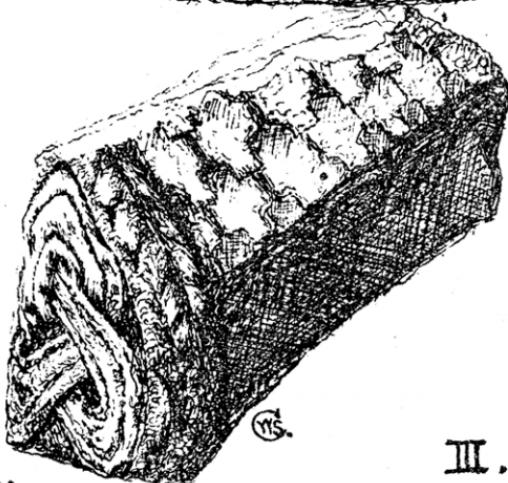
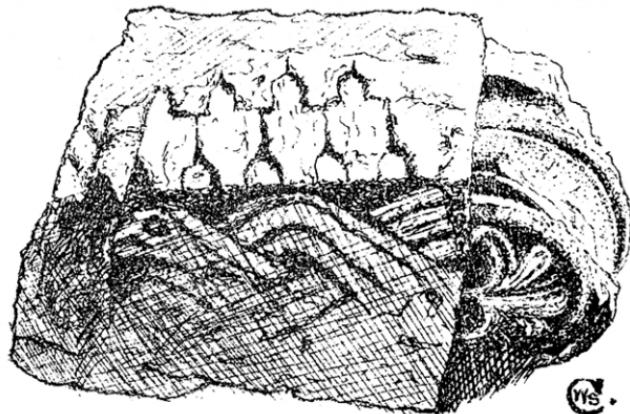


CROSS CANYON.

I. 6F⁵ X 1F⁴ 10In.



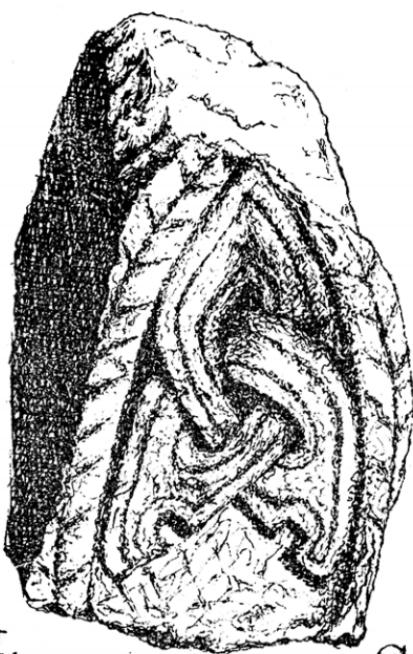
III.



II. III. PLUMBLAND. 3¹/₂ X 1¹/₂ F⁵

tewaas_001_1888_vol9_0032
Base 1¹/₂ In. Thick.

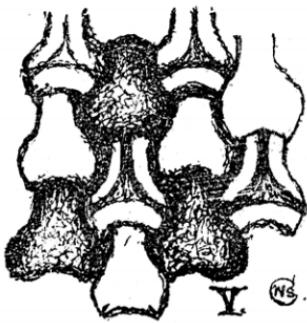
2F⁵, 5In., X 1F⁴, 6In.



IV.

PLUMBLAND.

(MS.)



V. (MS.)

DEARHAM - CROSS CANONBY.
GOSFORTH ETC.



VI. (MS., %)

ASPATRIA,
GOSFORTH, ETC.

ART. XXXV.—*Notes on some Coped pre-Norman Tombstones at Aspatria, Lowther, Cross Canonby, and Plumbländ.* By the Rev. W. S. CALVERLEY, F.S.A., Vicar of Aspatria. *Read at Ulverston, Sept. 13, 1887.*

WE know that various races in different parts of the world have constructed their graves on the model of their houses, the idea underlying this kind of burial being that the dead live in these places in exactly the same way as the living live in their own houses, hence chamber tombs found in barrows or tumuli not only all over Europe, but very largely in the East. When, however, cremation was practised, a full-sized house was unnecessarily large, and models in pottery* were sometimes used.

Several hut-urns found in Germany are described by Dr. Birch in his work on antient pottery, as being distinctly Teutonic, and occuring in sepulchres of the period when bronze weapons were used, and before the predominance of Roman Art. Similar hut-urns were discovered in Italy in 1817, in an ancient cemetery in the Commune of Marino (Province of Rome). Some of these urns are models of circular huts, with square openings in the sides as doors through which the ashes of the dead were introduced, and having imitations of thatched roofs. Some shew the beams which support the roof and the joists, one has six columns on each side adhering to the walls, and small windows projecting out of the thatched roof. The roof of one is ornamented with devices of a modified key pattern. Some large urns of thick pottery found with these hut-urns are beautified with the same pattern, as well as with a series of svastikas enclosed in panels.

