the Envoy of God. He uses the bush only to identify the scene, to call attention to the words, of such deep significance from his point of view, spoken on the occasion. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people . . . and I am come down to deliver them . . . and to bring them . . . into a good land, and a large, unto land flowing with milk and honey; . . . therefore I will send thee . . . that thou mayst bring forth my people . . . out of Egypt."*

IX. It is very intelligible that the miracle of the Burning Bush should have been lightly touched upon, and the calling of the Shepherd to be the Saviour of his people emphasised, in a series of which the aim is not the representation of incidents from the life of Moses, but the illumination of the idea of Moses as a prototype of Christ.

On either side of Moses are pastoral scenes suggestive of the shepherd's protective care of his flock, and of the intimacy and tenderness of his relation to his sheep.

To the left a shepherd, who stands leaning on his staff among his sheep, recalls many similar representations, notably one in this very church.†

The recumbent figure on the right suggests a life of contemplative peace and security; the youth bends to caress one of the sheep gathered about him, a 'motif' similar to that of the Apollo-like Good Shepherd of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, in Ravenna.‡ With this should be contrasted the Moses with his Sheep in S. Vitale, Ravenna, in which the later dogmatic conception is embodied.§

The subsidiary figures, therefore, echo the thought of the 'Pastor' in forms which Christians were accustomed to associate with Christ, the Shepherd of their souls.

X. Justin Martyr treats this incident from a similar point of view in his address to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and to Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus; that is to say, he ignores the miracle, and dwells on Moses' mission only.

"When Moses was tending the flocks of his maternal uncle in Arabia," he says, "our Christ conversed with him, under the semblance of a Burning Bush. Put off thy shoes, and draw near, and hear;" He said.

* Ex. iii. 7-10.

† Plate 10, No. 3.

‡ Plate 18, No. 3.

Plate 18, No. 4.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

“And when he had put off his shoes and drawn near, he heard that he was to go down to Egypt, and lead out thence the people of Israel; he received mighty power . . . and went down, and led out the people, doing great and marvellous things.”*

XI. In the only two existing illustrated copies of the “Topographia,” written by Cosmas Indicopleustes as late as 547, is a reproduction of an early representation of a shepherd, associated with which is a text relating to Moses, and the following explanatory gloss, which certainly, like the picture it comments, is derived from an early source.

“This is the great Moses,” it runs, “who as in a shadow presents the image of our Good Shepherd, Christ; who by words and deeds pre-announced the dispensation of the Lord Christ; by deeds, as when He redeemed Israel from bondage to Egypt; by the institution of the Passover also, and the shedding of blood; and by passing through the sea as in Baptism.” . . . “Ah! wondrous office of the Mediator, mirrored in so many marvels!” “It is not necessary to speak of the Tabernacle, which was the Image of the Cosmos in which the Mercy Seat, which is the Lord Christ, was placed.”†

* ‘Apol.’ i., chap. lxii.

† Migne, ‘Patr. S. Gr.’ Vol. 88, 221; see also ‘The Decorations of the Triumphal Arch.’—The Mercy Seat, xvi.

CHAPTER VI

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.-X.) :—
- IV. The space usually allotted to two pictures is here given to one. Why?
- V. Its subject, not the attack of the enemy, but salvation by water.
- VI. Contrast with other representations.
- VII. Energy and effort expressed in the figure of Moses.
- VIII. Overthrow of the enemy.
- IX. Mystic significance. S. Paul. S. Augustine. Justin Martyr. Clement of Alexandria.
- X. Justin Martyr on Baptism.

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Plate 19, No. 2 ; Plate 20 ; Plate 21.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea . . . and the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went after them into the sea ; there remained not so much as one of them.

“But the Children of Israel walked upon the dry land in the midst of the sea.”—Ex. xiv. 27, 29.

“I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.”—I Cor. x. 1, 2.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture is divided into three parts. To the extreme right is a walled city, from the gateway of which issues an armed band of mounted soldiers, and a stretch of golden land sprinkled with small ill-drawn chariots, foot and horse soldiers.

To the extreme left, led by Moses and Aaron, is a long narrow

2.



1.



3.



4.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

procession of Israelites, who advance from the back of the picture forward.

Separating these two groups is an expanse of blue waters filled with struggling soldiery. In the middle distance, surrounded by the floating shields of his dead, rises the lonely figure of the Egyptian King, venerable, white bearded, his shield upraised, his royal mantle fluttering in the wind, his right hand stretched over the waste of weltering waters beneath which his people, whom he soon will join, lie, "still as a stone"; a tragic personification of age, of ruin, and of indomitable spirit.*

The procession of Israelites is headed by Moses. His eyes gleam with almost demoniac energy, his brow and mouth contract with the effort with which, rod out-stretched, he holds back the foaming death which encompasses his people; his very garments, with their broken agitated lines, their sudden alternations of grey and white, the lightning quality of their high lights, are passion-swept.†

Beside this embodiment of febrile energy is the serenely aristocratic figure of Aaron, who walks beside his brother with the austere dignity of an Emperor walking in a Roman triumph; the richly-coloured folds of his heavy robes are in splendid harmony with his face and demeanour.

Moses, as throughout the series, wears a white tunica talaris and pallium; Aaron a tunica talaris and what appears a paenula, but which has been pronounced to be a toga worn in fashion peculiar to the Flamines, of which representations occur on the Ara Pacis and in single statues.‡

III. CONDITION.—This picture consists of two parts, the one original, the other an interpolation, seemingly made on the basis of a late miniature, by the hand to which is due the greater part of the Battle against Amalek, the Fall of Jericho. It gives no clue to the character of that which it replaces. The disparity of the size of the renewed figures with those that are antique is a measure of the restorer's ineptitude.

* Plate 21.

† Plate 20.

‡ See Plate 19, No. 3. Petersen, 'Ara Pacis Augustae,' Wien, 1902, p. 110, and Plate 6 (xvii.) in which the Imperial Pontifex Maximus and the two Flamines who follow him wear the toga in this manner. See also 'Bull. dell'Accad. Com. di Roma,' a. 1897, p. 301, f; also 'Mitth. des röm. Instituts,' 1897, p. 74.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Antique are (*a*) the long train of Hebrew men and women with Moses and Aaron at their head; (*b*) the wide expanse of sea, across which their trodden way is marked by a path of foam; the floating shields; the figure of Pharaoh and the town on the extreme right. (Abstraction must be made of the right wall of the gateway, which extends along four-fifths of the side of the picture.)

Not antique are (*a*) the golden land and (*b*) the small ill-drawn figures, horses and chariots which cover the right half of the picture.

The figures composing the procession of the Israelites are in good condition; notably fine are those of Moses and Aaron, also the two heads immediately behind them, which are flawless; composed of unalterable vitreous cubes, undimmed and untarnished by time, these present precisely the same appearance as when they left their makers' hands one thousand seven hundred years ago.

The technique in which these heads are executed is of a brilliant and audacious impressionism of curiously modern character. The desired effect is obtained solely by the juxtaposition of masses of tone, without any regard to outline.

The effect, for instance, of the eye and shining cheek of the young man behind Moses is produced by three square touches, a black and a white cube forming the eye, and a second white cube the high light on the cheek.

The faces are richly coloured; the shadows consisting of blue-blacks, and saturated reds and oranges; the lights, of orange, lemon yellow, and white, with connecting passages of neutral tint; these strongly individual notes of colour melt into each other, in the dim light of the church-interior, at the distance of some four or five yards.

The brilliant flesh-tints of the Israelites who follow Moses should be contrasted with the opaqueness of restored faces both here and in other pictures of this cycle. The figures of Miriam, and of the child led by Aaron are utterly ruined.

It being improbable that the restorer should have permitted himself such licence of invention as is now apparent, had traces of pictured incidents remained to guide him in his reconstruction of the right side of this picture, it is likely that the sea only, without figures, stretched from the Israelites across the foreground; and that the band of the Israelites on the left was balanced on the right by a thin green line of



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

land, on which rose the enemies' stronghold, which is antique. If this hypothesis be correct, then the impression the artist aimed at producing was that of a great expanse of water, strewn with the *débris* of vanquished foes, and cloven by the will of one accompanied by a band of disciples, who follow him in all confidence.

COMMENTARY.—IV. This picture differs from those by which it is preceded in that it has been allotted the full space usually shared by two compositions. The question arises, why?

The Passage of the Red Sea is frequently represented on early Christian sarcophagi, not as a tall quadrangular composition, as here, but as a long frieze-like panel, resembling the form of the single compositions of which the double pictures in this church are composed ;* there is no material reason why it should not have been so treated here.

Its form, therefore, is the result of the deliberate choice of its maker, and points to his desire to distinguish it from its fellows in order to emphasise the importance of its contents. It is necessary, therefore, to define them with precision, and to discover the point of view from which they were regarded by contemporary writers.

It has been seen that the picture is not in its original state, its right half being the handiwork of a restorer, working probably on a motif borrowed from late miniatures. It has also been shown that in all likelihood its greater part was occupied by the presentment of the sea, and that the town which now stretches into the foreground stood in the middle distance on a promontory ; its function, like that of the town in another picture of this series,† being the localisation of the incident represented in its vicinity ; in this case it stands for Egypt, from which Pharaoh and his host had issued.

It should be noted that the light track of the passage of the Israelites does not issue from this town, with which they are in no way connected ; it is pictured merely as the home of their enemies.

V. The artist has not emphasised the attack ; the elements of his picture are the waters ; the relics of the submerged enemy ; the saviour ; and the saved.

The long train of the freed defiles through the waters like a military column ; the white line of their path finds its pictorial climax in the

* Plate 19, No. 4.

† Plate 22, No. 3a.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

fluttering garments of their leader, who advances with face set in determined volition, from the impact of whose will the waters recoil to make a passage for the redeemed.

VI. How different is this conception from that inspiring later presentations on Christian reliefs of fourth- and fifth-century sarcophagi,* in which Moses advances with the composure of a thaumaturge, and faces both waters and the pursuing hosts with uplifted rod, as one who says with authority, "Thus far, and no further!" †

VII. But here his figure is not calm or self-assured, but vibrates with the effort to fulfil the task to which he has been called. The waters retreat before him as he advances with outstretched rod, and passionate eyes, an embodiment of the will to save, and of the faith which can remove mountains. The Israelites follow, composed and radiant in the consciousness of safe guidance.

VIII. The subject of this picture is not only the salvation of the Israelites through water, but the overthrow of their enemies by the same medium.

The foiled effort of the foe; their destruction; the wide waste of waters on which the shields float like bubbles; the contrast between ruin and death, and salvation, these are pictured in a manner as simple as drastic.

The sea is the field of the lost battle, the dead have sunk like "lead in the mighty waters," and their leader, raising his shield above the flood, faces death with a Titan-like brow of untamed defiance. But the Israelites, led by Moses, stand free on dry land; between them and the place of bondage flow the redeeming waters.

IX. The mystic aspect of the subject-matter is not far to seek.

S. Paul has associated it with the thought of Baptism; the death unto sin and the re-birth unto righteousness. "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant," he says, "how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." ‡

S. Augustine also says in his trenchant way, "per mare transitus baptismus est." §

* See Garrucci, Plate 308, 2 and 5; Plate 309, 1, 2, 3, and 4; Plate 358, 1; Plate 364, 3.

† Plate 19, No. 4.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

§ Ser. 352.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Justin places the "rod with which Moses was sent to effect the redemption of his people" among the Old Testament prototypes of the Cross, such as the tree which Moses cast into the bitter waters of Marah; the Rods used by Jacob to enlarge his flock; the tree of life, etc.*

Clement of Alexandria speaks of Egypt as the "symbol of the world, and of deceit, of suffering and afflictions"; of that which being earthly and not divine, must be abandoned.†

X. The character of the mystic significance attached to the passage of the Red Sea in the second century is evident, and is reflected in this picture, of which the historical subject-matter is so handled as to suggest its typological significance.

Moses, the redeemer of his people, foreshadows the incarnate Logos, who in the fulness of time was to redeem the people of God. This is the root-idea of this series. This idea is here associated with the especial thought of the waters of baptism in which he is laved who is about to be admitted into the communion of Christians, "in order that he who has chosen to be born again and has repented may not remain a child of necessity, nor of ignorance, but may become a child of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed. . . . This washing," adds Justin Martyr, "is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in understanding. . . . He who is illuminated is washed in the name of Jesus Christ . . . and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the Prophets foretold all things about Christ."‡

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' lvi.

† 'Strom.,' Book ii. chap. x.

‡ Justin Martyr, 'Apol.' i., chap. lxi.

CHAPTER VII

THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VIII.):—
- IV. Moses before God.
- V. Moses before the people.
- VI. Contour of a hill still visible in the gold restoration.
- VII. Subject : covenant made between God and his people on Mount Sinai ;
- VIII. Not the revolt of the starving Israelites against Moses.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

Plate 22, No. 1a.

I. SUBJECT.—“The Lord called unto Moses out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob . . . Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples ; for all the earth is mine ; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. . . . And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and set before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”—
Ex. xix. 3-8.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Two incidents are represented here. Moses receives a command from God ; and he communicates it unto the people, who receive it with reverence.

Moses wears a long white tunica and pallium ; the People of Israel long white tunics and coloured paenulae.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

III. CONDITION.—Were it not for the uniformity of the general conception of the cycle as a whole, the hypothesis that the antique pictures of this series came to an end with *The Passage of the Red Sea* and are succeeded by others of later date and inferior quality would be plausible. As this view is untenable, the thought embodied in the series relating to Moses being one and complete, and uniting with that of the main cycle to form a composite but organic whole, we are forced to conclude that this picture, and those following on it, are copies, of value chiefly as preserving the subject and composition of that which they replace. The figures, instead of being of long and elegant proportions, are thick and short; the types are plebeian; the flesh tints opaque. Light and dark stones are no longer placed in startling proximity, with the result that the general colour-effect, instead of being sparkling, is heavy and uniform.

The wide band of gold which traverses this copy horizontally is of later date; within it is a patch of still later gold, of the form of a mountain; the cubes of which this interpolation consists are not only larger, and of a different colour, but their surface is higher than that of the earlier gold in which they are embedded.

Between the two figures of Moses is an interpolation in stucco covered with square patches of gold leaf. The sky on the left is executed in cubes which may be antique; it has been badly repaired on the right with cubes which are smeared with paint.

The sentimental "Padre eterno" is post-Raphaellesque.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Two incidents are pictured here; the chief actor in each, Moses, appears twice. It is probable that, in accordance with antique usage, a tree originally separated these two scenes (as elsewhere *); its last traces were probably destroyed at the time when the present gold-dotted patch of stucco was introduced.

These two figures of Moses are placed near each other, back to back; clearly successive moments of an event are represented: Moses receives a command from God, and communicates it to His people. Although the representation of God in the clouds is modern, it corresponds so closely to the conditions predicated by Moses' posture that it evidently corresponds in conception, though not in presentment, with the lost classic original.

* Plate 10, No. 6a; Plate 12, No. 1a; Plate 26, No. 3b.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Moses' pose is worthy of attention; he stands erect, his shoulders and head thrown back, his hand upraised in speech with the Lord, who leans from among crimson clouds to address him; it is similar to that in which Jacob receives the Angelic embassy*; the artist's intention here is, however, better expressed, or perhaps we should rather say better preserved, although but little that is actually antique remains of the figures of either Moses, or Jacob.

V. In the second group Moses approaches the people and delivers his message. His hand is raised in the well-known gesture of speech; he is the interpreter of the divine will, God's envoy. He is unaccompanied by his brother Aaron the priest.

VI. Beneath the presentment of God is an empty quadrangular sheet of gold, which replaces some object swept away by time or by the restorer. The relation of the person of Moses to that of God makes it clear that the scene was not completed by a third figure, but by some accessory. The size and shape of the space to be filled, and its position beneath the Divine Being, puts a building out of the question; but it is admirably adapted to enclose a mountain; a mountain naturally not represented from the modern realistic point of view, but, after the antique manner, as an intellectual concept, a synthesis of the characteristics of a mountain, such as occurs in the last picture of this series, *The Death of Moses*, or of the rude and late variation from the didactic series of sacramental import of the *Doors of S. Sabina*.†

Indeed the outline of such a mountain is still visible within the sheet of gold which has replaced this part of the original picture; moreover, fragments of steplike rocks are embedded in the green slip of foreground at Moses' feet.

Such a mountain as an accessory to a scene taken from the life of Moses can only be interpreted as Mount Sinai.

VII. The scenes represented are therefore those in which Moses acted as intermediary between God and His people, and the Israelites accepted the Covenant by which they were constituted in an especial sense the "People of God." "Moses came," it is written, "and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all the words which

* Compare page 125 and Plate 10, No. 6a.

† See Plate 22, No. 4a; Plate 52, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do; and Moses reported the words of the people unto the Lord."

VIII. The calm earnestness of both prophet and people invalidates the hypothesis hitherto accepted, of those who interpret this scene as representing the passionate outbreak of the starving Israelites against their leader, in which they cried out, saying, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

This is no rebellious outbreak, but a solemn and harmonious council. The hand of Moses is raised in stately and emphatic speech; the Elders opposite him raise theirs in equally dignified approval and ratification: "All the people answered together, and said, What the Lord has spoken, we will do."

* Ex. xvi. 3.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MIRACLE OF THE QUAILS

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VII.) :—
- IV. Irrecognisably restored.
- V. Miracle of the quails probably originally associated with that of the manna.
- VI. Sarcophagus at Nimes, Reliefs of S. Sabina.
- VII. Mystic significance.

THE MIRACLE OF THE QUAILS.

Plate 22, No. 1b.

I. SUBJECT.—“It came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp.”—Ex. xvi. 13.

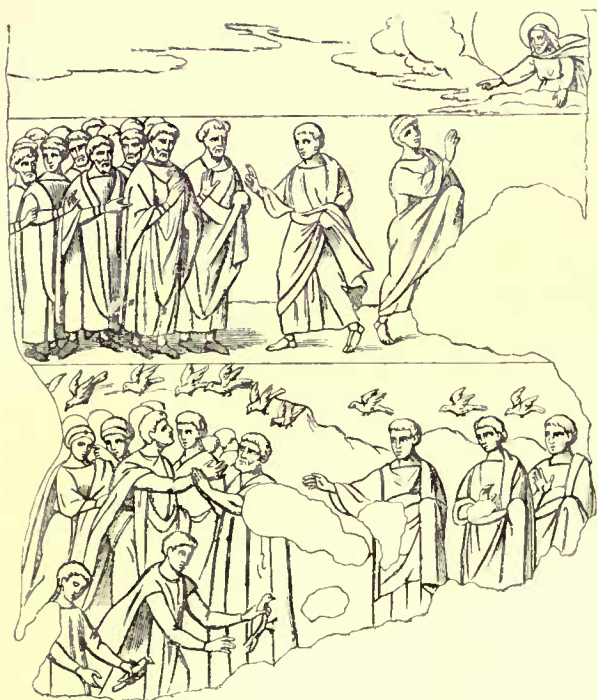
II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture consists of two groups of distinct character. To the left, a confused mass of men and children, apparently occupied in catching quails; to the right, three rude male figures in tunica and pallium: Moses, with right hand outstretched in a gesture of command, and two followers with hands raised in postures of wonder.

III. CONDITION.—This picture is so ruined that but little remains from which an idea of the character of the original may be gleaned.

The group to the left, in which the original composition was probably reproduced, has been so patched and restored as to be hardly decipherable. The three men on the right are interpolations of the eighth or ninth centuries. The gold background is a modern interpolation, partly in stucco, as also are, in great part, the birds which fly horizontally across the picture.

COMMENTARY.—IV. We have seen that what at present meets the eye is not only not antique, but is not even a reproduction of the lost original. The only figure in the group on the left which is antique in

1.



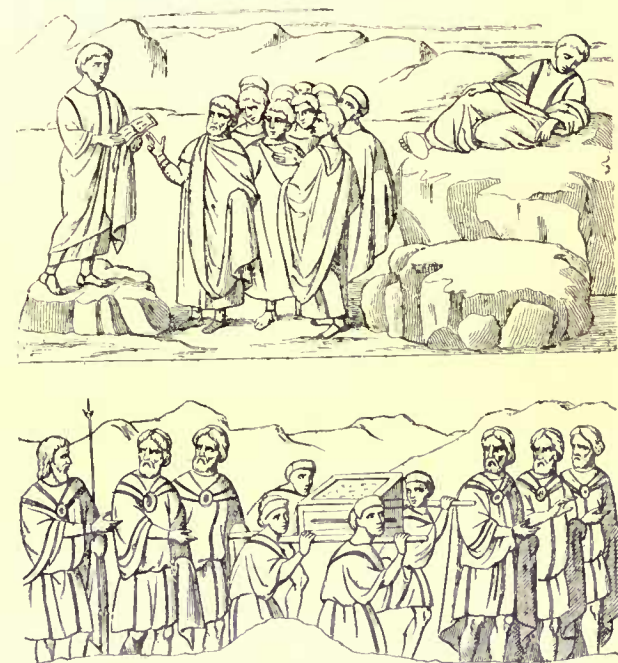
2.



3.



4.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

character is that of the man in a white tunica and orange paenula. The three figures on the right are conceived in the spirit and executed in the manner of the Middle Ages. Moses is represented as a thaumaturge; he stretches out his hand to perform a miracle, while his two followers express their awed wonder. The execution is of the gross barbarity of the Dark Ages. So little remaining as a guide, the reconstruction of this picture is of its essence hypothetical.

Although the large birds which fly across the sky and purport to be quails are not antique, it is probable that the restorer was guided in his reconstruction either by surviving traces, or by tradition. We are justified therefore in accepting the miracle of the quails as the subject-matter of the original picture. It is probable also that in dividing the picture into two groups the artist followed the original arrangement.

All that can now be predicated of the lost composition which stands behind this picture is that it was divided into two parts, in which distinct but related subjects were represented, one of which was the miracle of the quails.

V. Two miracles connected with the feeding of the people are associated in the Biblical text, the miracle of the quails, and the miracle of the manna.

VI. There are two notable instances in which they are connected in early Christian art. On the coarsely executed sacramental panels of the doors of S. Sabina,* and on a sarcophagus at Nîmes,† in which the manner of the capture of the birds, and the general composition, recall the Sicinian mosaic.

VII. The mystic interpretation of these miracles is based on the words of Christ Himself.

“The Word,” writes Clement of Alexandria, “declares Himself to be the Bread of heaven. For Moses, He says, gave you not that Bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you that true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He that came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. And this Bread is my Flesh.”

“Your fathers,” said Christ, “did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the Bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.”§

* Wiegand, Plate 10, p. 46-50.

† C. Le Blant, ‘Les Sarcophages Chrétiens de la Gaule,’ Paris, 1886, p. 116. Plate 32, 3.

‡ ‘Paed.,’ Book i. chap. vi.

§ John vi. 49.

CHAPTER IX

THE BITTER WATERS OF MARAH

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VII.) :—
- IV. Character of the Divine Being in the sky.
- V. Typology of the incident according to Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and S. Paul.
- VI. Comparison with the sacramental scenes of S. Vitale, S. Apollinare, etc.
- VII. Writers of the second and third centuries, like its artists, did not ignore the realistic aspect of the events they treated typologically.

THE BITTER WATERS OF MARAH.

Plate 22, No. 2a.

I. SUBJECT.—“ They could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. . . . And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet.”—Ex. xv. 23-25.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Along the foreground runs the water which is the centre of the incidents represented.

Two scenes, separated from each other by a bushy hillock, take place on its banks. On the left a group of Israelites reproach Moses with eloquent gestures,—“the water is bitter.” Moses faces them, a very personification of southern agitation, his right hand stretched towards the waters in question, his person vibrating with passion, his draperies agitated by the vehemence of his movements.

In the scene to the right Moses, looking up to the Divine Being in the sky, touches the bitter waters with the bough of a tree, and the thirsting people kneel and drink.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

III. CONDITION.—This picture is a good example of the work of the copyist. The original has been adhered to, the gradations of colour about the bushy bank are charming and characteristic,* but the figures are squat, the flesh tints are opaque, the draperies without brilliancy.

The blue waters of the foreground are so finely rendered, and so similar in technique to those of the Red Sea, that it is probable that they are remains of the original picture.

The gold background is an interpolation.

The Divine figure in the clouds has been restored at a late date, but its antique character has not been lost.

COMMENTARY.—IV. At first sight this picture appears nothing more than the realistic representation of an altercation between Moses and the children of Israel, followed by the miraculous gift of water.

Comparison, however, with the foregoing picture, with which it has points both of contact and contrast, discloses characteristics which give a clue to the nature of its mystic contents.

The intervention of the Divine Being in human affairs is symbolised throughout this cycle by a hand issuing from clouds, or by an angel; to this general rule there are three exceptions only, which occur in the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek,† in the Covenant between God and His people,‡ after which they were fed on heavenly food, and in this picture; in all of which the Divine Being is represented as a bearded man.

In the representation of the 'Covenant' this figure is too restored—it is, in fact, post-Raphaelesque—to serve as the basis of argument. Here, though not actually antique, the antique original is reproduced, and resembles the Christ of the Melchizedek picture both in type and pose.

At first sight there appears something incongruous between this Divine figure, which is conceived as sublime and suffering, and the scene below, which seems to represent an agitated encounter between a thirsty and discontented people and a leader vibrating with anger, and which presents a striking contrast with the dignified colloquy with which it is associated.

* The character of this fragment is a guide to the reconstruction of the pastoral scenes of which irretrievably ruined versions occur in the foregoing series.

† Plate 6.

‡ Plate 22, No. 1a.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The group on the left clearly consists of Israelites, who reproach Moses ; of water there is plenty, but it is bitter ; the harassed guide faces them with passionate gestures ; is he God to create sweet water in the wilderness ?

In the following scene the Divine Being appears in the likeness of Christ, His hand outstretched, as in the Melchizedek picture, with a pathetic gesture of self-oblation ; the leader of Israel, looking up for inspiration, touches the bitter waters with a piece of wood. The people kneel and quench their thirst.

V. "Hear," says Justin, "how this man was symbolised of whom the scriptures declare that having been crucified He will come in glory. Moses was sent with a rod to redeem His people ; at their head he divided the sea, this being in his hands ; by this he saw water gush out of a rock ; and when he cast a tree into the bitter waters of Marah he made them sweet."*

Clement of Alexandria in his 'Paedagogus' comments on the rebellious attitude of the Israelites in the following passage : "The Logos of old taught through Moses . . . for the Law is the training of refractory children." †

He also quotes S. Paul's words in this connection. "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers . . . were baptized into Moses . . . in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual food, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ."

VI. It is instructive to contrast the manner in which these three historical scenes are invested with sacramental significance with the strictly dogmatic and hieratic sacramental pictures of later art, of S. Vitale at Ravenna, for instance. ‡

Whereas in the one case the compositions are primarily and exclusively dogmatic, in the other they are in the first instance the representation of scenes from the lives of certain of the Jewish leaders, scenes, however, chosen for representation because their significance was believed to be mystic ; the artist set himself the difficult task of suggesting the inner mystic kernel of an event while retaining its outer realistic husk.

This mental attitude is characteristic of the times.

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxxvi.

† 'The Instructor,' chap. xi.

‡ See p. 62.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VII. Writers as well as artists strove to bring the outward event in its crudest realism before their audience, and then, turning their eyes from "its natural aspect," endeavoured "to view it as a means of Grace." *

Origen says in one of his sermons: "Let us first grasp the verbal significance of the narrative, and rise from that to its mystic and allegorical meaning . . . let us then lay bare the hidden and mysterious truth it contains." †

* Hippolytus, 'Sermon on the Baptism of Christ.'

† 'Sermon on the Ark.'

CHAPTER X
THE REJECTION OF THE EMBASSAGE OF
ISRAEL BY EDOM

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VIII.) :—
- IV. The subject of this picture difficult to determine if this series be interpreted as realistic text-illustration.
- V. Has been interpreted as representing an interview between Moses and Amalek.
- VI. Its subject, the refusal of the King of Edom to treat with Israel.
- VII. The significance of Edom.
- VIII. The repudiation of Moses' mission (Moses being a type of Christ) fitly precludes the representation of a battle in which the people of God conquer through the power of the Cross.

THE REJECTION OF THE EMBASSAGE OF ISRAEL BY EDOM.

Plate 22, No. 2b.

I. SUBJECT.—“Moses sent messages . . . unto the King of Edom. Thus saith thy brother Israel. . . . Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy land. . . . And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass through . . . wherefore Israel turned away from him.”—Numbers xx. 14-21.

II. DESCRIPTION.—The subject of this picture is evidently the refusal of a request. Moses and his two followers turn reluctantly away from a king who has issued, at the head of his troops, from a fortified city on the extreme right.

III. CONDITION.—All that remains of the original is the general composition, and, in part, the dignified figures of Moses and his companions.

The left of the picture has been entirely remodelled by the artist

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

to whom are due the restorations of *The Passage of the Red Sea* ;* *The Battle against Amalek* ;† *The Fall of Jericho*.‡ Characteristic of his workmanship are: (1) the shrunken skull-like head of the king of Edom, with the red and gold, red-plumed helmet; (2) the small equestrian figure in the foreground; and (3) the little soldiers with the heavy spears.

Doubtless the king, after the invariable classic usage, was originally attended by two soldiers. These have been swept away and their shields merged in one of immense proportions which floats behind him. The gold halo which surrounds his figure is the remains of a restoration in gold which has been effaced.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Simple as is this representation of a meeting between Moses and an armed king at the head of his troops, the identification of its subject is not without difficulty.

The first feat of arms recorded in the Book of Exodus is the Battle of Rephidim, in which the Israelites defeated the Amalekites; this is the undisputable subject of the following picture.

According to the Biblical account this battle was subsequent to the feeding of the people on quails and manna; and followed immediately on the striking of water from the rock.

Had the subject of the picture just discussed been the miraculous provision of water at Horeb, and were there any mention in the Book of Exodus of an interview with the king of the Amalekites, then that interview would doubtless be the subject of this picture.

But the incident by which it is preceded is not the miracle at Horeb, but the sweetening of the bitter waters at Marah; and far from there being any mention of an interview preludeing the battle with Amalek, his attack seems to have been of the nature of a surprise.

V. Commentators, at a loss how to interpret this representation of an interview which occurred after a miracle connected with water, which on careless examination might be interpreted as representing the gushing forth of water from a rock, and before the Battle with Amalek, in a series accepted by them as the realistic translation of the historical narrative into pictorial form, have concluded that it was the artist's invention.

* Plate 19, No. 2.

† Plate 23, No. 1.

‡ Plate 26, No. 2a.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

If this were so,—if the subject of one of the few scenes chosen for illustration from the life of Moses were not only the invention of the artist, but incompatible with the Biblical text,—to what motive should so unique an innovation be attributed?

The incidents selected from the life of Moses are few, and their right to figure in this cycle is in all cases justified by their secondary mystic significance.

The overwhelming importance of its typological significance could alone justify the artist in supplementing the Biblical text by an original invention, but we are at a loss to discover the mystic import of an interview between Moses and Amalek.

We are convinced that the event depicted is one which did not occur between the Miracle of Marah and the Battle of Rephidim, but which took place later in the wanderings of the Children of Israel; a conviction which is incompatible with the conception of the cycle as the simple reflection of the Biblical text.*

VI. In the twentieth chapter of the Book of Numbers it is written: "Moses sent messengers to the King of Edom. Thus saith thy brother Israel . . . let us pass, I pray thee, through thy land. . . . Edom refused to give Israel passage through his borders . . . therefore Israel turned away from him."

This picture corresponds so closely with this text that its derivation from it is obvious.

To the left is a fortified city, whence issue armed men; at their head their leader, and representative, the King, his hand raised in speech. Opposite him is Moses, the representative of Israel, with two followers. The poses of these two leaders gives drastic expression to the action and re-action of two conflicting wills.

Clearly the leader of the Israelites has proffered a petition, which has been refused. Its negation is mirrored in the suppliant's figure; in the manner in which he turns away, looking back over his shoulder, as if wishful to detect signs of relenting. The expression of surprise and regretful disapproval, together with the abandonment of further negotiation, is admirably rendered. The gestures of Aaron and Hur emphasise the impression of a foiled enterprise.

* It is noteworthy that the miracle at Marah actually preceded those of the quails and manna, which it is here represented as following.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VI. A similar request for permission to travel through his land was made by Moses to Sihon, King of the Amorites, and with a similar result; but this is not the subject of this picture, which represents the interview with Edom, as results from the relation of Edom to Israel, and the manner in which it is commented in Holy Writ.

VII. Edom is Esau;* Isaiah and other prophets contrast Israel and Edom. Israel and Edom were brothers; hence Moses' reference to blood relationship, in spite of which his claim was rebuffed. The subject of the picture is therefore the official rejection of the mission of Moses by a people who were the children of Abraham.

The historical sequence of events is usually, though not constantly, observed in this cycle; its material being such scenes as may be invested with typological significance considerations of chronology were put aside directly they militated against the didactic purpose for the sake of which the event was pictured.

VIII. There was some especial reason therefore why the interview of Moses with the King of Edom, which took place at the end of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, was represented as prelude to the battle with Amalek, which took place soon after the Passage of the Red Sea. It prefigured the rejection of Christ by His brethren according to the flesh, and therefore fitly preceded a scene in which the visible aspect of Calvary is associated with the thought of victory.

* Gen. xxv. 29; xxxvi. 1.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEFEAT OF AMALEK

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.—X.) :—
- IV. Previous pictures of this size all of sacramental character.
- V. The Crucifixion foreshadowed.
- VI. Typological significance, Barnabas.
- VII. Justin Martyr.
- VIII. Epiphanius of Caesarea.
- IX. Typological significance attached to trees by Justin Martyr.
- X. Jerusalem.

THE DEFEAT OF AMALEK.

Plate 23, No. 1.

I. SUBJECT.—“Moses said unto Jesus (Joshua), Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek. . . . So Jesus . . . fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed . . . and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”—Ex. xvii. 9—11.

II. DESCRIPTION.—The foreground of a mountainous landscape is occupied by the representation of the confused encounter of two bands of soldiers armed with spears and shields: those on the left issue from a fortified city.

High above them on a podium-like rock is the figure of Moses, his hands outstretched in prayer; Aaron and Hur stand on either side, and a little below him.

All three wear white tunics and pallia.

Behind each of these figures spring branches of foliage.

1.



2.



3.



4.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

III. CONDITION.—Nothing in this picture can be accepted as antique except (*a*) the town on the left, of which the houses are so brilliant in colour, and so definite in drawing, that they may be part of the original picture; (*b*) the lower part of the sky, and the upper part of the mountains, (*c*) those parts of the landscape background which are free from gold, *i.e.*, in which the high lights are executed in tones of orange and light yellow.

In spite of clumsy repairs the three figures of Moses, Aaron, and Hur are antique in character, the cubes of glass-enamel of which they are composed are, however, very roughly set, and their draperies wrongly restored.

The green bushes behind all three figures are antique in character, the best preserved example is that behind Aaron.

The soldiers in the foreground are by the hand to which is due the restorations of *The Passage of the Red Sea*, *The Fall of Jericho*, etc.

All gold interpolations are of a late date.

The rayed sun is in the taste of the time of Bernini.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Five only of the nearly fifty pictures which decorate the Nave have been granted a double measure of the space allotted to the others.

Of these pictures, three, as has been seen already, are of sacramental import: *Melchizedek*, with the Bread and Wine; the mystic meal of the Three Angels; and the *Passage of the Red Sea*.

V. A glance at this picture suffices to evoke the scene the artist wished this Old Testament battle-piece to foreshadow. The spectator's first word is "Calvary"; it is only on second thoughts that he recollects that the literary material of this series is drawn from the life of Moses; and that the event depicted is the battle which Moses watched from a hill-top, the victory falling to his people only when his hands were outstretched.

Reference to the text shows that it is the source of the general idea only of this picture; for in the narrative Moses is described as seated on a rock, being weak and old, while Aaron and Hur supported his heavy arms on either side; but in the mosaic he is represented as a young man, standing alone, elastic and erect, on a podium-like rock, his arms outstretched, his figure vibrating with enthusiastic determination.

What is represented is clearly an act of power.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Below, on either side of him, are his two attendants, subordinate figures, one of whom gazes before him, standing pensively with pendant arms; while the other looks up in wonder. Both are motionless.

Moses' eyes are raised. His outstretched upraised arms are slightly bent at the elbows, his pose is that of prayer, of an antique "Pietas," or of the "Orantes" of the Catacombs, and sarcophagi.*

VI. Justin Martyr, Barnabas, and others speak at length of the typological significance of Moses' outstretched hands.

Barnabas gives it drastic expression.

"Thou art taught," he says, "concerning Christ, and Him that was crucified.

"When war was waged against Israel by men of another nation, the Spirit said to the Heart of Moses that he should make a type of the Cross and of Him that should suffer on it, that He might remind them that they were delivered unto death for their sins; for, said he, unless they set their hopes on Him, war shall be waged against them for ever.

"Moses therefore . . . standing on higher ground . . . stretched out his hands, and Israel was victorious, but when he lowered them they were slain by the sword; wherefore was this?

"That they might learn that they cannot be saved unless they set their hope on Him."†

VII. Justin Martyr, drawing the person of Joshua into the typology of the scene, and thus giving it a slightly different colour, says:

"When the people warred against Amalek, and Jesus, the son of Nun, led the fight, Moses stretched both his hands in prayer to God all day, while Hur and Aaron supported them, lest they should droop from fatigue; for if he failed to reproduce any part of the sign of the Cross, his people were beaten; as is recorded in the book of Moses; but if he retained this form Amalek was defeated. He who prevailed, prevailed by the Cross.

"It was not because Moses prayed that his people were stronger, but because one bearing the name of Jesus fought in the forefront of the battle; while Moses transformed himself into a semblance of the Cross."‡

VIII. The outstretched hands of Moses on the Hill provided

* Plate 23, No. 3, The Crucifixion on the doors of S. Sabina; No. 2, Orans from a painting (third century) in the Catacombs of SS. Pietro e Marcellino.

† Epistle, chap. xii.

‡ 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xc.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

not an argument, but a metaphor,—the difference is significant,—to later Churchmen.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus (367-403), wrote in the following strain to Jerome: "Let me tell you, dear son, that Amalek was plucked up by the roots, and the Trophy of the Cross erected on the Hill of Rephedim. For even as Israel conquered when Moses stretched forth his hands, so has the Lord granted His servant Theophilus strength to plant the banner of the Cross on the Altar of the church of Alexandria, in opposition to Origen. And thus is fulfilled what is written: 'Record this sign; for I will pluck up this heresy of Origen by the roots, and, together with Amalek, destroy it from the face of the earth.'"*

IX. Justin speaks at length on the significance to be attached to trees, or to their equivalent—wood—in the Old Testament.

"Hear," he says, "how this Man who was crucified, and of whom the Scriptures declare that He will return, was symbolised . . . by the Tree of Life, . . . by the Rod, with which Moses was sent to prepare the redemption of his people, . . . by the Tree, casting which into the bitter waters of Marah, he made them sweet, . . . by the Tree from which God appeared to Abraham. . . . Even so our Christ was crucified upon a Tree."†

Elsewhere he says that Christians are saved "by . . . faith and by wood, those who are aforetime prepared, and repent of their sins shall escape the impending judgment of God."‡

The artist has expressed the same thought here, in that he has silhouetted each of the three Figures on the hill-top on a mass of foliage.

X. This suggestive group is placed outside a walled city, the home of a hostile population; it is unlikely that such a significant detail should be accidental in a composition of which the purport is avowedly typological, and which is part of a series characterised by a tendency inimical to the Jews. The city from which the enemies of God emerge, outside of which the scene which foreshadows Calvary, is enacted, is doubtless to be understood as Jerusalem.

* Migne, 'Patr. S. Gr.' tom. xliii. p. 391. (The last words are a paraphrase of Ex. xvii. 14.)

† 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxxvi.

‡ *Ibid.* chap. cxxxviii.

CHAPTER XII

THE MISSION OF THE ENVOYS

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VIII.) :—
- IV. Subject-matter :
- V. Not the return of the Spies,
- VI. But their mission.
- VII. Accessories.
- VIII. Prototypical significance.

THE MISSION OF THE ENVOYS.

Plate 22, No. 3a.

I. SUBJECT.—“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may spy out the land . . . which I give unto the children of Israel ; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man. . . . And Moses sent them according to the commandment of the Lord.”—Numbers xiii. 1-3.

II. DESCRIPTION.—To the left Moses, accompanied by Aaron, addresses a group of men with vivid eyes, the foremost of whom raises his right hand in speech.

Moses and Aaron wear the white tunica and pallium, as is usual. Behind them is a temple-like building approached by steps. A lamp hangs in the doorway, which is draped with white curtains.

The envoys are dressed as shepherds. They wear the tunica exomis of various colours, and carry coloured mantles. Behind them is a town with light walls, striped horizontally with black lines, above which houses are visible.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value of a restored copy, in which a fairly preserved fragment of the original is embedded.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

In its present state it is evidently the work of two artists of very different capacity, temperament, and colour-sense.

In its centre is a group of men with brilliant flesh-tints and flashing eyes. Their dresses are of oranges and blues which occur in earlier pictures. The blue of the mantle of the man to the extreme right is of the colour and technique of Aaron's paenula.* Behind them, among pale drab stones, are juxtaposed masses of red, dark green, and black, rocks, similar to those which build up the mountain on which Moses rests in the next picture. These rocks and the group of men are the outcome of the same colour-sense, they are the work of an artist who had a predilection for rich strong tints, and vivid effects. This part of the picture, though injured by repairs, is antique. The rest is grey and formless. All precision of drawing and brilliancy of touch has been lost.

Compare the drawing of the figure of Moses here with that of Lot, whose pose is similar; † his grey draperies, underneath which there are no limbs, with Lot's glistening robes, which suggest the body they cover; the line of the silhouette of his figure with Lot's; his shadowy grey face with the opulent colouring of the heads in *The Passage of the Red Sea*. ‡

The drab stones which supplement the patches of red, black, and green, which form the rock on which the city behind the envoys is placed, are of the same feeble colourlessness.

Reminiscences of the fine gradations of the original colour occur in the distant background. The strip of gold in the middle distance is not antique.

Two restorers of distinct character have worked among others on this series. To one may be ascribed the upper part of *The Battle against Amalek*, *The Passing of Moses*, and the picture below, in the execution of which he had not the assistance of a classic basis. He seems to have been conscientious in his effort to reproduce the classic original he repaired, but was a poor colourist and a weak draftsman.

To the other are due the restorations in *The Passage of the Red Sea*, *The Refusal of Edom*, *The Fall of Jericho*, the lower part of *The Battle against Amalek*, etc.

COMMENTARY.—IV. In order to understand this picture it is necessary to grasp its relation to the text, for on this depends the

* Plate 20.

† Plate 8.

‡ Plate 20.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

answer to the question whether the incident represented be pictured realistically, as at first sight appears, or whether it be so handled as to serve a didactic purpose.

V. It has been interpreted as representing the return of the spies. If this be correct, its dramatic colouring and that of the narrative are strikingly dissimilar.

The spies are reported to have returned panic-stricken from Palestine; both land and people, they declared, were too strong for them to attack.

How high feeling ran in the camp is shown by its re-action on Moses and Aaron, who it is written "fell on their faces before the assemblage of the children of Israel."

It would have been natural if the artist had reproduced this electric atmosphere in what, according to the hypothesis, is a text illustration; * but far from picturing a scene of passionate emotion, he has represented Moses and the spies in attitudes of undisturbed composure.

It is impossible to harmonise the language of this picture with that of the text, if this interpretation of the subject-matter be correct.

VI. The subject represented is an interview between a leader and his delegates, a conference, for the hands of both Moses and the foremost of his envoys are raised in speech, and would seem to represent the sending out of the emissaries rather than their return.

VII. The dress they wear is not that of the Israelites throughout this series (a tunica or a dalmatica, and a pænula), but that of shepherds, although no suggestion of a disguise is made in the text.

Immediately behind Moses is a masonry temple-like building, approached by four steps. Does this represent the Tent of the Covenant, and if so, why is it given this especial form? Why, moreover, is this building, which occurs in none of the preceding pictures, introduced here in an illustration of a text which has no reference to it?

Similar buildings occur in the history of Jacob, † in connections which, if the cycle be conceived as historical, are unintelligible, but which are most significant, if accepted as clues to an allegorical under-current of thought.

* How well able to do so he was, is shown by the following picture.

† Plate 10, No. 5a and No. 6b; compare page 117. See also Plate 23, No. 4, the temple-like *ædicula* of Lazarus' tomb in a fresco painting of the third century in the Catacombs of SS. Pietro e Marcellino.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The appearance of this accessory here must be attributed either to the fancy of the illustrator, or to his desire to give an especial character to the event depicted.

The first of these explanations involves an anachronism; the fortuitous introduction of meaningless accessories being contrary to the spirit and practice of antique art.

The second is not only plausible, but probable, the modification of the accessories of other pictures of this great cycle being the outcome of definite typological purposes.

VIII. Although the literary material of this series is the Old Testament story of Moses, its actual form is due to the thought of Moses as a prototype of Christ.

The analogy of other pictures justifies the hypothesis that a scene from the life of Christ may be foreshadowed there. This can be no other than the sending out of His delegates, His disciples.

Moses' envoys are dressed as shepherds. Has the artist thus hinted at the pastoral character of the apostles' office?

They are empty handed; Christ said, "Get you . . . no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes; nor staff." *

The temple-like building, which rises behind Moses, is similar to others which occur in this series, and which always represent the Church.

Behind the envoys rises a strong town, primarily representing the great and strong towns of Palestine, but possibly also the cities which were to form the mission ground of Jesus' disciples: "Into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth." †

* Matt. x. 10.

† Matt. x. 11, 13.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STONING OF MOSES

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-IX.) :—
- IV. Divergence from text : the act, not the threat, is depicted.
- V. The nimbus.¹
- VI. Moses a prototype of Christ.
- VII. The Jews persecutors of the Prophets.
- VIII. This cycle animated by an undercurrent of animosity against the Jews,
- IX. As is also the frame of mind of the Apologists.

THE STONING OF MOSES.

Plate 22, No. 3b; Plate 24.

I. SUBJECT.—“All the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the Glory of the Lord appeared.”—Numbers xiv. 10.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture represents the attempt made by a group of Jews to stone Moses and his two companions, who seek refuge in the tabernacle.

The latter are enclosed in a grey-blue oval figure circumscribed by a dark line, against which the stones flung strike and fall harmless to the ground. Its contour is broken above the head of Moses by the hand of God, issuing, palm outwards, from out a bank of fiery clouds; dark lines proceed from it, which traverse the oval figure from top to bottom, following its curves.

To the right is the tabernacle, a classic building approached by steps, with architrave, and pediment decorated with the sign of the Cross.

Moses and his followers wear the tunic and pallium, the Jews coloured dalmaticae and paenulae.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

III. CONDITION.—The background between the group of infuriated Israelites and the nimbus enclosing Moses and his followers is antique, the only instance in this church in which the colour-scale of the background is preserved unbroken, and even here the highest note of aerial blue is absent.*

The passage of colour is very subtle, dark green, passing by slow degrees into yellow, brightening into the orange of the middle distance, then sinking from yellow, through grey lilacs, into pure cool blues. The sky, however, which is generally represented, is not depicted here.

This fragment is invaluable as affording a basis for the mental reconstruction of other backgrounds of this cycle. For all incidents represented, together with such landscape details as were necessary to the story, were either silhouetted upon this lovely colour-scale, or woven into it.

It should be observed that the yellow of the middle distance is more brilliant than the gold which replaces it in neighbouring pictures.

The group on the left has not only been retouched, but reconstructed, and the two foremost figures have melted into each other in the process; the head of the man, who has been effaced, is still represented by an unaccountable pale yellow circular patch on the shoulder of the abnormally tall man behind him.† Nevertheless, this group is strongly reminiscent of the antique; in colour, in movement, in the vividness of the eyes, and in the passionate movements of the actors.

The group within the nimbus, though patched and mended, is translucent and silvery in colouring. The head and figure of Moses are well preserved. The brilliancy of his sleeve (though dimmed by restoration) is a striking contrast to the opaque pallium in the upper picture. The hand of God, the clouds, and the tabernacle seem to have been restored in the Middle Ages.

COMMENTARY.—IV. The excellent preservation of part of this picture, and the vivid characterisation of the event depicted, lend it especial interest.

As in foregoing cases, the peculiar point of view the artist wished to emphasise is best discovered by comparing the composition with its literary source; especial attention being due to their points of divergence.

* See Plate 24.

† On Plate 22, No. 3b, this detail is incorrectly rendered.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

It is written that when the People of Israel, worn by the hardships of the life in the wilderness, heard of the strength of the inhabitants of Palestine, their hearts fainted within them, and they proposed to stone Moses and Aaron; and, choosing other leaders, to return to the bondage and fleshpots of Egypt.

“And the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; . . . and all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt . . . let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces . . . and spake, . . . Rebel not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land . . . the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the Glory of the Lord appeared in the tent of the meeting.”*

Only the threat is spoken of in the Biblical narrative, its execution was prevented by the appearance of the mysterious “Glory.” But in the picture the act is depicted.

Hands, in which there are stones, are upraised; bodies are bent backward; eyes are fixed on a goal; missiles hurtle through the air, but fall harmlessly to the ground on contact with the nimbus-like radiance which encloses the persons of Moses and his companions.

Moses stretches his hand significantly towards the tabernacle, as who would say, “Your fury is impotent. We are safe in the hands of God, as in His Temple!”

V. The “appearance” of the Lord is constantly spoken of in the history of the wanderings of the children of Israel; sometimes it is called the “Glory of the Lord” as here, sometimes a cloud, “the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the door of the Tent,”† and sometimes both images are combined, as when it is written, “They looked towards the Tent of the Meeting, and behold the cloud covered it, and the Glory of the Lord appeared.”‡

It is said of the Pillar of Cloud that its protective presence accompanied the Israelites in the Passage of the Red Sea, but it is not represented in this series.

The central Angel in the representation of the visit to Abraham is enclosed within an oval figure barred with radiant beams, and

* Numbers xiv. 1-10.

† Numbers xii. 5.

‡ See also Numbers xii. 10.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

accompanied by crimson clouds, the emblem of the super-terrestrial atmosphere of a Divine Being. The clouds here are grouped about the Hand of God ; otherwise these two symbols are practically identical, and have the same significance. Like the light-filled circle, which encloses the Mercy Seat, they stand for a sphere other than mundane, for the life-medium of super-terrestrial beings.

VI. Moses, here as throughout this cycle, is treated as a prototype of Christ.

VII. S. Stephen speaks of him as "that Moses, to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt;" and then, making the application personal, adds, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before (prophesied) of the coming of the Righteous One, of whom ye now have become betrayers and murderers!"*

The same thought was expressed by Christ, who, looking down on the doomed city, cried, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."†

As the Jews tried to stone Moses, so they tried to stone Christ.

It is written that He was walking in the Temple in Solomon's porch, and the Jews came round about Him, and said: "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, . . . I and my Father are one; and they took up stones again to stone Him . . . and He went forth out of their hand."‡ The parallelism of the two scenes is close.

VIII. The selection of this incident out of the many of which the life of Moses is composed is quite in the spirit of this cycle, which is characterised by an undercurrent of animosity towards the Jews,§ as also are the writings of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and their contemporaries.

* Acts vii. 39-52.

† Matt. xxiii. 37.

‡ John x. 23-31; compare also xi. 8.

§ See the picture of The Separation of Abraham and Lot, Plate 8, and p. 86f. See also the pictures Hamar, Shechem, and the Sons of Leah, Plate 12, and p. 133.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

IX. Justin views the annihilation of the Jews as a nation as the divine retribution for precisely such acts.

“These things have happened to you in equity and fairness,” he says, “for you have slain the Just One, and His prophets before Him, and now you reject those that hope in Him . . . though you cannot lay hands on us now on account of those that have the power, when you could, you did.*

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xvi.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SECOND COVENANT, AND THE PASSING OF MOSES

I. SUBJECT.

II. DESCRIPTION.

III. CONDITION.

COMMENTARY (IV.-XIV.) :—

IV. De Rossi interprets this picture as the Giving of the Law to the Levites.

V. The book, a restoration.

VI. Points of connection. Contrast between this picture and the representation of The Covenant of Sinai.

VII. Its subject. The Second Covenant.

VIII. The last words of Christ.

IX. Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, speak of the last words of Moses as foreshadowing the universality of the mission of Christianity.

X. Is the death of Moses represented ?

XI. Philo's account.

XII. Josephus' account.

XIII. Justin's conception of the New Covenant, and of the People of God.

XIV. This picture a link between the Moses and "Jesus" Series.

THE SECOND COVENANT, AND THE PASSING OF MOSES.

Plate 22, No. 4a.

I. SUBJECT.—“The Covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the Covenant which he made with them in Horeb.”—Deut. xxix. 1.

“Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto Mount Nebo . . . and the Lord shewed him all the land . . . and said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died.”—Deut. xxxiv. 1-5.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

II. DESCRIPTION.—Two incidents are represented here.

Moses, raised on a podium-like rock, addresses the children of Israel, who stand in a group below, the hand of their representative raised in answering speech.

To the left Moses reclines at full length on a flat mountain top. He seems to watch, rather than to sleep in death.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of a poor copy, disfigured by an extensive gold interpolation in the middle distance.

The flesh-tints are opaque, the figures blurred and indistinct.

Antique, however, and characteristic are the rocks which compose the mountain on which Moses lies. They consist of juxtaposed masses of dark red, green, and black, which produce a rich tapestry-like effect.

The weakness of the figures of the Israelites is added to by the touches of gold on their draperies, which seem to make them transparent to the gold background.

COMMENTARY.—IV. “Moisè consegna il Deuteronomio ai Leviti, e riposa sul Nebo.” Thus concisely does de Rossi summarise the subject of this composition, misled by the restorer, and by the designer of the modern picture presenting the Levites carrying the Ark below, who certainly had the scene indicated by de Rossi* in their minds.

V. The book† which Moses seems to hold in his mantle-involved left hand, but which really floats before it, is not antique, but a restorer's addition; neither is he associated with a book or roll in any of the foregoing pictures, not even in one of which the subject-matter is parallel with that of this, namely in the Covenant made between God and His people on Sinai.

VI. If abstraction be made of the *book*, and of the following composition, there is no reason to suppose that the subject of this picture is the delivery of the Law to the Levites.

* “And it came to pass that when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a book . . . that he commanded the Levites, which carry the Ark of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the Law, and put it by the side of the Ark of the Covenant . . . that it may be there for a witness against thee.”—Deut. xxxi. 24–26.

† Bound books, both open and shut, are frequent on monuments of the fifth and subsequent centuries; they occur in the mosaics of S. Sabina in Rome, of Galla Placidia, and of S. Vitale in Ravenna, etc. They are also connected with the persons of SS. Peter and Paul on the Arch, figures which are a patchwork of restorations too complex to date.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The Israelites opposite Moses are similar in character, movement, and arrangement with the Elders of the Covenant;* here as there, the "people," standing in a compact group, are no passive auditors or spectators, but vivid participators in a scene in which they play an important *rôle*.

Moses, however, is conceived very differently in the two pictures. In the earlier scene he approaches the people eagerly, full of zeal in the delivery of his message, but here his figure is characterised by dignity, and a certain aloofness; there he treads the earth on an equality with the Israelites, but here he is raised above them on a podium-like rock, similar to that in *The Battle with Amalek*, or that on which the Angel of the Lord stands before Joshua, or that on which Joshua is uplifted during the staying of the Sun and Moon.†

VII. Evidently the incident represented is one of solemn import, which shortly preceded his withdrawal from the leadership of the Israelites, namely the ratification and extension of the Covenant made with Israel at Sinai,‡ a scene which took place immediately before his farewell to his people. "These," it is written, "are the words of the Covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the Covenant He made with them at Horeb."

"And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt . . . the signs, and the great wonders. . . . Keep, therefore, the words of this Covenant, and do them, . . . that thou shouldest enter into the Covenant of the Lord thy God . . . *that He may establish thee unto Himself for a people*, and that He may be unto thee a God. . . . Neither with you only do I make this Covenant . . . but with him that standeth with us here this day; and also with him that is not here with us this day." §

Would it be possible to find a more fitting conclusion to a series of pictorial representations (with an underlying didactic purpose) of the wanderings of the Chosen People in the Wilderness, and of the means by which their lives were sustained and preserved; a series which forms a link in a cycle recording the history and education of the Plebs Dei from the earliest times until the coming of Christ?

* Chap. vii. p. 180; Plate 22, No. 1a. † Plate 23, No. 1; Plate 26, No. 1a and No. 5.

‡ The mountain which in the other books of the Pentateuch is called Sinai is named Horeb in the Book of Deuteronomy.

