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THIS IS GERALD FLURRY, PUBLISHER
AND EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE
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JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

By The late Isabel Hill Elder, Northern Ireland



Prophecy, history and tradition combine to make the story of Joseph of Arimathea unique in the annals of our race. A story drawn from sacred and secular sources, and bearing a name known the world over wherever the Christian message has gone, yet but vaguely understood as an integral part of that message; a part prophetically assigned to Arimathean Joseph to perform in the last act of the Drama of the Ages.

In this tale of long ago misconceptions and mistaken identities must be clarified so that the story may be seen to rest upon a true and sure foundation. For this purpose we begin in the days prior to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua.

CANAAN

At that pre-conquest time Canaan, for the most part, was inhabited by a number of tribes descended from a degenerate grandson of Noah, Canaan, youngest son of Ham. The land, later known as Palestine, was then under the suzerainty of Egypt. Upon the arrival of the Hebrew people (Israel) at the River Jordan, Egypt for no known reason, relinquished her over-lordship and withdrew her troops, leaving the Canaanites to defend themselves in the approaching Hebrew invasion.

Apart from the Hittites, the aggressive Philistines were the only non-Canaanite people the Hebrews had to encounter in their conquest under Joshua. The Philistines were known to the Canaanites as "foreigners", as the name Philistine is said to signify. They were descended from Mizraim, second son of Ham, and do not appear to have come under tribute to Egypt. The Philistines were left in the land for some centuries after the conquest; they had an alerting effect upon Israel, and a scourge in times of disobedience to the laws of God; they occupied five main cities, and eventually Canaan derived the name Palestine from their name Philistia .

PHOENICIA

The Phoenicians who occupied an extensive maritime strip were, with their kinsfolk, the Canaanites, equally degenerate, disease-ridden and idolatrous in its lowest expression of moral depravity. The Israelites, under Joshua, were divinely charged with the task of driving them out for the cleansing of the land, a task made less difficult from the fact that the Egyptian troops had been withdrawn.

The Phoenician territory consisted of the coastal strip on the western sea-board of the Mediterranean from the tip of Mount Carmel to Sidon, 120 miles, and a hinterland of 20 miles stretching to the western slopes of the Galilean hills. In the book of Joshua (19: 24-31) we find that the portion of Canaan allotted to the tribe of Asher after the conquest, was precisely this Phoenician territory.

The Phoenicians, in common with all the Canaanites, were under tribute to Egypt, in those days viewed as a most undesirable badge of servitude. This conquest took place in the 14th century B.C.

Asher's "lot" comprised twenty-two cities or castles with their villages. On the North of the Asherite territory lay the "lot" of the tribe of Dan, the coastal strip from Sidon to Arvada , and a hinterland stretching to the sources of the Jordan. To the South lay the territory of Zebulun from Mount Carmel to Sarid and eastward to Nazareth in Galilee.

It was a quite prevalent usage in ancient times for conquered territory to continue to be known by its pre-conquest name. As a result we have the name Phoenicia perpetuated for many centuries after the territory came into Hebrew possession, and the Israel people referred to as Phoenicians, to the confusion of the Bible student and historian. Josephus refers to the re-building of Tyre by the tribe of Asher after its destruction by Joshua. The impression remained, however, until recent years that some of the tribes of Israel failed to drive out the Canaanites – which they eventually accomplished, as witness King David taking the "stronghold of Zion", then considered to be impregnable. (II Samuel 5:7).

The writer of the eightieth Psalm did not exaggerate when he described the vine, by which he typified Israel, as filling the land of Palestine, when transplanted there from Egypt, and as sending forth its branches into the sea, neither of which could Israel be said to have done, if they had not conquered Phoenicia.

That the tribe of Asher possessed Tyre, "The Crowning City", whose merchants were "princes" as Isaiah describes Tyre , demonstrates the fulfilling of a strange prophecy made by Jacob. (Genesis 49:20) Upon promising Judah the sceptre, emblem of perpetual royalty, Jacob promised Asher "royal dainties" otherwise translated "royal treasures". In the time of Hiram, the Asherite king of Tyre, whose fleet ploughed the seas with that of Solomon, bringing back the produce of many lands, including treasured gold for making the vessels for the Temple in Jerusalem, that promise made by Jacob was fulfilled. "Solomon had at sea a navy with the navy of Hiram". This friendly alliance began in the days of Solomon's father, David; we read that "Hiram was ever a lover of David".

PHOENICIAN VERSUS ISRAEL

The mistaken identity of the Hebrew people, Israel, as Phoenicians continued throughout the centuries undetected by historian and Bible student alike. The highly applauded prowess of the Phoenicians by sea and land being the rightful laudation of the tribe of Asher. This mistaken identity was brought to an end by the discovery in Egypt in the year 1887 among the ruins of the palace of Amenhotep the Fourth, of the Tel el Amarna tablets recording the conquest of Joshua from the Egyptian and Canaanitish point of view.

Egypt, having relinquished her suzerainty and withdrawn her troops and her guardian officials, the native Canaanites were left to defend themselves. The tablets show that in each of the Canaanite cities there was a native ruler or king, and an Egyptian official known, according to Major Condor, as a Paka, placed there, presumably, to guard the Egyptian interests. The Amarna tablets are invaluable for the historical information they impart of that period. The cuneiform inscriptions upon the brick tablets are letters from Canaanitish rulers to Amenhotep the Fourth entreating the Pharaoh to send his troops to their aid in defending the land against the invading Hebrews under Joshua. To these appeals the Pharaoh turned a deaf ear and the conquest was completed by Joshua. (See *"The Oldest Letters in the World"* by Mrs. Sydney Bristow). With one exception, no place names were changed. The Israel people entered upon their new possession, burning the unhealthy habitations of the degenerate Canaanites and re-building towns and villages before entering upon their own way of life – circa 1444 B.C. (Ussher).

In his translation of the Bible, Ferrar Fenton, who wrote his version after the discovery of the Amarna tablets was able to show that Joshua burnt Tyre with fire, and that Tyre was rebuilt by the Hebrews. (Joshua 11:10-20, F.F.trans.).

"It had been decreed that the western border of the Israelites should be the Mediterranean seaboard. Joshua obeyed that decree by conquering Phoenicia".

There was, actually, nothing new in the Israelites being known by the name of the country they had conquered; history abounds with instances of this ancient practice. In the course of their history the Hebrews were known variously as Amorites, Moabites, Medes, Persians and Mandas. (Marchant *"Monumental Facts"*). Of one historical reference to the Phoenicians of the rejected Canaanitish stock, there was found, legible for many an age, an inscription in Phoenician characters on two pillars at Tangiers, opposite Gibraltar, "We fly from the face of Joshua the robber". (Procopius *"Vandalensis" Lib. 2, ch. 10*). Their flight was south-ward to settle amongst other African tribes of the people of Ham.

