

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Notes on the Church of St. Bartholomew, Churchdown

by F. Smithe
1888-89, Vol. 13, 271-287

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NOTES ON THE CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, CHURCHDOWN.

BY FREDERICK SMITHE, M.A., LL.D.

Read before the Society in the Church of St. Bartholomew, 19th July, 1888.

THE upland position of this interesting Parish Church has led to much speculation. There exists a legend to the effect that it was originally intended to build a church at the bottom of the hill instead of on the top, but that the design was frustrated by a demon, who every night conveyed to the summit of the hill the stones which in the day-time had been deposited at the foot. A similar legend prevails all over Europe as to churches built on lofty sites.

This remarkable myth sets forth the history of the struggle of Paganism with Christendom.¹ Churchdown Church, or Chosen Church, by the latter name it is better known to the villagers, is dedicated to St. Bartholomew, and in former days was the parish church for two communities: one village, that of Chosen, is situated on the slopes and vale northward from the church, whilst the other, named Huclecote, was a hamlet on the south side of Chosen hill. Thus the parishioners from both places met together to worship in the same church on the summit of the hill, and the aisle in the parish church was formerly known by the name of the "Huclecote side." Seeing that the name of the place is derived from the position of the church is a voucher for the existence of a church in such an elevated situation from the earliest time. Churchdown² means the church on the hill, as Churcham means the church on

¹ See *Valleys of the Tirol*, by R. H. Busk, 1874.

² The older spelling of the word *Churchdown*, apart from the derivation, may be given thus: In *Domesday Book* (1086), *Circesdune*. In *Pipe Roll*, 1st Richard I. (1157), *Kyrchdon*. In the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (1288), and *Inquisitiones Nonarum*, 14th Edward III. (1430) *Churesdon*. In the Parish Register (1563), it is written *Chursdown*. In Speke's map (1616) it is *Chursdon*, and 1888, and long before, *Chosen*.

the ham. In this connection a note may be transcribed, written by the late Canon S. Lysons in 1865, and kindly sent by him to the author—"A singular corruption of this name Churchdown, to suit the views of more modern times, has occurred in the change of Thorsdown into Churchdown. I have ancient documents now in my possession which mentions this place as Thorsdown, *alias* Churchdown,—and no doubt the building of a Christian church upon the spot where Thor was previously worshipped—as Gregory the Great counselled Christians to do, that they might attract, rather than shock, the prejudices of the heathen—led to a transition also in the pronunciation of a name, which, when spoken rapidly, would sound very like that which preceded it, and though at first sight there is no radical connection between the names, Thorsdown became Churchdown. There is, however, a mythological connection between the two words, for Church derives from Κῆρυξ, the Greek word for Λόκκ, the same name having been applied by the sun-worshippers to their lord. So that Kurios, Baal, and Thor, are all synonymes for the sun; and so the wary and politic head of the Roman Church may have had good reasons for the advice given to his Apostles in Britain, in calling off the attention of the heathen from their "dumb idols to serve the living God."

Chosen Hill is 580ft. high, and is really part of the Cotteswold range. The spectator viewing the hill from a certain position, say from Battledown, the upper part of the town of Cheltenham, must at once be impressed with its affinity, as being a peninsula of the Cotteswolds; and this, without calling in the aid of the geologist, who, from evidence peculiar to his science, affirms Chosen to be merely an outlier of the Cotteswold Hills.

The prospect of the surrounding country, seen from the summit, is peculiar; for from the highest eminence, the eye can sweep the horizon at its blending with the skyline. Looking to the south, the river Severn is seen gleaming aside Robin Wood's Hill, and even the arches which span the Severn Bridge can be discerned. The city of Gloucester and the town Cheltenham, both lying in the plain, and only a few miles distant, Cheltenham

seeming to lie in a cove of the Cotteswolds with those hills for a back-ground, and Gloucester Cathedral conspicuous in the opposite direction, whilst the Abberley Hills, 12 miles beyond Worcester, and Worcester Cathedral, for it is 40 miles away, require a clear sky. Coming nearer to Churchdown are the Malvern range of hills, some 20 miles away, leading southward and westward to the blue hills of Radnorshire. Whilst a striking object comparatively near, but yet 9 miles off, is the charming Abbey of Tewkesbury. In the stillness of the evening the distant smoke of the furnaces in the Forest of Dene is noticeable curling upwards from the environment of forest. But turning from this view, one which never seems to tire, and walking to the churchyard gate, on looking across the down, it requires little acuteness to observe, stretching from the churchyard wall, the line of an ancient entrenched camp, indications of rampart and ditch. The mounds of earthworks include both the church and churchyard, so that the Church of St. Bartholomew has a rare site, being on the hill and within the camp. This entrenched camp is of Roman character, according to Messrs Buckman and Newmarch; of British, according to Rev. Canon Lysons. It may have successively been occupied by both.