§ Deut. xxix. 1-15.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

VIII. Surely this scene recalls another, in which, before He was removed from the sight of His disciples, Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed them, and said, "These are my words which I spake while I was yet with you, how that all things must need be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses . . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all nations." *

IX. The last words of Moses are interpreted by Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and other Apologists in this sense. They repeatedly speak of them as foreshadowing the Mission of Christ.

X. Closely connected with Moses' farewell words is his death.

He is represented here as lying full length, propped on his elbow, on the flat top of a mountain.

This attitude, which is of frequent occurrence on Etruscan sarcophagi, is hardly that of death, or even of sleep; it appears rather that of watchful repose, and reproduces the words of the Biblical text closely: "The Lord shewed him all the land . . . and said . . . This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thy eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." †

His actual death does not seem to have been represented.

XI. The two Hellenistic Jews, Philo and Josephus, treat the passing of the Prophet differently in their Lives of Moses, but both as a mystery; and it must be remembered that these works were vital forces in their day, and as "Tendenz-schriften" played an important rôle in the religious thought of the first centuries of our era.

Philo, whose account is a Hellenised version of an ancient Hebrew tradition says: "When the time came for Moses to ascend unto heaven, and leaving behind the perishable body, to become a partaker of immortality, the Father of the World, calling him to Himself removed the mortal veil, and thus converted him into pure illuminated intelligence."

XII. According to Josephus, Moses described his own death, but did not die. His version would almost seem to be inspired by S. Luke's account of Christ's Ascension, although he does not expressly state that the Hebrew Lawgiver was received bodily into heaven.

"Now as he went thence to the place where he was to vanish out

* Luke xxiv. 44.

† Deut. xxxiv. 1, 4.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of their sight, they all followed after him weeping . . . as soon as he was come to the mountain called Abarim, he dismissed the senate; and as he was about to embrace Eleasar and Joshua, and was still discoursing with them, a cloud on a sudden stood over him, and he disappeared in a certain valley. Although he wrote in the holy books that he died, this was only done from fear, lest they should venture to say that, because of his extraordinary virtue, he went to God.*

XIII. The thought expressed in this picture as a whole is not borrowed from Philo, or from Josephus; but is quite in the spirit of a Justin, or of a Clement.

“I have read,” says Justin, “that there shall be a final law, and a covenant, the chiefest of all; which is now incumbent on all men to observe, as many as are seeking after the inheritance of God.

“For the law promulgated on Horeb is old, and belongs to you alone; but this is for all, universally. . . .

“If, therefore, God proclaimed a new Covenant, which was to be instituted, and this for the light of the nations, we see and are persuaded that men approach God through the name of Him that was crucified, Jesus Christ . . . Moreover, by the works and the attendant miracles, it is possible for all to understand that He is the New Law, and the New Covenant, and the expectation of those who out of every people wait for the good things of God; for the true spiritual Israel and descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham . . . are we, who have been led to God by this crucified Christ.”†

XIV. This picture is indeed admirably adapted to form a link between the series devoted to the history of Moses, and that which deals with the story of Joshua. For Moses is conceived, not as having died, but merely as having passed into a higher sphere, from which, as from a mountain-top, he watches the progress of his people, who, led by Jesus, live through another phase of their history.

In this last series, the prototype of Christ no longer labours and suffers, as did Jacob; no longer do the People of God hunger and thirst in the wilderness, their life sustained on miraculous food, as when guided by Moses; but, led by “Jesus,” they pass triumphantly from one victory to another, and finally enter into their inheritance.

* Whinston's 'Josephus,' Book iv., chap. viii. 48.

† 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xi.

THE FOURTH TYPOLOGICAL SERIES: JOSHUA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

- I. The Book of Joshua, the first of the prophetic books. S. Luke. The Talmud. Josephus.
- II. Called the "Book of Jesus Nave" in the Septuagint.
- III. Philo's interpretation of Joshua's two names, Hosea and Jesus.
- IV. Origen on this point.
- V. Ireneaus on this point.
- VI. This view universal in the second and third centuries,
- VII. Superseded in the fifth century,
- VIII. Is reflected in the Sicinian mosaics.

CHRIST speaks of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms as containing all that was prophetically foretold concerning Him; "all that needs must be fulfilled." *

Both at his time, and before it, the books now called historical were reckoned among the prophetic. The sequence of the prophets is the following in a fragment of the Talmud of Jerusalem, approximately of the time of Christ: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve; it is written in Hebrew, and not in Aramaic, the speech of the rest of the book, an external witness to its reputation and antiquity.

Flavius Josephus also reckons Joshua the first of the prophets, of whom he recognises thirteen in his 'Jewish Antiquities,' a book written with the express purpose of enriching *classic* literature with an historical work, and of recommending things Jewish to the attention of

* Luke xxiv. 44.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the cultivated cosmopolitans of the Empire, a book moulded therefore by the desire to replace the miraculous by the probable and rational.

The Book of Joshua, which is a graphic account of the means by which the Israelites took Canaan, can only be described as prophetic if the incidents recorded be accepted as foreshadowing future events; if it be regarded as the record not of prophetic speech, like the books of an Isaiah, or a Jeremiah, but as prophetic history.

II. The first book which followed on the Books of the Law in the Septuagint had the significant title, "The Book of Jesus Nave."

It is difficult to exaggerate the suggestiveness of such a name to minds saturated with the spirit of allegory prevalent in the centuries of which the birth of Christ is the centre, during which Old Testament history was viewed as a dramatic "Mystery" enacted for typological ends.

III. In the Alexandrine treatise on Scriptural names ascribed to Philo, the name Jesus Nave is dwelt on at length.* "Moses," it is said, "changed the name of Hosea into Jesus;" and expressed his character in his new name; for the interpretation of Hosea is "what manner of man is this;" but Jesus means "the Salvation of the Lord," a name therefore of the most exalted significance.†

IV. Origen (185-254), writing on the same point in his Homily "On the Book of Joshua," says, "Because this name is above all other names, therefore every knee in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, shall bow in the name of Jesus. . . . I meet with this name, 'Jesus,' for the first time in the Book of Exodus, and now I will see under what circumstances it is introduced.

"Then, 'came Amelek,' it is written, 'and strove against Israel in Rephidim, and Moses spoke to *Jesus*"; and the writer then goes on to describe the Battle dominated by the sign of the Cross, in which the Israelites led by Jesus triumphed over their enemies.‡

Later, still speaking of the Book of Joshua, he expressly says, "This book is not so much a record of the deeds of Jesus Nave, as a foreshadowing (literally 'prepainting') of the mysteries of my Lord Jesus. For He it is who on the death of Moses took over the government. He

* Chap. xxi.

† The Philonic origin of this treatise was doubted by both Origen and Eusebius: it seems to have been published anonymously. See Schürer, 'Geschichte des Jüd Volkes,' iii. 540.

‡ Migne, 'Patrologia S. G.' xii., pp. 826 and 828. Compare pp. 195-197, and Plate 23, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

it is who leads the Army, and opposes Amalek. And it should be noted what was prefigured when one on a hill-top stretched wide his arms during a battle, and by his victory added to the supreme power and might of the Cross."

V. Irenaeus expresses the same thought in the few words in which he synthesises his conception of the distinctive functions of the two great Jewish leaders. "It is in the nature of things," he says, "that Moses should have led the people out of Egypt; but that 'Jesus' should have conducted them into the land of their inheritance; that Moses, moreover, like the Law, should have ceased to be, but that 'Jesus' as Logos, and as prototype of the incarnate Logos, should be his people's General; and (it is intelligible) further that Moses should have given the fathers manna as food, but 'Jesus,' corn, the fruit of the earth, a type of the body of Christ; for this reason it is written that the manna of the Lord was withdrawn when the people ate of the fruit of the land, and of corn." *

VI. This conception of the prototypical significance of the person of Joshua is not characteristic of any school; it was held by Origen, who may be looked on as representative of the Christian thought of Alexandria; by Justin, who was born in Samaria, and suffered death in Rome; by Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, and by others; it was in short not the outcome of the thought of a locality, or of a personality, but of a period, that of the Christian Apologists; and may be said to have passed away with it.

VII. The substitution of the name "Joshua" for that of Jesus in Jerome's Latin Vulgate rendered the analogy between the lives of the Jewish leader and the Christian Redeemer less striking. Moreover, the "Zeitgeist" changed; Christians of the fifth century were no longer concerned to justify their faith in Christ by ancient prototypes, neither were they looking for His immediate second coming: on the contrary, they were occupied in formulating dogmas destined to serve as the permanent foundations of the Church.

VIII. It is important to keep the peculiar typological aspect under which Joshua appeared to the early Church constantly in mind if we would follow the undercurrent of significance which is the *raison d'être* of the pictures we are about to study.

* 'Fragmenta Irenaei,' Stieren's edition, pp. 837 and 838.

CHAPTER II

THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN

I. SUBJECT.

II. DESCRIPTION.

III. CONDITION.

COMMENTARY (IV.-IX.):—

IV. This picture not a simple reflection of the Biblical text.

V. The Passage of the Jordan a subject peculiarly adapted to mystic interpretation.

VI. Mystic interpretation of the history of "Jesus Nave" in vogue from the first to the fifth century.

VII. The decorations of the basilica Felix as described by Paulinus of Nola (353-434).

VIII. Prudentius' 'Dittochaeon' (348-410).

IX. Afraat (about 325).

THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN.

Plate 25, No. 1.

I. SUBJECT.—"Then Joshua called . . . men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel . . . and said unto them, Pass over before the Ark of the Lord your God . . . and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder."—Joshua iv. 4, 5.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This composition is divided into two unequal parts by the river Jordan, which, rising in distant mountains, flows obliquely across it. To the right are the groups centering about the Ark, and about Joshua, and to the left four Israelites, carrying stones upon their shoulders.

The Ark, a low flat-topped quadrangular chest resting on poles, like the Table of Shew-Bread on the Arch of Titus, is borne horizontally on the shoulders of four men, wearing white girded tunics (*tunica talaris subcincta*) with purple clavi.

In the extreme foreground to the right, attended by a small military

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

guard, is Joshua, his figure watchful and tense, a staff clasped in his mantle-involved left hand, his right raised with an expression of attention, his eyes turned on the "chosen," sent before him across the Jordan, one of whom looks back as if for direction. His attitude is that of a General who from a distance watches his troops perform a difficult manoeuvre.

He wears the dress of a Roman General of the Empire, *i.e.*, (1) a red under tunic (*tunica subcula*), of which only the sleeves and the hem of the skirt, just seen under the armour, are visible; (2) armour; (3) a purple war-mantle (*paludamentum*) fastened on the right shoulder by a round gold brooch (*fibula*). A narrow diadem encircles his bare head; in his left hand, which is enwrapped in the folds of his purple paludamentum, is a golden sceptre, certainly originally a lance.

Like their brethren carrying the Ark, the four Israelites, bowed beneath the weight of the stones they bear, wear white girded tunics with purple clavi.

All the persons represented are similarly shod; they wear soft white boots, bound about the foot with red bands.

The blue river is indicated in its whole length, from its source in the distant mountains to its extinction in a pool representing the Dead Sea.

Its course is unbroken; there is no indication of the rushing asunder of its waters to make a passage for the Israelites.

Parallel instances of landscapes crossed obliquely by rivers are frequent on the Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius; for the art of the Empire did not disdain to occupy itself with pure topography.*

III. CONDITION.—This is perhaps the best preserved picture in this series.

Abstraction must be made of the opaque group of which Joshua is the centre, a restoration of uncertain date, in which, however, the original composition is probably reproduced; and of all gold interpolations among which the most disastrous in effect are the gilt patches which occur between the figures of the stone-bearers, robbing those in the background of bodies, draperies, and legs.

The remaining two-thirds of the picture are antique, and, though injured by repairs and time, characteristically classic both in colour and sentiment.

* See Plate 25, No. 2, Passage of a River on the Column of Marcus Aurelius.

I.



2.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Antique, and inimitable in the rendering of tender atmospheric effects are the mountains on the left, composed of finely graduated vitreous cubes of pale green, blue, grey, white, emerald-green, and red, the *ne plus ultra* of the expression in mosaic of the subtleties of vaporous landscape.

Fine, also, but unequal in preservation, are the young men carrying stones, and those carrying the Ark; their sensitive and expressive heads combine a rare and very attractive tenderness of sentiment with that hall mark of classic workmanship, translucency of the flesh tints. The whites of their draperies, composed of white, grey-blue, grey-green, and pale violet cubes, are rich and harmonious.

The river, which traverses the golden middle distance obliquely, is at first sight a strikingly discordant colour-note; but it will be observed that this lack of harmony ceases where it is embedded, not in modern gold, but in antique mosaic, *i.e.*, in its source in the distant mountains, and where it gradually dwindles to extinction in the foreground.

The sky above the Ark is brilliant and translucent. As in *The Stoning of Moses*, strata of yellow cubes alternate with blue; in the distance the former have the appearance of gold enamel.

A fragment of the original white and red framework is preserved on the upper border of the picture; it consists of two rows of red stones, and one of white, and impinges on the deep blue of the sky.

The classic fragments preserved here are of so high a quality and in so good a state that they should be used as notes in harmony with which the rest of the picture may be mentally reconstructed, and its originally fine tonality recovered.

All gold must be eliminated, and the disturbing gilt patches which occur in the groups replaced by the delicate greys and luminous whites of draperies, and the much injured middle-distance mentally reconstructed after the model of that in *The Stoning of Moses*.

COMMENTARY.—IV. The historical incident which is the basis of this picture is thus described in the Book of Joshua: "And it came to pass when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord being before the people; and when they that bare the Ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the Ark were dipped in the brink of the water . . . that the waters which came down from above stood, and rose

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

up in one heap, . . . and those that went down towards the sea . . . even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off: and the people passed over. . . . And the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, . . . until all the nation were passed clean over Jordan. And it came to pass when all the nation were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua. . . . Then Joshua called the twelve men . . . whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man; and Joshua said unto them, . . . take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the Children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you."*

It will be seen that the artist had no scruple in departing in many points from the Biblical narrative; according to which it was *after* the waters had divided at the touch of the feet of the priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant, and the whole people had gone over on dry land, that Joshua sent back the twelve men into the bed of the river to bring thence twelve memorial stones.

Here the men carrying the stones go before the Ark; and are four in number; † the men who carry the Ark are not priests; and there is no hint of a miracle; the flow of the waters of the Jordan is uninterrupted from its source to the Dead Sea.

So marked a deviation from the text shows that the artist did not purpose to illustrate a given moment in a historical event, but, as throughout the series, so to transfigure an event as to make it transparent to an inner meaning, for the sake of which only he has chosen to represent it.

V. The identity in the Greek text of the name of the leader of the Israelites, "Jesus," with that of the Redeemer, rendered an allegorical interpretation of his story inevitable in an age in which the history of the chosen people was interpreted as "a shadow of the good things to come," an age in love with obscure typology, and ingenious in the discovery of the occult under the most prosaic disguises.

But in this especial instance the material to be handled is such that it is difficult to translate it into words without seeming to purposely construct an allegory. The Ark of God's Covenant with His chosen people is borne under the guidance of Jesus, their Leader and Prince,

* Josh. iii. 14-17, and iv. 1-5.

† See 'The Mystery of the Virgin Birth,' § xii., and p. 168.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

through the mysterious river Jordan, the waters of which, dividing, leave a passage leading from the wilderness into the Holy Land.

VI. The period during which Joshua was accepted as a type of Christ is limited.

Traces of this conception occur in the Letter to the Hebrews.* It is clearly expressed in the Letter of Barnabas (variously dated from 70 to 132), and in the writings of Justin Martyr (about 115-165), Origen, Irenaeus, and of other theologians of the second and third centuries.

The descriptions of the ecclesiastical art of the fourth and fifth centuries in the poems of Paulinus of Nola (353-434) and of Prudentius (348-410), show that two centuries later the same thought was still associated with "Jesus Nave," but had assumed a different, a more hieratic aspect, being even pressed into the service of the theological polemics of the day.

VII. In the poem in which Paulinus of Nola describes the paintings of the Atrium of the Basilica Felix he gives prominence to the incident which has hitherto been erroneously accepted as forming the subject-matter of this picture, namely, the *miracle* which attended the entry of the Israelites into Palestine.

He states that the series was inaugurated by compositions founded on the writings of Moses, does not describe the pictures, but only mentions the fact in general terms. "Then Art," he writes, "presents in faithful sequence the events recorded in five books, by the aged Moses."†

He then dwells on the subject-matter of one picture in which were represented the acts of "Jesus, he who was called by the Name of God, during whose leadership of the People of Israel the Jordan retired from before the face of the Holy Ark, its tide suspended, and its waves stayed."‡

Eight verses follow, giving a detailed account of the miracle, and then the remaining pictures are dismissed with a few generic remarks.

* iv. 8.

† "Omnia namque tenet serie pictura fideli
Quae senior scripsit per quinque volumina Moses."

It is to be observed that Paulinus' series was certainly historical, the events pictured being represented in "faithful sequence."

‡ "Quae gessit Domini signatus nomine Jesus
Quo duce Jordanis, suspenso gurgite, fixis
Fluctibus, a facie divinae restitit arcae."

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

VIII. Prudentius carries the allegorising tendency a step further. In his 'Dittochaeon' he connects the twelve stones taken from the bed of the river at the command of Jesus, with the twelve Apostles.

"The Jordan," he writes, "is carried back to its source by its ebbing tide, it left dry the path to be trodden by the People of God: a witness are the stones, twice six, which the fathers built up in the river itself, foreshadowing the Apostles."*

And he expresses the same thought again in his 'Cathemerion.' (12 v. 173 ff.)

"This truly and surely is Jesus
Who from the bed of the ebbing waters
Built up and erected stones three times four,
Emblems of the Apostles."†

IX. Afraat, a learned Bishop of the Syrian Church, whose writings are immediately subsequent to the Council of Nicaea (325), and, therefore of the date to which the invention and execution of these mosaics have hitherto been attributed (the time of Liberius), renders the typology of the incident more definite, not merely connecting the choice of the twelve stones with the calling of the Apostles, but, by a play on words, with the election of Peter to be the foundation-stone of the Church.

"Jesus, the son of Nave, chose stones for a witness to Israel: Jesus our Redeemer, chose Peter (Πέτρος) as a strong stone (πέτρα), and as a faithful witness among all people."

"It is certain," adds the Syrian bishop's modern commentator, "that Afraat did not allude to Peter's Apostleship alone, for then he would have mentioned all the Apostles 'duodecim durissimi lapides.'"‡

* "In fontem refluo Jordanis gurgite fertur
Dum calcanda Dei populis vada sicca relinquit,
Testes bis seni lapides, quos flumine in ipso
Constituere patres in formam discipulorum."
'Dittochaeon,' 57 ff.

† "Hic nempe Jesus verior
Qui ter quaternas denique
Refluentis amnis alveo
Fundavit et fixit petras
Apostolorum stemmata."

‡ Benigni, 'Unity of the Church,' p. 3.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

It is obvious that the Sicinian mosaic in which the miracle is ignored, is not the outcome of this theological point of view, in which the miracle is all important.

Its typology being a link in a sequence of imagery, it will be discussed in connection with the typology of the group of which it is part; suffice it now to repeat that the miraculous passage of the Jordan is not its subject, but the river itself, the Ark, Jesus, and his envoys who are represented as builders.

CHAPTER III

JESUS' ENVOYS

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VI.):—
- IV. The sequence of events not that of the Biblical narrative.
- V. A result of the general idea embodied in the cycle.
- VI. Rahab.

JESUS' ENVOYS.

Plate 25, No. 1b.

I. SUBJECT.—“And Joshua the son of Nun sent out . . . two men . . . saying, Go view the land, and Jericho.

“And they went, and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab. . . . And the woman took the two men, and hid them.”—
Joshua ii. 1-4.

II. DESCRIPTION.—To the left Joshua, standing at the head of his army, despatches messengers to explore the land; they move rapidly towards the town of Jericho, which is represented on the right.

Joshua wears the dress of a Roman General; his head, which is bare, according to the constant practice of classic art in the representation of Emperors,* is encircled by a diadem; in his left hand is a long lance; his right is raised in the gesture of speech addressed to his two envoys, who move with alacrity to fulfil his commands. The attitude of one of these,—his right hand stretched inquiringly towards the unknown land towards which his eager steps are carrying him, but his

* Neither Trajan nor Marcus Aurelius is represented otherwise than bareheaded on their respective columns, whether in scenes of peace or of war.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

head, turned towards the General from whom his mission derives both its authority and significance,—admirably synthesises the ideal of “one under authority.”

The author evidently wished to underline the thought of the subordination of the two envoys; to remind the spectator that their mission, like that of the disciples of a later date sent out in twos, was not the outcome of their own intelligence or will, but was undertaken in obedience to the commands of “Jesus.”

Very beautiful and characteristic of the original colour-scheme is the almost Venetian colouring of the central group. The charming play of light and shade on the face of the envoy in the foreground, the brilliant pallor of his gleaming flesh-tints shadowed by masses of dark hair, the refreshing contrast of the cool blue of his tunic, with the saturated crimson of his mantle, are conceived in the key and manner now associated with the name of Tintoretto.

To the extreme right is the town of Jericho, characterised as strong, as fortified, and as the home of Rahab, whose house is seen rising above the city walls. Four figures are visible above its gateway: Rahab, dressed as throughout the series, in which she is represented four times, in a blue dalmatica, in conversation with a man in orange, whose gestures indicate entreaty; and a little apart, a second group of two figures, who take refuge in her house.

The background, as throughout this cycle, consists of gradations of green, yellow, and grey-blue, synthesising a landscape with sunlit middle distance; upon the horizon are silhouetted the slightly undulating outlines of mountains.

III. CONDITION.—Both composition and colour-harmony are substantially antique, but their effect is much injured by the irregular strip of gold restoration which traverses the picture horizontally, and by the gilt touches and spots which are scattered over it.

The figure of Joshua is injured by repairs. The soldiers behind him are to be ascribed to the restorer.

In excellent preservation are the sky and mountain-range in the background, the head of Joshua, and the figures of his envoys, and more especially that of the envoy who looks back. The head of his companion is ruined. The shield behind Joshua is antique.

The technical treatment of the sky, which is built up of graduated

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

strata of blue-grey, into which yellow cubes are delicately interwoven, recurs throughout the Moses and Joshua series.

The contrast between the rich, subdued, and saturated Venetian colouring of this picture, and the silvery spring-like greens and whites of the well preserved central group in *The Stoning of Moses*, shows how varied was the gamut of colour in which the artists of these mosaics worked.

COMMENTARY.—IV. It will be seen that the events connected with the taking of Jericho are not depicted in their historical sequence ; for according to the Biblical narrative, Joshua sent out the spies *before* the Israelites crossed the Jordan ; but here he is represented as sending them out afterwards.

V. This divergence from the text is a necessary result of the thought the artist purposed to embody, namely, the triumph of the people of God.

On one side of the Jordan lay the Wilderness, with its trials and hardships, its hunger, its thirst, and the assaults of powerful enemies, met only by especial means of salvation ordained by God Himself ; but on the other, led no longer by Moses, but by Jesus, the "chosen" entered into the inheritance prepared for them. Their way is a triumphal progress ; Jericho, which first rejects them, falls at the blast of their trumpets ; and the laws of the heavenly bodies are suspended for their sake.

The all-important feature of the first picture was therefore the river Jordan, the mysterious boundary, separating the place of probation from the promised land.

Having by its presence made it clear that the events pictured take place in an ideal land, the artist handles his historical material freely, regarding nothing but the logical presentation of his idea. Thus Jesus' envoys go before him to Jericho, and are protected by Rahab ; the Captain of the Host of the Lord takes command of the army ; Jericho falls, but Rahab is saved.

VI. Two incidents are represented here : (1) Jesus' envoys go forth ; (2) they are received by Rahab in her temple-like house, which the artist has placed, so that it may be seen and its significance grasped, above the city walls.

Rahab played an honourable *rôle* in the thought of the Church ;

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

her name is included in the very short list of persons mentioned in the canonical writings as Old Testament types of Christian virtues. In the Letter to the Hebrews, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses are named, and then Rahab; "by faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace." *

The same thought is developed by Clement of Rome in his Epistle to the Corinthians. †

Many of the Fathers, moreover, looked on her as a prototype of the Church drawn from the Gentiles.

"The interpretation of the word 'Rahab,'" says Origen, "is expansion, and in so far it is a symbol of the Church of the Gentiles, of which it is said, 'The space is too narrow for me; procure me room, that I may live.'" ‡

* Heb. xi. 31.

† Chap. xii.

‡ Migne, 'Patr. S. G.,' Tom. xii. p. 821.

CHAPTER IV

JOSHUA BEFORE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (IV.-VI.) :—
- IV. Treatment of the same subject in the Joshua Rotulus.
- V. Angels winged and wingless.
- VI. Michael.

JOSHUA BEFORE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.

Plate 26, No. 1a.

I. SUBJECT.—“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”

“And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.

“And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?”

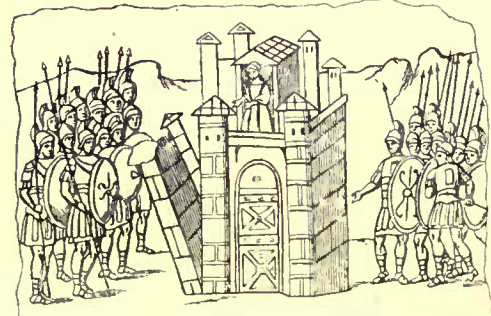
“And the Captain of the host of the Lord said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.”—Joshua v. 13-15.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Standing on a rocky eminence to the extreme right is the isolated figure of a warrior, spear in hand, wearing the dress of a Roman general of Imperial times, similar to that worn by Joshua in the foregoing, and following pictures; his head is encircled by a pale blue nimbus; he is characterised therefore either as one in authority, or as a being belonging to a higher sphere.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Joshua, behind whom stands a group of armed soldiers, advances towards him from the left; bowed; his outstretched hands veiled in adoration.*

Whereas he is invariably represented elsewhere in the dress of a military commander, he here wears that of a civilian, *i.e.*, a short white girded tunic, with long tight fitting sleeves (*tunica talaris manicata succincta*), decorated with square purple spots (*segmenta*). On his feet are shoe-like sandals, with round leather lappets covering the toes and heels.

Each of the soldiers behind him carries two spears, as was usual with Roman spearmen.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of a poor and much restored copy, by the hand apparently to which we owe the upper part of *The Battle against Amalek*, *The Death of Moses*, etc.

The group behind Joshua is a later interpolation, by the hand to which are due the soldiers in *The Passage of the Red Sea*, in *The Battle against Amalek*, in *The Fall of Jericho*, etc.; they have small heads, with disproportionately large features, indicated by heavy lines.

The figure of Joshua seems to be the result of an earlier restoration; this is suggested by the character of his dress; his pose,—his body bent forward in reverence, his hands outstretched as he moves forward to approach a revered Being,—is that of Abraham in *The Visit of the Angels*; it is probable that these two figures originally corresponded more closely, and that Joshua's hands were unveiled.

The gold interpolation is of uncertain date. The whole picture is enclosed by an irregular band of coarse stucco restoration, which is widest on the left, where it has encroached on the group of soldiers attendant on Joshua.

The peculiar technique in which the mountains were executed,—they are rayed with pale yellow stones,—recurs in the following pictures.

COMMENTARY.—IV. The same subject is pictured in the *Joshua Rotulus* of the Vatican, but in how different a manner! †

In the Greek manuscript the Angel, wearing the dress of a Roman general, and carrying a lance, stands in a dignified pose before Joshua, who is pictured twice, once standing, his hand raised in speech,

* Abraham before the Angel of the Lord (Plate 7, No. 1) is represented in a similar pose. So also is Simeon in *The Presentation* (Plates 35 and 36, No. 1).

† Plate 27, No. 1.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

ignorant of the personality of his interlocutor, and then prostrate at his feet. It would be difficult to give more vivid expression to the rapidly changing psychology of the situation.

Caution must be observed in the comparison of a much restored and poor copy with an exquisite original.

If, however, it be accepted that the general composition and space arrangement of the original mosaic are retained here, and if its parts be mentally reconstructed on the artistic level of such antique fragments as are preserved, for instance as occur in *The Passage of the Red Sea*—an Angel of the quality and dignity of the figure of Aaron would be no mean achievement*—then it cannot but be recognised that these two compositions are of high artistic quality, and are the expression of very different temperaments, personal, racial, and artistic; the one masculine, austere, self-contained; the other, sensitive, poetic, feminine. Equally characteristic of two peoples are the social conventions embodied; the conception of an admired general as prostrate at the feet of any power is one which could never have obtained in Rome; its home is the Orient.

V. The Angel of the Lord is here represented as wingless.

Garrucci concludes that as the Angels of the Nave are wingless (the Angel before Joshua, and those before Abraham), and those of the Arch are winged, therefore the one series is anterior to the other, the wingless and winged Angels forming phases in the evolution of the presentment of Angels. The value of this theory is lessened by two circumstances: (*a*) the wings on the Arch are subsequent restorations † and (*b*) the exigencies of the narrative illustrated in the Nave, in which the Angels are mistaken for men, necessitate their representation as wingless.‡

VI. It was inevitable at a time when the Old Testament was looked on as a mine of Christian typology that the mysterious leader who appeared to Joshua before Jericho should have been interpreted as foreshadowing the Immanuel: § for his name "Michael" signifies "as

* Plate 20.

† See Plates 41, 42 and 45.

‡ That this necessity was not recognised in later realistic pictorial narrative is shown by the picture we reproduce from the Joshua Rotulus. Plate 27, No. 1.

§ Origen says, "Afterwards he gave them Michael as general (*ἀρχιστρατηγός*). . . . He was a Prince of the people, and appeared as such to Daniel." (Migne, 'Patr. S. G.' xii. p. 821.) In the Joshua Rotulus the name Michael is attached to the figure of the Angel.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

God," and was moreover generally associated with the phrase attached to it in the Book of Daniel, "the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people."*

His presence is a fitting climax to the tissue of prodigies and miracles of which the story of the taking of the Holy Land by the Old Testament "Jesus" is composed, and justifies the dreamy and sometimes evasive mysticism, which, by an exquisite spiritual alchemy, transformed the rude story of the taking of Palestine into an allegory of the triumph of Christ, as in Origen's 'Homily on the Book of Jesus'; or as here, and in the writings of Justin Martyr, into a foreshadowing of His Second Coming, and of the final possession of the Land of Promise, The New Jerusalem, by the elect.

* Chap. xii. 1.

CHAPTER V

THE RETURN OF THE ENVOYS

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

THE RETURN OF THE ENVOYS.

Plate 26, No. 1b.

I. SUBJECT.—“Then Rahab let them down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town-wall.

“And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers light upon you.”—Joshua ii. 15-16.

“Then the two men returned, and descended from the mountain; and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun.”—Joshua ii. 23.

II. DESCRIPTION.—This picture embodies two subjects, separated from each other by a mountain-range traversing it obliquely: the one representing the escape of Jesus Nave’s envoys from Jericho; the other their reception by him.

To the extreme right is the fortified town of Jericho, upon the wall of which hangs one of the envoys clinging to the cord, by which Rahab, who stands above, holding its ends, enables him to effect his escape. His companion, who has already reached the ground, and is fully armed and carries a shield and two lances, makes hastily for the mountains, which rise precipitously before him. Rahab, standing on the town-wall, on which her house is carefully particularised, wears a blue dalmatica and white head-dress.

Jesus Nave forms the centre of the group to the left; he receives the report of his envoys, standing at the head of his troops, in the dress of a Roman general of Imperial times.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

His agents, both completely armed, lay their report before him with agitated gestures. The rapid interchange of question and answer is admirably expressed in the action of the raised hands of the general, and those of his delegates.

It is curious that in the representation of their departure from the camp they are pictured in civil dress, and as unarmed ; in that of their return, they are furnished with helmets, shields, and carry two lances each.

III. CONDITION.—Although this composition has been rendered indistinct by repairs ; has been patched in places with very indifferent workmanship ; has been invaded by streams of gold ; and curtailed by the band of coarse mosaic by which it is enclosed on three sides ; yet, being comparatively free from restoration proper, *i.e.*, reconstruction in the style of another period ; it has retained its original intonation, and much of its antique character.

How much it has suffered is shown by comparison of the figure of Joshua with a similar figure in the preceding picture : the mountain ridge with the mountain range in *The Crossing of the Jordan* ; the walls of Jericho with the walls of Gibeon ; the spies with the spies in the preceding picture, in which precision of drawing, and brilliancy of flesh tints are characteristically classic.

The group of soldiers behind Joshua is entirely due to the restorer ; the large shield which, in spite of its apparent weight, floats behind him, being held by no one, is the restorer's amalgam of the two shields usually borne by the general's two attendants.

CHAPTER VI

A.—THE FALL OF JERICHO

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

B.—THE PROCESSION OF THE ARK

- IV. DESCRIPTION.
- V. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (VI.—X.) :—
- VI. Figures smaller than in previous pictures.
Fall of the wall represented before the trumpet blast which caused it.
- VII. The upper and lower strata to be understood as the background and foreground of one picture.
- VIII. The interconnection of these two strata, and the identity of style of this picture with that of those both preceding and following it, shows that the present arrangement of the pictures in groups of two, is antique.
- IX. Treatment of the same subject in the Joshua Rotulus.
- X. The incident conceived in the one instance realistically, in the other, typologically.
- XI. Rahab. Justin Martyr. Origen. Prudentius. Paulinus of Nola.
The two pictures here united within one frame are so intimately connected that it has been necessary to discuss them together.

THE FALL OF JERICHO.

Plate 26, No. 2.

I. SUBJECT.—“And the seven priests, bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Ark of the Lord, went on continually, and blew with the trumpets, and the armed men went before them; and the rearward came after the Ark of the Lord, the priests blowing with trumpets as they went. . . . And it came to pass at the seventh time that Joshua said . . . the Lord hath given you the city. And the city



2.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to the Lord: only Rahab . . . shall live. . . . So the priests blew with the trumpets . . . and it came to pass . . . that . . . the wall fell down flat."—Joshua vi. 13, 16, 20.

II. DESCRIPTION.—In the centre of this composition is a conventional representation of a town, obviously Jericho, flanked on the right and on the left by motionless bands of armed soldiers.

Above the closed city gateway appears the figure of a woman, Rahab, with outstretched arms. The right wing of the city wall is represented as falling, not in fragments, but in a single mass.

Ranges of distant hills are silhouetted against the horizon.

The architectural mass occupying the centre of the picture is a typical, if somewhat rude example of the conventional representation of a town in the art of this time. It is square in plan, with high walls, turreted at their angles; a strongly fortified gateway occupies the whole of its front face; above it appear such objects as the artist wished the spectator to realise as within the town, objects which serve to identify either the locality, or the incident represented: the material exigencies of the case force him to elevate them above the walls, otherwise they would not be visible, but they are not to be understood as so located in reality, but merely as within the town walls.

The city gateway is closed by large bronze doors, decorated and strengthened by large bosses.

Above it stands Rahab with outstretched imploring arms. Bound on the wall beneath her is the line of scarlet thread. "Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window . . . and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him."*

She wears a blue dalmatica, and white head-dress, as in former pictures. Behind her is the façade of her house, "the house on the town wall," the only object in the city which the artist has cared to particularise.

To the right and left of Jericho are immobile bodies of soldiery.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value only of a poor copy, which is almost entirely overlaid by later interpolations. The groups of soldiers drawn up on either side of the town are by the same hand

* ii. 18, 19.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

as the soldiers in The Passage of the Red Sea, The Battle against Amalek, etc. The date of the gilt middle-distance is uncertain.

The town is not antique in execution.*

The technique of the mountains and sky, which are composed of coloured strata with serrated edges, which bite into each other like the teeth of a cogged wheel occurs in other pictures of this series.

PROCESSION OF THE ARK.

IV. DESCRIPTION.—The Ark, carried swiftly forward by four men, occupies the centre of the picture. Before and behind it, advancing with the same passionately rapid movement, are two groups of trumpeters, their instruments at their lips.

In the middle distance to the right, Joshua, at the head of his soldiers, directs the procession.

The men carrying the Ark wear white-girded wide-sleeved tunics (*tunica succincta manicata*), with purple clavi: the trumpeters, similar tunics, with round purple spots (*segmenta*), and long tight-fitting sleeves.

Joshua, in the dress of a Roman General, stands with his right hand raised in the gesture of speech, or command: behind him is a band of fully armed soldiers carrying shields, and two lances each.

The *ligne mouvementé* of the horizon represents the mountainous regions of the Holy Land.

V. CONDITION.—This picture is either a fine copy, or an original with early interpolations. If abstraction be made of the inevitable late interpolation of gold in the middle distance, and of slight injuries due to repairs, it may be said to be free from restoration proper. Its antique brilliance of illumination and colour-harmony have been preserved. The sense of movement is well given.

The soldiers behind Joshua are much repaired. The left and lower borders of the picture have been coarsely restored.

The effect of the light on the mountains, which are almost obliterated by radiance, is obtained by means of long rays of light yellow, which traverse them obliquely from below. The translucence of the sky is obtained in a different manner, by long horizontal touches of yellow, like gold thread woven into a pale texture.

* Compare with Gibeon in the following picture, which is antique.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

COMMENTARY.—VI. Certain unique peculiarities of composition occur here. The figures are smaller than in any other picture of this series; the natural sequence of events is not observed: the fall of the wall of Jericho being represented before the trumpet-blast which produced it.

Each of the compositions which form this double picture, if taken alone, is unintelligible: the walls of Jericho fall in the upper picture, why, is not explained: the Ark moves in a circular course round an object, which is not represented.

VII. These peculiarities cease to be surprising or anomalous when it is realised that, although the artist has furnished two events so closely connected as to stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect, each with its separate landscape-setting and sky, yet he intended them to be looked on not as two pictures, but as one; to be viewed as strictly complementary the one to the other, the lower picture being in fact the foreground to the upper, the upper the background to the lower.

These reciprocally explanatory pieces become intelligible only when they are mentally placed one before the other, like stage "wings," so as to build up a complete *mise en scène*.

Whereas all the pictures of this cycle, with this exception, are composed like bas-reliefs on a single plane, the multiplicity of incidents here depicted forced the creation of a composition on more than one plane on the artist; and he acquitted himself of the task in a manner which, though at first sight naïve, shows that the incident was not divided into its component parts, and those parts pictured separately, because of his inability to grapple with the problem of space expression.

A sense of depth is given to the upper picture by the line perspective of the town, and of the groups of soldiers: in *The Procession of the Ark* the trumpeters execute a sort of flanking movement inwards towards the background, giving a sense of circular movement round an object not indicated; and involving a sense of space, extending, not only from side to side, but also forward and backward. The figure of Joshua too is certainly not in the foreground, but in the middle distance; and the group of figures he heads is completed in the picture above.

The prompting motive was probably the artist's desire to give unmistakable pre-eminence both to the city and to the Ark. The source of this desire was didactic; the manner of its expression is possibly

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

traceable to a classic convention, which, for the sake of clarity, both of narrative and of line, discouraged the impinging of one important body upon another, and resulted in the tendency, observable throughout this series, to compose as if for a bas-relief.

VIII. The interconnection of the two strata of which this picture is composed is further important as deciding the much debated question of the original distribution of the single parts of this decorative cycle, whether side by side, in a narrow continuous border, as has been asserted ; or in isolated pairs, as here.

These strata stand to each other in the relation of foreground and background ; it is therefore inconceivable that they were originally designed to be placed side by side ; so as to form a continuous frieze, or to be otherwise associated than at present.

This is the only double-picture belonging to this cycle, from the treatment of the subject-matter of which this conclusion may be confidently drawn.

As this double picture is precisely similar in structure and technique to those by which it is preceded and followed, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that all the pictures of this series were designed to be arranged in isolated pairs as at present.

The theory that this cycle was designed as a cursive frieze of the type of that of the Joshua Rotulus is further negatived by the size of certain compositions, such as Abraham and Melchizedek ; Abraham and the Three Angels ; The Crossing of the Red Sea, etc.

IX. Essentially and typically different is the treatment of the same subject in the Joshua Rotulus : * indeed, it is difficult to conceive a greater divergence of temperament than that revealed by the handiwork of the miniaturist, and of the mosaicist. The one treats the fall of Jericho as a successful breaching attack ; the other, as a miracle of typological import.

The flowing frieze-like decoration of the Greek Roll is animated by the breathless rush and dash of the Israelites, storming lance in hand into the fated town ; and pressing, firebrand in hand, into the furthest recesses ; while the personification of the city sits motionless outside its walls, in the quietness of despair. Behind the soldiers is the procession of the Israelites, the long-robed priests going before, blowing

* Plate 27, No. 2.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the seven trumpets; the Ark, borne by four priests coming after, followed by the unarmed multitude of the children of Israel.*

X. Nothing of this is pictured in the mosaic.

In the centre of the composition is the conventional representation of a town, with high walls, and closed gateway; not a defender is to be seen; only Rahab, with the symbolic red cord bound on the wall beneath her.

As the town is not defended, neither is it attacked; the armed troops of the Israelites are drawn up round it in silent and motionless expectation; suddenly, at the blast of the trumpets, the town wall breaks away in a single mass.

As in the following representation of The Staying of the Sun and Moon, it is not the prowess of the Israelites, but the miracle, the Divine interposition, which the artist wished to emphasise.

XI. Prominently bound above the city gateway is the "line of scarlet thread," the "true token" which was the pledge of the safety guaranteed by Joshua's envoys to Rahab, and to her father's house.

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews only speaks of Rahab as one who was saved by faith; "by faith Rahab the harlot perished not." Clement of Rome, however, in his Letter to the Corinthians brings her story into direct prophetic connection with the salvation which is in Christ. "The messengers of Jesus," he says, gave her a sign of salvation, the "scarlet thread" showing beforehand that through the blood of the Lord there shall be redemption unto all them that hope and believe on God." "Ye see," he adds, "that not only faith, but prophecy is found in the woman."

The same mystic interpretation is to be met with in the works of other writers: it occurs in Justin's 'Dialogue with Trypho'; and is repeated in a dramatic form in the much later poems of Prudentius and of Paulinus of Nola.

"When Jericho sank," writes Prudentius, in his 'Dittochaëon,' "the halls of Rahab alone remained erect."

* "And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark; the priests blowing the trumpets as they went . . . and Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city! So the people shouted, and the priests blew with the trumpets . . . and the walls fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city . . . and they burned the city with fire."—vi. 13, 16, 20, 24.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

"The Harlot, Hostess of Saints (so great is the power of faith),
Safe in her intact house, offered the hostile fire,
Vivid crimson, foreshadowing blood."*

And Paulinus of Nola concludes his twenty-sixth hymn with the words which comment the same incident :

" . . . From which comprehend
How greatly worthy is His Blood of which the *image* wrought salvation." †

* "Procubuit Jericho, sola stant atria Raab
Hospita sanctorum meretrix, tanta est fidei vis,
Incolumi segura domo spectabile coccum
Ignibus adversis in signum sanguinis offert."
Prud., 'Dittochaeon,' xvi.

† " . . . Hinc cape quantum
Ipse cruor valeat, cujus salvabat imago . . ."
Paulinus of Nola, Carmen xxvi.

CHAPTER VII

THE SIEGE OF GIBEON

- I. SUBJECTS of the double picture.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

DELIVERY OF GIBEON

- IV. DESCRIPTION.
- V. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY.
- VI. Its subject not the Siege of Ai, but of Gibeon.

THE SIEGE AND DELIVERY OF GIBEON.

Plate 26, No. 3. Plate 28, No. 2.

I. SUBJECT.—“Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek, King of Jerusalem, heard . . . how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them, that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities . . . and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adoni-zedek, King of Jerusalem, sent unto . . . the King of Hebron, and unto . . . the King of Jarmuth, and unto . . . the King of Lachish, and unto the King of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, and let us smite Gibeon. . . . Therefore the five Kings of the Amorites . . . went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped against Gibeon, and made war against it.”—Joshua x. 1-5.

“And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua . . . saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly and save us, and help us, for all the kings . . . are gathered together against us.”—Joshua x. 6.

“And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear them not, for I have

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

delivered them into thine hands; there shall not a man of them stand before thee."—Joshua x. 8, 9.

"So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him."—Joshua x. 7.

THE SIEGE.

II. DESCRIPTION.—Four subjects are represented in this double picture: (1) the town of Gibeon is attacked by the armed hosts of the five kings; (2) Joshua receives the fugitives from Gibeon, who urge the immediate expedition of succour; (3) the Divine Being appears to Joshua, promising success; (4) Joshua rides forth to the aid of Gibeon.

These subjects are arranged in two strata. To the extreme right of the upper stratum is the town of Gibeon, characterised as powerful by the strength of its walls, and by the number and size of the public buildings which rise above them. The visored heads of its defenders, visible above the fortifications, their large shields, the bows, arrows, and lances in their hands, add the impression of vigilant courage to that of strength.

Outside and below the city walls the soldiers of the five kings pause in the amazement and terror of repulse.

A fully armed soldier, carrying a shield and two lances, turns from the city, and, sheltering himself with his shield, attempts to draw an arrow from a wound in his breast; a not infrequent motive in Imperial Roman Art.*

To the left, Joshua, attended by an armed guard, receives the two soldiers who have been sent from Gibeon to beg for aid. The composure of the General is admirably contrasted with their gestures of agonised entreaty.

III. CONDITION.—Although this picture has suffered from time, from the repairer, and from the restorer, yet it has lost neither its antique character, nor its general intonation.

Abstraction must be made of all patches of gold in the background and elsewhere; of the heads of the attacking soldiery in the background; and of irregular patches of green and yellow, which have

* See Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius, in which, however, the arrow or spear is actually lacking, having probably been executed in bronze.

1.



2.



3.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

replaced the delicately graduated greens and yellows of the middle-distance.

The figure of Joshua has been much injured by repairs, more especially by the addition of spots and lines of gold. Original and in good preservation, on the other hand, are his purple paludamentum, and the two shields borne behind him by two attendants: similar shields in similar positions, but ruined, have misled the restorer into the perpetration elsewhere of such anomalies as the floating shield of the King of Edom, or the monstrous equipment of Joshua in *The Condemnation of the Five Kings*.*

The strong masonry walls of the town are in perfect preservation, and may be accepted as typical good work of this period, and as a test which may be applied to other buildings represented in this cycle.†

The figures of the shield-bearing soldiery, both of the attack and of the defence, are well drawn, and admirably spirited.

THE DELIVERY.

IV. DESCRIPTION.—Two scenes, separated from each other by a slender cypress, are represented in the lower picture: in the one, Joshua receives a command from God; in the other, that command is put into execution; the Israelites march to the relief of Gibeon.

To the left, Joshua, attended by two fully armed soldiers, holds communion with a Divine being: the leader of the Israelites is bare-headed, wears the dress of a Roman General, has a lance in his left hand; his right is lifted in the gesture of speech addressed to the "Angel" of God, who appears in the heavens, and bends toward him across a parapet-like band of red and blue clouds. The Angel is represented as a youthful Apollo-like Being, in white tunic with purple clavi, his red-gold hair is encircled by a golden nimbus.‡

To the right of the dividing cypress, a group of armed warriors moves rapidly towards a distant town, Gibeon. In their midst is Joshua on horseback, in the same dress as in the previous scene, a lance in his

* Plate 22, No. 2b; Plate 26, No. 6.

† See foregoing picture, Plate 26, No. 2, also the building behind Joseph in *The Mystery of the Virgin-Birth*, Plate 31.

‡ In Garrucci's engraving, reproduced on Plate 26, No. 3b, the figure of the Angel has been converted into a bearded Christ.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

hand. He is distinguished by his bare head from the mass of his followers, all of whom wear helmets.

V. CONDITION.—Antique, though injured, is the beautiful Angel of the Lord in the sky, with warm flesh-tints and hair contrasting with the cold gleaming pallor of the nimbus, and with the deep blue of the sky.*

The remainder of the picture is irretrievably ruined. The head of Joshua on horseback, that also of the soldier behind him, is antique, but injured; bands of coarse modern mosaic enclose the picture on three sides; only a few stones remain of the town, which filled the right angle; a large patch of opaque restoration spreads round the head of Joshua, and covers the space occupied by the two attendants, which we know from the analogy of other pictures must have stood originally behind him, the ends of the two lances borne by one of them are still visible.

All strips, patches, and spots of gold are interpolations.

VI. COMMENTARY.—Previous commentators have believed this group of incidents to centre about the Siege of Ai, but the event pictured is certainly the Siege of Gibeon, for the taking of Ai was a drama in many acts, containing incidents of which there is no suggestion here, but which are reflected in a long series of realistic pictures in the Joshua Rotulus.

The attack of the Israelites on Ai was inaugurated by a defeat; for Joshua, under-estimating its strength, sent a small party against it, which was repulsed, pursued, and destroyed. "The hearts of the people became as water," it is written; and "Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, he and all the Elders of Israel, and they put dust upon their heads." †

Thereupon follows the history and stoning of Achan, who had taken of the "devoted thing," and had thus brought misfortunes on Israel.

Then a second attack was made. After the defenders of Ai had been tempted out by a feigned flight, the main body of the Israelites entered the town, killed the inhabitants, men and women, to the number of twelve thousand, burned the town, and hanged its king upon a tree.

* Compare Plate I.

† Josh. chaps. vii. and viii.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Nothing of the sort is represented here.

"The Siege of Gibeon" is followed by representations of the miracles by which the Divine Being secured the victory to His people.

De Rossi concurs with earlier commentators in describing this picture as "Josué à l'assaut de la ville de Hai," and adds, "quelques suppléments a l'extrémité inférieure."*

* 'Mosaici di S. Maria Maggiore,' p. 7; Ciampini, lxiv.; 'D'Agincourt Peint.,' xiv. 23.

CHAPTER VIII

A. THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF "JESUS" NAVE

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.

B. PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY

- IV. SUBJECT.
 - V. DESCRIPTION.
 - VI. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (VII.—XIV.) :—
- VII. The Gibeon sub-series, which illustrates nine verses, consists of nine pictures.
 - VIII. Simultaneous with the unexpected appearance of Jesus Nave is the flight of the Kings into the shelter of caves.
 - IX. The "Dies Irae."
 - X. The martial spirit embodied points to the military Rome of the second century as its birthplace, rather than to the monastic Rome of Jerome or Augustine.
 - XI. Its artistic qualities point to the same period.
 - XII. Contrasted with the Battle of Alexander, and with the representations of the same subject in the Joshua Rotulus.
 - XIII. Connected with a relief on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, which is a variant of a much-repeated earlier composition.
 - XIV. The Representation of the Hailstorm uninfluenced by the representation of a somewhat similar subject on the column of Marcus Aurelius.

THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF "JESUS."

Plate 26, No. 4a; Plate 29, No. 1.

I. SUBJECT.—"So Joshua went up . . . and he came upon them (all the Kings of the Amorites) suddenly . . . and the Lord discomfited them before Israel."—Joshua x. 5-10.

II. DESCRIPTION.—On a white horse in the centre of this battle-piece is the figure of Jesus Nave, bare-headed; his floating hair confined

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

by a golden diadem. He wears the rich dress of a Roman General; his purple paludamentum, of which little more than the wide golden tabula is visible, flutters behind him; in his right hand he brandishes a lance.

His soldiery, similarly armed, but wearing helmets, throng about him; they carry red and white shields emblazoned with the device of Roman legions, those in the rear wield two lances, those in the van one only, the others project, their purpose served, from the bleeding bodies of the foes, which lie naked at their feet.

To the right and to the left are five Kings, two on one side, and three on the other, who take refuge in caves.

They wear short white tunics, and silver-blue armour, their heads are uncovered, and encircled by golden diadems; their legs are bare; their feet are shod in soft white leather boots bound with red.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value of a fair and well-preserved copy, in which fragments of the antique original are preserved. The light antique key has not been lost. Especially fine in intonation are the luminous figures of the Kings silhouetted against the dark mouth of the cave on the right. This cave is fine in colour and execution; it is similar in quality to the misty mountains of *The Passage of the Jordan*,* and cannot but be antique.

The whole composition is enclosed in an irregular band of stucco restoration, which includes the cave on the left, and the indistinct figures at Joshua's feet.

The edges of this picture have been much injured: not only is it enclosed on three sides in a band of stucco imitation of mosaic, but the head of Joshua and of all the soldiers behind him have been either renewed, or patched in stucco; the figure of the King on the left, and his horror-stricken face are well preserved, but the figure of his companion has been utterly destroyed, nothing of it remaining except the lower part of one leg. Of the three Kings on the right two are splendidly preserved, but the upper part of the third has been destroyed, his legs, however, white tunic, and blue and white armour, are antique, and in good condition.

The prostrate figures in the foreground, with two exceptions, are the fruit of restoration.

Abstraction must be made of all touches and patches of gold,

* See Plate 25, No. 1a.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

especially of the large patch which surrounds the equestrian figure of Joshua, and has impinged upon, and destroyed, the contours of his horse. Many of the cubes which appear to be golden are yellow enamel, and antique.

This brilliant martial group, of which the general colouring is very light, unlike the other pictures of this series was originally relieved on a dark green background (of which fragments are still visible, filling some of the interstices between the figures), and on the deep blue-black of the cave openings.

PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY; THE ENEMY DISCOMFITED BY A HAILSTORM.

Plate 26, No. 4b.

IV. SUBJECT.—(a) “He slew them with great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them . . . and smote them.

(b) “It came to pass, as they fled from before Israel . . . that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven . . . and they died: they were more which died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.”—Joshua x. 10–11.

V. DESCRIPTION.—Two events are pictured here.

(a) In the scene to the right, Joshua, characterised as in the composition above, forms the centre of a group of soldiers;* he wields a spear in his right hand, his left is enveloped in the folds of his paludamentum. In the picture as it now stands, prostrate enemies lie at his feet; they are not antique; and it is doubtful whether they correspond to the original design, for the desperate energy of Joshua's action does not suggest vanquished foes.

(b) That to the left consists of a much injured group of flying soldiers, of which only three equestrian figures remain.

In the sky is the open hand of God, extended palm outwards; from it fall small black discs.

VI. CONDITION.—(a) Although the ground on the left has suffered much from repairs and restorations, its main masses and general intonation may be accepted as corresponding with the original.

The vigorous figure of Joshua, and the three light heads on his right, though they have suffered from time and repairs, are free from

* Incorrectly reproduced by Garrucci.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

restoration; the same may be said of the soldier on his left, whose arm is passed through the straps inside his shield.

The lower third of the picture, including all these figures, which have been restored from their waist downwards, is modern.

(*b*) Nothing of the original, on the other hand, has survived in the three equestrian figures to the right, and it is doubtful whether they correspond in any way to the fugitives they have replaced.

The opaque sky against which their heads are silhouetted is not antique, exception being made of patches of finely graduated cubes in its upper part.

The hand of God, the black discs which fall from it, and the clouds from which it issues, are mediæval in execution.

The fragments of red cubes, embedded in the fine antique patches just spoken of, are antique, and show that the clouds which accompany a divine apparition were present in the original composition.

The cubes of which this part of the picture is composed are badly set.

COMMENTARY.—VII. The history of the Siege of Gibeon is amply illustrated; nine verses forming the subject-matter of as many pictures.

The text "Joshua came upon them suddenly," translated into a generic representation of a battle, is followed by representations of the struggle and flight of the enemy, who are overwhelmed, not by the prowess of the Israelites, but by the hand of God: "the Lord cast down from heaven great stones . . . there were more which died with the hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."

VIII. The unexpected inroad of Joshua at dawn is not the sole subject of the upper picture.

The armed group of which he is the centre is enclosed and framed by the shadowy mouths of caves, within which five diademed Kings take refuge: an incident not historically contemporaneous with Joshua's inroad; one which is not mentioned until much later in the Biblical narrative, and did not take place until after the miraculous staying of the Sun and Moon.

That the first and penultimate acts of this drama should have been visualised as coincident, and should have been *followed* by representations of the miraculous hailstorm, and of the staying of the Sun and

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Moon, is a proof that this picture was not designed as an historical illustration; for though antique art aimed rather at the presentment of a synthesis of the complex of incidents which go to make up an event than at the realistic representation of that event as it appeared at a given moment, yet we know of no such synthesis *followed* by the detailed treatment of its component incidents.

The apparent anomaly here is the result of the mystic meaning with which this event was invested by the artist.

IX. The prototypical significance of this cycle is apocalyptic, as will be shown later.

The thought underlying this picture is that of the *Dies Irae*, and, in this connection, this representation of the sudden inroad into a sleeping camp of a band of youthful warriors grouped about the radiant, virile, death-dealing "Jesus," at whose feet lie his naked and dying enemies, is significant. It is spiritually related to the Day of Wrath of the great Florentine, the affinities of whose stern and terrible soul were rather with such Pagan-Roman images of vengeance and destruction, than with the Christian ideals of mercy and forgiveness.