On the Mediterranean seaboard the Asherites had as neighbours on the north the tribe of Dan, and on the south the tribe of Zebulun. It is a remarkable fact that Dan was the only tribe in Israel to change the name of their newly-conquered territory to *"the name of Dan their father"*. (Joshua 19:47). By this characteristic the people of Dan may be traced in their later trek across Europe in place-names and rivers, in such names as Danube=Dan's Rest. Dneister, Danzig, Dneiper, Dardanelles, until finally this tribe settled in southern Scandinavia and named their part of the country Dans Mark or boundary, now Denmark. Herein we find the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jacob, *"Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel"*. In Denmark the people are a complete entity with a constitutional monarchy, and are a law unto themselves. Branches of Dan were the *Danonii* of Greece and the *Tuatha de Danaan* of Ireland.

The tribe of Judah gave their name, Judea, to their "lot" in Palestine, though failing to retain their ancient patronymic outside the Promised Land.

By the eleventh century B.C. the tribe of Asher alone of sea-faring men, under the name Phoenician, had passed out of the Mediterranean, coasted along Spain and Gaul, established a trade with the *"tin islands"* = the Scilly Isles and Cornwall. (*Universal Encyclopedia*). The *"Phoenicians"*, we now realize, who, according to many writers, made settlements in Britain, were of the Israel tribe

of Asher, and were not of the "accursed Hamitic race of Canaan", but were of the race of Shem. The descendants of Ham's youngest son Canaan, upon whom Noah uttered a far-reaching curse of servitude were therefore powerless to gain supremacy in private or national enterprise. "A servant of servants" precisely describes their position as vassals of Egypt and of the Hittites, who were conquered by Egypt and were under vassalage to their conquerors, hence the "servant of servants" under vassalage to vassals. The reputed colonization of Cornwall by Phoenicians rests upon the same assumption as that of "Phoenician" Ireland. The nomenclature "Phoenician" Cornwall, and "Phoenician" Ireland are without foundation in historical fact. Bruce Hannay in his "Race Origins" states "The Phoenicians were Israelites". No Phoenician antiquities and no Phoenician graves have been discovered in Cornwall nor in Ireland.

The ancient Britons buried, instead of burning their dead like the Romans, by whom in after years during the Roman occupation, they were heavily taxed for it on every occasion; they still however adhered to their own customs. This, with similarity of Welsh and Cornish words and whole sentences in the Hebrew language leaves no doubt as to the origin of the British people.

CORNWALL

The oldest graves that have been discovered in Cornwall – the Harlyn Bay Discoveries, near Padstow – are remarkable as showing that the earliest settlers in Cornwall, and as some think the first tin workers, were buried exactly like the prehistoric Egyptians, in a crouching position on the left side with the knees almost touching the chin. (R. A. Bullen, B.A., "Harlyn Bay Discoveries"). The earliest tin mining in Cornwall is found, in this discovery, to point to the builders of Stonehenge, and other gigantic monuments in these islands believed to have been the Hyksos and the first tin miners in Britain, those Semitic descendants of Noah who left Egypt upon their completion of the Great Pyramid. Their knowledge of astronomy led to their creation of charts in earth and stone of the Zodiac. In no other way can we account for pre-historic Egyptian graves in Cornwall and for a people with the scientific knowledge in pre-historic times to discover and instruct in the mining of tin, which later proved to be the most universally useful metal for the use of mankind.

Have we in the ancient Druidic hymn found in Davies' "Mythology of the British Druids" an echo of the arrival of the Hyksos from Egypt. The following four short lines are said to have been the prayer of five hundred men in five ships who arrived in pre-historic times on the shores of Britain. The predominance of the number five and multiples of five is characteristic of the Great Pyramid building in Egypt, believed to have been the work of the Hyksos. Taliesen, the Welsh authority on matters Druidical, stated that his lore had been delivered to him in the Hebrew. Mr. Davies put this passage into Hebrew letters which have been translated thus: –

"And I have Covenanted a Covenant. O heap (or ruin).

A home of wood is a home, my budding forth.

I have Covenanted a Covenant. O ships.

Sak (my defender) is my witness: He is my friend. "

The Hyksos were reputed to be "tall, powerfully built men" and so gives a vein of truth to the legend that Cornwall was the home of all the most famous giants of history and tradition.

ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT

It is quite possible, even probable, that Michael's Mount was so named by the Asherites, for in their wilderness days, Sethur, son of Michael, a descendant of Asher, was one of the spies deputed by Moses to "search out" the land of Canaan; also in the Asherite territory in Canaan there was a city named *Mishael*, which would appear to have been a variation of Michael, and was one of the four cities given by Asher to the Levites as a "place of refuge" (Joshua 21: 30). As Levites accompanied all expeditions of the Israelites it is impossible to avoid the

conclusion that Michael's Mount was originally one of the earliest Levitical places of refuge in these islands, such provision being compulsory in all Israel settlements.

In support of Michael's Mount having been a Levitical sanctuary, it is worthy of note that from time immemorial the Mount has been a place of pilgrimage. That a Celtic or Druidic Monastery succeeded the place of refuge, and that the Mount was registered as a "menage" or monastery lands is borne out by the fact that this property never paid "geld" nor tax. To this romantic spot came St. Keyne, daughter of the king of Brecon, on a pilgrimage in 490 A.D., a fact which indicates that Michael's Mount had become established as a Christian Centre; and the prefix "Saint" added to bring the title into conformity with the angelic Michael of the Scriptures.

The Israel tribe of Asher in their ships traded with many countries.

"Their numerous fleets were scattered over the Indian and Atlantic oceans. The Tyrian pennant waved at the same time on the coasts of Britain and on the shores of Ceylon"

By 600 B.C. this trade had reached maturity and the Asherites (Phoenician so called) were at the zenith of their greatness.

"Rome, founded C. 650 B.C., was still an insignificant unwall'd Italian town, Asher on the Mediterranean sea-board of Canaan, more than 600 years old." (George Smith, LL.D., *"The Cassiterides"*).

Rome had no inherent qualities for a rapid rise to power in the ancient world. It is now generally conceded that Rome copied Greece; she could not have moved forward without the example of Greece founded by giant intellects of the ancient Israel people, whom she unashamedly copied in architecture and the arts.

The merchants of Asher worked or farmed the tin mines, not as slaves, but as masters and exporters. (See Camden *"Britannica"*, vol. I). Let it be repeated, there is no trace in Cornwall of Phoenician antiquities nor graves; no trace of Phoenician influence has been discovered in either Gaul or Britain. No vestige of Phoenician traders has ever been found in Britain, yet native pre-Roman objects have come to light in Cornish tin works, while tin was discovered in the Iron Age village of Glastonbury, and tin was used in minting British money.

The Rev. T. Taylor in his work *"St. Michael's Mount"* quoting Diodorus Siculus who is said to have been quoting Posidonius, asserts that *"the merchants who bought the tin at Ictis (Michael's Mount) were neither Phoenician nor Carthaginian"*.

