

The People And The Book

By
Peter J Gadsden



**Queen Victoria presenting a
Bible to a tribal chief at
Windsor Castle (1861)**

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All biblical quotations are from the King James Version

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INTRODUCTION

"Remember and forget not"



It was **Edmund Burke** (left) who wrote "*people will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors.*" This is not only a sound philosophical statement, but also a fundamental biblical principle. Our political, as well as spiritual leaders, would do well to take note of this, for our once great nation is being led by men who have lost their way and they are leading the British people astray. These men have failed to understand the great principle, of "*remember and forget not*". They have, and one suspects deliberately, failed to remember God's mercy in dealing with this nation throughout the ages, they have forgotten his many acts of deliverance. The result is that today's politicians and spiritual leaders, rather than building on the solid foundation laid by previous generations, are building on sinking sand and they themselves flounder in the sinking sands of ungodliness, human ambition and vain hopes.

The act of looking back, is an act of recollection, of remembrance, of recalling past events, past blessings, important anniversaries in our lives, special events in our families history and in the history of the nation. The act of recollection is not living in the past, but is an important tool that enables the wise man and leader to avoid the pitfalls and mistakes of the past. By ignoring the past, men and nations leave themselves wide open to the very real danger of making the same mistakes over and over again, just as we see taking place today.

REMEMBER – REMEMBER

Again and again in the Bible, God's children are exhorted to remember. In Deuteronomy 5:15 for example the Lord calls on the children of Israel to "*Remember that they were servants in the land of Egypt,*" and that it was God who delivered them. We too should look back and remember that we were also once servants, not only individually to sin, but as a nation servants of the Church of Rome, and that it was God, who in His grace and mercy set us free. We would have been slaves to the Third Reich had it not been for the intervention of God, yet today what these people failed to do by armed conflict, they are doing by guile. The British leaders cannot or will not see it; the words of the old song need to be remembered "*Britain, never, never, never shall be slaves.*" But slaves we will be if our leaders do not wake up.

In Deuteronomy 16:3 Israel are exhorted to remember their deliverance from the Egyptians and they are to do so through a special feast, the Passover (left). Then again there is Deuteronomy 25:17, when they are called to remember and a humiliating event in their early history when the heathen king crept up behind them unawares and killed a number of the people. So we could go on; these are but three examples of the principle of looking back. Looking back reminds us of what we were, where we have come from and above all the greatness of God and His dealings with us. As well as warning of danger, looking back enables one to take evasive action and build positively for the future.

Today, many who claim to be authorities on the past, are trying to rewrite our history. They do so by either leaving out certain important facts, or by placing a greater emphasis on certain events which cannot rightly be justified. The most fertile ground for this manipulation of the past, is in the field of church history, particularly in respect of the early British Church and later the Protestant Reformation. This may be seen in that historic facts taught in schools forty and fifty years ago, are neglected, whilst other matters are brought to the fore, without due and adequate explanation. These moves are political, for by hiding the true facts, ambitious politicians and indeed ungodly spiritual leaders are able to manipulate the hearts and minds of the people.



An example of this rewriting of history may be found in respect of the early Christian church in Britain, for there are those who claim that the Christian faith was introduced to Britain by the arrival of the papal legate, Augustine when he landed at Thanet, in Kent in 597 AD. He had been commissioned by Pope Gregory to convert the Angles to the Latin form of Christianity. He arrived carrying with him a Bible, a book of Martyrs, a silver cross and a picture depicting Christ. Over the years the idea that he was the originator of Christianity in Britain has caught on and has been perpetuated by those with a vested interest; the result is that this falsehood has become the truth to many. Another factor that has helped in the general acceptance of this claim, is that most Christians

have adopted a Middle Eastern concept of Christianity, seeing the spread of the faith as being confined to the limitations described in the Bible and known as Bible lands. There is little doubt that the true Christian faith was well established in Britain by 314 AD when bishops from Britain attended the Church Council of Arles. British bishops were also present at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Prior to these Councils the British Church suffered severe persecution under Emperor Diocletian, when some ten thousand ordinary Christians along with a number of their leaders were put to death for their faith in Christ.

The question is, when did the Christian faith arrive on these shores. It is the purpose of this booklet is to try and throw some light on the matter. There are a number of strands that need to be followed in order to come to some conclusion.

A FULLER PICTURE

In order to get a fuller picture of our subject, it is important that we have an understanding of our nation before the advent of Christianity, and indeed before the Roman Empire invaded these shores. It has long been said that the natives of Britain, were painted savages; this idea has been perpetuated by historians over the years. This again is untrue and is based on two statements written by Julius Caesar, before he had time to fully assess the people and culture of the land he came to conquer, an enterprise in which we should hasten to add was an abject failure. When he first landed in or about 55 BC, it is recorded that his army *'faced a beach crowded with horses, chariots and skin-clad, blue-dyed infantry armed with pointless swords and uttering shouts of defiance.'* Yet it was these same people, the uneducated pagan savages, that humiliated Julius Caesar and sent him packing. The following year he returned, again with little success, for he had to suspended all military operations because of great losses at sea, through storms, although he did manage to get an expeditionary force as far north as London. It is however said that he spent much of the time writing, describing the country, he had not seen and the character of the people he had not met. He wrote these words *"Most of the inland inhabitants do not sow corn, but live on milk and flesh, and are clad with skins. All Britons, indeed dye themselves with wood (typographical error for woad) which occasions a bluish appearance in fight."* Whilst indebted to Caesar for leaving his record, it is incredible that many historians have followed this slender evidence, ignoring much that contradicts it and branded the ancient British people painted savages. It has been a case of the *"Painted savage"* fallacy becoming a self perpetuating error, which has been taught as factual in many of our schools. With such an idea of our heritage is it any wonder that the British people see little or any hope in the future, seeing themselves sinking into what they think is their pagan past.

BRITISH CIVILISATION

Civilization, is far more than having cars and modern conveniences, one can have all of these things, yet be quite uncivilized. Civilization has to do with social concerns, about having a system of social development, it is about having law and order, of government and the mutual

responsibility of people. From the very beginning man was created to be a civilized being, it was through his disobedience to the Law that caused what we call today barbarianism and savagery, in other words lawlessness. This is the idea often portrayed about the native Britons.

This "*Painted Savage*" idea is a false, libellous and dangerous idea, for it suggests that the British people were uncivilized, uneducated and lawless. Whilst true, the British people did paint themselves with woad when they went to war, many nations did the same, it has been suggested that this acted as an antiseptic in the event of wounding. Furthermore, let us not forget that under the guise of camouflage British and foreign soldiers do the same today. Yet they do not wear it all the time any more than the ancient Britons would. Furthermore, the British did not dress in smelly animal skins, Strabo has left us, descriptions of the dress of the Britons of his day, On a visit to Athens of the British Druid, Abaris the Greek geographer writes "*He came not clad in skins like the Scythian, but with a bow in his hand, a quiver hanging on his shoulder, a plaid wrapped about his body, a gilded belt encircling his loins and trousers reaching down from the waist to the soles of his feet.*"

Britain was a proud, independent nation and could boast a high degree of civilization; it had a good heritage and culture. Furthermore it was a nation that even then had a world wide export market, the main commodity being the export of tin along with lead and copper. In fact Britain was the leading manufacturer of these important products, a business that had gone on for many centuries. Such was the fame of Britain for these commodities that the name Cassiterides or the Tin Isle was given to us. When tin was discovered in Spain, British mining engineers were employed in the training of Spanish miners. Abbé de Fortene shows that trade with the Phoenicians, was taking place as far back as 1190 BC. Strabo the historian, informs us that tin was not the only commodity exported by the British, for he tells of British traders shipping corn, skins and cattle to Europe



In his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* Sir William Blackstone makes this telling comment "*Brutus, the first king of this land, as soon as he settled himself in his kingdom ... wrote a book in the Greek tongue, calling it The Laws of the Britons and he collected the same out of the laws of the Trojans. This king died over a thousand years before Christ, Samuel then being a judge in Israel*". The story is that at the end of the Trojan wars, Brutus set sail with a thousand of his country men to find anew pastures in the West. He eventually arrived in Britain, landing at Totnes in Devon. A stone known as the Brutus Stone is set in the pavement in Fore Street, this stone is said to be one that he brought with him. It is further claimed that the foundations of the city of London, under the ancient name of Trinovantium or Caer Troia were laid by him.

Opposite Canon Street Station in London, is a very old stone called the London Stone. A small plaque takes us back to 1188, when it was associated with Elwin, Lord mayor of London. Tradition however tell us that this stone was originally the pedestal of the 'Palladium' at Troy in Greece, this Palladium being a statue of a pagan goddess, one sacred to the Trojans. There therefore seems to be a link between ancient Greece, an empire not unknown for its civilisation and Britain. It is also interesting to note that Troy is referred to in the Acts of the Apostles as Troas.

About the sixth century B.C. Himilco of Carthage, visited Britain on an exploratory mission; his report was that the Britons were a "*powerful race, proud-spirited, effectively skilful in art, and constantly busy with the cares of trade.*" In the year BC 330 the explorer Pythias, made two voyages to Britain and reported on the British agricultural resources as well as the domestic customs. Greek coins of that period have been unearthed in various parts of the country. When the Romans invaded Britons were found to possess gold coinage and beautifully made shields

of bronze, enamelled ornaments and richly enamelled horse trappings. Another much sought after commodity was wool. Martial, in about A.D. 60 confirms that among the many attractions of Britain, was the manufacture of wool; he says that the British were "*for wool past compare.*" Cloth however was also imported from abroad, particularly that produced by the Phoenicians.