X. This composition has not only its spiritual progeny, but its artistic ancestry.

Its mere existence as an important item in a decorative scheme selected not only to adorn one of the greatest of the basilicae, but to satisfy the taste and stimulate the imaginations of the cultivated Christians who frequented its precincts, is inconsistent with the "timbre" of the time of Jerome, who, writing shortly after the pontificate of Liberius, and before that of Xystus, characterises the eternal city as the seat of triumphant monasticism.

The form into which the artist has pressed an incident in Jewish history, which he wished should be regarded as a prototype of the Second Coming of Christ, was evidently created at a time when the fibres of Roman citizens had not ceased to vibrate to military ideals.

XI. That such a composition belongs to the great past of Rome rather than to the days of its decadence is shown, not only by the spirit with which it is animated, but by its form: clarity, simplicity, of composition, efficacy of line, the skill with which a few figures are made to produce the impression of a throng;—these qualities speak to the eye of an art which is the master of its means of expression.

1.



2.



3.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XII. In his book on early Christian Mosaics in Italy, M. Ainaloff connects this picture with the great Pompeian mosaic, the Battle of Alexander: * the point of connection between these two compositions is the fact that both are copies, more or less good, of magnificent battle-pieces; but the prototype of one—which is long and narrow, being built up about two points of interest, the two contending Kings—is a Greek wall painting, into which some great master has pressed the rush and turmoil of battling hosts, and the sense of the slow yielding of a heavy body to irresistible force. The other is constructed round a single point, both interest and design centring in the person of Jesus Nave, about whom his soldiers cluster like swarming bees, a radiant Apollo-like Being; the quintessence of the hero in the sense of antique myths, concentrating and gathering up in his person the martial passions of which the scene he dominates is the outcome.

The affinities of the Pompeian mosaic are rather with the rapid movement, the dash and *élan* of the battle pieces of the Greek Codex of the Vatican, the Joshua Rotulus, than with the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore, which belongs to the branch of Hellenic art which took root in Rome, and savours of the soil from which it drew its nutriment.

XIII. The true prototype is not far to seek. Among the reliefs of the Column of Marcus Aurelius is one of which the parallelism is apparent; it contains the same radiant equestrian central figure, on either side of which fellow combatants are symmetrically grouped. It is filled with the same sense of clamour and terror; it represents, as here, a breathless charge, not, as might reasonably be expected, from left to right, but forwards, out of the picture, towards the spectator, a mode of movement involving problems of foreshortening and perspective which need the aid of colour for their perfect expression.†

THE HAILSTORM.

XIV. It is noteworthy that, although the character of the pictures forming this series shows that their composer was familiar with the reliefs of the Columns of Trajan, and of Marcus Aurelius, yet this composition is uninfluenced by the fine representation on the Column of Marcus Aurelius of a parallel incident, namely, the salvation of the Imperial troops on the brink of destruction from want of water, by a

* Plate 29, No. 3; see Appendix III.

† Plate 29, No. 2.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

storm of rain, which fell on the Roman camp as a refreshing shower, but which overwhelmed the Quadi in destructive floods.

This is the more remarkable, as the phenomenon was ascribed by many Christian writers of authority to the prayers of the Twelfth Legion, said to have been largely composed of Christians.*

* See Claudius Apollinaris in Eusebius, 'H. E.,' v. 5; Tertullian, 'Ad Scapul.,' cap. 4; Orosius, 'Hist.,' vii. 15; Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, and others. Tertullian even speaks of "litterae Marci Aurelii quibus illam Germanicam sitim Christianorum forte militum precationibus impetrato imbri discussam contestatur."

CHAPTER IX

THE STAYING OF SUN AND MOON

- I. SUBJECT.
- II. DESCRIPTION.
- III. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (IV.-VI.) :—
- IV. Size of the picture.
- V. Joshua Rotulus.
- VI. Its subject the miracle, and not the battle.

THE STAYING OF SUN AND MOON.

Plate 26, No. 5; Plate 30, No. 1.

I. SUBJECT.—“Then spake Joshua . . . and he said in the sight of Israel :

“Sun : stand thou still upon Gibeon ;
And thou, Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.
And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed,
Until the Nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.”

Joshua x. 12-13.

II. DESCRIPTION.—As in the foregoing composition “Jesus Nave” dominates the entire picture. He stands isolated in its centre on a low eminence, his right hand stretched commandingly towards the Sun and Moon; in his left, enwrapped in the folds of a paludamentum, is a spear.

Below him on either side are masses of armed and motionless soldiery.

Here, as in the preceding picture, the impression of a multitude is produced by the skilful distribution of men, and not by their numbers.

Although wrecked, this picture retains such indications of its pristine beauty as show it to have been among the finest in this series, both as regards colour, and as regards distribution of line and mass.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

In order to evoke an image of the lost original, abstraction must be made of the heads of the soldiers on the right, and of the actual execution of the figure of Joshua, which must be mentally reconstructed after the model of a classic *Allocutio*, of the white patch between his legs; and of all streams, patches, and touches of glittering gold.

The landscape foreground was of a dark and heavy green, out of which rose, as now, a podium-like rock, consisting of juxtaposed masses of red and dark green, silhouetted against the sunny middle-distance; * this in its turn faded into the grey-green of distant mountains; the pallor of the sky on the horizon was accentuated by the deep blue of its upper strata.

The centre of the composition was the dignified figure of a General, with hand raised in speech, lifted above an ordered mass of vivid upturned faces, lances and richly coloured shields.

This solemn scene was silhouetted against a pale web of graduated colour.

III. CONDITION.—Antique are: (1) The composition; (2) Two fine heads of soldiers on the left; (3) the dark blue and red shields and helmets (which struck a rich note on the original sunny middle-distance); (4) the podium-like rock on which Joshua stands; and (5) the distant misty mountains (which should be compared with the mountains in *The Crossing of the Jordan*).†

Of the time of Cardinal Pinelli are the large stucco figures on the extreme left. The skull-like heads of many of the soldiers are due to the restorer of part of *The Passage of the Red Sea*, *The Battle of Rephidim*, etc.

The gold interpolations are of uncertain date. The rest of the picture has been rendered incoherent, and almost incomprehensible by numerous styleless repairs, and by the deteriorations inseparable from the lapse of some one thousand seven hundred years.

The various processes of deterioration to which a mosaic may be subjected are fully represented here, and repay observation.

The antique mosaics of this church are composed of pieces of vitreous enamel, of which the colour is indestructible.

During the Middle Ages, possibly when the church was darkened by the blocking up of alternate windows of the Nave, eyes accustomed

* Compare Plate 24.

† Plate 25, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

to the glittering surfaces of the Cosmati, or Pre-Cosmati, demanded more brilliance, and the yellow cubes of the middle-distance were replaced by vitreous cubes, to which actual gold-leaf had been applied: these may flake off: the light dun-coloured patch behind Joshua's legs seems to be an example of cubes from which the gilding has passed away.

The yawning chasm in the sun is an example of another phase in the ruin of a picture in mosaic; it marks the disappearance of a cluster of cubes *en masse*, leaving the white plaster in which they were embedded exposed to view. The miniature crater thus produced is jagged with shadows.

COMMENTARY.—IV. Of the seven pictures dedicated to the triumph of Joshua over the five Kings the artist has granted the space, generally occupied by two, to one alone, an honour generally accorded only to representations of subjects of dogmatic import. Its mere size therefore speaks of the ulterior significance of its subject-matter; but still more eloquently the manner in which it is handled.

V. No one unacquainted with the Biblical narrative, and therefore with certain unmistakable accessories, would recognise its subject-matter to be an incident occurring during the hot pursuit and flight of a routed enemy.

This historical event is reproduced in the Joshua Rotulus. Joshua, following closely in the wake of a fugitive foe, scarcely pauses to look back and upward towards the Sun and Moon;* the movement of his commanding right hand is momentary, it is as if he were almost unable to snatch time from the breathless pursuit in order to utter the compelling word.

How differently is the same scene conceived here! To pass from one representation to the other is like passing from the clamour and excitement of battle into the hushed solemnity attendant on the celebration of a religious rite.

VI. Here there is no frantic rush of soldiery, mad with victory and blood-lust; no tumult of war; but the stately quiet of what seems a military ceremony: Joshua, standing alone on a rock, which lifts him above his audience, addresses his followers, who, like their leader, oblivious of imminent battle, stand about him in motionless attention.†

* Plate 30, No. 3.

† Compare the representation of an Allocutio by Marcus Aurelius on his Column, Plate 30, No. 2.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Before the miraculous portent all sense of combat and contest fades away, and a pause ensues of awed contemplation.

“Is not this written in the book of Iashar ?

And the Sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

And there was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man : for the Lord fought for Israel.”*

* Josh. x. 13, 14.



I.



3.



CHAPTER X

A.—THE CONDEMNATION OF THE FIVE KINGS

I. SUBJECT.

II. DESCRIPTION.

III. CONDITION.

COMMENTARY (IV.—V.) :—

IV. Although so disfigured the original composition can be mentally recovered.

V. The Day of Judgment.

B.—THE DIVISION OF THE SPOIL

A.—THE CONDEMNATION OF THE FIVE KINGS.

Plate 26, No. 6a.

I. SUBJECT.—“Joshua said, Bring forth those five Kings unto me, out of the cave. And they did so.”—Joshua x. 22–23.

II. DESCRIPTION.—In the centre of the composition is an armed warrior, a large shield hangs on his shoulders; his right hand is raised in the gesture of speech; to the right are fully armed soldiers; to the left, attended by a military guard, are three prisoners characterised as Kings by the diadems which encircle their bare heads.

III. CONDITION.—This picture has the value of a copy, which is almost entirely overlaid with later interpolations characteristic of the style of the time at which they were made.

Of the antique copy nothing remains except the Kings, which are however of so high a quality, so brilliant and pure in colour, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the artist was largely guided in their reconstruction by surviving antique fragments, which he re-embodied.

The soldiers behind the three Kings are by the restorer of *The Passage of the Red Sea, The Battle against Amalek, etc.*

The three large warriors on the right are of the time of Cardinal Pinelli, to whom also is due their spotted gold stucco background.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The mosaic gold background on the left is of an earlier date.

The central figure is of the beginning of the last century.

COMMENTARY.—IV. The mental reconstruction of this picture is rendered possible, not only by the fragments of antique workmanship embedded in the grotesque restorations, which at first sight seem to render it unworthy of serious study, but by the clumsy mistakes of the restorer.

The central figure is borrowed from an "Allocutio" of the type of which numberless examples occur in Roman art, on the Columns of Marcus Aurelius, of Trajan, among the illustrations of the Vatican Virgil, of the Joshua Rotulus, etc.; but nothing could be further from the antique ideal than its proportions, or than the spirit of swaggering self-assertion with which the squat little figure representing Joshua is inflated. The plumed hat, and the armour sparkling with meaningless touches of gold, must be ascribed to the fancy of the modern restorer; the gigantic shield hanging upon his back, and framing the entire figure in its large curves, is probably a naïve amalgam of the two shields borne by the two attendants, who, by the analogy of all other representations of the public appearances of Generals, must have accompanied him. The two groups on either side were originally more symmetrical than at present; each consisted of vanquished Kings and their attendants.

The elements of this composition were therefore those of a typical classic Allocutio.

A General in full armour, accompanied by shield-bearing attendants, was represented as addressing prisoners grouped on either side of him.

V. The artist who composed this series proposed to picture events from the history of the Israelites in such a manner as should render them transparent to an inner significance, by virtue of which they foreshadowed the history and teaching of Christ.

It has already been stated that the mystic meaning associated with the history of Jesus Nave in the Christian thought of the third century is apocalyptic. The typological significance of this scene, in which "Jesus" judges the Kings of the earth, is obvious.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

B.—THE DIVISION OF THE SPOIL.

Plate 26, No. 6b.

The following picture is a confused mass of restorations in mosaic and stucco, with glittering interpolations in gold. Artistically it has no relation to the picture by which it is preceded.

Its subject-matter is however significant.

On the left is a shadowy man with soldiers behind him, bearing shields, on the right is a group of persons executed in stucco, gathered about a chest, or Altar, with vases and precious utensils.

In cases in which restorations are executed in stucco, in which patches of mosaics are embedded, the original design is usually more or less perfectly retained. Hence it may be concluded that the subject pictured was the division of the spoil of Canaan, an incident but slightly touched on in the Biblical text, but which plays a prominent *rôle* in the typology of the history of Joshua.*

* See following Chapter, § III. and § XVII.

CHAPTER XI

THE TYPOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE HISTORY OF JOSHUA

- I. This series treats neither of simple history, nor of biography, but of history conceived typologically.
- II. The name, "Jesus." Justin Martyr. Barnabas.
- III. Apocalyptic significance of Joshua's history. Justin Martyr.
- IV. The passage from the Wilderness into the Promised Land. Hippolytus.
- V. Origen's interpretation.
- VI. The sending out of the Envoys prefigured the sending out of Christ's Apostles.
- VII. The captain of the Host of the Lord. Eusebius.
- VIII. The rejection of the Envoys by the people of Jericho.
- IX. The consequent fall of Jericho. Apocalyptic.
- X. The trumpets. Origen.
- XI. Rahab.
- XII. Gibeon.
- XIII. Simultaneously with the sudden appearance of "Jesus" the Kings seek refuge in caves.
- XIV. The Prodigies. The Hailstorm.
- XV. Suspension of the Course of the Sun and Moon. Justin Martyr. Origen.
- XVI. The Judgment of the Kings.
- XVII. The Division of the Spoil.
- XVIII. The four succeeding pictures are lost.
- XIX. The intimate harmony of Justin's views with those reflected in this cycle.
- XX. The attitude of the early Church towards the Millennium.
- XXI. This series historical, typological, and adiaphoristic.

I. ANALYSIS of this series shows that its component parts were not designed either as a simple history of the taking of Canaan by Joshua, nor as a biographical record: had the former been the case the historical sequence of events, which is ignored in the first four pictures, would have been observed; had the latter, it would surely have been inaugurated by a representation of the calling of Joshua.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Its literary basis, like that of the entire cycle, is historical, but the events depicted are chosen because of their universally accepted typological import, which, although their historical character is insisted on, must have been evident to contemporary spectators, as it still is to those familiar with the Christian thought of the time.

II. The name given throughout the Septuagint to the leader of the Israelites, "Jesus," acted like a spell on the Pre-Constantinian Christian imagination. "Hosea," says Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with the Jew Trypho, "was named 'Jesus' by Moses, when he was sent to spy out the land of Canaan; why, ye neither ask, nor marvel at, nor investigate: therefore," he adds in his pungent way, "Christ has escaped your attention. . . . And should ye hear that 'Jesus' is our Christ, ye consider not that His name was not bestowed on Him by chance, nor without purpose."*

And elsewhere he asserts that "Jesus, the son of Nave, through His name,† wrought great and wondrous works, proclaiming aforetime the deeds of our Lord."‡

The writer of the Letter of Barnabas says of Hosea, that Moses gave him the name of Jesus, "to the end that all people might give ear to him alone, for the Father revealeth all things concerning His Son." Indeed, so absorbed is he in the mystic aspect of the figure of Joshua, that he seems to lose sight of the historical personage, for he describes Joshua as "Jesus, not the son of man, but of God, revealed in the flesh in a figure."§

Justin Martyr treats his history as prophetic; as a revelation before the set time of mysteries.

Having ascribed the victory won by "Jesus" over the Amalekites in the strength of the Cross, to the image of which, the body of Moses standing erect, with upraised hands, was transformed, he says: "God enjoined that this incident should be recorded, and the name of Jesus engraven on your intelligences as the name of him who should blot out Amalek."|| And a little later he repeats the same thought. He speaks

* Chap. cxiii.

† The power of the name Jesus is a thought of frequent recurrence in the writings of the early Christian teachers. See, for instance, Hermas, Similitude IX. "The name of the Son of God is great and incomprehensible, and sustaineth the whole world."

‡ Chap. cxv.

§ Ep. chap. xii. 8, 10.

|| 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cxxxi.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

of Jesus, who was crucified . . . of whom these symbols were fore-announcements, whom all principalities and kingdoms shall fear.

“Jesus,” the son of Nun, conceived as a prototype of Jesus, the Son of God, “who should lead the people who came out of Egypt into the Holy Land, and who should utterly blot out Amalek.”* This is the point of view from which the story of Joshua is represented here.

III. To the early Christians his figure spoke of the hope which transformed the darkness of persecution into light; he was the symbol of the second coming of their Lord in power and great glory; his history the assurance of their final delivery from the power of an evil and antagonistic world, whose hatred of them sometimes flamed out in acts of malignant power.

It is this “Jesus,” seen by eyes which looked for the great and terrible avenger of the Apocalypse, who is here pictured.

“As Jesus,” says Justin Martyr,† “was appointed successor to Moses . . . and he, not Moses, led the people into the Holy Land, . . . and as he distributed it by lot to those who entered along with him, so also Jesus, the Christ, will turn again the dispersion of His people, and will distribute the good land to each one, though not in the same manner; for the former gave them a temporary inheritance . . . but the latter . . . will give us an eternal possession. The former, after he had been named ‘Jesus,’ and had received strength from the Spirit, caused the sun to stand still . . . the latter is He through Whom the Father shall renew both the heavens and . . . the earth. This is He who shall shine an eternal light in Jerusalem. And this,” he adds in curious concord with the general scheme of this didactic cycle, naming the subjects of its first and last pictures, its alpha and omega, “This is he who is the King of Salem, after the order of Melchizedek.”

IV. This group, the last of the series decorating the Nave, is opened by a representation of the passage of the barrier separating the wilderness from the Holy Land.

According to the Old Testament narrative the waters of the river Jordan divided miraculously to make this passage possible; this miracle is not represented here,‡ nor is the Biblical narrative followed. The

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxxxi.

† *Ibid.* chap. cxiii.

‡ Compare Plate 25, No. 1, with Plate 19, No. 2; The Passage of the Red Sea.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

river is pictured in its entire length, unbroken; the Ark is not accompanied by priests, nor followed by the long procession of the people.

The centre of the picture is the Ark.

In Hippolytus' exegesis the Ark is conceived as typical of "the body of Christ, the true holy Ark, outwardly . . . the Logos, inwardly . . . the Spirit."* This interpretation is the key to the inner significance of a representation of a miraculous event in which the miracle, and all its appurtenances are ignored.

The young men who have passed the river carry stones on their shoulders. Metaphors drawn from the art of the builder are common in the writings of the New Testament. Christ, quoting from Isaiah,† speaks of Himself as the "Corner Stone," and is constantly referred to as such by the Apostles.‡ St. Paul describes himself as a "wise master builder."§ The subject of the Ninth Similitude of Hermas is a tower representing the Church, of which the foundation is Christ. It is as builders that these young men are conceived, the foremost of whom looks back to "Jesus," by whom his actions are directed, and from whom his mission derives its significance.

The Apostles, the founders of the Church of Christ, were twelve. . . . In the Apocalypse|| the walls of the New Jerusalem are spoken of as built on twelve foundations, on which "were written the twelve names of the twelve Apostles." In this composition the exigencies of space rendered it impossible to picture the stone-bearers as twelve; they are represented as four, the numerical symbol of totality. ¶

V. In his Homily on the Book of Joshua, Origen treats this subject allegorically, and in the same spirit as the designer of these mosaics, although he interprets and applies it differently.

He contrasts the "death unto sin" in baptism, precluded by penance and confession, by fear and shame, with the passage of the Christian, led by Christ, and attended by the Church, out of this earthly wilderness into the unknown land.

* Hippolytus, Works, Berlin edition, iv. 24, 3, p. 246, 4.

† "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation." Chap. xxviii. 16.

‡ By S. Peter; 1 Peter ii. 7, 8. Acts iv. 11; by S. Paul in the Letter to the Ephesians ii. 20, etc.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 10.

|| xxi. 14.

¶ See p. 218 and p. 290 f.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“My Lord and Saviour Jesus takes on Himself the princely leadership! We will now compare the deeds of Moses with the princely leadership of ‘Jesus.’ When Moses led the people out of Egypt there was no order in their ranks, no priestly observance: they traversed the sea, salt water, with no sweetness in it, and this water was a wall to them on the right hand, and on the left. . . . But when my Lord led the army, mysteries were foreshadowed. Priests go before, the Ark of the Covenant borne on their shoulders; the sea does not press in, the salt flood, but led by my Lord I come to the Jordan, and I come without confused flight, or terror, or fear, and I come with priests, who on their necks and shoulders bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, in which the Law of God, and the Holy Word is preserved. . . . I step into the Jordan to the blast of trumpets, which give forth mysterious and divine sounds, so that I advance to the sound of Divine trumpet-blasts.”*

But the mysticism of the mosaic is of a wider and less personal character. The means of man’s redemption are here foreshadowed: the mystic Ark, the Body of Christ, the receptacle, if we may use the expression, of the Word; the long unbroken stream of waters; the builders; and Jesus himself, to whom they look for guidance; these are the elements of obvious typological import of which the first picture of this series is composed.

As the men carrying the stones typify the Apostles, so the envoys, *νεανίσκοι*, in the following picture foreshadow the disciples whom Jesus sent out to proclaim His coming. “The Lord,” it is written, “sent them out two and two before His face, into every city and place whither He Himself was about to come. . . . Into whatsoever city ye enter and they receive you . . .” He said . . . “say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof, and say, Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we do wipe off against you: howbeit know this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh.” And here the Speaker pauses to paint the doom of those cities which rejected His envoys. “I say unto you,” He cries, “it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. . . . Woe unto thee, Chorazin. Woe unto thee, Bethsaida. . . . it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and

* Migne, ‘Patr. S. G.’ Tom. xii. p. 828.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Sidon in the judgment than for you. . . . He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth Me: and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me."*

In harmony with these words, the flight of "Jesus'" envoys from Jericho, where the King sought to find and kill them, both precludes the fall of the city, and suggests the reason of its destruction, its enmity to the people of God, whose triumph, under "Jesus," is represented in the five following pictures, in which successive phases of the Last Judgment are represented. That the thought of Christ's disciples was present in the artist's mind when he pictured Joshua's envoys, and that he wished the spectator to understand that Jericho fell because of its treatment of Joshua's messengers, and because of its lack of faith, is suggested by the prominence given to the story of Rahab, one of the few Old Testament characters mentioned in the New Testament as saved by faith ("by faith Rahab the Harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.")† She is also accepted as a type of the Church of the Gentiles. She evidently played an important *rôle* in the artist's imagination, for she is pictured in each of the three pictures connected with the fate of Jericho: a significant circumstance in a series in which small importance is attached to mere historical fact.

VII. The manner in which the subject-matter of the following picture, the appearance of the Captain of the Host of the Lord to Joshua is handled, shows it to be the outcome of the same current of thought as those preceding it.

Joshua neither falls to the ground, nor looses the shoes from off his feet, as in the text; neither is he represented as an armed General, as elsewhere; but, although he wears a civilian's dress, a large military escort renders his rank and position unmistakable.

The Angel, on the other hand, is pictured in the full dress of a Roman General.

The typological significance attached by Eusebius‡ to this event is practically identical with that embodied in this mosaic. He "who appeared to Moses in the bush," he says, and commanded him to loose his shoes from off his feet, is he who appeared as "archistrategos" to Joshua, and commanded him to do the same. God appeared in human

* Luke x. 1-16.

† Heb. xi. 31.

‡ 'Demonst. Evan.,' v. 19.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

form to Abraham by the Oak, and in like manner to Jacob also. To Moses in the image of Clouds and Fire, as terrible therefore, and veiled; but to "Jesus," Moses' successor, destined to arm himself against the people of Palestine, a strange people and godless, he, the Logos, fitly appeared wielding an edged sword, showing by this vision that he purposed to punish the ungodly with an invisible sword, and to fight and combat in the ranks of his people. Therefore he called himself the "Captain of the Hosts of the Lord." An interpretation in which possibly the words, and certainly the sentiments, of some earlier writer are echoed: for whereas it is dissimilar in character from that of contemporary commentaries, those of S. Augustine for example, it closely resembles the utterances of a Barnabas, or a Hermas. Nor is this surprising, for, as is well known, the peculiar value of Eusebius' work lies precisely in the numberless loans from early sources with which it is enriched.

VIII. The two parts of the double pictures of which this cycle is composed are usually closely interconnected in thought.

This is not the case with the picture below the representation of "Jesus" before the Angel, in which the subject-matter of the lower stratum of the previous picture, The Sending Out of "Jesus" Envoys, is continued.

The leading thought of this series, that of "Jesus" as the judge of godless towns and kingdoms, is emphasised by the stress laid on the danger and escape of his agents, the story of which is told at surprising length; it precludes and necessitates the condemnation of the city which had thirsted for their blood.

IX. The remainder of the series is dedicated to the representation of the destruction of the enemies of the People of God, by "Jesus, he who should blot out the memorial of Amalek from under heaven."*

This sub-series is inaugurated by the Fall of "Jericho."

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great!" † This is the cry of the great Apocalyptic Angel whose "glory" illumines [the earth. Seven trumpets are given in the vision to seven Angels; and each blast blown precludes some dread calamity.

When the seventh Angel raised his trumpet, "there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell." He sounded; "and

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cxxxi; see also p. 197.

† Rev. xviii. 2.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

there followed great voices in heaven ; and they said, The Kingdom of the World is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."*

X. In like manner trumpet-blasts were blown seven times without the city of Jericho ; and at the seventh blast, "the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell.† . . . And Joshua said, The city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to the Lord."‡ Origen thus comments on these trumpet-blasts. "These trumpets," he says, "are a symbol. They prefigure the last day, for it is written that He Himself, the Lord, will descend from heaven, with the sound of war, the voice of the Archangel, and with the Trumpet of God."§

The parallelism between the two conceptions is striking, and it is not surprising that it should have seized on the imaginations of a generation eager to discover and associate type and antitype.

XI. As at the Last Judgment all shall not perish, but the elect shall be saved, so the life of one believer was snatched from the ruin of Jericho.

Above the city gateway, outside her house, stands Rahab, the woman who had received and succoured "Jesus'" emissaries, and had confessed "the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath ;" and below her is bound the mystic line of scarlet thread on which her salvation depends. As Jericho perished because faithless, so Rahab was saved by faith.

"Rahab," says Origen, "means extension ;" and goes on to characterise her as typifying the Church of the Gentiles.||

Upon this follow seven pictures, representing nine incidents which succeed each other in quick succession, and all of which have reference to the Last Judgment.

XII. In the first is represented the attack of the allied forces of the Kings of Canaan on Gibeon, "a great city like a royal city," which had made peace with the people of God : the besieged manfully hold their own, but the enemy are many, and pour from between the defiles of the mountains ; messengers are despatched in hot haste to Joshua. "Slack not thy hand from thy servants," they cry ; "come up to us

* Rev. xi. 13-15.

† Joshua vi. 20.

‡ vi. 17.

§ Migne, 'Patr. S. G.' Tom. xii. p. 281.

|| p. 225.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

quickly, and save us, and help us, for all the Kings of the Amorites . . . are gathered together against us.”*

In like manner, in the Apocalypse, “the souls of them that had been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held, . . . cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the Holy and True, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”†

“Jesus’” response promptly follows on the appeal; he communes with the Lord, and rides forth to their rescue.

He is represented as standing to the left of the picture, with raised hand, communing with the Angel, who appears, above among reddened clouds. In the space below this heavenly apparition is a small tree, about which a vine is entwined. Unfortunately, this part of the picture is much restored. It is impossible, however, that so large a space should have been left empty; impossible also that it should have been filled by a figure, or by an architectural accessory. Throughout this series the restorers have usually followed some hint gathered from the ruins they renovated; it is therefore probable that the present design may remotely approximate to that of the original.

To the right of the same picture Joshua on a white horse, advancing to smite the enemy of his people, looks back for assurance to the Angel of the Lord: the artist evidently wished to characterise his mission as undertaken at God’s command. Herein possibly lies the reason of the representation of a subject, which it is difficult to invest with typological significance, and which it is at first sight strange should have been pictured at all in a series of which the subject-matter has been subjected to such a rigorous process of selection.

The typological characteristics, which are here far from apparent, are however clearly expressed in the picture to which it serves as prelude.

XIII. In the three following verses of the Biblical narrative the three incidents are described which are depicted in the three following pictures: The Surprise at Dawn; The Hailstorm; and The Miraculous Suspension of the Courses of the Sun and Moon.

It is written that after their final overthrow the five Kings took refuge in a cave, whence they were dislodged by Joshua’s emissaries, and dragged before their conqueror.

* Josh. x., 6.

† Rev. vi. 9, 10.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

It would have been natural, therefore, to have placed their hiding-place in the background of the last picture, of which the subject is their condemnation.

This course was not, however, adopted by the artist, who preferred to associate their flight into the sheltering cave with the unexpected inroad into the sleeping camp of "Jesus" the Avenger. The key to this apparently arbitrary violation of historical truth lies in the undercurrent of apocalyptic meaning, for the sake of which Joshua's history was represented.

In the artist's mind the words of the Master, who had warned His disciples to watch, "for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." "For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man," were associated with the Apocalyptic vision of a white horse: "And behold he that sat thereon had a bow, and there was given unto him a crown, and he came forth conquering, and to conquer."* After his appearance there was a great earthquake, and the aspect of the sun and moon was changed; and "the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains . . . and the strong, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us, . . . for the great day of wrath is come, and who is able to stand?" Joshua's victory over the Kings of Canaan is conceived as foreshadowing the eternal triumph of Jesus over His enemies; therefore the flight of the Kings into the caves was pictured as simultaneous with his sudden terrible appearance, although their panic was subsequent, not only to the unexpected inroad and pursuit, but also to the miraculous suspension of the courses of the sun and moon.

XIV. In the lower stratum of this double-picture the artist has made it clear that the destruction of the enemy was not the work of man, but of God; he has placed the hand of God in the sky, and from it fall great hailstones.

"They were more," it is written, "which died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."†

XV. Immediately on the storm, followed the miracle:

"The sun stood still; and the moon stayed,
Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies."

* Rev. vi. 2 and 12-17

† Josh. x. 11.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

These words evoke the image of a battle, which continued to rage after the course of the heavenly bodies had been stayed, indeed it was for that object that their decline was suspended ; and it is thus that this subject is represented in the Joshua Rotulus,* and elsewhere.

But not here.†

No enemy : no battle : the sun and moon hang together in the sky, and the army of Israel is gathered in motionless immobility about the person of " Jesus " (Joshua), whose hands are raised in speech.

It has been suggested that the situation depicted is momentary. It was not a usage of antique, as it is of modern art, to seize a fleeting moment, and give it permanent form. Moreover, the miracle here represented was not only not momentary in character, but was one the very existence of which could only be verified after long observation. It would have been absurd to represent the army of Israel as engrossed in astronomical observation, while the enemy escaped.

Origen's " Ninth Homily on the Book of Jesus " is devoted to the interpretation of this miracle, which he regards as foreshadowing the protective power of Christ. " In like manner," he says, " Jesus, with His princes and powers, stands by those who for His name's sake are attacked by the strong. He not only lends his aid during the battle, but lengthens the span of the day, and, prolonging the hours of light, drives back the oncoming night. We will show now, if we can, how our Lord Jesus has spread light and lengthened the day ; partly for the salvation of man, partly for the destruction of the inimical forces, has He held back the day of consummation, and stayed it, and has arrested its oncoming. God the Father knew that the salvation of the people should come through His Son, for He says to Him, ' Ask of Me, and I will give you the people of the earth for an inheritance, and the ends of the earth for a possession.' As long as it is day, and the time of light is prolonged, we will live in honour as in the day, and bring forth the works of light." ‡

It will be seen that although Origen's applications are moral rather, and by no means identical with those of Justin Martyr or of the creator of these pictures, the thought of the Great Day of the Apocalypse

* See Plate 30, No. 3.

† See Plate 30, No. 1.

‡ Migne, ' Patr. S. G.,' Tom. xii. p. 884.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

was not absent from his mind when speaking of the history of Jesus Nave.

“Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, . . . and the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. . . . Then shall they see the Son of Man coming . . . with power and great glory.” *

“Hosea,” says Justin, “after he had been named Jesus, caused the sun to stand still;” † and in the same connection, associating the thoughts of Joshua, of the Last Judgment, and of the Millennium, he says, “this is he . . . by whom the Father shall renew both the heaven and the earth. . . . He shall shine an eternal light in Jerusalem.” ‡

It was from thoughts and images such as these that the artist drew his inspiration, and for the sake of which the miracle, which put the Amorites into the hands of the Israelites, is represented on a scale which places it in the category of pictures like The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek, The Passage of The Red Sea, The Defeat of the Amalekites—pictures either of sacramental import, or embodying some fundamental belief.

The composition is built up about the person of Joshua, who, standing high on a bema-like rock, is prominent in its centre. Somewhat similar in conception is the much later representation of Christ standing upon clouds reddened by the Divine Presence, in SS. Cosmo and Damiano.

XVI. So little that is antique is left of the last double picture, and the extensive restorations to which it has been subjected have so slight a relation to the lost original, that it is hazardous to speak of its typological significance.

Undoubtedly the Judgment of the Kings was represented in the upper picture. The condition of the lower makes it impossible to do more than divine its original subject-matter. This has been asserted to be the Execution of the Kings; a statement founded on the analogy of the Joshua Rotulus, in which their death is the last incident pictured. Nothing in the stucco picture by which the original composition is replaced justified this hypothesis.

XVII. Its present subject, the distribution of the spoil of the conquered, is more harmonious with the general tenor of the series.

* Matt. xxiv. 7, 29, 30.

† ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxiii.

‡ *Ibid.*

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“Hosea,” says Justin Martyr, “distributed the good land to each; *he* gave them a temporal inheritance; but Christ shall give us an eternal possession.”*

Five pictures completed this cycle originally. As these have been destroyed, and no record kept of their character or subject, it would be idle to attempt to reconstruct them in detail. But it would perhaps be well to make a brief survey of the views current in the Christian world of the second and third centuries on the Second Coming of Christ, which was believed to have been foreshadowed in the history of Joshua.

XIX. It has been seen that a remarkable harmony exists between Justin Martyr's general views, and even his detailed interpretation of especial events, and not only the general phase of thought reflected in this cycle, but also the peculiar point of view which is the inspiration of individual pictures; this is nowhere more remarkably evidenced than in the manner in which the history of Joshua is treated.

XX. Like S. Paul, Justin Martyr was assured that the great and terrible day of the Lord was at hand; and, like the Apostle, he believed it would be precluded by the rise of the Antichrist, “the Man of Sin,” “the Son of Perdition,” † after whose fatal career had been completed the Son of Man would appear in the heavens surrounded by His angels, the holy dead of all times would arise, and Christ would establish a kingdom in Jerusalem, which should endure for a thousand years, and be followed by the general Resurrection, and the Day of Judgment.‡

This conviction was largely founded on the description in Daniel of the “Horn” that warred against the Almighty. “He shall speak words against the Most High,” it is written, “and shall wear out the saints of the Most High . . . and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and half a time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xciii.

† “He that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the Temple of God, setting himself forth as God . . . whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming.”—
2 Thess. ii. 4, 8.

‡ ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. lxxx. f.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall obey and serve Him."*

Barnabas also believed that the coming of Christ was imminent. "The consummation of sin is come," he says, "the Day of the Lord is at hand." He speaks of the destruction of the three great Horns by one little Horn, and adds significantly, "this we ought to understand."* Prudential reasons possibly prevented him from being more explicit, but the interpretation to which he alluded was evidently one current.

The curious phenomenon of the disbelief in the reality of the death of Nero, and the hope that he might return to renew his persecutions, was symptomatic of the same tone of mind. "That Nero was dead," writes a modern historian,† "was not fully believed by either Christian or heathen, both of whom for many years anticipated his reappearance, or resurrection: the one with anxious dread, the other with wistful expectation . . . the Christians . . . had lost by Nero's death the awful, but triumphant, spell of conflict . . . which was in their eyes the necessary preliminary to the reign of the Messiah."

Justin Martyr formulates his belief fully in his argument with Trypho. Trypho asks,‡ "Do you really believe that the town of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and *your* people assembled there to rejoice with Christ?" Justin replies that there are good Christians who do not hold this view; "but I," he says, "and other thoroughly right-minded Christians, *know* that there will be a resurrection of the body, and that we shall spend a thousand years in a Jerusalem which has been rebuilt, beautified, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and others have taught us."

Later, in the same discussion, he says: § "As Jesus . . . led the people into the Holy Land . . . so will Jesus Christ assemble the people of the Dispersion (the Christians scattered in all places), and will distribute the good land to each. But not as did 'Jesus,' for he gave them a temporary inheritance, for he was not, like Christ, God, or the Son of God; for He after the resurrection of the saints will give us an eternal possession.

* Daniel, chap. vii. 25-27. Compare 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xxxi.

† Cruttwell, 'Literary History of Early Christianity,' vol. ii. p. 50.

‡ 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxx. § *l. c.* chap. cxiii.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

“For He it is after and by whom the Father will renew heaven and earth. He it is, who shall shine an eternal light in Jerusalem. He it is, who is King of Salem, after the order of Melchizedek, and eternal Priest of the Most High.”*

Elsewhere he says, “Christ has appeared according to the power given Him by the Almighty Father, and calls to friendship, and goodwill, and repentance, and to peaceful common-life, and has promised . . . that there shall be a future possession for all saints in this same land Therefore all men everywhere, bond or free, who have believed in Christ and in His words, and those of the prophets—know that they will be with Him in that land, and inherit the eternal and imperishable.” †

This certainty made the sufferings of the moment of but small account. “Two advents of Christ,” says Justin, “have been prophesied; in the one He is represented as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, crucified; but in the other, as descending from heaven in glory . . . consequently no one can alarm, or subdue us who have believed in Him . . . though beheaded, crucified, exposed to wild beasts, and chains, and fire, and other tortures, we do not give up our confession . . . for the rest of the prophecy will be fulfilled at His second coming.” ‡

Such a train of thought being characteristic of the Christianity of the Apologists, it is not improbable that it was reflected in the final pictures, now lost, of a cycle which is wholly inspired by their writings.

XXI. In conclusion, we will repeat that the subject-matter of this series is undoubtedly historical; the events pictured occurred during the taking of Canaan by Joshua, but they were chosen for representation because of the Apocalyptic significance with which they were invested in the religious literature of the day. This typological tendency was necessarily *sous entendu* in a cyclic decoration of which the mystic significance was veiled, which was intended to appear to the ordinary pagan spectator as historical, but which was also designed to speak to the initiated of the great hope, for the sake of which they were prepared to brave persecution, and death.

This esoteric significance was rendered evident, to those who had the key, by a consistent series of omissions, and by the sequence, inter-connection, and modification of the facts represented.

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. cxiii.

† *Ibid.* chap. cxxxix.

‡ *Ibid.* chap. cx.

PART II

THE ANTITYPICAL DECORATIONS
OF THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH:
THE ADVENT OF THE LOGOS
AND HIS RECEPTION



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Plates 31 and 35.

I. IT has been shown that the events selected for representation in the four series of the Nave are either such Old Testament incidents as are susceptible of typological interpretation (as The Passage of the Red Sea, or The Visit of the Three Angels to Abraham), or scenes in which the chief actor may be looked on as a prototype of Christ.

II. Such an arrangement postulates as its climax the realisation of what has been foreshadowed. The imagination, fed on types, demands the antitype.

III. A cycle consisting of scenes from the life of the *historical* Christ would form therefore a not unnatural termination to a prefatory cycle in which His life and mission are foreshadowed.

And at first sight the character of the figurative decorations of the Arch seems to justify this expectation.

Its subject-matter being the childhood of Christ, it is opened, as is natural, by what appears a representation of the Annunciation ; this, however, is not followed by a representation of the Nativity, which is not pictured at all ; a strange omission.

IV. Further examination discloses a peculiarity of arrangement which militates against the supposition that the standpoint from which this series was composed was strictly historical ; the chronological sequence of events is not observed. It begins with the Annunciation, and ends with the visit of the Magi to Herod ; the latter scene is preceded by a representation of its result, the Massacre of the Innocents ; which, in its turn, is preceded by its result, the Flight into Egypt.

V. The Adoration of the Magi, moreover, is composed without the faintest reference to historical realism.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

It is clear, therefore, that these pictures were not designed as mere illustrations reflecting the panorama of a historical narrative, as has been believed.

A different explanatory hypothesis must therefore be sought.

VI. The pictures of the Nave have been shown to be "Tendenz-bilder," of which the ostensible subject-matter is drawn from Biblical history. Is it possible that this is true of the pictures of the Arch also?

The answer to this question can only be obtained by examination of their contents, of their relation to each other, and to the cycle and sub-cycle of which they are parts.

This inquiry is the subject-matter of the following pages.

CHAPTER II

THE MYSTERY OF THE VIRGIN-BIRTH

I. DESCRIPTION.

- II. CONDITION : (*a*) The decorations of the Arch much restored ; (*b*) Angels' heads in the Adoration of the Magi ; (*c*) Angels' heads ; (*d*) Virgin's head ; (*e*) Angels' hands ; (*f*) Wings ; (*g*) Virgin ; (*h*) Dove ; (*i*) Floating Angel ; (*j*) Joseph ; (*k*) The two Sanctuaries.

COMMENTARY (III.-XVI.) :—

- III. This series described as continuous historical illustration.
IV. As the chronological sequence of events is not observed, and as no text is followed, it cannot be correctly thus described.
V. The flying Angel, probably not antique. No Angel of the Annunciation.
VI. The continuous method not adopted in any composition of the Arch.
VII. The subject not the Annunciation, but the Mystery of the Virgin-Birth.
VIII. Representations of the Annunciation in the Catacombs.
IX. The spinning scene an apocryphal episode.
X. The mystic significance of the crimson wool.
XI. Angels.
XII. The number Four.
XIII. Joseph or Zachariah ?
XIV. The closed and open Temples—the Law and the Gospel.
XV. Identity of the message given to Mary and Joseph.
XVI. The Virgin-Birth. Justin Martyr.

THE MYSTERY OF THE VIRGIN-BIRTH.

Plate 31 ; Plate 32, No. 1 ; Plate 33.

I. DESCRIPTION.—Eight figures, silhouetted against a graduated background of green, yellow passing into gold, and grey-blue, form the subject-matter of this long frieze-like picture, to which architectural masses at either end give equilibrium.

The dramatis personæ are Angels, with two exceptions, those of a man and a woman.

The latter, obviously the Virgin, forms the centre of a group to the

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

left; she is seated, not in the immediate foreground, at a somewhat unusual angle, on a seat furnished with an undecorated suppedaneum.

She wears a purple sub-tunica, of which the sleeves only are visible at the wrists; a white tunica, of which only the wide white sleeves are seen; and a palla of cloth of gold, fastened at the waist by a jewelled clasp; the latter is decorated by purple clavi, which are however cut short at the waist. This dress is an ill-understood version of the *palla contabula*, which was the gala dress of the Empire from the fifth century onward, of which classic examples occur in the Procession of Virgins in S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna.* The shoes are white. The face oval, with large eyes, and a long curved nose; it is framed in full dark hair. A wide golden necklace set with gems is clasped about the throat.

On the Virgin's right is a circular gilt wicker basket, out of which she draws a long rope of red wool. Under her arm is a narrow oblong object which has been incorrectly interpreted as a spindle; she is not, however, represented as spinning, but merely as sitting, with a long rope of crimson wool held in her hands, and resting on her knees.

In the sky, to the right, there floats a winged Angel, with hand outstretched in speech addressed to her; its prototypes are evidently the winged victories of Roman triumphal arches.† Above her head is a dove, flying downwards. To the right and in front of the Virgin are two winged Angels on foot, their hands raised in emphatic speech addressed, not to her, but to an unseen audience before them. To the left are two other winged Angels, whose gestures suggest wonder, the amazed contemplation of a Mystery, rather than its proclamation.

As these Angels conform to a single type, the description of one only will suffice, that to the right of the Virgin. His head, silhouetted upon a translucent nimbus edged with white, is solidly constructed; his features not drawn, but modelled in masses of tone; his eyes fiery, with gleaming whites; his hair full and waved; his colouring, of the warm ruddy golden brown of the men and heroes of early frescoes in the Catacombs, and at Pompei. The ideal embodied is, like theirs, that of virile and powerful youth. His feet are bare. He wears a long white tunic (*tunica talaris*), with purple clavi, and a white pallium, the ends of which are adorned by marks.‡

* Plate 32, No. 4.

† Plate 51, No. 1.

‡ They are similar to those reproduced on Plate 8.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The significance of these heavenly beings is apparent; they are messengers who bring great tidings, which the gesture of the Angel on the right shows to be connected with the Virgin, who is seated a little behind him with a stream of crimson running between her hands and on to her knees.

To the extreme right of this composition is a bearded man, obviously Joseph. He wears a short girded tunic (*tunica succincta*), with one purple clavus; the other has been converted by the restorer into a rod, held somewhat awkwardly in his left hand, which hand is involved in the folds of a short mantle hanging on his left shoulder; his right hand is raised in the gesture of one who listens and ponders.

An Angel with raised right hand addresses him.

This incident is not separated from the other by a material barrier, a tree, or architectonic fragment; these two scenes are conceived, therefore, either as actually one, or as the expression of one thought.

To the extreme left of this composition is a typical classical temple, with columns, architrave, and pediment. Its bronze gates are not only shut, an unusual particularity, but a gilt net (not to be mistaken for the lattice-work which often formed the upper part of temple doorways, as in the Pantheon) has been drawn across its entrance. This Temple is therefore to be understood as closed, its sanctuary as inaccessible.

Between the arch and the curved tops of the bronze doors looped white curtains are visible, such as usually draped temple and palace entrances; these have been mistaken for heraldic bearings resembling those of the Medici.*

Behind Joseph is a classic building of a temple-like type; it is characterised as very large, by the size of the stones of which it is composed; access to it is not barred by a closed gate, as is that of its pendant; a burning lamp hangs in its hospitably open curtained doorway.

II. CONDITION.—(a) A single glance at the mosaics of the Arch as a whole will suffice to convince the student whose eye has been trained by study of the pictures of the Nave that they have been subjected to frequent repairs and interpolations; he will observe that here as there the colour harmony is rudely broken in upon by the intrusion

* Compare the curtains of the Palatium in the mosaics of S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, with similar ornaments, Plate 32, No. 5.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

of masses of crudely glittering gold, that the female figure on the left of the Throne of Christ in *The Adoration of the Magi* is a modern interpolation in stucco, that the sides and upper border of the Arch have been largely reconstructed in stucco, and that the central Symbol and the town of Jerusalem are suggestive of the art of the Middle Ages.

He will therefore approach the first picture of this series in the expectation of finding that its parts are not altogether in their original state.

His first desideratum will be a head, or figure, of which the character and quality proclaim its originality, and which may be used as a touchstone of the genuineness of other portions.

(b) In the picture immediately below the Virgin is a group of Angels' heads, which, though injured by time—*i.e.*, discoloured by dirt, composed of slightly dislocated cubes, and even patched—are free from restoration proper, and are therefore substantially antique.*

It is obvious that these heads were executed at the same time, and in the same technique as that of the Angel from the second picture of the Abraham Series,† the heads of Moses and Aaron in *The Passage of the Red Sea*,‡ &c.

(c) Although there is nothing on this level in the Annunciation, the heads of the Angels pictured in it may be accepted as antique in conception, in spite of disfiguring repairs; and the best preserved of their number, the head of the Angel on the right of the Virgin, as executed in the technique characteristic of the earliest stratum of execution in this church, exception being made of unimportant repairs. This Angel's face is warm in colour, round and full in form, and is framed in flame-like masses of hair; the head is solid, and this effect is obtained not by linear drawing, but by the juxtaposition of masses of tone; high lights of precisely the right value are dashed onto the cheek-bone and upper lip, indicating their form with an audacious certainty of touch which would do credit to a modern impressionist.§ In harmony with this radiant head is the transparent grey-blue halo by which it is encircled.

(d) In striking contrast to this daringly handled and glowing

* Plates 41 and 42.

† Plate 1.

‡ Plate 20.

§ Two light cubes form the high light on the cheek-bone, and three on the upper lip.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

embodiment of disciplined force is the timidly executed pinched face of the Virgin, composed of a mass of small slightly modulated grey-pink cubes, on which the features are drawn in heavy but weak lines.

Nothing can be more dissimilar than the technique of these two heads; they are the outcome of ideals and technical methods separated from each other by a wide gulf of time.

(e) Although the hands of the Angels are injured, their gestures are clear; in that of speech, the thumb, first and second fingers are straight, the third and fourth bent; in that of proclamation, the hand is stretched forward, palm outwards, with all the fingers extended.

(f) The wings of the Angels are conceived and executed in a manner which is incompatible with the habits of visualisation and presentation revealed in their faces; for whereas these, as has been seen, are solidly modelled, and translucent in colour, they are flat, incorporeal, of a dull grey, edged by a dark line; they are moreover relieved upon the gold background (in the neighbourhood of which it is usual to find interpolations), and upon the original though much injured sky, the cubes of which in their immediate vicinity are set at a different angle than elsewhere.

Suspicion of their authenticity is converted into certainty by the manner in which wings are treated in other pictures of this series.

The eight Angels of The Virgin-Birth and of The Repudiation of Christ, which are furnished with two wings each, are so completely isolated that, had they originally been represented as wingless, it would have been easy for the restorer to remedy the defect, should this have been demanded by the iconography of a later date;* but the four Angels behind the Throne of Christ in The Adoration of the Magi, and the two Angels in The Philosopher a Guide to Christ, lean so closely together that, having been designed as wingless, the addition of two wings each was an impossibility; the embarrassed interpolator, constrained to bring the appearance of these Angels into harmony with that of the other Angels of this series, to which these accessories had been easily added, was obliged to content himself with trimming the outer edges of these groups with wings; with the result that two of these six Angels are wingless and four have one wing apiece.†

The position of the interpolator being perfectly intelligible, and it

* Plates 31 and 35.

† See Plates 41, 42 and 45.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

being impossible to believe that so uncertain an image of the Angels he proposed to represent floated before his mental vision that he was capable of picturing them sometimes with one wing, sometimes with two, and sometimes with none, it follows that they must have figured originally as strong young men, without wings, as they are conceived both in the literature, and art of the time.

Comparison of the draperies of the Angels in this picture, which are heavy, opaque, and cut into parts by clumsy dark lines, with those of the group immediately below,* radiant, aerial, sparkling, of the same technique as the draperies of Moses in *The Passage of the Sea*,† suffices to prove them to be restorations.

(g) We have already seen that the head of the Virgin is the creation of the restorer.

Her dress is thickly set with golden cubes, and therefore not in its original state; ‡ the cubes of the shadowed part of this dress are precisely similar to those which form the shadowed portions of the Angel's robes on either side of it: it is moreover spotted here and there with incomprehensible touches of white; the so-called "spindle" is a white fold, although the palla is of cloth of gold, the shoes also are white not golden. It would appear that the Virgin's dress was originally white, but that at some subsequent period the high lights of the white dress were knocked out, and replaced by gold.

Paucity of material makes it impossible to define the character of the original dress with certainty. We would however suggest that, probably like Leah and Anna, the Virgin wore a tunica and palla (in her case, white), and that possibly her palla, like Anna's, was drawn over her head.

If this be so then the group formed by the Virgin and the Angel on her left resembled that of the Virgin and prophet of the Catacomb of Priscilla, of some generations earlier.§

The Virgin's left hand is replaced by a shapeless mass of red stucco.

The crimson wool is antique, and virtually intact.

The seat has been practically destroyed by the encroachments of

* Plates 41 and 42.

† Plate 20.

‡ Compare the similar figures in the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Plate 32, No. 4.

§ See Plate 32, No. 2, reproduced from the coloured facsimile in J. Wilpert's 'Le Pitture delle Catacombe Romane,' Rome, 1903, Tav. 22.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the gold mosaic; nothing remains of it except the white cushion on which the Virgin sits, the outline of which is much disfigured.

The Suppedaneum is antique, unjewelled, and in good condition.*

(h) The dove which hovers over the Virgin's head is chiefly executed in stucco, but within its outline is an irregular horizontal band of white mosaic (about eight cubes deep, and sixteen wide), the lower outline of which is somewhat similar to that of a dove's breast, and the spring of its wings; there are a few cubes also in its head. These cubes are too roughly set, and too stucco-bedaubed, for it to be possible to form an opinion as to their date. It is difficult *a priori* to believe that a dove formed part of the original design, it being an accessory introduced into representations of the Annunciation at a later date.

(i) It is not possible to speak with greater certitude of the figure of the floating Angel who announces the mystery to the Virgin.

It is almost entirely executed in stucco, but a cluster of cubes on the shoulder, and on the sleeves of the outstretched arm, and some stucco-bedaubed cubes in the face, prove that a mosaic figure in a similar pose existed before the present stucco restorations were made.

So extraneous, however, is this figure to the line scheme, and general conception and distribution of the masses of this composition, that it is hard to believe that it formed part of the original design.

We know of no representations in Christian Art of flying Angels, founded like this on the victories of the triumphal arches of Rome, earlier than the time of Xystus, at which date they were a favourite motive.

The head of Joseph is composed of pink-grey cubes, upon which the features are drawn in black lines; it is of the same workmanship as those of the Virgin, and of Christ in The Adoration of the Magi. His dress has been restored, and at a subsequent period the clavus on the left of his tunic has been converted into a rod.

(k) The bulk of the temple behind him seems to be a mediæval restoration. Indeed, little that is antique is embodied in the radical restorations of the right end of this picture, of which the character is that of Xystine, or even post-Xystine art.†

* Compare with jewelled suppedaneum of the Throne in The Adoration of the Magi, Plate 31.

† Compare the curtains which hang in the open doorway (Plate 31) with those of the Temple of Jerusalem in the next picture (Plates 35 and 39).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Above the central band of gold interpolation which traverses this picture horizontally is an irregular band of grey-blue sky, in the finest preservation.

Below the gold interpolation is what seems a strip of antique foreground.

Beneath the Borgia frieze, which forms the upper border of the decorations of the Arch, is a band of stucco, in which the greater part of the floating Angel, the dove, and the groups of crimson clouds are embedded; this band descends on the left, widening, as it sinks, until it covers the entire left end of the composition, and covers the base of the Temple.

The pediment of this Temple, and the column on the right, are executed in mosaic, but are not antique; their restorer has lowered the base of the Temple, which should bear the same relation to the foreground as do the columns of the Temple behind Joseph.

Nothing in this picture therefore is antique in workmanship, except two narrow strips of background, and the heads of the Angels, which, though repaired extensively, have retained their original character. The original composition has doubtless been retained.

COMMENTARY.—III. This series, like the fourfold cycle of the Nave, has been described as not only strictly historical in character, but as an example of the translation of a composition designed from the point of view of one of the minor arts, that of book- or rather roll-illustration, into mosaic; and of its application, without modification, to the decoration of a great building.

It has been further judged to belong to that class of realistic classic presentment to which the name of "continuous" has been given; *i.e.*, to have been designed to form a pictorial stream, running parallel with the story related, and reflecting its contents, as in a mirror.

Classic examples of this type of pictorial narration are the reliefs of the Columns of Trajan, and of Marcus Aurelius, and the illustrated Joshua Rotulus of the Vatican Library. In the former, the figures of the Emperors occur and recur throughout the long history of their wars, sometimes appearing more than once in the representation of a single scene. Joshua before the Angel of the Lord may be selected from the latter as one among many other admirable examples of the use of this method. The Angel is pictured standing, his hand raised in dignified

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

speech, but Joshua is represented twice, once erect, and questioning the Unknown, and then again prostrate at His feet.*

It may be suggested that in like manner the Angel of the Annunciation is here represented twice, once in rapid flight, and then, having alighted, as delivering his message. The position of the Angel standing on the right of the Virgin negatives this hypothesis. An Angel of the Annunciation who stands, not before the Virgin but in front of her, and speaks, not to her, but to an unseen audience, is unthinkable. Indeed, the manner in which this Angel is represented makes it doubtful whether the subject of this picture be strictly speaking the Annunciation.

This series has been further described, not only as historical and continuous, but as domestic narrative; as simply recording the history of the childhood of Christ, spent under the guardianship of His Mother, and of Joseph. If these characterisations be correct, if this series can be called continuous domestic narrative, then its literary subject-matter is conceived and handled in a very different manner to that of the Arch.

There is nothing unnatural *per se* in the hypothesis that the long series of Old Testament prototypes of the Redeemer terminated in the realistic representation of that which those prophetic figures foreshadowed: the historic Christ.

Yet if thus approached, this series, entirely occupied with events in the life of Christ's childhood, inspires an uncomfortable sense of anticlimax. A representation of the acts of power of this long-looked-for Messiah, foreshadowed in the lives of leaders like Moses, or Joshua, would have been a more fitting climax to their deeds.

The correctness of these hypotheses can only be tested in one way, by analysis of the series itself.