An ancient name for St. Michael's Mount is believed to be discovered in the name *Ictis* or *Mictis*. The latter name would be more likely as an ancient variation of Michael. Pliny's quotation (IV, 30 of *Timaeus*), *"Six days' sail inland from Britain (Brittany?) there is an island called Mictis in which white lead is found, and to this island the Britons come in boats of osier covered with sewn hides"*.

There is also the Diodorus quotation (V. 21, 31) of Posidonius who travelled in Britain about 80 B.C. and describes the metal workers of Cornwall carrying the tin *"to a certain island lying off the coast of Britain, called Ictis (Mictis?) ... at this island the merchants buy the tin from the natives and carry it across into Gaul"*. In the native pronunciation of Michael the "ch" was probably pronounced "k". Michael would then have been Mickle and so Mictis.

The prophetic blessing of Jacob upon Asher (**Genesis 49:20**) and that of Moses (**Deuteronomy 33:24**) have been amply fulfilled *"Above ground olives and oil (in Palestine); "beneath, iron and copper" (in Britain). (Companion Bible)*. The energetic sea-faring sons of Asher amassed great wealth and laid the foundation of the riches of the Duchy of Cornwall which since those days has

maintained the heir to the British throne in affluence and dignity. The key to this is found recorded in ancient British chronicles, that from time immemorial Cornwall was a royal dukedom, the inheritance of the eldest son of the Sovereign, and never permitted to be held by other than the rightful heir.

Tin stamped with the Duchy seal bears a *"lion rampant, gule, crowned or: with a bordure garnished with bezants"* (W. Copeland Borlase, *"Tin Trade in Cornwall"*). A bordure indicates Royal lineage.

The tinnars had their own parliament known as the *"Stannaries"*, guarded by a warden whose office was hereditary. According to Sir George Harris (*"The Stannaries in Cornwall"*), the origin of the Constitution is *"lost in preceding ages of unfathomable antiquity"*. There were mining and trade interests between Cornwall and Somerset from remote antiquity, and there is the old tradition that a trading route existed from pre-Roman times between the tin mines of Cornwall and the lead mines of the Mendips. Traces of this *"way"* may, perhaps, still be found in the *"Here Path over the Quantocks"*.

It was certainly not by mere chance that Arimathean Joseph became acquainted with the Cornish tin and Somerset lead mining, for as a Prince of the House of David, Joseph was aware that his kinsmen of the tribe of Asher had made Cornwall famous for the prized metal. Was it perhaps in Joseph's wake (of the tribe of Judah) that the Jews' became acquainted with Cornwall and its tin mining, where their name remains to this day in *"Jews houses, Jews tin, Jews leavings"* or is it part of the post-captivity usage to label all sections of Israel *"Jews"*?

"We may date the origin of arms as hereditary marks of honour from soon after the subversion of the Roman Empire by the invincible Goths of the fifth century, A.D. (who were of Israel) and who in that time of destruction gave birth and life to Heraldry, placing it in the room of the "Jus imaginum" of the Romans. Thus the strong bore lions, wolves, leopards, etc.; for wit and craft they bore serpents, dogs: this being the practice of the conquering Goths, and who must therefore have previously been acquainted with the use of ensigns". Nisbett *"System of Heraldry"* (see Genesis 49, Numbers 2: 2)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Arimathean Joseph should not be viewed as a lone figure on our shores in pursuit of his mining interests but rather as a rich man of those days travelling with a considerable retinue and with the entree to the Royal Court. That the Boy Jesus was entrusted to his care by his niece Mary, the Virgin Mother, his eldest brother's daughter, is a tradition found in places widely apart, and tenaciously held in Cornwall. During the war (1939-1945) a Polish fighter pilot, later killed in combat, told of the legend current around the old harbours, of the Baltic that Joseph of Arimathea as an Eastern Mediterranean sea-faring merchant visited their ports with the Boy Jesus on board. Similar legends are found around the Hebrides of the visit of Joseph to these most north-westerly islands of the Hebrews.

The legends concerning our Lord's visits when grown to manhood centre around Glastonbury and the Mendip Hills, as persistent tradition asserts, and cannot be dismissed without blind incredulity.

In folk memory these visits have been kept alive and passed on from one generation to another, held dear by the older inhabitants by whom it is not considered a subject for glib and sceptical discussion, nor for the prying of strangers out of mere curiosity. The lips of the native residents are then sealed, but among themselves, in their own homes, they talk about the time in the long ago when our Lord visited Glastonbury and the surrounding country and accepted hospitality in their homes.

William Blake (1757-1827), English poet and artist, was so deeply impressed with the Glastonbury tradition that he was moved to write, in wonder and in awe: –

*"And did those feet in ancient time walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God on England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance Divine shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here among those dark Satanic mills?*

*Bring me my bow of burning gold! Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold! Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight, nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till I have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land."*

Even to-day there are homes in and around Glastonbury where an extra place is always laid at table in the belief that one day He will return.

PALESTINE

At the end of our Lord's travels, which traditionally included India and Tibet, He returned to Palestine at the age of thirty years, to begin His ministry, in strict accordance with the Mosaic law as the regulation age when priests entered upon their Levitical duties. And here began the transfer of the High Priesthood from the House of Levi to the House of David, to be vested in our Lord. *"Thou art a priest for ever"* – (Hebrews 5: 6). That Joseph of Arimathea was then returned to Palestine is certain for there was much to occupy him in the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus *"but secretly for fear of the Jews"* (actually the *Sanhedrin*) being well aware that he could serve his kinsman Master best by remaining in the background in those days of religious and political unrest.

Joseph was well-known to the other disciples and their friends.

Matthew calls Joseph: *"A rich man of Arimathea."* **Mark**: *"An honourable counsellor."* **Luke**: *"A counsellor, a good man and a just."* **John**: *"A disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews."*

Joseph is called *"nobilis de curio"* which indicates that he had an officer's rank in the Judean or Roman Army, and accounts for his acquaintance with Pontius Pilate, the Spanish born, British-educated Governor of Judea. In this connection it is also said *"Joseph was a soldier of Pilate seven years"*. On this point the Rev. Smithett Lewis, M.A. (*"Joseph of Arimathea"*, p. 56) states:

"We have proof that Decurio was a recognized office in the Roman Empire in the time of Joseph. Cicero had a favourite villa in Pompeii. At that time its City Council consisted of Decurios, who had been ex-magistrates, and of other pre-eminent persons. So important were they, that Cicero said, with some irony, that it was easier to become a Senator of Rome than a Decurio in Pompeii."

On the Mount of Transfiguration, our Lord, in the presence of his disciples, discussed with Moses and Elias *"His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem"*; it is certain that the Master discussed this subject with his kinsman disciple Joseph, in view of the part Joseph was destined to play as next-of-kin.

