

## BIBLICAL TERRANOMICS

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### THE HOLY CONSPIRACY\*

By James W. Stivers  
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*I believe that in the end the truth will conquer.*

- John Wycliffe

*The truth against the world!*

- Druid battle cry

He was the last King of the Britons, the last in a line of succession which extended millennia into the mists of time. The Year was 658 A.D. Cadwalader the Blessed (the third of only three sovereigns to be so affectionately rendered) was forced, yet again, to lead his people against the Saxon pagans - this time in Somerset. All that was left of the ancient kingdom was the rugged country we now call Wales. It had taken the Anglo-Saxons roughly two centuries to capture the lower half of the island. There had been many battles, many reverses, many dead. Plague stalked the land from all the unburied bodies.

Cadwalader's own father had been killed twenty-five years earlier in a successful defense of the recaptured capital: Caerleon-on-Dee (Chester). Not only had it been the seat of government for the Britons upon the withdrawal of the Romans, but just a few miles away was Bangor, the ecclesiastical center for the British isles. Just as the old Romans sought to destroy Druidism at the Menai massacre, so the new Romans sought to destroy the heart of Celtic Christianity. The Saxons were their instrument of death, and the monastery went up in flames. Twelve hundred monks and scholars perished; literary treasures were lost forever. The Archbishop fled to the Isle of Man, others regrouped among the Scots at Whithorn. The Britons were never able to fully recover.

Cadwalader felt that he was on the losing end of history. A great warrior who had ended the fighting among his own people, his kingdom became a refuge for the dispossessed Britons who fled

the scorched-earth tactics of the Saxons. Perhaps, the prophecy of Gildas the Wise was true. There was still too much paganism to be purged from his own people before God would come to their aid. Perhaps, the Saxons were God's rod and would have to be dealt with another way. But his soldiers wanted to fight and he dared not refuse them. These thoughts troubled him on that day of battle, much like the thoughts which troubled another Celtic champion centuries later t Gettysburg - Robert E. Lee.

Battle was engaged and Cadwalader (my ancestor) was defeated. Although the kingdom of the Cymry (Wales) never lost its independence during the era of the Saxons (they had their own worries with the Danes), it did sink into a dark age of malaise and division. Cadwalader abdicated his throne and entered a monastery. He died in the great plague of 664.

### **The Denial of Christian Antiquities**

Over the course of the last two centuries, modern scholarship has been systematic in its attempt to discredit and bury the story of the first Christian centuries. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has been called an Essene imitation of Buddhist legends. Hebrew monotheism, we are told, was borrowed from the Egyptian Aten worship. The Apostle Peter is said to be the cynical leader of a Jewish sect called "the Nazarenes", while the Apostle Paul is labeled a Gnostic. Speculation and revisionism have been the singular quest of the major seminaries and universities these many years. While their theories expire with each turn of the archaeologist's spade, or with the new translation of an ancient manuscript, the orthodox interpretation of our Christian past is still received with scorn and contempt.

The story of Celtic Christianity has suffered the most from this blacklisted history. This was so for three reasons. First, the Celts were the early adversaries of imperial Rome, and Rome, at every turn, sought to vilify and destroy the heart of their resistance: the Druid priesthood. Second, the successors of the Druids, the Culdees, were again the adversaries of Rome: papal Rome. Their records were either destroyed or re-written. Finally, the Druids and the Culdees, while both literary scholars in every respect, taught the people by oral tradition. They felt the mind was weakened by relying upon books, and that truth does not become part of a man until he memorizes it. Consequently, this tradition precluded written records until the Welsh Triads and poems of early medieval times, when Celtic monks realized their heritage would perish if it was not written down.

Since modern scholarship is not Christian and does not subsist in a culture which transmits knowledge by oral tradition,

there is a profound bias against anything Christian or Celtic. It loves classical literature, of course: it is both Greco-Roman and pagan. Yet, the Druid circle of knowledge took twenty years to master, requiring upwards of 10,000 verses to be committed to memory. No small task!

Imagine, for a moment, if the truth of our Christian past depended upon the records left by the Japanese had they won World War II. Imagine in the centuries to come that Mt. Rushmore is the only re-cord of the existence of the United States. Would our descendants think the images there to be our gods? Truly, the transmission of knowledge and culture is a sacred task. Might not the cultural amnesia of our generation be part of our dilemma?

*When a land rejects her legends,  
Sees but falsehoods in the past;  
And its people view their Sires  
In the light of fools and liars,  
'Tis a sign of its decline  
And its glories cannot last.  
Branches that but blight their roots  
Yield no sap for lasting fruits.*

- author unknown

### **Searching for the Scarlet Thread**

Ten years ago, research led to the conclusion that John Wycliffe was responsible for the unique form of Protestantism which took shape in America. It flowed from him to his Lollard followers and then to the Nonconformists and Separatists of the 16th-Century Reformation. From them, of course, came the Pilgrims, Puritans, and other Independents which stamped their image upon the American soul. I summarized my findings in *The Separatist Papers* #8 through #11 (especially #10). A new generation of historians has verified that thesis in recent years (e.g. Benjamin Hart's, *Faith & Freedom*).

After reaching that milestone, I turned my attention to earlier history to see if Wycliffe's Reformation appeared out of a vacuum (a very unlikely proposition) or if there were identifiable links in a chain which would lead me to Apostolic origins. In particular, it was important to ask whether or not Protestantism, especially Anglo-American Protestantism, was the off-shoot of Latin Christianity. Or to put it another way, "are Protestants simply reformed Roman Catholics or do they stand within a catholicity of an historic church with different Apostolic foundations?" Protestant theologians will tend to concede that the historic, catholic church must be identified

with Rome (at least in the West), whether we like it or not. Radical Protestants (Fundamentalists) will, of course, add that it does not matter because salvation comes through the Scriptures alone.

The Fundamentalist position is flawed, however, because it fails to acknowledge that it was the historic church which gave us the Canon of Scripture. Indeed, the Scriptures need a preacher to create the "hearing of faith" (Romans 10:13-15). Someone must send the preacher. Establishing the authenticity of the messenger, then, seems to require someone to authenticate him.

Irenaeus, among the greatest of the Church Fathers, found it necessary to claim Apostolic succession in his controversy with the Gnostics during the second century. The Gnostics boasted that they were privy to a secret, oral tradition which Jesus had taught His disciples. Irenaeus countered, saying that he had sat at the feet of Polycarp. Polycarp was a pupil and co-worker with the Apostle John in Asia Minor. He had heard of no secret, oral tradition, and if there was one, he would have been the first to know.

Apparently, then, Apostolic succession serves some purpose in validating the messenger, although changing the Scriptures would be evidence of false apostolic authority. Perhaps, that is why Wycliffe chose to use Jerome's Latin Vulgate when he translated the Bible into English. It was the received text, even to the Roman Catholics. Wisely, he could and did use their own Scriptures to invalidate the apostolic claims of their Pope. Remember that in his day, the Christian world was divided over two Popes.

I do not claim to know the exact purpose and value of a church with Apostolic foundations. I am talking about more than just appreciating the value of the early councils and creeds of the Church. Currently, there seems to be a traditionalist mood among evangelical Christians, a desire to return to our roots, both as a nation and as a church. There is significant movement toward Eastern Orthodoxy. Some have gone back to Roman Catholicism, as in the case of Franky Schaeffer, son of the late Francis Schaeffer. Those active in the Pro-Life movement have felt the center of gravity change. They have been drawn to the Roman Catholic Church because they admire its consistent stand against abortion. But they are also drawn to it because it is an ancient institution.

A church with a continuity of ministry from the days of the Apostles is certainly worthy of respect and honor. That is why I am a fond student of the early Fathers. I have always felt it our Christian duty to defer to them in custom and interpretation, unless we are compelled otherwise by the Scriptures. The burden of proof rests upon innovators.

If a return to a historic, apostolic church is what we need, are the Latin and Greek traditions our only options? Was Wycliffe merely a reformed Roman Catholic, or did he come in contact with a different tradition which became the fount of his reformation? Did this tradition come through a process of apostolic succession?

Consider what is required to answer such questions. A vast period of time must be carefully reviewed, encompassing histories of great antiquity. The period from Wycliffe to the Pilgrims involved a mere two centuries, with another century and a half from the Pilgrims to the American Revolution. However, the time from our Lord's sojourn to Wycliffe was thirteen centuries. The trail can be easily lost.

Answering such questions in the short space of this essay requires a summary with unavoidable generalizations. Experts will feel certain particulars poorly stated. I beg their forbearance. The soundness of my basic thesis is easily demonstrable, however: Wycliffe's Reformation was indigenous, not foreign. It was more than the spontaneous result of combining the Scriptures with a fertile mind and willing heart. It was unique; for Wycliffe's mind and heart were a Celtic mind and a Celtic heart. Originally, there were four church traditions with clear Apostolic foundations: Asian, Greek, Latin, and Celtic. Wycliffe stands in the Celtic branch.

During the first century, the Apostles and their successors achieved the national conversion of the British nation. The Druids, Britain's priestly caste, embraced the faith en masse. Their arch-Druids and bards became bishops and deacons. Their *Cors*, institutions of higher learning, became Christian colleges. This process of conversion became complete in the second century during the reign of King Lucian.

The bishoprics of Britain were acknowledged by the Church Fathers throughout the Roman Empire and were represented at the early, ecumenical councils, including Nicea. During the age of Rome's decline, the Druid bishops became known as Culdees among the Britons, Scots, Irish, and Armoricans (Brittany). Their influence flowered during the Middle Ages through the monastic movement. In decline under persecution, they survived in the collegiate chapels of European universities, where finally at Oxford, Wycliffe discovered their message. That message carried a different theological emphasis and philosophy of social order. It was the message of the forgotten branch of Christianity: the Celtic branch from which Wycliffe stood with glorious illumination.

Herein lies the story of the holy conspiracy (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).

## Ancient Celtic Civilization

*To believe that we can penetrate the Celtic mind and share the Celts' psychological condition and feelings, is a pure waste of time.*

- Stuart Piggott, *The Druids*

*Excessive want of fear has no name, but a man who was not afraid of anything, even waves and earthquakes, as they say the Celts are not, would be mad or insensible.*

- Aristotle

The Celts were a fearless and reckless people. This was because they felt themselves to be immortal. Death, for them, held no terror. It was a mere passageway to the new life in a different world. Celts were known to have promised repayment of debts in the afterlife. In battle, the first wave of warriors would, without hesitation, throw themselves upon the spears of their adversaries, leaving the way open for the second wave to commence the rout. It took centuries for Rome to learn how to overcome Celtic tactics of warfare.

This aura of invincibility was the work of the Druids, the priestly caste of Celtic society. The Druids taught the immortality of the soul, some say the transmigration of souls, although there is little evidence of it. Accepted historical dogma tells us that the Druids were pagans. But that assertion is based upon the denial of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The Classical historians tell us that the Celts were cannibalistic headhunters and that the Druids practiced augury by studying the entrails of human sacrifices and that the Druids were the inventors of wicker cages, places where humans were burnt alive. These fantastic accusations must be tempered by the knowledge that Roman policy involved negative propaganda about their enemies. The Christians, also, were accused of cannibalism and incest.

Unfortunately, the grotesque caricatures stuck to the Druids. During the Christian era, they were portrayed as wizards practicing all the arts of black magic. Some nineteenth-century fraternal orders and the current New Age movement have claimed continuity with Druidic traditions. The evidence is wanting. It is as believable to say that King Ahab and Queen Jezebel of the ancient northern kingdom practiced the religion of Moses.

