

8. DERSINGHAM, NORFOLK.

SOME NOTES ON THE ORIGIN AND USES OF LOW-SIDE WINDOWS IN ANCIENT CHURCHES.¹

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It is generally admitted that the state of our knowledge of this subject is unsatisfactory. It is incomplete and unconvincing, and this is mainly due to two causes.

1. Since the matter was for the first time brought before the Archaeological Institute in 1844 in Mr. Parker's now classical paper, no really systematic method of study has been followed out. It is no slur on Mr. Parker's ability to describe his paper as very fragmentary and, in some points, inaccurate, for it was obviously intended to be introductory. The fault has lain rather with the later writers on this subject. This subsequent literature is either the record of isolated examples noticed in the fuller descriptions of various churches, or consists of short papers of collected examples chosen for the most part to illustrate the writer's particular theory. There are no collected and illustrated notices of all the examples to be found in the various counties (with certain slight exceptions to be noticed presently), and for this reason alone the subject has remained almost untouched, and kept in the background as a sort of puzzle to be brought out at Archaeological Meetings when nothing more serious is to be considered. In the last few years it has, however, been realised that system is as necessary in examining this subject as it is in any other. Consequently we have the benefit of Mr. F. J. Hodgson's valuable paper contributed to the *Archaeologia Aeliana* in 1901, containing a complete list of examples in the county of Durham. Mr. Johnston has worked out lists for Surrey and Sussex, Mr. Cranage is engaged on a Shropshire list, and Mr. Brereton has in MSS. an almost exhaustive list for Northampton and Rutland. From this renewed study it

¹ Read before the Institute, March 1st, 1905.

appears that these windows are of much more common occurrence than was formerly supposed, and that their variety (in situation and character) is such as altogether to preclude the possibility of their explanation by one common theory.

2. Hitherto the chances of reaching a sound conclusion have been hindered by over-indulgence of the imitative faculty. Every succeeding writer copied his predecessor and quoted his examples, without verifying the references. At the outset these windows were regarded as mysterious. Some were found to be blocked up, they must, therefore, have been superstitious; they were in old churches, they must have been popish; and then follow the string of absurdities which have been written, and which are still to be found in the guide-books used by tourists and in the instructions given by caretakers of churches and country parsons. The Englishman of fifty years ago and many to-day are quite satisfied if you refer anything ecclesiastical which they do not understand to the practice of confession or the crowds of wandering lepers. Both are of no account to-day, both are in common estimation popish, both are, therefore, the true key to anything that happened "before the Reformation." The times of this ignorance are now passing away; we are far better equipped as to our knowledge of what the Church of England was and is, what it did and does, than were those who wrote fifty years ago; and out of confusion there is slowly emerging order and sound knowledge. Mr. F. J. Hodgson has shown clearly the method we should follow in this study. I wish to acknowledge that his paper was the means of turning my attention to these windows and attempting to give to them a systematic examination. Though I must also admit that each successive reading added to an increasing personal knowledge of fresh examples has convinced me that his theory, which he claims to be of universal application, applies only within very narrow limits.

I propose therefore in these notes, with the help of examples, to point out a method of systematic study, which appears to have the best chance of leading to assured results. Briefly it involves (1) the collection of examples and illustrations and the making of an exhaus

tive catalogue, and (2) classification based upon experiment under as few distinct headings as may be found possible. The difficulty that besets this method is personal. Every reference must be verified, and local information must never be relied upon; there must be a personal visit of the student or some one instructed by him and knowing his mind. The importance of this condition can at once be appreciated by a glance at the illustrations which usually accompany papers on this subject. They rarely, if ever, show the entire wall space in which the window occurs, so that it is impossible to consider it in relation to the normal scheme of illumination or architectural fenestration. A picture of a window with as little margin round it as possible is absolutely useless for purposes of classification; all illustrations should be in sets of two, three, or even four, thus:—(a) exterior view of whole wall surface; (b) interior view of same; (c) detail exterior of window to show peculiarities; (d) interior to show any unusual feature; (e) there must always be a measured plan if the window points directly from or to some internal feature.

Another condition to be observed is the making of actual experiment wherever possible of the uses to which the window could be put; in this way a great many picturesque explanations will be found to be impracticable; here again it is well not to rely upon second-hand information. It is surprising to find how differently systematic instructions can be interpreted by different people.

I should like to add that the examples I am about to quote have not been selected with any ulterior object. I have no particular theory of my own to advance, except that I consider that canon of criticism to apply which compels us to accept a simple and natural explanation in preference to a forced though possibly more picturesque or mysterious explanation.

The examples I proceed to note are from personal observation with certain marked exceptions.

PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION OF LOW-SIDE OPENINGS.

A.—*In the Chancel.*

I. The sill of the westernmost window is dropped below the normal level of the window sills.

(a) On the south side.