In the climax, when the hatred and jealousy of the Sanhedrin had reached its peak, and burst upon the princely head of Jesus of Nazareth, Joseph as a member of that body was aware of its cruel intention and *"consented not unto the counsel and deeds of them"* that plotted the destruction of Jesus. One other member of that august body spoke out in vindication of his Lord Nicodemus, *"a master in Israel"*, actually a Doctor of the Law. Nicodemus spoke as a lawyer, and as a Levite, *"Doth our law judge any man before it heareth him and knoweth what he doeth?"*

While the Last Supper was in progress the Sanhedrin was in session following the *Feast of Brotherhood, the Qadosh*, which signified Holiness, Dedication, Sanctification and was held on Passover Eve. At this session the attendance of all its members was compulsory; we can therefore place Joseph of Arimathea on that evening, while at his house in Jerusalem the *Qadosh* was reinstated as a Memorial Service, and the New Covenant inaugurated by our Lord in the

words *"This Cup is the New Covenant in my blood."* The Passover Supper ended with our Lord's injunction *"This do in remembrance of Me"* and observed ever since by His followers as *"The Last Supper"*.

The Sanhedrin being in Session gave the traitor Judas his opportunity, and withdrawing from the Upper Room he hurried to the Assembly Hall of the Sanhedrin, there to arrange for the betrayal of his Master. *"What will you give me and I will deliver Him unto you."* . . . *"and they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver."* (Matthew 26:15, Zechariah 11:12). Judas had heard his Master's plan for the evening-to go direct to the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples.

Afterwards Judas took his place at the head of *"a great multitude with staves and swords"* from the *"Chief priests, and scribes and elders"*, the rabble tools of the Sanhedrin, to lead them to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus awaited the crisis which held for Him death and resurrection. Joseph was a pained spectator of all these things, the condemnation by the Sanhedrin, the death sentence pronounced unwillingly by Pilate. That Joseph took his stand near the Cross (literally **stave or rood**) is self-evident, for as next-of-kin Joseph had the right to claim the Body of his Master for burial. When the moment came and the words *"It is finished"* were uttered by his Lord, Joseph sought and obtained Pilate's permission to remove the Body. In this he was assisted by Nicodemus. It is a striking fact that it was two of the three richest men in Jerusalem, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, *"A master in Israel"*, both secret disciples of Jesus, who removed the wounded and lacerated body from the Cross, and carried out a hasty embalming with the spices they had brought, before winding the Body in its linen winding-sheet. This is important to note as in Israel kings and princes alone, were wrapped in linen for burial, and so was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, *"He made his grave with the wicked"* (it was intended that His grave should be with the wicked) and *"with the rich in his death"* or it was decreed to be with the rich. (Matthew 27:58-60, Isaiah 53:9, F.F. trans.). In the Magdalen College Library at Oxford, there is a remarkable old manuscript *Life of Mary Magdalen* (No. 89 in the Library catalogue). The twenty second chapter contains an account of the embalming and burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. A detailed description is given of the mausoleum and sepulchre of Joseph, which he had made for his own body. Joseph in this M.S.S. is called *"nobilis decurio"*. The sepulchre is described as consisting of two chambers, an outer room which was of sufficient height so that *"a man with his hand raised could scarcely touch the roofing of it"* and an inner chamber where the Body of the Lord Christ was laid. In both, the entrance is said to have faced eastwards.

After the burial Joseph and Nicodemus hurried to their homes to keep the Passover with their families, this being strictly a family feast at which the question must be asked by the youngest member of the family, *"What mean ye by this Feast?"* The sacred service rendered our Lord by Joseph of Arimathea was recorded in Britain. *"The High History of the Holy Grail"* reveals in the prayer of Dindrane, *"Lord the good Knight, Joseph of Abarimacie (Arimathea) took down Your Body when it hung upon the rood, and laid Your Body in the Holy Sepulchre wherein You were covered of the sovran cloth."* Herein is reference to the *"Prophet of Nazareth"* despised and rejected of men but accorded the burial of a King.

Joseph of Arimathea is not mentioned in the events which immediately succeeded the resurrection. At first there was no persecution of the followers of the *"New Way"*. Eusebius, the historian, writes of Tiberius Caesar as the Emperor under whom the name of Christ was spread abroad (bk. ii, c. ii). Tiberius threatened death to any persecutors of the new Faith. The reign of Tiberius had only three and a half years to run until his death in A.D. 37, having reigned twenty-three years. The daughter of his third wife Julia, by a previous marriage, became the wife of Pontius Pilate; it was she who, during the trial of our Lord, sent the message to her husband, *"Have thou nothing to do with that just man"* (Matthew 27:19). No doubt this incident deeply impressed Tiberius when he

came to hear of it, and caused the Emperor to have a measure of sympathy with the followers of "that Just Man".

The brief reign of his successor, Caligula, four years, was not marked by any hostility towards the Christians. Caligula died in A.D. 41 and was succeeded by Claudius who reigned for thirteen years. The early years of this reign were marked by increasing hostility from the Palestinian Jews towards the followers of "The New Way", and after the stoning of Stephen many Christians fled to the great port of Caesarea, prepared to go forth to another land in search of peace and freedom of worship. Joseph of Arimathea appears to have been the leader of a little band which included Martha, the three Marys, Salome, Lazarus, Zachaeus, the family of Joseph, his servants and twelve disciples. (*Recognitions of Clement*).

Eventually casting off from shore, the little band of refugees sailed along the Mediterranean towards the coast of Gaul and landed at Marseilles. Here Lazarus chose to remain and was its first missionary and later, Bishop; his name is perpetuated in one of the churches there.

The remainder of the party continued their journey along the Rhone valley, the trade route familiar to Joseph, his party dwindling as one and then another chose a town or village to remain as missionary. Perhaps the last to break off was Zachaeus who stopped at Rocamadour and took up his residence on the slopes of its rocky height because, it is said, the place reminded him of a loved spot in the homeland of Palestine. Joseph and his household continued on their way to Morlaix in Brittany, there to wait for suitable weather conditions to cross to Britain-four days' sail.

THE BRITONS

From ancient chronicles, records and pedigrees extant it is possible to glean some idea of life in these islands at the dawn of the Christian era. The picture is of a self-reliant people, engaged in industrial and agricultural pursuits, living on the lands owned by their fore-fathers for many generations.

Diodorus Siculus (D.14 A.D.) describes the people of these islands as "civilized and courteous to strangers. They are of much sincerity and integrity, far from the craft and knavery of men among us, contented with plain and homely fare, and strangers to the excess and luxury of rich men." Their work shows that they had then made considerable progress in the useful arts and in commerce. From other descriptions of the Britons we read that their ordinary clothing was of "tartan, spun, coloured and woven by themselves. The upper classes wore collars and bracelets of gold and necklaces of amber. The chiefs were armed with helmets, shields and cuirasses of leather, bronze or chain mail, while their many weapons of defence – darts, pikes and broad-swords – were often richly worked and ornamented." (Conybeare "Roman Britains", p. 48-50).