IV. It is immediately evident that this series cannot be described as continuous narrative of the type of the Joshua Rotulus, for the chronology of the events depicted has not been observed; the Flight into Egypt is represented *before* the Massacre of the Innocents, of which it was the result, and the Massacre of the Innocents *before* the Visit of the Magi to Herod. This, however, may be ascribed to the dislocation of the order of the pictures at the time of their adaptation as the decorations of the Arch. We turn, therefore, to the analysis of the first picture of the series, viewed as an isolated unit, in order to determine whether it

* Plate 27, No. 1; compare p. 227 f.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

can be correctly described as the reproduction of a book illustration, historical in substance, and continuous in manner of presentment; a description which involves the idea of the reflection of the succeeding phases of a narrative, which predicates a text.

The two Annunciations pictured here, to Mary and to Joseph, are not separated from each other by a tree, building, or architectonic division; they are, therefore, to be considered (if the subject-matter be realistic) as coincident in time and place, or, if it be ideal, as bound together in the unity of a single thought.

The story of the birth of Christ is told by two only of the canonical writers, by Matthew and Luke: in the former the Annunciation to Mary is not mentioned; but it is said that an Angel appeared to Joseph, and warned him of the miraculous origin of the Child about to be born to Mary. Luke, on the other hand, recounts the story of the Annunciation to Mary, but makes no mention of any announcement to Joseph.

This picture therefore is not taken from a pictorial series illustrating either the one or the other of these Evangelists.

The history of the Virgin and of the miraculous birth of Christ is given in detail in the apocryphal Gospel of James, a book largely circulated among early Christians, which contains the story of the miraculous birth of the Virgin; of her Angel-encompassed life in the Temple; of the miraculous choice of Joseph as her protector; of his long absence from home; of the three Annunciations to the Virgin, one while spinning; of the Visitation; of Joseph's return; of a tragic scene between him and Mary; of an explanatory angelic Annunciation to him also; of accusations brought against Mary and Joseph by the Jewish priests; of the Ordeal of the Goblet; etc.

Although neither of the canonical Gospels record both Annunciations, and both are described in the Protevangelium Jacobi (in which an Annunciation to the Virgin is associated with a detail pictured here,—she is described as spinning), still the two Annunciations are separated from each other by so long a lapse of time, and by so many incidents, that it is impossible that they should have been pictured as part and parcel of one incident in a continuous pictorial reproduction of its text.

Moreover, the character of the Gospel, in which popular tradition, at once fantastically mystic and coarsely realistic, is preserved, accords but

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

ill with the character of the picture under discussion, which is sober and dignified.

It follows therefore that this composition is not the continuous pictorial equivalent of any known text.*

V. Examination of the present material condition of the picture has shown that it is far from being in its original state; that both the dove and the flying Angel may with strong probability be declared later adjuncts; they fall out of the general composition; they are moreover composed of stucco, and of cubes in so stucco-bedaubed a state that it is impossible to form an opinion as to their original appearance or date. But even if the flying Angel be accepted as part of the original design, the significance of the central group would be in no way modified.

The Angel to the right of the Virgin is not the Angel of the Annunciation. An Angel of the Annunciation who stands in front of the Virgin, but turns, speaking away from her, is unimaginable; as is also, if the scene be interpreted realistically, the idea of an Angel so consumed with undignified haste that he delivers his wondrous message flying, and on alighting shouts it into space.

VI. Moreover, this continuous method of presentment is not adopted in any other picture of the Arch.

VII. But if this picture be interpreted, not as the realistic representation of an event, but as the synthesis of an idea; if the figure of the Virgin (with, or without the flying Angel) be accepted as standing for the thought of the Virgin-Birth of the Redeemer, and the Angels about her for the heavenly witnesses and heralds of the mystery, then the composition, and the disposition of the figures become intelligible.

If this hypothesis be correct, this picture is a "Tendenz-bild," like those of the Nave, in which the historical element is merely the text from which the artist draws conclusions, which may seem far fetched and fantastic enough to the modern thinker, but which are those drawn from it by the teachers of the second and third centuries, Justin Martyr, Barnabas, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and others.

It is the pictorial equivalent of the words, "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel."†

* This apocryphal Gospel, which in its present form is approximately of the fifth century, is a compilation of earlier writings now lost, but which were known to Justin Martyr. † Isaiah vii. 14.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Are these the words spoken by the Angel who points to the Virgin, but addresses the PLEBS DEI?

Is this also the purport of the solemn colloquy of the Angel with Joseph?

VIII. In the earliest representations of the Annunciation which occur in the Catacombs this scene is conceived in the simplest manner.*

The Virgin is pictured as seated, with an Angel before her. He is represented as a young man of noble type, undistinguished by any accessory, whether of wing, or dress, or nimbus, who might well be mistaken, as were the Angels of the Resurrection,† and of Hermas,‡ for beautiful human beings.

How different the scene here! The seated Virgin, the many nimbus-crowned Angels, one of whom addresses Joseph, and the two great buildings at either end, which give the long composition equilibrium.

IX. The Virgin is not represented here as actually spinning, but by her side is a basket, from which she draws a strand of crimson wool, an accessory founded on the spinning incident recorded in the Prot-evangelium Jacobi, in which it is related that as she was drawing water from a well she heard a voice saying, "Hail!" "Being afraid," it is written, "she went trembling into the house, and took up her purple wool, and sat down in her seat to work; and behold the Angel of the Lord stood by her, and said, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour in the sight of God."§

It has been shown that the Virgin's figure here has suffered much at the hands of restorers; that her head is much posterior in date to that of the Angels about her; that her person is enclosed in gold cubes which are not original; that her dress is studded with gold cubes, whereas gold does not occur in classic mosaics, and is incompatible with the general colour-scheme of these pictures, which, though mystic in aim, are realistic in presentment; and that analysis of her dress

* J. Wilpert, 'Le Pitture delle Catacombe Romane,' pp. 187, 188.

† "When the women were at the sepulchre, behold, *two men* stood by them, in dazzling apparel."—Luke xxiv. 4. "Entering the tomb they saw a *young man* sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe."—Mark xvi. 5.

‡ "It was revealed to me while sleeping by a *very goodly young man*."—Hermas, 'Vision,' iii.

§ This is the source of a motif common in Byzantine art. An early example of it is a relief on a sarcophagus at Ravenna, Plate 32, No. 3.



1880

[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

1880

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

brings details to light which show that it was white originally, not cloth of gold.

X. The original effect of this white-robed woman, with a stream of crimson flowing through her uplifted hands, and falling upon her knees, must have been very striking. Analysis of the Old Testament cycles has shown that a much accentuated detail, especially if it be absent from the Biblical narrative, or plays quite a subsidiary *rôle*, often serves as a key to the mystic under-current for the sake of which the picture in which it occurs was composed. As examples may be instanced the birds, the common Christian symbol of Souls, which feed on the grapes of Eucharistic significance in Jacob's Blessing;* and the Scarlet Thread, which is the means of Rahab's salvation.

"The scarlet thread shows beforehand that through the blood of the Lord there shall be Redemption," writes Clement of Rome.†

The thought which informs the decorations of the Arch is complementary to those which inspired the pictures of the Nave: the contents of these cycles stand to each other in the relation of type, and antitype: the prophetic typology of the one is realised in the other. As Moses instructs the philosophers, and a philosopher brings Princes to Christ; as the sons of Jacob massacre their religious allies, and the Jewish Priesthood is the motive force which produces the Massacre of the Innocents; so here, the scarlet thread of Rahab is similar in form and colour to the scarlet thread uplifted by the Virgin, which falls in heavy masses onto her white knees, "vivid crimson foreshadowing blood," blood, the symbol of life, and of sacrifice.

It is because the spinning incident, which is merely a realistic touch in the apocryphal story, if brought into connection with the manner of Rahab's salvation, suggests the mode of men's redemption also, that the artist has elected to give so prominent a position to an accessory of which there is no hint in the canonical narrative.

XI. Four Angels occupy the foreground; they stand in groups of two on either side of the seated Virgin with the scarlet thread.

Kings and Emperors are never pictured alone in antique art, but as accompanied by attendants.‡ These Angels might therefore be

* See p. 102 f. † Letter to the Corinthians, chap. xii. Compare pp. 225, 233, 237 f., 263 and 265.

‡ See Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius; the representations of Herod on the Arch; and of Joshua and of Esau in the Nave.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

interpreted as visible expressions of the Virgin's dignity, were this explanation corroborated by the testimony of the other pictures of the Arch in which they occur. But in the following picture, The Epiphany, in which they appear in the same number and manner, they are associated, not with the Virgin, who is not present, but with Christ.

They are rather the expression of super-terrestrial powers, representatives of unknown realms, visible on earth as Ambassadors of God.

A later and naturalistic art expressed the supernatural character of this scene in obvious symbolism: the Angel of the Annunciation was pictured as kneeling before the Virgin, his garments still agitated by the vehemence of his earthward flight; a dove flying downwards symbolised the Holy Ghost; the hand of God, or even the person of the Eternal Father, was represented above, and from Him proceeded rays which enveloped the Virgin.

But the intellectual world of the creator of the decorations of the Arch was of very different imaginative fibre. His feet barely touch the earth. He aimed, not at representing an incident, but at evoking a thought, the very essence of which is the supernatural; its significance, cosmic, which involves, not this world only, but the whole range of created things, the life of the invisible powers of the universe.

In the *Protevangelium Jacobi* the Virgin is described as surrounded and protected by Angels, they watch over her, and she receives food at their hands. But the apocryphal Gospel is not the source of the artist's inspiration, the Angels do not figure on account of the Virgin, for, as we have seen, they equally appear when she is present, and when she is absent; they express rather the awed and joyous participation of extra-terrestrial beings in the divine scheme of human redemption; they stand like a Greek chorus, vividly sharing, and commenting the drama they witness.

XII. S. Luke, in describing the Annunciation of the Nativity to the shepherds, writes, "Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace."

The same thought, that of the presence of the "heavenly host," is suggested by the persistent representation of the Angels as four; for four, the number of the elements, and of the dimensions, signifies totality, not only in Pythagorean, but also in Oriental and

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Christian numeric symbology. For this reason the creatures of the vision of Ezekiel are four, and four are the Living Creatures of the Apocalypse; they stand for the whole unknown world of extra-terrestrial life. Four also are the streams which issue from the mount on which Christ is enthroned, they represent the sources of spiritual life, or a cognate though narrower conception, the four canonical Gospels.

S. Paul, wishing to evoke the thought of the perfect and satisfying completeness of the love of Christ, speaks of its "breadth, and length, and height, and depth."* And Job, speaking of the Wisdom of God, the Unapproachable, and Absolute, exclaims :†

"It is high as heaven ; what canst thou do ?
Deeper than Sheol, what canst thou know ?
The measure thereof is longer than the earth,
And broader than the sea."

In like manner the Angels here stand for the whole kingdom of the angelic world, a world of which the apostolic fathers were vividly conscious. Their presence testifies to the transcendental character of the incident of which they are the awe-struck contemplators and heralds.

XIII. The Evangelist Luke prefaces his history of the birth of Christ by an account of the pre-announcement of the birth of a long-desired son to Zacharias, while officiating in the Temple.

Associated here with the scene of which the Virgin is the centre is the representation of the colloquy of an Angel with a man, behind whom is a Temple.

Annunciations to two men only are recorded in the canonical account of events preceding the birth of Christ; to Joseph, and to Zacharias. As Joseph was a carpenter, and in no way connected with the Temple, whereas Zacharias was a priest, and the revelation of the birth of his son was made to him while officiating in the Temple, this male figure has been accepted, by those who interpret the scene realistically, as representing Zacharias.

Zacharias, however, was a priest, as has been said; the dress of priests is well defined and uniform throughout the series of both Arch and Nave, and is not the dress of the man in front of the Temple, who

* Eph. iii. 18.

† Chap. xi. 8, 9.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

wears the ordinary dress of the Roman layman, *i.e.*, a white girded tunic, with a mantle hung on the shoulder.*

It is moreover difficult to believe that even in a realistic series the birth of Christ and that of John, which took place some six months earlier (and therefore if this series had been composed on the continuous plan should have been represented first), would have been classed together as events of almost equal importance in a small series of four pictures illustrating the Infancy of Christ; especially as no further reference to the Baptist is made in the rest of the series. It has been shown, however, that the scene pictured is not conceived historically; what is represented is not an event, but an idea; and one which has no connection with the story of Zacharias.

XIV. The man pictured is undoubtedly Joseph. The building behind him is not introduced as a clue to his personality, nor in order to indicate the locality in which the revelation was made; but, together with the Temple on the left, it forms an integral part of the idea to be expressed.

These two buildings close the composition on either side. As such buildings serve in classic art to indicate the *mise en scène* of the event depicted, the Temple behind the Virgin has been interpreted as that of Jerusalem, in which, according to the Protevangelium Jacobi, she spent her girlhood, as one of its dedicated Virgins. The significance of the edifice behind Joseph was more difficult to divine, but, strange to say, though differing in every detail from the building on the left, it also has been identified with the Temple of Jerusalem; with the result that the figure in front of it has been interpreted as that of Zacharias,—it being impossible to associate the carpenter Joseph with the great Hebrew Sanctuary—and the two united scenes as the annunciations of the births of Christ, and of John the Baptist; an interpretation which, as has been shown, is untenable.

The building behind the Virgin is a classic Temple with closed doors, in front of which a gilt net is spread; a most unusual accessory, in which the artist underlines his conception of the building pictured as disused, its sanctuary as inaccessible.

The hospitably open doorway of the sanctuary behind Joseph, and

* This figure is not original, but although its authors have failed to preserve style, it is highly improbable that they have altered the type of dress worn.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the burning lamp in its entrance, indicate a place of worship, the rites of which are celebrated, and access to which is open to all.

The significance of these enigmatic edifices is intimately connected with the leading thought of the cycle as a whole. The idea they embody has already been formulated in a picture of the Nave, which is enclosed on either side by the figures of Leah the Superseded, and Rachel the Beloved. "Leah is your Synagogue," says Justin Martyr, "but Rachel is our Church."* These buildings symbolise the abrogated Jewish law, and the new universal Church.

They are the fitting ideal framework of a representation of the Incarnation, conceived as the last act in the Divine scheme for the redemption of men. They give historical perspective to the final announcement of the near approach of a Redeemer, prefigured by the blood of the Paschal lamb,† prefigured by Rahab's scarlet thread;‡ the Virgin's Son, whose Divine nature is witnessed to by heavenly beings, who announce His purpose, and await His coming.

XV. The two annunciations to Mary and to Joseph, of which the ideal background is the superseded Law, and the new Dispensation of Grace, are treated here as one scene, as two complementary aspects of one event. This is justified by the identity of the thought expressed in the message delivered.

"Fear not," the Angel said to Mary . . . "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore . . . that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God."§

"Fear not," said the Angel to Joseph . . . "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.

"Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

"Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,
And they shall call His name Immanuel;"

which is, being interpreted, God with us."||

* See p. 106 f. and p. 122.

† Plate 26, No. 2, and p. 289.

‡ Plate 19, No. 1, and p. 138.

§ Luke i. 30, 35.

|| Matt. i. 20-23.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XVI. The Virgin-Birth is a point on which Justin Martyr insists at length as being the most important of the prophetically pre-indicated signs by which the incarnate Logos should be recognised.

“Since the mystery of His birth now demands attention, I will speak of it,” he says. “The Spirit of Prophecy . . . foretold how it would happen. That men who believe on Him might know how He came into the world.

“The Lord said to Ahaz, saying, ‘Ask for thyself a sign from the Lord thy God, in the depth, or in the height.’ And Ahaz answered, ‘I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.’ And Isaiah said . . . ‘Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.’”*

* ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xliii.

CHAPTER III

THE MERCY SEAT

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION.
- III. The component parts of the Symbol.
- IV. The Nativity not represented; a strange omission if the subject of this series had been, as has been believed, a cyclic representation of the Childhood of Christ.
- V. Empty Thrones with attributes, in classic art. S. Vitale, Ravenna. Thrones on coins. Dea Syria. Ark of the Temple of Jerusalem.
- VI. Christian use of this Symbol. S. Prisca, near Capua. Berlin Ring. Umbrian Sarcophagus.
- VII. Later variations of the same Symbol, and the art of the Decadence, of Byzantium, and of Russia.
- VIII. Does it stand for the Second Person of the Trinity?
- IX. No prejudice existed in the early Church against the representation of the person of the Risen Christ. Paintings in the Catacombs. Mosaics of S. Lorenzo, Milan. Christ with Melchizedek in S. Maria Maggiore.
- X. The Cross as a Symbol of the earthly life of Christ incongruous in a cyclic representation of His childhood.
- XI. The Apocalyptic Throne.
- XII. The Throne of the Vision of Ezekiel.
- XIII. Conditions of Ezekiel's life, and training.
- XIV. The Holy Things of the Temple made after Divine prototypes. The Mercy Seat. Cherubim.
- XV. The relation of the aspect of the Mercy Seat to Ezekiel's Vision, and to S. John's Vision. The antitype of the Ark.
- XVI. The Throne of Grace. Hippolytus. Cosmas Indicopleustes.
- XVII. Summary. Nothing in this Emblem being of original workmanship, except fragments of the Throne, it can only be affirmed that a Throne formed part of the original emblem.
- XVIII. The original Throne may have been of the character of that of the Berlin Ring.
- XIX. The Cross. The sprinkling of the Mercy Seat with blood. Hilasterion. S. Paul.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

- XX. Letter to the Hebrews.
- XXI. The Cross in early Christian thought. S. Paul. Justin Martyr. Barnabas. Irenaeus.
- XXII. The Crown.
- XXIII. The Purple Mantle. Johannes Damascenus.
- XXIV. The Suppedaneum.
- XXV. The Roll.¹
- XXVI. S. Peter and S. Paul ;
- XXVII. They represent the two Churches, drawn respectively from the Jews and from the Gentiles.
- XXVIII. The Living Creatures derived from the Vision of Ezekiel.
- XXIX. This Emblem is not placed *above* the pictures of the Arch, but is sunk into their midst.
- XXX. The Incarnation.
- XXXI. Mysteries. The *Disciplina arcani*.
- XXXII. Meaning of the Emblem as a whole.
- XXXIII. The frequent use of symbols in the first centuries of our era, both in literature, and in the pictorial arts.
- XXXIV. Rarity of this Symbol at an early date.
- XXXV. Paucity of material. Chief sources of our knowledge of the Christian Art of the second and third centuries, the Catacombs, and the reflex of early pictures on Sarcophagi.

THE MERCY SEAT.

Plate 34, Nos. 1 and 2.

I. DESCRIPTION.—On the keystone of the Arch, between the representations of the Virgin-Birth, and of the Repudiation of Christ by the Jews, is an emblem framed in a circular nimbus; associated with it are the four Apocalyptic Living Creatures; and the figures of SS. Peter and Paul.

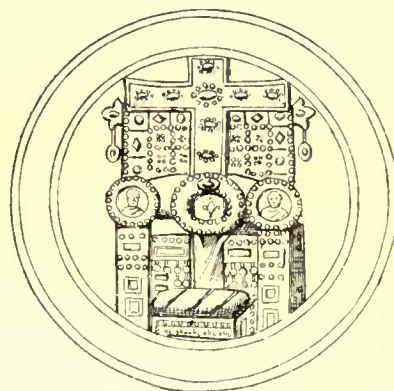
This emblem consists of a jewelled Throne, a jewelled Cross, a jewelled Crown, a purple Mantle with golden tabula, and a jewelled Footstool, upon which lies a white sealed Roll. It is relieved upon a white background, encircled by a prismatic green-blue border, passing from a dark into a pale shade, which is edged outside by a clear white line.

The Throne is rectangular in plan, as are also the four legs on which the seat rests; these are drawn according to the canons of antique perspective, with the back legs so placed as to be visible behind and outside those in front; they are, moreover, distinguished from them in colour, those in front being blue, those behind red;

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



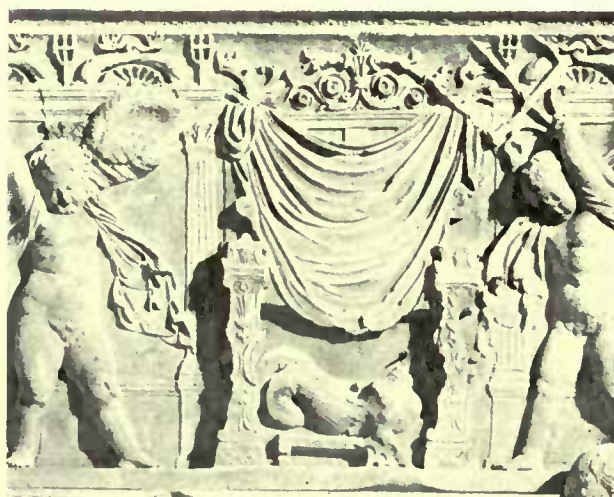
6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

they are decorated with large blue gems set in gold, and bordered with pearls. Upon the seat lies a white bolster-like cushion, the round ends of which are decorated with circular medallions (one at each end), on which, set in pearls, are the portraits of SS. Peter and Paul; these are not part of the framework of the chair, one being placed over the front, and one over the back leg.

The back of the throne is square; its surface is decorated by two rows of blue gems, alternately round and square, set in gold, and placed within large golden squares set in pearls.

Its upper bar terminates in heads of dogs—executed in brown and yellow cubes; they are to be understood as golden therefore—from the mouths of which depend red tassels on blue cords, a classic motif which is incompatible with the barbaric profusion and arrangement of gold and gems with which the throne is encrusted.

If this throne be conceived as wide, low, and golden, with the upper bar of its back terminating in finials in the form of dogs' heads; and if abstraction be made of its present surface and accessories, it will be observed that the section of a circle which extends from its upper border to the edge of the blue aureola above is rather large to have been left undecorated. This empty space may have been filled by an inscription like the IXΘΥΣ of the Berlin ring, or, like the same ring, the throne may have had a triangular back, decorated by some Christian symbol, such as a cross, or a star.

CROSS.—From the seat of the throne rises a large Latin cross covered with jewelled incrustations, similar in design to the decoration of the throne. The awkward way in which its horizontal beam composes with the top of the back of the chair, with which it is parallel, and to the two jewelled strata of which it seems to add a third, shows it to be a later adjunct, and not part of the original design.

CROWN.—In front of, and leaning against the foot of the cross, is a jewelled diadem, wider behind than before, set with blue gems, the largest of which is placed in front.

MANTLE.—Closely following the outline of the crown, like a shadow, is a small fine purple mantle (*chlamys*), the pendant end of which is decorated with a golden tabula—a later addition.

The character, position, and clumsy execution of the crown prove it to be of the same date as the cross.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

THE APOSTLES.—On either side of this emblem stand two much-injured figures, which evidently represent S. Peter and S. Paul. They wear the tunica and pallium; before the pallium-involved left hand of each of them floats an open book; although in their present state the work of a late restorer, they doubtless approximately reproduce the lost original.

Above the Apostles, arranged in two groups, are the four Apocalyptic Living Creatures.

II. CONDITION.—No part of the throne is of the original classic workmanship except the dogs' heads with tassels, the large white cushion (exception however being made of the medallions, in which it terminates), the greater part of its background, and part of the dark ring enclosing it (the sides only, the upper part is executed in stucco, the lower much injured), and finally the white Roll with seven black bands which lies on the footstool. (It has been repaired in places with white cubes of a slightly darker intonation than are those of the original). These are composed of well-formed closely-connected vitreous cubes.

Late interpolations of the decadence are: the Cross, the Crown, the jewelled surface of the Throne and of the Footstool, also the medallions at the end of the cushions, with the portraits set in gems of S. Peter and S. Paul.

THE APOCALYPTIC LIVING CREATURES.—*Ox*. There are a few vitreous cubes of uncertain date in the shoulder, and in the cloud below, the remainder of the emblem is in stucco.

Angel.—Almost entirely executed in stucco. Parts of the white draperies are in mosaic.

Eagle.—Almost entirely in stucco, red mosaic cubes are scattered through the clouds below it.

The figure of the Apostle on the left, together with the open book which floats before his drapery-covered left hand, though pre-Xystine, is not original in execution, the tunic has been shortened to make room for Xystus' inscription, which cuts off the Apostle's left foot.

The head and shoulders have been restored in stucco; probably at the time of the addition of the Borgia frieze.

The figure on the right has been still more roughly restored. The head and shoulders are in stucco; its right foot has been cut off by Xystus' inscription.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

THE BACKGROUND.—Original are (1) the strip of green, shading not into gold, but into yellow, which borders the inscription, the curve of the arch, and forms the lower horizontal strata of the pictures on either side, and (2) the much-injured grey-blue of the sky above, together with fragments of red clouds embedded in it. Of late but uncertain date is the uniform gold wall which extends from the yellow of the background below to the grey-blue of the sky above. Within this gold restoration is an irregular vertical strip of stucco, painted in imitation of gold mosaic; it extends from the S, E (of XYSTUS EPIS.) in the inscription below to the angle made by the cloud under the Angel, with the upper curve of the aureola.

INSCRIPTION.—The dedicatory inscription is of the time of Xystus, exception being made of the letters C, O, P, of Episcopus, which have been re-executed at a later date.

COMMENTARY.—III. Dominating this cycle—of which the subject-matter is the Virgin-Birth of Christ; His recognition by some believers, both Jew and Gentile, as the long foretold Redeemer, and as the true Wisdom; His rejection by the Jewish hierarchy and by the secular power—is a Symbol consisting of a Throne, associated with which are a Cross, a Crown, a Mantle, and a Roll.

It has an especial atmosphere, is isolated within a prismatic circle, and is guarded by the four Apocalyptic Beasts; its transcendental character is thus doubly underlined.

IV. It will be noted that the Nativity is not pictured; an inexplicable omission were this cycle conceived historically, and with the intent to glorify the Theotokos, as has been believed; the more so as its natural place between the "Annunciation" and the "Presentation" is occupied by a symbol, a somewhat illogical centre to a series of scenes from real life. Its absence, however, from a cycle of which the basis is an abstract idea to which the scene of the actual physical birth is not essential, is intelligible.

The full significance of this symbol may appear obvious at first sight, but is by no means self-evident; it is only gradually revealed by the detailed examination of the parts of which the emblem is composed; the most prominent of which is the throne.

V. A throne is the universal symbol of empire, and is constantly used as such in classic art. Standing for power in the abstract, it is

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

usually represented as empty ; the attributes with which it is associated show what, or whose, power it represents.

In the church of St. Vitale at Ravenna is a classic pagan relief, which originally decorated a Greek Temple dedicated to Poseidon.* It represents an empty throne, from which depends a mantle ; it is characterised as that of the Ruler of the Sea by a trident.

Similar thrones associated with attributes are of frequent occurrence on classic coins.

On a silver coin struck by Octavianus in honour of Julius Cæsar, is a sella curulis, on which is a laurel crown, and the inscription CAESAR DIC(tator) PER(petuus). Dio Cassius relates that such a chair (of gold) was decreed by the Senate to be dedicated among other honours to the memory of Julius Cæsar.†

Gold and silver coins, inscribed IMP. CAES. TRAIAN., dedicated to Vespasian by his successors, are stamped with the curule chair and thunderbolt, the well-known symbol of Imperial power. A curule chair was placed in a temple as a sign of respect for the newly deified Emperor Vespasian.

On the reverse of a coin of Domitian of the year 80 A.D. is a curule chair without a back ; upon the seat, from which a cloth depends, is a helmet ; the inscription runs, PRINCEPS JUVENTUTIS.‡ A curule chair was given as a token of honour to such sons of Emperors as were graced with the title of Prince of the (Roman) Youth.§

On the reverse of another coin with the portrait bust of Faustina is an empty throne with a back, against which a sceptre has been placed. In front of it is a peacock ; the inscription runs AETERNITAS.

It being unlawful to represent the person of the great DEIA SYRIA,

* Plate 34, No. 8.

† Morell, 'Fam. Julia,' Tav. 7.

‡ Plate 34, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6.

§ See S. W. Stevenson, C. Roach Smith, and F. W. Madden, 'A Dictionary of Roman Coins, Republican and Imperial,' Bell and Sons, 1889, p. 729. "A seat with an anaclinterium, or back, richly ornamented, and with a stragulum, or embroidered cover, spread over it, is elaborately figured on the reverse of a silver coin of Domitian, with the inscription PRINCEPS JUVENTVT. ; on the obverse appear CAES . DIVI . F . DOMITIANVS . COS . VII . and the laureated head of the Emperor, who in his seventh consulate, on the death of his father, was declared by his brother Titus partner with and successor to him in the empire (imperii consors et successor), and to whom a chair of this ornamental and honorary description was assigned. In Morell is an engraving of the above coins, and the commentary of Gorias thereupon, who says, that the sella was classed amongst those decorations with which the sons of emperors were endowed, as soon as they were called Caesars, may be gathered from Tacitus ('Hist.,' l. iv. c. 1), who says respecting Domitian, Nomen sedemque Caesaris Domitianus acceperat ; it is therefore not surprising if on his medals the sella is often assigned to him."

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

her empty throne was placed in the central shrine of her famous Temple of Hieropolis.*

Tacitus relates that when Pompey forced his way into the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem he found no statue in it, but an empty throne † (“ nulla intus deum effigie, vacuum sedem et inania arcana ”).

VI. Similar empty thrones were not unknown to early Christian art.

An empty throne associated with a roll is pictured in the mosaic decorations of the Church of Sta. Prisca, near Capua Vetere.‡

Another decorates a signet ring now in the Berlin Museum.§

Another adorns a sarcophagus in Umbria.||

VII. It was a favourite form of later symbolism ; variations, derivations, and developments appear with varying significance in Roman and Italian art throughout the Imperial decadence, and the Middle Ages ; also in Byzantine art, and the pictorial speech of its direct descendant, the ecclesiastic art of the Russia of to-day.¶

VIII. The thought naturally suggested by a Christian emblem, consisting of a throne associated with a cross and a crown, is that of the Second Person of the Trinity, of the risen Christ, ascended and reigning in super-terrestrial realms.

Several considerations, however, militate against the acceptance, as exhaustive, of this simple explanation, which is quite correct if applied to Byzantine and mediæval representations.

IX. Pictures of Christ surrounded by His Apostles in the Catacombs, and in the Church of S. Lorenzo, Milan (a version in mosaic of an earlier composition), in which the scene represented is certainly not to be referred to the Redeemer's earthly life, but to His transcendental existence, show that the bodily existence of the glorified Saviour occupied a prominent place in the consciousness of the early Church, and that its representation was forbidden by no religious scruple.

* Preller, ‘ Römische Mythologie,’ p. 745.

† Tacitus, ‘ Hist.,’ v. 9.

‡ Garrucci, ‘ Arte Crist.,’ vol. iv. pl. 64.

§ Plate 34, No. 7. “ L’antiqua forma della sedia, l’encarpo, l’epigraphe IXYΘ, di che anche in Oriente (dove forse viene il cimelio) non troviamo esempi dopo il secolo quinto o sesto, mi persuadono la gemma appartenere ai primi secoli dell’ arte cristiana, a quale però precisamente non ardisco definire . . . Quivi ad ogni occhio ed intelletto appare manifesta la cattedra di Cristo, chiaramente designata dall’ epigrafe, e dalla stella della luce divina.” De Rossi, ‘ Bull. di Arch. Crit.,’ 1872, p. 33. He goes on to distinguish this symbol from the later “ Etoimasia.”

|| Plate 34, No. 9.

¶ See Garrucci, *l. c.*, pl. 226, 241, 253, 286, 287.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

But it is not necessary to go so far afield to prove this point, for in this very church the risen Christ is represented in a picture contemporary with the decorations of the Arch—we speak of the first picture of the Old Testament series, in which, associated with Melchizedek, is the pathetic image of his great antitype.*

Had the artist therefore wished to picture his enthroned and glorified Lord, there is no reason why he should have abstained from doing so directly, without resort to a symbol.

X. The surroundings of the symbol, moreover, render it *a priori* improbable that the Throne here should represent the power, the divinity of Christ, and the Cross and Crown His human person.†

There is something of the nature of a mixed metaphor, something incongruous and illogical, in the use of emblems unequivocally associated with the death of the Redeemer as symbols of His human life in a composite symbol which is the centre and corner-stone of a series of pictures representing scenes from His childhood.

This explanation in this crude form must be put aside. To be acceptable, an interpretation must apply on the one hand to the character and component parts of the emblem, and on the other must put it as a whole into vital connection with the pictorial cycle of Old and New Testament subjects of which it is the centre.

XI. The minds of the Seers of the Old and of the New Testaments alike were haunted by visions of “a throne, set in heaven,” guarded by wondrous Living Creatures.

S. John in his second vision on the Island of Patmos saw “a throne set in heaven ;” and a “rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon ;” . . . and round about the throne, “four living creatures, and the first was like a lion, and the second was like a calf, and the third had a face as of a man ; and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.”‡ The vision undoubtedly served as the basis of the allegorical figure we are studying, a Throne guarded by Four Creatures.

These are the particularities of the apocalyptic vision which the artist has here selected for representation : there are others he chose to ignore (One seated upon the throne ; the Seven Candlesticks . . . the

* See Plate 6.

† Compare the sarcophagus in the Lateran Museum, Plate 34, No. 10.

‡ Rev. iv. 2-8.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Glassy Sea . . . the four and twenty Elders), as he could not press them into the service of the idea which it was his purpose to embody. These omissions are significant as showing that, though inspired by S. John's account, it was not his design to translate it into pictorial form. . . . His subject is not the apocalyptic vision, but a thought associated with the Throne, which is its centre.*

XII. The especial form taken by S. John's vision is undoubtedly the result of familiarity with the earlier revelation made to Ezekiel. . . . "Above the firmament," writes the Seer of the Captivity, . . . "was the likeness of a Throne" † . . . "and there was a brightness round about. As is the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness round about." ‡ "Out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures . . . as for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man . . . of a lion . . . of an ox . . . and of an eagle . . . and their faces and their wings were separate." § This, he adds, || "was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord."

Here again we have only noted those images which are repeated on the mosaic of S. Maria Maggiore; for here, as in the vision of S. John, are others, the omission of which serves to prove (what the accessories of the Throne, the Cross and the figures of the Apostles render obvious) that the task the artist set himself was not the reproduction of the Old Testament vision.

Analysis of the pictures of the Nave has shown that, as in the literature of the time so in its art, Old Testament history was regarded as a chain of divinely permitted incidents, all-important *prophetically*, as mystic foreshadowings of the perfect life, and of the unalloyed truth which were to be revealed.

It is from this point of view that the four pictorial cycles which form the didactic decorations of the Nave were composed.

In those of the Arch, however, of which the subject-matter is drawn from the events of the New Dispensation, the position is reversed; we are there confronted, not with types, but with antitypes; not by prophecies, but by their fulfilment.

* Compare the symbol here, together with its accessories, and the cycle of which it is part, with the representation of the apocalyptic vision on the triumphal arch of SS. Cosma and Damiano.

† Ezekiel i. 26.

‡ Verse 27.

§ Verse 5-11.

|| Verse 28.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

And most remarkably is this the case with regard to the allegorical emblem which is its centre.

Its subject is the reality of which Ezekiel's vision was a shadow.

XIII. In order to enter into the full significance of the vision called by Ezekiel "the Glory of the Lord," which appeared to him again and again throughout his prophetic mission, it must be put into connection with the conditions under which he lived, and the visible aspect of the Hebrew ritual, the re-establishment of which in Jerusalem was the subject-matter of his last vision.

The sanctity of the holy things of the Temple was believed to be theirs intrinsically, and not derived, though of course heightened by association, from the uses to which they were put.

They were understood to be the material image of invisible holy things; having been made by Moses, at God's command, and under His direction, after the pattern of divine prototypes.

XIV. This was true in a peculiar sense of the Ark, which was not only the symbol, but the pledge and abiding-place, of the presence of God, and the centre alike of the Temple, and of the religious and moral life of the people.

"Thou shalt make an Ark," said the Lord . . . "and thou shalt overlay it with pure gold . . . and thou shalt put into it the Testimony . . . And thou shalt make a Mercy Seat of pure gold . . . and thou shalt make two cherubim of gold . . . and the cherubim shall spread their wings on high, covering the Mercy Seat with their wings . . . and *there will I meet you, and commune with you, from above the Mercy Seat, from between the Cherubim.*"*

The outward appearance of the "Mercy Seat" passed into the very warp and woof of the Hebrew religious imagination. Its form was inseparably connected with "the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord."

God was to them "the Lord of Hosts that sitteth upon the Cherubim." † Hezekiah addresses his prayer "to the Lord, the God of Israel, that sitteth upon the Cherubim." ‡

Asaph, the psalmist, cries:

"Give ear, thou Shepherd of Israel!

Thou that sitteth upon the Cherubim, shine forth!" §

* Ex. xxv. 10-22.

† 2 Sam. vi. 2.

‡ 2 Kings xix. 15.

§ Ps. lxxx.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

and another minstrel sings—

“The Lord reigneth, let the peoples tremble !
He sitteth upon the Cherubim, let the earth be moved !” *

To the Jews the Cherubim were, if we may use the expression, the Caryatides of God, His Bearers: they indicate His invisible presence.

In the sixth century, when Ezekiel lived in captivity in Babylon, the Ark with its inseparable adjunct, the Mercy Seat, from which the Glory of the Lord had shone, was irretrievably lost.

When the prophet—his mind filled with the thought of the sin and of the punishment of his people; of their future national resurrection; and of the re-establishment of the worship of God in the Temple of Jerusalem—pictured “the Glory of the Lord,” it appeared to him in a form, modified, it is true, by his Babylonian surroundings, but essentially one with which every Jew was familiar, that of the lost centre of the Hebrew ritual.

Every feature of the ancient image was, however, invested with a richer colouring, and throbbed with a more potent life; within the “great light” he saw a throne, with the “likeness of a man” upon it; the Cherubim were not winged figures wrought in gold, but, as he is careful to particularise, “living creatures,” compact of strange forms, and endowed with supernatural life.

The Glory, the Throne, and the Cherubim were orientalised reminiscences of the lost Ark, the meeting place of God and man.

XV. It was inevitable that S. John, who certainly inherited the mould in which his vision was cast from Ezekiel, should, together with its form, have preserved something of its mystic contents, hallowed by the immemorial religious associations of his race, that the Theophany of the Apocalypse should have been associated in his mind with the thought of the ancient Ark of the Covenant, that behind the image of the Throne, guarded by super-terrestrial living creatures, should have hovered reminiscences of an image of cognate significance—the Ark of the Covenant overshadowed by Cherubim.

We have already seen that the sanctity of the instruments of the Hebrew ritual were derived from their relation to divine prototypes.

S. Stephen speaks of the “Tabernacle of the Testimony” as made

* Psalms xcix. 1.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

according to a figure revealed to Moses;* and the author of the letter to the Hebrews writes of the Tabernacle, and of the adjuncts of its ritual as "the copy and shadow of heavenly things" in a context which shows that he regards the "holy things" of the Old and New Testaments as standing to each other in the relation of shadow and substance.†

What is the antitype of the "tabernacle of the Testimony"?

XVI. The author of the letter to the Hebrews gives the answer, "Let us draw near with boldness unto the Throne of Grace," ‡ he cries, in a connection which makes it impossible to doubt that the image in his mind was that of the Hilasterion, the "Mercy Seat upon the Ark of the Covenant."

Hippolytus gives the same idea unmistakable expression. "Christ," he says, is the true Ark, outwardly the Logos, inwardly the Spirit." §

"The Tabernacle," say Cosmas Indicopleustes, in a phrase reflecting an inherited phase of thought "was an Image" (literally an impression, a print) "of the universe, its centre was the Ark, that is Christ." ||

XVII. An empty throne, as has been shown, was a current symbol of power, the especial nature of the wielder of which was indicated by the addition of attributes; when this emblem passed into Christian usage it took on a somewhat different colouring, characteristic both of hellenistic Christianity, and reminiscent of its semitic origin; it represented not a Throne of Power, but the Throne of Grace, an image related to the Mercy Seat of the Hebrew Tabernacle, as is shown by its association with the apocalyptic Living Things, which are the late equivalent of the Hebrew Cherubim.

XVIII. Fragments of antique workmanship are embedded in the Throne alone (much restored as it is), whereas the attributes associated with it are entirely of later date; it alone therefore is part of the original design, which probably closely resembled that of the Berlin ring. ¶

The thought originally embodied in the accessories has probably been retained and enlarged by the inventor of their present substitutes.

* Acts vii. 44.

† ch. viii. 5.

‡ ch. iv. 16.

§ Bonwetsch, 'Studien zu den Commentaren Hippolyts,' Leipzig, 1897, p. 37; Hippolytus, 'Works,' Berlin edition, iv. 24, p. 246.

|| Book V., Comment appended to a picture of Moses. Compare p. 173.

¶ Plate 34, No. 7.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XIX. THE CROSS.—The Mercy Seat was yearly sprinkled with blood, on the Day of Atonement. “Aaron shall take of the blood,” so ran the directions, “and shall sprinkle it . . . on the Mercy Seat . . . because of the uncleanness of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins.” *

S. Paul uses this blood-anointed Mercy Seat, † as an image of “the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a Mercy Seat, . . . by His blood.” ‡

“Christ, the Mercy Seat . . . by His blood;” such a phrase might well be the inspiration of an emblem consisting of a Throne, associated with a Cross.

XX. The same thought, that of the redemptive power of the Blood of Christ, is expressed by the author of the letter to the Hebrews, “if the blood of goats and bulls . . . sanctify . . . how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God—cleanse your conscience?” §

XXI. It would have been strange, if, as has been sometimes said, the Christian world hesitated for nearly three hundred years before it used the Cross as an emblem; if the disciples to whom S. Paul wrote, “the word of the Cross is to them that are perishing foolishness, but unto us it is the power of God,” || had waited until assured of the patronage of an Emperor’s mother before they dared to picture the instrument of their salvation.

A marked change, however, in the significance attached to its iconographic use resulted from the Finding of the Cross by Helena, and the enthusiasm and *élan* she put into its cult. After her day it was no longer suggested, but directly represented.

It occurs in the Catacombs among the emblems of the second century, ¶ and is chief among the prophetic fore-tokens which such writers as Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and others, were ingenious in discovering in the Old Testament narrative.

* Lev. xvi. 14, 16.

† The word in the Greek original is “Hilasterion.” The “propitiation” of the English text, though supported by scholars, involves the loss of the concrete image S. Paul had in his mind, and with it, its Jewish local colour. Wycliff and Luther translated it Mercy Seat (Gnadenstuhl) both here, and in the passage quoted from the letter to the Hebrews.

‡ Rom. iii. 25.

§ Heb. ix. 14.

|| 1 Cor. i. 18.

¶ See Wilpert, ‘La Croce sui Monumenti delle Catacombe,’ ‘Bull. di Arch. Crist.,’ 1902, pp. 1–14.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

After Justin Martyr had enumerated no less than sixteen Old Testament prototypes of the Cross in his argument with the Jew Tryphon he cries triumphantly, "Through the power of this mystery have people from among all nations been turned from the adoration of idols and of demons to the worship of the true God."*

XXII. THE CROWN AND PURPLE MANTLE.—Associated with the Cross are a Crown, and a folded Purple Mantle, insignia of power.

Hellenistic kings frequently exchanged such gifts in recognition of their common equality as heads of peoples; and as pledges of friendship.

"We send thee a purple mantle, and a golden crown; that thou mayest hold faithfully to us, and be our friend," so writes King Alexander of Syria,† to the Maccabæan Prince Jonathan.‡

XXIII. To assume the purple (*purpuram sumere*) was synonymous in common parlance with the assumption of imperial power.

Remarkable and to the point are the reflections commonly ascribed to Johannes Damascenus, on the Purple of the Son of God, in his writing in defence of the use of pictures in churches.

"I believe," he writes, "in a God who is bodiless, invisible, formless, and intangible: but I believe in Him," he continues, "as one who has bowed Himself to His creation (*κτίσις*).

I adore (*προσκυνῶ*) therefore God alone.

"When I adore the King, I adore his purple also (*ἀλουργίς*), not indeed as a garment, but as a symbol of his Divine Majesty.

"For the purple is the flesh of the Son of God. In it did the invisible God become the visible Logos. I do not seek after a visible image of the invisible God, but I picture God as He revealed Himself in the flesh.

"What is unlawful, or unchristian therein?"§

XXIV. SUPPEDANEUM.—Before the Throne is a prominent footstool, or suppedaneum.

A prominent footstool is always placed before antique representations of enthroned Princes; of this there are several examples on this

* 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xci.

† 154-150 B.C.

‡ 1 Macc. x. 20, also verse 62; xiv. 43; 2 Macc. iv. 23.

§ Migne, 'Patr. S. G.,' xciv.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

very Arch: in the compositions in which Herod occurs, and a very remarkable instance in The Adoration of the Magi, in which the footstool of the Throne on which the Child sits is, as here, richly decorated with precious stones.

XXV. Upon the footstool lies a roll, sealed with seven seals. Such a roll bound with seven ribbons, each sealed with the seal of one of the seven witnesses the law enjoined, and accompanied by his signature, could be nothing but a will.*

The author of the letter to the Hebrews writes, "He is the Mediator of a New Covenant . . . the promise of the eternal inheritance. . . . Where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. . . . Even the first Covenant hath not been dedicated without blood.†

In the Revelation to S. John of the Last Things, a "strong Angel" cries "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof?" And the four and twenty Elders respond, "Worthy art Thou to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God Kingdom and Priests; and they reign upon the earth.‡

This Roll, sealed with seven Seals, and placed beneath the Cross, is therefore the Testament of Christ, the emblem and pledge of the kingdom bought with His blood, a kingdom—as the seals are still unbroken—not yet inherited. It is the pledge therefore of good things to come.

XXVI. S. PETER AND S. PAUL.—Compositions in which the figures of S. Peter and of S. Paul are placed on either side of an emblem of Christ, or of His person, are frequent in early Christian art.§

In the apse of the basilica of Junius Bassus (now destroyed) an enthroned Christ was represented with S. Peter and S. Paul on His right and left; associated with this picture was this inscription, "PETRUS ET PAULUS PRAEDICANT ET DOCENT DE REGNO (dei)." ||

Nor was it in Rome alone that churches were thus decorated.

* "Das sogenannte prätorische Testament musste auf der Außenseite und zwar auf den Fäden womit die Urkunde verschnürt war, die Siegel der sieben obligaten Zeugen, und zur Zeite derselben deren Namen tragen." Zahn, 'Einleitung in das Neue Testament,' vol. ii., p. 600.

† Heb. ix. 15-18.

‡ Rev. v. 2, 9, 10.

§ See Garrucci, *passim*.

|| De Rossi, 'Bull. di Arch. Crist.,' 1871, p. 15.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Basil the Great wrote to Julian the Apostate that *in conformance with a practice dating from Apostolic times* representations of St. Peter and of St. Paul were to be found in all Christian churches.*

In the Greek and Oriental churches these two Apostles were naturally not selected and mutually associated because they both worked and died in Rome; but, as in the Church of S. Pudenziana, on account of their identification with the two congregations, Hebrew and Gentile, of which the early Christian community was composed.

XXVII. Although it is undeniable that not only the thought of the calling of the Gentiles to be the people of God is the chief inspiration of the decorations of the Nave, and still more strikingly so of the Arch, which are both characterised by an undercurrent of bitterness against the Jews, as unmistakable and almost as outspoken as that expressed in the writings of Justin Martyr, yet the presence of the two Apostles would seem to show that the theologian who planned this vast cycle of didactic decorations wished to express his recognition of both elements in the church; of the members of the; "Ecclesia ex Circumcisione," as well as those of the "Ecclesia ex Gentibus."

In the current iconography of representations of the princes of the Apostles standing on either side of the enthroned Christ, Peter and Paul turn to their Lord with gestures of adoration, or receive rolls into their reverently veiled hands. It is unusual that they should stand as here, nearly *en face* and motionless, as guards, on either side of a symbol representing Christ.

No conclusion, however, can be based on their postures, as in their present state these figures are post-Renaissance products, executed in stucco.

XXVIII. THE LIVING CREATURES.—It has been pointed out that the four Beasts about the Throne are purely apocalyptic in conception. They are derived from the Cherubim of the Ark, and from the Living Creatures of Ezekiel, and must not be mistaken for the later symbols of the Evangelists, with which a book is always associated. Here, as throughout the Old Testament, they are the visible accessories of invisible Deity.†

XXIX. This complex emblem of a transcendental idea is not

* Epist. 360.

† See p. 305.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

placed above the pictures of the Arch, but is sunk between the representations of The Virgin-Birth and of The Repudiation of Christ; it would seem that the artist intended to suggest the descent of the Divine Logos into regions of terrestrial life.

XXX. The place it occupies is that which would naturally have been given to The Nativity. But the birth of Christ as a material fact is an incident extraneous to the thought embodied in this cycle; not so, however, the idea of The Incarnation; which as a mystery lay outside the range of permitted pictorial expression, and could therefore only be given veiled expression.

XXXI. The rigorous concealment of mysteries was a stringent rule of the early Church, says a modern commentator of the Liturgy of the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitution.*

“The Apostles and Fathers,” says S. Basil, “who from the beginning gave prescriptions concerning the Church, guarded the dignity of the mysteries in secrecy and silence.”†

Athanasius writes in the same spirit: “It is not permitted to describe the mysteries to those that are not initiated.”‡

A church was not the place of assemblage of tried members or initiates only, but of Catechumens and of Energumens, and of Penitents also; these were dismissed from the building before the ritualistic celebration of the *mysteria*.

This principle, which was rigidly enforced, naturally dominated not only liturgical practice, but also the decoration of buildings designed as places of public worship.

XXXII. The idea which the artist aimed at evoking in this symbol was composite: That of Christ, the redeeming Logos, incarnate, crucified, ascended, reigning, and to return; this he synthesised in an emblem consisting of a Throne, the Roman symbol of power modified however in harmony with the religious tradition of the Semitic founders of Christianity into reminiscence of the Hebrew Mercy Seat; associated with it are symbols of Power and Sacrifice, the Crown and Purple Mantle of Empire; and the Cross, the Christian symbol of Redemption; the Roll, the promise of an inheritance; the mystic Living Creatures, emblems borrowed by S. John from Ezekiel's Vision, and from the Cherubim

* Cresswell (London, 1900), p. 16.

† ‘De Spiritu Sancto,’ 27.

‡ ‘Apologia contra Arianos,’ 11.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of the ancient Hebrew Mercy Seat. On either side of this emblem of mixed Oriental and Roman descent are the figures of the representatives of the Churches drawn from the Jews, and from the Gentiles, which serve as *traits d'union* between a symbol of severely transcendental significance, and the scenes from human life in which it is embedded.

XXXIII. A tendency to speak and think in symbols is characteristic of the religious modes of expression, both Pagan and Christian, of the first centuries of our era, and was the result of the mystic nature of the Oriental religions then in vogue, and of the practice of veiling the intimate teachings which were revealed to the initiated only.

Hence the Christian symbols of the Dove, the Anchor, the Good Shepherd, the Fish, or the cryptogram IXΘΥΣ, and others.

XXXIV. It may at first sight seem strange that, whereas these symbols are of constant occurrence in early Christian art, the Mercy Seat—the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant, and therefore the synthetic symbol of the idea of Old Testament history as prophetic of the events of the New Dispensation—occurs for the first time on the Arch of S. Maria Maggiore, and does not recur for some centuries, and then with a profoundly modified significance.

XXXV. The cause of this seeming anomaly probably lies in the paucity of material, time and man have spared, and in their nature.

Knowledge of the Christian art of the four first centuries is chiefly derived from the decorations of burial vaults, and of sarcophagi, which naturally consist in great part of the cyclic representation of subjects connected with the hope of a future life ; that is to say, firstly, of such Old Testament subjects as are susceptible of interpretation as allegories, or rather, as pre-intimations of the Resurrection : such as the story of Jonah, or of the Three Jews in the fiery furnace ; secondly, of representations of the miracles of Christ, and of scenes from His Passion grouped about a symbol of the Resurrection, both testimonies to His dominion over nature ; ideal cycles, which are incongruous with the thought of which this symbol is the expression,—that of Christ the Mediator between God and Man, prefigured in the ancient Hebrew Mercy Seat.



CHAPTER IV

THE REPUDIATION OF CHRIST BY THE JEWS. SIMEON'S PROPHECY.

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION : (a) Such portions as are antique in conception and execution ; (b) antique in conception only, but not in execution ; (c) interpolations.
- COMMENTARY (III.-XXIV.) :—
- III. Ostensible subject, not the Purification of the Virgin, not the Circumcision, but the Presentation.
- IV. The true subject-matter represented common to the three incidents pictured.
- V. The point of view adopted, not historic, but didactic, as in Nave.
- VI. The inimical attitude of the hierarchical procession stands for the repudiation of Christ by the Jewish Priesthood.
- VII. The Temple ; the decoration of its pediment.
- VIII. De Rossi. Garrucci. Ainalof.
- IX. Roma. Floral architectonic decorations. Water-escapes.
- X. Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.
- XI. Justin Martyr's Comment.
- XII. Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.
- XIII. Ælia Capitolina.
- XIV. The Christian interpretation of contemporary events.
- XV. "Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."
- XVI. Justin Martyr. Barnabas.
- XVII. The significance of the substitution here of a pagan temple for that of Jehovah, generally intelligible in the second century.
- XVIII. Roma, not Jupiter Capitolinus, represented on the pediment.
- XIX. Templum Romæ et Veneris.
- XX. The downfall of the Jews, and the exaltation of the Gentiles.
- XXI. The Flight into Egypt historically the result of the Visit of the Magi to Herod.
- XXII. Possible apocalyptic interpretation.
- XXIII. The Flight of the Woman. The Two Doves.
- XXIV. Summary.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

THE REPUDIATION OF CHRIST BY THE JEWS. SIMEON'S PROPHECY.

Plate 35 ; Plate 36, No. 1 ; Plates 37, 38, and 39.

DESCRIPTION.—This picture, of which the ostensible subject is the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, is the most peopled on the Arch.

It consists of three parts: (1) of a scene which occurs in the Atrium of a Temple, (2) of a Temple, of which the pediment is decorated with a colossal figure, (3) of a ruined fragment consisting of the figure of an Angel, and of dim suggestions of a foot, and draperies in movement.

A long row of arches springing from Ionic columns forms the background of the first scene, and characterises it as taking place in the Atrium of a Temple, clearly the Temple of Jerusalem.

The Virgin carrying the Child, preceded by Joseph, and accompanied by three Angels, advances from the left, towards the centre of the picture ; the Christ is recognised by Anna, and by Simeon who moves impetuously forward to hail Him, his outstretched hands veiled in his pallium.

Behind him is a long procession of Priests and Levites, who form a living barrier between the Holy Family and the Temple, to which they point.

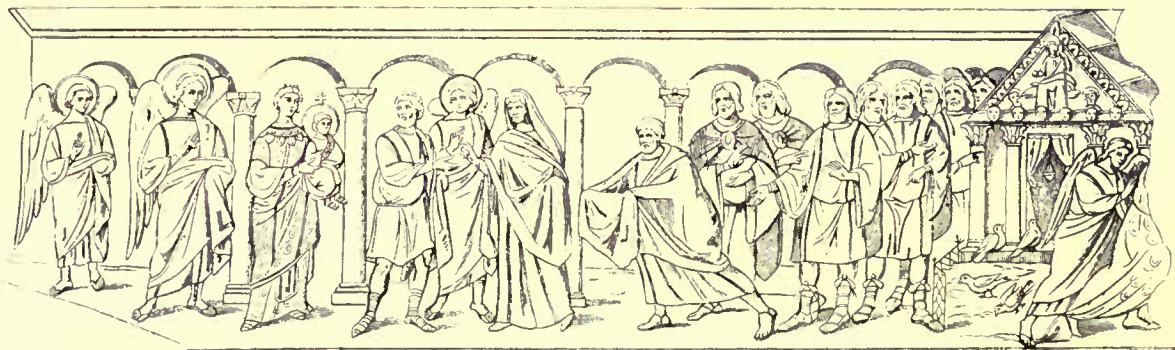
THE VIRGIN.—The Virgin, who holds the Child aloft, as if for acclamation, wears a white tunic with wide white sleeves, fastened at the wrist by a purple band ; a dalmatica and a palla contabulata of cloth of gold ; jewels in her hair ; pearls in her ears ; and a massive necklace set with gems about her throat.

The Child wears a long tunic (*tunica talaris*) with purple clavi ; white pallium ; and red shoes ; a transparent pale blue nimbus, enclosed by a dark blue line surmounted by a red equilateral cross, encircles His head. His right hand is raised in dignified speech.

JOSEPH.—It is unnecessary to discuss this figure, which is not antique, but by the hand of some late and probably post-Renaissance artist.

ANGELS.—Like a king's guard accompanying the Holy Family are three Angels (originally doubtless four, as in the other pictures of this series) ; two of them stand behind the Virgin, one leads the way as herald ; and it is likely that the modern column, which, together with its background, separates the figure of Mary from that of Joseph,

1.



3.



2.



4.



6.



5.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

replaces the fourth, which probably at the time of Cardinal Pinelli's restorations was ruined past the possibility of renovation, and was therefore swept away.

