

NORMAN SCULPTURE OF LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.



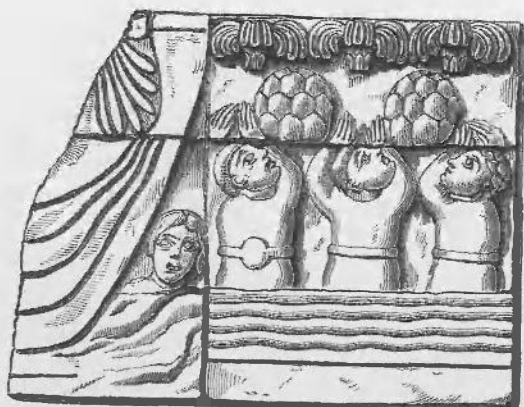
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The Archaeological Journal.

MARCH, 1868.

THE NORMAN SCULPTURE OF LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.¹

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It is singular that up to the present time so little is known of the more ancient sculptures displayed upon the west front of Lincoln Cathedral. These constitute a series of subjects which can scarcely escape the notice even of a casual observer, as it comes within an easy reach of the eye, and through the depths of its shadows as contrasted with its prominent light-catching portions, courts enquiry from all entering any one of the western portals of that venerable pile which it serves to adorn. Enquiring looks are indeed usually raised towards these sculptures ; but as yet little has been done towards their elucidation, so that only here and there certain subjects have been detected, while the remainder still demand explanation ; it will now, therefore, be my object to endeavour to grasp the key unlocking the secrets of that work of ancient art which has so long adorned the west front of our beauteous queen of English cathedrals. Those who have attempted to describe these sculptures have either omitted to make any comments upon their difficulties, or have left their elucidation to the discernment of future observers. Their approximate date even has not been agreed to by former examiners, some attributing them to the Saxon period, some to the Norman. Of these, Gough, Wild, and even Cockerell, deemed them to be Saxon, whereas they undoubtedly are, from their own internal evidence and style,

¹ Communicated to the Section of Antiquities at the annual meeting of the Institute at Kingston-upon-Hull, July, 1867.

if indeed so old, not older than the time of Remigius of Fécamp, Bishop of Lincoln, in whose episcopate the see was removed from Dorchester, about A.D. 1078. Some persons, it must be observed, have considered these relics of art as belonging to the time of the successor of Remigius, Robert Bloet, in whose days the church was consecrated, or to that of Bishop Alexander, early in whose episcopate the cathedral was greatly damaged by a conflagration, and by whom the nave was vaulted with stone.² Amongst similar works in England with which the Lincoln sculptures may be compared are two bas-reliefs of nearly contemporary date in Chichester Cathedral.³ The figures in those sculptures are treated in the same peculiar style, and over one of them is a cornice, on which the honeysuckle ornament resembles that over some of the Lincoln sculptures. By the kind courtesy of Mr. Murray I am enabled to present representations of these relics of art, representing our Lord at the gate of Bethany, and the Raising of Lazarus (p. 20 *infra*) These are assumed to have been brought from the Saxon cathedral at Selsey, but they are probably later than the Lincoln sculptures,

² Essex, in his *Observations on the Cathedral* communicated to the Society of Antiquaries in 1775, notices these sculptures. "The difference of the workmanship, and the irregularity in which they are placed, make it probable they were brought from some old church, and placed in this front when it was first built." *Archæologia*, vol. iv. p. 152. It thus appears that Essex regarded them as of greater antiquity than the work of Remigius. The same notion is stated in the letter-press that accompanies two plates of the west front, *Vetusta Monum.* vol. iii. pl. x. xi., from measurements taken by Mr. Lumby, clerk of the works of Lincoln Cathedral. Wild, in his *Architecture and Sculpture of Lincoln Cathedral*, p. 16, alludes to the notion that the sculptures are "of Saxon workmanship, an opinion less sanctioned by their want of merit (for they are not below the standard of the eleventh century) than by their irregular insertion in the walls, which nevertheless is as likely to have been occasioned by their removal from some other part of the Cathedral, when rebuilt in the twelfth century, as from any older church." Professor Cockerell, in the Appendix to his *Iconography of the West Front of Wells Cathedral*, p. 82, observes that he "should entirely subscribe to the opinion that this frieze

is of Saxon workmanship," and suggests that it might have been transported from Dorchester, the site of the ancient see, or from some previous church in Lincoln, which, as a flourishing town long before Christianised under Saxon rule, must have possessed conspicuous churches already.