Notices of the earlier history of Churchdown, as given in the county histories, are scanty. Atkyns (1768) and Rudder (1779) refer to the manor and other estates. In Domesday Book this manor stands under the heading: "Terra Thome Archiep'i," the estate of Archbishop Thomas, and it is thus recorded: [Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury] held Circesdune in the reign of Edward the Confessor. It was taxed 15 hides and a half; there were 32 plow tillages; whereof two were in demesne; there was a wood half a mile long and 3 furlongs broad. It paid a yearly rent of 13*l.* in King Edward's reign; it paid 12*l.* yearly in King William's reign. There were 5 manors or reputed manors in Churchdown, particulars of these, more or less accurate, are recounted by county historians, but need not be transcribed in the present account. The estates were owned by the canons of St. Oswald and were at the Dissolution and Spoliation of the religious houses, assigned (Hen. VIII., 34) to the new see of Bristol. The

revenues from the property thus diverted may be estimated at the present time by the amount of the Tithe Commutation, which was fixed at £1214 a year. The Dean and Chapter of Bristol present to the living as patrons. They are the Rectors appropriators of the benefice of Churchdown, and the incumbents of the benefice are their perpetual curates.

The Church of St. Bartholomew, as it now stands, consists of a tower, a nave, a south aisle, and a porch facing the north; also a chancel (*See plan, Plate XVII.*) What it was in Saxon times is a matter of conjecture. The only tangible proof of the existence of a pre-Norman church presents itself in the chancel in certain remains built into the masonry of one wall, that on the north side.

The pre-Norman or Saxon church led to changes—alterations and additions of Norman character, instance the Norman doorway of a florid period, which had on each side two piers, and their simple capitals of Norman age, and supported the terminations of a semi-circular arch (*Plate XVI., fig. 2*). The remains of these four piers still exist, and, together with the portion of an arch remaining, will be examined later on. We clearly see the presence of a Norman edifice.

In course of time, the Norman church required enlarging, by the addition of an aisle, and the new part was of necessity on the south side of the church, as on the north, or opposite, side the pitch of the ground forms a steep declivity. Churches are generally enlarged by aisles built on the north side. Not so here. For the old wall was under-pinned, strutted, and removed from its position, built again as a wall of the new aisle, and its former place occupied by an arcade, of Transition age, of arches, carried by three piers and semi-piers at the wall ends. The east end of this aisle was converted into a chapel, with an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Probably, about the same period, the removal of the Norman north doorway, and the erection of a storied porch was proceeded with. The latter may have taken the place of a much shallower porch, still that point is immaterial, and there is not evidence to guide us to a decision. The completion of the large porch, with its



three stories, and winding staircase up to the priest's chamber, and the embellishing of the south door, by clumsily fitting part of the removed arch and fixing it over the pointed doorway, completed an epoch in the history of this church. There must have been afterwards a long pause, only broken at times by the removal of narrow windows of earlier date, and insertions, from one time to another, of more spacious windows of Decorated, or, later on, of Perpendicular work, with their mullions and their tracery. When, at last, after decay and the corroding tooth of time had wrought its work, and the weather in a situation so exposed to the frost, had shaken the stone in the old tower to pieces, it became a mere ruin. In 1601 a new tower was built, and the remains of the old tower were used up, and so incorporated in every part of the present building are the fragments that they can be easily traced, and afford material help and a trustworthy clue toward a clear understanding of the past history of the church.