These Angels are characterised, as in the foregoing picture, as winged heavenly Beings. In type and dress they resemble their brethren of the Annunciation, and, like them, each of their heads is enclosed by a light blue nimbus.

Immediately opposite Joseph is the dignified figure of Anna, the Prophetess, in long purple-brown tunic with dark clavi, her purple pallium drawn over her head. Traces of white beneath it show that, like Sarah, Leah, and others, she wore a married woman's cap. The proportions of this fine figure are such as occur in second- and third-century representations of women in the Catacombs.

SIMEON.—Behind Anna is Simeon, a white-bearded, white-headed old man, with strong clear-cut features, who moves eagerly forward to receive the long-looked for Child into his reverently veiled hands. His humble and eager gesture contrasts with the indifference and antagonism of the Priests behind him. He wears the tunica talaris, and pallium, decorated at the corner by a figure resembling an inverted L.

PROCESSION OF PRIESTS.—This procession, which advances from behind the Temple, from the immediate precincts of which it is separated by a gilt railing, consists of Priests and Levites. All have long beards and full hair, falling to their shoulders in the oriental fashion.

The dress of the Priests consists of a white girded tunic, with wide white sleeves, and dark purple mantle, fastened on the breast by a large round brooch; * that of the Levites, of a girded white linen tunic, with purple clavi. A certain racial resemblance connects this long line of faces, different as they are; the first two, fine and serious, are followed by two of which the racial peculiarities are recorded by the hand of hatred, their noses are thick and overhanging, their mocking lips coarse and sensuous; beyond them again is a beautiful Medusa-like youth, with an expression of nameless horror frozen onto his face.

The realism in the characterisation of these Hebrews is paralleled by that of approximately contemporary representations of barbarians on the Columns of Marcus Aurelius. †

* Compare Jethro, Plates 15 and 16; Melchizedek, Plate 5, No. 1. † Plate 36, Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The general expression of this group of Jews is that of negation, heightened in some instances into repudiation. They point with similar gestures to the Temple beyond them, which, the scene depicted being what it is, can be no other than the Temple of Jerusalem.

TEMPLE.—A rectangular building, with a gabled roof of gilt bronze, pediment, frieze, columned portico, and curtained entrance-doorway, in which hangs a burning lamp.

The decorations of the pediment are polychromatic; its whole height is occupied by a gigantic seated female figure, holding a globe in her right hand and a lance in her left; the face is young, and of noble type, the head helmeted; clearly a Roma. The cushioned seat on which she is seated has no back.

On either side of this figure, which is boldly executed in cubes of yellow, green, brown, and black, and represents a gilt bronze statue, are green and yellow architectonic floral motifs.

The upper borders of the pediment are decorated with coarsely executed acanthus leaves. Along the sloping roof of the portico are water-escapes, in the form of masks, whether human, or leonine it is impossible to say.

In front of the Temple, divided from the rest of the composition by a gilt railing, is a green lawn-like enclosure, on which lie the bodies of two dead grey doves.

On the green steps which lead to the sanctuary are two living white doves: they are rendered prominent by their disproportionate size, which proves them to be more than mere accessories.

Beyond the Temple-precincts are the remains of two figures: an Angel in rapid motion with well-preserved head; and a suggestion of the foot and skirt of a woman, the position and movement of which indicate flight.

CONDITION.—Antique both in conception and execution are only (*a*) the figure of Anna; (*b*) the Temple on the extreme right, its lawn and accessories, and the Angel in front of it.

The figure of Anna is untouched by the hand of the restorer; it is, however, much injured, some of the cubes of which it is composed have fallen out, others are slightly dislocated; its surface is rough, and dull with the dust of ages.

The temple and accessories are antique; exception being made of

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the gilt wall of the portico, the gilt railings, and the capitals of the columns, which seem to have been re-executed by a mediæval artist.

The execution of the head of the Roma is characteristic of the earliest stratum of art in this basilica: it is impressionist in style; the effects aimed at are produced in the directest and simplest manner possible. The eyes consist of two quadrangular black cubes only, the nose of two square cubes; the mouth is not indicated at all, but the massing of light and shade is so skilful that at a distance it is not missed.

This figure, which represents a gilt-bronze statue, is built up of large yellow, green, of a deep rich shade, grey-brown, and black cubes; the ornaments on either side are of the same green and yellow cubes; the three cubes of the pistil are of slightly lighter yellow cubes. The spear consists of two vertical lines of yellow, and of red cubes.

The cubes which form the head of the Angel in front of the Temple are considerably dislocated, and their surface rough; the head is, however, entirely free from interpolations.

(*b*) Antique in sentiment, but not in actual execution (which seems to be post-Renaissance), are the heads of Simeon and of the Jews; so antique in spirit and form are they that it is probable that either a considerable part of the original must have survived at the time of their remodelling, or that the artist was guided by good copies.

He had evidently observed the keen glance of the antique heads in this church, and the white glittering of their eyes, for he reproduces this impression in his restorations of the heads of the Jews, sometimes even adhering to the "Sicinian canon," according to which a vividly flashing eye was expressed by two rectangular cubes, one black, one white. But he has lost this effect in Simeon's eye, which is composed of five cubes. The result of this use of more, and subtler gradations of colour is charming if the head be seen from a short distance, but the effect is nil if it be seen from the pavement of the church, whereas in antique heads the gleaming eye is effective even when the face is dimly discernible.

The head of Simeon in all probability closely resembled that of Abraham, in *The Parting of Abraham and Lot*, but the technique in which it is executed is strikingly and characteristically different.*

* Compare Plate 37 with Plate 8.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The lighted bridge of Abraham's nose consists of four cubes only, Simeon's of six; three cubes form Abraham's eyebrow, nine that of Simeon; the shadowed side of Abraham's nose consists of three cubes, Simeon's of thirteen; Abraham's eye is of two cubes, one black, one white, Simeon's of five, one large quadrangular black, one small blue-grey, two pale buff, and one quadrangular white.

The three Angels of the guard are much disfigured by repairs, and interpolations; their draperies are largely executed in stucco.

Although the figure of the Virgin is executed in mosaic, and is well preserved, it is not possible to accept it as original; for whereas those of Simeon, Anna, and the Priests are vivid, and the Angels in the picture below emotional, it is dull and heavy as a gilt and painted wooden doll. Nor is this the result of the Virgin's cumbersome cloth of gold draperies; for, although Zipporah's dress is of the same material and fashioning, the main characteristic of her personality is its birdlike alertness, and sensitive spontaneity; she is cast in the same psychological mould as Simeon and Anna.*

On detailed examination at close quarters it will be found that, as in *The Annunciation* so here, the Virgin's figure has been ruthlessly remodelled in the taste of a later period; in both cases this may be the result of the restorer's desire to bring the Virgins of the Arch into harmony with the Theotokos of the entrance wall.†

The shadows of the draperies are of a warm grey-green, the colour of white in shadow, but not of shadowed gold: here and there spots and bands of white occur, which are only explicable as survivals of white draperies, a band across the breast for instance, another along the lower border of the gold mantle, and the whole of the pendant end in front. It is probable that this dress, like that of the Virgin in *The Mystery of the Virgin-Birth*, was white originally.‡

JOSEPH.—The figure of Joseph has been remodelled, his head and legs completely renewed, probably at the time of Cardinal Pinelli; for the manner in which the light and shade are massed, the heavy and somewhat plebeian structure of the head, the muscular development of the legs, are peculiarities which point to the Roman art of the time of the Carracci.

ATRIUM.—Nowhere else in this cycle is a realistic architectural background used for the purpose of localising the scene pictured.

* See Plate 15.

† See p. 28.
318

‡ See p. 282.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Scenes are localised in classic art, and throughout the decorations of this church, by a symbol, and not by a realistic background: in early Greek art, speaking generally, by a personification; in Roman art and in this cycle by an accessory, generally a conventional representation of a town; a seaport in *The Philosopher a Guide to Christ*; * a town representing Bethlehem in *The Interview of the Magi with Herod*; † a Temple, Abraham's mystic home, the Church, in *The Separation of Abraham and Lot*, ‡ etc. Two of the columns seem to have been restored at a later date, they are executed in cubes the colour of which is not that of those used in the other columns, their bases come too low in the picture, which they cut up; they give a false isolation to Joseph, the Angel, and Anna; and put Simeon into unnatural connection with the hostile procession behind him. § The column behind the Virgin and Joseph probably replaces the missing fourth Angel. It is probable that this colonnade is a Renaissance addition.

COMMENTARY.—III. On the right and top of the Arch, corresponding to *The Annunciation of the Virgin-Birth* on the left, is a representation of what appears at first sight to be the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*. The space between these two scenes, which would naturally have been occupied by a picture of the *Nativity*, had the series been historical, is occupied by a symbol—the *Mercy Seat*.

The ostensible subject of this composition is one of the many ceremonial acts connected with child-birth prescribed by the Jewish law; || not, however, the purification of a woman thirty-three days after delivery; nor the circumcision, as has been sometimes said, for this rite, which was preliminary to reception into the Jewish community, and an affirmation of personal adherence to the Law of Moses, took place when the child was only eight days old.

Circumcision was, as is well known, the occasion of a dividing of ways in the primitive Christian community; some, the Jewish section, holding it binding on all, even on Gentile proselytes; others, like S. Paul, strenuously supporting the opposite view; it was, however, recognised on all hands that those who refused to submit to it stood outside the orthodox Jewish community.

* Plate 44, No. 1.

† Plate 47, No. 2.

‡ Plate 8.

§ These details can be better discerned on the photographic reproduction Plate 35, than on the line engraving Plate 36, No. 1.

|| Leviticus xii.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

In the only passage in which S. Paul refers to the Virgin, he classes the birth of Christ and circumcision together as necessary to the redemption of Jew. "When the fulness of time came," he writes, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, *born under the law*, that He might redeem them which were under the law." *

Filling, therefore, so important a *rôle*, it would not have been unnatural had it been pictured here.

Nor was its subject-matter prohibitive, as is proved by numerous masterpieces of later art belonging to phases of taste as diverse as those represented by the authors of the Utrecht Psalter, by Bellini, by Mantegna, and by Paolo Veronese. Indeed, its absence, in a vast cycle of which the leading thought is the supersession of the Synagogue, or the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*, by the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*, is surprising.

Nevertheless, it is not the Circumcision which is represented here, but the Presentation—a very subordinate rite; for although the law originally prescribed the dedication of all the first-born to the service of God, this command was afterwards commuted, and the Tribe of Levi was accepted as a national equivalent. †

IV. And yet the large proportion of the limited space to be decorated shows that if taken in connection with the two subjects with which it is here associated, it was an important factor in the thought the series was designed to express.

V. The mere association here of three scenes which are chronologically and geographically independent of each other (the Presentation, a Temple with a figurative pediment, and a Flight), suffices to prove that the picture was not conceived naturalistically, but didactically, as is the composition by which it is preceded, and as are the series of the Nave.

The artist has lent especial prominence to two of the numerous figures of which this composition consists: to the Prophetess Anna and to Simeon, who hastens to do homage to Him whom the Virgin solemnly elevates, like a young king to be acclaimed; ‡ the eager reverence of the old man's gesture is accentuated by its contrast with the indifference and hostility of the procession of priests behind Him. §

VI. There is no hint in the simply historical narrative of the Gospels of the inimical attitude of the Priesthood; it is the artist's

* Gal. iv. 4-5.

† Numbers viii. 16-18.

‡ Plate 37

§ Plate 38



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

personal invention, and as such important; for if he invented it he must have done so with intention; and that intention must have been the furtherance of the purpose for which he composed the picture. Its significance is unmistakable: it stands for the official rejection of Christ by the Hebrew hierarchy; it reflects Simeon's words, "Behold this Child is set for the falling . . . of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against."*

VII. The procession of Priests, curiously enough, is not closely associated with the Temple; not only does it advance from behind it, instead of issuing from its gates, but is actually separated from the sacred precincts by a gilt railing.

So slight is the relation of these Priests to the Temple of which they are the official representatives, that the doubt arises whether the building can be the Temple of Jerusalem.†

This doubt is heightened by the character of the decoration of its pediment, which consists of a colossal draped figure, wearing a helmet, and bearing a globe and spear.‡ It is impossible that the Jehovah of the Jews could be thus represented.

VIII. De Rossi not only interpreted this central figure as an enthroned Christ, but recognised the heads of SS. Peter and Paul in the floral decorations on either side.

Garrucci went even further; he identified the lions' heads which serve as water spouts to the portico as the heads of martyrs.

"On pourra consulter," so writes de Rossi, "à propos de la façon dont le Temple et les portiques de Salomon sont représentées ici l'article que j'ai écrit dans le 'Bull. d'Arch. Crist.', 1882, p. 152, où j'ai comparé la scène présente avec la perspective du temple de Jérusalem tracée sur un précieux verre judaïque.

"La façade de l'édifice est composée de quatre colonnes soutenant un fronton triangulaire, qui est orné de l'image du Sauveur, assis entre les bustes nimbés des princes des apôtres.

"L'artiste a évidemment imité la façade d'une église chrétienne, et a fait comme l'auteur des portes de Sainte Sabine, qui, dans la scène de Zacharie, a mis dans le fond une église surmontée d'une croix gemmée, à la place du temple de Jérusalem.

"Cet anachronisme, qui nous met en possession d'un document

* Luke ii. 34.

† Plate 39.

‡ *Ibid.*

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

positif de la manière dont le front extérieur des basiliques chrétiennes était orné dans la première moitié du cinquième siècle, nous indique encore de quelles images sacrées on avait la coutume de l'enricher."*

IX. The identity of the central figure, which is obvious now that we publish an exact reproduction,† was difficult to divine when, badly lighted and dim with dust, it was seen from the dangerous roof of the baldacchino; such, however, were the conditions under which it was recognised by Professor Ainalof as a Roma of the well-known type.

X. But by what process of thought could the decorations of the Temple of such fanatical iconoclasts as the disciples of Moses be thus conceived?

XI. At the end of the second, or at the beginning of the third century, the date of the conception of these pictures, the City and Temple of Jerusalem no longer existed; they had been swept off the face of the earth.

XII. Only forty years after the death of Christ, the Temple was burnt by the soldiers of Titus (70 A.D.); and Jerusalem was laid so evel with the ground that Josephus says it was difficult to believe that the spot had once been populated.‡ Three towers of Herod's palace alone were spared, and at their feet the tenth Legion was permanently encamped.

XIII. Some fifty years later Hadrian declared the practice of circumcision illegal in his realms, in an edict which produced a bloody Jewish outbreak, a long guerilla war, the final victory of Rome, and the foundation by Hadrian, on the site of Jerusalem, of a Roman City, *Ælia Capitolina*, into which no Jew might enter on pain of death; and the *erection of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus* on the ploughed site of the national Jewish sanctuary.§

XIV. These events worked powerfully on the Christian imagination, for were they not the fulfilment of the prophetic words of Christ, who had foretold the erection of the "Abomination of Desolation" on the Holy Place, and had cited it as heralding His second coming in glory?||

Had He not wept over the ill-fated city, and cried, "The days shall

* 'Mosaici di S. Maria Maggiore,' p. 4.

† Plate 39.

‡ 'Bell. Jud.,' vii. 1; compare Schürer, 'Gesch. des jüd. Volkes,' 1901, vol. i., p. 649.

§ 135 A.D.

|| Matt. xxiv. 15.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, . . . and shall dash thee to the ground; . . . they shall not leave in thee one stone upon the other; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”*

XV. “Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”: this phrase synthesises the thought expressed in this representation of the rejection of Christ by the Temple hierarchy, the result of their action being the erection, on the sacred site, of a Temple to the titular deity of Rome, and the flight of Christ from the once Holy Land to that of the Gentiles.

XVI. Dramatic as was the spectacle of the national extinction of the people who had crucified Christ, and had cried, “His blood be on us, and on our children,” contemporary Christian imagination was even more impressed by the destruction of the Temple, the indispensable centre of the Jewish worship; the desecration of the Jewish sanctuary was interpreted as the unmistakable expression of the Divine will that the Hebrew ritual should cease.

Justin Martyr emphasises this point in a passage in his argument with Trypho, in which he asserts that the law of Moses was a temporary, and not a permanent ordinance, and therefore, its purpose served, was abrogated. “Let us discuss this together,” he says to Trypho, “whether it be possible to keep all the Mosaic ordinances now.”

“No,” Trypho hastens to reply; “it is no longer possible to sacrifice the lamb of the Passover, or to offer the goats ordained for the fast, or, in short, any of the other sacrifices.”†

Barnabas, in a letter characterised by the hostility of his times to the people who had forfeited the promises, exhorts his Christian hearers, “seeing the days are exceedingly evil, to inquire into the righteous judgments of God,” and to accept the signs of the times as teaching the absolute abrogation of the Hebrew sacrificial ritual. “These things,” he writes, “has God done away with, that through the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ men might offer themselves spiritually.” “In this,” he adds, “God has shown His foreknowledge and His goodness to usward, for He has manifested these things in order that we should not run as proselytes to the Jewish law.”‡

* Luke xix. 43, 44.

† ‘Dial. with Trypho,’ chap. xlvi.

‡ Ep. ii. 1-20.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Towards the end of his letter he speaks of the destruction of the Temple, and "of those miserable men, who, putting their trust in a building (as if it could be the habitation of God!), were deceived; for, as do the Gentiles, so they consecrated a Temple to God."*

He goes on to speak of its re-edification as the fulfilment of the prophecy, "'They that destroy this Temple even they shall rebuild it.' And so it has come to pass; in their wars it was destroyed by their enemies, and now the servants of their enemies rebuild it."

"Moreover," he adds, "it was foretold that the City, the Temple, and the People of Israel should be abandoned; for the Scripture saith, it shall be in the last days that the Lord will abandon unto destruction the people of His pasture, and their fold, and their tower. And the Word of the Lord has come to pass."†

This is clearly a comment on contemporary history made by a Christian spectator of the Jewish rebellion of the time of Hadrian, of the foundation of *Ælia Capitolina*, and of the erection of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

Justin Martyr's interpretation of the fall of the Jewish people is equally explicit, and more definitely hostile. After quoting the prophecy, "A ruler shall not depart from Judah . . . until that which is laid up for him shall come, and he shall be the desire of nations;" he says, "After the manifestation of Jesus Christ in your nation . . . you ceased to exist under your own king, your land was laid waste, and forsaken, like a lodge in a vineyard."‡

And again, "Circumcision according to the flesh . . . was given as a sign, that ye may be separated from all nations, and from us; and that ye alone may suffer what ye now justly suffer; that your land may be desolate; your cities burned with fire; that strangers eat your fruit in your presence, and not one of you may go up to Jerusalem . . . these things have happened unto you rightly and fairly, for you slew the Just One and His prophets before Him, and now you reject them that hope in Him . . . cursing in your synagogues those that believe in Christ."§

XVII. Such being the current second century Christian explanation of the downfall of the Jews, it is clear that the substitution of a pagan

* Chap. xii. 11.

‡ 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lii.

† Ep., chap. xii. and xv.

§ *Ibid.* chap. 16.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Temple here for that of the Jehovah of the Jews, in a representation of the repudiation of Christ by the Hebrew hierarchy would have been immediately intelligible to the contemporary Christian spectator as the significant juxtaposition of cause and effect.

XVIII. The Temple erected by Hadrian in Jerusalem was dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus; it is surprising therefore that its pediment should be here represented as adorned by a statue of Rome, and not by a Jupiter.

It may be that the artist purposed not to represent Hadrian's sacrilege, but to remind the spectator of the extinction of the Jewish nationality, to recall the *two* occasions on which Jerusalem was trodden under foot by Rome: in 70, when the Roman legionaries planted their ensigns in the court of the Temple, and saluted their leader as Imperator in the light of the still burning Holy of Holies; and again in 135, when the Roman city of Ælia Capitolina, into which no Jew might enter, arose on ploughed fields which once were Jerusalem.*

XIX. It would be interesting if the statue pictured on the pediment could be identified with that enshrined within Hadrian's great Roman Temple, the Temple of Venus and Rome; but unfortunately there is no evidence as to which of the many conceptions of the goddess that of Hadrian conformed. Figures of an amazonian character preponderate on coins previous to his reign; on later coins the type is that of an Athene, *i.e.*, of a seated female figure wearing a helmet, and bearing a lance, a conception therefore not dissimilar to that represented here.†

XX. The merciless insistence on the logic of history involved in this drastic juxtaposition of the rejection of Christ by the Jews with their subsequent tragic history is characteristic of the times, and is a result of the same train of thought which induced the artist to contrast the gloomy figure of the unloved Leah with the bride-like radiance of Rachel.

XXI. Associated with this Temple is a representation of The Flight into Egypt.

According to the Evangelical narrative this Flight was the direct

* Ælia Capitolina is thus named in the 'Geography' of Ptolemaus, on coins, on mile-stones, and on inscriptions. After Jerusalem became Christian under Constantine, it recovered its ancient name.

† Of a similar type are Roman statues, Plate 36, No. 2 (from the Villa Medici, Rome).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

result of the visit of the Magi to Herod, the subject of the following picture. Had the point of view from which this cycle was composed been historical, its creator would surely have associated these two incidents ; his pictures however being "Tendenzbilder," he was constrained to ignore chronology by the thought it was their *raison d'être* to express, which thought in this instance was that of the repudiation of Christ by the Jewish hierarchy.

XXII. He may, however, have been induced by another motive to associate the flight of a woman with the representation of the impious temple of Hadrian.

We have seen that these decorations were conceived by an artist whose imagination was powerfully affected by the mysterious and poetic visions recorded in the Apocalypse of S. John.*

In the account of the vision in which the Ark of the New Covenant is revealed to S. John a portent is described. "There was opened the Temple of God that is in heaven," it is written, "and there was seen in His temple the Ark of His Covenant . . . and a great sign was seen . . . a woman . . . And she was delivered of a son, a man-child, who is to rule all the nations . . . And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they may nourish her a thousand, three hundred, and three score days." †

It is also written that the Court of the Temple and the Holy City were destined to be abandoned "unto the nations," to be "trodden under foot forty and two months," the same period of time. ‡

The Church of the first and second centuries looked for the speedy Second Coming of Christ, and the reign of the Saints in Jerusalem.

"Do you really believe," asks Trypho of Justin, "that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and do you expect *your* people to be gathered there?"

"We know," answered Justin, "that there shall be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which shall then be rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged." §

And again he says : "There was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied by a revelation made to him, that those who believe in our Christ should dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem." ||

* See p. 305 and p. 309.

† Rev. xi. 19 ; xii. 1-6.

‡ Rev. xi. 2.

§ 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxx.

|| *Ibid.* chap. lxxxi.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

This Millennium, it was believed, would be precluded by the dominion of the Man of Sin, who should "speak words against the Most High," and "wear out all the Saints," whose lives should be "given into his hand, for a time, a times, and half a time,"* the same period of time, therefore, *i.e.*, three hundred and fifty years according to the ordinary Hebrew mode of computation, three and a half according to that of Justin Martyr.†

XXIII. We would tentatively connect this figure of a woman in flight (who in the first instance represents the Virgin) with the Woman of the Apocalypse, a personification of the Church.

This hypothesis is supported by a detail, which, trifling as it is, it would be unscientific to ignore, or to regard as a mere realistic accessory, for it was not the practice of antique artists to adorn their compositions with arbitrary trimmings, intended to please the eye, without appealing to the intelligence, especially in didactic pictures.‡

Within the Atrium of the Temple lie two dead doves, and on the steps which lead up to the sanctuary are two more, alive, and of a gleaming whiteness.

These birds are so unnaturally large that it is difficult to believe that they were designed as mere naturalistic accessories.

What are they? Why are they there?

They certainly do not represent the doves offered by Joseph, as has been suggested; neither is it possible to accept Garrucci's hypothesis that they are pets kept within the sacred precincts.

Doves in early Christian Art are the recognised symbols of Souls.

In the account of the Apocalyptic vision from which we have quoted, after it has been said that the Court of the Temple shall be abandoned to the nations for forty and two months, it is added: "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days," (again the same period of time) . . . "and the beast . . . shall overcome them . . . and kill them. And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is

* Dan. vii. 9-28.

† Justin says, "The times are now running on to their consummation, and he whom Daniel foretells would have dominion for a time, a times and half a time, is even already at the door, about to speak blasphemous things against the Most High."—'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xxxii.

‡ "Era costume che i animali sacri si lasciassero liberi nei recinti delle Basiliche." He refers in support of this view to Basil of Seleucia, 'De Vita S. Theclae,' lib. II., cap. 8, p. 152, ed. Pantin, 1608.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. . . . After the three days and a half," (always the same period of time), "the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet."*

If we are right in associating these doves which are twice represented in the Court of the Temple, once dead, and once alive, with this text, then they symbolise the two great martyrs of Jerusalem, James and Simeon, of whom the former suffered death at the hands of the Jews, the latter at those of the Romans.†

We would further connect this representation of the desecrated sanctuary with two dead doves and two live ones in its court, and in front of it a fugitive woman, with a phase of thought, current in the first centuries of our era, by virtue of which the very suffering of the "evil days" was converted into a source of hope, being regarded as the pledge and immediate precursor of the Second Coming of the Lord, who had said: "When ye see the Abomination of Desolation . . . standing in the Holy Place, (let him that readeth understand), . . . then shall be great tribulation . . . but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened . . . then shall all the tribes of the earth . . . see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."‡

This interpretation may seem fantastic—and we do not insist on it—it is, however, characteristic of the times, and is in harmony with the conception of the foregoing series, in which the history of Joshua is interpreted as foreshadowing the second coming of Christ in power.

XXIV. This composition, therefore, the largest, most complicated, and most peopled of those on the Arch, which seems at first sight to consist of a fortuitous collection of incidents, is in fact a complicated but single organism, a web, the variously coloured strands of which are skilfully interwoven in the expression of one thought, the repudiation of Christ by the Jews, and its national results.

* Rev. xi. 3-11.

† Euseb., Hist. Eccl. ii. 23. According to Hegesippus James was martyred within the precincts of the Temple, and buried near it. "And within no long time Vespasian laid siege." He also records the martyrdom of Simeon, "who ruled the Church of Jerusalem until the time of Trajan, when he was crucified."

‡ Matt. xxiv. 15-30.

1.



2.



3.



CHAPTER V

THE COMING OF THE ORIENT TO CHRIST

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (III.-XVI.) :—
- III. Popularity and form of other representations of the Adoration of the Magi.
- IV. Is it possible to recover the design of the ruined left side of this picture ?
- V. S. Matthew's account. That of the Pseudo-Matthew.
- VI. The Throne.
- VII. The Angels.
- VIII. The Magi.
- IX. The Sibyl.
- X. The *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*.
- XI. The Star of the Magi.
- XII. The utterances of the Sibyls. Their representations in Art.
- XIII. What does the present rococo Virgin replace ?
- XIV. Hystaspes. Justin Martyr. Clement of Alexandria. Ammianus Marcellinus.
- XV. The cult of Mithras.
- XVI. Cognate apse decorations. Catacombs. S. Pudenziana.

THE COMING OF THE ORIENT TO CHRIST.

Plate 31; Plate 40, No. 1; Plates 41, 42, and 43.

I. DESCRIPTION.—The elements of which this picture is composed are disposed rhythmically about a central figure, that of the Child Christ, seen *en face*, seated on a large throne, behind which stand four Angels, arranged in groups of two, on either side of a large and brilliant star. This well-preserved central group is constructed according to the laws of strict symmetry.

To the right of this throne is the figure of a seated woman, wrapped in the folds of a dusky palla—her head is inclined towards her raised right hand, an unfurled scroll is in her left; a very personification of brooding thought; beyond her are two Persians, obviously the

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Magi, who advance, their gifts in their hands, towards Christ. Behind them is a conventional representation of a town.

Not only has the remainder of the picture to the left of the throne perished, and been replaced by a valueless stucco composition in the taste of the eighteenth century, but the space it should cover has been encroached upon by a stucco pilaster (of the time of Cardinal Pinelli), which has the disastrous effect of robbing the figure of Christ of its central position, and thus of depriving the composition of the severe equilibrium of line and mass which should be its most striking artistic feature.

CHRIST.—Christ, pictured as a Child of some three or four years, is represented as seated on a singularly large jewelled throne with gemmed suppedaneum, which, however, His sandalled feet do not touch. He wears a long white tunic (*tunica talaris*) with purple clavi, a white pallium with purple clavi; His left hand is hidden in its folds, His right raised in the gesture of speech. His head is encircled by a diadem-like fillet, surmounted by an equilateral red-bordered cross, silhouetted upon the nimbus of pale gold which encircles His head.

THRONE.—The large quadrangular throne, a bisellium, consists of a broad golden framework, set with gems; a crimson curtain hangs at its back, and white draperies between the pillars which support the seat; these are surmounted by medallions, placed vertically, composed of large round blue stones encircled by pearls set in gold. The seat is filled by a large purple cushion.

The miraculous star is poised immediately above the Child's head; it is not represented as floating freely in the terrestrial sky, but as enclosed within its own supernatural atmosphere, indicated by the disc of deep blue in which it is embedded.*

ANGELS.—Behind the throne, visible to the waist only, are two pairs of Angels, separated by the star; their hands, raised in expressive gestures, witness to their sense of His dignity to Whom the Magi tender their allegiance, and of the world-embracing import of the ceremony at which they assist. Each of their heads is enclosed by a pale blue

* This thought—that of existence other than terrestrial—lies at the root of the aureola and nimbus. See the nimbus in *The Appearance of the Angels to Abraham* (Plate 7, No. 1), in *The Stoning of Moses* (Plate 22, No. 3b), *The Mercy Seat* (Plate 34, No. 1), and elsewhere.

1. 1. 1. 1.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

nimbus encircled by a white line. The Angels on the extreme right and left of the group have one wing each; the central Angels have none.* The colours of their draperies are clear, with brilliant tremulous lights; the sky behind them is blonde and translucent.

PERSONIFICATION ON THE RIGHT.—To the right of this central group is a small plain golden throne with an undecorated suppedaneum; on it is seated a woman in a pose indicative of profound thought; her person is enveloped in the rich folds of a sombre purple palla, which is drawn over her head; the ends of an unfurled scroll are lightly clasped in her left hand; her right is poised contemplatively near her face, which is young, beautiful, and characterised by an expression of glad surprise, as of one whose realised hopes exceed anticipation.†

This figure, which has been variously explained as a nurse, as a kind of lady-in-waiting attached to the person of the Virgin, and as a personification of the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*, is clearly a personification.

SEATED FIGURE ON THE LEFT.—Its pendant, on the left of the throne, is an interpolation, chiefly in stucco, of the time of Benedict XIV.; it is a blonde brightly-coloured eighteenth-century version of the Virgin of the Annunciation, and is intended to represent the Madonna, who is conceived as a graceful young woman seated with crossed legs on a bank, on which her left hand rests; she leans forward, and a little to the right, her head brightly turned to the left. The background of this trivial figure is executed in coloured stucco, and is overlapped by Pinelli's pseudo-classic stucco pilaster.

MAGI.—To the right of the central group are two Magi, who, bearing gifts, approach Christ reverently. They wear the national Persian dress, *i.e.*, tightly fitting trousers trimmed longitudinally with broad bands of jewelled insertions running from ankle to hip, in the one instance white, in the other purple; a belted tunic, the skirt of which is cut into deep indentations reaching from the waist to the knee; a richly jewelled band, resembling an ecclesiastical pallium, hangs from their shoulders; they also wear coloured Phrygian caps, and red shoes, both lavishly set with jewels.‡

They are not distinguished as Oriental by their dress only, so

* Compare p. 281 f.

† See Plate 43.

‡ Compare Plate 40, No. 1, with Plate 49

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

strikingly dissimilar to that of the Romans—but also by the characteristically sinuous movements of their supple bodies.

Behind them is a walled town, with towers, gateways, and temples, remarkable both for number and magnitude.

The background, as throughout this series, consists of a graduated chord of colour, passing from green, through yellow, into grey-blue.*

II. CONDITION.—Antique in this picture are, (1) the four Angels behind the throne; (2) their aerial background, (3) the star, (4) possibly the appurtenances of the throne, also the figure of the Child; His head, however, is of a later date, as is also the jewelled framework of both throne and suppedaneum.

The figure of the Sibyl is antique; her face, however, is executed in the same technique as is that of Simeon † and of the little Christ in the following picture, *Occidental Philosophy a Guide to Christ*; ‡ but although possibly post-Renaissance in execution, its antique character has not been lost. The original head was probably executed in a technique similar to that of the central Mage in *The Magi before Herod*; § or in that of the women in *The Separation of Abraham and Lot*.||

The figures of the Magi on the right have been robbed of all character by time, which has loosened the cubes of which they are composed, and has thus roughened their surface; they are also disfigured by numerous clumsy patchings and restorations. The golden nimbus, cross, and head of Christ are also of a late date.

The figure of the Madonna on the left of the throne (executed in stucco) is of the time of Benedict XIV.

Abstraction must be made of all patches, and touches of gold; also of the wings of the Angels. It is obvious that these Angels, two of whom are wingless, and two of whom have only one wing each, were originally conceived as wingless; the restorer desirous of bringing them into harmony with the other Angels of this series, whose figures, being isolated, were more easily tampered with, was constrained to trim the edges of the *group* with wings; hence the physiological and iconographical anomaly which at present meets the eye.¶

The heads of these Angels are executed in the same manner, and show the same habits of visualisation, as do those in *The Passage of the*

* Compare Plate 24.

§ Plate 49.

† Plate 37.

|| Plate 8.

‡ Plate 44, No. 1.

¶ Compare p. 281 f.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Red Sea;* as there, the cubes used are large, the massing of light and shade bold; the technique, however, is unique in so far that grey, which is used elsewhere to modify the crudity of the brick reds and oranges, is absent; the flesh tints, therefore, have a roughness of colouring unique in this cycle. It is probable that these heads were shaken to bits by some disaster, and carelessly put together again, for the cubes of which they are composed are antique, but their present arrangement seems fortuitous. Some of the high lights have fallen out.

In spite of these defects they are among the most expressive on the Arch, and the most grandiose; there is something terrible in the awe-struck attention with which these supernatural powers watch the unfolding of events, witness the fulfilment of primeval prophecy, the coming of the East to Christ.

Very different is their tragic and brooding aspect to that of the radiant Being who is present when the Wise find Christ, not by the gloomy way of abstinence and prophetic ecstasy, but by the smiling path of intellectual illumination.

COMMENTARY.—III. The representation of The Adoration of the Magi here differs radically from any other Christian rendering of a subject, the popularity of which is proved by its frequent repetition in the Catacombs, in the frescoes and mosaics of churches, and in the reliefs of sarcophagi and ivories.

This popularity, which seems to have been immediate, so early is the date at which the disposition of the figures became fixed and typical, is probably due to its subject, the coming of the Gentiles to Christ.

From the beginning it was characterised by certain invariable elements. The Virgin was pictured in profile, the Child on her knees; the Magi, who always wear the peculiarly-fashioned Persian dresses, as approaching, one behind the other, with trays, on which gifts are laid, in the still prevailing Oriental fashion, in their eager outstretched hands.†

The dress of the Orientals is the only detail in which the Sicinian mosaic conforms to the traditional type; in all else it differs. The Child Christ, seen *en face*, sits alone on the throne, on either side of which Personifications are seated. The Virgin is not represented at all.

IV. Unfortunately, the picture is not complete, the left wing has

* Compare Plates 41 and 42 with Plate 20.

† Plate 40, No. 3.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

perished, and has been replaced by an interpolation of the eighteenth century.

Indeed, so completely has this part of the picture been destroyed that its hypothetic reconstruction would have been impossible, were it not that the remaining two-thirds (of which the composition is intact) are of such a character as to predicate a composition with two wings arranged symmetrically on either side of a centre. As what has perished was the complement, both literary and artistic, of what has survived, it is legitimate to hope that when an understanding of what still exists has been attained, it may serve as a basis on which what is lost may be mentally reconstructed.

V. The event pictured is described by S. Matthew, who writes of the Magi, that "the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was . . . and they came into the house, and saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him, and opening their treasures they offered unto Him gifts."* The same account is repeated in the Pseudo Evangelium Matthaei, with the additional statement that the "Child was seated on His mother's knees."†

Nothing could be further from these historical narratives than the scene as pictured here, which is certainly not conceived as a fragment of realistic history, as the presence of the Personifications alone suffice to prove, but as the embodiment of a thought.

VI. The throne on which Christ is seated is of abnormal size and magnificence.

Very simple in comparison with it are the thrones of Roman Emperors on reliefs of the time of Trajan, and of Marcus Aurelius; on the Arch of Constantine; or that of the Egyptian princess in the Nave of this very church.‡

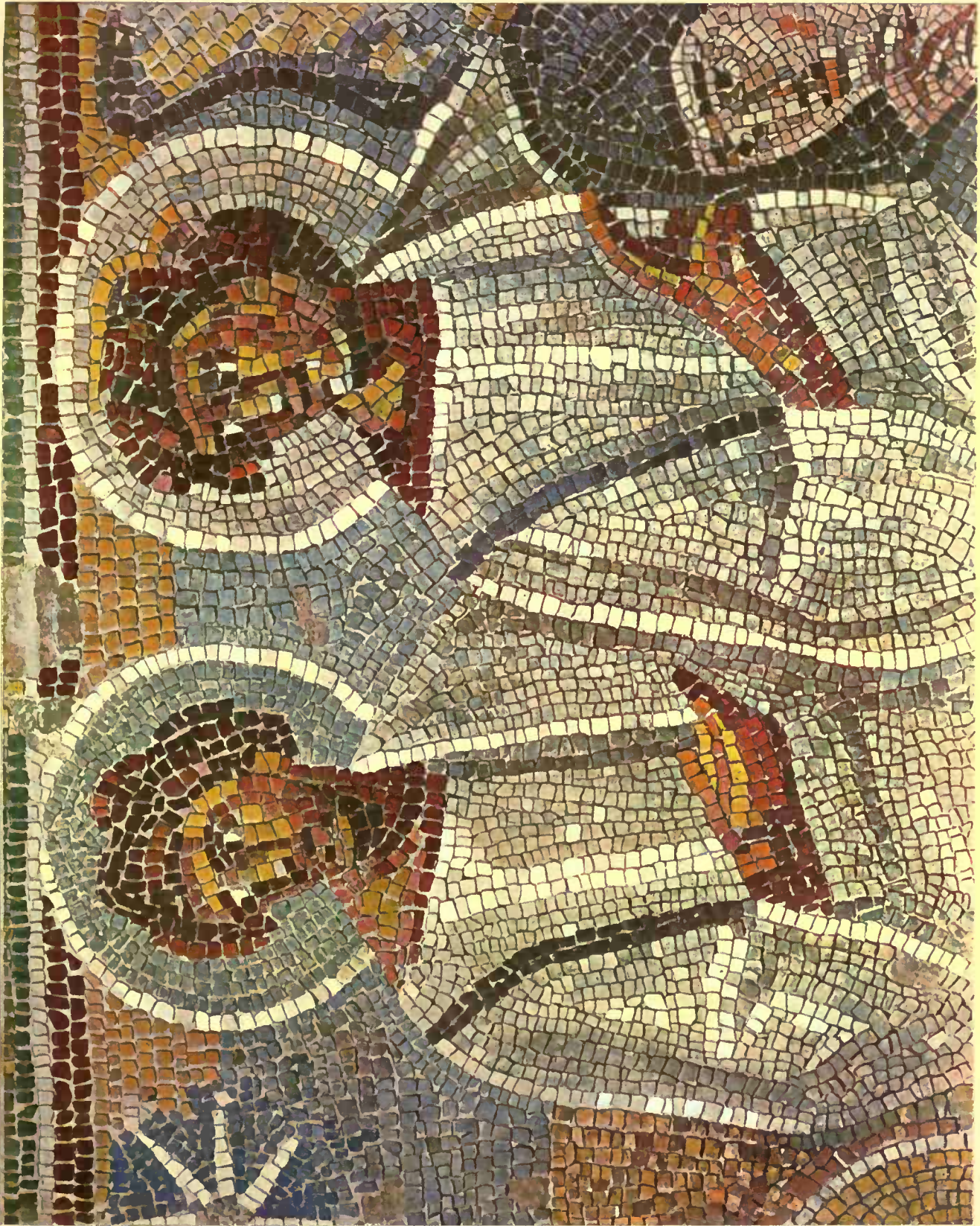
It is difficult to find its parallel in magnificence even in later Byzantine art, the art *par excellence* of hieratic luxury.

Ainaloff compares it to the throne in the Kosmas Indicopleustes of the Vatican, and to those of the Syrian manuscript of the Laurentiana, thrones which are only about half as wide as this. He also brings it

* Matth. ii. 9-11.

† Compare Plate 40, No. 3, from the Catacombs of Pietro e Marcellino, ascribed by Mons. J. Wilpert to the first half of the third century.

‡ See Plate 14, No. 1.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

into connection, and in our opinion more correctly, with those in the illustrated Manuscript of the Iliad of the Ambrosian Library* for thrones of this type existed long before Byzantine art, with which they are too often exclusively connected.

A throne of considerable size, a bisellium, dating from the beginning of our era, is represented on the cameo of the Vienna Gallery on which Augustus and Roma are enthroned.†

VII. The prominence given to this accessory, which is a creation of the artist's imagination, is undoubtedly due to his desire to heighten the spectator's sense of the dignity of Christ.

His majesty is not only witnessed to by the splendour of His throne, but by the character of the attendants who stand behind Him, after the manner of an Imperial official guard.‡ Their heads, like His, are encircled by a light-blue nimbus; they are therefore characterised, not as merely guardians or attendants, but as heavenly Beings, representatives of invisible superhuman forces.

The general idea expressed is that of Christ, the Logos, "who became flesh and dwelt among us," as a divine King, not unattended by superterrestrial Powers.

The same idea is expressed in the symbol of the Christophany, on the keystone of the Arch.§

VIII. Only two Magi are pictured here, whereas three and sometimes four are generally represented in the Catacombs, and three in another picture in this series. It is probable that one of their number was represented on the left of the throne, in that part of the picture which has perished.

The town on the right probably represents, not the distant Eastern town whence they started on their pilgrimage, but the Bethlehem of prophecy which the priests and scribes indicated as the place where the Christ should be born; quoting the prophecy:

* See 'Iliadis fragmenta et picturae,' Milano, 1819, ed. Cardinal Mai. Plates 5 and 8, The Seat of Achilles; Plate 19, The Throne of Zeus; Plate 25, The Common Seat of Paris and Helen. The belief, held until recently, that these miniatures belonged to a late phase of antique art, has been modified by the discovery of papyri of the early Empire, which are characterised by identical paleographical peculiarities.

† Plate 40, No. 2.

‡ See the official appearances of Moses, Joshua, Herod in this church (Plate 22, No. 2b; Plate 26, No. 1a; Plate 47, No. 1 and No. 2); also of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, on their respective columns and arches (Plate 30, No. 2).

§ See p. 295.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“ And thou, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah :
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.”*

In the mosaic the “ wise men of the East ” are represented in the dress of Chaldæans or Persians ; † one chiefly familiar to Romans as that of Mithras, ‡ a Persian deity whose worship took root in Rome before the age of Augustus, and, together with that of Isis, of the Jehovah of the Jews, and of the Christ of the Christians, became one of the fashionable cults of the Rome of the Antonines, and one moreover which recent researches show to have held a position of hitherto unsuspected predominance as late not only as the time of Constantine, but that of Julian the Apostate.

IX. Seated between the Magi and the throne of Christ is an imposing female figure, which has been interpreted by Garrucci and others as a lady, attendant on the Virgin ; as an accessory, therefore, introduced, for reasons of symmetry only, as a pendant ; and by de Rossi, and others as a Personification of the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*.

It is unnecessary to discuss Garrucci's realistic hypothesis, as the character of the central group makes it obvious that this picture was conceived, not as a reproduction of a given minute in an historical scene, but as a synthesis of an idea.

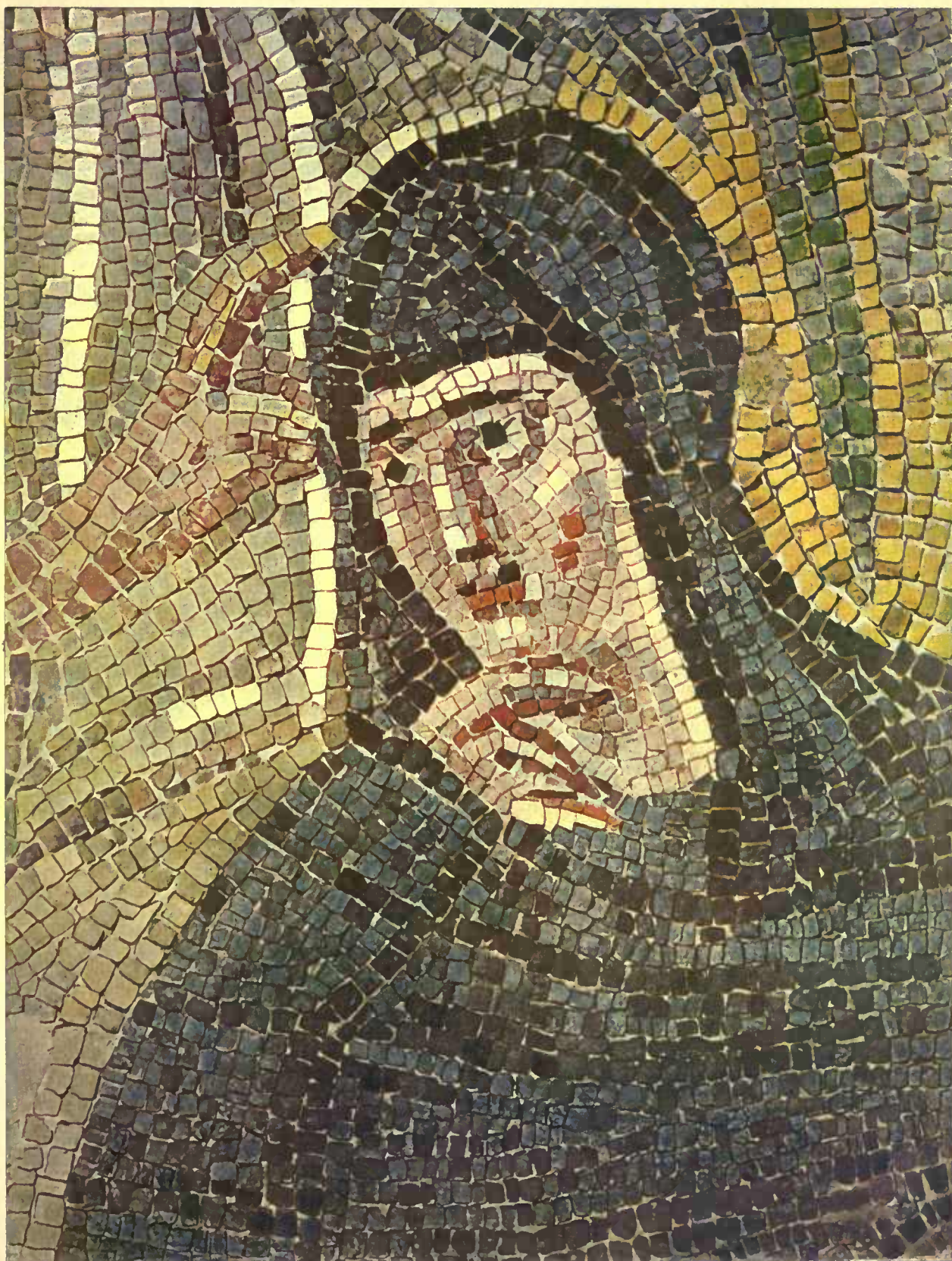
X. De Rossi suggests that this idea is the reception of the Gentile world into the Church of Christ, symbolised by the personifications of the two currents of which it was primitively composed, the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione* and the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus* ; a hypothesis which has much to recommend it, this thought being the inspiration of a group of pictures in the Nave, in which Leah and Rachel are treated as prototypes of the Synagogue and the Church.

Moreover, at a distance there is a certain superficial resemblance

* Matth. ii. 6 ; Micah v. 2.

† The Persian King, Khosres II. Parviz, who invaded Palestine in 613 A.D., massacred 80,000 Christians in Jerusalem, and destroyed innumerable Christian relics, is said to have ordered his troops to spare the richly decorated façade of the basilica at Bethlehem on which the Adoration of the Magi was represented in mosaic, because the personages represented there were recognisable as his ancestors by their dress.

‡ Plate 47, Nos. 3, 4, and 5. Compare also Plate 47, No. 6, Busts of Magi, from a silver casket in the church of S. Nazaro, Milan.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

between the pensive sombrely draped personification of the Arch, and the classic and tragic figure of Leah; but on approaching the former it will be seen that her face is young, and lighted by a dawning joy; whereas that of Leah is characterised by stoic despair.

Further, the association of a personification of the Church of the Jews with the Magi is inappropriate, the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus* was their natural patron. This hypothesis must therefore be dismissed.

It may be that this thoughtful woman with an unfurled scroll in her hand represents a prophetess or seer, if so, she must be a prophetess who foretold Christ as the fulfilment of the religious aspiration of the Gentiles; for such must have been the office of the Personage here conceived as the protectress of Gentile worshippers who are led by a star to Christ.

Is she the Sibyl? Far fetched as the suggestion may seem at first sight, it is supported by the manner in which she is represented, and by the *rôle* played by the prophetess in religious history, and by her connection with the Magi.

XI. According to Matthew, the Eastern astrologers, the Magi, not only knew that the Redeemer was about to appear, but that He was to be born in Israel. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" they asked; "for we saw His star in the east."*

"When the Magi saw the star," remarks Clement of Alexandria, "not only did they recognise it as the Star of the Lord, but they knew that a King had been born, and to what people; namely, to a people who worship God. Now the Jews had at that time the renown of being worshippers of God" (*i.e.*, monotheists in a polytheistic world.)†

Clement therefore attributed the fact that the Magi not only knew of the appearance of Christ in Judea, but apprehended the significance of His birth, to their scientific acquirements, to their comprehension both of the movements of the stars, and of their occult significance.

This is a point of view characteristic of the early centuries of our era, during which Christianity courted the corroboration of philosophy, and Christ was conceived as the end and fulfilment of knowledge.

The coming of the Redeemer was associated with a star by an early Syrian seer, Balaam, whose sayings are preserved in the Old Testament, although he stood outside the cycle of Hebrew prophets.

* Matth. ii. 2.

† 'Fragments,' § 75, vol. iv., p. 28 in Klotz' edition.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“ He took up the parable,” it is written, “ and cried :

“ Balaam, the man which seeth the vision of the Almighty, saith,
I see Him, but not now,
I behold Him, but not nigh,
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob
.
.
.
And Edom shall be a possession
Seir also which were his enemies.
Out of Jacob shall one have dominion.”*

Eusebius, who places his Commentary on the predictions of Balaam in the forefront of his analysis of Messianic prophecy, possibly because the words of the Seer of Moab accentuate the point he wished to make, namely the calling of the Gentiles to be the People of God, dwells on the thought expressed in the last lines of Balaam's prophecy; “ the star rose out of Judah,” he notes, “ but was a light not to the Jews, but to those who had been counted enemies ”; and explains that the Magi, the lineal descendants of Balaam, were not only familiar with this prediction, and held it in all honour, but that, inspired by it, they had watched the courses of the stars for ages, until the luminary foretold, rising above Judea, warned them that the looked for leader had been born in Palestine. This star, he adds, was not only their guide, it was the symbol of what they sought, Christ Himself, the divine Light which had dawned on the darkness of the world.†

In the mosaic the Star floats above Christ; the worshippers of light have found the true light.

Not only Jewish but pre-Christian pagan literature bears witness to a widespread belief that in the fulness of time a Redeemer should be born who would bring salvation to all the people of the earth.

Semi-fabulous figures of prophetic women appear in the grey of history; Sibyls, whose oracular sayings, foretelling a golden age of plenty and peace, were transcribed and treasured in Chaldæa, Greece, and Italy.

Their “ Books,” said to have been obtained by Tarquinius Superbus from the Cumaean Sibyl, were preserved in the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus until the destruction of the Temple and its contents by fire

* Numbers xxiv. 16-19.

† ‘Demonstratio Evangelica,’ Book ix. Eusebius' literary work is of especial interest as embodying and thus preserving writings of the earlier theologians, notably those of the early School of Alexandria of which Origen was the chief exponent.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

in 83 B.C. Seven years later the Roman Senate garnered a second harvest of Sibylline utterances from Erythraea in Asia Minor. These were still in the Capitol in the fourth century, during which they were consulted by Julian the Apostate, and it was not until the time of Stilicho, and by his order, that they were burned.

The Cumaean Sibyl is invoked by Virgil in the celebrated passage in the fourth Eclogue, written in 40 B.C., which was claimed by some early Christian writers as prophetic of the birth of Christ: "Be thou auspicious, oh chaste Lucena, to the boy about to be born, under whose reign the iron age will pass, and golden days dawn on a brighter world. His life will be divine, and with fatherly care he will govern a milder earth."

In view of the universal honour in which these Prophetesses were held, and of the important social office they filled, it is not surprising that they should have been frequently represented in Classic Art, both pictorial and figurative.

Lactantius* has preserved Varro's statement that a full-length figure of a Sibyl, standing, with a book in her hands, existed on the Roman Forum.

In the illustrated Virgil of the fourth or fifth century in the Vatican, Aeneas is pictured as guided by a Sibyl.

The real existence of these inspired women was unanimously accepted in classic antiquity, even by Christians, who denied that of the gods.

Justin Martyr appeals to their evidence as authoritative in his first 'Apologia,' and condemns the new law which forbade recourse to their writings and to those of Hystaspes.

"By the agency of Devils," he says, "death has been decreed against those who read the books of Hystaspes, or of the Sibyl, or of the prophets, in order that men may be prevented by fear . . . from receiving the knowledge of the good, and that they may retain them permanently in slavery, which however they do not always succeed in doing . . . for *we* read them fearlessly!" †

Hermas, the author of 'The Shepherd,' when confronted with a visionary appearance of a venerable woman, never doubts her to be the Sibyl.

* 'Inst.,' i. 6.

† 'I. Apologia,' chap. xlv.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“There came an old woman in a bright garment,” he writes, “having a book in her hand, she sat alone, and saluted me, saying, ‘Hermas, Hail!’* . . . A very goodly young man said unto me, ‘What thinkest thou of that old woman?’ ‘Who is she?’ I answered, ‘A Sibyl.’ ‘Thou art mistaken,’ said he, ‘it is the Church of God.’” †

Many of the early Fathers refer to the Sibylline oracles as divinely prophetic of the coming of Christ.

Incongruous, therefore, with modern conceptions as is the introduction of a pagan Sibyl into a pictorial representation of the Epiphany, it is harmonious with the thought of the first centuries of our era, and with the classic practice of looking to art for a synthesis of the significance of an event, rather than for a realistic representation of a crucial moment in its evolution, as is the modern habit.

Nothing could be more eloquent from the antique point of view than the association of the Cumaean Sibyl, “the high-souled daughter of Berosus,” the Babylonian astrologer, with the pictorial presentment of the realisation of her prophecies. ‡

XIII. It being clear that the subject of the well-preserved two-thirds of a picture, of which the main artistic peculiarity is the symmetry of its structure, is the coming of Persian astrologers to Christ under the auspices of an Eastern prophetess whose oracles were accepted as inspired by Christians and Pagans alike; and that the third Mage was represented within the ruined one-third of the same picture, it is possible to form a reasoned opinion as to the character of the lost figure which formed a pendant to that of the Sibyl.

It is unlikely that its present pendant, a rococo Madonna, seated with crossed legs on a bank or bench, bears any relation to the figure it replaces.

It is obvious that the artist did not conceive this scene as a domestic episode, nor Christ as the centre of a family group; that his aim was not the creation of a realistic representation of the Adoration of the Magi, but of a pictographic synthesis of the thought of Christ as the fulfilment

* Vision I.

† Vision II.

‡ The unknown author of the ‘Cohortatio ad Gentiles,’ which is sometimes ascribed to Justin Martyr, describes (chap. xxxvii.) a visit to the Basilica of Cumae, and to the Cave in which the Sibyl lived. His guide, he says, informed him that she was the daughter of Berosus the astrologer, a statement which doubtless corresponded with popular tradition. Pliny speaks of Berosus as an astrologer (‘Hist. Nat.,’ 35, 37).

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of the prophecy and yearning of the east ; for this reason he has isolated Him upon a Throne, has associated Him with the prophetic star, and has placed the Sibyl beside Him.

Joseph has been omitted, and it cannot be denied that it is difficult to find a place for the Virgin in a picture thus designed.

There are similar instances in the Old Testament series of the elimination of prominent actors from scenes in which their presence might militate against the comprehension of the typological import of the event depicted.*

XIV. The position given to the utterances of the Sibyl, which were accepted as authoritative by Christians and Pagans alike, and were used as weapons by the writers of early Christian polemics, was granted to another ancient Seer, Hystaspes, whose name is constantly associated with that of the Sibyls.