³ The highly curious sculptures in the South choir-aisle of Chichester Cathedral are figured in the Translation of Labarte's *Handbook of Mediæval Arts*, pp. 5, 6, where they are ascribed to the tenth or eleventh century. The woodcuts there given have also been reproduced in this *Journal*, vol. xii. p. 412, and in the *Handbook to the Cathedrals of England* (Lond., Murray, 1861), part II., p. 312, pl. ix. It is observed that they are probably early Norman, with indications of being by a foreign artist; a certain Byzantine character may be traced in the hair, in the narrow folds of the drapery, and perhaps in the tall slender figures. Two fragments in Sompting church, Sussex, are noticed, which may be compared with the Chichester sculptures. There is also a small sculpture of the like early character inserted in the wall of the tower of Barnack church, Northamptonshire, not without value for comparison with the relics of Norman art at Lincoln.

and were perhaps carved, during the first quarter of the twelfth century, by order of Bishop Radulphus, who commenced the building of his cathedral at Chichester, A.D. 1114. The most crude ideas have been promulgated as to some of the sculptures at Lincoln, although, of course, others have been recognised, such as Noah's ark and Daniel in the lions' den. The learned Warton thought that he detected in the former the legend of Birinus;⁴ another author has suggested that in these sculptures pagan fables are blended with scriptural truth, and a third that the figures of friars and nuns appear among them; whereas certainly no reference is made to Birinus in any of the sculptures, none but scriptural subjects are here displayed, and there is not a single friar or nun represented. The series has been engraved by Gough for his edition of Camden's *Britannia*;⁵ but the meaning of its groups of figures, and their connection with one another, has never, I believe, been understood, and remains unexplained. As, however, I feel satisfied that an elucidation of the series is possible, after a careful and near examination of its details, a comparison between those details nearly lost through the ravages of time or violence with more perfect portions, and by the valuable aid of photography, I am about to submit what I conceive to be a true explanation of these sculptures. It may deserve mention that during the recent works of restoration of the west front of the cathedral I was enabled by means of the scaffolding then erected to obtain a series of photographs from which the accompanying woodcuts have been prepared.

⁴ Gough, in his account of the font in Winchester Cathedral (*Vetusta Monum.* vol. ii. p. 6), alludes to the suggestion by the learned writer of the "History of Poetry in England," that the Lincoln sculptures related to the legend of Birinus, at that time supposed to have supplied the subjects of the sculptures at Winchester. St. Birinus exercised episcopal functions at Dorchester in Oxfordshire, and was there buried. Remigius, it will be remembered, was the last bishop of that see, and the first of Lincoln: it appeared probable that he might have selected incidents in the history of so eminent a preacher of Christian faith, as his predecessor Birinus had been, to decorate the Cathedral newly erected at Lincoln. A certain similarity in some details doubtless gave weight to this suggestion; the subjects at Winchester,

however, although of smaller proportions than those at Lincoln, may claim comparison with them as exemplifying the character of Norman art. They are now recognised as taken from the legend of St. Nicholas. A font almost precisely similar, and presenting subjects from the same legend, exists at Zedelghem, near Bruges, and is figured by De Caumont, *Bulletin Monumental*, vol. xxi. p. 471.

⁵ Gough states that the three figures forming the fourth group in the Torments of Hell described hereafter, No. 12, were "cut a few years ago to supply the place of older; and there were two more groups too imperfect to merit copying." He adopts the suggestion of Essex, that the sculptures were brought from some old church. Camden's *Britannia*, edit. 1806, vol. ii. p. 368, pl. xi.

It will be remembered that a pyramidal group of five arched recesses is the principal feature of the Norman west front of Lincoln Cathedral, the lower part of the three larger recesses being pierced by doorways, and the subsidiary one on either side constituting an ornamental appendage. These three doorways have been attributed to the times of Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, 1123—1148. The series of sculptures I have now to explain passes just above the arches of the smaller recesses, and is continued along the sides of the piers of the principal recesses, always in the same horizontal line, but in variable continuity. In addition to these there is an insulated subject on the southern face of the Norman south-western tower, which can now only be seen from within the area on the south created by the extension of the west front during the early part of the thirteenth century. That these sculptures are Norman appears from their characteristics, the disproportionably large heads and the flat faces of the figures, also from their spare forms and ill-proportioned members; yet the treatment of some of them is worthy of comparison with a better period of mediæval art, and occasionally a classical treatment of the drapery seems to indicate that the influence of Roman art had not absolutely been lost in England when these sculptures were executed. Such works of art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries are now most rare, and none can be compared with this as to the extent of the subjects treated of and their peculiar character, so that few observant persons have approached the west front of Lincoln Cathedral without having had their curiosity excited respecting that storied band above them, although they have not conjectured why it was placed there; while by others it has been regarded simply as a grotesque specimen of early art, half destroyed by long exposure to the weather; and, indeed, it is curious through its antiquity, but its chief value arises from the fact of its being an exposition of scripture set forth seven or eight hundred years ago, either by Remi, or Remigius, the first Norman Bishop of Lincoln, or by his successor Alexander, one or other of whom so thoughtfully moulded the very stones of his cathedral church as to constitute a sermon abounding with pure truth, portions of which still remain to denote its original fulness when complete and rightly arranged. The series has since been dislocated, like a manuscript whose