This then was the Britain with which Joseph of Arimathea was familiar and where his name had become widely known.

THE FRIENDS OF JOSEPH

In the early visits of Joseph to Britain the King Paramount was Cunobelinus or King Belinus, the "Cymbeline" of Shakespeare, immortalized in the lines:

"The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline Personates thee." – (Act 3, Sc. 1).

Soon after the accession of Claudius in A.D. 41 the peace of the country was disturbed by a Roman invasion, the excuse for this attack being the refusal of Cunobelinus to pay tribute to Rome; the attack met with stubborn resistance from the Britons. The Queen having died the King married a second time, a marriage which ruined his domestic happiness. The new Queen, Cartismandua, the widow of the Trinobantes Chief, proved to be a deceitful and scheming

woman. The King's domestic unhappiness was further increased by the defection of his eldest son Adminius who had become an insurgent against his father, fled to Belgium where he was arrested by the Romans, and removed to Rome by Caligula to be reserved for triumph-an event rendered void by the death of Caligula. The Celtic name of this prince was *Aedd Menw* which signifies "*Hugh, the Intellectual*".

The second son of Cunobelinus, Gwyderius, the Togodubnus of history. (Gwdyr in the Celtic language signifies "*tenacity of purpose*"). Gwyderius attacked the Romans and drove them back to their ships, to be treacherously slain later by the Roman Laelius Hamo, who having accoutred himself as a Briton, made his way to the military tent of the Prince, stabbed him while under no apprehension of danger. Caradoc, third son of Cunobelinus managed to keep the death of his brother from his troops, and in hot pursuit overtook the Roman Hamo as he was about to board his ship and killed the treacherous Roman, thus avenging his brother's death.

Caradoc, a brave and fearless leader and feared by the Romans, carried on the war. The loss of the second son of Cunobelinus was a heavy blow and the unhappy King decided to abdicate in favour of his third son, Caradoc, better known by his latinized name, Caractacus, who now became Arviragus or High King.

The Queen, Cartismandua (Celtic Aricia) frustrated in her ambitious desire to unite the son of her first marriage to Cunobeline's daughter Eigan in order to strengthen her son's position, seized an opportunity for vengeance on her husband by betraying Caractacus to the Romans.

Betrayed, not conquered, Caractacus was carried in triumph to Rome where he delivered his famous speech before the Senate. Joseph of Arimathea, being a friend of Caractacus and his father Cunobeline, it is well to consider this speech as indicative of the high dignity, culture and wealth of the British royal family at the dawn of the Christian era. Before the tribunal of Claudius, Caractacus delivered himself thus:

"Had my government in Britain been directed solely with a view to the preservation of my hereditary domains, or the aggrandisement of my own family, I might, long since, have entered this city an ally, not a prisoner; nor would you have disdained for a friend, a prince descended from illustrious ancestors, and the dictator of many nations (states). My present condition, stript of its former majesty, is as adverse to myself as it is a cause of triumph to you. What then? I was lord of men, horses, arms, wealth; what wonder if, at your dictation, I refused to resign them! Does it follow that because the Romans aspire to universal dominion, every nation is to accept the vassalage they would impose? I am now in your power – betrayed not conquered. Had I, like others, yielded without resistance, where would have been the name of Caradoc? Where your glory? Oblivion would have buried both in the same tomb. Bid me live. I shall survive for ever in history, one example at least of Roman clemency." (Tacitus. "*Annals XII, 37*").

The preservation of Caractacus forms a solitary exception in the long catalogue of victims to the merciless policy of Imperial Rome. His life was spared on condition that he never again bore arms against Rome. Spared, unwittingly, to be the friend and protector as Arviragus (High King), of the Judean refugees, brought to Glastonbury by the friend of the family, Joseph of Arimathea, and undoubtedly upon the invitation of the British king. The events of those times are so disconnected in British history that few realize that the description of Britain which we have long since settled down to believe is the legacy of our enemies. Now, however, the truth is beginning to be taught in our schools and the Britons seen to be the equal in education, culture and wealth of any nation on earth with its Grecian and Palestinian branches.

GLASTONBURY

Arimathean Joseph and his party, which included his son Josephes, sailing from Morlaix where they had waited for suitable weather conditions, arrived at Glastonbury and landed on the Wirral, about one mile from the Tor. Joseph immediately thrust the staff he carried into the ground, tantamount to planting a tree, an ancient form of claim to land either by presentation or purchase.

The staff planted by Joseph may have been our Lord's staff, for Joseph as His nearest male relative had the disposal of our Lord's belongings. It was certainly not Joseph's staff, for by Israel law his staff must pass to his eldest son and was often made a death-bed ceremony. The thorn staff, like Aaron's rod, budded and blossomed (**Numbers 17:8**) and eventually grew into a beautiful tree becoming widely known as the "*Sacred Thorn*". The cup used at the Last Supper in Joseph of Arimathea's Jerusalem residence, an ordinary cup in every day use in his house, now became a sacred treasure and was among the valued objects brought by him to Glastonbury, since with this cup of olive wood our Lord had inaugurated the New Covenant. (**Luke 22:20**). This cup which Joseph brought to his home in Southern Britain was preserved as a cherished possession by his descendants. At a later date, probably at the time of the Saxon invasion, when the country was in a state of turmoil and unrest, fears were entertained for its safety; the cup was then deposited in the Celtic Church at Glastonbury. There it lay through long years of troublous times and became forgotten. Later when the Celtic Church was demolished, to be replaced by a building approved by Rome, in this demolition the cup was discovered. The box, of some enduring material (in which traditionally the cup was enclosed, and documentary evidence of its precious value); this may yet come to light through the work and the skill of the archaeologist. Meanwhile the cup has been safely housed at Nanteos Manor, near Aberystweth since the sixteenth century.

The Arimathean party of Christian Israelites were received at Glastonbury as "*Judean refugees*", in old Latin "*quidam advanae*" = certain strangers, in later Latin *Culdich*, Anglicized *Culdees*. They were welcomed by Arviragus, who at that time resided at his palace at Caerleon-on-Usk.

The first notable act of the king, Arviragus, was to bestow upon the twelve disciples of Joseph, the Judean refugees, twelve hides of land free of tax. In the *Liber Soliaco* (1619 A.D.) it is stated that at Glastonbury itself one hide of land equalled 160 acres, and was deemed sufficient to maintain a man and his family. With this land grant a document was furnished setting forth the legal aspect of the gift, which gave the recipients many British concessions including right of citizenship and all the privileges accorded the Druidic hierarchy. Every Druid was entitled to one hide of land, free of tax, freedom to pass unmolested from one district to another in time of war, and many other privileges.