The elements of superstition ascribed to Druidism really belonged to the Mithras cult, which was a dualistic religion of magic popular among the Roman military. It was prominent in the regions of Roman occupation and was a constant threat to the Celtic soul.

*That Neo-Platonic mysticism reached Britain and Ireland in the later Roman decades cannot be questioned, that it carried with it the entire myth of Osiris in the bowdlerized version characteristic of it and that it linked up with native myths and beliefs must be granted. The Britain of the second, third and fourth centuries was a theatre of rival cults, as was Rome herself at that period. Among these was Mithraism, and that this particular system succeeded in establishing itself both in Gaul and Britain is among the manifest things. . . Mithraism was, to describe it summarily, a cult adapted from the ancient worship of the Persian sun-god, modified by Greek influence. . . That Mithraism powerfully influenced the Neo-Druidic or Arthurian cult there is considerable proof . . . It appears to me as highly probable that the remaining Bards of Britain in the fifth century, possessing, as they did, a fragmentary tradition of Druidic dogma, combined this with acceptances from a rather contorted species of Mithraism.*

- *The Magic Arts in Celtic Britain,*  
Lewis Spence (Barnes & Noble, p.157)

And in direct reference to Mithraism, R. J. Rushdoony points out that,

*In England, and throughout Europe, the old fertility cults were fought by orthodox Christianity as the "witches covens". In the later "Middle Ages" they flourished as Christianity declined.*

- *World History Notes, p. 133*

Contrary to modern Wiccan enthusiasts, witchcraft finds its true roots in Mithraism, not Druidism.

As for human sacrifice, archaeologists have failed to turn up human remains at places of Druidic worship, such as Stonehenge, although animal bones have been uncovered. In this respect, the Druids were no different than the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. The assumption is not far-fetched to believe that periods of apostasy occurred among the Celts, just as they occurred among the Israelites. We do not blame Moses for Israel's bouts with paganism. Likewise, we should not blame the Druidic system for Celtic barbarism.

Beheading the enemy after killing him as proof of a body count (and fireside boasting) was true of the Celts. But again, this does not differ from the grizzly details of warfare in ancient Israel (witness David's beheading of Goliath). Pressed by starvation, it is not difficult to believe that some Celts were tempted to eat human flesh. But a more likely explanation for the rumor of Celtic cannibalism is that it was war propaganda to terrorize their enemies. Historians have surmised that the Celts were the inventors of psychological warfare.

The Celts were also a theatrical people and lovers of practical jokes. St. Jerome claimed he saw cannibalism among the Gauls when he was young. What is more probable is that he was a victim of Celtic entertainment. I can easily imagine the riotous laughter around the hearth after the departure of the powder-faced boy whom they had convinced of their grizzly deed.

The best description of the Druids would be to compare them with the Magi which came to the birth of Christ, or with the Chaldean philosophers and astronomers, among whom the prophet Daniel rose to such eminence.

One historical account cites a Druidic prediction of the birth of Christ:

*There was in Great Britain in the time of this King Cambelinus, a soothsayer, whom thy called Thezelinus, and who was said to be a prophet; so it happened, once upon a time, that the king was holding a great feast at his court, and he commanded that they should bring him this Thezelinus, of whom when he came, the king required, in presence of his barons, that he would be pleased to prophesy something concerning the time to come; at which request, Thezelinus replied to the king telling him not to be astonished to hear that the Saviour and Redeemer of the whole world was born of a virgin, without human corruption. The king and the other barons caused this prophecy to be written down, and often afterwards they recollected it and for this reason the Britons believed in our Lord as soon as they heard him spoken of or preached, because they remembered the prophecy of Thezelinus.*

- *A Collection of the Chronicles and Ancient Histories  
of Great Britain, Now Called England*  
John De Wavrin, translated, 1864

As said above, it would be expecting too much of any religion not to believe that there were periods of apostasy, when the people followed base customs and superstitions. That the allegories with which the Druids taught the people were taken literally or embellished into grotesque legends should not surprise us. Finding the core teachings is more important,



especially those which prepared the people for Christianity.

Druidism was a religion based upon natural revelation (Romans 1:19-20). It was led by astronomers and great thinkers who excelled in intellectual refinement. We find the influence of Druidism in Pythagoras, especially in the doctrine of the immortal soul. We also see traces in the ancient Greek philosopher, Anaxagoras, and his doctrine of the logos.

While the Druids had a pantheon similar to the angelic host in Christian teaching, the Druids taught an ultimate Trinity: Beli, Taran, and Esu. The nineteenth-century authority on Welsh antiquities, R.W. Morgan, explained it thus in reference to Christ:

*When Christianity preached Jesus as God, it preached the most familiar name of its own deity to Druidism; and in the ancient British tongue "Jesus" has never assumed its Greek, Latin, or Hebrew form, but remains the pure Druidic "Yesu". It is singular thus that the ancient Briton has never changed the name of the God he and his forefathers worshipped, nor has ever worshipped but one God.*

- *St. Paul in Great Britain*, p.15 (1860)

The archaeologist has found few idols in Celtic Europe. The Druids were not idol worshippers; nor, left to themselves, were the Celts. The nearest they came to it was by venerating sacred places, sacred stones, and sacred plants (such as the oak tree). Sometimes, that reverence bordered on animism. But they never quite became animists, certainly not in the same sense as have the Hindus. True animism produces a religion of fear and inaction. The Celts were a bold and adventurous people.

Druidic cosmology did differ from the Genesis account, however. They believed matter was eternal, being the extension of God much like the body is the extension of the mind. One Triad tells us that "Three things came into being at the same moment - light, man, and moral choice". The Mosaic account tells us that light was created on the first day of creation, while man was made on the sixth day. But without the aid of special revelation, it is difficult to imagine any religion having an accurate doctrine of origins. It is certainly amazing that the Druids were concerned with the matter of moral choice. Virtually all the religions of the ancient world left man to the "fate" of the gods. Druidism saw the freedom of the will as the essence of the human soul, without which, man was marw - imbruted. They perceived mankind as fallen from an ideal state, but they saw that devolution in a moral sense which, in turn, affected his meta-physical condition - another important distinction from other pagan religions. The Druids taught salvation was accomplished through a process similar to the Hindu Karma called

*abred*, the cycle of purification by suffering. This is a pagan concept, of course, but not far from what Jewish theologians were able to produce during the Intertestamental period. The Druids taught that there was only one way to be delivered from *abred*: a vicarious atonement. Julius Caesar is quoted frequently on this point:

*The Druids teach that by no other way than the ransoming of man's life by the life of man, is reconciliation with the divine justice of the immortal gods possible.*

- Commentaries, lib.v. (Morgan p.22)

We can see why the Druids embraced the Gospel. They knew their soteriology was a prison. Every little mistake required a return to the bottom rung of the *abred* cycle. The news of God's atonement was truly the proclamation of liberation.

Secular historians tell us the Celts were the early Europeans. Various migrations from the near East and central Asia during the two millennia before Christ gradually populated the continent. They were not empire builders, although they inhabited territory, which at one point, exceeded the land mass of the Roman Empire. Signs of their presence stretch from the British Isles to the Ukraine, from Denmark to Asia Minor. Celtiberia was Portugal and northern Spain. The Helvetii of Switzerland are Celts. The Celts invaded and dwelled in northern Italy and northern Greece. The Galatians of Paul's Epistle were a Celtic kingdom.

Since they were not empire builders, we better understand them by their civilization, rather than their politics. Their art-forms and craftsmanship were exquisite for detail and beauty. They were experts in metallurgy and glass. They were lovers of music and poetry, and were a deeply religious people. They were lovers of nature and consciously ecological. For that reason, they preferred an agriculture based upon animal husbandry and perennials, rather than intense soil-tillage.

Their social structure was tribal, but not rigidly patriarchal. In many ways their customs reflected those of the Biblical patriarchs, so much so that it has attracted the attention of secular historians (see references in chapter five of *Celt, Druid & Culdee* by Isabel Elder Hill and Merch O Lundam Derri, Covenant Publishing Co., Britain, 1973 edition). These likenesses appear because in fact the Celts were Shemites, descendants of Noah's first son. Although the sons of Japheth were the first to settle the coasts of the Mediterranean, the Shemites soon followed through Asia Minor, Greece and into the European interior. Later, through joint-ventures with Phoenician seafarers, Israelites would form small mining colonies on the

Atlantic coasts and the British Isles. Of the Western Isles, Ptolemy tells us that "They were peopled by descendants of the Hebrew Race, who were skilled in smelting operations, and excelled in working metals". To what extent the Israelites mingled with the existing Shemite populations is not clear. But, at least on the islands, it must have been sufficient for the Scots to declare their Israelite ancestry (see the *Scottish Declaration of Independence*, April 6, 1320, signed by King Bruce and sealed by twenty-five Scottish nobles and presented to Pope John XXII. Published in America by Artisan Sales, P.O.Box 1497, Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91360). See also Frederick Haberman's *Tracing Our Ancestors*, 1934, which contains a wealth of archaeological information.

*Gaelic and Brythonic are the two main Celtic languages. They are almost perfect Hebrew. Jews and Arabs, while using the Hebrew alphabet, nevertheless, speak Aramaic dialects.*

*You can take any sentence in Hebrew and change it into Gaelic, word for word, without altering the order of a single word or particle, and you will have the correct Gaelic idiom in every case. You cannot do that with any other language in Europe.*

- Dr. Duncan M Dougall as quoted by  
E. Raymond Capt, *Missing Links  
Discovered in Assyrian Tablets*  
p. 191 (Artisan Sales, 1985)

There remain two million people on the Celtic fringe who still speak these holy languages. Where are the Celts today? There are remnants remaining in every land they have lived. That is why you can find redheads, even among the Kurds. The Welsh, Irish, and Scots have Celtic blood flowing in their veins - and all Americans from them are of Celtic extraction, also. The old South was the latest attempt to establish a Celtic civilization, although I do not believe most Southerners were aware of their Celtic heritage at the time. They simply were playing out the genius and the instincts of their race, both good and bad.

It is debatable as to whether we can say there is a "pure" Celtic race. Many invasions from their European kinsmen created much mingling. But one thing is for certain, there appears to be a Celtic-type which is genetically dominant and is clearly visible in all peoples that have come in contact with them. More on that later.

The political influence of the Druids was typical of theocratic societies. They were exempt from taxation and war. They formed the professional class (e.g. healers with herbs) and civil service (e.g. judges and scribes). So revered were they that the Celts would stop fighting in the heat of battle at their appearance. Caesar saw in them an aristocracy. But the Druids were simple in their manners and did not lord their authority. They were counselors of kings. And yet, even kings did not rule as Oriental despots. Kings were customarily tribal chiefs elected by their peers in times of national emergency. Sometimes, they were deposed. The ancient words Trech gwlad n arglwydd, "The country is above the king" have remained the corner-stone of British common law.

### **The Celts in Prophecy**

*Our greatest advantage in dealing with such a powerful people is that they cannot act in concert. It is seldom that even two or three tribes will join in meeting a common danger, and so while each fights for himself they are all conquered together.*

- Tacitus

In Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image, he saw the parade of ancient world empires: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome (Daniel 2). The head of the image was made of gold, and Daniel said that represented the kingdom of Babylon. The second empire was Persia - the arms and breast of silver. Persia defeated and succeeded Babylon as the world empire. Persia was followed by the Greek empire, the belly and thighs of brass. Finally, there were the legs of iron - Rome. Rome was the crushing kingdom of iron strength.