The art of enamelling was also invented in Britain in those far off days. Examples of this work, are the famous **Glastonbury bowl**, (left) reported to be well over two thousand years old, and the Desborough mirror. Many forms of jewellery, pins and brooches have been found, not only in Britain but as far away as Gaza; however made in Britain.

Jacquetta Hawkes writes in her book *Early Britain* that the "**Yorkshire Celts**, *beyond all other groups, seem to have been responsible for establishing the tradition of La Tene art.*" The art of La Tene, seems to have travelled to Britain from the continent of Europe at a very early date. La Tene,

which gave its name to the art, is situated close to the north-eastern end of Lake Neuchatel in Switzerland. As with many things, when the Roman Empire encroached into this area, the culture ceased.

The British people are today seen as being very lazy when it comes to learning languages, the main reason possibly being that English has for generations been seen as a universal language. In the ancient world, the Greek language, used worldwide, was the second language and used as the common trading language, just as English is today. Greek was known and used in Britain. In his **Gallic Wars**, Julius Caesar informs us that the Druids used Greek in all commercial transactions. In fact in the Sunday Times June 16th 1996 there was a report of writing, comprising a 89 letter script having been discovered, this having been used in Britain at least as early as 1500 BC.

EDUCATION, SPIRITUALITY AND LAWS

In his book "*The Ancient Faith of Britain*" (1924) Dudley Wright observes "*In Britain, the Druidical order is said to have numbered thirty-one seats of education, each being a Cyfiath, or City, the capital of a tribe.*" Julius Caesar in his writings states that "*A large number of young men resort for the purpose of instruction.*" It is further stated by Wright that "*They observed one day in seven as peculiarly sanctified and made holy by the Great Creator.*" They also dedicated one-tenth of their substance to religious works. It is also known that the British people worshipped only one God. To think that the ancient Britons were uneducated savages is totally unjust. It may well be true, just as it is today, that not all took advantage of or had the opportunity to study, but many did. The period of education to the highest degree, equivalent to a modern Doctorate, lasted twenty years. During this time four degrees were awarded, the first given after three years study; this included the study of the arts, probably equal to the modern Bachelor of Arts, the second Degree was awarded after a further six years of study. The third after a further nine year's work, with the final degree following two years later; so claims Dudley Wright.

Archaeologist J O Kinnaman DD made this notable statement "Pilate was not a Roman by nationality, but by citizenship. He was born a Spaniard and educated in Spain as far as the schools of that country could take him. Then he went to Britain to study in the universities of that country under the administration of the Druids. How long he studied in Britain is not known." Isabel Hill Elder, author of ***Celt, Druid and Culdee***, claims that students at these universities numbered upward of sixty thousand, whilst Julius Caesar claims that the Gauls sent their young people to be educated at the British universities.

Another false idea is that the religion practised by the ancient Britons, commonly defined as Druidism, involved human sacrifice, yet despite extensive archaeological investigations, there is no evidence to support this, archaeological finds only support animal sacrifice. It is possible however that a corrupt and debased form of this religion did exist, on the European Continent which practised such atrocities. When one realizes similarities have been noted between the religion of Britain and that of the Old Testament, this is what one would expect. It is also interesting to note that the ancient religion did not follow the practice of most pagan nations of bowing down and worshipping idols and graven images; this was to them an abomination. No artefacts have been found that even hint at any idol worship taking place in Britain before the Roman occupation. It is also interesting to note that they always worshipped in the open, facing east. Furthermore they had a passionate belief in the immortality of the soul. Again referring to *The Gallic Wars*, Julius Caesar writes "*The Druids make the immortality of the soul the basis of all their teaching, holding it to be the principal incentive and reason for a virtuous life.*"

Furthermore, it is interesting to note, that the British knew the name of the Messiah, long before the event of His incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, a translation of an ancient Celtic Triad tells us this:

**"The Lord our God is One.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is the King of Glory? The Lord Yesu;
He is the King of Glory"**

In Britain the name 'Yesu' never assumed its Greek or Latin form, but remained in the native tongue. How the Druids knew this wonderful name is a mystery.

One of the great problems that face modern historians, seeking to find the facts about this period, is given by **Julius Caesar** (left) in his *Gallic Wars* for he writes "*Druids do not go to war ... their (scholars) are said there to learn by heart a great number of verses; accordingly some remain in the course of training twenty years. Nor do they regard it lawful to commit these to writing ...*" It is because the British scholars, the religious leaders followed this practice, that documented facts, as far as their religious teachings and activities, are in short supply. One suggested reason for this practice was that memorization, rather than documented materials, helped the mind, kept it active and stimulated thought. It was only after the Roman occupation that this rule began to be relaxed. This practice did not apply to ordinary every day business and social transactions.



Ancient Britain was not a lawless nation, the practice of lawmaking and observance was a long established principle. One of the great law givers of Britain lived five hundred years before Christ; his name was Dunvallo Molmutius. The seat of learning and government from which his laws proceeded was Winton (Winchester). The following statements come from the Triads of Molmutius, triads because the statements come in threes. "*There are three tests of*

civil liberty: equality of rights - equality of taxation - freedom to come and go." In respect of British heritage and birthright he declared *"There are three civil birthrights of every Briton; the right, to go wherever he pleases - the right wherever he is, to protection from his land and sovereign - the right of equal privileges and equal restrictions."* In matters of religion the following is declared *"There are three sacred things by which the conscience binds itself to truth; the name of God - the rod of him who offers up prayers to God - and the joined right hand."* Social welfare was not neglected in these ancient British laws *"There are three persons who have the right to public maintenance; the old - the babe - the foreigner who cannot speak the British tongue."*



These laws, according to research carried out by Harrison Hill in the 1920's, were the first laws published in Britain and along with those of the Queen of Mercia, were essential elements of the British system and culture until the time of William the Conqueror. The British people are not without a long and worthy heritage in terms of spirituality, education and law. The British people at the time of our Lord were not Barbarians, they were not uneducated, painted savages.

Good medical care and hygiene, not the medicine-man concept so often equated with this period in our history, was practised at this time, following the principle of prevention is better than cure. Doctors were skilled in the treatment of patients following a stringent hygiene code, advising cheerfulness, temperance and exercise as the way to maintain good health.

It would therefore, not be out of place to say, that Druidism, rather than being simply a religion, was in fact the very core of government, the source of civil and religious government of the land. From this source originated the nations courts of law and law givers, its clergy, its legislators, teachers and doctors. Under the rule of this ancient order, Britain maintained a high standard of morals, justice and patriotism.

THE ROMAN ERA (55 B.O - AD. 410)

Julius Caesar arrived off Dover from Boulogne with eighty transports and two legions of soldiers in the early hours of 26th August in 55BC. This date is disputed, as some believe the event took place some years earlier. Give or take a few years, Julius Caesar, the famous general, arrived on British soil, not long before the birth of Christ. As we have mentioned his arrival was not unheralded, as there was armed opposition on the beaches between Deal and Walmer. Repeated skirmishing prevented the reconnaissance from being a success; in fact this expedition ended in a dismal failure and within two weeks the Roman forces were forced to retreat and return to Gaul. On his return to Rome, Caesar was openly ridiculed for this failure.

He returned in 54 B.O (variously on 18th or 21st July). With five legions and eight hundred vessels, he made his camp on the Kentish shore. Despite the set backs, he had at sea, losing many men and ships through storms. in the English channel, an expeditionary force was sent north to London, crossing the river Thames near Brentford. As with his first visit, he faced fierce opposition by the British forces, under the command of Cassivellaunus. His base was the old Belgic capital of St Albans (Verulamium). Due to the strength of opposition and possibly having to use a much weaker force than originally planned; the Roman occupation could not be sustained, the invasion force once more being forced to retreat.

It was nearly a century later in AD 43, when the third Roman landing was made with some 20,000 men in three waves under the command of Plautius. This invasion is referred to as the Claudian invasion, after the Roman emperor, who in 42 AD issued a decree of persecution against

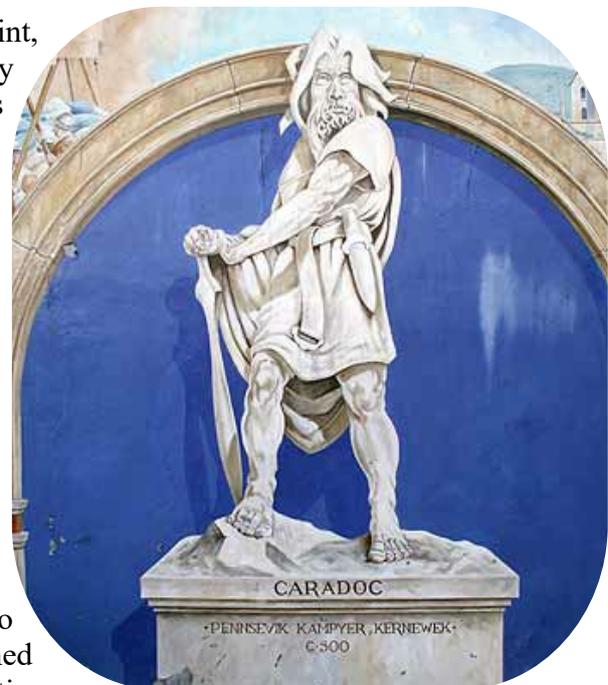
the British Christians. He ordered that Christian Britain, men, woman and children, along with its institutions and libraries be destroyed. In this same edict, according to Suetonius, he proclaimed that the acceptance of the Druidic or Christian faith was a capital offence, punishable either by the sword, or forced to face the lions in the arena of the Coliseum. This ruling also included descendants of David. In order to accomplish this he equipped one of the largest armies, led by the most able generals ever to leave Rome. Rome believed, from her previous experience, that brute force of arms would bring the British people to their knees; this was a flawed judgement, as the experience of Julius Caesar had shown.