This grant of twelve hides of land tax free, is recorded in *Domesday Book*, "*This land has never paid tax*" (*Domesday Survey, folio p. 249 b*). The gracious reception and protection accorded these first Christian missionaries by Arviragus the king, continued as royal patronage until in 156 A.D. his great-grandson King Lucius established Christianity as the national religion of Britain, and into which the Levitical Druidism gradually merged. These facts exclude the claim of the Latin Church to that eminence, having been a "*foreign*" element in these islands since its first introduction by the monk Augustine in 579 A.D.

The refugee missionaries proceeded with the full consent of the King and the Druidic hierarchy to introduce the Gospel of Christ by building a church, a wattle church, to the precise dimensions of the tabernacle of old. The wattle church at Glastonbury was built of timber pillars and framework doubly wattled inside and out and thatched with reeds, as the mode then was. Many castles in Britain were so built as history attests. Such also was the primitive Capitol of Rome (*Ovid "Faesti ad Pest Roma"*). A model of the Glastonbury wattle church may be seen at the British Museum.

ARVIRAGUS

This king, perhaps better known by his domestic name, Caradoc, latinized Caractacus, rather than by his title which signifies High King or King Paramount, had yet another title, that of Pendragon, literally King Commander.

It is impossible to view Glastonbury in Druidic times as other than prosperous, beside its reputation as an educational centre and place of refuge, while its sister community, Caerleon-on-Usk on the other side of the Severn is described as a *"city of palaces and gilded roofs"*, the reputed home of Arviragus, the British king. (*Prehistoric London*, p77).

Arviragus was famed beyond his native shores. Spenser pays tribute to the British king, in the lines:-

*"Was never king more highly magnified
Nor dread of Romans was than Arviragus."*

As a soldier Juvenal pays tribute in a satire, making one of his characters ask a pale, nervous-looking man, *"What is the matter with you? Have you seen the car-borne British king Arviragus?"*

As a writer, Pitsaeus, the Continental Roman Canon (1619) in his History *de Rebus Anglicis* includes Arviragus as *"illustrious writer of Britain"*.

On the occasion of the betrayal of Arviragus (Caractacus) and his arrival in Rome as a captive, the excitement of the populace demonstrated the interest which his capture aroused. Juvenal could suggest no news which would have been hailed by the Romans with more satisfaction than the fall of the British King:-

*"Hath our great enemy, Arviragus, the car-borne
British king Dropped from his battle throne?"*

Upon his return to Britain Arviragus was yet looked upon as formidable in war and an enemy to be feared; Claudius then sought to make a permanent peace by offering the British king a complete reconciliation, promising at the same time, to bestow upon him his daughter Genuissa, a promise not acceptable to Arviragus. Later, however, he was persuaded by his nobles to accept the proposal of Claudius. The marriage, fortunately, proved entirely happy. Arviragus built a castle for his Queen Genuissa and named their new home Gloucester in compliment to her father, Claudius, which name in the Celtic tongue becomes Glouster.

The Chronicle states that Arviragus *"in a manner valued nothing but her alone."* They had four children, the eldest Eudal Marius who succeeded his father, Eudal (fair-haired), Marius (a title). *"When Arviragus returned to Britain,"* the Chronicle continues, *"he governed his kingdom in peace and tranquility. In war none more fierce than he, in peace none more mild, none more pleasing in manner, nor in his presents more magnificent. When he finished his course of life, A.D. 80, he was buried at Gloucester (Geoffrey of Monmouth)."* Thereafter Gloucester became a royal dukedom.

KING ARTHUR

As a direct descendant of Joseph of Arimathea no sketch of Joseph's life would be complete without some notice of the British king, Arthur.

A number of characters of the same name though of lesser renown are found in British history; all, however, won their fame as warriors without any claim to a kingly line.

There is no consensus of opinion as to the origin of the name. It is first noticed in Adamnan's *"Life of Columba"* as the name of a Prince of the Scoto-Irish kingdom of Dalriada who fell in battle in 596. There may be a clue in the fact that the name was, in one list, spelt Arty, by which the descendants of Cormac MacArt were sometimes known, whose ancestors traced back to Tea Tephí of Tara, and among whose descendants was the great Columba, and from whom

on the distaff side General Charles de Gaulle descends. Also of Irish descent was Arthur, who appears as the grandfather of Faradach in a list of ecclesiastics in the seventh century. These are mentioned by E. K. Chambers in his *"Arthur of Britain"*, together with a fairly historical Arthur traceable to South-west Wales about the beginning of the seventh century, and traditionally perhaps, the Arthur who was slain in battle and lies buried on the slopes of a Welsh mountain.

An Irish record assigns to an Arthur the death of the Ulster chief Mongan in Scotland in 620. This Arthur is said to have been the son of a British prince Bicuir. It would be reasonable to conclude that this North British Arthur was the ancient hero commemorated in Scotland's Arthur's Seat. The North British prince may possibly have extended his warring activities as far south as Chester. It is certain that this Arthur did not penetrate into Wales.

A fascinating possibility for the introduction of the name Arthur is that given in *"Arthur of Britain"* (p.170). *"There was a Lucius Artorius Castus, who played a conspicuous military part in Britain during the second century."* (*Corps. Inscr. Lat. iii, 303, 2131*). The possibility that this Arthur may have been a son or grandson of King Lucius who established Christianity as the national religion of Britain in 156 A.D. is worth noting. Exploration by archaeologists and experts in research may yet find undeniable proof that the name Arthur is of ancient Celtic origin, and came down to-us from the Royal House in Britain.

In the sixth century Uther Pendragon caused a circular table to be made *"after the pattern of the table of the Last Supper"*; accuracy of description being a family responsibility passed on from one generation to another. This table Uther presented to his son Arthur.

The modern controversy over Uther Pendragon by some historians and others, contending that Uther was not a king, is based upon a lack of knowledge of the common use made of titular designations by the ancient Celts. Pendragon, which signifies Chief Leader in battle, was conferred only upon a king. King Arthur, therefore, inherited his kingdom from his father Uther Pendragon. May not Uther be a dialectal corruption of Arthur, father and son bearing the same name. Arthur was only a boy (cir. A.D.500) when the Saxon Cedric's ships sailed up the Parrett. At Glastonbury, later, Arthur came to reside at times and enjoy his favourite view from the Wirral. Here he prepared for his greatest of twelve battles, Bradbury, in 530.

On Wirral Hill, the ancient cattle pasture of the Fortress or Sanctuary (City of Refuge) there lies a flat stone to mark the spot where Joseph thrust his staff into the ground, a spot well-known to Joseph's descendant Arthur, and where the king must often have gazed upon the sacred thorn.

Arthur and his Knights had bound themselves to find the missing family heirloom, the Cup of the Last Supper (the grail which signifies a wooden cup). To retrieve this sacred cup these valiant descendants of Arimathean Joseph braved many hazards in fruitless search. And so when Arthur died and was laid to rest at Glastonbury, the mystery unsolved, the brave attempt at recovery a failure. Yet the sacred cup was stored in a secret place in the nearby church had they but known.