There was more to this vision, however. And here is where Bible commentators lose their focus because they do not know their history very well. The feet of the image were made of iron and clay mingled together, signifying strength without unity. The Romans would seek to impose their empire amongst a people who would be a part of the Empire, but would change its character. Who were these clay people? The Aramaic text describes the clay as "potter's clay". The clay was not a barbaric people who would destroy the Empire, as were the Goths. Rather, it was a people who had a civilization. Only the Celts can fit the description of the clay in this vision. They had a civilization and their racial temperament was individualistic and fiercely independent.

Julius Caesar subjugated the Celts of Gaul and Spain late in the first century B.C. The devastation was great, as the famed

Celtic general, Vercingetorix, led a nearly successful fight to the finish. Depopulated, the character of the people was altered by new immigrations. But the seeds were sown that later would change the character of the Empire, also. Rome represented the principle of centralism and absolutism; the Celts represented the opposite: decentralism and individual liberty. Although formidable in battle, their disunity permitted Rome's victory. Only the Celts in Scotland and Ireland escaped Rome's reach, and that was because they were considered waste areas. Rome was quickly learning that it required too much of an investment to conquer Celts. The high price of future conquests were not worth the prize. And that is why the Romans quickly abandoned quest of conquering the Goths beyond the Rhine. It would leave them vulnerable to a Celtic uprising. Like the absorbing power of a black-hole, Rome's possessions became unbearable. Not until it came to terms with the Celtic philosophy of social order did Rome revive. Celts became the backbone of the imperial army during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. Later Caesars adopted policies of de-centralization, and in Celtic hands, the Stone Kingdom emerged victorious.

Daniel's interpretation of the King's dream ended with a great meteor destroying the image, and then growing into a mountain which filled the earth. This is the kingdom of the Messiah which destroys all previous civilizations, including Celtic, and establishes Christian civilization upon the old ruins.

### **Christianity Comes to the Celts**

*Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our teacher, and we never lost His teaching. Christianity was a new thing in Asia, but there never was a time when the Druids of Britain held not its doctrines.*

- Taliesin, 5th-century Druid

*Druidism, therefore, dissolved by the natural action of its own principles into Christianity.*

- R.W. Morgan

From the ground covered already, we can see that the Druids were ready for a Savior. We also see where their religion, on certain key points, had affinity with Christian doctrine on the one hand, and disharmony with pagan religion on the other. There was another factor which opened the door to the first Christian missionaries: Britain's war with Rome.

At about the time Christianity was being introduced into Britain, Rome was mounting an invasion. When the British patriots realized that the Christians were persecuted in the Empire, they received them into sanctuary.

This pattern can be verified by many historical examples. Religion often becomes a matter of state policy. It often becomes a fifth column effort. Kings, seeking to protect the integrity of their borders, will adopt a religion different than that of neighboring states. They will persecute religions which are not the state religion.

It would have made it much more difficult for the first missionaries to Britain had the effort been perceived as a propaganda front for the Roman legions.

Only two religions were universally outlawed by Rome: Christianity and Druidism. Judaism suffered under Rome, but was never universally prohibited by an imperial edict.

The evidence that the Gospel came to the Celts in general and the Britons in particular, during the first century, is conclusive. Of course, from Scripture, we can prove that Galatia received the Gospel from Paul, as his Epistle attests. It is logical to think that the Galatians would want to spread the Good News to their kinsmen in Gaul. We know that the persecution in Acts 8 scattered the earliest disciples abroad. The Acts of the Apostles tells us about Paul, but the other disciples were busy, too. Over twenty years later, Paul affirmed that the New Testament church had fulfilled the evangelistic requirement of the Great Commission:

*. . . the true word of the gospel which has been preached to you, just as it has been preached throughout the world, growing and bringing forth fruits . . .*

*If you continue in your faith and your foundation is firm and if you are not moved from the hope of the gospel which you have heard and which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and for which I, Paul, have become a minister.*

- Colossians 1:5, 6 & 23

Even if we must confine Paul's "cosmos" to the Roman world of his day, we still must include the Celts of Gaul, Spain, and the lower half of Britain. These countries were under Roman occupation at the time.

Additionally, our Lord's command to take the Gospel of the Kingdom to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) may not have been a figurative expression. For, according to Cecil Roth's book, *A History of the Jews in England*, he refers to medieval Jewish literature to document the fact that the expression "the end of

the earth" was the classical name for the British Isles (p. 25). If this was how the disciples understood it, then the evangelistic effort would have been launched by them immediately after the conversion of Samaria (Acts 8).

We are not left to guess what happened in those early years, fortunately. The writings of the Church Fathers have filled in the gaps. We know, for instance, that the Apostle Thomas died in India on his return from China. There are churches in India, which to this day claim Thomas as their founder.

As for Britain, consider the following:

*The extremities of Spain, the various parts of Gaul, the regions of Britain which have never been penetrated by Roman arms have received the religion of Christ.*

-Tertullian *Def. Fidei*, p.179

*The Apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Britannic Isles.*

- *De Demonstratione Evenglii, Lib III*  
Eusebius (A.D. 260-340)

Others among the Fathers confirm that Simon Zelotes was crucified in Britain (Roman Britain, of course. Britons did not practice crucifixion). Aristobulus, saluted by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, was one of the seventy and became a bishop in Britain. Joseph of Arimathea is recorded as another.

Theodoret the Blessed, Bishop in Syria, writing in 435 A.D., said:

*Paul, liberated from his first captivity at Rome, preached the Gospel to the Britons and others in the West. Our fishermen and publicans not only persuaded the Romans and their tributaries to acknowledge the Crucified and His laws, but the Britons also and the Cymry (the Welsh).*

"Britons and the Cymry" were sometimes treated separately from other Roman provinces because they were never truly conquered. They were subjugated by treaty, not by force of arms. This fact attests to the heroic determination of those remote Celts to remain free. It also explains why Britain was left untouched by all but one of the ten imperial persecutions, the last one under Diocletian. And that persecution resulted in the war in which Constantine the Great, with a British army, became Emperor and legalized Christianity.

I must, once again, refer you to Rev. Morgan's work as to why Rome never overcame the Britons:

From A.D. 43 to A.D. 86 sixty pitched battles were fought. "The series of invasions and sanguinary conflicts," observes Smith in his "Ancient Religions", between the Romans and Britons have no parallel in any age or country. "We are able to perceive," writes Richardson, "from the partial story furnished by the invaders themselves, that conquest was never more dearly attempted than in the case of Britain by the Romans. By no people was every inch of country at any age contested with more bravery and surrendered more stubbornly than by the aboriginal fathers of this isle. They had become a very populous nation, so versed in military tactics as to meet the armies, which had been carrying the Roman banners over the most famed and intellectual quarters of the world, on such formidable terms, as to render victory at every encounter little better than defeat."

- p. 90

No wonder Adolf Hitler declined to invade Britain!

While we do not have direct evidence that Peter arrived in Britain, we do have evidence that he ordained bishops (elders) whom he sent to Britain:

*The city of Rome, and all Italy, and Spain, and Britain, and Gaul, together with all the rest of the countries round about them, received the apostles' ordination to the priesthood from Simon Cephas, who went up from Antioch. . .*

- The Teaching of the Apostles, from ancient Syriac documents (*AnteNicene Fathers, vol.vii, p.671*)

The value of the above record is that it establishes the equality of the British bishops with that of Rome. Britain can claim Petrine Apostolic foundations.

Eusebius records that Britain was represented at the Council of Nicea by one bishop, and Athanasius testifies of Britain's firm loyalty to its Creed. Britain was also represented at the Councils of Arles (A.D. 314), and Sardic and Arminium later in the fourth century. No charge of heresy was ever charged until Pelagius, who I shall speak to later.

In the Diocletian persecution the lists of British martyrs exceed ten thousand. And it was the finding of the Church Councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1417), Sienna (1424) and Basle (1434) (all Roman Catholic Councils), that "the Churches of France and Spain must yield in points of antiquity and precedence to that of Britain as the latter Church was founded by Joseph of Arimathea immediately after the passion of Christ."



So, the joyous work that was begun by the Apostles in the first century matured until the second century, when Christianity became the civil religion of all Britain under Lleeuer Mawr (Lucius the Great). This was when the three seats of the three Arch-Druids of Britain officially became Christian Arch-bishoprics: Caer Llyn-dain (London), Caer Evroc (York), Caer Lleon (Caerleon-on-Dee: Chester/Bangor). Students at the Druidic universities numbered as high as 60,000, according to Morgan. Britain rivals Armenia as the first Christian kingdom.

### **The Celtic Fathers**

All men may hold the same truths, yet no man can hereby be drawn into slavery to another. If the Cymry believed all that Rome believes, that would be as strong a reason for Rome obeying us, as for us to obey Rome. It suffices for us that we obey the Truth. If other men obey the Truth, are they therefore to become subject to us? Then were the Truth of Christ made slavery and not freedom.

- Cadvan, Prince of Wales (A.D. 610)

Church historians focus on two main branches of Christianity: the Greek and the Latin, or Eastern and Western Christianity. Further study reveals, however, that there were two other branches of significance. Church historians confine their studies to the churches within the confines of the Roman Empire, believing that all other branches were derivative of the basic Greek and Roman types. Such was not the case.

Beyond the frontiers of the Empire in the East, there dwelt the Parthians, Persians, and Indians who embraced Christianity during the generation of the Apostles. These peoples constituted the true "Church of the East", from which we get the Peshitta, the Aramaic equivalent of the Textus Receptus in the West. Later in the fifth century, the Church of the East received the Nestorians into sanctuary. The Western church retaliated by excommunicating a third of the Body of Christ. But the missionary zeal of the so-called "Nestorian church" was exceptional. Their success reached as far as China and perhaps beyond. For centuries, it was the largest body of Christians in the world.

Beyond Rome's western frontiers were the Cymry (Welsh) who evangelized in Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, and with new evidence, we know they were in North America (see *The Celtic Inheritance* by Peter Berresford Ellis, Dorset Press, NY, 1992). The Mohawk and Sioux can claim Celtic ancestry (*The Ancient American Magazine*,

1993 and 1994 issues, P.O. Box 370, Colfax, WI 54730; and *America B.C.* by Barry Fell, Simon & Schuster, NY, 1989. See other works by the same author).

The contribution of the Celts to Western Christianity will be addressed shortly. But before I do, I want to discuss the Latin Fathers.

The three great Latin fathers were Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. They were the most prominent leaders whose doctrines were later used to establish Roman Catholicism. And while the reader must understand my high regard for their contributions to Christianity, gifts which abide to this day, space requires brevity and isolation of those points which created the distinctives of Latin Christianity.

Tertullian labored in North Africa, as did Cyprian and Augustine. He was a Roman lawyer, and the Roman system of government formed the basis of his world view which reflected back into his theology. Although he was the first to coin the term "Trinity", he did not conceive the doctrine as it was later expressed at Nicea. In fact, the Arians relied upon his subordinationism to support their claims. The Nicene Creed taught the doctrine of the Trinity as we understand it today: the co-equality in deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that they are of the same substance. Tertullian saw Christ with a beginning and his divine attributes as in some sense different and subordinate to the Father's.

With subordinationism, the imperial command structure found its way into Tertullian's conception of the Trinity. It was a top-down authoritarian chain from the Father to the Son to the Holy Ghost. While Rome was later to embrace the doctrine of Nicea, it never was able to differentiate between functional authority and ontological equality, which I shall speak to in a moment.

The Roman concept of government has always been authoritarian and imperial. This lies at its implicit Arianism. All emperors and kings are tempted to dabble in Arianism because government, traditionally, operates upon command-obedience responses.

Tertullian became a Montanist in later years, which reflected his legalistic mind on personal morals. His teaching in these areas were strict and intrusive - and in stark contrast to the happy, fun-loving Celts. The doctrine of penance was first articulated by Tertullian.