Even with this massive invasion force and superiority of arms and equipment, the British forces were no walkover. Under the ageing British leader, **Cunobelinus**, (Coin left) the resistance remained strong and bitter. Some of the most bitter and bloodiest battles resulted from Roman deception. The King of the East Anglian Iceni tribe, knowing of Rome's cruel atrocities practised on their captives, he sought to safe guard his wife, Queen Boadicea, from them, should he die. To secure the welfare of his family, he bequeathed half of his great fortune to Emperor Nero. On his death in 60 AD, this was totally ignored, and Caissus Decius claimed the entire fortune for the state. When the family resisted,

the Roman army stormed the royal residence and, in typical fashion, exacted a terrible revenge, including the rape of the queen's daughters. Inflamed by these atrocities enflamed Queen Boadicea in AD 61 raised an army of warriors, and attacked the Roman strongholds of Colchester (Camulodunum), London (Londinium), and St. Albans each of which were sacked by her. Boadicea's army consisted some 80,000. She was met by Suetonius' 14th and 20th Legions comprising of some 10,000, men on a battlefield perhaps near Hampstead Heath, North London. The conflict was fierce and bloody, the British forces were not only routed, but massacred. For the loss of only about 400 of the fully armed Romans, 70,000 Britons were claimed to have been killed.

Two other names need to be mentioned at this point, Caradoc, King of the Silures, known in history by the name given him by the Romans, Caractacus and Bran. Caractacus was the elected leader, the equivalent of the Commander in Chief of the British forces; he was a man of great courage. His valour and skill in battle earned him the title "the Scourge of the Romans." He fought over thirty battles against the Romans, many of which resulted in victories. What transpired to be his final battle was fought in or about 51 AD, and ended in defeat. He fled north for safety to one whom he thought was an ally, but was there betrayed, captured and taken prisoner along with Llyr Llediath his grandfather and Llyr's son Bran along with other members of his family and transported to Rome. Bran before being taken to Rome, was the Arch Druid, but when they returned from Rome both he and Caractacus were Christians.



Bran, now called Bran the Blessed, returned to Britain before Caractacus in 58 AD, and began spreading the gospel message. There is the old school rhyme that goes:

**In forty-three a Roman host
From Gaul attacked our southern coast;**

**Caractacus in nine years more
A captive left his native shore.**

Eurgain, the daughter of Caradoc, is said to have established a Christian school at Llantwit Major. The students were divided into twenty-four groups, each being responsible for one hour of worship, forming a chain of ceaseless praise (laus perennis) that ascended to God.

Many fierce battles took place over the following years, but even the most able of the Roman legions were unable to subdue the independent spirit of the British people. Tacitus wrote of the Claudian campaign, which lasted about nine years, that although Rome hurled the greatest army in their history at the British, it failed to prevail against the military genius of Caractacus and the reckless fierceness of the British warrior. The famous legions of Rome suffered many defeats and great losses. It was not until the reign of Hadrian in about AD 120 that Britain became officially part of the Roman Empire, that was accomplished not by force of arms but by treaty. In this treaty Britain retained its kings, lands, laws and rights, accepting the Roman army for the defence of the realm.



For nearly 300 years the Roman regime protected the land, enforced peace and maintained law and order. They built public baths, grand villas and great public buildings, introduced central heating and many other "modern" home improvements. In order to maintain their strength of 40,000 troops, who were garrisoned at Chester, Caerleon-on-Usk, York and Hadrian's wall, the Legions recruited local men, thus Britons made up part of the Roman army. **Hadrian** (left) arrived in Britain 122AD after the annihilation of the 9th legion by the Picts. The seventy-four and a half mile wall across the Tyne to Solway isthmus was built between A.D 122 and 129. The thirty seven mile long Forth to Clyde or Antonine Wall was built about 150 A.D but was abandoned within forty years. Emperor Severus re-established military order in the period 208-21, but by the time of Caracalla, who ruled in 211-17, the increasing number of raids by the Saxons, so named after their favourite weapon, a short, one handed sword, called a Seax, from the Schleswig-Holstein area were becoming increasingly troublesome, as were the incursions by the Picts and Scots. These made great demands on the Roman garrisons, so that in 367 A.D the

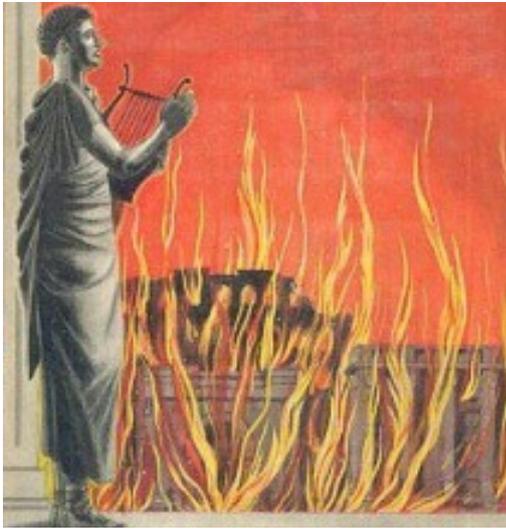
Emperor Valentinian was forced to send General Theodosius to restore order in the province. In AD 400, Theodosius in turn sent his General Stilicho, to deliver the Province from the ever increasing pressure of the barbarians.

By AD 402, the emperor was forced to recall the Roman garrison to help resist the incursions into Northern Italy of the Visigoths, under Alaric. In AD 405, there was mutiny in the remaining garrison in Britain, who in 410 AD elected Gratianus (a Briton) as rival Emperor. Emperor Honorius told the Britons that they must 'defend themselves' against the Saxons, Picts, and Scots. This was something they were unable to do, despite, or maybe because of the three hundred year occupation by Rome. Submission to the authority of Rome had probably weakened the British spirit, undermining their resolve and strength.

By AD 449, the Scandinavian invaders had made great inroads in Britain; a Jutish Kingdom had been set up in Kent by Hengist and Horsa. The 5th and 6th centuries were a period of utter

confusion and misery, with conflict between the English and the remaining Britons, whose last champion was reputedly King Arthur. Sometime between 493 and 503 AD, Arthur, so legend tells us, fought the battle of Mountpadon against the Saxon invaders on an uncertain site, now ascribed to Liddington Camp, Badbury, near Swindon, Wiltshire.'

CHRISTIANITY IN ROMAN BRITAIN



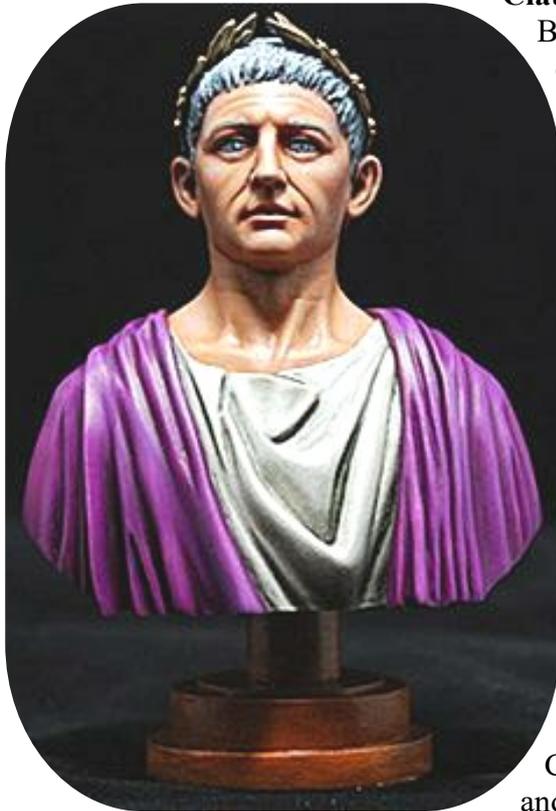
For over three hundred and fifty years, Roman forces had occupied Britain; they brought with them their culture, their laws and religion, so the first proposition is this, that Roman soldiers and the Roman civilians that followed and lived in Britain, would almost certainly have included Christians. It is hardly conceivable that such a large contingent of people from Rome, and other parts of the Roman Empire, would not have a reasonable representation of Christians over such a time span. These Christians would hardly have kept their faith secret; they would have shared their faith with the inhabitants in the regions with whom they came into contact. Christianity, is and always has been a missionary oriented faith. This is not an unreasonable proposition when one considers the following information. In the New Testament we

have the following names, Pudens, Linus and Claudia; these three along with others send their greetings to Timothy via Paul's second letter to him, 2Timothy 4:21. This letter was written in the Autumn of 67 AD from Rome. Nero was the emperor, the Christians had become the scapegoats for his burning of half the city in July 64 AD. Paul, like all Christians, was regarded as *Religio Illicito* and rather than being under house arrest as was his first imprisonment in Rome, he was then incarcerated in a cold prison cell, from whence this letter was written.