The preceding brief statement of the history of the building is no mere speculation. It is a bare recital of facts carefully interpreted and marshalled in order of time, and should be well borne in mind whilst reading the following more detailed and fuller particulars of the sub-divisions of the sacred edifice :—

I. THE CHANCEL.—This portion of the church has been most altered, it has undergone a “radical restoration.” The dimensions of the chancel are small in proportion to the rest of the building. This may be accounted for by the exigency of the site. The church is on an acclivity, with a steep drop of the ground all round it, except toward the graveyard, where the slope is easier. This is evidence in support of the great antiquity of the building made up of the remains of the past, and, doubtless, a rude cell at first, so that when the site was chosen, it may have been selected, because the most suitable spot for signalling a beacon fire to other points. At all events, no thought was taken by the first builders for any enlargement, which accounts for the smallness of the chancel. The reparation of the chancel and choir of the church was undertaken in 1880 by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as they hold the estates of the Bristol chapter,

and are legally bound to repair the chancel. The work was carried out under the direction of the architect of the commissioners, Mr. Ewan Christian. What was then done was as follows: The floor of the chancel was raised, for it had through burials and other causes been lowered until it was flush from one end to the opposite extremity of the building. Besides this reason, about the year 1616, when Puritanism was rampant, there was much destructive change, and the chancel, specially, was the object of protestant fanaticism—the people had been taught by their preachers that the “high places” and “the strongholds,” mentioned in the bible, meant the floors of the chancel, &c., and that they must be thrown down and levelled. The pavement of the chancel was broken up and thrown into a hole in the churchyard, and the floor being levelled down, the little chancel was then swept of every object that gave offence to these Philistines. Of course, they did not spare the Lady chapel, it was treated after the same fashion. Mr. Ewan Christian had the floor of the church chancel raised to its original height, and made three steps to the eastward,—viz., one step at the chancel arch, one at the sanctuary rails, and the last at the foot-pace before the altar, and a suitable pavement in addition. The stone-work of the east window and of the smaller window in the south wall was repaired and made good wherever it had become decayed. The old roof was removed and replaced by a new oak roof, of waggon form, and solidly constructed. The old roof was a sorry affair, low down, with a white-washed ceiling, diversified by two rusty iron cross girders, which seemed to keep the walls together. The Holy table, the legs of which had been painted red, was set against the east wall but alongside the north and south sides were deal pews, with their respective partitions of books, desks, seats, and at the ends westward were two low doors to admit the communicants. In front of the table, at a distance of a few feet, was a tall oak balustrade, surmounted by a hand-rail, and with slender-turned balusters, or supports, set close. The pavement was only of common red brick. Such an arrangement was not uncommon as late as 30 years ago in many country churches, though now things of the past.

The present east window of St. Bartholomew's is of Perpendicular style—early 15th century—is wide in proportion to the height, and so rather deficient in graceful proportion, but in form and tracery is quaint and pleasing. The smaller window on the south side is square-headed, with semi-circular headed couplets, and in three particulars or more point to an ancient use. These are the wooden beam over the window, the narrow aperture, the deep flat sill, and, next, the special position facing the churchyard and situated in a re-entering angle of the chancel and nave, force the conclusion that here we have a window of debased style one too (1616 date) that replaced an ancient opening of the nature of a Lazar window. The old house in the churchyard, and the adjoining cottage, were formerly used for lodging paupers and poor imbeciles of the parish long before the days of Unions and Boards of Guardians. On the same side as this smaller window is a mural monument of white marble, erected in memory of Sir Robert Austen, Bart., of Dartford, in Kent, who died in 1743, surmounted by a shield charged with the following arms:—*Or, a chevron gules between three lions' paws, erect and erased, sa, impaling Arg. on a fess, double-cotised, gules, three griffins' heads erased, per fess, erm. and of the second; for his wife Rachel, dau. of Sir Francis DASHWOOD, of High Wycombe, co. Bucks, Bart. Crest of AUSTEN: Out of a mural coronet a white stag's head, pp^r collared or.*

Near is the piscina, of Decorated style, (*Plate XVI., fig. 7*) which formed an adjunct of the Lady chapel altar, in 1880 and came to light accidentally. It was found just behind the wainscoting of a tall pew, its right side being cracked and well nigh demolished, and walled in. After careful deliberation with archæologists and other authorities, it was decided that as an appurtenance of the church, it should be carefully restored by cementing the pieces together, and fixing it in the chancel, and also that a note of its historical position should be entered in the church books, with the dates. This piscina contains the basin and flat-stone shelf for holding the

cruets used in the Divine office, and is a fine example and carefully finished. The poppy heads and panelling in the choir are of oak, reproduced from remnants of the ancient work,—one stall and one panel only ; the specimen of the former was found worked up in the framing of a pew ; the finished work is quite satisfactory and sharply carved. On the north side, built into the wall, occur the most interesting remains of ancient work. (*Plate XVI. fig. 1*). These consist of the bowl of an ancient font, together with three pieces of worked freestone with mouldings, some most likely were impost. The bowl is shewn in section, and under and near is one of the worked stones with mouldings. These remains have been examined by several experts, such as Prof. Middleton and other architects, and considered to be of Saxon or pre-Norman date. The mouldings of the worked pieces are flat, with little relief, of simple contour, and unlike any figured in *Paley's Gothic Mouldings*.