Cyprian was the next Latin theologian, and with him we begin to see the doctrine of the imperial church. Cyprian saw the bishops as potentates:

*He cannot have God for his father who has not the Church for his mother. If anyone was able to escape outside Noah's ark then he also escapes who is outside the doors of the church.*

- as quoted by Philip Lee, p.52, in  
*Against the Protestant Gnostics* (Oxford,1987)

*Look to the bishop as to the Lord himself; do nothing without the bishop. The Church is established in the bishops and the clergy.*

- Lee, p. 44

With Cyprian, the Ark of Salvation was the Church. Then, the Ark became the clergy. Later with Augustine, the Ark became the clergy of the Roman Empire. Finally, as with Pope Gregory and those who followed him, the Ark became the Bishop of Rome.

In speaking of the Latin fathers, Louis Berkhof agrees that "they represent the visible organization as the channel of divine grace, and make participation in the blessings of salvation dependent on membership in the visible Church" (*The History of Christian Doctrines*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1937, p. 68). Berkhof's work is very useful for a basic understanding of major doctrines in the Early Church.

When Cyprian's doctrine of salvation and the church was combined with Tertullian's subordinationism, it created a nominal Trinitarianism and a practical Arianism. What that means is that the doctrine of the Trinity became superfluous to personal salvation. For the average person, it made no practical difference whether there was a Trinity or not, no more so than whether it was the earth which orbited the sun or the sun which orbited the earth. It was purely a concern of academia.

All grace flowed from the Pope, who replaced the Father. It was administered by the priest, who replaced the Son. And the dead saints, with the Virgin Mother, replaced the role of the Holy Spirit. With this earthly Trinity, the command structure was restored. Latin Christianity adopted a practical Arianism.

The institutionalizing of Divine grace was consummated in Augustine. Augustine is remembered for his dim view of man's condition, as told in his Confessions, and his controversy with Pelagius over predestination and free will. The sinful condition of man and predestination are both Biblical doctrines. It was how he combined them in his classic, *Concerning the City of God* Against the Pagans, which alarmed the Pelagians. Augustine taught that man needs the iron rod of a Christian state to create a decent civilization.

Augustine's world was aflame with the destruction and brutality of the barbaric invasions. Ending the butchery and restoring sanity to civil life made him a partisan for strong-man politics. Unfortunately, emergency made him the enemy of Christian liberty.

Augustine was a great man and a great theologian. He heroically struggled against the insanity of his day. But it is easy to see how his system became the darling of the Roman imperial bureaucracy, which later converted itself into the Papal bureaucracy. In his system, man was helpless without God's grace. God's grace came from the Church, its sacraments and its sacerdotal orders. Those sacerdotal orders must become the civil power, according to Augustine, so that good will triumph over evil. Anyone who resists this institutional grace is resisting God's eternal decree. We can see why Augustine organized the inquisition against the Donatists, the Protestants of his day.

This institutional paternalism flowered in the middle ages as the Holy Roman Empire. State tyranny followed. It still plagues us today in communism, and other forms of the messianic state. Wycliffe called it the Beast of Revelation.

Now, let us contrast this system with Celtic Christianity.

The Celtic Church is an Eastern Church, not a Latin one. There are a galaxy of connections stretching back into the Biblical record itself. But even in pre-Christian times, Celtic and Greek contact was frequent. The Druids used Greek for their written language, as did the Celtic Church. Historians consider the Celtic Church to be Johannine in custom and theology, rather than Petrine. The Gospel of John was the favorite of the Celtic saints.

We have already identified the Greek term Logos which John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used to describe the deity of Jesus Christ. Since his Gospel was written late in the first century, it would have had more significance to the Druids, than to the Jewish and even Greek thinkers at the time, since their churches were already well established. It was also a term which emerged from Druidic cosmology, as mentioned earlier.

Ephesus was the center of Christianity during the second century, where John settled down for the last third of his life. Ephesus was the spiritual center for the Celts in Galatia, as well, during the years of John and his successor, Polycarp (69-155 A.D.).

Irenaeus (b. 120 A.D.) became the first of the three, great Celtic fathers of the Early Church. It is not known whether Celtic blood flowed in his veins or whether he was originally

from Galatia. But there must have been some kind of bond for the Celts; for his ministerial career was spent as the bishop to the Celts at Lyons, deep in Gaul (Lyons was as close to Britain as it was to Rome). In one of his writings, he apologizes for his sloppy Greek because he lives among illiterate Celts and uses their language, instead. This would have been an unlikely problem for a person who grew up and was educated in a Greek city. I tend to believe he was a Celt.

Whether Celt or not, he was a Celt at heart and developed Christian doctrine in a way which would be understood and assimilated by them. For that reason, the Christian world would see him as a Celtic expression of the faith. He was certainly looked upon by the Celts as their spiritual father. When the persecution of Marcus Aurelius broke out in 177, the Celtic Christians fled to him for refuge.

Once the pupil of Polycarp, Irenaeus had the status of an Apostolic father. This stature saved the Early Church from the great Easter schism in 189 A.D. Seeking preeminence, Victor, the Bishop of Rome, threatened to excommunicate the Asian churches for not following Rome's calendar date for Easter. Irenaeus counseled him to be more conciliatory, to which he agreed. Probably no other man in Christendom could have tamed the pride of the Roman bishop.

Benefiting from Irenaeus' long ministry, the Gaulish Church became a powerful organization. It was holding numerous councils during the fourth century. In 404 A.D., Pope Innocent I tried to gag them, claiming that theological differences should be settled in Rome. Not until the Franks invaded and displaced the Celts did Rome find ready subjects to its ecclesiastical domination. Southern Gaul (France) had to be destroyed in the middle ages before it submitted to Rome.

Irenaeus is most known, however, for his contest with the Gnostic heretics of his day. His writings against that heresy have not been improved upon since he wrote them so long ago. He saved early Christianity from becoming a mystery religion.

In this controversy with the Gnostics, Irenaeus could count on the support of the Druids. They never held the view that the creation was evil, since it was a part of the being of God, as we noted earlier. There was no dichotomy in the cosmos, nor even in man himself, since the Druids taught that the essence of a man's soul was the will.

Gnosticism taught that all matter was evil, including the body. It taught that the God who made the universe of matter was the evil God Jesus Christ came to destroy. This pitted the New Testament against the Old.

Theologians may think the Druids failed to understand the Creator/creature distinction. They also misunderstand Irenaeus when he talks about the deification of man. The Druids taught that man cannot bear the burden of infinity; only God can, since infinity is a reflection of His own being. Likewise with Irenaeus, man's union with infinity, his deification, was the immortality attained by moral perfection and the resurrection.

Consequently, Irenaeus and Druidism found common cause on this most important doctrine: the doctrine of creation. While Gnosticism ravaged the churches in other parts of the Empire, the Celts were never pressured by the crisis.

In two other areas Irenaeus left a definite "Celtic" imprint on Christian theology. One was on the doctrine of redemption; the other was on the doctrine of the covenant.

On redemption, Irenaeus taught "the recapitulation theory." And I marvel that theologians have not understood that it answered the crisis of Druidism. Berkhof describes it thus,

*(Its) the idea that Christ recapitulates in himself all the stages of human life, and all the experiences of these stages of human life, and all the experiences of these stages, including those which belong to our state as sinners. By His incarnation and human life he thus reverses the course on which Adam by his sin started humanity and thus becomes a new leaven in the life of mankind. He communicates immortality to those who are united to him by faith and effects an ethical transformation in their lives, and by his obedience compensates for the disobedience of Adam.*

- *Ibid*, p. 165

In the words of Irenaeus himself:

*(Christ) did not despise or evade any condition of humanity . . . but sanctified every age. . . He therefore passes through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants, a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are at this age . . . a youth for youths . . . and . . . because he was an old man for old people . . . sanctifying at the same time the aged also . . . then, at last, he came onto death itself.*

- *Ibid*, Lee, p.129-130

While he does not overlook the demands of justice fulfilled in the Atonement, Irenaeus stresses the doctrine of the incarnation itself and God's concern to actually save man from his sinful state, not in some judicial or positional sense, but in a deliverance which restores man to God's design.

Gustaf Aulen called this "the Classical View of the Atonement" in distinction from the Latin and subjective views. In his book, *Christus Victor* (Macmillan, 1969), he draws heavily from Irenaeus, devoting an entire chapter to his perspective:

*If it was right to maintain with reference to Irenaeus and the other Fathers that in their teaching salvation and atonement were one and the same thing, its is still more deeply and thoroughly true of the teaching of Paul. The double aspect which is inherent in the classic idea of atonement is expressed by him more trenchantly than by them, in his view of the Law as on the one hand holy and good, and on the other as a power which held mankind in bondage. It is therefore more abundantly clear that the Pauline doctrine of salvation is also a doctrine of atonement: God through Christ saves mankind from His own judgment and His own Law, establishing a new relation which transcends the order of merit and of justice.*

- p. 71

Berkhof, a Reformed theologian, with disapproval, refers again to Irenaeus:

*The real significance of Christ's work lies in the fact that He brought the sure knowledge of God and thus strengthened the freedom of man. . . Christ recapitulates the whole human race in Himself and thus establishes a new relation between God and man . . .*

- p. 66

You will recall earlier, the Druids taught a form of Karma, called "Abred", and saw in Christ's Atonement a deliverance from it. Irenaeus' recapitulation doctrine speaks directly to the Druidic dilemma. Just as pious Jews discovered, so the Druids learned that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That was why the Druids could not stop their Celtic flocks from sinking into the self-immolation of human sacrifice at the dawn of the Christian era. They had run out of hope. Jesus (Esu) entered Abred for the whole human race and has delivered mankind from the demands of public justice. In Christ man has been restored to the innocence of Eden.

To have the slate wiped clean was not sufficient, for the Druids knew that justification alone would not assure perseverance. For the Druids, a doctrine of sanctification was as important as justification. If man's moral condition could not be made whole, justification would become a mockery of God's perfection. Consider the following excerpt from a Druid catechism:

**Master:** Through the love of God thou sayest thou art come through all this and hast felt all this - how so, seeing there are so many signs of unlove?

**Disciple:** "Gwynfyd" (Druid heaven) cannot be regained without knowing everything, there cannot be knowing everything without feeling-in-self everything, there cannot be feeling everything without suffering-in-self every "rhith" (form or stage of life) of evil and of good, that one may be self-known from the other; and all this must be before "gwynfyd" can be regained, for "gwynfyd" is perfect liberty, choosing the good when all forms of good and evil have been self-suffered.

**Master:** Why cannot there be "gwynfyd" without traversing every "rhith" of life in "abred"?

**Disciple:** Because no two "rhiths" are identical, and every "rhith" has its own cause, suffering, means of knowledge, intelligence, "gwynfyd", power, not to be found in any other "rhith"; and since there is special knowledge in every special "rhith" not to be found in any other, necessity ensues to suffer every "rhith" before "abred" be completely traversed.

**Master:** How many "rhiths" are there?

**Disciple:** As many as God saw necessary towards knowing all good and all evil in every kind and quality, so that there should be nothing conceivable by God which should not be experienced, and thence its "abred"- knowledge.

- Morgan, p. 21

Whether the above catechism represents sound theology or not is immaterial. What is important to realize is that the Druids understood that God could not admit man into heaven without an assurance that he would not sin again. Or that if man did sin, there would still exist a moral power to redeem him. Irenaeus' recapitulation doctrine spoke directly to this issue. No longer need man worry about future sin because Christ has become both his justification and his sanctification.

No wonder the Druids received Christ with joy! A great burden was rolled away. Love became the only motive necessary for good works.