leaves, after having been torn from their original binding, have again been in part collected and re-bound without any regard to their first and proper sequence, for now we have only portions of the series, and these are arranged without reference to their chronological order. At first they probably constituted a series extending at least along the whole of the west front in unbroken order, and contained many more subjects than at present. One of the most important of these appears never to have been removed, viz., that over the northernmost recess, as it is continued within the adjoining larger recess, and the whole seems to have been composed for this particular spot ; but most, if not all the others, have been freshly arranged, and this probably during the re-building of the Cathedral under St. Hugh and his successors. When complete they appear to have formed a sculptured exposition of the Christian faith, gathered from both Testaments ; and such an exposition, whether pictured on the walls or in the windows of churches, carved in wood, or sculptured in stone, would still not only be admissible in any of our greater churches, but profitable to their frequenters as lively illustrations of God's Holy Word. Exclusive of a subject now destroyed, except the lower portion of a draped figure, there are twelve scriptural subjects still left, seven of which are taken from the Old Testament, and the remainder from the New. They vary considerably in width, but are mostly 3 ft. 5 in. in height. They are protected by a plainly chamfered cornice, which has rendered them valuable conservative service. As they are now arranged in no sort of order, I shall describe them according to their proper sequence, heading each subject with its title, and the text or texts it is intended to illustrate.

1. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise—(Genesis iii. 24).—This sculpture has been tampered with, and now presents a sadly smoothed appearance, through the loss of its original minor characteristics. It represents, in a very expressive manner, one of the cherubim casting out our first parents from their happy dwelling-place. The deep despondency of the unhappy pair is well denoted by their wistful back-turned looks, their downcast arms and clasped hands, as they retire at the command of God's minister appointed to expel them from Eden, and thus to keep them from approaching the tree of life. That guardian spirit is

represented with wings, and clothed in a long robe having ample sleeves and a mantle. In his right hand he bears the flaming sword, and his left hand, with extended palm, is placed upon Adam's shoulder, for the purpose of compelling him to leave his first home in Eden. There is considerable dignity given to this figure, but the others are ill-proportioned and weak.

2. The Curse of Man because of his Disobedience—(Genesis iii. 17, 18, 19).—This subject is illustrated by the representation of two men engaged in manual labour, and dressed alike in tight-fitting tunics reaching to the knees. The one to the right has a beard and long hair. In his hands is a spade, which he is forcing into the ground with his right foot. It is remarkable that this spade resembles, as to shape, some represented in the Bayeux tapestry. The figure on the left holds an axe, required to clear the ground previous to spade-culture. Tufts of conventional foliage appear beneath these figures, and above is a cornice of carved work of a rich foliated design. In the right-hand upper corner beneath this cornice, a hand grasping a bag is introduced, probably intended to denote God's providence for his people, and his care for all their wants, although labouring under a curse through Adam's transgression.

3. The Building of the Ark—(Genesis vi. 14).—This very interesting sculpture portrays Noah, in dutiful and faithful obedience to God's command, in the act of working at the ark, aided by an assistant, probably intended for one of his sons. Noah wears a girdled tunic having tight-fitting sleeves, and ankle-shoes. His hair is rather short, as are his curling whiskers and beard. In his left hand he holds an axe, or a hammer, which he supports upon his shoulder, and he stretches out the other towards his assistant workman with the fore finger extended, as though in the act of giving instructions. The comparative youthfulness of the other figure is indicated by the absence of a beard and his inferior size; he is dressed in a shorter tunic, having the usual breast opening, and holds a hatchet with both his hands. Between these figures a portion of the ark is seen, whose lofty prow and planked sides were probably suggested by the features given to vessels of the eleventh century, and perhaps even by that supplied by Remigius himself to the Conqueror for the invasion of England. Such continued to



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be the mode of representing this subject for centuries after the time of Remigius, and from its importance it was, of course, very often repeated, as being so strongly typical of the ark of Christ's Church, and the salvation thus freely offered to all men, as well as of the necessity for building up that ark through the preaching of the gospel, and for raising material structures wherein God's holy name might be worshipped. On one of the incised slabs of the thirteenth century, forming a part of the pavement of the church of St. Remi, at Rheims, the building of the ark is similarly treated.⁶

4. The Effects of the Flood—(Genesis vi. 7 ; vii. 23).—In unhappy contrast with the faithful Noah building the ark for his preservation, and that of his family, his security therein and his thankful exit from it, this subject portrays the end of the ungodly, who would not hearken to his patient exhortations. It has been saved from exposure both to the weather and the soot-laden breezes of the Lincoln atmosphere through its enclosure within the subsequently built portion of the west front of the Cathedral. To the left of the subject is seen the lofty prow of the ark floating upon the rising waters, which are indicated by the waved lines below. From these rise three half-submerged human figures dressed in tight tunics girded round their waists, who with upraised hands and arms are vainly attempting to save themselves by clinging to such objects as still remained above the water-floods, whether rocks or trees. Just beneath the prow of the ark is the figure of a man either floating or swimming, indicative of the hopeless efforts to escape on the part of the wicked, when all flesh perished except the happy occupants of the life-preserving means of salvation provided by God through the instrumentality of Noah.