(b) On both north and south sides. This is an arrangement of very frequent occurrence. It is most usual in the Early English period when the windows are simple narrow lancets. It is usually found on both north and south sides of the chancel.

Examples :—

Clapham.

Clymping, Sussex.

Bracebridge, Lincs.

I have seen the same arrangement in the Decorated church at Charlton on Otmoor, Oxon.,

in the transitional to Perpendicular church at Merton, Oxon.,

and in the Perpendicular church at Coombe, Oxon.

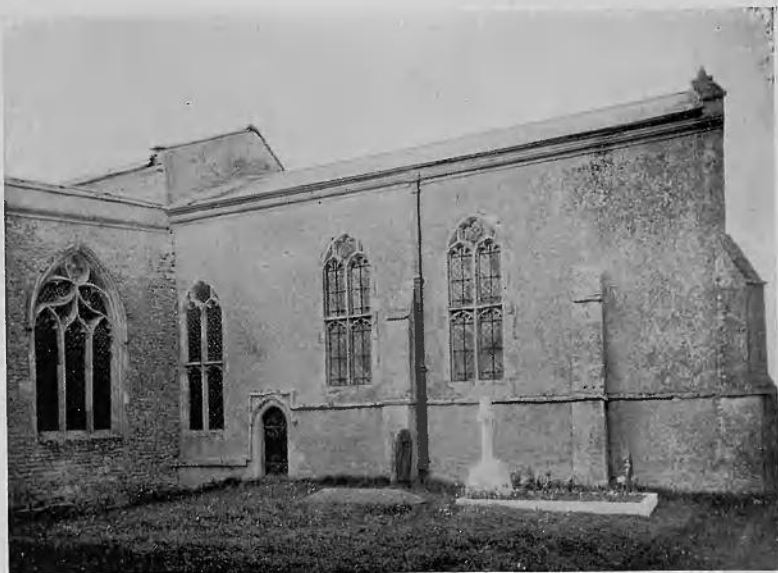
When this arrangement is seen from the inside it at once suggests the purpose of giving more light immediately above the shoulders of priest or clerk when reading their office from the accustomed place in the chancel. This explanation I have found to be borne out in practice by continued experiments, and must, I think, be decisively negatived before it can be dismissed or displaced by any other theory. The occurrence of this arrangement in successive building periods has not so far, to my knowledge, been noticed; I have only come across the examples quoted from Oxfordshire, but have little doubt that many more exist. I know of no examples of this type where indications of shutters exist either by way of hinges or rebate; sometimes the internal sill is lowered to form a seat.

II. A separate window of a different character to the normal type of fenestration, and at a much lower level, is inserted near the angle of the wall separating nave and chancel :

(a) associated with a priest's door ;

(b) quite independent; sometimes no priest's door exists.

This class includes the greater number of openings commonly called "Low-side." Their situation is practically uniform, but their individual character is of great variety. Their purpose can only be estimated when the whole of the



1. MERTON, OXON.



2. BROADWELL, OXON.



3. SISTON, Lincs.



4. TATSFIELD, SURREY.

original lighting scheme is considered, and in every case that I have examined I can come to no other conclusion than that given in explanation of the previous class. They are so often so far removed from the other chancel windows that without them the west end of the chancel would be quite dark. When associated with a priest's door they often are seen to have been inserted at one and the same time. These windows are sometimes found in pairs on the north and south sides of the chancel, though generally singly on the south side alone.

Examples may be quoted as existing at :—

Ringstead, Norfolk,
Chalk, Kent,
Twywell, Northants (north side),
Blackbourton, Oxon.,
Siston, Lincs.

At Tatsfield, Surrey, is a very unusual form of window, a quatrefoil within a square, in the usual place; there is only one other window, a narrow lancet, in the south wall of the chancel.

At Broadwell, Oxon., the low window is plain, round-headed, and indeterminate in date. The chancel is lighted by two fine decorated two-light windows, of which the easternmost is considerably lowered and the sill within used as a sedile, the lowering being clearly intended to bring the light nearer to the seat.

At Upton, Northants, there is a large window inserted over the low window, probably of a much later date; but the low window has not been blocked.

At Alvescot, Oxon., is a window on the north side of the chancel which lights a recess in the north wall, in which are two stone desks, at the proper height for use of a reader when sitting and standing. To this class belongs the circular window in the chancel at Coombes, Sussex, the window added above being perpendicular.

In this class of windows each example must be examined independently and its possible use tested by

experiment before expressing an opinion as to its original purpose.

III. (a) A window is inserted below an existing window very often below the string-course, sometimes of the same, sometimes of different date.