That leads us to another of Irenaeus' teachings which did resonate with the Celts: the doctrine of the covenant. Berkhof provides this summary:

*From the start God was deeply concerned for the salvation of the race, and sought to win it by three covenants. The law written in the heart of man represented the first covenant. The patriarchs were righteous before God because they met its requirements. When the knowledge of this law faded*



away, the Decalogue was given, representing the second covenant. On account of Israel's sinful disposition the law of ceremonies was added, to prepare the people for following Christ and for friendship with God. The Pharisees made it of none effect by robbing it of its chief content, namely, love. In the third covenant Christ restored the original law, the law of love.

- p. 64

This truth was answer to the Druid's prayer, as one fragment reads:

*Grant, O God, They Protection;  
And in Protection, Strength;  
And in Strength, Understanding;  
And in Understanding, Knowledge;  
And in Knowledge, the Knowledge of Justice;  
And in the Knowledge of Justice, the Love of it;  
And in that Love, the Love of all Existences;  
And in the love of all Existences the Love of God.  
God and all Goodness.*

- *Ibid*, Haberman, p. 88

"The Law of Love" was a theme which would appear repeatedly throughout the history of the Celtic saints. It would be heard again in Wycliffe's day and again in his Evangelical heirs. While the Eastern and Latin churches would be caught-up in rules and saving empires, the Celts would be busy saving men.

We come now to the second Celtic father: Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers in Gaul. He lived from 315 to 373 A.D. and was at the center of the Arian controversy. Peter Ellis explains his contribution:

*Hilary is regarded as the first native Celt to become an outstanding force in the Christian movement. His writings, with those of Athanasius, are said to have laid the foundation of Catholicism and western Christianity. He had become bishop of Poitiers about 350 A.D. but, because of his opposition to Arianism, he was exiled to Phrygia about 356-360 A.D. This allowed him the leisure to write his greatest work "De Trinitate" defining his belief in the Holy Trinity. Hilary's ideas about the Trinity have become the accepted Christian attitude. As a Celt, Hilary must have been imbued with the Celtic mystic traditions concerning trinity . . . It has been argued, therefore, that this important piece of Christian philosophical doctrine was a Celtic import as it is not found in the Greek or Judaic origins of Christianity.*

- *Celtic Inheritance*, p. 150

While the Arians found support in Tertullian's writings, Athanasius and Hilary found support for their view of the Trinity in Irenaeus. When the generation of Irenaeus passed away, the center of Christianity moved from Ephesus to Alexandria. Then, Christianity became increasingly divided. The farther east you went, the more Arian the churches became; the farther west you went, the more Trinitarian. This change occurred because the eastern churches were being hit the hardest from the Oriental cults spilling into the Empire. Druidism lay to the west, and it was always solidly Trinitarian. Matthew Arnold, one of England's literary masters of the 19th century, translated the following Druid creedal statements, which is perhaps one of the most profound examples of pre-Christian theism:

*There are Three Primeval Unities, and more than one of each cannot exist; One God: One Truth: and One Point of Liberty, where all opposites preponderate. Three things proceed from the Three Primeval Unities: All of life, All that is Good, and All Power.*

- *Ibid.*, Haberman, p. 87

The Druids were fond of teaching verse in threes, hence, the Triads. They were also fond of all triune symbols in nature.

The importance of the Trinitarian doctrine lies not only in its pious expression of Divine truth, but also in its impact on philosophy and social order. Man was made in the image of God. Therefore, his thinking and relationships will reflect that heavenly pattern. In the doctrine of the Trinity, we have three-ism exalted over dual-ism as ultimate reality. In the Trinity, we have balance between the ultimate principles of "the one" and "the many" - unity and diversity. Likewise, we have the earthly institution of the family exalted as the primary one (Father and Son) over individualism and statism. It is the foundation of Christian philosophy.

The third Celtic father was Pelagius, the twentieth abbot of Bangor. Bangor was called "the mother of all monasteries" by Hilary. Pelagius visited Rome and was shocked by the materialism and low state of morality. This was in about 380 A.D., a generation before the first sack of Rome.

Pelagius began teaching moral accountability. Stung by his rebukes, his adversaries pled inability to keep the moral law. Whereupon, Pelagius launched his crusade on the doctrine of free will. He is remembered for his collision with Augustine and his excommunication as a heretic.

Hilary was gone, of course, by the time of Pelagius. But in an epistle to the British Church, Hilary did speak of the "uncontaminated will." Some writings of Irenaeus were friendly to the doctrine. Pelagius' teaching was the revival of the Druidic doctrine of free will, which you will recall said the will was the essence of man's soul. Since the Druids also taught that the soul was immortal, one wonders in what sense the will was considered immortal. If it was considered self-dependently immortal, then it would be considered divine, which was heretical, of course.

But a careful reading of Pelagius' works which remain and the Druid doctrine tell us differently. Immortality is an infinite principle, which the Druids said only God can uphold, since man was finite. Thus, man's will is upheld by God's will.

Being a Latin father, Augustine could not understand the Celtic mind. St. Jerome derisively accused Pelagius of being "full of the porridge of the Scots". Pelagius was not concerned with metaphysics, but with virtue, as were the Druids. The Druids taught that it was the will which separated man from beasts. As a Druid, Pelagius was naturally shocked at Augustine's position. He saw the Augustinians as denying their humanity - denying that they were made in the image of God. Denial of free will was a license to brutishness.

Gordon C. Olson was a modern student of Pelagius and insisted that "Pelagianism" was an invention of his adversaries. Pelagius was really a semi-Pelagian. He taught free will in the sense that God has endowed everyone with the spiritual grace to be saved, if they choose to follow the call. Pelagians baptize Christian babies because they are saved; Augustinians baptize them to save them. The damning element in Pelagianism was that it taught God's saving grace flowed to men individually and did not depend upon the Church, especially the bishop, to mediate that grace. "Free will" threatened the elaborate institutional edifice of Latin Christianity. It said there was salvation outside of Cyprian's second Ark and Augustine's holy *polis*.

History has sufficiently proved that the Councils which condemned Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism were the result of political antagonisms, and not theology. Two Councils acquitted Pelagius of heresy. It was not until the Emperor intervened to overturn them that Augustine prevailed, although the Church never embraced Augustinianism, either.

Regardless, it is important to understand that the Anglican Church has not accepted as binding any Creed after Nicea. That was why it was possible for the Wesleys and early Methodism to exist freely in Britain. Even Reformed divines now define predestination in a manner not contradictory to free will:

As Van Til states it, the assumption is that "a personal act of man cannot at the same time but in a different sense, be a personal act of God . . . (It) assumes that either man or God act personally at a certain time, and at a certain place, but that they cannot act personally simultaneously at the same point of contact . . . that personal activity on the part of man must always be at the expense of the personal character of that which surrounds him.

. . .  
A tremendous fallacy is involved in this point of view. First of all, it depersonalizes the universe which surrounds man and assumes that it has an existence which is independent of God. But, if God created all things, then all creation is understandable and has meaning only in terms of God and His creative purpose. . . Man . . . is personal and free because foreordained and predestined. The only way to assert man's freedom and personality is to declare God's absolute sovereignty.

- *By What Standard?*, R.J. Rushdoony  
Thoburn Press, 1983, p. 142-143

[I consider the above to be some of the finest Christian Druid doctrine. Both Van Til and Rushdoony are solid Calvinists.]

Like a good Celt, Pelagius attacked elitism and the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few. For that, he has been accused, unfairly, of being a proto-socialist. The Roman Empire reached its end by the time of Augustine and Pelagius. The corruption ran deep. We can suggest that Rome's destruction was a result of its refusal to accept Pelagius' prophetic message.

In summary, I think it can be fairly established that Latin Christianity reflected the imperialism of the Roman Empire: cosmopolitan, authoritative, hierarchal, and bureaucratic. Celtic Christianity reflected the provincialism of Celtic society: decentralized, voluntary, and individualistic.

### **Family Monasticism: The Best of the Celtic Church**

*But the earth helped the woman . . .*

- Revelation 12:16

When Britain was drained of its manpower in the defense of Rome, it was left to the mercy of the northern tribes and the Saxons. At first allies, the Saxons, a Germanic people from the continent, became more of a threat than the pillagers from the north. As Rome faded from memory, the sixth century found the

Britons and Saxons locked in a desperate struggle for the island.

The retreating Britons found sanctuary with the Cymry, their brethren in Wales. The Saxons, viewing themselves as superior to the Britons, refused to amalgamate. Massacre and expulsion were their preferred policies. They were Odinists and had no use for Christianity. Churches and monasteries were destroyed; bishops and priests slain, as they tried to convert their conquerors.

It was at about this time that renewed missionary endeavors to Ireland and Scotland were vigorously pursued. Even Wales became a place of fierce struggle. In the end it retained its independence, but not until it was devastated by battle, famine, and plague. Many of its nobility had suffered treacherous assassination, which required the remnant to regroup in Armorica (Brittany).

With the Abbey of Bangor in ruins early in the seventh century, the center of Celtic Christianity was moved across the bay to Whit-horn, Scotland and the Isle of Man, which formed an axis of missionary enterprise. Since the Picts of eastern Scotland were still too hostile, the Celtic church turned its attention to Ireland. The fruits of the Irish mission became the marvel of the Middle Ages. R.J. Rushdoony provides a description here worth quoting at length:

*For a time Ireland became the center of Christianity and of learning in the Western world, especially during the sixth and seventh centuries. It was an independent Christian church, free also of state control . . .*

*The illuminated manuscripts of Ireland, especially the "Book of Kells", are without equal in the Western world. The fine and accurate detail is such that a tradition arose that angels did the work. . .*

*The Irish missionaries went to Britain, the continent, and to Iceland long before the Norsemen. They introduced not only Irish learning and the study of Greek, but Irish monasteries, strong agricultural centers which helped Christianize many an area. They introduced also practices unknown to other churches, such as the system of private confession. . . The Irish missionaries were not institutionally minded; they were individualistic and evangelistic. Theirs was a happy, not a melancholy or somber Christianity. Among their great missionaries were Columba, Columbanus, Gall, Colman, and Fursa.*

- World History Notes, p. 133-134

So renown were the Irish missionaries, that evidence of their presence can be found as far east as Kiev. The Roman Pope

became alarmed to hear that they were establishing monasteries in northern Italy. The Irish, at this time, were not Roman Catholic, but Culdee.

Culdee, literally meaning "refugee", was the name given at the beginning to the Druid Christians when they sought sanctuary from the pagan invasions. They were the remains of the British and Welsh churches founded in the Apostolic era. So often were they in flight during those years, that "Culdee" began to be used as a general term to describe all Christian leaders who were independent of Rome.

The Culdee (or Celtic) Church found its instrument of renewal in the monastery. It was an end-run effort around the loss of the bishoprics in the Celtic world to the Roman wave.

In our day, monasteries conjure up visions of a bleak existence. Perhaps, that was the case for monasteries of the Latin and African traditions. During the Dark Ages, they were oases in a barbaric world. In them the beautiful things of life could be experienced and appreciated. Music, art, and the Scriptures (which were still scribed by hand) could be found in the monastery. Celtic monks were hard workers and studied agriculture. Some of mankind's greatest advances in husbandry were the fruits of Celtic monasteries. From them, lands devastated by war re-learned the forgotten arts and crafts of civilization. They were the preservers of skills and learning of all kinds and very often provided capital necessary for life-improving ventures in the near-by villages. Destroying a defenseless monastery was truly a crime of the worst kind.