It is however the three names, Pudens, Linus and Claudia, that are of importance to this discussion. We need to go back a few years to AD. 41-54 and the time when Claudius was Emperor. During part of this time Pudens, who is mentioned by Paul, was in Britain on military service. He was the son and heir of Pudentinus. At this time Pudens was not a Christian, but was a follower of the ancient pagan religions of Rome. The fact that he was stationed in Britain probably as a senatorial envoy to Roman Generals, is verified by a Dedication Stone unearthed in 1723 in the foundations of a house at North Corner in St Martins Street, Chichester. The dedication was for the Roman Temple of Neptune and Minerva, and the inscription has been translated to read "*The College or Artificers, and their ministers of religion attached to it by authority of Tib Claudius Cogidunus, the King (as legate of the Emperor Claudius) in Britain, have dedicated this temple to Neptune and Minerva, at their own cost, in honour of the divine imperial family: Pudens son of Pudentinus, giving the ground.*" This proves without any doubt that Pudens was not only here in Britain, but was also a man of wealth and social standing, either owning or purchasing the site for the temple.

It is highly probable, that this is the Pudens mentioned by Paul in the letter to Timothy. Pudens' full title and name being Senator Aulus Rufus Pudens. In Romans 16:13 Paul's writes "*salute Rufus and the mother of him and of me*" using Pudens' domestic name. By writing in this fashion Paul is implying that Pudens father married Paul's widowed mother. Rufus Pudens' married whilst in Rome, Princess Claudia, the daughter of Caractacus the British King; the very king who had fought a long and illustrious campaign against the Claudian Mission but, who, as a prisoner had been taken to Rome with his wife and family. Caractacus was, as we have seen a victim of subterfuge, for he sought the protection of Aricia, Queen of the Brigantes, who proved to be no friend, since she betrayed him to Rome. He was arrested whilst he slept, chained in irons and taken to Rome. She in turn was denounced by the people and dethroned for betraying this great leader and hero.

Because of his heroic and fearless stand, and many battles fought against the invading forces, Caractacus' fame had spread throughout the then known world. Even in Rome his name had reached celebrity status. In order to magnify the great victory achieved over this heroic British king, the emperor bestowed the highest praise and honour on the vanquished warrior king. A great triumphal procession was ordered, at which full military honours and glory were displayed. The king, a prisoner in chains, was, along with his family and with other prisoners, paraded before the gathered throng of some three million people. For some reason, the humiliation and cruelty reserved for such prisoners, was not meted out to this British hero. It is said that "*Rome trembled when she saw the Briton, though fast in chains.*" In his defence before the Roman Senate Caractacus said this "*Had my government in Britain been directed solely with a view to the preservation of my hereditary domains, or the aggrandisement of my own family, I might long since have entered this city as an ally, not as a prisoner. Nor would you have disdained for a friend a king descended from illustrious ancestors. My present condition, stripped of its former majesty, is as adverse to myself as it is a cause of triumph to you ... I was lord of oxen, horses, arms and wealth. Are you surprised if at your dictation I refused to resign them? Does it follow that because the Romans aspire to universal dominion, every nation is to accept the vassalage they would impose? I am now in your power - betrayed not conquered! Had I, like others yielded without resistance, where would have been the name of Caradoc? Where your glory? Oblivion would have buried both in the same tomb. Bid me live, and I shall survive for ever in history as an example of Roman clemency*".



Claudius (left) granted him his freedom to return to Britain, which he subsequently did. However, members of his family remained in Rome as hostages. For nine years he had defied Rome, fought thirty-nine battles and only an act of treachery delivered him into the hands of Rome. We need to remember these brave and heroic ancestors of ours; they met Rome head on, fought to keep the nation free from foreign laws and government.

Pudens by this time had been converted to Christ, as indeed were Claudia and Caractacus, Caractacus also had a son named Linus, who was to become the first bishop of Rome. The Roman Poet, Martial, writing in the year AD68 calls her "*Claudia peregrina et edita Britannis*" and speaks of her marriage to Pudens.

The situation then is this, we find that there is a British King in Rome, father in law of a Roman Senator, who along with his wife Claudia are clearly Christians and whose son Linus is the bishop of Rome, and all this in the first century AD, only twenty or thirty years after the resurrection. It is therefore highly unlikely that Christianity was an unknown religion in Britain. On his return to Britain Caractacus lived in Aber-gweryd in Glamorganshire, the home of Bran, and from here preached the gospel of Christ. Roman martyrology records the death of four of Pudens' and Claudia's children, ending with this statement "*All of whom were instructed in the faith of the Apostles.*" We have therefore good reason to believe that Christianity was established in Britain during the first century, at the very latest 58 AD, when Bran, who is spoken of in the Welsh Triads as one of the introducers of Christianity to Britain, returned from Rome. His family is also described in these same writings as one of the three holy families of Britain.

WHO BROUGHT THE GOSPEL TO BRITAIN? EVANGELISTIC MISSIONS THE APOSTLE PAUL IN BRITAIN?

Did the apostle Paul visit Britain? This is a question that has puzzled historians throughout the centuries. If he did visit Britain then Christianity would have certainly have been introduced at a very early stage, certainly long before that suggested by most people today.

There is certainly some circumstantial evidence that suggests at least the probability that the apostle Paul visited these shores. Clement, a personal friend of the apostle says that the apostle travelled to the "*furthest limits of the West*" the western limit of the Empire was Britain. Jerome also declares that "*After his imprisonment, having been in Spain, he went from ocean to ocean, and preached in Western parts.*" This phrase "*Western Parts*", is understood in Roman literature to include Britain. Certainly Britain would not have been unknown to Paul; he was a highly educated and well informed man. Eusebius records that it was St Paul, who "*Planted Christianity in the British Isles.*" We cannot ignore the report of Theodoret the Blessed, born about 390 AD, who in AD 435 said: "*Paul, liberated from his captivity at Rome preached the Gospel to the Romans and others in the West.*" Venantius Fortunatus, the Bishop of Poitiers, born about 530 AD speaks of Paul "*Crossing the ocean*" and visiting "*Britain and the extreme West.*"

There is also a certain amount of traditional and archaeological evidence that suggests Paul came to these parts. In the ancient harbour of Chichester, there is a place known as Paul's Wharf. Tradition claims that this was the place the apostle set foot on British soil. (Sussex Archaeological Collections, vol 22 1871). Also on a cliff at Fowey in Cornwall, there exist the remains of a church building where tradition says the apostle preached. The Welsh Triad and Annals have reference to a visit from Paul who reformed and re-organized the great Druidic Cor of Bangor Isacoed, the very place where centuries later, over one thousand Christians were massacred as they prayed. It is said that it was the Rule of Paul that governed the great school of prophets that existed in this place.

Old St. Paul's Cathedral - London



In addition to this, there is the tradition that says St Paul preached at Gospel Oak as well as the spot where St Paul's Cathedral now stands. It is interesting to note that this is the only cathedral in England that bears his name. The Sonnini Manuscript suggests Paul came to Britain and preached on Mount Lud, Ludgate Hill. In the Morning Post, dated 27th March 1931, there was a report of a visit made by one hundred

and fifty members of the Friends of Italy Society, to Rome. The number included the Mayors of Bath, Colchester and Dorchester, The group were given a special audience with Pope Pius XI , who in a specially prepared address, advanced the idea that it was St. Paul himself and not Pope Gregory who first introduced Christianity into Britain.

THE ARIMATHEA CONNEXTION

Until recent times, what we are about to consider was considered to be impeachable as the true source of the introduction of Christianity to Britain; it was certainly taught as a fact during the author's school days in the nineteen forties and fifties.

The story is that after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the authorities, as we know, vented their anger on the disciples, not least towards Philip, Lazarus, Martha, Mary and Joseph of Arimathea. This little group were banished from Judea; they were placed, so the records



inform us, in an open boat (left) and allowed to drift in the Mediterranean Sea. They eventually arrived at Marseilles. Philip and Lazarus remained at this place whilst Joseph, Mary and Martha along with twelve companions. travelled on to Britain. They landed on the South West coast and there began preaching the gospel, eventually arriving at the place we now know as Glastonbury. King Arviragus, the ruler of the region, took pity on them, gave them land and allowed them to settle there, the amount of land is described as twelve hides, a hide being

a portion of land sufficient to sustain a family and its dependants and has been estimated to be between sixty and one hundred and twenty acres.

A place of worship was built out of wattles and dedicated in honour of Mary the mother of Jesus. Many mythical tales have developed over the centuries regarding this place and the events that took place. However, one thing is certain, no place in Britain has ever attempted to rival Glastonbury's claim to be the first British Christian settlement.

Cardinal Baronius, who wrote the maxim "*Melius silentium quam mendacium veris admixtum*" which is translated "*Better silence than a lie mixed with truth,*" a learned Librarian and very careful historian who spent thirty years in producing his Ecclesiastical Annals quotes a Vatican manuscript, for the year AD 35 which makes the following declaration: "*That in that year (35AD) Joseph of Arimathea, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Marcella, their maid and Maximin, a disciple were put by the Jews into a boat without sail and without oars and floated down the Mediterranean, and landed in Marseilles. And from thence Joseph and his company crossed into Britain, and preached the gospel there and finally died there.*" It is interesting to note that until recent years, the gypsies in France made an annual pilgrimage to Saintes Maries de la Mer at the mouth of the Rhone, where the boat of Lazarus is said to have come ashore.