At Offham, Kent, and
Warbleton, Sussex,

are examples of the insertion at a later date of a larger window encroaching upon and partially destroying an existing Early English lancet and having within, a common widely splayed opening and the sill arranged as a seat. In these two cases (I have not seen others) I have no doubt myself that the purpose in view was the increase of light for the reader of the office. At Offham the insertion is a two-light, and at Warbleton a single light of decorated date.

Cowley, Oxon., is peculiar. The chancel is badly lighted with two square-headed windows usually described as Early English. The window is 1 foot 9 inches wide and the sill about 8 feet from the ground; below is a similar type of window but smaller, 8 inches wide and 2 feet high; within are hinges and a rebate at the sides only; the sill has been filled up and its character destroyed in restoration. It would fulfil the purpose of a reader's light, but is certainly clumsy.

Addington, Surrey, belongs to the same class—the little Norman window above being obviously inadequate.

North Hinksey, Oxon., is said to possess the only Norman example. It is certainly round-headed and oddly moulded. This window is particularly interesting, as the plain lancet above seems to have superseded it, and quite answers the purpose for which, I believe, they were both intended.

(b) In another type a small window is found below the left-hand bottom corner of a large decorated window on



5. ADDINGTON, SURREY.



6. COWLEY, OXON.



7. WIMBETHAMSTEAD, HERTS.



9. BINSEY, OXON.

the south side of the chancel. They are usually of the same date as the window above, and have been very carefully inserted. If the windows above were darkened with painted glass they would naturally afford needful light to the reader; and if shuttered and not glazed would supply needful ventilation.

Examples are to be seen at :—

Acle, Norfolk.
 Chaddesley-Corbett, Worcester.
 Wheathampstead, Herts.
 Thurning, Hunts.
 Dallington, Northants.
 Claybrook, Leicester.

A most beautiful, and I believe unique, example is at Dersingham, Norfolk.

IV. Existing windows are lowered, and the lower portion divided by a transom and wholly or in part provided with hinges and rebate for shutters, and an iron grille where not originally glazed.

(a) Single-light windows as at :—

Polebrook, Northants.
 Binsey, Oxon.
 Darley Dale, Derbyshire.

The transom divides the window almost in two. The rebates are external. At Binsey the upper and lower half are rebated and the hinges remain for the upper half. There is no indication of an iron grille, and the glazing seems to have been original.

A later type is seen at :—

Alwalton, Hunts.
 Melton Constable, Norfolk.

Both these examples occur in the usual position and would serve the same purpose as others, as already explained. The shutters here may have been a purely local convenience. Binsey is entirely blocked below the transom. Polebrooke is partially blocked. This type of window is not common. I have personally seen only these three.

(β) Two or three-light windows

(i) with one light only transomed, as at

Warham, All Saints, Norfolk.

Here it is the western light. I have unfortunately no note as to rebate.

The famous example at Othery, Somerset, belongs to this class.

(ii) with two lights transomed, as at :—

Garsington, Oxon.

Eynsford, Kent.

These are both two-light windows and transomed at about the lower third. Parker states that rebates and hinges were to be seen at Garsington in 1844; they are now restored away. This feature is doubled at Garsington, being seen on either side of the chancel.

(iii) A three-light, transomed throughout.

Orton Longueville, Hunts. So far as I know, this is a solitary example.

(iv) A peculiar example is seen at Downton, Wilts. A large two-light window has its western half alone lowered and transomed; this was evidently part of the original design, for a heavy string-course is continued round the bottom of the window so as to include the uneven sill. This type of window undoubtedly causes the greater part of the controversy as to the purpose of these windows, owing to the additional circumstances of shutters, gratings, and occasional absence of glazing, all of which should if possible be accounted for. Absence of glazing accompanied by gratings and shutters seem most naturally to provide for ventilation. The openings of this kind are usually small, and would not provide much extra light when the size of the whole window is taken into account. It is no answer to this theory to say that there was no idea of ventilation in old days.

V. Various peculiar examples occur in the chancel of certain churches. They cannot be specially classified, and their possible use must be considered independently in connection with local circumstances. I proceed to note a few.



10. GARSINGTON, OXON



11. ORTON LONGUEVILLE, HUNTS.



12. LIMPSFIELD, SURREY, EXTERIOR.



13. LIMPSFIELD, SURREY, INTERIOR.



14. GRAFTON UNDERWOOD, NORTHANTS.



15. BROOK. KENT.

Limpsfield (Surrey). A very small window close to the ground at the extreme east end of the chancel on the south side. Within it is enormously splayed, evidently to admit light. Under present arrangements, it lights the south end of the altar. I know of no other similar example.

Grafton Underwood (Northants). Similarly situated to the window at Limpsfield, but about 8 feet from ground. This is a small two-light opening, each light $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches across, and about 1 foot high. Its purpose may have been to allow the lights on the altar to be seen from without at a distance, but I have not tested whether this would be possible.

