

of the Catacombs of Rome. Prudentius, *Cathemerinon*, Hymn. 1, with this view of the symbolism of cock-crow, says:—

“Hoc esse signum præscii  
Norunt repromissæ spei;  
Qua nos soporis liberi  
Speramus adventum Dei.”

The name,\* also, of the female, and the fact that she had but one, countenance this opinion, which is also supported by the absence† of D.M., with which Pagan epitaphs commonly begin.

So far the evidence preponderates in favour of the opinion that the memorial is Christian. But may it not be both Mithraic and Christian? On this subject I take the liberty of submitting a passage from my “Christian Epitaphs of the first Six Centuries,” pp. 56, 57.

“*Percipio* is similarly used in heathen inscriptions, where it is applied to those who had participated in the rites of the *Mater Deum Magna Idæa* or of *Mithras*, known as the *Taurobolium* and *Criobolium*.”<sup>1</sup>

“Another term in which there is a strange agreement is *renatus*, applied by Christians to the baptized, as in De Rossi’s n. 270, ‘(ca)lesti renatus (aq)ua qui vivit in (avum),’—see also n. 36, ‘natus est in æternum,’—and by Pagans to *Tauroboliatii*. Thus ‘*Taurobolio Criobolioque in æternum renatus*,’ in Orelli’s n. 2352, of the date 376 A.D.; and ‘*arcanis perfusionibus in æternum renatus Taurobolium Crioboliumque fecit*,’ in Henzen’s n. 6040. These mystic rites seem to have been a mixture of the cults of the *Magna Mater* and *Mithras*, with the addition of some Christian principles and terms.”

\* *Spes* is a name of a female common to both Pagans and Christians. Among the latter it is not very often found. See, however, De Rossi’s n. 532, and Perret, xxxii. We have also the Latin forms *Spesina*, *Sperantia*, and the Greek *Elpis*, *Elpidius*, *Elpizusa*, *Elpidephorus*. The fact that there is but one name is not conclusive that the person was a Christian, but it adds to the probability. See *Christian Epitaphs*, p. xx.

† This also adds to the probability; but there are a few Pagan gravestones on which this usual commencement is not found, and there are a few Christian on which the letters appear. See *Christian Epitaphs*, p. 60.

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<sup>1</sup> “The *Taurobolium* and *Criobolium* were respectively sacrifices of a bull and of a ram on the occasion of initiations. The persons who received them (*qui perciperunt*) descended into a deep pit which was covered over with a wooden platform, composed of pierced planks. On this platform the animal was killed, and the persons beneath presented their bodies to receive the blood as it descended through the holes. The result was believed to be purification that lasted for twenty years, or everlasting regeneration.”