The Domesday Book confirms the following: "*The Church at Glastonbury (left) has in its own ville (village or settlement) 12 hides of land, which have never paid tax.*" Although this does not confirm the story of Joseph of Arimathea, it certainly bears weight to the fact that 12 hides of land were given for some special purpose., Maelgwyn of Llandaff, the uncle of St David, wrote about 450AD that "*Joseph of Arimathea, the noble decurion (a member of a colony) entered his perpetual sleep with his XI companions in the Isle of Avalon,*" In his History of the Franks, Gregory of Tours AD 544- 595, Haleca, the Archbishop of Saragossa, in his Fragmenta and the Chronicon of Pseudo Dexter are all united in saying that Joseph of Arimathea was the first to preach the gospel in Britain.



THE APOSTLE PETER'S ASSOCIATION

Did the Apostle Peter visit these Isles? There seems to be a certain amount of documentation that suggests he did. In the *Argum Epist, St Pauli AD Romanos* Cornelius a Lapide answers a question, one that is often asked even today. "Why did St Paul not salute St Peter in his Epistle to the Romans"? This is a reasonable question when one considers the Church of Rome's claims that Peter was in Rome. That the Roman Church was established by Him and that he was the

first bishop of Rome, The answer Lapidé gives is because "*Peter with the rest of the Jews had been banished from Rome by the Edict of Claudius and was in Britain.*" Simon Metaphrastes goes further and claims that the vision Peter had in 2Peter 1 regarding his death, appeared to him whilst in Britain.

Finally, corroboration for these statements may be found on a four foot by fifteen inches stone tablet unearthed at Whithorn, the inscription reads "LUCVS PANCTI PETRI APVSTOLI" the translation of which is "*The place of St Peter the Apostle*", (Whithorn being the traditional place where Peter landed.)

THE LUCIAN TRADITION

In order to maintain the community and faith at Glastonbury, the order of twelve was maintained by the system of anchorites, that is, the system, when one disciple died another was appointed in his place, thus maintaining the status quo. However as with religion throughout the ages there was probably a certain amount of neglect creeping into the work, the initial zealotry being replaced by casualness and the tendency to back sliding; such a downgrade can be shown historically, in both Israel's history and that of the Church in this land. It is therefore not only possible, but highly probable that by the middle to end of the second century, such would have taken place in Britain.



However, at this time a new luminary was to appear on the scene, a British king by the name of **Lucius**, (left) the great grandson of Caractacus.

We need at this point to remember that Caractacus and his father Bran, had not only been prisoners of Rome in Rome, but had been so roughly at the same time as the apostle Paul. The question is, did these members of British royalty meet Paul? Were they converted under his ministry? It is not possible to say for sure, but when they were set free to return to Britain, they returned as Christians, and proclaimed their new found faith to others. It is therefore highly unlikely that Lucius was without knowledge of the Christian faith. He wrote to the bishop of Rome, Eleutherius, asking for missionaries to be sent to Britain; some reports have it that he requested that the bishop of Rome to make him a Christian. The Welsh

Triads inform us that the bishop responded by sending Dyfan, Fagan, Medwy and Elfan, all of which are British names; these may have been Christian Britons resident in Rome. These men came and strengthened the witness of the long established British Church. We must remember that at this time in history, the Church of Rome was still a sound church, she had not embraced the idolatry and false doctrine of later years, which caused her to become the founder of apostate Latin Christianity.

There is also some evidence to suggest that Britain, as a nation adopted the Christian faith and became the first country to do so. At the National Council at Winchester in AD 156, King Lucius, by solemn declaration declared to the world that Britain was officially a Christian nation, again referring to the Welsh Triads; this act is described as follows: "*King Lucius was the first on the Isle of Britain who bestowed the privilege of country and nation and judgement and validity of oath upon those who should be of the faith of Christ.*"

Lucius established the three most famous archbishoprics, London, York and Caerlon on Usk. Among many church buildings erected by him. was the historic church of St Peter on Cornhill, which is often referred to as the first Christian church in London. The foundations are certainly pre Norman Conquest, and in the vestry there is a brass plate, dating from the time of Henry IV, 1399 -1415, claiming the following that "*in AD 179 good King Lucius, founded that church, the first Christian church in London, which became the archepiscopal seat of the south.*" This is all that remains of the building which was destroyed by the great fire of London in 1666. The present building, built by Sir Christopher Wren, dates from 1677 - 87.

Lucius, eventually left these shores as a missionary to Europe, travelling through Bavaria, eventually being martyred near Curia, Germany. It is claimed that he and his sister are buried in the crypt of the old Cathedral at Coire, in Switzerland. Round about the year 250 AD, Sabellius wrote "*Christianity was privately expressed elsewhere, but the first nation that proclaimed it as their religion and called itself Christian, after the name of Christ, was Britain*". Ebrard also stated that "The glory of Britain consists ... That she was the first country which in a national capacity publicly professed herself Christian.

ARISTOBULUS

Hippolytus, born about AD. 160 one of the most knowledgeable members of the Roman (not Roman Catholic) Church of that period, refers to Aristobulus as Bishop of the Britons. The Martyrologies of the Greek Church say this "... *one of the seventy disciples and a follower of St Paul the Apostle ... was chosen by St Paul to be the missionary Bishop in the land of Britain.*" The testimony of Haleca, Bishop of Augusta, and St Ado, the Archbishop of Vienne, also support this claim. Theodoret also referred to Aristobulus as the Bishop of Britain. In the Genealogies of the Saints of Britain, the following statement is to be found "*There came with Bran the Blessed from Rome (a converted Arch-druid and father of Caractacus both of whom were prisoners in Rome in AD 31, Arwystli Hen (Aristobulus the Aged)*".

THE SIMON ZELOTES TRADITION

In the Bible Simon is often referred to as Simon the Canaanite, because he originated from Cana, It is not known whether he was a member of the Zealots, a religio - political party, followers of Mattathias, so called because of their zeal for the Law of God. These people opposed the rule of Rome and the payment of taxes to the pagan emperor, on the grounds that it was treason to God, their true King. Maybe Simon was, or had been, a member of this party. On the other hand some see the word zealous as having close affinity to the name of his home town, which the Greek translation gives as Zelotes. Whatever the case may be, he was one of the twelve and a zealous preacher of the gospel.



Nicephorous (left) the Patriarch of Constantinople and historian AD 758 - 829 wrote "*Simon born in Cana of Galilee, who for his fervent affection for his Master and great zeal that he showed by all means to the Gospel, was surnamed Zelotes, having received the Holy Ghost from above, travelled through Egypt and Afric, then Mauritania and all Lybia, preaching the Gospel. And the same doctrine he taught in the Occidental Sea and the Isles called Brittania.*"

The account which claims that Simon Zelotes came to Britain, is attributed to the Bishop of Tyre, Dorotheus, circa AD 303, who wrote "*Simon Zelotes preached Christ through all Mauretania, and Afric the less. At length he was crucified at Brittania, slain and buried.*" It is claimed that he was arrested under the orders of Catus Decianus, tried and condemned to death by crucifixion. His execution took place on or about 10th May AD 61 at Caistor, Lincolnshire, where it is said he is buried.

BRITISH MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

Most British missionary work is credited to men and women of recent centuries. The fact is, missionary work has been an integral part of the British Church's enterprise since the earliest days, and supports the concept of a very early arrival of Christianity to these shores. For example there was Beatus, a Briton of noble birth, who was, so tradition claims converted by the preaching of St Barnabus and baptized by him in Britain. He in turn went as a missionary to Switzerland, where he died in 96 AD.

Then there is the Irishman Mansutus, converted in Britain, who was commissioned and sent in the company of Clement to Rome, and then to preach the gospel in France. It is said that he founded the church in Lorraine. From here he went east, where he was slain for his faith, in AD 96 or 110.

Cadwal, another British missionary is credited for founding the church of Tarentum in Italy; the cathedral there is dedicated to him. Such missionary activity from Britain is clear evidence of a very early arrival of the faith to these shores.

ARCHAEOLOGY



Important finds of Christian artefacts also confirm the early establishment of Christianity in Britain. For example, in 1963 a mosaic pavement was unearthed at Hinton St Mary, Dorset (left); measuring 30ft x 20ft, it has been dated as belonging to the early fourth century AD. The dates have been set as being between 270 and 400 because of coins that were found with it dating from that period. It has been described by the British Museum, in whose possession it now is, as "Undoubtedly one of the most outstanding Christian remains from Roman Britain."

In addition to this pavement, finds of six baptismal tanks have been found in Britain, one of which it is declared the earliest evidence discovered in the Thames Valley. Like the pavement the date placed on them is fourth century. At Shepton Mallet a third or fourth century amulet, identified as being of Christian use and origin has been discovered.