Weekley (Northants). The next parish has a precisely similar opening, but placed below the south window of a chapel which has encroached along the chancel. I think it probable that it was originally placed in the chancel wall, and then moved outwards when the chapel was built. These two examples are, so far as I can hear, solitary. There is a large window in a somewhat similar position at St. Giles, Northampton.

Merton (Oxon.). The north wall of the chancel is windowless, except for a small opening about the centre, which looks directly upon the Easter Sepulchre placed (unusually) on the south side.

Brook (Kent). An elliptical opening on the north side. The great outward splay in the exterior seems to connect it with a hermitage, such as may have existed at Staplehurst (Kent), and is still partly existing at Ongar, (Essex). At Lowick (Northants), and some other places, a squint opens into the sedile, again, in all probability from a hermitage, the traces of which to the south of the chancel can be seen at Lowick. At Bredon, Worcestershire, is a peculiar shuttered opening in the Piscina. There are doubtless many more peculiar openings which should be collected and arranged for examination and comparison.

Class B. Low windows in the Nave, or Aisles of the Nave.

1. When found in the north or south wall of the nave, or nave aisles towards the east end, they may, as a rule,

without hesitation be associated with a subsidiary altar to which they were intended to give light. They occur not unfrequently in churches with nave and chancel under one roof and with but slightly marked division between nave and chancel. These churches were usually poorly lighted, and the insertion of a screen blocked much light and necessitated a fresh opening or openings when altars were placed to the west of the screen.

Examples may be seen at :—

Burnham Deepdale, Norfolk.

Dovercourt, and High Ongar, Essex.

Acle, Norfolk.

Swavesey, Cambs.

Clapham, Sussex.

At Cotterstock, Northants, the purpose is not so obvious, as the window is blocked, and the levels within and without are very different. For the same reason the two blocked windows at Caythorpe, Lincs., are at first sight puzzling.

Tanfield, Yorks, is generally spoken of as unique in having a low-side window pierced through a buttress. The "buttress," however, is not a buttress at all, but is an extension of the space within, in reality a small shallow chapel to make room for an altar to the south of the chancel arch, and the window, as in the other cases, lights it.

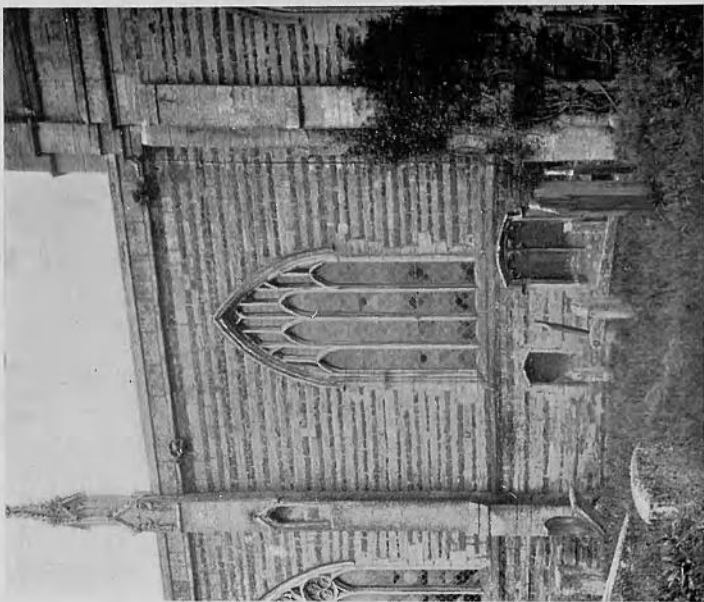
II. In other situations (in nave or aisles) these openings may sometimes be connected with some other object. For example, at Aldermaston, Berks, a low window to the west of the north door looks upon a wall-painting of St. Christopher in the south transept.

At Great Addington, Northants, a window in the N. wall to the E. end of the N. aisle opens into a tomb recess and illuminates the face of the figure lying underneath.

At Cogenhoe, Northants, is a peculiar example. The opening is in the outer wall of the south aisle towards its west end; it is very narrow and within is splayed, and looks a little like an aumbry. Across the aisle immediately opposite is one of the piers of the south nave arcade, and on the pier facing west are the remains of a