Justin Martyr appeals to the writings of Hystaspes in his address to the Emperor Antoninus Pius ; they must therefore have been commonly known, and generally accepted.†

A generation later Clement of Alexandria cries : “ Turn to Hellenistic literature ! read the words of the Sibyl ! See how she reveals God, and foretells the hidden events of the future ! Take up Hystaspes and read : you will find a still profounder and more subtle understanding of the future appearance of the Son of God ; you will hear how kings will oppose Him, and will hate Him, and those who bear His name, and His Faithful ; you will read of His patience, and of His Parousie.” ‡

The ancient epitomiser of a fifth-century collection of pagan prophecies of the coming of Christ, of which nothing now remains except a few excerpts, § remarks that the oracles of Hystaspes were preserved in the fourth book, that he was a King of Persia or Chaldea, to whom the holy mystery of the incarnation of the Redeemer was revealed on account of his God-fearing life.

He has been identified by a modern commentator || with the Persian sage Vistaspa. “ In the Avesta,” he writes, “ and that not in its more

* See the last scenes of the Jacob series, Plate 12, No. 2 and No. 3.

† ‘ I. Apol.,’ chap. xx. and xlv.

‡ ‘ Strom.,’ vi. 5.

§ Buresch, *Klaros*. 1889, p. 87-126. See Schürer, ‘ *Gesch. des jüd. Volks.*,’ 1898, vol. iii., p. 453.

|| Edw. Lehmann, in ‘ *Chanpetie de la Saussaye, Lehrbuch der Religions-Geschichte,*’ 2nd ed., vol. ii., 1897, p. 156.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

recent portions, Vistaspa is praised as the mighty protector of the true Faith. He is the Arm and Defender of the Law; he made a smooth Way for Purity, and brought Faith into the World; he is called Sraoscha, the Angel of Obedience, who brings men Truth."* This Vistaspa is identified with the celebrated Vistaspa, whom the Greeks call Hystaspes, the father of Darius.

The pagan historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, relates that "during Hystaspes' sojourn with the Indian Brahmins he learned from them the laws of the movements of the world, and of the stars, and pure religious usages," which knowledge he communicated to the Magi, his fellow countrymen, and which they have preserved to the world.†

Surely the figure of a royal Persian Seer of Christ-like character and wide influence, to whom had been granted foreknowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation, was admirably adapted to serve as a pendant to that of the Sibyl.

XV. The circumstances of the time added point to the association of this Oriental prophet with the thought of the coming of the Orient to Christ. As a Persian he would naturally have been represented (like the Magi) in the national dress—a dress so strikingly different to that worn by the rest of the civilised world, whether Jew, Egyptian or Hellenist, that it must have impressed the imagination of beholders as something strange and exotic, isolating its wearers into a closely connected group; a dress, moreover, with which Romans were familiar as that of Mithras, God of Life and Light, the Mediator between God and Man, whose ritual and teaching approached so closely to that of the Christian Church, that Tertullian and Justin Martyr were constrained to attribute these similarities to diabolic anticipatory plagiarism.

The Votary of Mithras, like the Christian Proselyte, entered the service of his Redeemer through a series of initiations; the blood of Redemption was shed for the remission of sins;‡ sins were washed away in a most holy Mystery; and the Soul, triumphing over matter, was reborn § and entrusted to guardian spirits.||

* "Purosque sacrorum ritus."

† 'Hist.,' Book vi. 32-33.

‡ Plate 47, No. 7.

§ "In æternum renatus, delutus sacratissimis mysteriis."

|| "Animæ custodes," the equivalents of Christian Angels.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The great Mithraic day of rejoicing was the 25th December, the birthday of the unconquerable God of Light.*

The rivalry of these two religions was keen, and in the second and third centuries it appeared as if the victory would remain with the Persians. As early as the sixth decade of the first century Nero had expressed a wish to be initiated into the mysteries of Mithraism by the Magi brought to Rome by King Tiridates. In the second century, Commodus publicly entered its ranks as an "adept." From his time onward Mazdaism enjoyed Imperial favour: "it had its chaplain in the palace of the *augusti*;" it enjoyed the especial sympathy of Aurelian, Diocletian, Galerius, Licinius, and of Julian the Apostate, and was fashionable among their nobles.† There can be no doubt that Constantine also may be counted among the votaries of the Persian Sun-god.‡

The elements of which this picture is composed—the reception of Persian worshippers by a young king, designated as such by his star, and characterised as divine by his attendants, with Oriental prophets in the places of honour on his right and on his left—seem to have been selected with especial reference to this rival cult, to whose votaries its message was the proclamation not only that the light for which they blindly groped has dawned, but that its all-conquering splendour had been foretold by their own prophets.

XVI. The rhythmic structure of this composition, which is built up symmetrically on either side of a central group, gives it a hieratic dignity which is unique in this series.

Whereas its companions are conceived as long frieze-like pictures, it is composed round a central point, and seems to have been originally designed to decorate an apse.

Its structure corresponds closely with that of S. Pudenziana, a later and more developed apse decoration, in the centre of which Christ as Pantocrator is seated on a great throne, dominated by a jewelled cross. In the sky, dappled with reddened clouds (evidence of the Divine

* See Plate 47, No. 4 and No. 6, figures of Mithras in the Vatican and in the Lateran Museum, to be compared with the figure of Daniel enthroned amidst Persians, Plate 47, No. 5.

† Franz Cumont, 'The Mysteries of Mithra,' translated by Th. J. McCormack, London, 1903, p. 85 f.

‡ Th. Zahn, 'Skizzen aus dem Leben der Alten Kirche,' Leipzig, 1894, p. 247 f.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Presence, as in S. Maria Maggiore), float the four mystic Living Creatures of the Apocalypse. On either side of the Throne are two heroic women, Personifications of the two Churches, *ex Circumcisione*, and *ex Gentibus*, with victors' crowns in their upraised hands, and the twelve Apostles, six on either side.

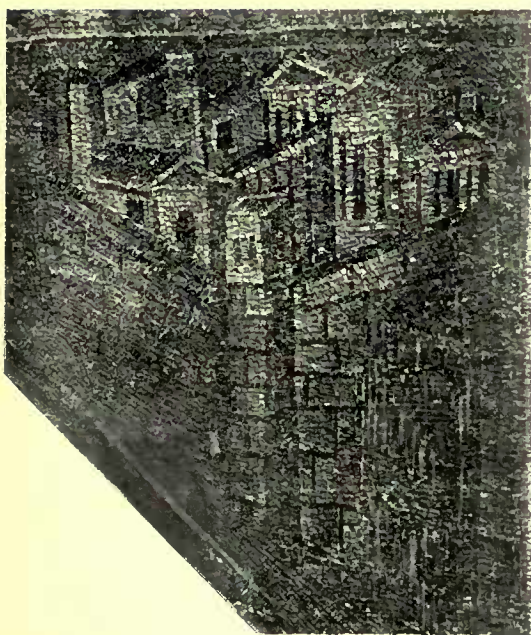
This is an expansion of an earlier apse decoration, of which several examples and variations are preserved in the Catacombs, in which rendering Christ is represented as enthroned in the midst of His disciples.

In the Sicinian mosaic Christ, the Logos, is seated on a wide Throne, above which floats the prophetic star; on either side of Him are heroic figures, Oriental Seers who foretold His advent; and beyond them are the Magi. Behind Christ, like guards, are four supernatural Beings, Angels—replaced in S. Pudenziana by the four Living Creatures—representatives of the supernatural world of which their Lord is King. The connection between these pictures is obvious.

1.



3.



2.



4.



5.



CHAPTER VI

OCCIDENTAL PHILOSOPHY A GUIDE TO CHRIST

I. DESCRIPTION.

II. CONDITION: (a) Antique; (b) Byzantine interpolation; (c) Interpolation of the time of Benedict XIV. (1740-1758); (d) Detailed examination of these divers techniques.

COMMENTARY (III.-VIII.) :—

III. Account of The Homage of Affrodosius in the *Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei*.

IV. The discrepancies between the picture and the literary source hitherto assigned it.

V. The Philosopher. His garb.

VI. Greek philosophy derived from the teaching of Moses. Clement of Alexandria, Aristobulus, Numenius of Apamea, and others, consider Moses as the founder of Greek philosophy.

VII. This composition the complement of the picture in the Nave, in which Moses is represented as instructing Greek philosophers.

VIII. Christ the ultimate expression of the Wisdom of the East and West an Imperial ideal.

OCCIDENTAL PHILOSOPHY A GUIDE TO CHRIST.

Plate 35; Plate 44, Nos. 1, 2, and 3; Plate 45; Plate 46.

I. DESCRIPTION.—This composition consists of two groups advancing processionally from right and left to meet each other.

A prince, followed by a suite of courtiers, is led outside the walls of a city by a philosopher, whose hands are raised in speech, the subject of which is evidently the Child Christ, who, advancing from the opposite direction, is accompanied by Mary and Joseph, and by four Angels, the foremost of whom raises his hand in a gesture corroborative of the utterance of the philosopher, and forms a link between the two groups.

Running along the top of the picture is a dark blue band, the lower border of which is formed by Xystus' gold interpolation; and might

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

therefore have extended lower in the original, and certainly had a very different marginal line. It now appears to represent a river, but probably originally pictured the sea. In its present form it might, with equal propriety, be interpreted as either sky or water, were it not for the masts and prows of ships floating upon it, which are visible above the heads of the prince and his court.

The aforesaid city is characterised as fortified, and as rich in public buildings, and porticoes.

The purpose of its presentation being the localisation of the scene pictured, we ask ourselves its name; and one alone, in spite of difficulties which militate against its acceptance, suggests itself; that of Alexandria. Alexandria, the seaport, the strongly fortified city, traversed in all its length by straight wide streets, bordered by porticoes, and adorned by the most celebrated buildings of antiquity, the palaces of the Ptolemies, the Theatres, the Poseidion, the Timonion, the Library, the Museum, and finally the great Serapeum; Alexandria, the seat of a hybrid Jewish eclecticism, which aimed at reconciling the Jewish Law with Greek Philosophy; and in later years the home of its heir, a philosophic Christian mysticism of not dissimilar character.

The appurtenances of the personage who heads the group are regal. His head is encircled by a golden diadem, he wears a short gold embroidered tunic, with long tight sleeves, (*tunica cincta manicata*) and purple mantle (*paludamentum*), with golden tabula, fastened on the shoulder by a circular golden brooch, with pendant tassels; his shoes are red, and so low and slight as to resemble sandals; through their interstices the dark purple underclothing of the foot is visible.³

To his left, and before him, is a bearded philosopher, in the characteristic dress of his profession, *i.e.*, a white pallium, so arranged as to leave the right arm and the right side of the torso bare; and sandals: he leans on a staff, held in his left hand, his right is raised in speech.

The prince's suite wear short tunics with tight long sleeves, and short mantles (*chlamys*) fastened on the shoulder by a brooch. A floral device is embroidered on the shoulder and skirt of the tunic of the courtier on the extreme left.

Projecting above their heads, which are silhouetted against the dark blue strip of water above, are the masts, and prows of ships.*

* De Rossi has incorrectly reproduced these as head-dresses, such as might be worn by savages,



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

The principal figure in the group to the right is that of Christ, represented as a child of some three or four years of age, standing at the head of His followers. His head, encircled by a diadem surmounted by a gold equilateral cross with a dark border, is silhouetted against a pale blue nimbus. His hand is raised in a gesture telling of solemn speech. He wears a long tunic (*tunica talaris*), and pallium; and sandals.

Behind, and to His left, are the figures of Joseph and Mary; the former is represented, as in the Annunciation, as a young man with short hair, and full beard; he wears a short tunic with crimson mantle; the representation of the Virgin also is based on that of the Annunciation. Both these figures are, however, eighteenth-century reconstructions in stucco, in which fragments of mosaic of various dates are embedded.

Four Angels were originally associated with this group; one, however, has been destroyed; his right hand is still visible projecting from beneath Cardinal Pinelli's pilaster on the right. In type and character they correspond with those represented in the other pictures of this series.

II. CONDITION.—Antique is the central portion of this picture, which contains the two figures of the Angels (their draperies much restored), and the head and figure of the philosopher. The much-injured head of the Child seems to have been reconstructed on an antique basis. The cross is an interpolation. Antique also is the city on the extreme left.

An interpolation of some centuries later is the group of which the Hellenistic prince is the head.

The Virgin and Joseph have been almost entirely re-executed in stucco at the time of Benedict XIV., but fragments of antique mosaic scattered about their persons show that the original disposition of the figures has been retained.

The Angel beyond the Virgin is much injured.

His companion, of whom nothing but the hand remains, has either been destroyed, or is hidden beneath Pinelli's seventeenth-century pilaster.

A most admirably preserved and exquisite specimen of the art of the third century is the head of the Hebe-like Angel on the right,*

* Plate 45.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

classic parallels with which occur in the Hellenistic art of which examples are preserved in Pompei and Rome.

Beside it is one of not inferior merit, or preservation, though less immediately attractive.

The frescoes of Pompei, and those in the Thermae of Diocletian, bear witness to the delight of the classic world in the characteristically differing flesh-tints of men and women; it loved to contrast the blonde flower-like tints of its sheltered women with the sun-bronzed glowing skins of their hunters and heroes.

The same sentiment, expressed in terms of psychology, is repeated here; the one Angel, charming, smiling, gracious, feminine, is contrasted with her sombre and virile companion.

The antique fragments embedded in the restorations of the Arch, though executed in the same technique, are evidently the work of different artists, each with his personal predilection for some especial colour-scheme.

The Angels' heads in this picture are executed in five colours, black, deep red, light orange, grey, and white.

Four colours only are used in the companion heads in The Adoration of the Magi, in which there is no grey; these heads, which have suffered greatly, are less charming, rougher, but more grandiose in character.

The head of the philosopher,* which is similar in type to that of Christ in the first picture of the Nave,† like all the antique pictures of this church, is composed of large cubes; the eye consisting of two blocks only, one black and one white.

Impinging on him are figures and background in a different technique. The green of the foreground changes, together with the general colour-key of the figures. The eyes of the king and courtiers behind him, which are round and large, their glance not piercing but languorous, consist not of two but of five or six stones; the lower lid is much cut down, and the white shows all round the iris. The character of this group is of the sixth century, it approximates to Justinian's two votive pictures at Ravenna.‡ The dresses point to the same date. This part of the picture is evidently interpolated.

The town on the left is antique, and well preserved; the colours of

* Plate 44, No. 2.

† Plate 6.

‡ Plate 13, No. 5.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

the buildings are clear, their drawing definite.* Such a town should be compared with the Jericho of the Nave, which is an interpolation of the late decadence.†

COMMENTARY.—III. The final chapter of the first part of the so-called *Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei* contains the following narrative.

“Mary and Joseph arrived with the Child Christ in the province of Hermopolis, and betook themselves to a town of Egypt called Sotine.

“And, as they knew no one with whom they could sojourn, they went to a temple which was called ‘the Capitol’ of Egypt. It contained 365 idols, to whom sacrifices were offered daily.

“But when the most holy Mary stepped across the threshold of this temple, carrying the Child in her arms, all these idols fell from their bases, and lay with shattered faces on the ground; thereby showing their nothingness.

“This being announced to Affrodosius, the Prince of that State, he went to the temple with his whole army.

“When the Priests saw him hasten thither accompanied by his army they believed he was about to take measures against those who had occasioned the downfall of the idols; but when he had entered the temple, and saw the images lying on their faces, he approached Mary, and paid homage to her, and to the Babe she carried in her bosom; and, turning to his whole army, and to his friends, said, ‘If this were not the Lord of our gods they would not have fallen upon their faces, nor would they lie thus prostrate before Him. They have dumbly acknowledged Him their Lord. Perceiving their attitude, we must beware lest we draw misfortune on ourselves, and excite His ill-will, as did Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who perished with his whole army in the sea, because he did not credit similar miracles.’

“Then the entire people of this State turned, through Jesus Christ, to faith in God.”

IV. In the opinion of experts,‡ this text is the theme of the picture under discussion. Certain considerations, however, militate against the acceptance of this opinion.

* Plate 44, No. 3.

† See p. 234.

‡ Kondakoff, de Waal, de Rossi; followed by J. P. Richter, in a contribution to the ‘*Nuovo Bullettino di Arch. Crist.*’ Anno v., 3 and 4.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The designer of these decorations, while permitting himself the greatest latitude in the arrangement and treatment of his literary subject-matter, always gives its main tendency clear, even drastic expression ; but here he not only ignores the incident round which the story centres, the fall of the idols, and its setting, the temple and the priests, not only does he depose the Virgin from her dominant position (the assertion of which is perhaps the main point of the Evangelium Pseudo-Matthæi), and allot her a very subsidiary rôle, but if this be his source, he has *invented* the chief character, the philosopher.

Moreover, it is difficult to believe that having elected to illustrate a richly coloured and sparkling narrative, telling of the recognition of Christ, not by the Egyptians merely, but by their very gods, an event eminently adapted to mirror and comment the main idea embodied in the decorations of the Arch, namely, the Calling of the Gentiles, the artist would have deliberately robbed it of the elements rendering it dramatically suitable to his purpose: or, to avoid the conclusion that the fall of the idols, and the consequent conversion of Affrodosius, are not the subject-matter of a picture which is nothing more than a representation of a philosopher who brings a prince to Christ.

This conclusion is strengthened by consideration of the very different intellectual *niveau* of this picture, and of the ivories and miniatures of which the story of Pseudo-Matthew is the indubitable source. The intellectual fibre of that Gospel and of the miniatures is similar, both are inspired by the same craving for the childishly marvellous ; whereas the picture of the Arch mirrors the thought and sentiment of an earlier Christianity, occupied with first principles, and inflamed with the desire (which finds such remarkable expression in the teaching of the Apologists) to recommend Christianity as the goal towards which the noblest thought of humanity naturally tends.

The so-called Evangelium Pseudo-Matthæi in its present form is a fifth-century compilation of three texts of different dates. * The frequent occurrence of childish marvels in the middle portion, in which the incident of Affrodosius is related, points to a late date.

It is not impossible that the story which formed the *point-de-départ* of this picture may be founded on an earlier version of the story of Affrodosius than that preserved in the Evangelium Pseudo-Matthæi ;

* Cruttwell, 'Lit. Hist.,' i. p. 172.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

this suggestion, however, in the present absence of data, has only the value of a plausible hypothesis.

V. The prominent part allotted to the philosopher here is a reflex of the important *rôle* played by philosophy in the daily life of the citizen, and in the official life of the court.

His peculiar aspect (uncut hair and beard, bare shoulder, white pallium and staff) was familiar to Roman citizens; for in this guise he perambulated the streets of all the great centres of Hellenistic culture, and thus attired was immediately recognised as a Greek philosopher, whether at Lyons, or Antioch; Carthage or Ephesus.

Such must have been the garb of the Alexandrine Jew Philo, the classic representative of the Hellenistic Jewish philosophy which flourished in Egypt and Asia Minor before and at the time of Christ.

Such too that of the Jew met by Aristotle in Asia Minor, "a Greek, not only in the manner of his speech, but also in that of his thought."*

Such also the appearance of Justin Martyr, who, having weighed the teaching of Stoics, of Peripatetics, and even that of Plato, and having found that they came short of the requirement of the human soul, turned to Christianity, and paid with his life for his zeal in its dissemination. Philosophy he deemed the true end of life; it was as a philosopher that he embraced the teaching of Christ; and to philosophers that he was concerned to recommend it. In the dedication of his 'Apologia' he gives the name "Philosopher" as a title of honour to the two associates of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius.

The spirit of combined rationalism and mysticism which is characteristic of the religious thought of a Justin Martyr, of a Clement of Alexandria, or of an Origen was not peculiar to members of the Christian faith.

Pre-Christian Hebrew exegesis of the school of Alexandria, such as Philo and his followers, aimed not only at mysticising the Old Testament history, but at informing the ancient Semitic Scriptures with the vital breath of Greek philosophy. Indeed, they went so far as to maintain that the Pentateuch was the source of Greek wisdom.†

In the middle of the second century B.C. Aristobulus, an Alexandrine

* 'Josephus contra Apionem,' i. 22.

† See p. 156 f.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Jew, prefaced his commentary on the Mosaic Law by a dedication to the King Ptolomaeus Philopater, in which he set forth the derivation of the Peripatetic philosophy from the Law of Moses, and from the writings of the Prophets.*

This point of view, of which the most notable exponent was Philo, was held by the Alexandrine philosopher's Christian successors, who, like their fellow citizen and forerunner, traced the philosophy of Greece to the inspired Hebrew Lawgiver.

"Whence, O Plato," cries Clement of Alexandria, "is that hint of truth thou givest? whence this rich copiousness of diction? . . . I know thy teachers, even if thou wouldst conceal them . . . thou art indebted to the Hebrew for laws which are consistent with truth, and for your sentiments respecting God."†

And again in the 'Stromateis' he says, "In short, Pythagoras and his followers, Plato, too, and most of the philosophers, were acquainted with the Lawgiver, as may be deduced from their teaching." And yet again, "It was from Moses that the chief of the Greeks drew (his) philosophic tenets."‡

Such views were not the personal peculiarities of individual Christians, but were characteristic of the religious eclecticism of the Empire.

They obtained among pagans, as well as Christians. The pagan historian Numenius of Apamea, who lived at the end of the second century, is said to have exclaimed, "What is Plato but a Moses who speaks Attic Greek?"§

VII. The familiarity of the author of this great cycle with the thought of the derivation of Greek philosophy from Hebrew revelation, is certified to by a picture in the Nave, in which the child Moses, a prototype of the Child Christ, is represented as instructing Greek philosophers,|| an episode which finds its complement in the scene we are studying, in which a philosopher, characterised in every point as similar to those sages instructed by Moses, leads a Hellenistic prince and his people to Christ.

* Clem. of Alexandria, 'Strom.', v., chap. xiv. Eusebius, 'Praep. Evan.', viii. 10, and xiii. 12.

† 'Exhort. to the Heathen,' chap. vi.

‡ v. 11.

§ Clement of Alexandria, 'Strom.' i. 22. Compare also Schürer, 'Gesch. des Jüd. Volks,' iii., p. 482. Zahn, 'Der Stoiker Epictet.'

|| See also Christ in The Philosopher's Pallium in the Catacombs of Callixt, Plate 44, No. 4.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VIII. Not born of the slave or of the illiterate is the conception of Christ which inspired these pictures in which He is imaged as the goal of the Wisdom of Babylon and Athens but of the aristocracy of an Imperial race, familiar with the reality of wide-spreading dominion, on whose imagination had arisen the idea of a universal spiritual kingdom, foreshadowed by types, and foretold by prophets.

CHAPTER VII

THE MARTYRDOM OF THE INNOCENTS

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION : (a) Restorations in stucco ; (b) in modern mosaic ; (c) in antique mosaic.
COMMENTARY (III.-XII.) :—
- III. No carnage ; two groups, representing hostile authority, and willing victims.
- IV. Inscription HERODES.
- V. Why is Herod alone named, of the many persons represented in this cycle ?
- VI. Why is a nimbus associated with him, while in the act of superintending a massacre ?
- VII. Was this inscription a 'Mene Tekel' of the Roman Empire ?
- VIII. The Mothers of Bethlehem.
- IX. Mourning women in Classic Art.
- X. The children conceived as 'witnesses.'
- XI. The Massacre of the Innocents, of the ivory at Milan Cathedral.
- XII. Justin Martyr on martyrdom.

THE MARTYRDOM OF THE INNOCENTS.

Plate 31 ; Plate 47, No. 1 ; Plate 48.

I. DESCRIPTION.—This picture consists of two parts, each of which represents an historically distinct event.

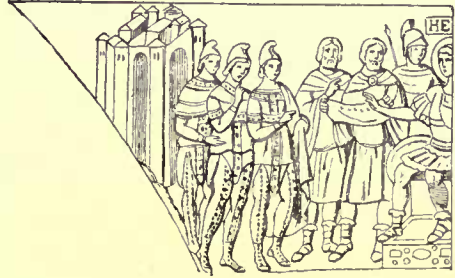
To the left is the figure of an enthroned Roman General, with a guard of two soldiers ; his imperiously raised right hand indicates the promulgation of an order, which the soldier before him hastens to execute.

To the right is a group of women, who move processionally from the back of the picture forward ; they carry little children on their left arms. Their hair is loosened, in token of sorrow ; their right hands are stretched forward with a gesture speaking of resignation and determination. The children are characterised by the same expression of

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

intelligent suffering, not unmixed with exaltation ; their arms are lifted in gestures similar to those of their mothers.

The women wear long gaily but softly tinted dalmaticae, with broad coloured clavi; the two who head the procession are robed respectively in periwinkle-blue, with yellow clavi ; and in orange, with pale blue clavi.

They each also wear a long white cloth passing over both shoulders, and covering the left arm, on which the child is supported; its pendant end is decorated in the one case by a circular purple spot, and in the other by a purple trefoil.

One of the children wears a long white tunic, with dark clavi and tight sleeves reaching to the wrist (*tunica talaris manicata*); the other a garment striped with red, green and yellow.

One figure is represented as if in reaction against the exaltation which seems to sustain this group. One mother turns aside, and with her child breaks out of the procession.

The soldier, who ideographically and pictorially forms a connecting link between the king and this procession of women, is pictured with his head turned towards Herod, as if listening to his words, but moving with outstretched murderous hands towards the women on the right: he wears a short red tunic, and grey blue chlamys, fastened on his right shoulder by a fibula.

Only a few cubes in the figure of Herod are antique ; but these suffice to make it clear that he was dressed as a general, was seated on a throne, and that his head was encircled by a nimbus ; that, in short, as in the following picture, *The Magi before Herod*,* he was conceived as a deified Roman ruler.

The inscription, HERODES, placed over his head in the picture representing his interview with the Magi, underlines his already unmistakable identity. It is inconceivable that this inscription, attached to the second representation of his person, should have been absent from the first ; the conclusion, therefore, that it figured here originally is justified.

It is possible that by this pleonasm the artist wished to inform the spectator that the two pictures in which Herod is pictured were to be looked on as one, accidentally broken in upon by the lines of the Arch. If this be so, then the Jewish hierarchy is represented as the source of persecution, and the Roman executive as its puppet.

* Plate 47, No. 2.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

CONDITION.—Although classic in their general proportions* and in the gay blonde colouring of their dresses, the women and the children who form the group on the right have been reconstructed in the taste of a later date.

The heads in the background have been rendered grotesque by repairs and restorations.

The best preserved face is that of the foremost women on the left, the flesh tints however, though light, have not that brilliancy of classic workmanship which is the fruit of the daring and able juxtaposition of strong contrasts; the cubes used are small and their arrangement ineffective; an attempt, however, has been made either to preserve or to reproduce the original effect of the eyes, which in the case of this woman and of her child are composed sometimes of three cubes, sometimes even of two—the classic canon. All the figures are much injured, the silhouette of the woman in blue and lemon has been impinged on by the interpolated gold background, and her right hand—which was doubtless extended in offering like that of her companion—effaced. Much repaired both in stucco and mosaic are her white draperies and the child she carries, whose head and shoulders, seen almost *en face*, are awkwardly placed above outstretched wooden arms seen almost in profile; they seem to be the work of a restorer accustomed to visualise the human figure frontally, working on an original which was perfectly naturalistic in presentment. Nowhere is his inability to draw more evident than in his representation of the shoulders and outstretched right hand of the woman in the red tunic with blue clavi.

In the second row, immediately behind the woman in red and blue, is the partially seen face of a young woman of the quality and technique of the woman in *The Parting of Abraham and Lot*.† The remainder of the picture is a complex of restorations in stucco and mosaic which can only be followed profitably in the church itself.

Like all the pictures of this series it has suffered greatly in the proximity of the seventeenth-century pilaster, which forms the architectonic framework of the Arch on the extreme right and left, it completely hides the attendant soldier behind Herod, and almost covers both Herod and his throne.

This part of the picture has moreover been restored in stucco, and

* Compare Plate 50, No. 4.

† Plates 8 and 9.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

that with little intelligence. Herod is represented as gigantic ; but the position of the *mosaic* nimbus, which can be seen shining through his painted body, shows that the original figure was of normal size.

The soldiers have been restored in mosaic, probably at the time of Cardinal Pinelli ; and again in stucco, probably at that of Benedict XIV.

All patches and touches of gold are interpolations. Scattered through this medley of the work of divers periods are fragments of antique workmanship, which show that the original composition has been retained.

The original background has been entirely destroyed and replaced by an opaque wall of gold.

The spectator should conceive this group of women, this flower-like cluster of grey-blues, oranges, light yellows, and whites, as relieved on the tenderly modulated, sunny, and aerial colour-scale which originally formed the background throughout this series.

COMMENTARY.—III. Most striking in this representation of an incident usually characterised by a wealth and variety of brutal detail is its aristocratic reserve ; this is no scene of carnage, but the willing assemblage of calm and determined witnesses in the place of martyrdom.

It is composed of two groups : the one, representing hostile authority, the other righteous victims ; these groups, though picturing incidents separated from each other by lapse of time and difference of locality, are woven into a homogeneous whole by the figure of a soldier, an embodiment of alacrity in obedience, a *trait d'union* between the giver of the order, and those who submit to it.

Compositions of this character, in which considerations of time and space are ignored, and distinct incidents melted together into a synthesis of a cycle of events, are not historical, but ideographic.

IV. The antique representation of Herod has perished, and has been replaced by a singularly poor substitute in stucco, in which, however, fragments of original mosaic are embedded ; the coat of paint by which these were forced into harmony with their setting has worn away, traces of the nimbus have become evident ; this and fragments of antique mosaic make it clear that the lost figure corresponds in dress, gesture, and attributes with the representation of Herod on the opposite wall.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The inscription, however, which is so important a feature of the second picture, has been destroyed, but the remarkable identity of the two compositions makes it impossible to doubt that a tablet was connected with the figure here, as there.

The existence here of such a tablet bearing a name, and resembling a dedicatory tablet in form, is most anomalous. In the frescoes illustrating the Odyssey, which have been removed from the Esquiline to the Vatican, explanatory names are attached to the persons pictured; they are, however, merely of the nature of annotations.

This is equally true of the frescoes of Tor Marancia (probably of the second century). The addition of explanatory names is common on Greek vases; they occur also on the Pompeian and other classic frescoes. But this instance is unique in this Basilica.

V. That Herod alone of the many persons pictured in this cycle should be furnished with an inscription disclosing his name, cannot be attributed to the desire that his identity should not be mistaken; for it is unquestionable that the members of the Christian community were more familiar with the story of his relation to the infancy of Christ, than with the histories of Hamor, Sechem, or Merris, or with those of Hystaspes; yet the identification of these persons was left to the unassisted intelligence of the spectator.

VI. The accessories of this figure, and the *rôle* it plays, are curiously incongruous.

Associated with this Idumean parvenu, who owed his title to the complaisance of an Emperor whose favour he secured by the arts of a courtier, is a nimbus, the attribute of a deified Roman Emperor.

Trajan and later Emperors are represented on Roman public monuments with nimbus-encircled heads*; they were adored as *DIVI* after their death, their apotheoses being decreed either by the Senate, or by their successors; but such honours are naturally inconceivable in the case of a vassal-king, even if his death were unattended by as inauspicious circumstances as was that of Herod.

The connection of his name with the figure of a ruler dignified with the sacred emblem by which the idea of divinity was associated with the governors of Imperial Rome is a *contradictio in adjecto*.

* The nimbus round the head of Trajan on the large medallions inserted into the Arch of Constantine is undoubtedly antique because in relief.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VII. When this mosaic was executed the blood-cemented crime-supported kingdom of Herod the Great had long crumbled into dust.

His name, placed over the head of one characterised as the representative of supreme military power and of divine wisdom, depicted in the act of committing an act of supreme injustice, is surely an ironic Christian comment on the Roman theory of the divinity of its rulers.

VIII. The assemblage of mothers is conceived as a compact group; the women of Bethlehem make no resistance to the unjust mandate, but offer the sacrifice required of them with composure and dignity, though not without suffering.

IX. The unbound hair streaming down their shoulders is the usual antique symbol of sorrow. It is common on classic vases. In the representation of the Death of Dido in the Virgil of the Vatican her funeral pyre is surrounded by female mourners with unloosed hair, who cry aloud, and beat their breasts; an accessory of death still retained in southern lands.

Similar mourning women are represented more than once in the miniatures of the Vienna Genesis, in which, abandoning themselves to the expression of the wildest and most passionate grief, they not only unbraid their hair, but tear it out by the roots.

Far from the mothers of Bethlehem is such undignified grief: their attitude is the outcome of the current ideal of Christian heroism, which faced pain and loss with that exhilaration which finds such noble expression in the Acts of the primitive³ martyrs, the simplicity and sincerity of which bear the stamp of psychological truth.*

X. Even the children are not passive victims, but intelligent and conscious "witnesses"; they stretch their hands towards Herod with a gesture expressing their sublime willingness to die.

The Innocents were early revered as the first Christian martyrs; an especial feast was observed in their honour, both in the Eastern and Western Church.

The woman on the right, who breaks out of the ranks and seeks refuge in flight, doubtless represented a renegade who failed in the day of trial.

* Compare the figure of Susanna, from the Catacombs of Priscilla (second century). Plate 50, No. 4.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XI. Strikingly different in sentiment is a Massacre of the Innocents (as rare a subject in early Christian art as it was popular at a later date) on an ivory relief of the time of Xystus preserved in the Cathedral of Milan.* In it a soldier is represented as holding a naked child by the foot, and swinging it in the air preparatory to braining it on the ground. Another pushes back the mothers, whose faces are distorted by pain, their hair is unbound, their arms distended in a frenzy of despair. This composition is based on that of S. Maria Maggiore, but separated from it by an abyss of taste and of religious sentiment which presupposes the lapse of a considerable period of time. The one is the outcome of the heroic period of Christianity; the other of the coarser Christianity of a declining Empire.

The one represents a massacre of babies, and is the parent of the heartrending scenes depicted by a Matteo di Giovanni, by a Marc Antonio, by a Rubens, and a Brueghel; the other is inspired by the exhilarating thought of the fortitude of the first martyrs, and of the impotent and foolish hostility of an ephemeral Empire.

XII. "It is evident," says Justin Martyr, "that no one can subdue or terrify us who believe in Jesus . . . for it is plain, that though beheaded, and crucified, and thrown to wild beasts, and given to chains and fire, and all other kinds of torture, we do not renounce our faith; on the contrary, the more such things happen, the more do others, in larger numbers, become faithful worshippers of God, through the name of Jesus." †

And again, "It were verily ridiculous if we, who earnestly long for incorruption, should not endure all things in order to obtain what we desire from Him who is able to grant it." ‡

* Plate 47, No. 3.

† 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. cx.

‡ 'I. Apol.,' chap. xxxix.



CHAPTER VIII

HEROD, PRIESTS, AND MAGI

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION.
COMMENTARY (III.-IX.) :—
- III. Herod and his nimbus,
- IV. A personification of divine, imperial Roman power.
- V. The attitude of the early Church towards orthodox Judaism. Barnabas.
- VI. Justin Martyr.
- VII. Herod in early Christian literature.
- VIII. The thought underlying both pictures, in each of which Herod issues a mandate, is the Roman Jew-prompted persecution of Christians.
- IX. The ephemeral Kingdom of Herod. 'HERODES,' the Christian MENE TEKEL of the Roman Empire.

HEROD, PRIESTS, AND MAGI.

Plate 35 ; Plate 47, No. 2 ; Plate 49.

I. DESCRIPTION.—The closely compacted mass of figures of which this composition is composed falls into three groups: to the left are the Magi, with the distant town from which they come; to the right, Herod enthroned, attended by a military escort, his right hand raised in speech addressed to the Eastern sages, and, between them, two white-bearded priests, one of whom holds an unfurled roll in his hand.

The Magi are characterised as Persians by their dress, which is uniform throughout this series, and as very young; their blonde faces are framed in flowing hair.

As in the foregoing picture, Herod wears the dress of a Roman Emperor; his head is encircled by a blue nimbus, above which is a tablet, inscribed with his name in white well-formed letters on a blue ground, a significant and unique particularity.

The two aged priests who stand between and somewhat behind

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

these two groups bend their attention upon Herod: it is evident that he has heard their interpretation of the roll they hold in their hands; and it would seem that the speech, to which they listen anxiously, is the fruit of their promptings.

II. CONDITION.—This picture is much injured in the neighbourhood of Cardinal Pinelli's pseudo-classic pilaster on the right; which hides part of the body of Herod, and entirely covers the soldier behind him.

Although the figure of Herod has been extensively restored in stucco, its antique character has not been lost. Isolated cubes scattered through it prove that the restorer has aimed at reproducing the mutilated original. The much-injured head is in mosaic, as is also its encircling blue nimbus, the outer border of which, however, has been encroached upon by its stucco background: this is red, painted with gold dots in imitation of gold mosaic.

The mutilated inscription HE(RODES) is antique.

The draperies and scrolls of the priests may be antique; the head of one is in stucco, and is apparently of the time of Benedict XIV.; that of the other, which is in mosaic, is of the time of Cardinal Pinelli.

The head of the central Mage—although the lower part is broken away, and the cubes of which it was composed replaced by a rough daub of tinted plaster—is among the best preserved heads in the church, what has survived being absolutely free from the suspicion of restoration.*

Its technique is that of the heads in *The Passage of the Red Sea*.† Like the face of Aaron, that of the Persian sage is built up of large roughly-fitted richly-coloured cubes, buff, blue-grey, orange, red, and black: the brilliant and expressive eyes are composed of two quadrangular cubes, one white, one black: there is no trace of linear drawing; the roundness of the young face is successfully expressed by the juxtaposition of warmly coloured masses of tone.

The skilful use of orange in connection with red should be observed; a lighter shade is put to a similar use in the heads in *Abraham and Lot*,‡ where it bridges the passage from deep red into buff. We conjecture its lost presence in the injured heads in *The Marriage of Moses and Zipporah*.§

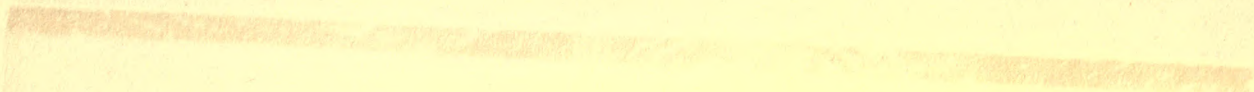
Green cubes similar to those used in the head-dress of the Oriental

* Plate 49.

† Plate 20.

‡ Plates 8 and 9.

§ Plate 15.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Mage occur in the architectonic flowers, and in the draperies of "Roma" in the second picture on the Arch.*

The heads of the other two Magi are ruined; the cubes of which they are composed have fallen out, or have moved, and their surface is consequently rough; they are, moreover, daubed with stucco.

COMMENTARY. III.—This picture consists of three groups; of three Persians, young and inquiring, almost timid; of an enthroned ruler, and of priests. The Ruler wears the dress of a Roman general, and is attended by a military escort; his hand is stretched out with a gesture of imperious command; his head is encircled by a nimbus—an emblem granted in the decorations of this church to no other king or leader, not to Melchizedek, or Pharaoh, not to Moses, or Joshua; nor to any great Christian personality, not to Peter, or Paul, nor to the Virgin. It is used exclusively as a symbol of the supernatural, and is thus associated with representations of Christ, of the Angels of God . . . and with Herod!—with Herod, the tributary King of Judea, who failed to murder the Child Christ! The association is surprising. But the artist has permitted no doubt as to the identity of the potentate, whose name, HERODES, he has inscribed on a tablet above his head. He has clearly and purposely associated two ideas at first sight incompatible with each other, Herod . . . a *deified* Roman Emperor.

IV. Between these two groups—one representing despotic Roman power, the other searchers after revealed truth—is a third. It consists of two aged priests, designated as such by their dress, which is that of the priests who repudiate "the Light to lighten the Gentiles" in The Presentation; in their hands is a large scroll, the message inscribed on which affects them and the Magi differently; the Magi hasten to adore their Redeemer, the Jews to plot His death.

The attitude of these Jewish priests is significant; they turn from the Magi, and fix their searching eyes on Herod, who seems to fulfil their will, to be their mouthpiece.

V. Daring as is this representation of a personification of deified Imperial power as the tool of a conquered people to whom Rome denied the right to enter their own capital, or their own holy places, on pain of death,† it is the pictorial equivalent of the common sentiment of the third century, which made the Jewish people responsible, not only

* Plate 39.

† See p. 322.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

for the suffering of Christ, but for the persecutions of Christians, which were traced to lying Hebrew intrigues. "Christ," says Barnabas, "was made manifest that the Jews should fill up the measure of their wickedness; and that we, being made heirs, should receive the Covenant of the Lord Jesus."*

VI. Justin Martyr says even more pointedly, "The Jews, who possessed the Books of the Prophets, did not understand, and therefore did not recognise Christ . . . and hate us who say He has come."†

And again, speaking to the Jew Trypho, he cries, quoting Isaiah, "Woe unto their soul! Woe! For they have devised an evil device against themselves, saying, Let us bind the righteous, for He is distasteful to us . . . accordingly ye displayed great zeal, crying dark, bitter, and unjust things throughout the land against the only blameless and righteous Light sent by God. . . . For He appeared distasteful to you . . ."‡

And again, "You curse in your synagogues all those that are called Christians after Him, and your nation effectively carry out the curse, putting to death those who confess themselves Christians . . . While neither they nor you are persuaded by us, but rather earnestly strive to make us deny the name of Christ, . . . we . . . submit to death in the full assurance that God will reward us as He promised through Christ."§

VII. The insignificance of the *role* played by Herod in early Christian literature strengthens the belief that the association here of the symbol of the divinity of the Imperial rulers of Rome with his figure is a piece of intentional irony.

No apocalyptic significance, such as rendered the figure of Nero lurid, was attached to his person. ||

In the Jewish "Ascension of Moses," which originated some years either before or after the birth of Christ, he is obscurely alluded to as an "impudent king, not of priestly descent, a wayward and godless man." "After him," it is added, "cometh the End." ¶

Justin Martyr, who alone among early Christian writers honours

* Ep. xii. 17.

† 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. xvii.

‡ Zahn, 'Einleitung in das Neue Testament,' vol. ii. p. 625.

¶ Kautzsch, 'Die Apokryphen und Pseudo-Epigraphen des Alten Testament,' ii., pp. 313 and 324.

† 'First Apology,' chap. xxxvi.

§ *Ibid.* chap. xcvi.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

him with comment, is of opinion that Ezekiel* described him prophetically, when he wrote of one whose "mother was a Hittite, and his father an Amorite." †

He identified him also with the "King of Assyria" ‡ of Isaiah.

"At the time of His birth," he writes, "the Magi, coming from Arabia to worship Him, went first to Herod, who was then sovereign in your land, whom the Scriptures call 'King of Assyria' § because of his ungodly and sinful character . . . for you know that the Holy Spirit often pre-announced such events by parables and similitudes."

VIII. If these two pictures to which the two figures of Herod are common are co-related, if the scenes represented are conceived as mutually supplementary, then their subject-matter is the attitude of the Gentile world, of the Jewish Priesthood, and of the Imperial power of Rome towards the long-looked-for Redeemer, whose advent was foretold in prophecies to which all three had access.

IX. An enthroned man, characterised as a Roman Emperor, is depicted as the puppet of the Jewish Priesthood. The pagan emblem of divinity is associated with a Ruler who is representative of conscious opposition to the will of God!

Is the inscription "HERODES" the Christian equivalent of the "Writing on the Wall"? is it the "MENE TEKEL" of the Roman Empire?

* Ez. xvi. 45.

† 'Dial. with Trypho,' chap. lxxvii.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Palestine was a province of Syria. In the common speech of the day Syria and Assyria were synonymous; thus Heliogabalus, who came from the Syrian town Emessa, was called "the Assyrian" by the Roman people.

CHAPTER IX

JERUSALEM AND BETHLEHEM

- I. DESCRIPTION.
- II. CONDITION.
- COMMENTARY (III-XIII):
- III. An isolated town, a symbol of locality ;
- IV. Not so used here.
- V. Personifications of towns. Roma. Joshua Rotulus.
- VI. Jerusalem, the Ecclesia ex circumcissione ; Bethlehem, the Ecclesia ex Gentibus.
- VII. The thought connecting these towns with the rest of the cycle.
- VIII. Realistic representation of Jerusalem.
- IX. Jerusalem restored as the apocalyptic New Jerusalem.
- X. Dubious significance of its jewelled pendant, Bethlehem.
- XI. This mixed pictorial metaphor clarified in the lapse of centuries into typical representations or personifications of the Law and of the Gospel.
- XII. Prudentius.
- XIII. Composite character of these towns due to interpolations.

JERUSALEM AND BETHLEHEM.

Plate 50, Nos. 1 and 2.

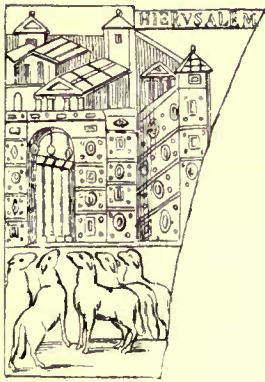
JERUSALEM.

I. DESCRIPTION.—A group of five sheep is pictured before a town entered by a large rounded archway, without door or gate, which opens directly on to a long range of columns, supporting a waggon-roof, seemingly a porticus. From the top of this arch depend a gilt Cross, and a blue Medallion, set in gold.

The city walls are golden, and set with gems. They are divided into four strata by red parallel horizontal lines, the spaces between which are ornamented by large emeralds, set alternately in an oval and a quadrangular framework, set in its turn in squares of pearls.

The space between the upper lines which indicate the thickness of the wall is also set with precious stones, a square and a round gem

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

alternating. These wall decorations are in the taste of a Romanesque bookcover.

Within the city walls, but, by an antique convention visible above them, are carefully characterised buildings, among them a classic temple with pillared portico and pediment.

Above the town, on the right, is the inscription *HIERVSALEM* in gold letters on a purple background.

II. *CONDITION*.—Possibly original in this picture are the much-injured buildings enclosed within the jewelled walls of the town.

The sheep in front of it are executed in much injured mosaic of uncertain date, but evidently reproduce an antique original.*

Of much later date (early mediaeval), are the jewelled walls of the town, and the Cross and Medallion hanging in its entrance. They are contemporary with the restored parts of the central symbol, the Mercy Seat, the Throne of Christ in *The Adoration of the Magi*, the Temple behind Joseph, and the figures of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, in *The Miracle of the Quails*.

Restorations in stucco occur in the neighbourhood of Cardinal Pinelli's pilaster.

BETHLEHEM.

I. *DESCRIPTION*.—Here, as in the corresponding representation of Jerusalem, five sheep are grouped outside a walled city.

II. *CONDITION*.—Only a fragment of the upper part of this picture can be accepted as even approximately in its original state; the remaining three-fourths have been restored in coloured stucco.

Possibly antique are the buildings pictured within the town walls, three temples, and an open theatre, or, more probably, a buleiterion.

Above the town is the inscription *BETHLEHEM* in golden letters on a purple ground.

COMMENTARY.—III. On the lowest and narrowest portions of the spandrils of the Arch, two towns, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, are pictured as pendants.

An isolated town, the sole subject of a picture, as here, sometimes serves to localise the scenes pictured either immediately above or below it.

IV. Jerusalem here, however, is associated with *The Massacre of*

* Compare the group of sheep at the side of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs of Pretextatus of the third century, Plate 50, No. 3.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

the Innocents, The Adoration of the Magi, and the Annunciation, all which events took place elsewhere. And Bethlehem is associated with The Visit of the Magi to Herod, The Homage of the Hellenistic Prince, and a scene connected with the Temple of Jerusalem, none of which events took place within its walls. Clearly it was not the artist's intention that these towns should be understood as the material background of the scenes pictured above them. They may serve, however, as a clue to their mystic significance.

The early Christian Church was composed of two distinctly differentiated sections, the Jewish and the Gentile, or the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*, and the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*.

These are represented in art either as personifications, as in S. Pudenziana, and in S. Sabina, and elsewhere; or as towns, as here, and in numerous other churches, and in reliefs and pictures.

V. A Town, representing a place of abode or origin, is a symbol the nature of which is too obvious to require comment.

The use of figures as representatives either of towns, or of the presiding genius of towns, was a common classic practice; the personifications of towns in the Joshua Rotulus,* and the "Roma" on this very Arch † may be cited as examples; on Greek coins of the second and third centuries, on which representations of personifications are accompanied by inscriptions descriptive of their chief social elements: "BOULE," "DEMOS," "EKKLESIA," etc. ‡

VI. The representative town of the Jews was naturally Jerusalem.

In designed contrast to the magnificence of the great Mistress of the World, whose privileged children all would fain be, Christians chose Bethlehem as the town of their citizenship, a place of no worldly importance, but of which Micah had prophesied.

"And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel."§

It was, moreover, the scene not only of the Birth of Christ, but also of the Coming of the Gentiles to Christ, and of the first Martyrdom.

* Plate 27, Nos. 1 and 2; Plate 30, No. 3.

† Plate 39.

‡ G. F. Hill, 'Handbook of Greek and Roman Coins,' London, 1899, p. 188.

§ Matth. ii. 6; Micah v. 2.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VII. Is there any mystic connection between these towns, and the scenes pictured above them? Topographical connection there is none, as we have seen.

Above Jerusalem are scenes in which the Jewish race plays a noble and dominating rôle.

Immediate above it is pictured the first martyrdom, that of the Jewish children, who at the coming of Christ laid down their lives for His sake. Above this is represented the coming of the Orient to worship the King of the Jews, and above this again the Annunciation of the Virgin Birth of the Redeemer, "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." *

Above Bethlehem are pictured scenes especially sacred to the members of the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*: the search of the Magi for Christ, the guidance of a prince to Christ by Gentile Philosophy, and the recognition of Christ by devout Jews as the "Light to lighten the Gentiles," the destruction and desecration of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the flight of Christ to the land of the Gentiles.

These two towns, therefore, serve as an anchor to the thoughts the artist has floated above them; they suggest the intellectual background of the scenes represented.

VIII. The much-interpolated Jerusalem of S. Maria Maggiore originally represented the earthly Jerusalem, the representative town of the Jews, viewed both as a material object, and as symbolising an idea.

The high-arched gateway leading into the town opens onto a spacious porticus; these great covered ways were characteristic features of Hellenistic towns, and doubtless, therefore, of the Jerusalem of the third century. A vast Porticus figured prominently also in the rebuilt and remodelled Jerusalem of Constantine. †

IX. With the lapse of time, and change of circumstances, with the extinction of the *ECCLESIA EX CIRCUMCISIONE*, and of the Jewish nation, with the disappearance of Jerusalem, even as a geographical name, and with its resurrection, not as the headquarters of the Jewish

* Matth. i. 1.

† See Map of Jerusalem, showing a long porticus connecting its opposite gates, which is reproduced in the sixth-century pavement of the Church of Madaba, Palestine; also the background of the Apse of S. Pudenziana.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

cult, but as the metropolis of the Christian world, with the *Crux Gemmata* for its ensign, the thought originally expressed in this realistic Jerusalem faded from the public consciousness; and though, with the usual conservatism of classic art, and of religious symbolism, the ancient pictograph was retained, the significance attached to it visibly wavered; the inscription "*Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*" (which had become meaningless) was retained, but the thought which the later artist aimed at expressing was unconnected with the city of Herod, or of Hadrian, or of Constantine; the vision which floated before him was that of the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, "the city of pure gold," with "walls adorned with all manner of precious stones."

X. Bethlehem, the symbol of the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*, was gradually involved in the same confusion of thought and imagery. Although it is difficult to say in what sense the "least of the cities of Judah" could be regarded as a pendant to the New Jerusalem, inexplicable jewels crept over her walls, and she came to figure as the worthy counterpart of her heavenly sister, and between their gateways moved the long procession of the mystic Flock of Christ. At the time of its composition this mystic symbol was abundantly intelligible: it represented the one flock, drawn from the Jews and from the Gentiles.*

XI. This mixed pictorial metaphor continued to exist for centuries, but at last the outgrown elements of the original thought dropped away, the towns were replaced by personifications of the Law and the Gospel, or, as they were sometimes called, by a persistent atavism, the Synagogue and the Church.

XII. Prudentius speaks of Bethlehem in words in which the earlier conception is mirrored.

*" Sancta Bethlem caput est orbis, quae pretulit Jesum,
Orbis principium, caput ipsum principiorum.
Urbs hominem Christum genuit, qui Christus agebat
Ante Deus, quam sol fieret, quam lucifer esset."*

XIII. In this basilica the interpolator has combined these two images. Late jewelled walls enclose an early naturalistic representation of a Hellenistic town in which are temples or houses, and a theatre-like building which may be interpreted as a *buleiterion*.

* See Plate 50, No. 5, The Procession of Sheep in the Apse of SS. Cosma a Damiano.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY

- I. The central Symbol ;
- II. The philosophic and didactic character of the series of which it is the synthesis. The Repudiation of Christ by the Jews.
- III. The Virgin Birth. "The Abomination of Desolation."
- IV. The Church of the fourth and fifth centuries proclaimed the future glories of Christ, the Church of the third pointed to fulfilled prophecy as proving the divinity of Christ.
- V. The overwhelming importance attached to the fulfilment of prophecy by second and third century writers, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others.
- VI. Christ conceived as the fulfilment of Eastern prophecy, and as that for which Western philosophy sought.
- VII. The Jews, because of their unbelief, forfeited their position as the "Plebs Dei."
- VIII. The two groups of which the early Church was composed.
- IX. Summary.
- X. The idea of the Incarnation a stumbling block to pagan thinkers.
- XI. Plato.
- XII. The Logos idea. Philo. St. John.
- XIII. Justin Martyr.
- XIV. Irenaeus.
- XV. Clement of Alexandria.
- XVI. Hippolytus.
- XVII. The cosmic significance of the Incarnation as expounded by the Gnostics.
- XVIII. The use of engraved symbols on signet rings.
- XIX. The manner in which the Christ Child is here represented shows that the artist conceived Him as the Logos.
- XX. Pictures in the Catacombs and in this basilica contrasted. The Annunciation.
- XXI. The composite and cosmopolitan art of Rome, and of the Roman empire.
- XXII. The adoration of the Magi.
- XXIII. Christ and Mithras.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

To resume:—

I. An emblematic throne which stands for Christ, the Ruler and Redeemer, typified in the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat of the Hebrew ritual, the mystic meeting place of God and man, dominates the pictorial decorations of the Arch, of which it is the key-stone intellectually and mystically, as it is decoratively and architectonically.

II. The pictures with which it is surrounded are expansions of a cognate thought, that of His universal dominion, who counts among His subjects men of the past as of the present, of the East and of the West. These representations, like those of the Nave, are essentially "Tendenzbilder," and not, as has been asserted, historical compositions, remains of an earlier illustrated Bible. The attempt to apprehend them as such leads to insoluble difficulties, which drop away directly they are accepted as the fruit of the Christian philosophy of the Age of the Apologists, as ideographic, and not realistic.

III. To the right of the Symbol of Christ is pictured the Annunciation of the Virgin Birth to Mary and to Joseph; His miraculous birth being the sign foretold by the prophets by which the Redeemer might be recognised. Especial weight is laid by Justin Martyr on its prophetic pre-annunciation. "Isaiah," he says, "foretold in express words that He should be born of a Virgin . . . for things which are incredible, and seemed impossible with men, these God foretold by the spirit of prophecy; that when they came to pass, there should not be unbelief, but faith; because they had been predicted."

And again, "The Angel of God brought her the good news, saying, 'Behold, thou shalt conceive of the Holy Ghost, and shalt bear a Son, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins;'" this they have taught, who have recorded all that concerns our Saviour Jesus Christ; and this we believe, since Isaiah also, through the spirit of prophecy, declared that He would be born as we have above intimated. It is wrong, therefore, to understand the Spirit and the Power of God as anything else than the Word which came upon the Virgin, and overshadowed her . . . "and," he adds, addressing Trypho in his truculent way, "even you, I fancy, will grant that the prophets are inspired by the divine Word."*

* 'I. Apologia,' chap. xxxiii.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

“The word Jesus,” says Eusebius in his ‘*Demonstratio Evangelica*,’ translated from Hebrew into Greek, “is σωτήριον, salvation”: “the name of our Redeemer is none other therefore than the Salvation of God. . . . Simeon witnessed to this,” he continues, “when taking the Child in his arms he cried, ‘Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.’”*

It is not beside the point, in a *resumé* of the general tendencies of the decorations of the Arch, to note that this quotation from Eusebius is taken from an exhaustive discourse of which the subject is the divine selection not of the Jews, but of the Gentiles to be the Plebs Dei.

This is in part the subject of the following picture, in which are represented the Presentation in the Temple of this long foretold Virgin-born Redeemer, His recognition by Simeon, and His repudiation by the Jews, with its result—“the Abomination of Desolation” standing on the Holy Place, and the flight of the Saviour to the Gentiles.