5. The Entry into and the Departure from the Ark—(Genesis vii. 7, 8, 9).—In this subject, which is nearly 7 ft. long, the ark is represented as a whole, the lower portion taking the form of a plank-built vessel of the eleventh century, with its stem and stern curving upwards to a considerable height. These support a roof partly covered with shingles having rounded edges. Resting on the left side of this roof is the returned dove before she was pulled into the ark again by Noah. Within are five seated figures, probably

⁶ *Archæol. Journal*, vol. xi. p. 39.

intended to represent Noah, his wife, and his three sons, which are as many as could be conveniently introduced. The central one, with a long beard to denote his age, and his hands upraised, is no doubt intended for Noah, then 600 years old. The two figures to the right are raising up their arms and clasped hands in grateful prayer. The one on the left of Noah is in an attitude of contemplation, and supporting his left elbow with the right hand, rests his chin upon his left hand. The remaining figure has upraised hands like those of the others. On the outside of the ark a line of animals on a very small scale is seen following one another into the ark. The heads of the first in the procession are alone cut, and these not according to the Scripture narrative, in pairs, viz., the ox, the ass, and the goat ; those that follow are on a still smaller scale, and are not distinguishable. On the right of the ark a subsequent incident is illustrated, viz., the departure from that means of salvation. This consists of two groups, one containing eight figures, four above and four below, the other two only. Of the first group the figure furthest from the ark below is that of a male in a mantle, whose skirt he holds back with his right hand, while he points to the freshly dried surface of the earth with the other. On his feet are ankle-shoes. The next figure represents his wife, who rests her right hand upon her husband's left shoulder, and embraces him with her left arm. She wears a hood upon her head, and a mantle over her gown. The two next figures and that above nearest to the ark represent females similarly attired. The two figures of the second group are on a larger scale, and have been thought not to have any reference to that with which it is conjoined, but from the evidence of a hand of one of the figures of the larger group which impinges upon the stone of the second, we are assured of the connection. This subject, therefore, we may presume, portrays the giving of that gracious covenant which God was pleased to make with Noah, and his assurance that "the waters should no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." One of these figures has long hair flowing upon his shoulders, and a nimbus ensigned with a cross above his head, to indicate his divinity. His left arm crosses his person, and with his right hand upraised he is earnestly addressing the person by his side. He wears the robe and mantle usually given to all the figures of such sub-

jects. The other figure is bearded and similarly attired, but has no nimbus ; he holds up his joined hands in reverence. In the incised subjects in the church of St. Remi at Rheims, before referred to, a dimidiated figure of God appears in the sky above the ark precisely like the figure in this sculpture, with long flowing hair, and a crossed nimbus, which was indeed the usual way in which the First person of the Trinity was represented during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as well as our Lord.⁷

6. Hannah and the Infant Samuel : Samuel announcing God's Revelation to Eli (1 Samuel i. 18).—These two subjects appear on one stone ; the first-named being above the other, and quite distinct from it. This represents a female reclining upon her left side in bed, and supporting her head with her left arm, whilst with the other she assists her infant, represented without clothing and on his knees, in the act of deriving nourishment from his mother's breast. The upper portion of the female is naked, except a hood or kerchief upon her head, which falls in folds upon her shoulders, but the greater part of her person is covered with the bed-clothes. Above this is a cornice of well-designed and effective foliated work, and a small piece of foliation appears on the right side of the subject, for the purpose of filling up a blank there. The lower subject is much mutilated in parts. On the left is a robed figure of a man seated on a throne or chair of state, with his legs extended and his feet appearing beyond the edge of his robe, which is cut square at the breast. The face, and indeed the greater part of the head, is gone, but there seems to have been a cap with a pendent flap upon the head. The openings of the sleeves at the wrists are large, as seen by that hanging from the right wrist. This arm is bent back, and apparently holds a staff, whose end rests upon the ground, or else seeks support from a pillar behind him. In front of this seated figure stands a lad with his legs apart, and supporting his left elbow with his right hand. He is dressed in a tunic reaching just below his knees, and confined round the waist by a girdle, whence it falls in full folds. This figure was originally represented as holding something extending from the hand towards the seated figure, of which there are now only slight remains. That object, from the evidence of what now exists, was

⁷ *Archæol. Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 39.

apparently either a censer or a label ; and if these two subjects were intended to represent Samuel and his mother before he was weaned and presented to the Lord, and Samuel announcing the doom of Eli's sons, some words indicative of their sentence probably appeared upon the label, if it was a label.^s

7. Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel vi. 16).—This subject is rudely framed with pieces of the same plainly-chamfered string or moulding which only appears above the other sculptures. It portrays the calm confidence of Daniel during the terrible night he was compelled to spend in the lions' den. He is represented in a sitting posture, with his right hand raised towards Him in whom he had placed his trust, and with a book in his left hand—probably intended for the book of God's law. His hair is short and crisply curled ; he is clothed in an ample robe reaching to the feet, and hanging in many minute folds about his body and below his knees. Over this is a mantle, covering the upper portion of his person, in continuous folds and depending from his elbows to the ground. In the right-hand corner, below the figure of David, are two lions' heads, another appears in the opposite corner. Above are two large dimidiated lions crossing one another behind Daniel, with their paws extended as though to exhibit their natural longing to attack the prophet, and the restraining power of God, who through his angel shut the mouths of these lions because before Him innocency was found in Daniel, and before the King he had done no hurt. The treatment of the lions' manes is very similar to that of the numerous sculptured lions found by Layard at Nineveh.