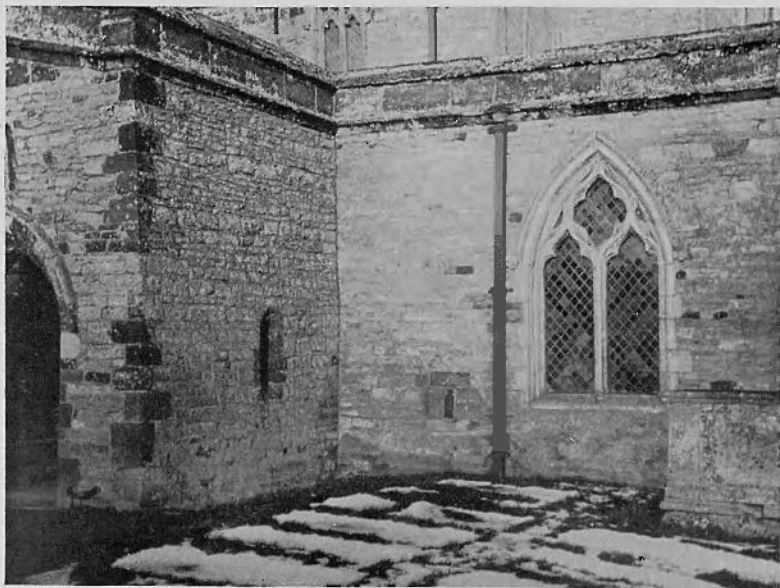
17. TANFIELD, YORKS.



16. CAYTHORPE, Lincs.



18. COGENHOE, NORTHANTS. INTERIOR.



19. COGENHOE, NORTHANTS. EXTERIOR.



20. GREAT ADDINGTON, NORTHANTS.



21. DARTFORD, KENT.

bracket supported by an image at the same level as the sill of this wall opening. A lamp burning on the bracket would shine through the opening into the churchyard. It is difficult to avoid the suggestion that the pier bracket and the opening were intentionally connected.

III. At the west end of nave or aisles. Instances of low windows in the west wall of various parts of a church are being multiplied. All the examples that I have seen can be most easily explained as enabling someone from outside to see the light burning on one of the nave altars within. Such cases can be seen at :—

Duston, Northants.

Dartford, Kent.

Guildford, Surrey (two openings).

St. Martin's, Canterbury.

All these are in the north aisle or on the north side of central west doorway.

At Tansor, Northants, and Bracebridge, Lincs., the openings are in the south aisle. Bracebridge has two openings, the lower oblong and grated, the upper a lancet.

At Dover Castle the opening is to the south of the west door, and relates to the soldiers' altar on the south side of the nave, which could thus be overlooked from the guard-room in the Pharos.

Examples are also quoted from :—

Singleton and Buxted, Sussex,

Stanford-le-Hope, Essex,

Bozeat, Northants,

but I have not seen them.

At St. Michael's, St. Albans, the west wall of the south chapel is pierced with a round opening which now looks into the porch. I am doubtful whether to include the window in the south aisle of Aldwinkle St. Peters, Northants. It is a large window, but it is transomed and the lower part rebated as for a shutter. There is a range of low windows beneath the west window of the old schoolroom just outside the church at Higham Ferrers, Northants.

High Side Windows.

High side windows should perhaps be mentioned, as they may in some way help to elucidate the purpose of some of the low windows. There is a remarkable example at Acton Burnell, Shropshire, where there are unmistakable marks of a gallery having once been placed just below the window inside. Tansor, Northants, also has a high small window in the west wall of the north aisle.

To sum up. It is clear that one explanation or purpose will not satisfy the different conditions of the known examples. In associating each window with its local surroundings the best chance of discovering its purpose would seem to lie. At the same time, constant personal experiment leads me more and more to the conclusion that a very large proportion of these windows were made to give more light to those within the church, at a time when the fenestration was found inadequate, or when the windows, otherwise large, were obscured by opaque or coloured glass. The objection to the somewhat favoured handbell theory seems to me this: that such a practice, if existent, would be universal, and the provision made for its observance would have been general instead of exceptional. I shall be very grateful for drawings or photographs with measurements (internal and external) of these windows from any part of England to help towards the complete catalogue I am proposing.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A.

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|-----------|--------|------------------------|
| Class I.— | 1. | Merton, Oxon. |
| „ II. { | 2. | Broadwell, Oxon. |
| | 3. | Siston, Lincs. |
| | 4. | Tatsfield, Surrey. |
| „ III. { | (a) 5. | Addington, Surrey. |
| | 6. | Cowley, Oxon. |
| | (b) 7. | Wheathampstead, Herts. |
| | 8. | Dersingham, Norfolk. |

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|-----------|-----|-----|-------------------------------|
| | (a) | 9. | Binsey, Oxon. |
| Class IV. | (b) | 10. | Garsington, Oxon. |
| | | 11. | Orton Longueville, Hunts. |
| | | 12. | Limpsfield, Surrey, Exterior. |
| | | 13. | " " Interior. |
| " V. | | 14. | Grafton Underwood, Northants. |
| | | 15. | Brook, Kent. |

B.