Dimensions of Chancel, are—21 ft. 9 ins. by 16 ft. 4 ins. For lesser dimensions consult *Plate XVII.*, which contains a plan of the church drawn to scale.

II. THE NAVE.—The body of the church is divided from the S. aisle by an arcade of semi-Norman or Transition style, consisting of four pointed arches resting on cylindrical piers, three of them disengaged and with semi-piers or pilasters against the walls at each end. The mouldings of the capitals have some of their members undercut, but are quite plain and characteristic. And the pier at the east end of the arcade contains a deep groove, and other marks where fittings, such as canopies and brackets for lights, existed ; the groove must have once carried a screen or lattice to divide the Lady chapel, as it was called, from the body of the church. The pillars bear traces of colour, chiefly red and green, and the flat member of the chamfered and recessed section of the pointed arches had depicted on it a simple pattern in marone red, that must have been neat and effective, such as the design figured (*Plate XVI., fig. 3*) ; it seemed to have been stencilled, and deserves to be reproduced. No sign

of an altar was found in the chapel. Though on the spot where the altar stood there is now a flat grave-stone with the inscription:—

“HERE RESTETH THE BODY OF JOHN DANVERS, THE SON OF RICHARD DANVERS, ESQ., AND BROTHER TO SIR WM. DANVERS,¹ WHO DEC^d THE 16th DAY OF JANUARY, 1616.”

The Piscina of the chapel of the B.V. Mary has been already mentioned. Two tiles, remarkable for their small size, were dug up in the church-yard by the grave-diggers, together with several fragments of encaustic tiles, of good colour and design, all of them in the possession of the writer. Of the two small tiles just named—one has a Lombardic capital letter M upon it; the other has a marigold flower. They are presumed to have come from the Lady chapel. In the parish register book the chapel of the Blessed Virgin is written in two entries, as the “ladye chauncell.” The first entry dated 1572; the second in 1586:

Anno Elizabethæ } Anno Doñi 1572
Reginæ: 14

That y^e seate under the wyndowe in the ladye chauncell was bulded by John Harmar C. hee payd for y^e place vj^s viij^d.

The next entry runs thus:

Anno Elizabethæ. } Anno Doñi. 1586.
Reginæ: 28

That the two uppermost seates in y^e ladye chauncell was allotted to Richard Harmar by y^e parishe and hee payde for y^e place ij^s & vj^d for workman & bord.

The Font stands in the correct place in the church between the north and south entrance doors, teaching the faithful that the entrance into Christ's church is through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. It is octagonal, and of stately form, of early Perpendicular style. The stone base, on which it is erected, is of old re-worked stone, and betrays its origin, viz., the remains of the ancient Norman tower, that was removed about 1600.

¹ Sir William Danvers was of co. Wilts, and was knighted at Hampton Court, 17th Nov. 1607.—ED.

The font is in good order, leaded, and has a drain for running off the contents, and an oak cover with twisted iron ring and floriated ornamentation. Looking from this point across the aisle the eye is attracted by the S. doorway directly opposite the porch entrance ; because, inside, and built in immediately over this lancet or pointed doorway, are remains, being part of the semi-circle of a Norman arch, which in its sweep ill accords with the pointed doorway. The sculpture has been well executed, but the fitting of the work, the replacing the voussoirs, or segments, in their new position, is clumsily done and gives it a cramped appearance. The decoration of this archway consists of late Norman, namely, of lozenges bordered with beads or studs, as is usually found at that time. The rows of studs are bordered with mouldings ; a part is shown in *Plate XVI., fig. 2.* The pattern of the lozenges consists of alternate conventional acanthus leaves, and human heads thus disposed : first, a leaf, plain, but of elegant pattern, filling up the diamond of the lozenge, and, instead of the leading stem, a row of beads takes its place. The next compartment contains a man's face, as though looking out of a window, the features grotesque and the hands on each side of the face as though grasping the bar of the window. This disposition is repeated with slight variations. One leaf conveys the notion rather of a fruit, like a corn cob. The point of interest to be solved is historical. From what part of the ancient church was this Norman archway removed ? And next, about what time ? There are but two places feasible from which it could be brought—always rejecting the highly improbable notion of its being brought from any other church. There is only a choice of two places in the present building from which the arch was removed :—it may have been either a chancel arch, or that of a Norman doorway. We must declare for the latter. The place it was brought from was the first place it occupied, and that was over the N. door in existence before the three-storied porch was erected. All the missing segments or voussoirs of the arch have been sought and found, four of them built into the masonry courses of the exterior ; one excepted, which is