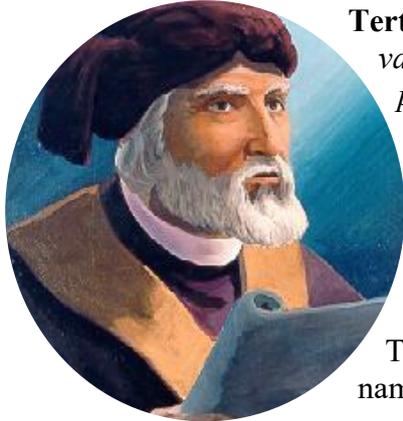
EVIDENCE OF THE PERSECUTIONS

The fourth century commences with a story of horror that was to last from the year 303 to 313 AD a period of ten years. Under Emperor Diocletian a persecution, the like of which had not been seen, was unleashed upon the Church of Christ. Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments* writes "*Where, by the way, is to be noted, that this realm (Britain) being so christened before, yet was never touched with any of the other nine persecutions, before the tenth persecution under Diocletian and Maximian: in which persecution and Polychronicon do record, that all Christianity almost in the whole island was destroyed, the churches subverted all books and literature burnt, many faithful, both men and women, were slain; among whom was the first and chief ringleader (as hath been said) was Alban.*" Alban or St Alban as he is called seems to have been a Roman soldier, probably British. According to his *De Excidio Britanniae*, Gildas declares that over ten thousand souls of different levels of society, along with Alban, Stephen and Argulius, both bishops of London; Socrates the bishop of York; Amphibalus bishop of Llandaff; Nicholas, bishop of Penrhyn (Glasgow); Melior, bishop of Carlisle all perished during these terrible years.

In addition to these saints who gave their lives for the cause of Christ, there is further evidence of the early formation of the church in Britain in that it is known that after the persecutions the British bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London and Adlefius of Chester were present at the Council of Arles in 314 AD. Others were present at the Council of Nicea in AD 315, Sardica in 347 and at Ariminum in 359 AD.

A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES

There are many witnesses that may be called upon at this point who all indicate an early date for the arrival and establishment of the Church in the land.



Tertulian (left) 155 - 222 AD said "*The extremities of Spain, the various part of Gaul, the regions of Britain which have never been penetrated by the Roman Arms, have received the religion of Christ.*"

Origen 185 - 254AD "*The divine goodness of our Lord and Saviour is equally diffused among the Britons, the Africans, and the other nations of the world.*"

The first bishop of Rouen in France was a Briton, a man by the name of Mellos, he was consecrated in 256 AD.

Eusebius AD 260 - 340 bishop of Caesarea "*The apostles passed beyond the ocean to the Isle called the Britannic Isles*".

Jerome writing in 378 AD said that "*From India to Britain all nations resound with the death and resurrection of Christ*".

Augustine of Hippo writing in AD 408 asks "*How many churches are there not erected in the British Isles,*"

Palldius, bishop of Helenpolis, born about 367 AD tells of the coming of British pilgrims to Syria and Jerusalem.

Gildas 516 -570AD a British historian says "*Christ, the true Son, afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts, to our island in the last year, as we know, of Tiberius Caesar.*" This was in AD 37, just four years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, about the same time that Saul, as he was then called was persecuting the saints, it is said of the saints at this time that "*they were all scattered abroad.*" He also writes that "*Joseph introduced Christianity into Britain into our Island in the last year of the Tiberius Caesar.*"

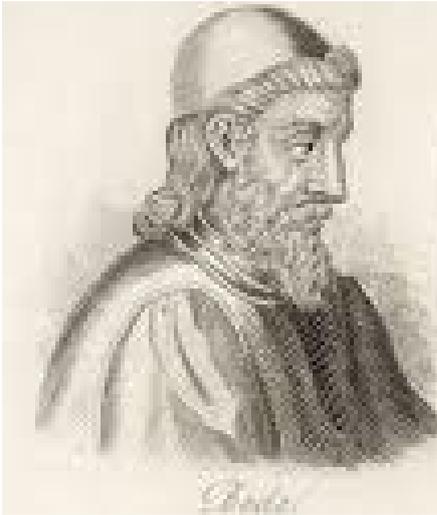
These are a few of the many who testify to the early birth of Christianity in Britain.

PATRICK AND COLUMBA

Little if anything works in isolation, and so it is in the case of Columba. In order to understand him we need to look briefly at his predecessor Patrick. Patrick was born about the year 385AD into a British family named Succat. His father was a deacon of the church at Bannavern, a simple and pious man. Undoubtedly Patrick came under the preaching of the gospel and his parents would have sought all within their power to bring him to a saving knowledge of Christ. He was however too fond of pleasure and made little response to the Word of God.

It was only after Irish pirates had taken him and two of his sisters captive and sold them as slaves in Ireland that the lessons he had heard at his parents feet became reality. So it was that in Ireland far from home, he turned to Christ, repented of his sin and was born again, by the Holy Spirit. His testimony is that "*I was sixteen years old and knew not the true God: but in that strange land the Lord opened my unbelieving eyes, and although late, I called my sins to mind, and was converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God, who regarded my low estate, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and consoled me as a father consoles his children.*" His trust and faith in the Scriptures can be readily seen in his own words "*The words are not mine, but of God and*

the apostles and the prophets, who have never lied, which I have set forth in Latin. He that believeth not shall be damned. God hath spoken." Patrick like all the other Celtic missionaries *"diligently followed whatever pure and devout customs that they learned from the prophets, the gospels, and the writings of the Apostles"* states J H Merle d'Aubigne.



After many adventures, Patrick returned home, only to feel the call to return to Ireland, this time not as a slave to men but as a slave to Christ, taking to that people the wonderful message of God's redeeming grace and mercy. Just prior to his return to Ireland, a Briton by the name of Pelagius, began teaching a strange doctrine, a doctrine that denied original sin and advocated free-will, maintaining that if man used all the powers of his nature he could attain perfection. Now although there is no record of this doctrine being preached by him in Britain, it was soon known on these shores. The reason this is mentioned, is because the British church refused according to the **historian Bede** (left) to accept this *"perverse doctrine and to blaspheme the grace of Jesus Christ."* Whilst not adhering to the stricter doctrine of

Augustine of Hippo, the British church believed that an inward spiritual change was required, one that divine power alone could accomplish, yet they also seemed to have the idea that at some point an element of natural strength was needed. Nevertheless, evangelical truth was the main thrust of the British church's doctrine.

Prior to Patrick's return to Ireland, a monk by the name of Palladius, who had been sent to Ireland by Pope Celestine to carry out missionary work, retired, reporting the failure of his mission. Patrick saw this as a great opportunity to fulfil his desire to evangelize the land with the gospel of Christ. It is falsely claimed by Rome that Patrick was consecrated bishop by Celestine but it is certain that he received his consecration at the hands of the bishops of Gaul, men of like mind, Celtic believers. In 432 AD he sailed with twelve companions to Ireland and for thirty-three years ministered the Word of Life to the people, establishing churches, centres of education, civilization and evangelism. Converts from paganism were established in their new faith by the teaching of sound scriptural doctrines. For many years after his home-call the Irish churches flourished, preaching the gospel. They were bastions of the true faith, and it was from one such church that Columba, this great man of God was to emerge.

It needs to be mentioned at this point, that from the days of Patrick to the reign of Henry II in the twelfth century the Church of Ireland was renowned for both its learning and missionary zeal, their evangelists proclaiming the Gospel message where ever they went in Britain and on the Continent of Europe. O'Driscoll gives us this picture of the Irish Church: *"The Christian Church of that country, as founded by Patrick, existed for many centuries free and unshackled. For about seven hundred years this church maintained its independence. It had no connection with England and differed on points of importance from Rome. The first work of Henry II was to reduce the Church of Ireland into obedience to the Roman Pontiff. Accordingly he procured a Council of Irish Clergy to be held in Cashel in 1172, and the combined influence and intrigues of Henry and the Pope prevailed. This Council put an end to the ancient Church of Ireland; she submitted to the yoke of Rome. This ominous apostasy has been followed by a series of calamities hardly to be equalled in the world. From the days of Patrick to the Council of Cashel was a bright and glorious career for Ireland. From the sitting of the Council to our own times the lot of Ireland has been unmix'd evil and all her history a tale of woe."* Quoted from Views of Ireland.

When it comes to the history of Patrick, one must be aware that there has been over the years a certain amount of confusion. In the middle of the ninth century there was in Ireland an abbot, also named Patrick. He was a practitioner of the idolatry that had infiltrated the church from Rome. He was also the founder of the unbiblical doctrine of Purgatory. Because these men had

the same name and the fact they both came to Britain, a certain amount of confusion, some say deliberately promoted by Rome, between these men, one of a godly disposition and the other ungodly and superstitious.

Columba was the son of Fedhlimidh a member of an Irish ruling family, and so was a man of noble birth. He was born in Co. Donegal on December 7th AD 521 some fifty-six years after the death of the Apostle to Ireland, Patrick and was baptized at Tulach-Dubhglaise (Temple Douglas). His education started early, when he was sent to the monastic school of Bishop Finian of Clonard. Here he became quite a celebrity for his learning and also for his religious zeal. He was eventually ordained by Bishop Etcen of Clonfad and was made Abbot of Durrogh.