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| | I. | 16. | Caythorpe, Lincs. |
| | | 17. | Tanfield, Yorks. |
| | | 18. | Cogenhoe, Northants, Exterior of S. aisle from S. |
| | II. | 19. | Cogenhoe, Northants, Interior of S. aisle from N. |
| | | 20. | Great Addington, Northants, N. aisle. |
| " III.— | | 21. | Dartford, Kent, N.W. corner of N. aisle from W. |

NOTE.—All the illustrations which accompany this paper are by the author, with the exception of Fig. 11 (Orton Longueville), which is by Mr. R. P. Brereton.

DISCUSSION ON THE PAPER.

Mr. KEYSER said these windows were so small that he could not believe they were put into particular positions to give light to anyone or anything inside. He agreed that in all probability the windows were put in to serve a great many purposes. His own view was that these low side windows were made to enable people outside to see something within the church. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred in looking through these windows a person would see the Holy Rood and the figure of our Lord hanging over the chancel arch or screen. He believed they were placed so as to enable lepers or excommunicated people to see into the church, for they were usually towards the figure of our Lord over the main screen; but he did not think they were exclusively used for that purpose; for some were so placed that it seemed they were there to enable somebody outside to receive the Holy Sacrament and to communicate with the priest inside the church, and this was probably more particularly their use where they found shutters and gratings. People might also look through to see the picture of St. Christopher. For instance, there was a window on the north side of the nave at Aldermaston, which no doubt was put there to fulfil requirements which they understood were carried out. The feeling which led to the painting of St. Christopher on the walls of their churches was that anyone looking at the picture of the Saint was safe from death on that particular day. He believed that was the object of this window at Aldermaston. But taking the ordinary class of these windows he should say, although they were adopted for many

other purposes, yet as a rule they were always placed in the position to give those outside the chance of seeing the figure of Christ. It was possible that where they found shutters these were for the protection of the church and were closed at night. The two examples which were shown at Tortington and St. Michael's, St. Albans, were not windows at all. They were simply recesses in which lamps might be placed, and he doubted if they were even pierced right through the wall. The one at Cogenhoe might not, however, have fulfilled that purpose. It struck him that the old chancel screen might have been across the two arches and that there had been chapels at the east end. He was still of opinion that the low side windows were for means of communion or to enable persons outside to see something or somebody inside the church, and the position they invariably occupied would, he thought, bear out his view, although he was quite willing to accept the theory that they served other purposes and that they might have been put in to allow for communion between the priests and someone outside. He felt, however, that their main purpose was to enable anybody who had no time to go into the church or did not want to go in to see this figure under the chancel arch, and cross himself and pass on.

Mr. ST. JOHN HOPE said that this question of low side windows was one of those hardy perennials which came up from time to time and had never yet produced agreement amongst antiquarians. Mr. Pim had referred to the paper lately written by Mr. Hodgson, which extended to almost 200 pages. In it Mr. Hodgson had set forth all the theories which had hitherto been put forward except one: that which Mr. Keyser had put forward that day. He was sorry he could not accept the theory of Mr. Keyser, for he could see no particular reason why anyone should desire to look at the back of the Rood, which was all that could possibly be seen through a low side window. Mr. Hodgson, having dismissed all other theories, had arrived at a new one of his own, namely, that these windows were used for throwing a light towards the churchyard to drive away the devil, would take a long time to discuss all the arguments for or against the different theories that had been advanced, especially the one that these windows were used for confessions, about which he had openly fought several times with Mr. Johnston without being able to convince him. The weak point of this theory seemed to him to be the difficulty of believing that any person should want to make his confession kneeling in the most awkward place he could possibly find outside the church, when there was nothing to prevent him going inside and making his confession there in the usual way. If anyone who had any lingering hold on that theory would reflect how confessions were heard in the Middle Ages, he would find that they were made inside the church. There was one particular rule which was laid down again and again in Episcopal Constitutions, that when people went into the church for confession, women were on no account to make their confessions except "without the veil," that is outside the Lenten veil which hung between the chancel stalls and the altar. And they appointed that the priest should hear the confessions of women in a prominent place inside the church. He (Mr. Hope) thought that Mr. Pim was quite right in claiming more than one use for these windows. Some which he had showed them seemed undoubtedly for the purpose of throwing