within, and embedded in the east wall of the porch. Now one of these pieces has the perforation which carried the curtain rod ; that is what one might expect to find attached to an outer door open to the north wind. The four missing pieces, since found added to those in position over the south doorway, make up the complete semi-circle of the Norman arch.¹ And the original position of that arch was north of the church, forming the northern entrance, and to complete the picture of that doorway, in accordance with the Norman style, the arch must have had at least four circular piers, two on each side. Well, these four piers have been found but in an inverted position, one in each corner of the porch, their Norman capitals turned into bases for the piers on which rest the ribs, &c., of the Early-English groining. This is an interesting study for the lover of our early church architecture. It will be further treated in the next heading, namely, the Porch. Like most of our ancient churches, the walls of S. Bartholomew's were adorned with paintings. There were some grotesque and interesting designs on the north wall of the nave, which are even now dimly to be seen, when the white-wash, with which they are covered up, is wet. One curious subject is said to be a demon, or Satan under the guise of a dragon of reptilian character, whispering into the ear of a person, kneeling at a fald-stool, insinuating evil, or suggesting some worldly or sinful thoughts, drawing his mind off his devotions. Lately a church-warden has had a stove-pipe carried through the middle of the design. Irretrievable damage has been thus done from time to time. One corner of the nave, also as late as 1854, had been desecrated by conversion into a charnel house for the remains of poor departed humanity. These bones were then carefully collected and interred in the grave-yard, under the direction of the curate in charge. There is a small lancet doorway west of the chief entrance from the porch, leading to the rooms over the porch. A peculiarity of

¹ List of the four missing parts of the Norman archway, since discovered :

PIECE.	PIECE.
1st. In Porch.	3rd. In N.E. window of nave.
2nd. Between belfry and tower, has holes in it.	4th. West end of aisle.

the shallow moulding of the frame-work of the door is a small filet, making a pleasing finish and completeness.

The aisle still retains the high pewing, and contains three windows. One, in the south-west end of it, having two lights, another, near the Lady chapel, and the smallest, west of the south door, leading into the church-yard, the whole of them of Perpendicular character, and one in particular with confused and dilapidated tracery. The fact is, that when in the last century any repairs were effected, village workmen, unskilled, and therefore unfit, were left to do them without supervision, and the result was work of the lowest type and character. The carved oak pulpit and sounding board have been much admired. The pulpit has the date 1631 carved in relief over the back panel, immediately under the sounding board. Many of the pews are covered with carving of Jacobean style, some of them give the monogram and date; for example: [A W. 1636]. This must refer to one of the Freams Wyndowe family.¹ The pews in the nave are open seats of mediæval pattern. They are of solid oak, $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in thickness, but of later years have been seriously deformed by tinkering additions, and the finials, are sawn off to allow thin deal paneling to rest upon them, with the idea of converting them into high pews. Immediately to the left of the chief entrance, and within the nave, is a holy water stoup, with a step, but no slab or basin.² The step may have been used as a shelf for an asperge (aspergillum) to rest upon.

THE PORCH.—Among the liberties taken with languages, it is singular that the old word for porch (porticus) should be given

¹ "The Wyndowes, who were the old squires occupying the Great House in Churchdown, came there in the time of Charles I. and left it in 1752. Their remains are interred on both sides of the nave at the chancel end of the church." The writer possesses many interesting particulars of this family.