8. Christ Instructing a Disciple, possibly Nicodemus (John iii. 14, 15).—This subject consists of two figures only, of a larger size than those of most of the others. One of these is certainly intended to represent our Lord, from the nimbus ensigned with a cross around his head. The hair flows upon the shoulders, and the beard is short. The robe has no opening at the breast, and is girded round the waist,

^s This subject, it may deserve notice, has suffered much injury, and, until closely examined when the scaffolding was placed during recent repairs of the Cathedral, its details were with difficulty to be discerned. It was supposed by Professor Cockerell to represent the death

of Isaac, with the accompanying figures of Jacob, Esau, and Rebecca. *Iconography of Wells Cathedral*, Appendix. p. 82. Gough seems to have regarded it as the death of Adam. *Vetust. Monum.* vol. ii. p. 7.



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whence it falls in graceful folds nearly to the feet, which are bare. Over this is a mantle, not fastened at the neck; a part hangs in a lappet form over the left shoulder. The right hand, with extended fingers, rests upon this lappet, and the left is raised with the thumb and fore finger pointed upward, and the other fingers depressed in an attitude of earnest exhortation. To the right of this figure is one of a disciple without the distinguishing nimbus, and having a short beard and short hair. He wears a robe or tunic and girdle, similar to that of his Divine Master, reaching nearly to the feet, and over this a long mantle fastened at the neck, and covering the shoulders. His hands are devoutly crossed as he listens to his Lord's holy words. It cannot be positively determined that this subject was intended to represent the interview between Christ and Nicodemus; but no other can be named with more probability.⁹

9. Christ Sitting at Meat with the Two Disciples at Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 29, 30).—This sculpture, placed on the right-hand side of the principal recess of the west side of the cathedral, is in almost as perfect a state as when it was first carved, and is especially valuable from the architectural features introduced into it, which serve to identify the date of the whole series of sculptures. This subject represents our Lord, after his resurrection, seated under a portico or external arcade of a house whose elevation is indicated behind by four square turrets furnished with low conical roofs, terminating in small spherical finials. One angle pillar of this building is alone given, whose details are Norman. Beneath the arcade is suspended a curtain, the folds are tightly gathered back on either side. Below this are figures of our Lord and the two disciples seated at a table covered with a cloth, whose pendent portion in front is gathered up into regular folds at even distances, and beneath are seen the legs and feet of those sitting at table. Christ is represented with short curling hair and a short beard, with one hand raised in the attitude of blessing, and the other holding a knife with which He is about to divide a small loaf placed before Him. He is clothed in a mantle,

⁹ It has been suggested that possibly this subject may illustrate the discourse of Our Lord with St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 18, "Tu es Petrus," or his last injunctions to that Apostle after the re-

surrection, John xxi. 15. It should be observed that at the early period to which these sculptures belong, the apostles are not always distinguished by any conventional symbol.

the folds of which are confined at the neck, before they flow over his shoulders. On the left is the figure of a disciple, who, in addition to a short beard, wears a moustache. He is also habited in a mantle. His right hand rests upon the table in front of him, and in his left he holds a cup, resembling the mediæval mazer, shaped like a small basin, which he is raising to his mouth, and similar to another on the table before Christ. On the other side the likeness of a younger disciple is carved. His hair is smooth, and curls only at its extreme ends ; he wears neither moustache nor beard. The folds of his mantle fall across his breast in a thoroughly classical manner, and are gathered up on his shoulder by the aid of a fibula. The hair of all three figures has been painted a deep bright red, but probably this was at first toned down by other more delicate tints ; the inside of the mantle of the central figure was also painted a light blue, or a blue green. In the lateral arch of the portico is a lion's leg and paw serving as a support to the "*sella longa*" on which our Lord and the disciples are seated ; and above, as if projecting from the portico column, are three small heads of animals, which probably are meant to express the ornamental finials of the back of the seat, and to stand for lions' heads.

10. The Blessed End of the Righteous contrasted with the Torments of Lost Souls (Matthew xxv. 46).—In this subject the death of a righteous man is strongly contrasted with the end of the wicked. Above, a dying man laid upon a bed is in the act of rendering up his soul to his Maker. The upper portion of his person, seen above the bed-clothes, is naked. The head has perished, but the arms and hands joined in prayer still remain perfect. Over the dying man's couch are two ministering angels, whose wings are extended above them. The mantle of the one on the right falls over his right arm, and he holds the chains of a thurible with which he is censuring the departing spirit ; the other angel stands by as his assistant, to receive the soul as it leaves the body, and to carry it away to happiness. Below is a very different scene, viz., the pains of hell ordained for the wicked. A portion of this subject has been generally mistaken for a boat, to which indeed it bears a strong resemblance ; but, in reality, it represents a far different object, viz., the jaws of hell ; and on close examination it will be found that what

was supposed to be the notched edge of the boat is really the teeth of the jaws, nineteen in number, and then after a break four more. The outline of the whole head connected with these terrible jaws may be discerned in part upon the stones beneath, including the eye and ears. Within the dread confines thus suggested is seated a demon, with a monstrous head like a baboon, who grasps a fork with both hands, by the aid of which he is forcing a group of three condemned ones, who vainly cling to each other, headlong into the fiery depths below. Two of these wear tightly-fitting caps, elongated behind to the nape of the neck, but are otherwise stripped of all clothing, and the tines of the demon's fork are fixed in the jaw and cheek of the central figure.