The thought of prophecy is therefore writ large on the great pictures which form the upper border of the Triumphal Arch; the events depicted are pledges of the divine nature of Him who both foretold and was foretold.

IV. The Church of Jerome and of Augustine and of succeeding generations attached supreme importance to the *proclamatio post eventum*.† Not so the early Church; Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and others, base their appeals to their contemporaries not on future glories, and not so much on the actual incidents of the life of Christ, as on the circumstance that they were foreknown, that they correspond with prophetic pre-announcements dating from the earliest times.

V. This is precisely the point of view which dictated the choice and treatment of the subject-matter of the decorations of the Nave; the lives of Moses, Joshua, and Jacob were not represented because of their intrinsic interest, but because they mirrored that which existed in the foreknowledge of God alone, the life of Christ.

Faith in oracles, in augurs, and in all the means by which the ancients sought to foreknow the future, was based on the belief that the Gods, powerless as they might be to suspend or modify the march

* IX. 3, 36.

† Representations of the risen and enthroned Christ occupy the arches and apses of the later Churches (S. Pudenziana, S. Paolo, etc.).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

of events, were still superior to human beings, in that the future lay clear before their vision.

This being so, how intelligible, nay how inevitable, becomes the attitude of Christians who, like Justin Martyr, had been formed in the school of antique culture, and aimed at sowing the seeds of their new faith in their native soil, and therefore based their propaganda on the assertion of the prophetic pre-announcement of the life of Christ, sometimes in words, but more often in types.

"Why," asks Justin Martyr, "should we believe of a crucified man that He is the first born of the Unbegotten God, and that He will judge the human race, unless we had found testimonies concerning Him published before His advent and human birth; and unless we saw that they had been fulfilled—the devastation of the land of the Jews, men of every race, persuaded by His teaching through the Apostles, rejecting their old habits, in which, being deceived, they had had their conversation . . . yea, and knew that the Christians from among the Gentiles to be both more numerous and more true than those from among the Jews."*

VI. The conception of the fulfilment in Christ of the earlier sporadic self-revelations of God to man is the root-idea of the representations of The Adoration of the Magi, and of The Homage of Philosopher and Prince. The Magi are led to Christ by the prophetic utterances of Gentile Seers, Balaam, Hystaspes, and the Sibyl; a Hellenistic Prince is led to Christ by a Philosopher, a lover of that Wisdom which Plato conceived as God-inspired.

VII. Among the Old Testament pictures of the Nave are not a few of which the main thought is the rejection of the Jews as the People of God.† Three pictures of the New Testament series express a parallel thought. Herod is conceived as supported and inspired by the Jewish Priesthood, who, having learned from the Scriptures that Jesus was the promised Messiah, conspire to destroy Him; with the result, the inauguration of the kingdom of Christ by the death of the first martyrs, and its inevitable consequence, the disinheritance of the physical race of Abraham by this crowning act of revolt.

VIII. The series closes with pictures of doubtful authenticity, representing the mystic towns of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the well-

* 'I. Apologia,' chap. liii. † See chap. iii. of First and chap. iv. of Second Typological Series.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

known emblems of the two currents, Jew and Gentile, which formed the early Christian Church; the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*, and the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*, emblems which on the extinction of the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione* took on the wider but cognate significance of the Old and New Covenants.

IX. The subject therefore of the decorations of the Arch is the manifestation of God in Christ, who is accepted as the long foretold Redeemer by those who sought for Him along the paths of Oriental mysticism, as the long-sought-for realisation of divine wisdom by others, whose need of Him was intellectual; and His rejection by the Jews, and by their tool, the representative of the Imperial power of Rome.

We have seen that the stratum of thought to which this cycle belongs is that of the second or third centuries, as represented by Justin Martyr, Barnabas, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, and others.

X. The problem which then chiefly exercised Christian thought was that of the Incarnation.

"When the Christian religion was preached to the world," says a modern writer, "it was inevitable that men's minds should reason upon it; it could not be accepted blindly, it must be made to fit in with the system of things. It was announced as being at once a fulfilment of Jewish prophecy, and a new world-embracing religion. To the Gentile thinker the Christ of the Jews could not, primarily and as such, be conceived as the Son of God, and Lord of the human race. To occupy such a position He must be regarded in the wider light of a Being universal as humanity itself, and so brought into an intelligible relation with the past of the Gentile world. . . . As the Gospel spread, an increasing number of cultured minds submitted to it; and many of these, whether Jew or Gentile, retained, under the apparent acceptance of Christian teaching, the root-ideas of their former faiths, from which they were not, and hardly wished to be, emancipated."*

Great was the necessity for some philosophic formula by which the unthinkable union of the human and Divine was rendered intelligible.

The doctrine of the Logos met this need.

XI. Plato conceived the world as consisting of appearances, images,

* Cruttwell, 'Literary History of Early Christianity,' vol. i. p. 182.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

or shadows more or less closely resembling ideal invisible realities ; and God as the synthesis and reality of these "ideas"; the Idea of Ideas; the source of all Being, the Reality behind all life, all thought.

XII. Clearly a gulf separated this 'God,' this philosophic abstraction, from the personal Deity of the Mosaic religion.

The Logos doctrine, generally associated with the name of its most distinguished exponent, the Hellenised Hebrew philosopher Philo, was an attempt to bridge this gulf.

Philo accepted the current belief that the Supreme Deity, Unconditioned and Inconceivable, could only come into contact with matter indirectly, through the medium of Logoi, intermediary powers, which he does not personify, although he calls them by such misleading titles as Angels, Arch-Angels, High Priests, etc. Neither did he conceive the Supreme Logos, the active Principle of Divine Reason, the Creative Word, as a Divine Person, but as a Divine Power.

It was John who first wrote of this Divine Creative Force as a Person, the Supreme Mediator between God and created things, the Son of God, in whom the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled. "In the beginning," he says, "was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. . . . All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that has been made. . . . He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. . . . And the Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us. . . . No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." *

This conception of the Logos was repeated and amplified by orthodox apologists, and modified by the Gnostics.

XIII. Justin Martyr, whose writings so often furnished literary parallels both to the realism and mysticism of the historical pictures of the Nave, was the first post-apostolic teacher, who, building on the foundation laid by S. John, systematically and formally declared that Christ, the visible Mediator and Revealer of the Deity, was one with the classic Logos.

In a summary of his argument at the end of his Second Apology he asserts, not the identity of the Christian teaching on this point with

* Chap. i. 1-18.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

that of ancient philosophy, but its connection and superiority. He declares that the human spirit was never without a spark of the Divine, prompted by which it dimly felt after, and recognised, that of which it shared the nature.

“The Platonic doctrines are not opposed to our teaching concerning Christ, neither are they identical with it; and this is true of those of the Poets, Stoics and Historians, for the *Spermatic* Word within them, working within its limitation, recognised that which is akin to it. What ever has been rightly spoken among men belongs to us Christians; for next to God the Unbegotten and Unutterable Deity, we worship the Logos, since He became man that He might share our suffering, and effect our cure.

“All writers who have spoken finely have done so through the emplant seed (*sperma*) of the Logos within them, through which they have dimly discerned the truth.”*

XIV. Irenaeus, the most irreproachably orthodox of the Fathers of the second century, writes of Christ the Logos in the same strain.†

Speaking of the gradual revelation of God to man, a revelation adapted to his powers of comprehension and endurance, he says: “God trains us step by step. . . . He could in the beginning have given perfect knowledge to man; but man, having but just begun to be, was unable to receive it, or, rather, to comprehend it when received; or again, comprehending, to retain it. For this cause the Son of God became a babe with man, perfect as He was. Not on His own account, but because of men’s childishness, being what man was able to comprehend. Not with God was the weakness and defect, but with newly-formed man, because he was not uncreated.”

XV. Clement of Alexandria taught that the Logos is one, and divine, but the ways which lead to Him many: the Way of Intelligence; the Way of the Law; and the Christian Way, that of personal communion. This he affirms in passages which are the synthesis of the thought embodied in the decorations of the Arch.‡

XVI. Two decades later, the Roman Bishop Hippolytus taught that God willed to create; and, thinking, generated the Logos, who, embodying the Father’s idea, created the Universe. He conceived

* ‘II. Apol.,’ chap. xiii.

† ‘Against Heres.,’ Book iv. chap. xxxviii.

‡ ‘Strom.,’ Book vi. chap. v.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

Him therefore, not only as the Father's thought, but as the active principle by which that thought was realised.

XVII. In the opinion of the Gnostics—a large and influential though unorthodox Christian sect—the incarnation of Christ was as the turning-point in the history of the Universe.

“Gnostic systems,” says a German historian,* “which dwell on the consternation produced in the kingdom of the Demiurge (the creator of our world) by the appearance of Christ as the manifestation of a new and mighty principle which had entered the precincts of this lower world, bear witness to the powerful impression made on the minds of Gnostic thinkers by the life of Christ and His influence on humanity.

“It appeared to them as the commencement of a great revolution in the history of mankind.

“The conception of the readjustment of the disturbed harmony of the universe, of the restoration of a fallen creation, of the reunion of earth with heaven, of the revelation to man of an ineffable God-like life transcending the bounds of mere human nature, of a new process of development, which should modify the whole system of the terrestrial world, these ideas henceforth formed the centre of Gnostic systems, the aim of which was the apprehension of the appearance of Christ, and of the new creation proceeding from Him, in their connection with the evolution of the universe. Everything is referred backwards and forwards to Christ's appearance in a theogonical and cosmogonical process, remounting to the original source of all things.”

XVIII. The Gnostics endeavoured to mirror their ideas in symbols, of which a number have been preserved to us on engraved stones. †

Orthodox Christians also engraved their symbols on signet rings. Clement of Alexandria recommends the following: the Fish or the Kryptogram I.X.Θ.Y.Σ, the Dove, the Lyre, and the Ship; many others were in common use; the Peacock, the Phœnix, the Palm, and the Christophany of the signet ring of Berlin, of which the elements are the Throne, and the prophetic star, which may also be interpreted as a combination of the Greek letters I, X, being the initials of ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ. ‡

* Neander, quoted by Cruttwell, 'Lit. Hist.,' vol. i. p. 191 f.

† Of these there is a large selection in the British Museum among the Christian Antiquities.

‡ See Plate 34, No. 7. Its enlargement on book cover.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

XIX. The thought of Christ as the Logos, as the revealer of God to the human race, is not expressed on the Arch in the symbol of the Mercy Seat only, but also in the manner in which the Christ-Child is represented. He is pictured as a child in years, but not in nature; there is no suggestion of dependence on the tender protectiveness of His Mother in this Being, so completely master of Himself, Who travels through Egypt accompanied by wondering Angels and by His parents, Who also only a few weeks old receives the homage of Simeon and Anna with awe-inspiring dignity, Who receives the Magi enthroned in solitary state, His hand raised in the gesture of speech, not of speech addressed to them, but of speech in the abstract, a gesture which is repeated in all three pictures, and, partaking of the character of an attribute, designates Him as the Word, the Logos.

The repetition of this gesture must not be attributed to accident, or interpreted as a fancy of the painter; such an interpretation would be an anachronism. The canons of classic art permitted no personal fancies.

XX. The phase of Christian thought embodied in the sixty-two pictures still preserved in this Basilica is not that which finds expression in the contemporary decorations of the Catacombs, although the cycles of both cemetery and church deal with material drawn from a common source—the Old Testament stories of the patriarchs, lawgivers, and leaders, and the New Testament account of the childhood of Christ.

It is instructive to compare The Annunciation and The Adoration of the Magi as pictured in this church with pictures of similar contents in the Catacombs.

The so-called "Annunciation" of the Catacombs of Priscilla* is accepted, for reasons of style and technique, as of the second century; it is, therefore, approximately synchronous with the mosaics of the Arch. The Virgin is represented as seated, the Child in her arms; before her, pointing to a star which floats between them, is a man, wearing the pallium only, characterised therefore as a philosopher or seer.

Two prophecies form its subject-matter: that of Balaam, "Behold, a star shall rise on Jacob"; and that of Isaiah, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Child."

It is therefore a variation of the theme of the Arch; the scarlet

* Plate 32, No. 2. Compare p. 288. See also J. Wilpert, 'Le pitture delle Catacombe Romane,' Rome, 1903, p. 188. Plate 22.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

thread, which here symbolises the redeeming blood of the Child, is there replaced by an actual representation of the Child itself. The Angel is replaced by the prophet.

Common to both is the introduction of the Virgin as a pictorial synthesis of the words spoken; in both cases the subject is a thought, something therefore lying outside the sphere of realistic representation. Although both these compositions are unquestionably the expression of similar habits of thought, neither of them is artistically dependant on the other.

Nor should the synchronous existence of independent phases of early Christian art be a matter for surprise.

XXI. It is precisely the co-existence of numberless currents and foreign influences which, together with its fragmentariness, renders the course of Roman art so difficult to follow; reflecting the life and composite civilisation of a cosmopolitan city, it is composed of heterogeneous elements, both native and foreign. So little is known of the schools of the great cities of the Empire, of Carthage, Alexandria, Antioch, Athens, which were certainly well represented in Rome, that it is impossible to dogmatise on their mutual interconnection and on their influence on the art of the capital of the Empire; still less to rebuild their *débris* into an organic whole.

All that is feasible now is, to analyse and characterise such specimens as have survived, to associate them with the phases of contemporary literature of which they are the pictorial equivalents, and with such examples of pictorial and plastic art as betray the same habits of visualisation and of conception and, when possible, to group them geographically.

XXII. The Annunciations of Priscilla and of S. Maria Maggiore are interesting in juxtaposition, because of certain similarities of thought, conception, and visualisation which underlie their obvious pictorial dissimilarity.

One idea is common to both; in both, although the subject is essentially mystic, its expression is realistic; in both objects are conceived in terms of mass and value, not of line; the whites of the eyes are abnormally brilliant, the carnations ruddy, the figures tell as solids on an aerial background. They are the outcome, intellectually and artistically, of the same phase of civilisation.

CONCLUSION AND GENERAL
CONSIDERATIONS

1.



2.



3.



CHAPTER I

CONCLUSION

- I. The classic Mosaics of this basilica associated with the name of Xystus in two inscriptions.
- II. The idea of the Theotokos is the inspiration both of Xystus' votive picture, and of his inscription on the entrance wall; but the Virgin is not represented in the pictures of the Nave, plays a subordinate part in those of the Arch; and is not mentioned in the inscription of the Arch.
- III. Was Xystus himself represented in his votive picture? Adoration of the Magi.
- IV. Plebs Dei.
- V. Date of the mosaics of the Arch and Nave.
- VI. Cyclic historical series. Throne of Maxentius. The "Vienna Genesis." Miracles and Passion of Christ. S. Apollinare, Ravenna. Doors of S. Sabina.
- VII. Pope Hadrian's evidence.
- VIII. Chronology. Points at issue.

I. IT has been seen * that the name of Xystus III. is associated with the antique mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in two monumental inscriptions.† Such inscriptions are so rare in the fifth century that the pictures of which they seem to guarantee the date have been accepted as fixed points, from which the historian may travel backwards and forwards; and round which he is justified in grouping stylistically similar works of art. As such they rightly hold a prominent place in reconstructive art history.

One of these two inscriptions was placed above the entrance door,

* P. 27 ff.

† Entries in the Liber Pontificalis which ascribe the building of S. Maria Maggiore to the Bishop of Rome who immediately preceded Leo the Great, prove that Xystus III. is the Pope in question, and not an earlier pontiff of the same name; neither Xystus I., a contemporary of the Antonines, nor Xystus II., whose short pontificate falls in the middle of the third century.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

and was probably associated with Xystus' "Theotokos"; the other is upon the Arch.

II. In the former Xystus lauds the Virgin in characteristic verses, conceived in accordance with the singular taste of the day. He describes her as enthroned in the centre of the picture, the Child on her knees, while martyrs advance from either side with gifts in their hands.* This picture is lost, but a later form of the same conception survives in the mosaics of S. Apollinare Nuovo, at Ravenna, in which a long procession of Virgins, bearing crowns, approach the enthroned Theotokos.†

The martyrs offer their gifts to the *Virgin*, so the inscription expressly states. This is an important point, and one characteristic of the phase of dogmatic theology prevailing in the fifth, and in the following centuries.

The mental attitude involved should be contrasted with that which finds expression in the representation of the Epiphany on the Arch, in which the Magi offer gifts, not to the Virgin, who is not conceived as present, but to the Child who sits alone on His great throne.

In like manner the thought underlying the votive inscription of the entrance wall is essentially dissimilar to that mirrored in the compositions of the Arch viewed as a cycle. This inscription reflects the image of the enthroned Virgin, who was the centre of the picture with which it was associated; but the Mother of Christ plays a very subordinate *rôle* in the intellectually complex cycle of the Arch, although its formal subject-matter is connected with the infancy of her Son. Neither is she mentioned in the inscription in which these pictures are dedicated to the People of God.

The character of the historical material selected would alone suffice to prove that the artist aimed at giving expression to an idea which had no reference to her. How could the Massacre of the Innocents, or the Visit of the Magi to Herod, be so handled as to redound to her glory?

III. The number of martyrs represented in Xystus' votive picture seems to have been five; for five are the modes of death enumerated in the accompanying inscription.

This picture was probably symmetrical, as are numerous contem-

* See p. 28

† Plate 32, No. 4.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

porary compositions of similar character. Five, however, is not a number which lends itself to symmetrical distribution; a sixth figure is postulated.

It is possible that this sixth figure was that of Xystus himself,* the Virgin's devotee, and the benefactor of the church.†

The mere fact that such a hypothesis is plausible proves how essentially dissimilar were the Christian art and thought of the third and fifth centuries; for the parallel suggestion that the figure of Xystus formed a pendant to that of the Sibyl, in *The Adoration of the Magi*, would be an anachronism from which the merest tyro would shrink.

Clearly both the picture and the inscription on the entrance wall were inspired by the Theotokos idea; whereas the pictures of the Arch and Nave were the outcome of a very different phase of thought.

IV. Were it otherwise, Xystus' inscription on the Arch, "Xystus Episcopus Plebi Dei," would be unintelligible. Why 'Plebi Dei'? Why not *Matri Dei*? Why should the Pope have appended an eight-lined verse to a single picture, and have left six pictures designed in the Virgin's honour (according to the hypothesis) with a curt dedication of four words in which she is not mentioned? Such a course is the more surprising if we consider how secondary is the *rôle* actually played by the Virgin in the pictures in question. Had she been their intellectual centre, Xystus would have done well to apprise the spectator of the fact in a clear verbal statement.

Xystus calls the "People of God," to whom he dedicated these mosaics, "Plebs," and not "Populus," the more dignified word. Early Christians did not entitle themselves "plebeians," though they were called so by their enemies. "Plebs profanae conjurationis" they are styled in Minutius' 'Octavius.'‡ It is not surprising, however, that Xystus should give the preference to the word "Plebs," for in the speech of his time it had the significance of the "Populus" of earlier Latin.

* H. Grisar has put forward this acceptable hypothesis in his 'Geschichte Roms u. der Päpste,' vol. i. p. 302.

† The introduction of donors into votive subject-pictures was traditional in Renaissance Art, frequent in that of the Middle Ages, and common in that of the classic decadence. A celebrated example occurs in the apse of SS. Cosma and Damiano on the Forum, in which Felix V., (a figure which in its present state is a baroque restoration), is represented with his church held as a votive offering in his hand.

‡ Chap. viii.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

It is evident that the word is not used on the Arch in any depreciatory sense; neither does it refer exclusively to the Christian congregation worshipping in the basilica; for had Xystus wished his meaning to be thus restricted he would no doubt have expressed himself unequivocally.

The "People of God" is a term of wide and comprehensive significance; its far-reaching scope is proclaimed by the contents of the pictures with which the inscription is associated; for each single composition, and each series in the Nave, like the single and combined instruments of an orchestra, contributes its special and very personal quatum to the harmonious expression of one theme, the historical pre-intimations of the character and mission of the Redeemer, whose advent, and acclamation by the elect from among all peoples, is pictured on the Arch.

The incidents selected from the Old and New Testaments are not chosen from this point of view only; both choice and treatment witness to the artist's desire to show that the true People of God are not the Israelites, as the Jews asserted, but the spiritual "seed of Abraham," the Christians.

During the whole of the second and third centuries Christians were looked on as an especial people, distinct from both Jews and Greeks. They were called the "third race." Nor was this name intended as a title of honour, but rather as the expression of the repugnance felt towards so peculiar and exclusive a religious body.

"We are called the 'third race,'" says Tertullian, "because we worship God"; and again, "because of our ritual"; and yet again, "because of our faith" (*superstitio*); therefore we are not a people in the sense in which the Jews or Romans are a people."*

The mosaics of the Arch, like those of the Nave, have an outer and an inner significance. Xystus' inscription shows how well he understood the latter. It may be that he thought fit to formulate it verbally, because he feared that under the altered conditions of his day it might have lost its currency.

V. There is a tendency among archaeologists to place these mosaics as early as possible.

* 'Ad Nationes,' i. 8: "De superstitione tertium genus deputamur, non de natione ut sint Romani, Judaei, dehinc Christiani." Further, i. 20: "tertium genus (dicimur) de ritu."

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Garrucci, de Rossi, H. Grisar, Ainalof, and others have hypothetically ascribed the pictures of the Nave not to the time of Xystus, but to that of Liberius; that is to say, they have antedated them by some eighty years.

Seroux d'Agincourt believed that the artist of the Joshua series drew his inspiration from the reliefs of the Column of Trajan.*

No one has suggested that they were later than the time of Xystus; that they were finished by his successor, for instance.

Indeed, it would seem that the mosaics of the Nave were connected with the fifth-century Pope, only on the strength of a vanished inscription, that on the entrance wall, which clearly embodied a phase of thought strikingly different from that they mirror; and that those of the Arch were ascribed to him on the authority of another inscription, which has the appearance of an interpolation, and which clearly summarises the contents of the decorative scheme into which it is so rudely inserted, as referring not to the Mother, but to the People of God.

This can only be explained by the circumstance that earlier students of these classic mosaics who have approached them with minds so saturated with knowledge of the mental environment predicated by the date apparently fixed by the Pope's name, that they have been blinded to their typological significance, and to the phase of theology embodied, which is very different from that of the time of Xystus, or of Liberius.†

Neither have they appreciated the much more subtle artistic peculiarities which characterise these compositions as anterior to both these Popes, elusive pictorial qualities easily overlooked in pictures so badly lighted, so badly placed, and so much restored, but which, nevertheless, contain classic fragments quite distinct in character from the complex mass of restorations and interpolations in which they are embedded, and from which they must be carefully distinguished.

Although little has survived of the art either immediately

* "Ces compositions furent d'abord une sorte d'imitation des plus beaux modèles antiques. On reconnaît ce génie imitatif dans quelques unes des mosaïques, qui règnent au-dessus de l'entablement de l'un et de l'autre côté de la grande nef, dans la belle église de St. Marie Majeure, à Rome. Cette mosaïque est assurément une des plus étendues qui existent. Quoi qu'elle date du cinquième siècle, et que par conséquent elle soit de beaucoup postérieure à la colonne Trajane, on ne peut douter que la manière, dont l'histoire de cet empereur est sculptée sur ce dernier monument, n'ait été présente à l'esprit des artistes chargés de l'exécuter et qu'ils n'aient eu l'intention de s'en rapprocher dans la représentation de quelques unes des faits de l'ancien testament." 'Histoire de l'Art par les Monuments vol. i. (Texte), p. 36.

† See Introduction chapters iv. and v.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

preceding the time of Xystus, or immediately subsequent to it, that little is characteristic, and essentially dissimilar both in conception and presentment to pre-Constantinian art.

VI. Cyclic representations of historical events are not infrequent in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Connected scenes from the life of Mary, and incidents from the life of Joseph and his brethren, decorate the ivory Throne of Maximianus at Ravenna. The illustrated Genesis of Vienna, of approximately the same date, contains versions of some of the scenes pictured in the Nave, those representing the lives of Abraham and Jacob; these are of so petty a realism, so devoid of any distinction of style, or of conception, that it would be absurd to associate any typological idea with them; except, possibly, with the naïve representation of Abraham and Melchizedek, which is probably a refraction in a coarse medium of an Apse decoration representing Abraham and Melchizedek.* Proportion in the figures represented, or in their relation to each other, harmonious colour, happy space arrangement, these prerequisites to good art are not merely not attained, they are not sought for. The miniatures of this manuscript are, in short, poor book illustrations, and shed no light on contemporary art.

Of this date also are the many and various representations of the History of the Virgin, and of the Nativity on sarcophagi, and on ivory reliefs.†

A cyclic representation of the acts of power of Christ is preserved in the Church of S. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, together with a series of historical compositions representing the drama of the Passion, from the Last Supper to the moment when doubting Thomas touches the wounds of his risen Lord. The conception of these mosaics, though nobler than that of the Vienna miniatures, is nevertheless realistic.

Of the time of Xystus, and instructive in this connection, are the rude wood carvings on the wings of the doors of S. Sabina; two of which represent the miracle of the feeding of the Israelites in the wilderness on manna, and on quails,‡ a subject which occurs also amongst the Sicinian mosaics in S. Maria Maggiore.

* Plate 2, No. 3. Compare the Apse decorations of S. Vitale and of S. Apollinare in Classe. Plate 5, Nos. 2 and 3.

† Plate 51, No. 3; Plate 52. Nos. 2, 3 and 4.

‡ Plate 52, No. 1.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

In each representation three persons are pictured as seated on folding chairs at a table; in the second relief they are waited on by rude servants. Both scenes are brutally conceived and executed, and might, at first sight, be mistaken for the boosing of boors, but on examination prove to be conceived sacramentally. It is not the clumsy execution alone which repels, but the grossness of the manner in which a fine original, the quality of which may be divined from similar compositions—which represent a sacramental meal—in the Catacombs, has been travestied.

The same blunt and realistic coarseness characterises contemporary reliefs on sarcophagi whenever the artist, abandoning classic prototypes, ventures to express himself.

Xystus' metrical inscription may be said to fall under the same stigma. How far are we from the elusive poetry of a Justin Martyr, or an Irenaeus, who, however extravagant their analogies, invest them with life and charm.

VII. Pope Hadrian's (772-795) account of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore has been put forward as an authoritative confirmation of the opinion that all the classic mosaics of the basilica are to be attributed to Xystus alone. His letter, however, if put into connection with the circumstances which produced it, cannot be so interpreted.

Charlemagne begged the Pope to justify the use and adoration of pictures, either from the writings of the New Testament, or from the decisions of the six Ecumenical Councils.

The Pope replied to this request in the following terms: "In the time of the first holy Council of the holy Pope Sylvester, and of the most Christian Emperor, holy pictures were honoured; and from that day forward until now the holy churches built by the holy Popes Sylvester, Marcus, and Julius, have been decorated with holy pictures in mosaic and in painting."

"Further," he adds, "at the time of the second holy Council, the holy Pope Damasus, of excellent taste (*elegantissimus papa*), built a church of which the holy Pope Gregory speaks in his 'Dialogues,' and which is called after its founder 'Damasene'; this likewise was decorated, and is so still, with sacred histories (series?) and pictures.

"Further, at the time of the third Council, the holy Pope Coelestinus decorated his own burial chamber (*coemeterium*) with paintings.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

“Further, his successor, the blessed Pope Xystus, erected the basilica of the Holy Mother of God, called ‘the Great,’ and also ‘of the Cradle,’ and likewise decorated it with gold mosaic, and with various holy histories and pictures.”*

Interesting as is the Pope’s testimony, it sheds no light on the point at issue.

In Hadrian’s time, Xystus’ Theotokos with attendant martyrs, together with his dedicatory inscription, naturally still decorated the entrance wall of the basilica. He may have alluded to this only; but in view of the inscription on the Arch, it would not be surprising if in an uncritical age he had given Xystus credit for all the mosaics of the church. It is very intelligible that this should have occurred later, after the picture ordered by Xystus, and characteristic of his time, had perished.

VIII. The chronology of these pictures is of interest, not only intrinsically—and the importance of the question whether a given group of celebrated compositions may, or may not, be antedated by some two hundred years is evident—but because the date of their creation involves large questions of comparative theology, and because their evidence corroborates views recently put forward by modern historians, which necessitate the reconstruction of current conceptions of the character and position of the early Christian Church in Rome.

Opinions differ strongly on the point at issue, viz., the date of these mosaics. It is maintained on the one hand that they are post-Constantinian; *i.e.*, that they belong to a period of advanced decadence, and that they were executed by order of Xystus III., as a monumental record of the decrees of the Council of Ephesus.

It is further asserted that they were designed to exalt Mary as the Virgin-Mother of God. They are consequently put forward as evidences of the early date at which pictorial expression was given to the prominence accorded the Virgin as Theotokos.

We meet these assertions with diametrically opposite statements, maintaining that the Virgin, far from being conceived in the spirit of the Council of Ephesus, is here allotted so subordinate a *rôle* that it is

* “Magis autem successor ejus beatus Sixtus papa fecit basilicam sanctae Dei genetricis Mariae cognomento Majorem, quae et ad praesepe dicitur. Simili modo et ipse tam in metallis aureis quamque in diversis historiis sacris decoravit imaginibus.” Migne, ‘Patr. S. Lat.,’ vol. xcvi., p. 1285.

1.



2.



3.



4.



CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

clear that her position and history were not factors determining the character of the compositions in question, which compositions were neither conceived nor executed in the period of decadence, nor were influenced by Byzantine formalism; but are the direct outcome of classic pictorial art, and reflect a characteristic and noble phase of early Christian thought, which has hitherto been believed to have passed away without having received definite art embodiment.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- I. The position and grouping of the Sicinian mosaics.
- II. The character of the four Old Testament series.
- III. Character of the New Testament series of the Arch.
- IV. Date.
- V. Restorations.
- VI. Interpolations.
- VII. Position of the pictures of the Nave.
- VIII. Were these pictures designed for their present position ?
- IX. Position of the pictures of the Arch.
- X. Instances of classic historical cyclic series so placed that their qualities as decoration and narrative are nullified. Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius. Arch of Septimius Severus.
- XI. The decorations of the private basilicas of wealthy Christians.
- XII. Christian use of the minor arts.
- XIII. Profuse decorations of palaces. Exotic luxury of Rome.
- XIV. Possible connection with the Art Schools of Alexandria, Antioch, Athens, etc.
- XV. The Sicinian mosaics prove that Christian art was on the level of contemporary pagan art. Paulinus of Nola.
- XVI. The intellectual level of the Sicinian mosaics.

I. THE mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore are so arranged as to decorate three sides of a quadrangle, that is to say, the Arch, and two sides of the Nave.*

On the south-west wall are scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs Abraham and Jacob; on the north-east wall, scenes from the lives of Moses and Joshua; and on the Arch, scenes representing the manifestation and acknowledgment of the long promised Redeemer. They seem therefore to fall into three groups, but this division is accidental.†

The decorations of the Nave are divided into four series, the centre of each of which is an Old Testament hero. Each of these series is

* Plate 4, No. 1.

† *Ibid.*

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

complete in itself, and, though not separated from its neighbour by a material barrier, is conceived as an independent unit, designed however to co-operate with its fellows in the representation of a complex idea, that of the prototypes of Christ in Jewish history.

The pictures of the Arch form a climax to this prophetic Old Testament cycle.

II. Abraham is conceived as the Father of the People of God (Plebs Dei).

The life of Jacob is so handled as to underline the prototypical significance of two of its aspects. He is conceived as the youthful shepherd, and as bridegroom. His double marriage is treated allegorically.

As the thought of Christ, the Shepherd and Husband of His Flock, is associated with Jacob, so the ideas of the Redeemer, and of the means of Grace appointed for the salvation of man, are connected with Moses. He leads the Chosen People out of the Land of Bondage; water is the means of their salvation; their life is miraculously sustained in the wilderness; they conquer their enemies by the power of the Cross.

Like Jacob the Shepherd, like Moses the Redeemer and Leader, so Joshua also figures as a prototype of Christ, of the Christ of the Apocalypse, who rides forth, conquering and to conquer, the "King of kings and Lord of lords." He is therefore pictured as a military hero, wearing the diadem and mantle of the "King of kings," the Roman emperors.*

This conception would not strike classic minds as strange; it is indeed the direct translation into form and colour of the words of the apocalyptic vision, and sobered in the process.

"And I saw the heavens opened; and behold a white horse, and He that sat thereon . . . in righteousness He does judge, and make war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems . . . He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and His name is called 'The Word of God,' . . . out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations . . . He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."†

Moreover, it must be remembered that in the Sicinian mosaic, it is not Christ who rides forward, lance in hand, trampling His enemies under His feet, but Jesus the son of Nun, who prefigured Christ.

* See Plate 29, No. 1

† 'Apoc.,' xix. 11-15.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

This conception is most clearly reflected in the Sudden Appearance of Jesus Nave, a picture which stands alone among the mosaics of this church in that its formal design is directly borrowed from a classic pagan original. It is a variation of a well-known relief, of which one version of the time of Trajan has been preserved on the Arch of Constantine, another on the Arch at Orange, and a third, to which it stands nearest, on the Column of Marcus Aurelius.*

Many-linked pictorial cycles, representing the various phases of a single event, are not unfrequent in Hellenistic art.

It is related of certain late classic painters that they composed pictures which were mutually complementary pendants.†

The walls of the Temple of Athene in Syracuse were decorated with a number of separate pictures representing various scenes from a single battle.‡

The pictures of the Joshua series form a similar cycle, they correspond to Cicero's phrase "pugna erat . . . in tabulis picta," for five pictures are dedicated to the delineation of one battle: Joshua's sudden appearance, the flight of the kings, the pursuit and hailstorm, the staying of the Sun and Moon, these are fleeting moments in one event which the artist has broken into its component parts.

III. The series decorating the Arch, of which the Logos is the centre, is not composed as an historical excerpt; the ideal the artist set before himself was not the realistic representation of certain well-known events, the thought of historical narrative was far from him. He aimed at giving expression to the idea of the manifestation of the Logos in Christ as at once the fulfilment and test of the aspirations of the world, as the goal of prophetic and intellectual aspiration, but a stone of stumbling to the Jewish hierarchy, and to the Imperial power of Rome.

He was aided in the expression of this idea by the actual form of the space to be decorated; for whereas the arrangement of the pictures of the Nave is frieze-like, one event succeeding another in consecutive sequence, the height and shape of the spandrils of the Arch made it possible to place the pictures one above the other, in mutually many-

* Plate 29, No. 2.

† W. Helbig, 'Untersuchungen über die campanische Wandmalerei,' p. 130 f.

‡ Cicero, 'In Verr.' vi. 55, 122: "Pugna erat equestris Agathoclis regis in tabulis picta praeclare: his autem tabulis interiores templi parietes vestiebantur."

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

sided connection. Their mere material inter-relation suggests the closely knit expression of a single though complex thought.

IV. The theological and philosophic points of view from which the literary subject-matter of this great cycle is treated militates against its ascription to the fourth or fifth centuries.

Artistic and stylistic considerations also tend to prove that the pictures of which it is composed cannot have been designed or executed at so late a date; they belong neither to the prime of imperial art, nor to its decadence, but to a time in which Christian thought of a marked character was expressed in the art forms of a classic civilisation no longer at its zenith.

V. This statement may appear paradoxical in view of the actual aspect of the mosaics themselves; its truth can only be substantiated by those who have trained themselves to distinguish between injured originals and well preserved later interpolations, and to recognise the reflex of classic qualities in pictures which have the value only of ill-preserved copies, which is all that can be said of the majority of the pictures in question.

The spectator's mind must be in the attitude, critical, receptive, and clairvoyant, in which he approaches a collection of ancient marbles. He must not hope to see many classic originals, though such as there are, are ultimate standards of quality and style; he must make abstraction of additions, and of anachronous restorations; he must look *through* the copy, of which the speech is that of the translator, to the mental image it is able to evoke in minds familiar with the art which, it may be, it only travesties.

VI. The material difficulties of position and lighting which make it well nigh impossible to see these pictures, are partly responsible for earlier misapprehensions of their quality and origin.

To take one example only: Philosophy a Guide to Christ, which has been attributed to the fifth century because of the indisputable stylistical peculiarities of the group led by the Hellenistic Prince. This group is an interpolation, as is convincingly proved by the style and quality of the undoubtedly classic Angel-heads in the same picture.* No one who has been able to approach this picture sufficiently near to *see* it can doubt that the figures of the Prince and

* See Plates 45 and 46.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

his suite are post-Constantinian, whereas the prototypes of the Angels' heads must be sought for in Pompei. This one example suffices to prove how misleading an antique interpolation may be, and how essential it is that distinctions should be drawn between what is original, and what is not.

The greater part of the remainder of the picture has been rendered characterless by restoration ; part of it moreover is an interpolation in stucco, of the eighteenth century. It consists therefore of characteristic examples of late classic art, of the art of the time of Xystus, and of that of Benedict XIV., welded together by styleless mendings.

VII. The position of these pictures is extremely unfortunate ; it is hardly exaggeration to say that as works of art they are inaccessible to sight, for even the best preserved originals, which are characterised by a power of light-reflection which renders them infinitely more luminous than the most recent restorations, are only visible to an eye armed with the latest invention of the scientific optician.

It may be almost said that they have not been seen since they were placed on the Arch, and above the epistyle of the Nave.

VIII. Is it possible that pictures of which the fine design and workmanship are nullified by the distance from the eye at which they are placed, can have been *designed* to occupy such a position ?

It has been suggested that the mosaics of the Nave originally decorated the atrium of the basilica ; an inadmissible hypothesis, for their pictorial effect is dependent on the obscure chiaroscuro of an interior, and is destroyed by the clear light of day.

They may have been placed originally at a lower level within the basilica ; in the side aisles, for instance, which are now decorated with wreathed tablets in the pseudo-classic taste of the eighteenth century. But this is a supposition only. There are no materials on which to base a theory reconstructive of their original position ; more cannot be affirmed than that their full pictorial effect is only obtained when they are seen in a dim light, from a distance of not less than four, and not more than six yards ; they are now more than three or four times that distance from the pavement, and can never have been less, the floor of the church having been raised, not lowered.

IX. Further it is certain, whatever may have been the original position of the pictures of the Nave, those of the Arch are still *in situ*.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

These are adaptations of pre-existing compositions now placed one above the other. They were originally of equal size, but the gradually diminishing space left by the curve of the Arch forced the artist to gradually compress the pictures forming the lower strata.

In the Annunciation the figures are amply spaced, and move freely within the area allotted them: this is not strikingly the case in the composition below, The Adoration of the Magi; but in the following, The Martyrdom of the Innocents, the reverse is true, the persons represented are crowded together, the central soldier almost touching both Herod and the mothers.*

Hence it follows that these pictures cannot have been moved bodily from any other position, or building, but were modified and executed for the decoration of the space they now cover; which is, however, so ill illuminated, and so far from the eye, that their details are practically invisible.

The mosaics of the Arch and Nave are so closely connected in thought and execution, that they stand and fall together; therefore the fact that the mosaics of the Nave are ill seen in their present position is no reason why that position should not be accepted as original.

X. It is undoubtedly strange that finely designed cycles of pictures, executed in a costly material, and conceived with the intent to edify and instruct, should have been placed at a distance from the eye which deprives them of pictorial and didactic effect.

It is, however, a circumstance not unique in the history of Roman Art.

The Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius are encrusted with long cyclic representations of historic scenes, the purpose of which was twofold: the decoration of the commemorative column, and the immortalisation of the Emperor whose exploits they record; but both these purposes are frustrated by the position of the reliefs, which are too distant from the eye to be legible, and which artistically merely destroy the surface of the column, fretting it with undecorative lines.

The architectonic distribution of the component parts of the figurative decorations of the Arch of Septimius Severus is similar to that of the Arch of S. Maria Maggiore; like it, it is decorated with a number of peopled compositions, placed beyond the range of vision in horizontal strata.†

* Plate 31.

† Plate 51, No. 1.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

The workmanship of the decorations of the now ruined Imperial Arch, though poor, was not on so low a level as has been asserted, to judge from the captive Dacians at its base, and may possibly be of the same date as the mosaics in question.* The decorations of the Arch of Septimius Severus are another proof of the tastelessness of which the Roman architect and his patrons were sometimes capable; we cite them to remind the reader of a classic example of a pre-Constantinian architectonic scheme similar to that of the Arch of the Basilica Sicinini.

XI. It has been shown that the Basilica Sicinini was in all likelihood originally a private basilica, part of a complex of buildings constituting the palace of a wealthy plutocrat.†

The religious history of the first, second and third centuries make it probable that at that date more than one Roman palace changed its pagan ornamentations for decorations either of a Christian character, or of a type which admitted of a secondary mystic interpretation, intelligible to initiates only.

“During the reign of Commodus,” says Eusebius, “our condition became more serene, souls of every stratum of society were brought to the true knowledge of God. And in Rome *many of those distinguished by birth and wealth, together with their households*, began to follow the path of salvation.”‡

It is incredible that while the votaries of the ancient gods of Greece and Rome, and of the more recently imported Oriental deities found an able handmaid in the art of their times, these wealthy and cultivated Christians were unable to press her into their service.

XII. The strange, but popular hypothesis of Christian impotence in the field of art is not supported by the evidence of archaeology. The bulk of surviving pre-Constantinian *objets d'art* is not small; it consists of pictures, sculptures, both in the round and in relief, and of numerous specimens of the minor arts; engraved stones, terra-cottas, bronzes, and gold glasses. The author of a scientific classification of the latter remarks with acumen: “these modest works of art prove how deeply the necessity for the idealisation of the things of daily life was felt, not only by pagans, but by Christians also.”§

XIII. The lavish splendour of the Roman palaces was fabulous, not

* See p. 15 f.

† Introduction, chap. vi.

‡ ‘Hist. Eccl.’ v. 21.

§ H. Vopel, ‘Goldgläser,’ Freiburg, 1899. Specimens from the third century, p. 21.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

their walls only, but their floors and ceilings were gay with glittering pictures in glass-mosaic, the *débris* of which still sows the soil of modern Rome.*

Luxury and taste were neither native nor synonymous in Rome. The possessions of the Imperial city were great; all the world stood in her service. The Orontes, the Nile, and the Jordan emptied themselves into the Tiber, if we may be permitted the extension of the epigram; her religions were born on their banks; the obelisque, and the sphinx, the bull and the ichthys crowded out Jupiter and the wolf-mother of the Twins.

But not her religions only, her decorations also, were syncretic and exotic, as a walk through the museums of the modern city suffice to prove.

XIV. The artists of Rome were rarely Romans, but rather Greeks and Orientals, who, though modified by generations of subserviency to the taste of their masters, retained their national temperaments, and probably also some connection with their country and compatriots.

It is not impossible that the designs of the Sicinian mosaics originated in some distant art centre, and were merely translated into mosaic in Rome, possibly by distinct groups of artists working under the direction of Sicininus' Roman architect.

The name of a famous cosmopolitan city, Alexandria, has been frequently mentioned during the analysis of the pictures in question, but it is unsafe to connect these compositions too closely with this great centre of Jewish and Hellenistic culture, for the Christian thought of the first centuries of our era, though not without local colour, was as a whole not provincial, but imperial in character, a fact which is proved by the mere enumeration of the names of those Christian thinkers whose written views unite in presenting parallels with those pictorially embodied here: Clement of Rome, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, and Tertullian.

Moreover, the pictorial art of Alexandria during the second and third centuries is practically an almost unknown quantity.

Other centres of Christian Art existed: Athens, Antioch, Ephesus, Carthage; each of which doubtless had a distinct physiognomy

* See Friedländer, 'Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms II., 3 Der Luxus der Wohngebäude (7th edition).

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of which a nebulous image may be re-evoked, but nothing of so concrete a character that this or that picture in this basilica, possibly a Roman translation, can be definitely associated with any of them.

All that can be predicted of the Sicinian mosaics—which, though distinguished from each other by minor differences of structure and style, are dominated by a striking unity of conception and execution—is their character, both literary and artistic; whence follows their date.

XV. It is true that but little has survived which is both antique, and in good condition; that little, however, suffices to prove that the artistic capacity of the Christian artist of the second and third centuries was not inferior to that of his pagan brethren; or—to face another contingency—that the hand of the pagan artist did not lose its cunning when set to reproduce a theme the full literary and mystic significance of which he was possibly ignorant.

XVI. Paulinus of Nola, a contemporary of Xystus III., speaks of the rich decoration of fifth-century basilicas with pictures of which the themes were drawn from the Old Testament, and associated with metrical commentaries. They were designed with the express purpose of presenting examples of noble life to the uncultivated and ignorant who flocked to the sanctuaries on the great commemorative festivals.

The mosaics of the basilica Sicinini stand on a very different intellectual level; they were clearly not designed to illuminate the ignorant, for they not only postulate intimacy with the biblical narrative, and with the doctrinal and mystic teaching of the Church, but a high level of philosophic culture.

The problem they illuminate is one which lies at the root of all religious life—man's relation to the Divine; the solution offered is the Incarnation of the Logos.

The artist who gave pictorial form to this great conception of the mission of Christ, and its place in universal history, deserves to be called the Christian brother of the artist Metrodorus, of whom Pliny* says that he was equally great as a philosopher and as a painter.

* 'Hist. Nat.,' 35, 135.

APPENDICES

I

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE HISTORY AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE

II

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE CONCERNING RECENT
RESTORATIONS

III

ABSTRACT OF DE ROSSI'S MOSAICI DI
S. MARIA MAGGIORE

IV

ABSTRACT OF AINALOF'S STUDIES ON THE
MOSAICS OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE

V

TABLE OF SYNCHRONOUS EVENTS

APPENDIX I

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF NOTES ON THE LATER HISTORY, RESTORATIONS, BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND REPRODUCTIONS OF THE MOSAICS OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE

THE mosaics decorating the Nave were originally about sixty in number, not including those which decorated the south-east (entrance) wall.

1500 (about). The upper part of the mosaics of the Arch partially concealed by a Renaissance frieze, of which the chief motif is the Borgia Bull.

1593. The mosaics of the Arch restored by Cardinal Pinelli. (An assertion made by Garrucci, who adduces no proof.)

1593. Pictures and inscription* on the south-east wall destroyed by order of Cardinal Pinelli; replaced at the same date by five pictures executed in coloured stucco by order of Cardinal Pinelli, these have no relation, whether literary or artistic, to the lost originals.

1593. Three pictures from the life of Moses destroyed to make room for the Arch leading into the Sistine Chapel. Water-colour copies made by order of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, and preserved in the library at the Barberini Palace (these have recently been transferred to the Vatican Library).

1611. Three pictures, destroyed by order of Paul V. in order to make room for the Arch leading into the Borghese Chapel. (Story of Abraham and of Jacob, no record of them preserved.)

1621. 'Basilicae S. Mariae Maioris . . . descriptio et delineatio, Romae, 1621. Auctore Abbate Paulo de Angelis.' On page 91 is an incorrect reproduction of the mosaics of the Arch, which, together with those of the Nave, are only incidentally referred to in the text. This work is of value to the student of the Basilica of the Middle Ages, which was given its *coup de grâce* by Paul V. (1605-1621).

Seventeenth Century : (1) drawings in a volume containing miscellaneous matter at Windsor Castle, carelessly done and not reliable.

* Notices of Xystus' epigraph : Aldemus, an English poet of the seventh century quotes the first verse. See De Rossi, 'Ins. Crist.,' vol. ii., p. 60.—1480 (about). Pietro Sabino quotes the first distych.—1593. Nothing remained of the inscription except the first line as far as "nova tecta." This was destroyed by Cardinal Pinelli.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

(2) Barberini MS. XLIX. Coloured reproductions of the mosaics of the Nave slightly treated, and unreliable in detail, made by order of Cardinal Francesco Barberini.

1677. A contemporary of Suarez makes an unsuccessful attempt to obtain permission to have the mosaics of the Arch cleaned and copied.

1680. At this time the upper part of the mosaics of the Arch was covered by a heavy wooden cornice, since removed.

1690 (before). Ciampini obtained permission to clean and copy the mosaics of the Arch.

1690. Joh. Ciampini: 'Vetera Monumenta, Romae,' Pars Prima, cp. XXII: 'De Liberiana sive S. Mariae Majoris Basilica: ac de antiquioribus musivis operibus in ea extantibus a Xysto III. anno 443 concinnatis, pp. 195-224.' Illustrated by inaccurate engravings, in which restorations are indicated as such.

1690. Ciampini writes that "it was hardly possible to distinguish the figures on the Arch, so injured were they, and so darkened by dust." 'Vet. Mon.' I., p. 200.

Bianchini: 'Anastasio Bibliothecarii de Vitis Romanorum Pontificum,' two pictures only, which are full of errors.

1750 (about). Mosaics cleaned and restored by order of Benedict XIV. (1740-1758).

1811-1823. Seroux d'Agincourt: 'L'Histoire de l'Art par les Monuments' (Paris, 1811-1823) contains seven pictures associated with the reliefs from the Columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius.

1824-1829. Restoration of the mosaics (see Appendix II.).

1839. 'La Patriarcale Basilica Liberiana, descritta ed illustrata con incisioni a contorni,' Vol. unico, 1839. In the text the author is named Filippo Gheradi. Plates LXI., LXVIII. contain engravings in outline by G. Fontana, G. Camilli, and others. The text is a simple recapitulation of the Biblical narrative.

Also quoted as 'Valentini: Le quattro principali Basiliche di Roma' (5 vols.).

1848-1851. Partial restoration of mosaics (see Appendix II.).

1855. Giacomo Fontana: 'Raccolta delle migliori Chiese di Roma e suburbane' (Rome), contains a fairly correct drawing of the Arch.

1877. Garrucci: 'Storia dell'Arte Cristiana,' Vol. IV., p. 17-31, and Plates CCXI. to CCXXII. Garrucci's illustrations consist of outline drawings of which the pattern, if we may call it so, is correct, but in which there is no attempt to suggest the style or quality of the original. He attributes the mosaics of the Arch to Xystus III., and believes them to have been composed in honour of the Theotokos dogma, promulgated at the Council of Ephesus. He differs from de Rossi in interpreting the Throne as a symbol of the power of Christ; attributes the mosaics of the Nave to Liberius, interprets them historically, and believes them to be generally arranged in chronological accordance with the Biblical text; but remarks that the history of the Jews "was a type or shadow of the history of the people promised to Abraham and . . . led by Christ to eternal joy." Although

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

it is impossible to accept his general conclusions, it should be acknowledged that valuable archaeological information is embedded in his analysis of the pictures.

1878. Rohault de Fleury: 'La Sainte Vierge. Études archéologiques et iconographiques.' Very incorrect reproduction of the mosaics of the Arch.

1886. Lehner: 'Die Marienverehrung in den ersten Jahrhunderten.' Four scenes from the Arch.

1887. Mgr. de Waal: 'Römischen Quartalschrift'; with coloured reproduction of the meeting of Christ and Affrodosius.

1893. G. B. de Rossi: 'Musaico dell' arco triomfale e delle pareti laterali di S. Maria Maggiore.' Sixteen folio pages containing the history of the mosaics and an account of their condition. De Rossi does not analyse each picture in detail, but is content with general appreciations, and with occasional references to their subject-matter. The text is accompanied by exceedingly clumsy and inadequately coloured reproductions. Finding ourselves constrained to express views diametrically opposed to those of this chief of Christian archaeologists we have thought it wise to append a short summary of the work in question. (Appendix III.)

Valuable detached studies of parts of these mosaics to be found in Kondakoff, 'Histoire de l'Art Byzantin'; Müntz, 'Mélanges de l'École française,' 1888, and elsewhere.

1893. Ainalof's Mosaics of the fourth and fifth centuries in Italy (in Russian) (Appendix IV. contains a short summary of his views).

1900. H. Grisar: 'Geschichte Roms u. der Päpste,' Freiburg, gives some valuable illustrations, partly from photographs.

PHOTOGRAPHS.—Parker's (taken some forty years ago) are difficult to obtain, his negatives having been destroyed in a fire. They should be used with much reserve. Colour and tone-effects are totally lost. They shed a considerable light, however, on questions of technique, and are startling revealers of restorations.

1890. Excellent photographs taken by Comm. Carlo Tenerani at the instigation of the late Mgr. Crostarosa. It is to be hoped that this valuable material will be made public. A few of these photographs reproduced in H. Grisar's work, some of them by kind permission here.

Our coloured reproductions are made from tracings coloured on the originals or from water-colours on a photographic basis.

APPENDIX II

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE CONCERNING RECENT RESTORATIONS

EXTRACTS FROM DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE RESTORATION OF THE MOSAICS OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE, PRESERVED IN THE ARCHIVIO DI STATO, ROMA.

(‘Archivio del Camerlengo,’ Tit. 4, No. 884, S. Maria Maggiore. Basilica Liberiana. Mosaici.)

I. 1824. March 15th. The Chapter of the Basilica petitions the Camerlengo di Santa Chiesa (Emmo. Revmo. il Signore Cardinale Pacca) for the restoration of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore.

May 9th. The Commissione di Belle Arti entrusts the Consigliere Sig. Cav. Camuccini with the task. He receives a detailed report on the condition of these mosaics, with an estimate of the cost of the proposed restorations, from Michel Köck, Ispettore dei Mosaici della Rev. Fab. di S. Pietro, e Pittore Academico.

Among other items it included the following :

“For work, stucco, glass cubes (<i>smalti</i>), the cleaning and retouching of the pictures (of such parts as are already painted)	scudi 424
For the external mosaics of the façade	„ 448
In all nine hundred and seventy-two scudi	

“This estimate does not include the price of scaffoldings, castles, or mortar. Signore Köck will receive the monthly payment of scudi 20, and will give all necessary assistance, providing ropes, beams, etc. He notes that *stuccatura* and *stabilitura* have the value of 12 *bajocchi il palmo*.

“It is hoped (*si ripromette*) that the work will be finished in five months.”

It appears that the Papal Exchequer (*Camerlengato*) lacked the funds necessary to the carrying out of this scheme.

The Chapter of the Basilica in another petition implored the charity of the Pope (*implorò la sovrana beneficenza*).

The Holy Father, however, merely put the matter into the hands of His Eminence the Camerlengo. And so things stood (*onde ora altro non rimane*).

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

II. Michel Köck's report (written in very defective Italian).

"By order of the Cav. Camuccini the undersigned repaired to S. Maria Maggiore, in order to examine the condition of the mosaics of that basilica, and to see what was necessary to their restoration. He came to the following conclusions:—

"Of the pictures in mosaic of the Nave, on the side of the Capella Borghese (19 in number) 9 are entirely executed in paint; of the (surface) of the other 10 either a half, or a third, or a fourth part is restored in paint. That which is in mosaic should be cleaned, and the paintings revived (*rinfrascati*) and retouched. Two of these pictures need to be strengthened with mortar, for the stucco has broken away from the wall.

"On the side of the Sistine Chapel there are 19 pictures also; 5 are executed entirely in paint, and likewise need retouching and repainting; the other 14 are slightly patched with restorations in paint. Each of the above mentioned pictures measures $10\frac{1}{2}$ palmi in width, and $8\frac{1}{2}$ palmi in height. The frieze of the Nave, being in great part painted, does not need to be cleaned, but such parts as are defective should be retouched. This frieze encircles the whole church, exception being made of the Choir of the Tribuna. The great decoration on the first Arch of the Tribuna (*il frontone grande*), and the depth of the wall of this Arch is in mosaic. It is restored in painting in many places, and is strengthened by a number of iron stars, more of which are needed in some places, as are also restorations in mosaic to the extent of about ten palmi.

"Probable expense of the restorations of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore according to the accompanying report:—

(1) It being necessary to wash, not only the mosaics of the Tribuna, but the 43 pictures of the Nave, which as they are partly restored in paint will take much time and trouble, the work cannot be done for less than	Scudi 100
(2) The restorations carried out in mosaic as described, 80 palmi at 28 paoli the palm	„ 224
(3) For the painter who will have to recover and restore 14 entire pictures and the greater part of others, as has been described	„ 75
(4) The cleaning and retouching the long frieze; and such painting of the mosaics of the Tribuna, and the thickness of the windows as may prove necessary	„ 20
Total	Scudi 419

. . . without the castle. In this are not included the stucco (*stuccatura*) and plaster (*intonacatura*) which will be necessary . . . to be bought as needed, at the usual price $12\frac{1}{2}$ bajocchi the palm."

As the rest of this report relates to the condition of the mosaics of the Apse, and of the façade only, it is unnecessary to quote it here.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

III. No. 1457. Div. 3a, 1824, Sept. 30th. Camuccini is ordered to execute the proposed restorations. "The Cardinale Camerlengo concedes full powers to the Sig. Cav. Camuccini, warmly recommending him, however, to see that the work is carried out with strict regard to economy, so that perfection of workmanship may be accompanied with the least possible strain on the public Exchequer.