Although monasticism was copied from the East, the early Celts were neither hermits nor ascetics. So close were they to life that they created an uncelebrated concept of the monastery: the family abbey. It became exceedingly popular among the Celts for whole family-groups (clans) to form monasteries. It stood to reason that the martyred missionaries would require replacement. Hence, the Celtic clergy was not celibate. In fact, the doctrine of celibacy was forced upon the Celts for the express purpose of destroying its ecclesiastical system. (Wales persevered with its married clergy until the Reformation.)

In Celtic society, the priestly office was inherited. Each clan had its own chapel on its family estate. One of their own, often the son of the principal male heir, was the priest. The Roman Church was frustrated for centuries from imposing its clergy into Celtic lands.

I am compelled to quote others at length on this remarkable tradition. First is Gladys Taylor in volume two of *Our Neglected Heritage* series (Covenant Publishing, London, 1969), p.9:

These training centers are generally referred to as monasteries, though the word is misleading. In many cases whole families lived together in these communities, whose sole purpose was preparation for missionary activity and the organized worship of God. Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham, describes them in these words, "The simplicity, the self-devotion, the prayerfulness, the burning love of Christ which shows forth in those Celtic missionaries of old must be your spiritual equipment now."

The nineteenth century historian of monasticism, the Comte de Montalembert, describes the Celtic monasteries of Ireland as "nothing else, to speak simple, than clans reorganized under a religious form." This is an apt description and it is unfortunate that, without any understanding of the Celtic methods, the early British saints have often been depicted as though they were members of some order of celibate monks, after the Roman pattern.

There were certain aspects of their work for which the Celtic British saints were renowned. First and foremost their scholarship, in particular their profound knowledge of Holy Scripture, was widely acknowledged. Always they carried satchels by their side, containing copies of Gospels, Epistles and Psalms. In the Irish colleges it was customary for a boy student to possess a psalter, carefully copied as part of his training and then learnt by heart. To memorize all the psalms would not be too great a task to those who were familiar with the form of education practised by the Druids.

Let me call to mind that "abbot" means "father". An abbey was the place of the father. While the Romans had an imitative fatherhood; Celtic Catholics had the real thing. Celtic Christianity was family-oriented in its social philosophy, not institutional as was Latin Christianity.

Thomas Hudson provides further detail in his study on *The High Age of the Celtic Church* (Attic Press, Greenwood, SC, 1992):

In the Celtic Church, the diocese was usually the same area as one of the petty kingdoms into which Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and much of Britain in that time were divided. Many monastic foundations were the result of an agreement between the king and all his extended kin, for one could not give away family land. The family as a whole would give the land and then move in. . . Some monks seem to have been born into the system after the clan started the monastery. Others came from families who sent their children to the religious house for fosterage. When these grew old enough to go out into the world they often chose to remain with the community. The Celts also had a custom of co-arb. The Co-arb was he who had right to the property by descent. Thus the bishop or abbot in office was the head of the

*House by blood and inheritance. The family property included the family monastery.*

- p. 24

Hudson tells us of one man who formed a monastery with his thirteen sons and twenty five daughters (p. 45). These spiritual pioneers were truly remarkable people. He further adds,

*The Celtic saints were not particularly meek and mild, nor were they the misfits of society. Humility did not come naturally to them and being shy and retiring did not occur to these people. They could be violent, vengeful and deliver mighty curses filled with a considerable lack of charity and destruction. Like all saints these were powerful men for they well use the power of grace given them by God through prayer. They had a closeness to God . . .*

*They healed the sick, raised the dead, brought boats safely out of storms, calmed ferocious beasts and even defeated raiding parties. Those of Druidic background and training turned that over to Christ, thus saining their prophetic powers. . . Never do they draw back from the discipline of the Call.*

- p. 44

While the Celtic Church was orthodox in every way, its form of government differed from the rest of the Christian world. Celtic society was decentralized and tribal. So was its church. Local parishes were identified with the territory of the clan. The family monasteries were the ecclesiastical units, not diocese like the Roman Church. Abbots, not bishops, became the spiritual heads. These abbots received ordination as the successors of the Culdees, who were in turn, the heirs of the Apostles. To destroy such an ecclesiastical system required the destruction of the entire society, which is exactly what Rome set out to do.

### **The Roman Wave**

*They have now found out a new language called Greek; we must carefully guard ourselves against it. That language will be the mother of all sorts of heresies. I see in the hands of a great number of persons a book written in this language called "The New Testament"; it is a book full of brambles, with vipers in them. As to the Hebrew, whoever learns that becomes a Jew at once.*

- Roman cleric in the time of Pope Alexander VI



*We desire 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 to every Christian.*

- Dionoth, Abbot of Bangor in reply to Augustine's demand to submit to the Bishop of Rome

When Augustine of Canterbury was sent by Pope Gregory to Britain at the end of the sixth century, Britain had lived free of imperial Rome for almost two centuries. The spokesmen for the British Church reminded him of the second canon of the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.), which ordained that the Churches outside of the Roman Empire should be governed by their ancient customs. The British, while within the Empire, nevertheless, preserved their ancient customs by treaty throughout the Roman period. Consequently, in terms of the canon, the Britons and Cymry ought to be treated as the Picts and Scots, as well as the Goths and Parthians. Augustine, who never even rose to greet the delegation, but sat smugly like a potentate, brushed their claim aside. The Celts may have had fiery tempers, but they never struggled with the vice of pride and arrogance, as did the Romans.

From the start, it was the goal of Rome to dominate the Celtic Church, and if not dominate it, then destroy it. This was in violation of the canons of Nicea which forbade intruding on another bishop's parish without his consent.

Rome did not hesitate to counsel and encourage the pagan Saxons to do their dirty work. By declaring the British Church as "non-Catholic", Rome justified its support of the Saxon subjugation of the island in meting out the "judgment of God". The Franks did Rome's dirty work in Gaul in the name of the "Holy Roman Empire". The kingdom of Armorica (Brittany) was all that was left of free Celtic Gaul.

Why was this happening? Papal Rome was merely the continuation of imperial Rome in different dress. The Babylonian idea of a commercial empire of free trade where everything was monetized, including the "souls of men" (Revelation 18:13), where men must be ruled by other men - this presupposition of all pagan government did not sit well with the free-spirited Celts. For that reason, they were marked, not just for defeat, but for utter extinction. The Celtic Church, the Celtic culture, and finally the Celtic people had to be destroyed. The invasions depopulated the richest portions of the island and reserved them for peoples subservient to the world order. This was not much different than what happened to another Celtic nation centuries later: the American South (see the works of Richard Kelly Hoskins).

No student of the history of the Celts will fail to be struck by their suffering and the oppression they have endured. The Celts have suffered far more from racism than have the Jews. At least, the Jews have been allowed a separate existence and the right to preserve their culture. Not so for the Celts. They were denied their land, their priests, and their language. At one time, playing the harp was forbidden in Ireland and speaking Gaelic was a capital offense. This cultural genocide has been sustained throughout the centuries, and today, most Celts do not know who they are, and most of those who do know deny it for embarrassment.

One effective method of displacing the Celts was to make the degrees of consanguinity so strict that Celts could not comply with canon law. It was customary to marry first and second cousins. The offspring of such unions were held illegitimate by the church. Without a legitimate heir, family property would be transferred to the king or the church.

After the initial invasions, intermarriages among the nobility occurred to seal treaties of peace. Often, the new spouse would be Latin, who would bring a Roman priest as a private chaplain. This formed the wedge of influence, which eventually led to what happened at the Synod of Whitby.

Historians mark the Synod of Whitby in 664 A.D. as the turning point in the Roman/Culdee struggle, although it would be centuries before the Culdees would lose their hold on the Celtic world. The controversy was over the dating of Easter. King Oswy, a Scot of Northumbria, sought to bring domestic peace, as the Queen's chaplains insisted on observing it according to the computation of Rome. The Culdees followed the Eastern tradition. At the Synod, the Papists won the day by claiming the Pope's succession from St. Peter and his possession of the "keys of the kingdom". (Working from better sources, 'a later generation would learn that the first bishop of Rome was a Briton - Linus, son of Caractacus, who was ordained by St. Paul and mentioned in the Epistle to Timothy! Britain can claim to be the Mother Church of Rome.)

At first, Rome was forced to compete side-by-side with the Culdees. A friendly king would endow a church or monastery to the Latin Church, but the people would insist on their own priest.' So, the Culdee would be reserved a corner of the chapel to minister, or was restricted to odd hours. The Latin Church would adopt Culdee ways and make them its own, such as voluntary confession to a soul-mate or footwashing following Communion. "Saining", making the sign of the Cross, was a uniquely Culdee custom which Rome copied, also.

By pretended claims of precedence and Petrine foundations, the Latin Church stole the fruits of Irish missions among the Anglo-Saxons and the Picts. The close of the eighth century found England (named after the Angles) with Rome as the established church. Brittany, Ireland, and Wales succumbed only under the boot of the Norman invasions during the twelve century. A few Culdee outposts remained on the outlying islands, such as Iona, for another century. This brings us to within a century of Wycliffe.

Rome launched a campaign of cultural genocide. On the one hand, it sought to destroy all traces of Celtic heritage. Renovating churches with Latin style (images and all) and banning the family chapels (or burning them). Then, it absorbed some Celtic customs as its own, so as to make the worshippers feel comfortable. Finally, by controlling the institutions of learning, new generations arose which knew nothing except Rome. Representatives of the old order, the Culdees, became an anachronism, and were despised as schismatics. Or the revisionists made the Culdee saints Roman Catholics in the histories, as in the case of St. Patrick (there were two St. Patricks, one a Culdee and one a Papist). The Celtic tradition, if it was heard at all, became the minority opinion.

### **Leavening the Roman Loaf**

*This nation, O king, as it deserves, may be oppressed and very largely destroyed and weakened through thy might and that of others, now as in days gone by and many times to come. Completely exterminated, however, it will not be through the wrath of man, unless it be the wrath of God accompanies it. And no nation, so I deem, other than this of the Welsh, and no other language, upon the stern Day of Judgment before the Most High Judge, will answer - whatever may happen to the greater remainder of it - for this little corner of the earth.*

- unnamed Welshman to Henry II at Pencader in 1163 A.D.

The destruction endured by the Celts, especially the Welsh, during the Middle Ages is difficult for modern minds to comprehend. Homes and villages would be destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again. Orchards were destroyed; livestock taken or killed. They were reduced to poverty during those centuries, living in the woods and caves, and eating what grew wild. Their impoverished condition and the wildness acquired to cope with it produced contempt in the eyes of their foes. Poorly clothed, they were looked upon as savages. To be called a "Welshman" has its modern counterpart in "nigger" or "white trash."

But their faith did not die, not unlike another "cloud of witnesses", "of whom the world was not worthy" (Hebrews 11). Even though Rome had the upper hand by the end of the first millennium, Celtic Christianity was by no means dead. In the end, papal Rome found the Celts as unruly as did imperial Rome, easy enough to swallow but much harder to digest.

Rushdoony comes to the same conclusion:

*The Frontier Age is that era in which the struggle of the Christian churches of Europe against this Roman concept took place, ending in the victory of Rome Except for the Frankish Church, the churches of Europe were independent of Rome Indeed, the great Irish Church had closer spiritual ties, as did others, with Constantinople, and its monks were instructors in Greek to Europe The Barbarian churches, first Arian and then orthodox, denied the Roman idea of papal sovereignty, they affirmed the royal control of churches but placed the king, the realm and the church alike under God's law. The Frontier Age ended in the captivity of the Western Churches, including England and Ireland, to the papacy but, from then on until the Reformation, these churches, except for the French Church, were in continuing revolt against that captivity. Wiclif and Hus are only two of the more prominent names in that struggle.*

*The Roman dream did not die with the Enlightenment but simply took many new forms; the best example of it to-day is the United Nations.*

- World History Notes, p. 130-131

My task, at this point, is to demonstrate that the initiators and leaders of that revolt were essentially Celtic. There are many streams which converge in the great Sixteenth Century Reformation. Nearly all of them have Celtic founts.