11. Christ the Custodian of all Faithful Souls—(John x. 28, xviii. 9.)—This subject is much mutilated, and has, I believe, been so far unnamed; it, however, undoubtedly represents our Lord as the guardian of faithful souls. Seated upon his throne, his long hair flows upon his shoulders, and the remains of a beard are discernible, but the face is entirely gone. His person is clothed in a tight-fitting robe, cut square at the neck with a vertical opening in the middle and a girdle round his waist. Below this the robe is full, and reaches to the feet. Over it is a mantle. The arms of Christ are extended, and He holds in his hand a pendent sheet, probably suggested by that seen by St. Peter in his vision (Acts x. 11). This contains three little *quasi* newly-born babes, intended, according to usual mediæval practice, to typify Christian souls.¹ At the four angles of this subject are remains of the Evangelistic symbols, portions of whose wings and other details may still be discerned on a close examination. The ground has been painted red, either to suggest the glory of heaven or simply for the purpose of throwing out the sculpture with greater distinctness. On the left hand above is the eagle of St. John, one of

¹ This conventional mode of typifying the place of beatified spirits in Abraham's Bosom, "*in Sinu*" (Luke xvi. v. 22), represented as the lap of the Patriarch, or as a drapery held by him over his knees, is familiar to us in monumental sculpture and sepulchral brasses, such a figure being often introduced over the head of the effigy. Peter Comestor, in *Hist. Scholast.* c. 87, states that the *limbus*

of the souls of the blessed in the future state was called "*Sinus Abrae*." See further in Ducange, *v. Limbus*. The representation of souls thus held in a drapery, usually described as Abraham's Bosom, occurs in early sculptures in the church of St. Trophimus, Arles, in painted glass at Bourges, and in other examples of mediæval art.

whose legs rests upon the Saviour's left hand, and whose feathering was very perfect until the late touching up of these sculptures ; opposite appears the angel of St. Matthew. Below the eagle the wing and head of the lion of St. Mark in part appears, and opposite to this we may conclude once appeared the ox of St. Luke, each having four wings.

12. The Torments of Hell—(Mark ix. 43, 44 ; Col. ii. 15 ; Heb. xii. 22, 23).—This subject, from its great importance, is not confined to one or more panels, but constitutes a considerable portion of the sculptured band. Part of it, 13 ft. in length, is placed over the northernmost recess of the west front of the Cathedral, and the remainder is carried on within the side wall of the larger adjoining recess. Over the whole is a continuous plainly-chamfered cornice, serving to protect it from the weather. The greater part of this subject, viz., all that faces the west, very vividly represents prophetically the torments of hell. The remainder depicts our Lord, as the victor over Satan, approaching the entrance or jaws of the place of eternal punishment, from which He is rescuing various suppliant souls, and behind Him are the saints redeemed by his blood, clothed in robes of righteousness, some of whom are sitting and some standing in close communion with their Lord and with one another. The torments of hell are set forth in a way best calculated to impress an uneducated people, who would more readily understand and be affected by the portrayal of bodily sufferings than by the greater pains of mental agony. This scene of misery is divided into four groups. The first, towards the left, represents two miserable human beings, stripped of their clothing, and delivered over to the power of a devil, who, with a wide monstrous face, stands between them. One of these is a man, the other a woman, with her hair flowing upon her shoulders. His right hand and her left are fastened to strong rings pendent above their heads, while their other hands are convulsively raised in excruciating pain, for their tormentor has stuck his sharp claws into the sides of his wretched victims, and two loathsome dragons, crossing one another below, represented as having small wings and long twining tails, with open mouths, are just about to close their jaws upon the thighs of the sufferers. The next group is much mutilated, but its original design is still evident. In this subject a devil of large size



and horrid form has seized two condemned men by the hair, which he is violently pulling upwards, while at the same time he is so clasping their persons with his legs as to preclude all hope of escape. Above and below are writhing serpents, ready to fasten on the limbs of these wretched captives. One of them, crouching through pain and fear, is vainly thrusting out his right arm in agony, and lays the other on his own breast : the other is grasping one of the attacking serpents by the neck. The third group represents a miserable man, unclothed, with the exception of some drapery about his neck, who has been seized by two devils, standing on either side of him ; and as he thrusts forth his arms in terror, each of his wrists is seized by a writhing serpent, and a third, coiling itself round his legs, is about to fasten upon his vitals. The fourth group is a modern copy of the original subject, the general characteristics of which it has no doubt reproduced, although differing very considerably from the style of the older work, whose quaintness and originality it has utterly failed to reproduce. This group consists of a devil with large ears, and a tail curling round his left leg, who has seized a poor naked man with a short beard by the hair, while between this evil spirit and his victim a second man in vain interposes by trying to hold back his tormentor's hand. Below is a dragon, who, with open mouth, displaying a formidable set of teeth, is about to bite one of the suffering men, and whose voluminous tail twines round the left legs of his victims.