² Durandus observes: "Institutum fuit vasa ista aquæ benedictæ ad ostium ecclesiæ a latere ingredientis, ubi protest dextro collocari. In veteri testamento non nisi lotus templum ingrediebatur. Cæterum vas istud aquæ benedictæ e marmore lapideve solido, non lateritio nec spongioso, fieri debet, aspergillum que decens e labro catenula appensum habere'.—Durand. de labro seu vase aquæ benedictæ."

to the aisle. In 1428, "In portica qui vulgariter y^e yle S.M. dicitur" (in R. Test. Eb.) The reason for the site of the porch of St. Bartholomew is already accounted for by the nature of the ground. It is a porch, with three stories, strongly and solidly built, and forms a striking feature. Formerly the entrance to the porch was through an oak door, defaced with the cutting and scribbling of innumerable visitors. Lately it has been replaced by iron gates, because the weight of the heavy door was telling upon the structure and threatening to disintegrate the masonry. The stone vaulting of the porch is borne by four-light cylindrical piers, whence springs the groining of the stone ribs, both the wall and the diagonal ribbing are plain chamfered. These four piers have Early-English capitals of the same age as the ribbing or groining, whereas the lower drums of the piers repose upon plain early Norman capitals, as figured in *Plate XVI., fig. 5*, which having served in their day to carry the semi-circular Norman arch of the entrance door to the church, have been deposed at a later time, and utilized by being inverted to serve as the bases of the comparatively new piers, whilst the remains of the Norman arch that rested upon these four Norman piers have been shifted to the interior of the south door, and the overplus of the parts have been used up in the masonry generally as named before. There are stone seats on each side of the porch. In mediæval time the porch was of importance. Seeing that, where sufficiently spacious, it was used for many ritual purposes, and the meaning of some of the rubrics of our present office books would be less ambiguous, were this borne in mind, at any rate, the many curious and quaint figures and emblems cut into the stones of the porch may have been done by the clergy or monks in the intervals of waiting there when otherwise unoccupied. A few of these representations will be described—many are left for the present. On the west side of the porch is carved the figure of one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity—an aged bearded face surrounded with a plain nimbus and aureole; on the same side is represented a whale spouting water into the sky, which was a favourite

emblem of the Resurrection to Eternal Life. Besides, there are some attempts at delineating small objects, not at all badly conceived, such as finials, floriated crosses, &c., some in bare outline, rude as to finish—still, disclosing a notion of drawing, not too common in the artizan of our country in the 19th century. Another rude carving is on the door-jamb of the porch, sufficiently rare, and not to be passed over. It is an incised figure of pre-Reformation date, judging by the fashion of it, late 14th century—a gaunt emblem of Death,¹ having the long hair and breasts of a woman; the fleshless arms are extended, holding in one hand an hour-glass to denote the brief span of man's life, and in the other hand, to signify the grave, is an asperge, which was used when the sprinkling of Holy water upon the corpse at the graveside was enjoined at the burial in the old service rubrics.²

Several of these "graffiti," or deep scratchings, or slight carvings, have yet to be examined, as they are now mostly covered up by accumulated coats of white-wash. Ascending the narrow winding newel staircase, at the tower end of the church, we enter the priest's chamber, so called, which is the first story; here there is a stone fireplace; and on one side is carved a small calvary cross; there is a flue and outside a low mediæval chimney (*Plate XVI. fig. 6*); there are about six lancet-headed windows and other apertures, all now glazed; a frame of 13th century stone-work to the largest; and one window, opening

¹ Death as a woman. Petrarch's conception of Death is embodied in the poet's grand and solemn song, "Il Trionfa della Morte," where Death appears in female form :

"Ed una donna involta in vesta negra,
Con un furor qual io non so se mai
Al tempo de Giganti fosse a Fegra."—See *Christian Iconography*.
Didron, Vol. II., p. 157.

² In some rituals the rubrical directions to be observed at the grave of the defunct, contained the words; "Dum sacerdos corpus aspergit," followed by the prayer, "Rore coelesti perfundat et reficiat animam tuam, Deus Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus. R. Amen." The reason for these prayers and the blessing of the grave, the censuring and the sprinkling of the body, is thus stated by Durandus: "Solent namque (daemones) de saevire in corpora mortuorum ut quod nequiverunt in vita, saltem post mortem agant."—

Durand. Rationale, lib. 7, n. 35.

into the church, which had for years been blocked up, was in 1880 re-opened, framed and glazed. This was the principal window, because from it the priest could command a view of the "Lady chapel" and all its belongings, such as the altar and image-lights. There is no flooring to this chamber other than the dust and rubble which fill the pockets of the vaulting of the porch. From the north side walls project three stone corbels which supported the rafters and flooring of the upper chamber or dormitory, and the one above that was probably a store room.