the light upon the man sitting and saying his office in the chancel. He thought if Mr. Pim looked into theory a little he would find the same explanation held good in the case of such windows in the aisle, because the ends of the aisles were frequently screened off to form little chapels.¹ The Institute had visited many churches where such screened off chapels remained at the ends of the aisles with seats, etc., and these windows would throw a light on those sitting in the seats. There was one difficulty to be got over both with regard to Mr. Pim's theory of lighting and Mr. Hodgson's theory of the lights to scare the devil, and that was the existence and use of the shutter.² Mr. Hodgson had passed it over without explaining what was the common sense of putting a light on the window sill to be visible in the churchyard and then opening a shutter so that the wind might blow it out. Even if the light were put into a lantern, why should there also be a wooden shutter? Surely if the window was to show a light, it would be sufficient to glaze the bottom opening. The wooden shutter must have been for some other purpose, and certainly not for admitting light at all. One of Mr. Keyser's suggestions was that these shuttered windows might have been for communicating people who were outside, but he (Mr. Hope) would like to know who would be the persons so communicated. Anyone who was allowed to communicate at all would surely be communicated inside the church. And there still remained this great difficulty, that these windows were usually pierced in such thick walls that it would be impossible for the priest inside to administer the Sacrament to anyone outside. It seemed to him that the sacring bell theory had most in its favour, and it should not be forgotten that there was no necessity for the person ringing the bell to put his hand outside the window. He need only open the shutter, which anyone inside could easily do, and then ring the bell *at* the window, so carrying out the rule that the bell was to be rung so that the people in the fields might hear it and know the moment of the sacring.

Mr. KEYSER pointed out these windows often had an iron grille and sometimes might have been used for communicating lepers.

Mr. HOPE said there was no need, as he had just pointed out, for the person ringing the bell to put his hand outside the window; moreover lepers were not permitted even to enter the churchyard. They would receive the sacrament in their own lazar houses, where they had their own chapels.

The CHAIRMAN said that before leaving the chair he would ask them to return thanks to Mr. Pim for his excellent paper. There were, however, some points in it on which he thought they would all agree, namely, that these windows were not arbitrary but were meant for some useful purpose. To suggest that they were all for the same purpose was more or less absurd, and he might add one other reason for the introduction of the windows in certain positions. It was whether the extreme difficulty in crossing the churchyards on winter nights and the impossibility of keeping a light in the recess might not have made it a

¹ A separate class for such chapel windows is made in the paper.

² See postscriptum to Mr. Hodgson's

paper, where the purpose of the shutter in this connection is explained, though not in my opinion conclusively.—H. B. P.

convenient thing to have a window through which the light inside the church could fall on the paths.

Mr. P. M. JOHNSTON said he had had the privilege of doing work in connection with the restoration of two of the churches which had been very much dwelt upon in the arguments of the lecturer—those of Clapham and Tortington—and had been instrumental in opening a number of low-side windows, including that in the south aisle of Clapham Church which had been left blocked up at a previous restoration. At Clapham he found an external rebate for the shutter. It was not convenient to put a wooden shutter back, but he put a glazed wooden frame. At Tortington, where he recently worked, there was a niche in the north wall of what had been the south chapel—now the extreme south wall of the chancel. He referred to the Burrell manuscripts in the British Museum, amongst which was a drawing of Tortington Church as it existed about 1780. From this drawing the arch originally opening into the destroyed southern chapel was then visible in the south wall, and that seemed to make it all the more certain that the recess to which Mr. Pim had referred could not have been a lamp niche. The whole character of this recess and the rebate for the little door originally fitted there pointed to its having been an ordinary aumbry, for use in the destroyed chapel. Mr. Pim mentioned Tatsfield Church as having a quatrefoil opening high up in the north wall of the chancel. That was not the case; there was such an opening, but quite low down, in the normal position of a low-side window in the south wall.

Mr. PIM said he had not seen it, but a photograph had been sent him, and his informant put it on the north wall.

Mr. JOHNSTON said there was nothing like it in the north wall. He proceeded to say, that no doubt there were many of these low-side windows which had some obvious connection with tombs and with the people who used those tombs for some purpose. He instanced one in connection with the tomb of Bishop Walter de Merton, in the north choir transept of Rochester Cathedral dating from *c.* 1277. There they had a tomb and window of the same date, and he believed Mr. St. John Hope had brought forward the explanation that this window had to do with the masses said at or near the tomb. Then there were many low-side windows, some of which had two lights, one only of which was transomed. He would instance one example—that at Buriton, Hampshire. There was a peculiarity about this which emphasised the purpose for which this and similar sub-transom openings were formed as being something other than lighting, because they were unlike the upper lights rebated for a shutter. He would turn to a piece of evidence which came into his hands comparatively recently by the kindness of the Rev. E. S. Dewick, in the shape of an extract from a manuscript in the British Museum called “the Rule of the Nuns of St. Saviour,” which reads as follows:—“The Sisters shall make their confessions at windows or iron gratings intended for this purpose, because while they can be heard they can scarcely be seen; but they shall communicate at the windows where they can be heard and likewise seen, through which it should be possible to freely administer to them both the Body of the Lord and the Chalice.” Whatever bearing this might have on low-side windows in parish churches, he