13. The entrance of the awful prison-house of condemned souls next appears, represented by a monstrous head, reaching from the top to the bottom of the sculptured band. The eyes are large and prominent, suggesting the idea that hell is seeking to enlarge its borders ; and the vast size of the mouth, extended to its utmost limit, appears to point to the insatiable greed of Satan for more and more victims whom he may devour.

In close contiguity to the jaws of hell and the dread powers of darkness, stands the blessed Author of light and salvation triumphing over the devil, whose form, bound and prostrate, is represented beneath his feet. The Saviour's dress is a robe, confined round the waist by a girdle, over which is a long flowing mantle, a portion of which is gathered

up under his left arm, and another portion hangs over his right shoulder. His feet are bare, his hair depends in long tresses upon his shoulders, and as Lord of Heaven and Earth, a crown encircles his brow. The hands and face are gone, but the Saviour bends in anxious love towards seven souls issuing in eager haste from the portals of hell, with their hands clasped in prayer, and in eager hope of release from their dread prison-house, whilst, from his attitude, the Lord of Life and Death appears to be blessing them; and, according to an ancient patristic belief, to be releasing them from the torments of hell, whose prince, with his hands crossed and bound together with thongs, and his cloven feet secured by heavy fetters, lies beneath the triumphant feet of Christ, as described by Keble,—

“Thine eye controuls
The thronging band of souls;
That, as thy blood won earth, thine agony
Might set the shadowy realm from sin and sorrow free.”

Next to the figure of our Lord is one whom we should naturally expect to represent St. Michael, because he stands upon the head of the prostrate Satan; but as the head is not nimbed, nor the shoulders winged, this may be intended simply to represent Man triumphant through Christ, in accordance with the word of prophecy. This has suffered much from its exposed position at an angle of the band, but its posture indicates admiration at the Saviour's act, who, through His power of leading captivity captive, used that power, as some of the fathers thought, in releasing souls from the jaws of hell. This figure is draped in the same manner as that of Christ, but the left leg, protruded from the robe as far as the knee, is exposed. The right hand is raised in astonishment at the miracle in the act of performance, and the left is laid in thankfulness upon the bosom.²

This curious sculptured subject is especially valuable because it sets forth the opinion held by Remigius with respect to the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell; for hence we gather that in common with Irenæus, Clemens

² Essex notices this remarkable sculpture as comparatively less rude in execution, “yet in design and treatment pre-eminently barbarous, &c., a subject, one would suppose, better suited to the

celebrated Gate of Dante, than to the entrance to a Christian church.” *Architecture and Sculpture of Lincoln Cathedral*, p. 16.



13.



14.

Alexandrinus, Cyril, and other Fathers of the Church, he believed that Christ preached to lost spirits in hell; and, with Augustine, that through the efficacy of his precious sacrifice for man he released some, but not all, confined in hell, from its torments;³ and thus, "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them."⁴ In the "Acts of Pilate" or "Gospel of Nicodemus," the result of our Lord's descent into hell is thus declared:—"Christ takes Adam by the hand, the rest of the Saints join hands, and they ascend with him to Paradise. Then Jesus stretched forth his hand, and said, 'Come to me, all ye my saints, who were created in mine image, who were condemned by the tree of the forbidden fruit, and by the devil and death; live now by the wood of my cross; the devil, the prince of this world, is overcome, and death is conquered.' Then presently all the Saints were joined together under the hand of the Most High God, and the Lord Jesus laid hold on Adam's hand, and said to him, 'Peace be to thee, and all thy righteous posterity which is mine.' Then Adam, casting himself at the feet of Jesus, addressed himself to him with tears in humble language and a loud voice, saying, 'I will extol thee, O Lord,' &c., &c. Then the Lord, stretching forth his hand, made the sign of the cross upon Adam and upon all his Saints. And taking hold of Adam by his right hand, he ascended from hell, and all the Saints of God followed him, &c., &c. Then the Lord, holding Adam by his hand, delivered him to Michael the Archangel, and he led them into Paradise, filled with mercy and glory."

Further matter connected with this subject is contained in the "Traicté de Purgatoire," 1545, and "Traytte of good lyving and good deying, and of paynys of hel, and the paynys of purgatoyr," &c., printed by Anthony Verard, 1490; both these are in Lincoln Cathedral Library, the last being a very curious volume with quaint woodcuts. But perhaps the character of the belief as to our Lord's descent into hell usually held by the Churchmen of the twelfth century is best gathered from a fine passage in one of St. Bruno's Homilies:—"Sciendum est autem quod illa hora, qua salvator noster inclinato capite spiritum emisit, corpore in cruce derelicto anima simul cum divinitate ad inferna spolianda

³ Epistle to Eudius, xcix. cap. 3.