Dimensions of Priest's Chamber.

			FT.	INS.
Width of wall across E. end by fireplace	-	-	8	9
„ „ by N. end is	-	-	11	0
Clear width of doorway into room at top	-	-	0	19

Dimensions of Porch (ground floor),

Width across front, wall to wall	-	-	-	11	3
Length	-	-	-	8	6
Width at iron gate	-	-	-	4	6
„ at church door	-	-	-	3	10

TOWER.—The tower is a square structure, solidly built, and battlemented with parapets equally spaced and bordered. The old Norman predecessor of this had fallen to ruin and the present building was completed and opened about three years before the death of Queen Elizabeth. The Tudor window in the west of it is large, with three mullions and four lights round-headed; the tower entrance from the nave is also round-headed, and this semi-circular arch, with flat soffits, rests on piers, flat, chamfered and capped with thin poor mouldings of debased character, matching those of the chancel arch. And this denotes, in connection with other evidence, that it was a time when everything in the church underwent extensive sweeping alterations. Just in the angle formed by the junction of the tower arch and wall of the nave the date of the building is recorded, boldly cut into the stone :

<p>THIS BELHOWS WAS BYVLDEDE IN THE YEERE OF OVR LORDE GOD—1601</p>

In the south-east corner of the tower is the little door of the staircase leading to the belfry.¹ The five bells, with their legends, are hung in strong oak frames, and are well appointed. They never fail, such is the custom, to give forth a muffled peal on Holy Innocents' Day. For details of the Bells, see *Plate XVII.*

EXTERIOR.—In going round the church from the porch there are visible, used up in the construction, four stone slabs in the walls of the porch:—two of them are quite plain and two are ornamented with incised crosses, of which one is illustrated and drawn to scale (*Plate XVI., fig. 4*). The window next the door of the aisle westward has a small piece of diaper work, a fragment of stone worked into the upper coping of the head, but we are at a loss to know what part of the church it came from. Immediately eastward of this and the side of the church are some slabs of an altar tomb that few know anything about. Their history is this, that some thirty years ago the rural dean visiting and inspecting, was consulted by the church-warden as what was to be done with a tomb in the churchyard that had become a ruin, and the four stones were lying flat on the ground; the rural dean suggested that they should be built into the south wall of the edifice, and his advice was followed. The sculpture on them is thoroughly Elizabethan in style, with skulls, bones, and other repulsive, stiff, and doleful decoration, and the inscription, in its pagan sentiment, accords well enough with the style. The inscription on one tablet will suffice:—

¹ It is curious to note that the word *Belfry* had, at first, no connection with Bells, for its earliest meaning was that of pent-house or of sheltered; and the word is still employed in this sense in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN CUNMEN,
 ZOON'S COURT,
 1689.

“OMNES EODEM COGIMUR : OMNIUM
 VERSATUR URNA SERIUS OCIVS

SORS EXITURA, ET NOS IN ÆTERNUM
 EXSILIUM IMPOSITURA CYMBÆ.”—

Lib. II., Ode 3.

Zoon's Court is a farm-house in the part of Hucclecote hamlet still comprised ecclesiastically in Churchdown. In 1851 the church commissioners cut off from the mother parish the remainder of the hamlet of Hucclecote and converted it into a district chapelry, for which a church was erected by subscription, &c., dedicated to St. Philip and St. James. The connection between Hucclecote and Churchdown, so far as the portion referred to is concerned, terminated in June, 1871.

In front of the glebe-house, which is about quarter of a mile up Chosen Hill, is a broad meadow sloping toward the road, which skirts the Manor, or “Great House.” The field is known as “Chapel Haye,” and the belief amongst the aged villagers is that a chapel existed there ages ago. Human bones, they say, have been dug up in this spot. Certain it is, that at sunset, when the slanting rays deepen the shadows, and show the irregularity of the ground, the traces of some outlines of a building are pretty visible. No chapel here seems to be mentioned in records or county histories, still, an ancient chapel must have existed to originate the place name of Chapel Haye, this building too, would have been in charge of the Canons of St. Oswald's.

In any case, such chapel would have afforded frail and aged people, at once, the opportunity of attending Divine Service, and a burial ground nearer to the top of the hill than the churchyard. Attention now being drawn to the subject, may possibly lead to some light being thrown upon it, or some notice of the name occurring in ancient documents.