First, for the common people during those dark years, revolt took the form of irreligion Impiety became the symbol of resistance. This was never more obvious than in the British Isles and southern France. People paid their tithes because it was the law, but they sported instead of attending church. The Celtic mind found the pomposity and somberness of the Latin Church to be obnoxious.

Second, these people were ready listeners to traveling evangelists who preached against Rome. Cathari, Albigenses, and Waldenses were effective in southern France and Brittany. The Latin Church condemned these sects for heresy and accused them of Manichaeism This myth has endured until new evidence surfaced in the twentieth century. Although some generalization occurs, since we must acknowledge there are heresies in every generation, these religious sects were basically sound The Cathari were recognized, of course, at the Council of Nicea, and were accepted. The

Albigensis and Waldenses were, upon closer examination, forerunners of the Baptist tradition. After citing some new evidence, David Hunt adds this evaluation.

*Their descendants, with us today, and the churches they founded, bear witness to their true faith and furnish additional proof of the malicious lies that Rome has hurled at them in order to cover its crimes.*

- *The Berean Call*, December, 1994  
P.O. Box 7019 Bend, Oregon

*Not only did these sects find their greatest support among the Celts, it was a Celt from north Italy who inaugurated the movement. Of much more, serious consequence was Arnold of Brescia, who, a pupil of the errant Abelard and accused of sharing his master's heterodoxies, was proclaiming a much more inconvenient heresy when he invoked the ancient republican ideals of the city of Rome, maintaining that the papal authority within the city was an usurpation, and indeed the whole temporal power of the papacy and all the temporal concerns of the Church as a whole were an usurpation --so that the crusade in Rome involved a larger crusade against the alleged secularism, wealth and worldliness of the clergy. After his death, there remained a certain obscure sect of Arnoldists, calling themselves "Poor Men", a devoted unworldliness their gospel, who no doubt provided a receptive organism in which the later culture of Waldensianism might thrive.*

- *Mediaeval Heresy and the Inquisition*  
A.S. Turberville, London, 1964, p. 15-16

Indeed, it appears that Arnold provided inspiration to Peter Waldo of Lyons (a Celtic hotbed), for he too called his followers "the Poor Men of Lyons" Brittany provided a source for other sects, some heretical (if we can believe the Romans) and some not (by Protestant standards) Apostolic Brethren, Henricians, Petrobrusians, etc. None of these movements can be considered more than popular revolts against Rome. Unable to provide coherent theologies of their own, as were the later Reformers, they contented themselves with being anti-Catholic. If Rome believed in infant baptism, then they did not. If Rome believed in transubstantiation, then they did not. These early sects among the people were built on negatives and were an expression of moral revulsion at the corrupt Establishment - emotional issues so typical of the contrarianism of the Celtic mind.

Third, there was the monastic movement, as was said earlier. But even after the monasteries were taken over by Rome, the Celts still flocked to them and used them for purposes of resistance. St Francis of Assisi, for instance, attended Bobbio

in northern Italy, a Celtic monastery which still glowed with its ancient traditions. From St. Francis, of course, came the Franciscans which provided scholars for the universities all over Europe. The "Spiritual Franciscans", as they were called, were a constant thorn in the Pope's side, and combined with the writings of Abbot Joachim (especially "The Everlasting Gospel" - a call to, essentially a Protestant age of the Holy Spirit), declared the clergy in league with Antichrist (Turberville, p. 41).

Looking carefully at the record, it contained the signs of a Druidic conspiracy against the Papal order (the prophecies of the Druid, Merlin of Arthurian legend, were incorporated in the Franciscan polemic.) The issue reached a head in 1323, when John XXII condemned their doctrine in a Papal bull. So high in esteem were the Franciscans that the Pope dared not excommunicate them. But many of them believed the Roman Church was indeed the "whore of Babylon." The fanatical Spirituals were small in number, but their cause was seized by some secular rulers, especially Lewis of Bavaria. William of Ockham produced numerous polemical works in their support. These events, which ought to receive greater scrutiny from historians, commenced a chain reaction ending in the Great Schism (a time when there were two Popes excommunicating each other). It was this spectacle which led Wycliffe to make his final break with Rome.

Fourth, the universities came alive with discontent. In the ninth century, a bold Irishman by the name of John Scotus Eriugena had declared the supremacy of reason over authority. By this assertion, he did not speak of an irreverent attitude toward the Scriptures, but rather the liberty of the mind from the interpretive authority of the clergy. This typically Celtic assertion would later influence the Scholastics, who stripped the Papacy of all intellectual respectability, just as the monks had stripped it of all moral credibility:

*That epoch which saw the new movement of monastic reform which gave birth to the order of Grammont, of the Carthusians and the Cistercians, is most notable in the history of the universities - of Paris, Oxford, Bologna. From one to another, from the feet of one learned doctor and teacher to another, flocked wandering scholars athirst for pure knowledge which, if it had a theological bias and a religious garb nevertheless inevitably tended to produce a spirit of rationalism, to substitute freedom for discipline, the individual consciousness for authority.*

- Ibid, Turberville, p. 6

At the close of the eleventh century, another bold Celt arose to follow in Euirgena's footsteps - Abelard of Brittany. There is much in his story which illustrates the Celt: his passionate and tender romance with Heloise, his daring to pursue

the logical demands of the truth, his impetuous temper and resolve in the face of dangerous and overwhelming opposition, and his irenic impulse. Like most great Celts, he does not receive his due. Rome rewarded his loyalty by denouncing him as a heretic at the hands of the sanctimonious Bernard of Clairvaux. But as much as Abelard loved Rome, he could never be a part of it. He was a Celt. He thought as a Celt and lived as a Celt. There was no room for him in the Latin constellation.

The universities loved him, however. He spent much time teaching in Paris. He was an excellent logician and did much to reconcile the realism of Anselm with the nominalism of his mentor, Roscellinus, which according to Gordon Clark, was the rediscovery of Aristotlism. To put it simply, realism was a philosophical perspective which emphasized the oneness of things, as had Plato. Nominalism emphasized the particulars of the many, as had Aristotle. In terms of the Trinity, realists would tend toward pantheism, as they would posit the unity of substance as the ultimate reality. Nominalists would consider the separate individuation as ultimate reality - hence, tri-theism. (Nominalism: universals consist in name only.)

While remaining a nominalist, as is typical of Celts, Abelard was careful to avoid the tri-theistic position, which exposed him to the charge, unfairly, of Sabellianism. As a conceptualist, he argued that faith cannot be established by reason because God is incomprehensible. But he explained the Trinity as revealed in a modalism of attributes with the Father representing the power of God, the Son representing the wisdom of God, and the Holy Spirit representing the goodness of God. His critics conveniently overlooked that he spoke of these as "revealed" attributes and not necessarily the ontological Trinity itself. In a sense, Christ Himself represented the Trinity in modalistic terms by referring to the persons with human titles: Father, Son, and Sacred Breath (the etymological meaning of "Holy Spirit") or Influence.

Abelard's view of the Trinity was pure Druidism. So was his dialectic system in *Sic et non*, ("Yes & No"), which became the standard for Aquinas and the Scholastics. It is remarkable, that as a general rule, the Latin churchmen leaned towards realism and the universal, while those influenced by Celts leaned toward nominalism and the particulars. Richard Weaver, in his marvelous defense of the antebellum tradition (*The Southern Tradition at Bay*), observed that the South was Aristotelian.

Abelard made another uniquely Celtic contribution to Christian theology on the doctrine of atonement. He is credited with establishing the Moral Influence theory in response to Anselm's Satisfaction theory. Anselm had systematized the Latin view which emphasized the payment of debt for sin to God. Abelard rejected that and adopted what some scholars call the "subjective

view", but for lack of understanding of the Celtic mind, fails to see its roots in Irenaeus' Recapitulation theory.

By "Moral Influence", theologians mean that the atonement and forgiveness of sins rest upon the sovereignty of God - His will and disposition to forgive without any consideration of merit by man, Christ or anyone. The value of the atonement lies in the fact that it was a symbolic act which capsulated man's condition in Christ and provided an ethical motive to repent. The theory was basically concerned with the problem of how man can be freed from the fear of God and respond personally to His love. With the embodiment of God's sacrificial love in the life and passion of Christ, man's heart is moved in faith and obedience. Abelard saw the Latin view as an exercise in abstraction with no meaningful message to the matter of man's salvation from sin.

There was much value in Abelard's position, but much to be desired. He failed to grasp the objective reality of sin and the demands of public justice, which is a reality created by the Third Person of the Trinity. Two people can experience a subjective relationship between themselves. A third person stands outside the relationship and observes it objectively. That is why both the Latin theory and Abelard's were inadequate - they both were subjective in different ways. The Governmental Theory came closer to integrating the subjective and objective aspects of the Atonement into a meaningful system.

Abelard's position, however, represented the continuing Celtic revolt against Latin theology. On the matter of the Atonement, Abelard would be succeeded by another Celt in the late thirteenth century: John Duns Scotus. He was an outstanding philosopher and theologian who left Scotland to teach at Oxford University. AS a Franciscan, he is regarded as the founder of Franciscan theology. His work on the Atonement perfected the Celtic view.

Working from Aquinas, which was an attempt to synthesize the views of Anselm and Abelard, Duns Scotus produced what was called the Acceptation Theory of the Atonement. He denied any quantitative value to the merits and sufferings of Christ, but that God chose, out of His sovereign grace, to accept the substitution of Christ's sufferings in the place of man's. By an act of His will, God determined to accept them as sufficient. Christ's merit, which was one not at all proportionate with the debt owed, was willingly accepted by God. This view made way for an evangelical emphasis upon the doctrine of salvation, because God will not allow for any other way of salvation except through Christ. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"! (Romans 3:23).



That Duns was also representing the Scottish position on the Atonement is evidenced by fact that the Culdees were preaching the atonement as a central evangelistic doctrine as late as the tenth century. Gordon Olson also classifies him with the Governmental theory which provided the basis for the revival preaching of New England ministers during the nineteenth century (e.g. Edwards, Finney, Taylor, etc.) (See the Truth Manual, available from this author).

The breadth and depth of Duns' Christian philosophy was impressive. One truly confronts a giant intellect by interacting with his train of logic. The ease with which he articulated the great questions of the cosmos and of Christian revelation can only be explained by contact with the Druidic discipline. Duns also taught in Paris. His influence was extensive and enduring.

There were two other principles he taught which are of concern here. First was his teaching on the incipency of the will. Although a firm believer in predestination, Duns taught that there was no cause behind God's will and no cause behind man's will. All moral actions were self-caused.

Second was his teaching on individuation. To avoid the pitfalls of pantheism, he emphasized individuals. Both of these doctrines, as we have shown, were uniquely Celtic. In Duns, again we find an exponent of Celtic theology.

We have identified four streams of resistance against Rome - all of them with evidence of much Celtic influence. The final stream was found in the royal houses of Europe. Celtic blood was present which increasingly manifested itself as the generations went by. This was never more obvious than in the case of the Saxons. Although racial antagonisms would later forbid the admission, the Anglo-Saxons became "Celticized". The royalty mingled first, as was mentioned earlier. And while that provided admission of Rome to some quarters, it also served as a two-edged sword. The Culdees made inroads of their own. By the time of King Alfred in the ninth century, England was ready to listen. Eager to revive literacy and learning among his people, Alfred turned to the Celts. Asser, the bishop and abbot of St. David's, came to his court as teacher and advisor. Under his guidance, monasticism was revived following the Celtic model. He updated and codified Saxon laws by borrowing heavily from Celtic common law traditions. In Alfred's own words, he explains why:

*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 considered how earnest God's ministers then were about preaching as about learning in this land.*

*Ibid*, Hill, p.138-139

Saxon boys, by the thousands, made their way to the great learning centers in Ireland to be taught by the Culdees. The Scriptures were being translated into the Saxon tongue, nearly five centuries before Wycliffe would attempt it in English. Alfred also founded Oxford University.