The scenic beauty of Glastonbury (Avalon) in which Arthur had so great delight is depicted by the monk Augustine who landed in Britain in 597. In a letter to Pope Gregory written in A.D. 600 Augustine said:

"In the western confines of Britain there is a certain royal island of large extent surrounded by water, abounding in all the beauties of nature and necessities of life. In it the first Neophytes found a church constructed by no human art but by the hand of Christ Himself for the salvation of His people." – (Spelman *"Concilia"*, p. 5).

Today, reclamation of land has completely altered this picture; we are grateful, however, for this true description of a scene familiar to Joseph of Arimathea and

his descendant Arthur, and not least for the testimony to the truth of the claim that Augustine found the Christian Church had been established in Britain five centuries prior to his arrival.

It is very remarkable that the Romans, Saxons and Danes made no attack upon Glastonbury itself, and that that church alone claims as her peculiar privilege never to have failed in her worship of the true Faith, preserved in the darkest days, by the tiny band of Culdees. As far north as Scotland and in Ireland the Culdees were found maintaining their own Palestinian founded Christianity, worshipping frequently as by ancient right, in a corner of the great Abbey Churches, until the Reformation. It was the Saxon King Ina, after the Saxons had overrun Somerset, who handed over the church at Glastonbury to Rome at the instigation of the monk Augustine. Somerset gets its name from a Saxon tribe. Its earliest inhabitants were Britons.

Chronological data of Welsh history; *"From Brutus to King Arthur are preserved the names of 86 'Brenline Prydian Oll' or Kings of all Britain ."*

In Arthur's pedigree retraced to Joseph of Arimathea *"it is impossible not to recognize the important and essential part played by the Hebrew lineage or descent"* (J. W. Taylor, "The Coming of the Saints"). The pedigree chart of John of Glastonbury is as follows: -Joseph of Arimathea, Josue, Aminadab, Castellors, Manael, Lambord, Urlard, Ygerna, rex Uterpendragon, rex Arthurus. The above pedigree is included in W. H. Milner's *"The Royal House of Britain an Enduring Dynasty"* (p.25).

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth Bishop Dubricius crowned Arthur at Caerleon-on-Usk amid great celebrations in the presence of four reigning (petty) kings. Dubricius was the grandson of the king of Ackenfeld, a district in Herefordshire.

In the memoirs of Giraldus Cambrensis this Welsh writer records that Roman ambassadors received their audience at the Court of King Arthur at Caerleon, Monmouth, and that the kings of Ireland came to pay tribute.

About 1220 the *trouveur*, Sarazin (a Cornish name) cited in verification of the truism that King Arthur was *"Lord of Great Britain"*.

"The noble Arthur, first of the three great Christian worthies of the world" (*Morte d'Arthur*), Revised Caxton edition.

Arthur was the first to build a castle on the Druidic mound at Windsor and to this earliest Windsor Castle brought the Round Table around which Arthur and his knights met in solemn conclave throughout Arthur's reign (*Froissart*). It is said that everyone of the twelve knights descended from Joseph of Arimathea.

When Arthur drew up the Rules of the Round Table on the Druidic principles of patriotism and self sacrifice in the cause of King and Country, he re-organized the old Order on Christian lines.

It was Henry Tudor's proud boast to have descended, not from Norman and Plantagnet, but from the Celtic kings, Arthur and Cadwalladar the Blessed, the last of his race to assume the royal title, they having been absorbed by marriage into the main British royal line.

Arthur, after his last great battle, wounded to the death, was carried to his beloved Avalon for the healing of his wounds; here he resigned the diadem of Britain to his kinsman Constantine, son of Cador, Duke of Cornwall (*Annales Cambrae. Record XIV, a*). In this record lies an historical fact in confirmation of the royal status of Arthur; his son, inheritor of the Duchy of Cornwall, having died, the Dukedom had passed to his kinsman Constantine, to be assumed by his heir and to be passed on in legitimate succession to the present heir to the throne, Charles, Prince of Wales.

In the *San Greal* literature we have a description of the splendour and solemnity of the pre-funeral service for Arthur's Queen Guinevere in the chapel at

Glastonbury.

"In the midst thereof were two coffins, one against the other. The coffins were covered with two palls, and there were clerks that chanted psalms in turn on the one side and the other. The body of the Queen lieth in the coffin before us, and in the other is the head of her son. The Queen bade at her death that the King's body should be set beside her own when he shall end. Hereof have we the letters and her seal in this chapel and this place made she be builded new on this wise or ever she died."

In due course Arthur was laid to rest beside his Queen, giving to Glastonbury an added claim to fame in ancient history. The spot is marked where lies a hero who "left a name to be glorified in a song of wonder and awe."

In the Sovereign's robing room of the Palace of Westminster, the history of King Arthur is set forth in carved panels from birth to death, while Dyce's magnificent pictures illustrating the virtues of chivalry adorn the walls.

ARTHUR'S LAST JOURNEY

"Then murmur'd Arthur 'Place me in the barge. So to the barge they came ...'
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge.

*The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me? I have
lived my life and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure!More
things are wrought by prayer Than this world
dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day;
For what are men better than sheep. or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain
If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friends; For so the whole round earth in every way
Bound by gold chains around the feet of God.
But now, farewell."*

"Idylls of the King (The passing of Arthur)".

TENNYSON

CAERLEON-ON-USK

Geoffrey of Monmouth distinctly says that the City of Legions was situated on the river Usk. (*Bk IV, cap. 19*). Here also was the ancient palace of the British Kings, and here came Joseph of Arimathea as an honoured guest. Here also was perhaps the first daughter Church of the Arimathean wattle Church at Glastonbury. Caerleon-on-Usk is not to be confused with Caerleon Vawe or Chester. Upon the former with London and York were founded the first three Bishoprics in the early British Church. They were not called Archbishoprics until after the Council of Nicea. A.D. 325 (*Mansi, vol. II, pp. 467-7*).

It is significant that the Bishops of Caerleon-on-Usk, London and York claimed and were conceded priority as British Bishops at the Councils of Pisa, Basle, Constance and Sienna. In this may be seen the undoubted success of Joseph's mission heralding the Gospel of Christ to the Britons. This church was afterwards handed over to Rome by the Saxon King Ina.

THE CHALICE WELL

The ceaseless flow of healing water from the Well, close to the Tor and to the Church, which now actually was to supplant the ancient Druidic place of worship (perhaps gradually as in some places), provided the water for the needs

of these early Christian settlers, and a source of attraction to pilgrims for many centuries.

The origin of the well was, probably in those days, common knowledge, built by Semitic ancestors who had come via Egypt and left their stamp upon its construction in the Egyptian masonry employed. The pentagonal chamber near the top is unique and carries a spiritual significance of which the Druids would be very conscious, five being the number of grace and was so employed in the building of the Great Pyramid, the Tabernacle, and later Temples, also in the Arimathean wattle Church.