did not know, but there they had a direction for confessions to be heard at "windows, or iron gratings," in exactly the same way as might be done in the common typical low-side window, and these apertures in the wall of the nuns' church are expressly described as "intended for this purpose." In connection with this interesting extract he might say that Mr. A. P. Boyson had recently been to Denmark for the express purpose of examining the low-side windows which occurred there. He believed it was the only Continental country where they were found. Mr. Boyson had carefully examined and obtained photographs and measurements of a great many of these openings, and he took the opportunity of calling upon some of the University authorities in various places, and wherever there was anything like a chair for Archaeology he raised a certain amount of interest by his enquiries. As a result he had received a great mass of information in the shape of more photographs and measurements. If other things permitted, Mr. Boyson and himself hoped to go over to Denmark in the course of the summer and follow up the enquiry on the spot. In many places throughout England there was still to be seen a window similar in its characteristics to the low-side window in churches, which had not been alluded to, viz., the low shuttered and grated openings in anchorites' cells. They had abundant historical evidence in that connection that these must have been used for the purpose of confessions. It was well known that the anchorites were walled up for life in these little cells, and they had their food brought to them and taken through these grated openings. There were several historical instances of people (Richard II. and Henry V. amongst others) going to make confessions to anchorites. How could they do this? It was not to be supposed that they could get through the wall, and the only answer was that they must have had speech with the inmate of the cell through his narrow grated window. He contended that the idea of confession through a window was in this way familiar to people in general long before the average low-side window was made. At the same time he agreed that these openings were made for more than one purpose. All the facts connected with them proved this. Granted, however, that there were half-a-dozen or a dozen uses for the openings, he did not see why the confessional theory should be scouted altogether.

Mr. PIM asked if the Order referred to was the St. Saviour's Priory, Southwark?

Mr. JOHNSTON said he understood it was the general rule of the Order.

The Rev. E. S. DEWICK said that the Order of St. Saviour was a curious one and contained both brothers and sisters. There was a wall between their twin churches, and the "window" was simply an opening through which the sisters might make their confessions; such window had nothing to do with those which they had been discussing.

The Rev. G. M. LIVETT said one example had not been discussed, namely, the opening in the north wall in Staplehurst Church, Kent, of which the blocking on the outside had been lately removed. Probably there were several instances of such openings. It was not an opening which had been put into a class by Mr. Pim, and there was a more

interesting instance still at Brook Church, near Ashford. He hoped that when this subject was being thoroughly thrashed out these instances would not be lost sight of. There was one other photograph of the sedilia at Lamberhurst which appeared to be pierced with two quatrefoils. Mr. Pim had spoken of a quatrefoil being pierced in the sedilia of St. Giles, Camberwell. He thought that was a class of opening which had probably something to do with this question, and the consideration of which must be included in this subject.

In reply to Mr. Pim, Mr. Livett said he should think that the outside work at Staplehurst Church was the original stone.

Mr. PIM said there was another example pierced through an aumbry, or Easter sepulchre, at Cogenhoe. There he had no doubt it was a round hole cut for a flue-pipe, because the aumbry here would not have an opening to look through at such a height. At Staplehurst he thought there was a real opening and that a stone with a round hole was put in at a later date to accommodate a flue. He understood that one of the different reasons for excluding lepers from participation in the Communion either through these or other windows was that when a person was declared a leper the Burial Service was read over him and he was considered dead. He did not know whether that was correct: if it was the case, then one need not trouble about the leper theory. He did not refer to the anchorites' cells as being in rather a different class, because it was obvious that the windows in anchorite cells were there to allow of communication taking place with the occupant. He could not help thinking that, in the case of the windows transomed at one corner, the shutter was provided for the purpose of ventilation.

Mr. Keyser seemed to think that he (Mr. Pim) took the view that every window, in whatever part of the church it might be, was intended to light somebody who was in a corner and enable him to read. He felt inclined to apply that theory only to the first class he had described, many of which occurred where there were no surrounding windows at all. Those at the west end were clearly intended for the purpose of allowing persons to look into the church to see the light burning on the altar and so forth. Indeed, they had a case recorded at Dover Castle, and it was quite reasonable to suppose that these windows were placed in different parts of the church to allow those outside to see if the lights were burning as they passed by. There was a window at Rustington that had obviously to do with the priests' door, in juxtaposition to which it stood. He had seen it stated that many of these cases occurred in churches which were known to have been appropriated to the monastic houses. He believed that at one time more than half the parish churches were appropriated to some monastery or other, and it was not unlikely that the monk would stand in the same place to say the office in the church as that to which he were accustomed in the monastery, and that there would be a window in the wall in order to give him more light. He did not desire in any degree to claim for his theory universal application, because he knew it was not possible to apply it; but he felt they had definite evidence which would apply to a large number of examples which was simple, and which did not strain one's knowledge of practice either past or present, and at the same time it was a reasonable explanation for the use of windows in a particular position.