

II. of the monograph it is evident that by whomsoever made, in whatever age, the chalice is a work of art of supreme and unexcelled beauty. How comes it then, that a poor and intrinsically valueless cup should be so enshrined? The great artist who spent years in designing and making the chalice must have been fully aware of the importance of the inner cup, whose crudeness was not only allowed to remain uncorrected but guarded with such care and in a receptacle of the very best which human art could procure. Dr. Eisen is convinced that the inner cup was revered as a personal relic of Christ and His Apostles, too sacred to be altered, perhaps even too precious to be used. It is not unnatural that he should incline to the belief that in this inner cup, now lying in a strong room in New York, we have indeed the Holy Grail itself.

According to the Arabs, local tradition designates the place where the treasure was found as the site of an ancient cathedral, and Dr. Eisen suggests that it was buried during the troublous times in the reign of Julian the Apostate. Julian closed the basilica of Constantine in Antioch, deprived it of its wealth, and caused its treasurer, Theodoretus, to be tortured and beheaded for concealing some object of great importance.

Space does not permit us even to summarise the reasons brought forward by Dr. Eisen for attributing the chalice to the first centuries, in spite of no parallel work of that period being known, or the ingenious deductions by which he places its exact date as between A.D. 60 and A.D. 70. It is obvious, however, that the identification of the portraits and their value stand or fall by the accuracy of his conclusions.

The chief decoration of the chalice is a broad band covering nearly three-quarters of the cup and containing twelve human figures bordered and held together by meandering grape-vines, the whole enriched by animals, birds, and symbolic objects. Above this field is a band of rosettes and below it is a tiny bead band. The bottom of the bowl terminates in an open lotus-flower. The human figures are seated, and divided into two rows, in the centre of each group being a figure which Dr. Eisen has identified as that of our Lord. Accepting, then, his identification, we have on the front upper row Christ enthroned after the Resurrection. He is shown in front view, His Head slightly inclined to the left but with gaze directed straight forward. The face, says Dr. Eisen (and the pictures completely bear him out), is remarkably individual, with a penetrating gaze, a mouth with a sweet expression, an almost celestial smile, tempered by serious thoughtfulness.

The mouth, he adds, is so unusual and so exactly like the other portrait showing our Lord in youth, that it carries the conviction that it must have been a characteristic of His human personality. "It is a wonderful face, such as no artist has ever been able to create from imagination." There are no emblems or symbols on the figure, but over the head soars the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, at the right hand is a plate with loaves and fishes, below which stands a lamb with the head turned towards Him. Below the figure is a large eagle, symbolising the Roman Empire, and a basket of bread. Above the head of Christ, unobtrusively crowded into the rosette band, is the star of the Nativity.

On the right side of the figure of Christ is St. Peter. "His face," says Dr. Eisen, "is one of the most remarkable pieces of portrait sculpture in existence. It is without doubt a true and accurate portrait, rustic, powerful, unyielding, but with a not unsympathetic expression." The figure of St. Paul, opposite that of St. Peter, shows an imposing man, calm and dignified, the chin short, rounded and rather small, the ear thick, high, and narrow, and the nose straight; the downward curve of the mouth gives the face an austere but noble expression. St. Jude is shown as a dignified man of careful habits and beautiful features, apparently one who never suffered any of the hardships of life. St. James has a face more full of serenity, sweetness, and calm than any of the other Apostles.

Behind St. Paul sits St. Andrew, apparently some years the senior of St. Peter his brother, whose rustic character he shares, though he is more dignified, less severe, and also less forceful. On the other side of the chalice, Christ as a youth, holding the scroll of the New Law, is the centre. On His right is St. Luke, whose features are those of an old man of a decidedly Greek type. The head is almost square, covered with long, thick, wavy hair and a beard, but without a neck-curl. Over the hair passes a Greek headband. The features are classic, and the expression is serious and contemplative. Below Him is St. Mark, a man of full face, with high and prominent cheeks, a nose conspicuously short and creased, and generally heavy features. He has the development of figure and enormous arms and legs which answer to the tradition that in his youth St. Mark was a water-carrier. Facing St. Mark is a dignified, stately man of Jewish type. He is St. Matthew. The most notable features are the small mouth and thin short upper lip. On his right arm is a phylactery. St. John the Divine sits in the upper row on the left of Christ. His face is unfortunately

damaged by time, but enough remains to indicate a man with a mystic, sweet, and youthful face and slender body, full of vivacity and elasticity, as the position of the limbs indicates. His brother, St. James, on his right, is also a beautiful, youthful figure, smooth of face and without a beard.

The chalice stands seven and a-half inches high. In feeling and execution it is Greek, but its symbolism is entirely derived from the Bible. By whomever it was executed, there is no doubt in Dr. Eisen's mind that in him was combined the spiritual power of interpreting Christianity and a classic sense of beauty. Its many qualities of design, truthfulness, dynamic symmetry, technical skill, and line-quality are all treated at great length in this monograph, but the author never loses sight of the fact that it is its religious value that is of overwhelming importance. "Now," says Dr. Eisen in one of his chapters, "for the first time since the final disappearance of the chalice amid the debris of the ancient church can the cravings of every Christian to gaze upon the actual features of his Lord be satisfied." Later he adds: "No one with appreciation and judgment can fail to recognise that thus the Evangelists and Apostles would have appeared in life—enthusiastic, intelligent, devout, imbued with life, wisdom, and energy, talented, serious, and full of character, but above all else human."

Most readers, however, who are fortunate enough to see this book will agree with Dr. Eisen that the most fascinating point of all with regard to the discovery is the belief that the chalice enshrines a most sacred cup. "In all probability the one that served the Lord and His Disciples at the Last Supper, the most precious object in Christian history, legend and tradition."—"Church Times."

Parish News.

Puketapu. The annual meeting, which had been postponed to the 27th of June, proved a very pleasant function. Referring to the many deaths which had occurred in the parish the Vicar said that though we seemed to be deprived of the presence and help of the departed, this was not really so; their loving influence was but removed to a higher sphere. Mr Ballantyne had left the district after many years of faithful service as churchwarden, but he was glad to be able to tell them that Mr Ballantyne had not entirely severed his connection with the parish, as he would still represent them in Synod. He wished to thank the Vestry for the energetic way in which they had so considerably reduced the debt on the