IV. Paid up to 30th July (1824) for restorations executed	Scudi 249'15
Paid up to 20th August for restorations executed	" 320
Paid up to 24th September for restorations executed	" 216'80
Paid up to 30th October for restorations executed	" 216'60
Paid up to 4th December for restorations executed	" 78'30

The accounts for the restorations of the mosaics of the Portico commence in January, 1825.

1st February, 1825. An exhortation to economy.

In 1825, July 5th. Camuccini writes to Cardinal Pacca :

(1) "The entire work of restoration to be done covers an area of five hundred palmi.

(2) "Of this work, commenced on November 15th and carried on till the 15th of last June, 273 palmi have been executed.

(3) "Consequently 227 palmi have still to be executed. This work should be terminated (calculating on the scale of work already done) during the course of the current year, 1825.

V. A recapitulation of the work executed by the mosaicists Rocchegiani and Ruspi, and of the payments made to them from the 18th of November, 1824 to July, 1825 :—

	ROCCHEGIANI.		RUSPI.	
	Amount of work.	Amount paid.	Amount of work.	Amount paid.
November 15 to December 15, 1824	24	67'20	24	67'20
January, 1825	13	36'40	30 $\frac{4}{12}$	84'93
February "	16	44'80	22 $\frac{6}{12}$	63
March "	14 $\frac{6}{12}$	40'7 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{11}{12}$	42
April "	14 $\frac{9}{12}$	41'30	19 $\frac{9}{12}$	55'30
May "	19 $\frac{8}{12}$	55'06	22 $\frac{9}{12}$	63'70
June "	18	50'40	20	56
July "	15 $\frac{3}{12}$	42'70	23	64'40
Total	135 $\frac{4}{12}$	378'57 $\frac{1}{2}$	177 $\frac{3}{12}$	496'53

VI. On the 25th May, 1824, Camuccini writes to Monsig. Marini that the payments to the people working on the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore were to be calculated on the scale of the tariff established for the work done in the cupola of S. Pietro in Vaticano.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

VII. In the following year numerous payments are made for the restorations of the mosaics of the façade.

VIII. October 7th, 1828. Pope Leo XII. orders that the restoration of the mosaics of the Loggia be brought to an end in the course of the following year, and that 3,674 scudi be then paid for them.*

IX. No documents relating to the restoration of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore recur until the years 1848-1851, during which work in the interior of the basilica was resumed.

The numerous documents belonging to these years consist almost exclusively of petitions from workers in mosaic, a selection from which follows. They show on what principles artisans were entrusted with the difficult task of restoring these venerable works of art.

(1) "To his Excellency the Minister of Public Works and Commerce, Dr. Pietro Sterbini,—Augusto Bianchini, of the parish of S. Nicola in Carcere, by profession a mosaicist, twenty-four years of age, Roman, having been some time out of work, implores your Excellency to give him employment on the works belonging to his profession which are now being executed in the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore."

In reply, F. Agricola, the Director of the Department, remarks that the candidate for work should furnish himself with a certificate from some master mosaicist, and enclose it with his petition.

(2) "Antonio Bucci, by profession a worker in mosaic, with a wife and five marriageable daughters, the eldest ten years of age, addresses himself to your compassion," etc.

(3) "Luigi del Prato, orphaned of his father, exercising the profession of mosaicist, a profession which, as your Excellency knows, is absolutely languishing, knowing that your Excellency has assumed the position of a Providence to this class of workers, endowing them with the means of earning a livelihood," etc., December, 1848.

(4) "It having become known to the mosaicist, Domenico Carotti, that your Excellency is about to order the restoration of the mosaics of the basilica Liberiana, he begs (*supplica*) that he may be among those who are called upon (*fra gli eletti*) to do the work, promising to dedicate to it those abilities which he has bought at the price of long years of study." December, 1848.

(5) "The soldier, Carlo Ardisson, of the first Roman Legion, having returned wounded (*reduce ferito*) from the campaign in Venice and Lombardy, by profession a mosaicist, being without work, implores your Excellency to give him a place among the workers on the mosaics in the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore," December 15th, 1848.

(6) "Luigi Kibel, who was present at the demolition of the two pieces of the frieze in mosaic which were discovered on the right and left of the Tribuna of the venerable basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, has taken the glass

* The original estimate was 448 scudi for work to be executed in five months not four years.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

cubes (*smalti*) under his care, and keeps them always at the disposition of the valued (*encomiato*) Minister, warning him, however, that the aforesaid cubes are all soiled with the chalk to which they were attached. Faithfully," etc.

(7) Finally on May 7th, 1851, the Chapter of the basilica petitions the Ministry "that on Saturday evening the wooden castles which encumber the body of the church may be removed, it being absolutely necessary that the restoration of the mosaics commenced so long ago in this most holy (*sacro santa*) basilica should be brought to an end."

APPENDIX III

ABSTRACT OF DE ROSSI'S MOSAICI DI S. MARIA MAGGIORE

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE DATE AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE MOSAICS.—After quoting Xystus' inscription, and the authorities which attest its authenticity, de Rossi analyses its contents. It began with the dedication of the "nova tecta" to the Virgin; then follows a passage laudatory of the Virgin and of the miraculous conception; then a description of a picture of the enthroned Virgin with the Child on her knees (Theotokos), towards whom moved a procession of Saints with crowns in their hands, and the emblems of their passion at their feet.

He associates the (lost) Procession of Martyrs with the mosaics of S. Agnese (seventh century), and with the procession in S. Apollinare in Ravenna (sixth century). He places the Theotokos in the apse, and makes the Procession move towards her in detached sections, placed between the upper windows of the Nave.

He believes the historical series to have formed an uninterrupted band encircling the entire Nave, *i.e.*, covering the space now empty on the entrance wall. According to this hypothesis the entire wall surface of the interior of the basilica was encrusted with figurative mosaics.

Two inscriptions, one over the entrance doorway, and another over the Arch, designate Xystus as the donor of these decorations.

The basilica was called "of Liberius," until its dedication by Xystus, after which it was called "S. Maria Maggiore."

At the time of Liberius it was also called "of Sicinius," a topographical designation applied to a considerable area on the Esquiline. In the life of S. Sylvester the "regio Sicinini" is spoken of. Xystus endowed the church with a house, "domum Claudii in Sicininum." The extension of this "regio" and the character of the buildings grouped upon it are unknown.

It is possible that Liberius may have decorated, and dedicated a pre-existing pagan basilica.

In the riots connected with the election of Damasus (366), the "basilica Sicinini" was assaulted, injured by fire, and its roof torn off.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

What more natural than that Xystus (432-440), finding restoration necessary, and being an enthusiastic opponent of the teaching of Nestorius (condemned at the Council of Ephesus), should have decorated the church, re-named in honour of the Theotokos, with pictures of which she was the centre?

The pictures of the Arch are composed in her honour, but not so those of the Nave, which it is impossible to bring into connection with the ideas embodied in the decisions of the Council of Ephesus. Are these anterior to the decorations of the Arch? and may they be attributed to Liberius?

He quotes Garrucci, who, prompted by such iconographic considerations as the representation of Angels on the Arch as winged, and in the Nave as wingless ('Arte Crist.,' IV. p. 17), puts forward the two following hypotheses: that the pictures of the Nave are either copies of earlier originals; or that they are earlier in date.

Dobbert supports the latter hypothesis; he connects the pictures of the Arch with "l'art cérémonieux des Byzantins," but those of the Nave with the art of the Columns of Trajan (98-117), and of Marcus Aurelius (161-180). In this he has been followed by other archaeologists, Kraus, de Waal, Grisar, &c.

ARCH.—Above Xystus' inscription (de Rossi says), on a disc resembling a votive shield, is a throne, on which is placed a gemmed cross, and a jewelled crown, from which depends a purple veil. On either side of it are the princes of the Apostles, with open books in their hands; and about it the symbols of the Evangelists.

In a sketch made before the time of Ciampini, a lamb resting on a book is represented on or before the throne.

Suarez, or an anonymous writer of 1677, relates that above the lamb was a throne upon which was seated the Virgin with the Child upon her knees (*beata Virgo puerum in grembio habet*). This passage is followed by a rough pen sketch, in which the Virgin's head, encircled by a nimbus, takes the place of the crown and purple veil; below it is that of a child, also with a nimbus.

Some twenty years later the mosaic was cleaned; the heads and the lamb vanished, and in their place the present composition appeared.

De Rossi expresses a doubt whether what now meets the eye may not be the work of restorers employed by Benedict XIV.

He follows Ciampini and Bianchini in interpreting this symbol as synthesising the doctrines and definitions promulgated at the Council of Ephesus:

"Ponendo mente al fatto, che il presente mosaico fu ordinato da Sisto per festeggiare la definizione del Concilio di Efeso, e che in questo Concilio, come nei altri Orientali, fu collocato nel luogo della Presidenza il trono, col Evangelio; concordamente al Ciampini ed al Bianchini mi è sembrato naturale il ravvisare nella scene del sommo dell' arco un' allusione simbolica al solenne giudizio sinodale, ed alla dottrina in esso definita."*

* On recalling the fact that the mosaic in question was ordered by Xystus in honour of the definitions of the Council of Ephesus, at which Council, as in other Oriental synods, a Throne with a New Testament was set in the place of Presidency, it seems natural to me, as to Ciampini and Bianchini, to regard the emblem crowning the Arch as a mystic allusion to the solemn character of the Synod, and its definitions.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

SCENES REPRESENTED ON THE ARCH.—(1*a* and 1*b*) Annunciation. Virgin spinning with a cortège of Angels. These Angels, he states, are not necessarily derived from the apocryphal writings—to prove this he follows Bianchini in associating them with a passage in the letter to the Hebrews (i. 6), “All the Angels of heaven worship Him.”

(1*b*) Subject doubtful.

(3*a* and 3*b*) Presentation. (3*b*) Flight into Egypt.

(4) Adoration of the Magi. Anstes, W. B. Marriott, the author of the article on Angels in Smith's and Cheetham's Dictionary of Chr. Ant., who considers that the figure on the left attributed to Benedict XIV. is not dissimilar to that reproduced in the Windsor drawing (from the collection of Card. Albani—Clement XI. 1700–1721). Garrucci interprets the seated figure on the right as a nurse, other archaeologists as a personification of the Synagogue. De Rossi connects it with the personifications of the *ecclesia ex circumcissione* and the *ecclesia ex Gentibus* in S. Sabina.

In conclusion de Rossi observes that this composition is not founded on an apocryphal incident: it becomes more and more clear, he says, “that the scenes pictured on the Arch were inspired by some theological conception (*un concetto teologico*), which he believes to be that of the Virgin as Theotokos.

(5) Interpreted by Garrucci and Lehner as representing Christ disputing with the Doctors; by Kondakoff, de Waal, Grisar, and others, as the Adoration of Christ by Affrodosius, an incident recorded in the *Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei*.

(6) Massacre of the Innocents.

(7) Magi before Herod. Interpreted by Ciampini and Bianchini as Herodias' daughter dancing.

(8) Jerusalem.

(9) Bethlehem.

MOSAICS OF THE ARCH.—General Conclusions.—De Rossi observes (1) that the artist was concerned to accentuate the solemn and dogmatic character of the events pictured; hence the attendant Angels; the cross on the nimbus of the Child, etc.; (2) that the influence of the Apocryphal writings is apparent not only in the choice of accessories, but also in that of the subject-matter; (3) that the pictorial use of the apocryphal writings was unknown earlier than the fifth century; but that apocryphal legends had so completely passed into the popular consciousness, that Jerome even, the fervid antagonist of the “*somnia apocryphorum*,” visualised certain scenes, the Nativity for instance, in accordance with apocryphal and not canonical accounts.

MOSAICS OF THE NAVE.—He states that this series is purely historical in character. “*Cotesta serie di quadri è tutta di carattere storico, e segue ordinatamente il testo biblico: non è scelta fatta con intenzione symbolica alludente alla definizione efesina, come nelle scene dell' arco.*”*

With regard to style he considers these pictures coarse and clumsy imitations

* The character of this series is purely historical, it follows the biblical narrative step by step, events are not selected from the point of view of a symbology having reference to the decisions of the Council of Ephesus, as on the Arch.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

of the reliefs of the Columns of Trajan (98-117) and of Marcus Aurelius (161-168).

He further remarks that their obvious connection with ancient "picture Bibles" has been noted by many observers, Kondakoff, Tikkanen, Springer, etc., but he points out that the treatment is very different in almost every case in which the same subject is represented both in the mosaics, and in the miniatures (p. 7). He considers this to be true of the illustrations of the "Vienna Genesis"; of the "Cotton Bible"; of the "Ashburnham Pentateuch"; but not invariably so of the "Joshua Rotulus." "In the scene pictured (in S. Maria Maggiore), in which Joshua arrests the course of the Sun and of the Moon, there is a manifest analogy, not only with the same scene in the Rotulus, but with its representation in the Greek Octateuchs of the Vatican (Nos. 746, 747), which . . . though belonging to the eleventh or twelfth centuries, reproduce more ancient originals, and belong to classic art. These brief notes suffice to show that from the earliest times there existed illustrated Bibles differing more or less from each other. The mosaics of the Nave preserve just such a Bible, coincident in part, and differing in part from originals which are reproduced in the earliest manuscripts as well as in Byzantine copies of the eleventh and twelfth centuries."

The hypothesis of the derivation from such a Bible of the scenes from the Old Testament pictured in the Nave is sufficient, he believes, to account for their divergence in style from the stately and grandiose scenes with which the Arch is decorated, scenes drawn with an especial object from canonical and apocryphal writings.

The mosaics of the Arch present, he says, characteristics to which the name of Byzantine has been attached: whereas in those of the Nave reminiscences of the style and art of classic antiquity are dominant (see Schnaase, 'Geschichte der Bildenden Künste,' III., p. 198).

The cursive vine of the epistyle resting on the columns of the Nave is, he asserts, a classic motive. Among its large curves is a medallion on which the divine Lamb is represented. This Lamb has no nimbus, neither is it associated in any way with a cross, whether simple, or monogrammatic, or attached to a staff, as in S. Pudenziana (about 390), and as in the Baptistry of the Lateran of approximately the same date. It is earlier in type than these. He notices that the architrave is an architectural feature peculiar rather to the fourth than to the fifth century. In S. Paolo (388) arches have already taken the place of the horizontal architrave. He quotes Huebsch, who attributes the columns and architrave of S. Maria Maggiore to the time of Liberius, rather than to that of Xystus. De Rossi notes that Mons. Crostarosa asserts that the walls of the Nave are of a different construction to those of the Arch, a fact previously only surmised by Stevenson and Huebsch. He notes that Adon (Migne, cxxiii., p. 101) in his 'Chronicon' asserts that Xystus constructed a basilica on the ruins of a pagan temple; observes, however, that its form is not that of a temple, but of a basilica. Suggests that it may be an adaptation of a civil basilica.

From these premises he draws the conclusion that the mosaics of the Nave are of the second half of the fourth century, and were ordered by Liberius; and that those of the Arch are of the first half of the fifth century, and were ordered by Xystus.

APPENDIX IV

AINALOF ON THE MOSAICS OF THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURY. 1895

PROF. AINALOF'S valuable work on the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore is the fruit of much learning, and of a wide knowledge of Byzantine and Classic art.

He was able to examine the mosaics of the Nave closely (from the cornice), but was only able to study the badly lighted mosaics of the Arch from the baldachino of the High Altar.

He ascribes the mosaics of the Arch and Nave to the fifth century.

ANNUNCIATION.—He notes that the Virgin's dress from the throat downward has been restored in coloured stucco; that the background has been restored in places in coloured stucco; and that part of the sky and of the wings of the flying Angel have been patched in the same material.

He notes that the Angels throughout the Arch are winged, a peculiarity of Byzantine art, whereas they are wingless in all representations of the Annunciation in the Catacombs: to prove this he quotes an Annunciation in Priscilla (second century), and another in Domitilla (second to fourth centuries).

He points out that the subject-matter of this picture is derived from Oriental apocryphal Gospels, which associate Angels with the Virgin, and which are the literary sources of a large group of fifth and sixth century reliefs connected with the East, in which the Virgin is dressed as in S. Maria Maggiore; that the same costume is worn by S. Agnese (seventh century), and S. Cecilia (ninth century), and by the Virgins in the Procession of Virgins at Ravenna (sixth century). It also occurs in many Byzantine manuscripts.

He states that the Annunciation to the Virgin spinning never occurs on Roman or Gallican sarcophagi, and that the presence of a dove in this scene is rare, and occurs only in Byzantine art.

Quotes as Oriental instances of the representation of the Annunciation to the Virgin spinning—

- (1) Sarcophagus. Ravenna. (Plate 32, No. 3 of present work.)
- (2) Throne of Maximianus. Ravenna.
- (3) Book cover. Paris. (Plate 51, No. 3 of present work.)
- (4) Ivory tablet. Trivulzio Coll. Milan.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

(5) Diptych from Coll. Greg. Stroganoff.

(6) Casket. Werden.

Observes that the artist has had no difficulty in drawing his figures from any point of view; that they are well constructed and pliable; that they stand easily and gracefully on firmly planted feet; comments on the awkwardly crossed legs of the Angel of the Annunciation; he notes "the absence of any trace of frontality."

Interprets the following scene as picturing the Annunciation to Zachariah, on the ground of its resemblance to a similar representation on the doors of S. Sabina.

Connects the representation of the Temple behind Zachariah with the representations of buildings in the Virgil of the Vatican.

PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.—He notes that this well preserved dress of the Virgin is that of a Byzantine Empress.

States that the arrangement and component items of this composition never recur in Byzantine art.

Notes that its true subject is not the Purification of the Virgin, but the recognition of Christ as the light alike of Jews and Gentiles, by Simeon and Anna; its treatment is, he considers, inspired by the narrative of S. Luke, supplemented by the account given in the apocryphal Arabic gospel "Of the Infancy of Christ." Beyond the scene which takes place in the precincts of the Temple, he sees an Angel leaning over a recumbent figure. Ciampini in his engraving gives something similar, but nevertheless interprets the incident as the Flight into Egypt, and accepts the upright figure as that of the Virgin.

Prof. Ainalof interprets it as the Dream in which Joseph was warned to seek safety for the Child in Egypt. The same subject is represented on the throne of Maximianus at Ravenna. Explains the apparently scattered attention of members of the hieratic procession as resulting from their divided interest in these two scenes.

He rejects de Rossi's hypothesis that the building represented is the Temple of Jerusalem as rebuilt by Herod, and also his interpretation of the decorations of the pediment as representing a Jupiter-like Christ enthroned with busts of the Princes of the Apostles on either side, and a frieze of Martyrs' heads below.

He recognises the figure on the pediment as representing the Roma of the Temple of Roma and Venus on the Forum, so often reproduced in an abbreviated form on Imperial coins. Referring to Fröhner ('Numismatique antique des Medallions de l'Empire Romain,' Paris, 1878), he connects the type of the Virgin with that of the Syrian manuscript of the Laurentiana (*i.e.*, black eyes, dark eyebrows and large pupils). Points out that the type and dress of the priests, unknown in the Christian art of the first three centuries, recurs in the Melchizedek of S. Vitale of Ravenna, sixth century.

Comments on the nimbus with the cross poised on its rim as a forerunner of the cruciform nimbus.

EPIPHANY.—States that this composition is unique in Christian art.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Follows Rohault de Fleury and Kondakoff in interpreting the two women seated on either side of the enthroned Christ as Personifications of the Church and of the Synagogue; and connects them with the Personifications of S. Sabina, and of S. Pudenziana.

Asserts that the column on which the melancholy figure of the Synagogue leans is distinct from her seat, and represents the column at which Christ was scourged (p. 88). Contrasts the freedom with which the Angels are drawn, and their sympathetic participation in the scene at which they assist with the rigidity and indifference of the Angels who fill a similar position behind the Virgin's throne in S. Apollinare at Ravenna. Observes that two of the Angels have only one wing apiece, and explains this as betokening the imperfect passage from one phase of representation to another, from the wingless Angels of the Catacombs to the winged Angels of the fifth and sixth centuries.

Derives the long throne from a classic throne for many Gods, such as occurs in the Iliad of the Ambrosiana, but connects it with a throne in the Syrian manuscript of the Laurentiana, the throne of Solomon, and with another in the Cosmas Indicopleustes, the throne of David and of Solomon. It is, he says, a royal throne, the throne of David, the throne of which the Angel spoke in his Annunciation to Mary, the scene pictured above. He conceives these two pictures as representing mutually complementary thoughts.

Notices that the arrangement of these "historical" pictures is not chronological, but the outcome of some "idea."

He follows Ciampini and others in completing the scene by placing a third Mage on the left, with upraised hand pointing to the Star, as on a sarcophagus in the Lateran.

THE RECOGNITION OF CHRIST BY AFFRODOSIUS.—Follows Kondakoff in deriving the subject-matter of this picture from the Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei.

The fall of the idols is not represented, but the official recognition of Christ by Affrodosius and his courtiers: the Prince wears the state dress of a Byzantine Emperor. Connects it with the court scenes at Ravenna of which Justinian is the centre.

States that the recognition of the divinity of Christ is the true subject of the second, third, and fourth pictures of this series.

THE MAGI BEFORE HEROD.—Two separate incidents pictured. (1) Herod's interview with the Priests. (2) His interview with the Magi.

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.—A unique composition, different from those of the sarcophagi, the diptych of Milan, and of the Syrian manuscript.

Ascribes the dignity and quietness of the composition to the want of space necessary to violent movement.

Notes that the hair of the women is unloosed, as is that of the mourners of the Milanese diptych, and of the casket of Brescia.

JERUSALEM, BETHLEHEM.—Considers the former well preserved; but observes

THE GOLDEN AGE OF

that the latter is almost entirely composed of coloured stucco. Similar representations of these idiographic towns occur as late as the tenth century.

THE THRONE.—Remarks that the heads of S. Peter and of S. Paul, the four symbolic beasts, and the upper part of the medallion, are in coloured stucco.

Similar Emblems:—(1) S. Prisca, Capua: Throne, dove, roll, clouds, apocalyptic beasts.

(2) SS. Cosma e Damiano: Throne, Lamb, roll, clouds (apocalyptic setting).

(3) Arian Baptistry, Ravenna: Throne, Cross, Apostles (not apocalyptic).

(4) S. Prassede: Throne, S. Peter and S. Paul on either side.

Remarks (1) that such types as those of Mary, Affrodosius, and Joseph are unknown in the art of the Catacombs, or on Roman or Gothic sarcophagi;

(2) That the types of the priests and their peculiar dress recur in S. Vitale, Ravenna;

(3) That the rich dresses of Mary and Affrodosius are common in Byzantine art;

(4) That the loose composition is characteristic of Byzantine art.

States (1) that the personifications of the Church and the Synagogue are peculiar to Rome, but that the manner in which they are represented here is Byzantine.

(2) That the light key of colour in which these pictures are composed recalls that of the mosaics of Pompeii, and of the Villa of Hadrian;

(3) That the figures of Herod and of his guard are Roman in character;

(4) That the youthful heads of the Angels, the heads of the priests, the Pompeian figure of the Philosopher are antique, and are characteristic of the classic art, which was the mother of Byzantine art.

He concludes, therefore, that the mosaics of the Arch represent an early phase of Byzantine art which flourished in Rome.

He considers that the character of the mosaics of the Nave proclaim them to be, not only of the same date and country as those of the Arch, but to be the work of the same group of artists.

He states that (1) the pictures of the Arch and Nave have the same appearance of enlarged miniatures;

(2) Have the same small figures in a roomy setting;

(3) Are composed in the same light key;

(4) Have the same light sky, sometimes warmed with prismatic colours;

(5) The same sunny middle distance, passing sometimes into actual gold;

(6) The same dark green foreground;

(7) That the same dark purple is used in both for the interior of temples, for the border of the mantles of priests, and for imperial robes;

(8) That the same sparkling touches of gold occur in both;

(9) The same conventional representation of temples and towns;

(10) The same types of Kings, Priests, and Levites; and the same type and dress of women (Mary, Zipporah, Pharaoh's daughter).

(11) The same mode of expressing haste and reverence (Abraham and Simeon).

(12) The same conception of Angels, as beings of glowing vitality.

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

He connects the pastoral scenes with the pastorals of the Vatican Virgils, and of the Pompeian frescoes. Considers the antique element more prominent in the Nave than on the Arch.

Does not accept the analogy between the Joshua battle-pieces and the battle-pieces of the columns of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius, on which D'Agincourt insists, on the ground that whereas in Roman reliefs a crowd is built up of superimposed persons who sometimes reach the upper border of the composition, here they never encroach on the landscape, *i.e.*, their heads do not rise above a certain level. To this rule he admits one exception, the Passage of the Red Sea.

He connects these mosaics with the miniatures of the Virgil (Vatican), the Iliad (Ambrosiana), the Joshua Rotulus (Vatican).

A river of the peculiar form of the Jordan in the first picture of the Joshua series is to be found in the Virgil of the Vatican, also a sea so treated as to cover a third of the picture, as in the Passage of the Red Sea, also similar landscapes, and a similar much developed genre.

In the Iliad also are the same battle-pieces, heroes, sieges, divine appearances in the clouds, and the same use of the nimbus.

States that the absence of Personifications of towns and rivers is common to the Virgil, the Iliad, and to the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore.

His interpretation of each picture is realistic and historical. For instance, he interprets the second female figure in the first picture of the Jacob series as servant.

Notices the freedom and pliability of movement of the ladies in the Presentation of Moses at the court of Pharaoh's daughter, and observes that a parallel to such freedom is to be found in antique art only. Notices the rigidity of the Princess's head, but draws no conclusion from it. Speaks of the Miracle of the Sun and Moon as "the well-known composition so frequent in Byzantine art," but gives no examples.

He observes that the Angels are wingless, whereas in the Byzantine manuscripts they are winged, and carry long staffs topped by semi-circles representing the heavens; and that Moses is represented as young, as in the Catacombs.

Speaks of the series as an interesting attempt to inform antique subjects with Christian significance, but detects no formal trace of Christianity except the crosses on the Temples, and the occasional similarity of the pose of the shepherds with that of the Good Shepherd of the Catacombs. Running side by side with the antique element he sees, however, "a stream of purely Byzantine forms."

He accepts the River, River Gods and Genii in the Apse as antique.

Like de Rossi he considers the frieze in the Nave antique, but disfigured by modern restoration.

Finally he connects both the composition of the individual pictures, and the general colour scheme of the decorations of the Nave, with the mosaics of Ravenna.

APPENDIX V

TABLE OF SYNCHRONOUS EVENTS

<i>Roman Emperors.</i>	<i>Notable Events relating to Church History.</i>
Claudius, 37-41	Philo-Judaeus visits Rome, A.D. 40
Vespasian, 69-79	Destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70
Titus, 79-81	Flavius Josephus born, 37; completes his 'Antiquitates Judaicae,' A.D. 94
Domitian, 81-96	Clement, Bishop of Rome, 91-100
	Letter to the Hebrews, about 95
Nerva, 96-98	(?) Letter of Barnabas (or time of Hadrian)
Trajan, 98-117	The Great Jewish Rebellion, 132-135.
	Aelia Capitolina founded on the site of Jerusalem
Hadrian, 117-138	Justin Martyr, about 115-165; 'Apologia,' about 152; 'Dialogue with the Jew Trypho' some years later
	Irenaeus, about 115 to about 195
Antoninus Pius, 138-161	Pius I., Bishop of Rome, 142-157
	'The Shepherd' by Hermas (or time of Domitian)
	Tatian, about 120-172
	Clement of Alexandria, about 145-220
Marcus Aurelius, 161-180	Tertullian, about 160-240
Commodus, 180-192	Origen, 185-254
Septimius Severus, 193-211	Callixtus I., 218-222
Caracalla, 211-217	Cyprian, 200-258
Elagabalus, 218-222	Hippolytus' Martyrdom
Severus Alexander, 222-235	
Maximinus, 235-238	
Gordianus, 238-244	
Phlippus, 244-249	

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN ART

Roman Emperors.

Decius, 249-251
Gallus, 251-254
Valerianus, 254-260
Gallienus, 254-268
Claudius Gothicus, 268-270
Aurelianus, 270-275
Probus, 276-282
Diocletian, 284-305
Maximianus Aug., 286-305
Constantine, 306-337
Constantine II., 337-340 (Occid.)
Constantius II., 337-361 (Orient)

Constans (Ital.), 337-350
Julian the Apostate, 360-363

Valentinian I., 364-375

Valentinian II., 375-392
Theodosius, 379-395
Honorius, 395-423

Valentinian III., 425-455

Justinian I., 527-565

Notable Events relating to Church History.

Eusebius of Caesarea, 265-339

Athanasius, 296-373

Council of Nicaea, 325
Sylvester I., 314-335
Liberius, 352-366
Felix II., 355-358
Ambrose, 333-397
Jerome, 340-420
Augustine, 354-430
Prudentius, 348-410
Paulinus of Nola, 353-431
Damasus I., 366-384

First siege of Rome by Alaric, 408
Second siege of Rome by Alaric, 409
Third siege of Rome and its capture by Alaric, 410
Innocent I., 402-417
Coelestinus I., 422-432
Council of Ephesus, 431
Xystus III., 432-440
Leo I., 440-461
Council of Chalcedon, 451

Hadrian I., 772-795

Alexander VI. (Borgia), 1492-1503
Sixtus V. (Peretti), 1585-1590
Clement VIII. (Aldobrandini), 1592-1605
Paul V. (Borghese), 1605-1621
Gregory XV. (Ludovisi), 1621-1623
Urban VIII. (Barberini), 1623-1644
Benedict XIV. (Lambertini), 1740-1758

INDEX

- AARON, 138, 176, 195, 199
 Abel, 63
 Abraham, 19, 38, 55, 64, 125, 135, 393
 Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ, 15, 55, 58-66,
 90, 388
 and the three Angels, 67-80, 90, 100 f., 275
 Abraham's separation from Lot, 81-88, 318
 Adoptio, 146
 Adoration of the Magi—*see* The Coming of the Orient to
 Christ. *See also* Magi
 Aelia Capitolina, 322, 324 f.—*see also* Jerusalem
 Affraat, 220
 Affrodosius, 51, 118, 349 f., 413, 418
 Agincourt—*see* Seroux d'Agincourt
 Ai, 242 f.
 Ainalof, 145, 170, 249, 322, 334, 387, 415-419
 Alaric, 35
 Aldemus, 27, 403
 Alexander Severus, 19, 64 f., 165
 Alexandria, 6, 158 f., 174, 214, 346, 380
 Allocutio, 138, 253, 256
 Amalek, 191 f., 194-197
 Amalekites, 191-197, 259 f., 264
 Ammianus Marcellinus, 31, 342
 Amorites, Kings of, 193, 244, 255, 266
 Amphora, 59, 79
 Angelis, Paul de, 403
 Angels, 68-80, 115 f., 182, 187, 226-229, 241, 263, 266,
 277-293, 298, 314-319, 330-332, 347 f., 363, 395 f.,
 419
 Anna, 164, 282, 314, 318, 320
 Annunciation, 372, 397—*see also* Mystery of the Virgin
 Birth
 to Joseph, 283, 292 f.—*see also* Joseph
 Antoninus Pius, 165, 172, 341, 351
 Apocalypse and apocalyptic interpretations, 214, 248,
 260-272, 291, 303-312, 326-328, 393—*see also* Living
 Creatures, St. John, and Revelation
 Apocryphal Writings, 12, 31 ff., 40, 86, 286-289
 Apostles—*see under* Christ
 Apostolic Constitutions, 311
 Ardisson, C., 409
 Aristobulus, 351 f.
 Aristotle, 1, 351
 Arius, 36 ff., 74
 Ark, 215, 234-237, 261 ff., 304-306, 326
 Art, Byzantine, 13, 288, 301, 391, 419
 Christian, 20, 64, 82, 103, 380
 Art, Classic, Conventions of, 13, 82, 101, 102, 103, 111, 115,
 182, 191, 203, 236, 240, 248, 268, 319, 340 f.
 Criticism, 4, 6, 398
 Epochs of, 15, 380
 Russian, 301
 Schools, 6 f., 380, 399
 Technique, 47-51, 60, 70 f., 82 f., 144, 163 f., 176, 199,
 203, 223 f., 235, 253, 280 f., 317 f., 348, 356, 362
 Artapanus, 147
 Ashburnham Pentateuch, 66, 414
 Athanasius, 36, 74 f., 311
 Atrium, 317, 318 f., 395
 Aubé, 134
 Augustine, 11, 32, 41, 75, 90 f., 103, 147, 178, 264, 373
 Augustus, 147, 300, 335
 Aureola, 69, 76, 79, 80, 203, 296, 298, 330

 BABYLON, 264
 Balaam, 337 f., 379
 Barnabas, letter of, 12, 32, 41, 96, 122, 124, 140, 196, 219,
 259, 264, 271, 287, 307, 323 f., 364, 373, 375
 Barberini, Cardinal, 403 f.
 MS. of Copies, 130, 138
 Basil the Great, 310, 311
 Basilicae, 18, 20, 22, 26
 Basilica Liberii, 26
 Sicinini, 26, 40-46
 Bassus Junius, basilica of, 20
 Benedict XIV., 5, 43, 331 f., 347, 357, 362, 396
 Bellini, 320
 Berosus, 340
 Berlin Museum, Ring with Mercy Seat, 297, 301, 306, 378
 Bethlehem, 319, 366-370
 Basilica, 336
 Women of, 354-360
 Bianchini, 404, 413
 Bibles illustrated, 9, 14 f., 65, 90, 145, 372
 Birds, 102, 289, 185, 312, 327
 Bitter Waters of Marah, 186-189
 Bonwetsch, 123, 306
 Books, 208, 298, 310
 Borghese Chapel, 5, 403, 407
 Borgia, 5, 284, 298, 403
 British Museum, Cotton MS., 69, 414
 engraved stones, 378
 Buresch, 341
 Burning Bush, 109-173
 Byzantine Art—*see* Art

INDEX

- CÆSAR**, 147, 300
Caesarius of Arles, 94
Camuccini, 406-408
Canon, 31
Capua Vetere, S. Prisca, 301
Caracalla, 19
Catacombs—Paintings, 3, 18, 21, 63, 94 f., 144, 150, 171, 196, 200, 278, 288, 301, 312, 334, 335, 389, 415—*see also* Priscilla and Domitilla
Charlemagne, 29, 389
Charles, 93
Chenephres, 147
Cherubim, 304, 310
Christ, bust of, 19, 49, 59, 64, 301 f., 348
 Childhood of, 275, 285, 292, 330, 345-353
 Repudiation of, 281, 313-328, 373
 as Shepherd, 94 f., 120-125, 172 f., 312
 symbolised by a lamb, 139, 293
 Type of, 63, 348, 353, 363
 and His Apostles, 168, 201, 220 f., 261 f., 344
Christians, Persecutions of, 19, 46
Ciampini, 106, 110, 127 f., 404
Clemens, Flavius, 18
Clement of Rome, 12, 140, 210, 225, 237, 289
Clement of Alexandria, 12, 41, 64, 135, 140, 147, 149, 155 f., 179, 185, 188, 287, 337, 341, 351, 352, 373, 375, 377 f.
Clouds, Representations and significance of, 49, 59, 69, 101 f., 170 f., 203, 205
Coelestinus, Pope, 389
Commodus, 19, 45, 147, 343, 398
Coming of the Orient to Christ, 285, 290, 333, 348, 397
Concordia, 165
Constantine, 74, 336, 343
 Arch of, 16, 22, 164, 334, 358, 394
Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, 46
Constantius, 36 f., 39
Cornelius, 45
Cosma e Damiano, Ss.—see Rome
Cosmas Indicopleustes, 149, 173, 306, 334
Cosmati, 253
Costanza, S.—see Rome
Covenant between God and His People, 180-183, 207-211
Cresswell, R. H., 311
Cross, 49, 79 f., 115, 122, 124 f., 179, 196 f., 213, 296 f., 299, 307 f., 311, 367
Crostarosa, Mons. P., 26, 414
Crown, 296 f., 299, 308, 311
Crutwell, Ch. Th., 271, 350, 375
Cumont, F., 343

DAMASUS, POPE, 5, 12, 31, 32, 389
Danesi, G., vii.
Daniel, 270, 343
Deities, Representations of, 23, 300 f.
De Waal, 405, 412
Delilah, 148
Demetrius, 135
De Rossi—see Rossi
Dexterarum junctio, 165 f.
Dinah, 128, 132, 135
Diocletian, 343
Disciplina Arcani, 311

Dobbert, 412
Doketism, 33
Domitian, 18, 300
Domitilla, 18
 Catacombs of, 20, 44
Doves—see Birds
Duchesne, Abbé, 26

ECCLESIA EX CIRCUMCISIONE, 105 ff., 124, 310, 312, 320, 331, 336, 344, 368 f.
Ecclesia ex gentibus, 124, 157 ff., 167 f., 225, 263, 265, 310, 312, 320, 336 f., 344, 368 f.
Edom, 118, 190-193—*see also* Esau
Egypt, 179
Ehrle, P., vii
Engelhardt, M. v., 73
Ephesus, Council of 31, 390, 404, 412, 413
Epiphanius, 197
Epiphany—see The Coming of the Orient to Christ
Esau, 104, 118 f., 125, 131, 289—*see also* Edom
Etoimasia, 301
Eucharist, 61, 75, 88, 103, 149, 289
Eusebius, 19, 64 f., 124, 135, 147, 263 f., 338, 373, 398
Ezekiel, tragic poet, 147 f., 159
 prophet, 291, 303 f., 305, 311, 365

FAUSTINA, 300
Felix II., 37
Flavia Neapolis, 135 f.
Flight into Egypt, 275, 285, 316 f., 320, 325 f.
Florence, Bibl. Laurentiana, Syrian MS, 334
Fontana, G., 404
Friedlaender, L., 399
Frontality, 63, 150

GADDI, 26
Garrucci, R., 101, 102, 108, 110, 117, 127 f., 145, 148, 170, 228, 241, 321, 327, 336, 387, 403 f., 412
Gelasius, 32
Gherardi, 404
Gibeon, 239-243, 246 f.
Giotto, 5, 13
Giovanni e Paolo, Ss., 20 f.
Glory of the Lord, 204, 305—*see also* Aureola
Gnostics, 376, 378
God—see Hand of
Gordianus, 19
Gregory, Pope, 389
Grisar, H., 29, 385, 387, 405

HADRIAN, 322, 324 f., 326
Hadrian I., 29, 389, 390
Hamor, 127-132, 193, 358
Hand of God, 102, 143, 144, 146, 148, 159, 170, 187, 203, 205, 246 f., 290
Harnack, A., 45
Haseloff, A., vii.
Hebrews, Letter to the: on Melchizedek, 61; on Moses, 149; on Joshua, 219; on Rahab, 237; on the Mercy Seat, 306
Hegesippus, 328
Heliogabalus, 19, 45, 365

INDEX

- Helbig, W., 394
 Heraclitus, 73
 Hermas, Shepherd of, 12, 41, 259, 261, 264, 288, 339 f.
 Herod, 289, 309, 355-359, 261, 362-365
 Hieronymus—*see* Jerome
 Hill, G. F., 368
 Hippolytus, 12, 123, 189, 261, 306, 375, 377
 Hittites, 365
 Hivites, 127, 130, 135
 Houses, 70, 79, 82, 101, 103, 143, 224, 233 f.
 Decorations of, 19
 Hülsen, Ch., vii
 Hystaspes, 339, 341 f.
- ИСХРИУС, 296, 312, 399
 Ignatius, 33
 Iliad, Ambrosian Library, 23, 335
 Irenaeus, 12, 41, 64, 92, 122, 167, 210, 214, 219, 307, 388
 Isaac, 82, 85, 99 f.
 Isaiah, Prophet, 261, 287, 365, 379
 Isis, 19, 64, 155, 336
 Israel, 38 f., 85, 92 f.
- JACOB, 55, 90, 200, 393
 Blessing of, 10, 99-104, 146
 his Dream, 89, 104
 Double marriage, 11, 91 f., 105-113
 Meeting with Esau, 89
 Augustine on, 90 f., 103
 as shepherd, 95, 109, 122-125, 128, 166, 393
 as bridegroom, 95, 122-124, 166, 393
 James, 328
 Jericho, Fall of, 214, 223, 232-238, 263-265
 Jerome, 11, 19, 32, 41, 75, 197, 248, 373
 Jerusalem, 366-370
 Temple of Jehovah, 88, 383, 301, 322
 Temple of Jupiter, 88, 316, 322
 New, 229, 320, 370
 Jesus Nave—*see* Joshua
 Jethro, 161-163, 168
 Job, 291
 Johannes Damascenus, 308
 John, *St.*, 33, 305, 326, 376—*see also* Apocalypse, and Revelation
 Jordan, Passage of, 215-221, 224
 Joseph, 279, 284, 286, 288, 291 f., 293, 314, 318, 341, 345, 347, 349, 372
 Josephus, Flavius, 141, 142, 210 f, 212, 222, 322
 Joshua ("Jesus"), 55, 125, 139, 196, 209, 212-272, 289, 363, 393 f.
 Passage of the Jordan, 215-221, 224
 Prototype of Christ, 213 f., 218 ff., 229, 258
 his envoys, 222-225, 230 f., 263 f.
 Fall of Jericho, 214, 232-238, 263-265
 and the Angel of the Lord, 226-229, 263 f., 284
 before Gibeon, 239-243, 265
 his Sudden Appearance, 244-250, 267, 394
 Staying of Sun and Moon, 237, 251-254, 267
 Condemnation of the five Kings, 255 f.
 Division of the spoil, 255, 257-272
 Joshua Rotulus (Vatican Library), 9, 66, 115, 159, 228, 236, 249, 253, 256, 269, 284 f., 368, 419
- Julian the Apostate, 37-39, 310, 336, 339, 343
 Justin Martyr, his exegesis, 12, 351, 388
 on Melchizedek, 260, 272
 on the Eucharist, 62 f.
 on the Logos, 64 f., 73, 376 f.
 on the Divinity of Christ, 76
 on Jehovah, 76
 on the Visit of the Angels to Abraham, 77 ff.
 on the true Israel, 86
 on the Jewish nation, 86 f.; 134, 206, 364
 on Jerusalem, 88
 on Jacob's history, 91 f.
 on Rachel and Leah, 105, 122, 293
 on the Cross, 124, 179, 259, 307 f.
 on Circumcision, 133, 324
 on the Passover, 139
 on Moses, 140, 154, 259, 260
 on Plato, 154-158, 160
 on the Burning Bush, 172 f.
 on Moses' rod, 179, 188
 on trees, 188, 124, 179
 on the battle of Rephidim, 196
 on the New Covenant, 211
 on Rahab, 237
 on Joshua, 259 f., 268 f., 270
 on the Millennium, 269, 271 f., 327
 on the birth of Christ, 287, 294, 372
 on the destruction of Jerusalem, 323 f., 326
 on the Sibyls and Hystaspes, 339, 341
 on Martyrdom, 360
 on Herod, 364 f.
 on prophecies, 374
 Jubilees, Book of, 86, 93
 Julia Mamaea, 19
 Julius, Pope, 380
 Juno Pronuba, 165 f.
 Justinian, 348
- KAUTSCH, E., 86, 93
 Kondakoff, N. de, 349, 405, 413, 417
 Kraus, F. X., 75
- LABAN, 92, 95, 105, 107-115, 124, 130
 Lactantius, 339
 Lampridius, 64
 Landscapes, treatment of, 48, 68, 102, 185, 203, 217, 245
 Lange, J. 63
 Langen, I. 45, 134
 Lateran—*see* Rome
 Leah, 10, 91, 94 f., 105-113, 116 f., 122 f., 164, 282, 293, 325, 336 f.
 Sons of, 127-134
 Le Blant, 185
 Lehmann, Edw., 341
 Lehner, 405, 413
 Leo XII., 409
 Liberius, 9, 11, 26, 30, 36-39, 40, 75 f., 248, 387
 Liber pontificalis, 26 f.
 Living Creatures, Apocalyptic, 291, 296, 298 f., 302, 310, 344
 Logos, 23, 35, 59, 64 f., 69, 73, 79, 167, 179, 188, 214, 261, 264, 311, 335, 344, 375-379, 394, 400

INDEX

- Lot's Separation from Abraham, 81-88
 Luke, 286, 288, 290 f., 293
- MACCABAEUS, 303
- Madonna—*see* Virgin, the holy, Pictures of
- Magi, 329, 331 f., 333, 335, 337, 340, 343 f.
- Magi before Herod, 275, 355, 361-365
- Mammaea, Julia, 19
- Mandorla—*see* Aureola
- Mantegna, 320
- Marcus, Pope, 389
- Marah, The bitter waters of, 186-189
- Marco, S. (Venice), 5
- Marcus Aurelius, Column of, 16, 22, 63, 115, 216, 222, 240, 249, 253, 256, 284, 289, 315, 394, 597
 persecution under, 19
- Marriott, 413
- Martyrdom of the Innocents, 275, 285, 354-360, 397
- Mary—*see* Virgin, the holy
- Massacre of the Innocents—*see* Martyrdom of the Innocents
- Matteo di Giovanni, 350
- Matthew, 286, 293, 328, 334, 336 f.
- Maximianus—*see* under Ravenna
- Mazdaism, 343—*see* also Mithraism
- Melchizedek, 15, 59 f., 162, 195, 260, 302, 363
- Mercy Seat, 80, 173, 296-312, 319, 367, 372
- Merris, 147, 164, 334, 358
- Metrodorus, 400
- Micah, 368
- Michael, 228 f.
- Michel Angelo, 139, 248
- Milan, Ambrosian Library—*see* Iliad
- Milan, S. Lorenzo, 301
- Milan, S. Nazaro, 336
 Cathedral, Ivory, 360
- Minucius Felix, 385
- Miracle of the Quails, 184 f.
- Miriam, 176
- Mission of the Envoys, 198-201
- Mithras, 65, 336, 342 f.
- Morani, A., vii.
- Mosaics in general, 14, 25, 252 f.
 Classical, 249
 S. Maria Maggiore—General Considerations, 3 ff; 22, 43 f., 47-49, 392
 Restorations, 4 f.
 Tiles, 26 f., 41
 Brickwork, 27, 41
 Apse decoration, 29
 Architrave, 42
 Gold interpolations, 48, 50, 79, 113, 153, 241, 245, 252 f.
 Sequel of pictures, 66, 83 f.
- Moses, 50, 51, 137-141
 Typological interpretation of history, 139, 149, 154, 160, 167 f., 172, 175, 179, 185, 205, 209
 Type of Christ, 139 f., 160, 211, 352
 Adoption of, 142-150
 among the Philosophers, 151-160, 352
 Marriage, 161-168
 Calling of, 169-173
- Moses, in Passage of the Red Sea, 174-179
 in Covenant between God and His people, 180-183, 207-211
 in Miracle of the Quails, 184 f.
 in Bitter Waters of Marah, 185-189
 and Amalek, 191-197
 and Edom, 190-193
 in Mission of the Envoys, 198-201
 Stoning of, 202-206, 217
 Death of, 210 f.
 Ezekiel's Drama, 147
- Müntz, 403
- Mystery of the Virgin Birth, 277-294
- NAPLES, Museum, 19, 21, 22, 25, 64, 158—*see* also Pompeian Paintings
- Nativity, 275, 311, 388
- Neander, 378
- Nero, 271, 343, 364
- Nerva, 147
- Nestorius, 34
- Nicaea, Council of, 25, 38, 95
- Nimbus, 69, 112, 203, 330, 358
- Nîmes, sarcophagus, 185
- Numenius of Apamea, 352
- OCCIDENTAL Philosophy—*see* Philosophy
- Orange, Arch, 394
- Origen, 12, 19, 41, 189, 197, 213, 219, 225, 229, 261 f., 265, 268, 287, 351, 373, 375
- Orpheus, 19, 155
- PACCA, Card., 406, 408
- Padre Eterno, 181, 290
- Paolo, S. (fuori le Mura), 5, 14, 27, 42, 373, 414
- Paolo Veronese, 320
- Paris, Bibl. Nat. Ivory, 388, 415
- Passage of the Red Sea, 174-179
- Pastoral scene, 87, 170-173
- Paul, S., 85 f., 90, 133, 148, 168, 178, 188, 225, 261, 270, 307, 319 f.—*see* also Peter and Paul
- Paul V., 5, 403—*see* also Borghese
- Paul de Angelis, 403
- Paulinus of Nola, 219, 237 f., 400
- Persecutions of Christians, 19, 46
- Peter, S., 261
- Peter and Paul, SS., representations of, 20, 27, 64, 296, 298, 309 f., 363
- Petersburg, St., Hermitage, 166
- Petersen, E., 158, 175
- Pharaoh, 138, 174 f., 177 f., 363
 Daughter of, 137, 142-150—*see* also Merris, and Ther-mouths
- Philippus Arabs, 19
- Philo Judæus, 73, 147 f., 156-160, 168, 210 f., 213, 351 f., 376
- Philosophers, type of, 64, 348, 351
 with Moses, 11, 151-160
- Philosophy, occidental, a Guide to Christ, 281, 319, 345-353, 395
- Pinelli, Cardinal, 5, 27, 117, 252, 255, 318, 330 f., 347, 357, 362, 367, 403

INDEX

- Plato, 154, 156-158, 352, 375 f.
 Plebs Dei, 182, 124, 288, 382 f.
 Pompey, 301
 Pompeian Mosaics, 158, 249
 Paintings, 19, 21, 69, 144, 150, 278, 348, 358 396—*see*
 also Naples, Museum
 Preller, 185
 Presentation of Christ—*see* Repudiation of Christ
 Priests, 275-291, 314 f., 361-365
 Priscilla, Catacombs of—*see* Rome
 Protevangelium Jacobi, 13, 32, 286-288
 Prototypes of Christ, 61, 91, 94 f., 168, 179
 Prudentius, 220, 237 f. 370
 Pseudo-Matthaeus, 13, 32, 334, 349 f.
 Pudenziana, S.—*see* Rome
 Purple mantle, 296 f., 299, 308, 511
- RACHEL, 10, 91, 94 f., 104-112, 116 f., 122 f., 166, 293, 325
 336
 Rahab, 223 f., 225, 230, 337, 263, 265, 289, 293
 Raphael, Sposalizio, 165
 Ravenna, S., Apollinare in Classe, 62 f., 388
 S. Apollinare Nuovo, 28, 42, 62, 104, 164, 278 f., 384,
 388, 415
 Baptistery of the Orthodox, 143
 Duomo, Throne of Maximianus, 388, 415 f.
 Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, 172, 208
 Sarcophagus, 288
 S. Vitale, 16, 17, 41, 62 f., 143 f., 150, 172, 188, 208,
 300, 348, 388
 Rebecca, 93, 99 f.
 Red Sea, Passage of, 174-179, 275, 282
 Revelation, St. John, 264, 302 f.—*see also* Apocalypse, and
 St. John
 Rephidim, Battle of, 192, 194-197
 Repudiation of Christ, 281, 313-328, 373
 Riegl, A., 16, 17
 Rocchegiani, 408
 Rohault de Fleury, 405
 Roll with seven seals, 146, 296, 299, 309, 311
 Roma, Figure of, 316 f., 322, 325, 335, 368
 Roman churches, Pre-Constantinian, 45
 Rome, S. Agnese, 28
 Catacombs of Domitilla, 20, 44
 of Priscilla, Annunciation, 288, 379, 415
 Fractio Panis, 60, 144
 Clemente, S., 25
 Cosma e Damiano, Ss., 16, 17, 41, 49, 269, 303, 370,
 385
 Costanza, S., 14
 Domus Liviae, 22
 Giovanni e Paolo, Ss., 20 f.
 Junius Bassus, Basilica, 307
 Lateran Church, 5, 14
 Museum, 22, 302, 343
 Lorenzo fuori, S., 166
 Maria Antiqua, S., 25
 Museo delle Terme, 19, 22, 64, 144, 348
 Pantheon, 279
 Prassede, S., 150
 Pudenziana, S., 14, 41, 42, 49, 310, 343, 368, 373, 414,
 417
- Sabina, S., 14, 27, 42, 143, 149, 182, 185, 196, 208,
 368, 388, 416
 Temple of Venus and Roma, 325, 416
 Vatican Library—*see* Joshua Rotulus and Virgil
 Museum, 373, 358
 Venanzio, S. 150
 Villa Albani (Torlonia), 158 f.
 Medici, 325
 Rossbach, 165
 Rossi, G. B. de, 28 f., 65 f., 108, 110 f., 112, 128, 145, 170,
 208, 243, 301, 321, 336, 346, 349, 387, 404 f., 411-414,
 416
 Rubens, 360
 Rufinus, 41
 Ruspi, 408
 Russian Art, 301
- SABINA, Pietro, 27
 Salona, Palace of Diocletian, 43
 Salonica Triumphal Arch, 16
 Salzenberg, 46
 Sarah, 68, 70, 71, 72, 80, 81, 82
 Sarcophagi, Christian, 3, 21 f., 177, 178, 196, 288, 312,
 388
 Schürer, 93, 147 f., 157, 322
 Septimius Severus, Arch of, 16, 397 f.
 persecution under, 19
 tiles of, 26
 Seroux d'Agincourt, 387, 404
 Shechem, 127-132, 135 f., 358
 Sibyl, 73, 332, 337-341, 385
 Sicinius, 40-46, 398 f.
 Simeon, 714, 315, 317 f., 320, 373
 Bishop of Jerusalem, 328
 Sixtus—*see* Xystus
 Sixtus V., 5, 138
 Smith and Cheetham, Dict. of Ch. Ant., 75, 413
 Socrates, 37, 41, 73, 160
 Sodom, town of, 82, 85
 Sogliano, 158
 Sotine, 349
 Standard works in good preservation, 50 f.
 Stephen, S., 153, 205, 305 f.
 Sterbini, P., 409
 Suarez, 404, 412
 Sulpicius Severus, 37
 Suppedaneum, 295, 308 f.
 Sylvestre, Pope, 389
 Syncretism, 19
 Syracuse, 394
- TABANELLI, C., vi.
 Tacitus, 301
 Talmud, 212
 Tatian, 154 f.
 Temples, 79, 82, 117, 198, 200 f., 279, 283, 291 f., 293, 314,
 320
 Tendenzbilder, 9, 276, 287, 326, 372
 Tenerani, C. Comm., 405
 Theodoret, 37
 Theodosius, Column of, 8
 Theodotus, 135

INDEX

- Theophany, 76, 79, 80, 88, 305
 Tertullian, 250, 386
 Theotokos, 28, 31, 34 f., 318, 384, 390, 404
 Thermouthis, 147
 Thrones, 296 f., 299-305, 311, 330, 367, 372
 Titus, 322
 Titus, Arch of, 16, 215
 Towns, views of, 82, 176, 196, 223, 233, 240, 319, 335, 346, 348 f., 366-370
 Trajan, Column of, 16, 22, 115, 222, 240, 249, 256-284, 289, 397
 Anaglypha, 16
 Trees, 71, 79, 80, 82, 115, 122 f., 124, 171, 181, 197
 Trinity, Dogma of, 72, 74, 75 f., 88
 Troy, 135 f., 155
 Typological exegesis, 61, 72, 91, 121, 157 f., 167, 172 f., 185, 189, 196, 209, 211, 214, 224 f., 229, 265, 289, 295, 303, 306

 UMBRIA, Sarcophagus, 301
 Utrecht Psalter, 320

 VALENTINI, 404
 Varro, 339
 Vespasian, 300

 Victories, on triumphal arches, 283
 Vienna Gallery, Cameo, 335
 Vienna Genesis, 9, 15, 66, 116, 359, 388
 Virgil, 80, 339
 Virgil, MS., illustrated, Vatican, 104, 113, 256, 339, 359
 Virgin, the holy, Pictures of, 28 ff., 277 f., 285-290, 314, 318, 320, 331, 333, 340, 345, 347, 349, 363, 372, 384, 388, 390
 Vistaspa, 341, f.
 Vitruvius, 45
 Vopel, H., 398

 WIEGAND, 185
 Wilpert, J., 60, 282, 288, 307, 334, 379
 Windsor Castle, Drawings, 403
 Women of Bethlehem, 164, 354-360
 Women's dresses, 82, 144, 162, 164, 233, 278, 282, 291, 355

 XYSTUS III. II, 24-35, 40, 75 f., 248, 383-390, 396
 Inscription of, 27 f., 298 f., 383-390
 Lost votive picture to the Holy Virgin, 28, 384 f.

 ZACCHARIAS, 291
 Zahn, Th., 45, 140, 309, 343, 352, 364
 Zipporah, 138, 143 f., 162-168

384
415

83

University of Toronto Roberts

22 May 96

NAME :
JOYCE POON

BOOK :
Early Christian art and architecture

DUE : 06/05/1996

KET
—
Y
—

BOOK :
Late antique, early Christian and mediae

N
7832 Richter, John Paul & Taylor, A.C.C.
R5 Golden age of Christian art
C.2
ROBA