Bored and built in the dim ages of antiquity the well never fails in its flow of chalybeate water at the rate of 25,000 gallons per day, curative and health promoting. The well is never advertised for these qualities yet visitors come from all parts of the world to the well, now surrounded by a beautiful garden, creating an atmosphere of peace and tranquility, and where, too, the spot is hallowed by the traditional presence of Jesus upon his reputed visits to Glastonbury .

The tradition that Joseph had a hut close to the well is probably based on fact. A hut shelter, however, is in no sense the home which later legends made it appear to be. Joseph lived with his family in comfort and dignity. His disciples were housed in the homes each had built for himself on his hide of land, 160 acres, and where they lived according to the Mosaic law so cogently expressed by Paul.

"If any man would not work neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10).

We should remember that it was in connection with the first Christian Church in Britain that the grant of land was made and is so entered in *Domesday Book*: *"The Church of Glastonbury has in its own ville twelve hides of land which have never paid tax."*

NICODEMUS

An oriental M.S.S. known as *"The Gospel of Nicodemus"* was thought by Tischendorf to be *"early second century"* and by Dr. Rendel Harris to be *"very early"*, states that Joseph of Arimathea suffered persecution. This indicates that Nicodemus did not hear or learn by any means of Joseph's departure from Palestine because of persecution and of his settling in Britain.

Nicodemus was, like his friend Joseph, a secret disciple and a rich man, but showed courage in protesting against the condemnation of Jesus without giving him a hearing. The final reference is in **John 19:39** where he is said to have brought a lavish gift of spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Nothing more is known of him beyond a large number of legends. His identification with the wealthy and generous *Naqdimon ben Gorion* of the *Talmud* is uncertain.

JOSEPH de MARMORE

In the earliest documentation, Joseph of Arimathea is referred to as Joseph de Marmore of Arimathea. *"Mar"* is an Eastern term for lord. St. George was styled *Mar* George by his body servant Pasicrates, being of noble birth as the son of the Count of Lydda. *"More"* or *"Mawr"* signifies great. Joseph's full title was *"The Great Lord Joseph of Arimathea"*. Undoubtedly this title derived from Joseph's elevated status as *"nobilis decurio"* by which title he is designated by Gildas and Rabanus. Ramah, about eight miles from Jerusalem was considered by Eusebius and Jerome to be the Arimathea of Joseph; a tradition fully endorsed by the Crusaders. As with the Bethany family and other rich Hebrews of his day Joseph had a town house in Jerusalem, probably not far from the Garden of Gethsemene where was the grove of olive trees, grown for their oil to supply the Temple lamps, the olive wood being used eventually for the fashioning of

bowls and cups, and other vessels "unto honour" in his country and town houses.

There is nothing to indicate whether the high office of "decurio" was conferred upon Joseph by Pilate or King Arviragus-or possibly by the Emperor Claudius upon the occasion of the marriage of his daughter Genuissa to the British king Arviragus in a day when honours were showered upon the relatives of the bridegroom, Joseph's daughter Anna being already married to Prince Beli, or Belinus, youngest brother of Arviragus.

In some medieval accounts, compiled by the monks of Glastonbury and copied by later writers, Joseph is said to have been sent to Britain from Gaul as a missionary by Philip the Evangelist. The story is manifestly contrary to fact. Philip had no jurisdiction over Joseph of Arimathea, no authority to direct his movements in any direction. They may have arrived in Gaul together as members of the Judean refugee group of which Joseph was the leader, Joseph and his household passing on to Morlaix en route for Britain. Joseph's task was no light one in bringing his household to settle in Britain, and their welcome by Arviragus precluded any authoritative over-seeing on the part of Philip or any of the disciples.

That Arviragus had a suitable residence provided at Glastonbury for Joseph and his household, who did not arrive unheralded, is no stretch of imagination. The wattle Church built by his disciples from the plans provided by Joseph was the first and absorbing task after their arrival. The joy of their first service in this church and the fervour of their praise from the Psalms made the occasion a notable one in the history of the first British church.

Joseph of Arimathea, by the testimony of ancient Chronicles became the ancestor of a long line of British princes. Joseph's grandson, Prince Helias, by the marriage of Joseph's son, Josephes, to a British princess appears in several heraldic charts; while Joseph's daughter Anna was already married to Prince Belinus, youngest brother of King Arviragus, their son Beli became the ancestor of Howel the Good, from which the Tudor line descends to our Sovereign, Elizabeth II. Anna's daughter Penardin married King Lyr or Lear and became the ancestress of Helena, mother of Constantine the Great (see *Harl. M.S.S., British Museum 3859 f, 193 b; also Jesus College M.S.20*). Anna is recorded as "cousin of the Blessed Virgin Mary". ("All generations shall call me blessed", Luke 1:48). The genealogy of Owain Tudor up to Anna is incorporated in the *Annales Cambraie*, edited by the Rev. J. W. Allthel, M.A., and published by the authority of the Lords Commissioners of H.M. Treasury under the direction of the Master of the Rolls.

When Joseph eventually arrived in Britain with his Gospel band to settle in Avalon, his daughter Anna, now sister-in-law to the King Arviragus (Prince Belinus being his youngest brother) was there to welcome him. Perhaps indeed it was because Anna was there already that he came to Britain. And so were united these two great families of the House of David, of the Judah line, to come down in direct succession to our present Queen Elizabeth II.

How precious are these records in the archives of Britain, putting to silence the sceptic and the scoffer.

William of Malmesbury states: "*The Isle of Avalon greedy of burials . . . received the thousands of sleepers, among whom Joseph de Marmore of Arimathea by name, entered his perpetual sleep.*"

Joseph is said by Cressy to have died at Glastonbury (Avalon) in A.D. 82.

"*Joseph of Arimathea, a much esteemed nobleman, who was himself expecting the Kingdom of God.*" (Mark 15:43). Ferrar Fenton translation.

Publishers Note to the Third Edition 1979

Mrs. Hill Elder's version of Caradoc as the son of Cunobelinus (*pg 21*) is unhistoric. He was the son of Bran the Blessed and a descendant of the Silurian Kings in Caerleon on Usk, Wales, where indeed Joseph of Arimathea is said to have been the guest of the King and Archdruid Bran the Blessed, father of Caradoc. (*pg 35*).

Caradoc was called The Arviragus or High King. And so was the son of Cunobelinus, as well as the ruler of what is now called Gloucester. The latter was a nephew of Caradoc. His name was Gweyreidd and he ruled over Cornwall, Somerset and Gloucester at Joseph's arrival. He was the Arviragus who gave the twelve hides.

In a correspondence with Mrs. Hill Elder just before her passing, it became clear that she was not aware of more than one Arviragus nor that Caradoc who went to Rome (*pg 22 -23*) was the son of Bran. There is even a version, that Caradoc was a near relative of Jesus through their great grandmother Anna.



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