⁴ Coll. ii. 15.

descendit, et tunc quidem illud psalmistæ adimpletum est : ‘Attollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini portæ æternales, et introibit Rex gloriæ!’ quibus interrogantibus, ‘Quid est iste Rex gloriæ?’ reponsum est eis, ‘Dominus fortis, et potens in prælio.’ Ingressus igitur dominus loca tenebrarum omnia circumquaque suo splendore illuminavit; fit clamor permixtus, bonis pro lætitia exultantibus, malis non præ timore fugere cupientibus. Tunc primi parentes occurrunt, et videntes creatorem suum lætis vocibus clamant, ‘Tandem Christe venis, magnis nos solvere pœnis.’ Tunc Patriarchæ et Prophetæ obviam ruunt, tunc omnis Sanctorum exercitus ejus pedibus se prosternunt. ‘O,’ inquit, ‘diu desiderate, O tanto tempore expectate, quæ te tantæ tenuere moræ?’ Tunc citharista David, ‘hoc est,’ inquit, ‘quod dicere solebam.’ Auditui meo dabis gaudium et lætitiā, et exultabunt ossa humiliata. Ecce nunc vident, ecce nunc audiunt, quod et videre et audire desiderasse Dominus ipse dicebat.’ Ait enim, ‘multi Prophetæ et Reges voluerunt videre quæ vos videtis, et non viderunt, et audire quæ auditis et non audierunt.’ Tunc Joannes Baptista, ‘Ecce,’ inquit, ‘de quo dicebam vobis, videtis illum, ejus adventum nuntiabam vobis.’ Sed qui per singula dicere audeat quanta ibi lætitia fuerit, cum Christus sol justitiæ eis apparuit? Tunc, alligato Diabolo, magno Sanctorum exercitu comitante, cum gloriā et triumpho lætus Dominus ad superos rediit, dicens, ‘Quoniam non derelinques animam meam in inferno, nec dabis Sanctum tuum videre corruptionem. Notas mihi fecisti vias vitæ, adimplebis me lætitia cum vultu tuo; delectationes in dexterā tuā, mihi pater, ubi tecum sedeo et vivo, et regno in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.’”⁵

The subject of our Lord’s descent into hell continued to be treated by mediæval artists precisely in the same manner as it was in the sculptures at Lincoln, down to the sixteenth century, hell’s portal being represented as the widely-opened jaws of a monster’s head, from which human forms are emerging at the approach of Christ; and in one late example of Flemish work carved upon a wooden panel, now in Stow Langtoft Church, Suffolk, a devil is retiring, as if in disgust that his office of door-keeper has been superseded, with his key slung over his back.

⁵ S. Brunonis Astensis Signensium Episcopi Opera. Venetiis apud Bertanos,

1651. S. Brunonis Astensis Homilia in Dominica Sanctæ Paschæ, tom. 2, p. 69.

14. This consists of six figures of saints holding communion with each other, among which the orders of Prophets, Priests, and Kings appear to be represented. They are all invested with long ample robes, or marriage garments washed in the blood of the Lamb, and, in peaceful security near Christ, are conversing one with another. The first figure, from its exposed situation, is in a very mutilated state. It is in a standing position, and has no peculiar characteristics. The second figure is seated ; the left hand holds up a portion of the mantle, and the right is raised in front of the left shoulder. The third figure is standing with the legs crossed, the left hand raised to the shoulder, and the right hand below the girdle supporting a portion of the mantle. The fourth saint, turning away from the last, is apparently represented in earnest conversation with the personage carved upon the other side, next to whom he stands. His mantle flows over his right arm, and with his right hand he sustains a portion of it below. Another piece of it falls over his left shoulder, and his left arm is raised as if to enforce what he is saying. The fifth figure is possibly that of a bishop seated, his right arm being raised in the gesture of blessing, and in his left hand is a long pastoral staff. With some care the various episcopal vestments may be recognized, such as the pall, chasuble, stole, tunic, and dalmatic. Something has been carved upon the head, which we may presume was a low mitre, but its form is now utterly lost. This figure may have been intended for St. James, or simply to represent the episcopal order. The last figure stands with the legs awkwardly crossed. The right hand is raised towards the left shoulder, and some object is held with the left hand, perhaps a harp ; on the head appear to be remains of a crown. It is robed like the others, and the treatment of the drapery throughout this subject has evidently been copied from some classical model. This figure was possibly intended to represent the kingly order exemplified by David ; and, if others were originally crowned, for which there is some ground of belief, we may assume that these, as saints, were so represented as having assumed the crown of righteousness laid up for them during their life on earth.

NOTE.—The several subjects are placed in the following situations:—

1. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise South face of the central recess.
2. The Curse of Man because of his Disobedience Between the central and southern recess.
3. The Building of the Ark Over the smaller southern recess.
4. The Effects of the Flood Within St. Hugh's chapel.
5. The Entry into and Departure from the Ark. God communes with Noah Over the smaller southern recess.
6. Hannah and the Infant Samuel; and Samuel announcing God's Revelation to Eli North face of the southern recess.
7. Daniel in the Lions' Den Over the smaller southern recess.
8. Christ instructing a Disciple South face of the southern recess.
9. Christ sitting at Meat with the Two Disciples at Emmaus South face of the northern recess.
10. The future Blessedness of the Righteous contrasted with the Torments of Lost Souls South face of the northern recess.
11. Christ Custodian of Faithful Souls.... North face of the northern recess.
12. The Torments of Hell } ... Over the smaller northern recess.
13. Christ the Victor of Satan }
14. The Happy Communion of Saints ... North face of the northern recess.



The Raising of Lazarus: Chichester Cathedral. See p. 2, ante.