His zeal for the work of God did not diminish and many churches and monastic foundations in Ireland resulted from his endeavours. The first bishop of Rouen in France was a Briton, a man by the name of Mellos; he was consecrated in 256 AD. It is said of him "*that he valued the cross of Christ more than the royal blood that flowed through his veins.*" These monasteries were far removed from the later popish houses that have the same name. They were basically centres of mission, missionary training and evangelism. The buildings comprised a timber church and a few rough wattle buildings, which were used for accommodation. One building was set aside for eating and another for the entertainment of strangers. They were enclosed by a rampart outside of which, buildings would be found for the storage of grain and the housing of cattle.



The rules of these monasteries were obedience, humility and chastity as is clearly outlined in God's Word. The daily tasks included reading and writing along with the manual labor necessary to maintain buildings and provide food. Daily devotions consisted of morning and evening prayers. The men were skilled writers and illuminators of books, some of the books written by Columba himself still remain, for example *The Book of Kells* (left) and *The Book of Durrow*. The main task of these centres, however, was that of missionary work, by taking the gospel of Christ into the high-ways and by-ways, in obedience to the Lord's command.

The influence of the evangelical teaching of these churches unquestionably left a sound evangelical mark on the heart and soul of Columba, giving him a zeal that has so impressed historians that some place him in the first rank after the apostles. Having established many churches in Ireland, the eyes of Columba turned to the mainland. Fables and legends abound as to the reasons why he undertook this arduous mission. Whatever the truth may be, the fact remains he was mightily used of the Lord to bring many souls to salvation.

Columba has been described by Edward L Cutts, in his book *Turning Points of English Church History* as "*a remarkable man: of princely birth, tall, athletic, powerful, of ruddy and joyous countenance: ... an eminent teacher in all the learning of his time, a guide of deep spiritual devotion ...*" In the year 562 AD or 563 AD, historians cannot agree as to the exact date, Columba set sail with twelve companions on a Currach covered with hides, when he was forty-two years of age. The missionaries landed on the Isle of Hy, now Latinized to Iona, on Whit-Sunday 565 AD. It is highly improbable that they were at sea all that time. In fact it is known that Iona was given to this missionary band. One record claims that it was given by King Connell, a relative of Columba, with the sole purpose of establishing a religious settlement there. Bede however says that it was the son of Meilochon, who was the most powerful king of the day and ruler over the Picts, who, in the ninth year of his reign, was converted to Christ, through the words and example of Columba and his men, their object again being to construct a religious settlement. Whatever be the true record, Columba was a kinsman, for sixty years before, a chieftain of the house of Eirc, head of the Irish Dalriada, had crossed the water, and with a band of followers

founded the kingdom of British Dalriada or Scotia. The name Scot belonged in the first instant to the inhabitants of Ireland and was carried by the Irish into northern Britain. From here the objective was to evangelize the people of the nation.



Columba, despite the many legends that have sprung up around him, was a man of like passions as ourselves. He like all of us, wrestled against human weakness and sin. He spent much time in prayer, writing, transcribing the scriptures, and teaching as well as preaching the gospel. He was a man who put into practice the biblical injunction "to redeem the time" He sought only the glory of God and spared no effort in this cause. According to Merle d' Aubigne, Columba was "indefatigable ... he went from house to house, and from kingdom to kingdom." A school of theology was established on Iona, at which the Word of God was studied. Through this a large number came to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of these converts in turn went out fired with a missionary zeal to win others for Christ. It was not long before the little island of Iona became known as "the light of the western world," a lighthouse amid the darkness of the times. Shortly before his death in 597 AD Columba said of Iona (above) "To this place, little and poor though it be, there shall come great honour, not only from Scottish kings and people, but from barbarous and foreign nations, and from the saints of other Churches also." None can dispute the truth of those words. For many years the kings of Scotland were crowned by Columba and his successors.

It should be noted, that the British Church was not ignorant of the errors taught and practised by the Latin Church. For example in the 7th century, Columbanus wrote the following to Pope Boniface IV: "Your chair O Pope, is defiled with heresy. Deadly errors have crept into it: It harbours horrors and impieties. Catholic? The true Catholicism you have lost. The orthodox and true Catholics are they who have always zealously preserved the true faith."

JESUS CHRIST OUR HEAD

Whilst it is true that this Christian community on Iona had rules by which to live and conduct their daily affairs, as well as religious ordinances, they did not look to these for matters of eternal life. This is a refreshing thing to know considering that, at this time, sacerdotalism was beginning to encroach into the church. Columba, being a Bible man, believed that it was the Holy Spirit who made a servant of God, not forms or practices. To the young people who would come to him for instruction, he would, according to Merle d' Aubigne say "The Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith. Throw aside all merit of works, and look for salvation to the grace of God alone. Beware of a religion which consists of outward observances: it is better to keep your heart pure before God than to abstain from meats. One alone is your head, Jesus Christ. Bishops and presbyters are equal: they should be the husbands of one wife, and have their children in subjection." This very clearly shows the man's biblical perspective and evangelical position. He was practising the great truths, later to become the watch words of the sixteenth century Reformation, Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia and Sola Christus.

It should be said that the British church, and this would include the community of Christians on Iona, was not ignorant of the erroneous teachings that were infiltrating her. There was no lack of communication between Britain and Europe. Several British bishops had attended the church councils that had taken place in Europe. They would not have been unaware of the errors being propagated by Rome. The Christians on Iona did not have any part in them and papal supremacy was unknown. Here the light of the true gospel shone clearly and undimmed amid the superstitions and idolatry that were growing elsewhere.

Some historians claim that Christianity was in serious decline in Britain, just prior to the commissioning of Augustine by Pope Gregory in 597 AD, but this is manifestly false. Under men like Columba and the Iona community, true biblical Christianity was strong, virile and healthy. These men were also responsible for establishing the Christian Church at Lindisfarne. Such was the evangelical fervour and missionary zeal generated by the Iona Christians that, not being content to minister the Word in the British Isles, Columbanus, not to be confused with the now aging Columba, "*feeling in his heart the burning fire which the Lord had kindled upon earth,*" set out to preach the true gospel in Europe. This missionary tour commenced in the very same year that Gregory ascended to the papal throne, and seven years before his delegation headed by Augustine arrived on British soil. "*Thus*" says d' Aubigne "*was Britain faithful in planting the standard of Christ in the heart of Europe.*"

One mission field however was left virtually untouched and it was this that opened the door to the corrupt form of Christianity being practised by Rome. The pagan Saxons who now inhabited the southern part of England, refused the gospel of Christ despite several attempts to reach them. Britons considered them as enemies of God and man, and would shudder as they pronounced their name, the zeal and resolve that had hitherto characterized the British missionaries faltered here. It was therefore left to Augustine, with the corrupt form of Christianity he brought, to convert these pagans to the Latin form of Christianity and establish a beachhead for that church in these fair realms, a fact that the British people have regretted ever since.

THE CONSTANTINE CONNECTION



Today few people realise that Emperor Constantine had a very close connection with Britain, in fact it is more than just a mere connection. Under the rule of Diocletian, the Roman Empire was divided into four areas, each being ruled over by a Caesar, with each ruler acting in harmony with the others. The Gallican provinces were assigned to Constantius, who set his court up in York. Polydore Vergil in his **History of England** states that Constantine was, "*born in Britain, of a British mother.*" He was born at York, to Constantius and St Helena in A.D 274. In the Ecclesiastical History, Sozomen writes that "*The Great Constantine received his Christian education in Britain*". Whilst from Hewin's Royal saints of Britain we find this statement: "*The Emporor Maximus Magnus or Maze Wledi was a Roman-Spaniard related to Emperor Theodosius, and of the family of Constantine the Great, and of British royal descent on his mother's side.*"

Today very few realize that Constantine the Great was a Briton, yet even the eminent Roman Catholic historian Cardinal Baronius speaks strongly about this fact when he says "*The man must be mad who, in the face of universal antiquity, refuses to believe that Constantine and his mother were Britons, born in Britain.*" In the church yard of the parish church of St Cuthbert, in York, there is to be found a stone cross bearing this inscription "*From this parish Constantine the Great was declared Emperor, 306 AD*". When Constantius died Constantine succeeded him as Emperor. The existing Emperors objected to his elevation, so Constantine was forced to uphold his claim by force of arms, which he did successfully. He led a British army to Rome, winning many victories on the way. On his arrival he received a great welcome. After twelve years joint authority with Licinius, in 313 persuaded his colleague to agree to a joint edict granting Christians equal liberty with other religions. In 324 when Licinius was killed Constantine became sole emperor. Here then we have a British ruler of the great Roman Empire.

There is an interesting tradition that Helena was the daughter of King Coel (old King Cole) of Colchester.

THE ARRIVAL OF DARKNESS

Augustine arrived in Britain, landing at Thanet in Kent in 597 AD, the very year that Columba died. With him came a new form of gospel. Until this point in time, the gospel that had been preached in Britain was an apostolic gospel, the true gospel of saving grace. When Augustine landed he was granted an interview with King Ethelbert, this took place in the open air, as the king feared that there would be some form of magical practices. Ethelbert's wife, Queen Bertha, was a worshipper of Almighty God and attended the existing church at Canterbury. In addition to the Gospels that Augustine brought with him, were a silver cross, and a painted image of Christ, these being the signs of the religion they brought, a religion that was to throw down heathen idols and replace them with Roman ones. More Roman missionaries followed; they brought with them church ornaments, the supposed relics of the saints and martyrs and the famous "pallium". The pallium was a type of cloak, that had its origins in ancient imperial Rome; the Emperors would present it to any upon whom they wished to mark with special favours. The arrival of this was a significant event, as it shows the church of Rome's true intention, namely to subjugate the British church and people, bending it to her ways.