His Five Axioms have come down to us, thus:

1. *A wise God governs.*
2. *All suffering may be accounted blessing.*
3. *God is the chiefest good.*
4. *Only the good are happy.*
5. *The foreknowledge of God does not conflict with man's free will.*

*The Pedigrees of Magna Carta, vol.1, p. 174*

During this era of goodwill, Celt and Saxon found more opportunity to mingle. By the time of the Norman invasion, the Saxons had lost interest in oppressing the Celts. Rome looked to William the Conqueror as the rod which would bring the Saxons back into line. The Pope even excommunicated King Harold to aid in his defeat. The Norman Conquest was successful in 1066 A.D. But Rome found, to its surprise, that William would not allow Rome to dictate state affairs. And so, Rome had a love/hate relationship with the new Norman rulers.

By the time of the Magna Carta, the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans would claim the Celtic heritage as their own. A romantic version of Celtic legend would be revived under King Edward III, for which King Arthur would become the central hero. The age of chivalry was born.

All of the above factors would combine to produce Wycliffe's Reformation and the dissenting tradition. The Poor Preachers, or Lollards as they were called, were sent out in the old monastic tradition. It became a popular movement with the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. The Oxford faculty stood with him, in the beginning as did the most powerful duke in England of royal blood, John of Gaunt.

What was amazing about Wycliffe's Reformation was not that it occurred, but that it had not occurred earlier. The anger and discontent had reached a fever pitch. Consider the following astonishing exchange at Wycliffe's first summoned appearance before the Bishop of London:

**Bishop:** *"Lord Percy, if I could have guessed you would have played the Master here, I would have prevented your coming."*

**John of Gaunt:** "Yes, he shall play the Master here for all of you."

**Lord Percy:** "Wycliffe, sit down, you've need of a seat, for you have many things to say."

**Bishop:** "It is unreasonable that a clergyman cited before his ordinary should sit down during his answer. He shall stand."

**John of Gaunt:** "My Lord Percy is in the right and for you, My Lord Bishop, you have grown so proud and arrogant, I will take care to humble your pride, and not only yours, but that of all the prelates of England. Thou dependest upon the credit of thy relations, but far from being able to help thee, they shall have enough to do to support themselves."

**Bishop:** "I place no confidence either in my relations, or in any else, but in God alone, Who will give me the boldness to speak the truth."

**The Duke to Lord Percy (aside):** "Rather than take this at the Bishop's hands, I'll drag him by the hair of the head out of the Church."

- *The Legacy of Arthur's Chester*, Robert Stoker  
Covenant Publishing, London, 1965 P. 137

Few people are aware that Wycliffe would have been a dead man were it not for the feisty temper of John, Duke of Lancaster. Through Queen Anne's sympathy and support (she was of the royal house in Bohemia), the followers of Hus and Wycliffe exchanged students and found sanctuary, at different points, in each other's country. Luther owed much to the followers of Hus, and Hus owed everything to Wycliffe.

Questions arise then about Wycliffe himself. Was he a Celt interacting with the Scriptures alone as did his predecessors Duns Scotus and William Occam? Was he nurtured by Culdee monks? Did he attempt a conscious resurrection of the Celtic Church?

We know nothing of his parentage except that he was born in York in about 1333 A.D. At that time, York was considered the frontier between England and Scotland. Northumbria, with the rise and fall of fortunes in battle, was passed between Scots and English for centuries. We have public record that the Culdees were in York as late as 1189 - underground, probably much longer. The Anglo-Norman proprietor of Northumbria, John de Baliol with his wife, Devorguila, the Scottish heiress and patriot, founded Balliol College at Oxford University. She died in 1290 A.D. Their son was the Balliol who was briefly King of Scotland, and dethroned by King Edward I and Robert Bruce.

Wycliffe became a fellow at Merton College, but he was first a student and then a master at Balliol, which had strong ties to Yorkshire. This puts Wycliffe squarely in the Scottish school, not only academically, but spiritually as well, since the Colleges had their own chaplains.

That Wycliffe was aware of the Celtic heritage cannot be denied. He would have had knowledge of the Order of St. George and the Garter, which was the Royal Chapel of Windsor and had never been subject to Rome. And in his plea for the Wycliffe Bible, his disciple, John Purvey wrote:

*For if worldly clergy would look well into their books and chronicles they would discover that Bede translated the Bible and expounded upon it extensively in Saxon, which was the English or common language of this country in his time. And not only Bede, but also King Alfred, who founded Oxford, translated at the end of his life the opening chapters Of the Psalms into Saxon, and would have done more if he had lived longer. Also Frenchmen, Belgians and Britons have the Bible and: other books of devotion and of exposition translated into their mother language.*

- *The Law of Love*, trans. David L. Jeffrey  
(Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), P. 351

Here, we find contemporary acknowledgment of the existence of the survival of Culdee Christianity in Wales, Brittany, and the small colony of Celts in Belgium (Frisians).

John Wycliffe was an Englishman who wanted a free England and a free Church in a free England But to arrive at that desire, he had to leave Latin Christianity behind him He had to think like a Celt, read the Scriptures like a Celt, and act like a Celt The Church of I England in the end followed the Latin model, but Wycliffe's true heirs, the Protestant Independents, Separatists, and Nonconformists (Puritans) would transplant that vision to a land he did-not know existed.

### **Celtic Renaissance**

The figures which played key roles in the various movements of the Sixteenth Century Reformation - the Reformation of, Luther, Calvin, and Knox - are too many to discuss here. It is enough to say that the Celts played a key role. Knox, of course, was a Scotsman and a Calvinist. But it must be remembered that it was the red-headed reformer, Farel, who invited Calvin to Geneva. Celts congregated in Switzerland for its remoteness. You will always find a higher concentration of Celts on the frontiers of society because they do not get along well with governments,

systems, and institutions. Free-spirited, they are always looking for open ground.

The Reformation took root in Scotland, only to be used later by King James VI of Scotland (later, the First of England) to wipe-out entire clans (such as the Clan Gregor and MacDonalDs of Islay) in the defense of Scottish Calvinism. At first, the Scotch Presbyterians were in league with him, but after he became King of England, he viciously turned on them.

The result of this massive upheaval was the great Scotch-Irish emigration to the American colonies. Upwards of 250,000 of them migrated to the middle colonies, from the time of the Pilgrims to 1800. Dispossessed and broken, these people created the old South a new bastion of Celtic civilization.

The presence of the Celts was felt in the North, as well. The Welsh came with the Puritans and concentrated, especially, in Rhode Island and Maine.

Grady McWhiney's excellent study on Celtic ways in the Old South (*Cracker Culture*, University of Alabama Press, 1988) is absolutely essential to grasp the fact that the United States, prior to the Civil War, was culturally two nations - two nations which despised each other.

The South was defeated before its civilization could flower into maturity - a civilization in which slavery would have faded away as a harmful economic system. My opinion is that the true issue of the War was the fact that the South had a self-sufficient society of freemen uninterested in the utopian visions of the imperial mind. Revived in the Hamiltonian agenda for America, many Northerners dreamed of a commercial empire. In this respect, they were pawns in the hands of European forces still committed to a world order patterned after the Roman Empire. There was no room for dissent in such a world order. It must be an absolute and closed system with no frontiers. The old South stood in the way of that vision.

The South was not only defeated; it was destroyed and plundered. During Reconstruction, the best of the South left for the western territories. It is there that we find the vibrancy of the old South - in Texas, California, the Northwest, and the Cowboy states. The new South is too much like Scotland after the Anglicans were through with it: closed-minded, proper, and somber.

But in a general sense, America has been *Celticized*. The current opposition to the New World Order is the sixth time the Celts have stood in opposition to the imperial Roman mind. There seems to be a sort of genetic predestination in retracing our ancestors' footsteps.

*Scrutiny reveals they are of differing types. . . But all alike have the same character and temperament, a striking witness to the influence which the character as well as the language of the Celts, whoever they were, made on all with whom they mingled. Ethnologically there may not be a Celtic race, but something was handed down from the days of comparative Celtic purity which welded different social elements into a common type, found often where no Celtic tongue is now spoken. It emerges where we least expect it, and the stolid Anglo-Saxon may suddenly awaken to something in himself due to a forgotten Celtic strain in his ancestry.*

*-.The Religion of the Ancient Celts, J.A. MacCulloch (Constable, London, 1911), p.8*

Celtic blood is showing itself again in the American resistance to the Global Elite. The challenge before us is to rediscover our heritage. You cannot fight something with nothing. We need to study what kind of character a Celtic civilization, based upon the Scriptures, would take, and then dedicate ourselves to that objective, even if it requires, a radical change of our political system.

### **Refounding the Celtic Church**

Creating a Celtic civilization will first require re-founding the Celtic Church. What that would require, I am not fully prepared to say. But the first step will certainly require us to learn our past correctly and honestly, and then let the full counsel of God in the Scriptures discipline it. However, there are a few others which I can only sketch.

The second step would be to republish the ancient Celtic texts of the Scriptures. Presently, the Received Text in the West has come to us through the Greek and Latin Churches. The Received Text of the Celtic Church appears to have been lost. To find it and translate it into English will require a clergy versed in the Celtic languages Gaelic and Cymry (Welsh).

The third step would be a re-examination of the Celtic common law. This would include the codes of Howell the Good, Lucian the Great, and the Laws of Brehon, among others. Currently, the canon law of Western Christianity is the imposition of Latin ways on a non-Latin people. I include Protestants. Most Protestants do not realize how much of Latin Christianity they have absorbed.

Finally, there would need to be an official declaration of Apostolic foundations. Due to the unique form in which the Celtic

Church was organized, especially in Wales, Apostolic succession became one of pedigree and not one of the pallium, as it was for the Latin Church. What that means is that the power of church authority was passed from bishop to bishop in a succession from the Apostles down through the generations of men they ordained. This was the case in the Greek, Latin, and even Eastern churches. In Celtic lands, ecclesiastical succession became one of birthright, which was passed-down from one heir to the succeeding heir in the next generation (father-to-son). Since in America, the Celtic church is in Diaspora, anyone who meets the Biblical requirements for office and who produces a pedigree which shows their Celtic ancestry, can claim apostolic succession. Although, that ancestry must show Origin in the aboriginal Celts during the time of the Culdees, and not merely a claim that one is of Scotch, Irish, or Welsh descent.

The above are only suggestions, at this point, for the purpose of establishing an authentic Celtic Church. Much more research needs to be done in these areas.

### **Conclusion**

In my zeal to establish my thesis, it may be that I have presented an overstatement of the virtue of the Celts. My purpose was not to paint the Latin Church as the bad guys and the Celtic Church as the good guys. There is enough good and evil to go around in all nations.

The Latin Church is a valid institution for those who need and respond to that kind of structure and teaching. Certainly, some peoples of the earth are not predisposed to self-government. They like the power and control which the Roman Catholic institution provides. My point is that the Latin Church is not becoming to most of the peoples of Europe, certainly northern Europe. That is why the Celtic Church developed it fit the ethnic composition and temperament of those peoples. The attempt to impose Latin Christianity has been a great tyranny and has caused much needless suffering. It will continue to do so unless we discover our heritage and restore it.