Augustine was appointed, by Pope Gregory (left), as bishop of the Saxons, but this encroachment on the liberty of the ancient British Church was met with opposition. One of the most influential men in the British Church was Dionoth; he was the president of a large community of Christians, numbering several thousand, whose head quarters were at Bangor in Wales. Augustine coveted the prize of gaining such a community, and sought to win them for the Pope.

The demand of Augustine was that the British Church should acknowledge the authority of the bishop of Rome, this being the first of a long series of such arrogant demands. The British Church refused. "We desire" replied Dionoth "to love all men, but he whom you call pope is not entitled to style himself the father of fathers', and the only submission we can render him is that which we owe every Christian." A General Assembly was convened in 601 AD, the meeting took place in the open air and once again Dionoth refused to acknowledge the authority of Rome and one by one Britons and British church leaders followed his example. "The Britons cannot submit either to the haughtiness of the Romans or the tyranny of the Saxons," they said. They had stood firm, yet there some questioning among themselves as to the validity of Augustine's claims; was the new form of Christianity from God or not? Leaving the Assembly, they sought further advice from one who was renowned for his wisdom. "Shall we resist or follow him?" they asked "If he is a man of God follow him" was the reply "How shall we know that?" they responded "If he is meek and humble of heart, he bears Christ's yoke, but if he is violent and proud, he is not of God," came the reply, "What sign shall we have of his humility?" asked the delegates "If he rises from his seat when you enter the room" was the reply. The test was good, but they would have done better by consulting the scriptures.

They returned to the meeting, and Augustine remained seated. The British delegates were astonished at this, seeing in this one act of arrogance the true character of Rome, humility is not a virtue that flourishes among Roman clergy, then or now. For the last time they said no. They refused to submit to papal authority saying "We have nothing to do with Rome, We know nothing of the Bishop of Rome in his new character of the Pope. We are the British Church, the Archbishop of which is accountable to God alone, having no superior on earth." Augustine, who had expected them to submit, was angry, his response was "If you will not receive brethren who bring peace, you shall receive enemies who bring you war." Argument and reason had failed, Rome now reverted her to most infamous weapon war. Augustine died before the dreadful plan was put into action. But under the leadership of a pagan Saxon king, Saxons marched on Bangor and there finding the church at prayer demanded to know "Who are these people and what are

they doing?" "They are Christians, praying" came the reply. "They are contending against us, though unarmed" exclaimed the king; he then ordered his army to kill these saints. Twelve hundred and fifty Bible believing, died at that place, witnesses for Christ. This great seat of learning, for such Bangor was, was razed to the ground.

The Saxon sword, motivated by Rome, had prevailed, it appeared to have swept everything before it. There was however a backlash on the Roman church, for vast numbers of those whom Augustine had claimed to have converted, forsook the teachings of Rome and returned to their, former pagan way of life and worship. This should not come as any surprise, for their conversion was to Romanism and not to Christ, their conversion was not a heart conversion. Alarmed at the turn of events, many of the Romish bishops fled to the continent, but Rome, ever ready with a trick or two up its sleeve, was not finished. Just when the Augustine mission seemed to have failed, Augustine's successor, Laurentius, presented himself to King Eadbald of Kent; his body was covered in wounds, he claimed that "Saint Peter had visited him in the night and whipped him, because he was about to forsake the flock". This deceptive move on the part of Laurentius, had the desired effect; Eadbald saw it as a miracle, and facilitated the establishment of the Church of Rome in our land, for he then acknowledged the supremacy of Rome, which just goes to show the gullibility of those who lead and things have not changed much since those far off days.



It was during the reign of **Charlemagne** (left) that Latin became the language of church services. In AD 600 Pope Gregory I imposed this language upon the church as being the language of prayer and worship. Thus it was that the common practice of Christians, to read the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue and to pray and worship in like manner was now forbidden, Latin was king, to use a modern expression Latin Ruled OK. The British church protested against this and was the first to demand its abolition. Bishop Ussher in his *Historia Dogmatica* writes:

"No two causes contributed so much to the declension of Christianity and the progress of Mohammedanism, as the suppression by the Church of Rome of the vernacular scriptures and her adoption of image worship"

THE CULDEE LINK

The Light of the Gospel, that came about six hundred years before, was not totally extinguished, true it was obscured, it was flickering low, but God retained His witness in these islands. This witness we may call the Culdee Link. The title or name Culdee, is probably more closely associated with strangers than with any other connection. It has special association with strangers who have arrived from far off places, particularly with refugees. The name was originally applied to the infant British Church, because of its connection with the alleged contact with the Judean refugees who brought the gospel. It was a title that became associated with the true Christian Church as opposed to the heretical church, a church that was never obliterated by the encroachment of romanism.

In the year 705 AD the British Church was declared to be outside the Catholic Church. From the book *Monks in the West* we learn that Adhelm wrote "The precepts of your bishops are not in accord with Catholic faith, we adjure you not to persevere in your arrogant contempt of the degrees of St Peter and the traditions of the Roman Church by your proud and tyrannical attachment to the statutes of your ancestors" That is the ancient Christian Bible based church.

The British Church, true to the ancient and unchangeable gospel had been openly declared heretical by Rome, and it continued as a separate Church, witnessing to the truth, and became known by the ancient name The Culdee Church, thus making it very distinctive from the Roman Church and all that she stood for. On the one hand there was the proud and persecuting Church of Rome with all her errors and idolatries, whilst on the other the Culdee or British Church with the Truth

In his *Ecclesiastical History*, the venerable Bede wrote: "*The Culdees followed uncertain rules in the observance of the great festival (Easter), practising only such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical and apostolic writings*". In other words these were Bible Christians. They loved the Word and its simple yet profound truth, rather than those who sought position, wealth and prestige within the apostate Latin church.

Even though the Latin Church grew and supplanted much of the true church in Britain, it did not succeed in stamping it out, the true faith was never and has never been



eradicated from Britain. Through out those dark ages there were men like Alciun who, in his Caroline Books, sought to stem the tide of heresy. From Columba in the seventh century through to Alfred in the ninth, the light of the gospel continued to shine. King Alfred (left), was a godly king, a Christian king, as well as being a great patron of literature. He gave his people the Gospels in their own language, Saxon. He wrote "*I wish you to know that it often occurs to my mind to consider what manner of wise men there were formerly in the British nation, both spiritual and temporal; I consider how earnest God's ministers then were about preaching as about learning in this land.*"

It is on record that in the tenth century ministers of the Culdee Church, officiated at St Peters in York. In the eleventh century, the Culdee Church received support from an unexpected quarter, in that William the Conqueror, who for reasons other than those of the true faith rejected the Popes' *claims on Britain*. When Gregory VII called on the king to pay homage, William's reply was "*Thy legate Hubert, holy father, hath called upon me to take the oath of fealty to thee and thy successors, and to exert myself in enforcing the more regular payment of money which my predecessors were accustomed to remit to the Church of Rome. One request I have granted the other I refuse. Homage to thee I have not chosen, nor do I choose to do. I never made a promise to that effect, neither do I find it was ever performed by my predecessors to thine.*" Although never a protestant in the sense we would understand today, William would not bow to papal demands.

Pockets of true believers continued to exist, right through to the time of John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century. For not only had the Culdee Church survived, but the truth they taught was under Wycliffe once again being preached throughout the land. John de Wycliffe, was of Norman baronial ancestry and had received a share of land on the northern boundary of Yorksire, close to the river Tees, near to a village called Wycliffe, from whence he obtained the name. For several generations his family had been the ministers of the parish. He obtained his doctorate in Theology from Oxford. In his study at Lutterworth he composed many theses against the doctrines of the Church of Rome and sought to train men, whom he had selected to propagate these truths throughout the country, these men were called Lollards.

He engaged in the work of translating the Bible from Latin into the vulgar tongue, which found no favour with the Roman Church; his translation of the New Testament was published in 1380, he died shortly after. Such was the impact of the gospel that it was claimed in his day that at least half of the nation had come to an understanding of the truth; the saying was "*You could meet two men on the road, but one would be a Wycliffe*". The Duke of Lancaster, known in history as 'John of Gaunt' the son of Edward III, resented the arrogance of the romish prelates and the large

share of temporal power that they took to themselves, aligned himself with Wycliffe, whose vision was to restore to Britain the long lost apostolic purity of the clergy and church. These two men were united in their aim to reduce the wealth that the church had accrued to itself and humble the pride of the Roman hierarchy.

The foundation for the 16th century Reformation had not only been laid, but the principle was firmly established in the British soul.

MONASTERIES

A point of clarification is needed in respect of these institutions, although they have not been mentioned until now. However, in many history books mention is made of monasteries, dating back to the very early days of the church. These must not be confused with the modern institutions of the same name. These ancient monasteries were more correctly colleges attached to the church, they were seats of learning. The manner of living was also very different from the places of modern times.

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**The 'Vetusta Ecclesia' – the Wattle
Ecclesia built by Joseph of Arimathea
and the twelve disciples**

H. Stough, Dedicated Disciples pg. 80.



**St. Paul's Free Church
Bexill-on-Sea East Sussex
Minister Dr. P. Gadsden**

**"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the
Lord from Jerusalem"
(Isaiah 2:3)."**