* Hut-Urns, *Archæologia*, vol. xlii., p. 99. Sir John Lubbock, Bart.

In

In the York Museum are several Roman tombs roofed with tiles.* One is "formed of roof-tiles (*tegulae*) and ridge-tiles (*imbrices*), which bear the impress of the victorious sixth Legion,† LEG. VI. VI."

The tiles of another tomb are "stamped LEG. IX. HISP., so that it is probable that the tomb covered a soldier of the ninth, or Spanish Legion." This tomb is set up in the exact form of a tiled house-roof, with the *curved ridge-tiles* placed upon the angle formed by the *two side roof-tiles*. It is No. 71 in the handbook.

Coped Tombs, commonly called Saxon Hog-backs, follow the idea of the grave being the Home of the Dead. I here give four valuable specimens; their existence has hitherto been known only to a few, and they have never before been figured. I desire to thank Mr. W. L. Fletcher, of Stoneleigh, Workington, for the very great help he has afforded me, in obtaining, at much cost and trouble to himself, most excellent photographs without which I should not have been able to reproduce the work and thought of the long forgotten past in a manner at all worthy of the great beauty and elegance of the sculptures themselves.

No. I, is a very massive red sandstone "hog-back" at Cross Cannonby, near Maryport. The curve of the tomb roof springs from an enlargement at either end of the stone. The whole surface of this roof is covered with the same pattern as that on the lower part of the crosses at Gosforth and Dearham, and which represents the intertwining of the branches of the world tree Yggdrasil of Scandinavian thought. The home of the dead, where Helia holds sway, is deep down in the earth beneath a root of Yggdrasil. Above ground and beneath the rainbow-

* Handbook to York Museum, p. 6, 61.

I desire to thank Mr. H. M. Platnauer, of the York Museum, for his great kindness in sending me sketches of all the Roman Tiled Tombs in the Museum with measurements.

† Engraved in Llewellyn Jewitt's Grave Mounds.

We

arch the Tree of Life fills every space, and beyond is the bright home of the Blessed. There are Midgard and Asgard, the world home, where life's battles are fought, life's deeds done, and the home of the Holy ones. The uncarved surface on the lower portion of the stone would be nearly hidden by vegetation, only the roof over the dead—as in the case of a Roman tiled tomb cover—would remain above ground, and at either end a sculptured cross such as the one now standing in Dearham churchyard, carved with the identical device. The gables in this case are quite plain as though the intention had been to complete the monument by erecting crosses at the head and the feet. The faith of the dead man was Christian. The ornament is one continuous symbolism of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, see figs. v. vi. vii. The prevalent thought of the community appealed to is Northern or Scandinavian.

The arch of heaven descends at the horizon into Hel's dark home,—the jaws of death—the grave. It was down the rainbow that Odin rode when he sought knowledge concerning the fate of Baldr: thither has the dead man been borne by those messengers who do the bidding of Helia; but for the Christian there is deliverance from “the cords of Hel” for the roots of the Tree of Life, and the presence of the Trinity of God, penetrate even into the Nethermost world—Nifl-hel—as well as reaching upwards to the Gods' seat—paradise. When the crosses stood at head and foot, this was an imposing and instructive Christian monument speaking plainly to all who looked upon it. At Heysham, Lancashire, the curved surface of the “hog-back” descends at each end into the huge jaws of a widely gaping monster, whose great eyes and “slaughter craving throat” and head form the enlargement of the ends of the stone. The body and legs of the beast are quite insignificant. It is the *jaws of Hel*, Hell-muth which is portrayed.

It

It is to be hoped that the Rev. T. Lees, F.S.A., will make public the results of his work upon the scenes portrayed on the face of this Heysham stone, as his learned research and knowledge of mediæval thought will be sure to throw new light upon a neglected subject of very deep interest and educational as well as historic value.

The Cross Canonby Yggdrasil "hog-back" is six feet long and two feet high, and has escaped destruction possibly by reason of its massiveness. It formerly stood on the top of the churchyard wall near the old entrance. It was in this position when I first discovered its character in 1874. It now lies at the east end of the south aisle. Over the south door of the church another massive stone of similar character does duty as a lintel. The Norman builders have thus utilized the memorial stone of their predecessors, as at Bongate, Appleby.*

No. II and III, are the two parts of one red sandstone shrine-shaped tomb, now lying under the ancient yew tree in Plumbländ churchyard. It has been broken in two, one part (III) was cut by an early English mason into a very beautiful impost or springer for an arch, with honey suckle moulded ornament beneath. The sides were roughly scabbled to make a firm and good bed, and the carved block built face downwards into the wall, and the new arch sprung from this impost. Hundreds of years afterwards this new part of the church was pulled down and the tell-tale sculpture once more exposed to view.

Place the circular end—the early English impost—III, next the broken end of II, and it will seem that both sides of the original have been carved in a similar manner, and that both ends or gables were ornamented with a similar design. IV is the end view of III, and shews the gable which was opposite to the one seen in II before the stone was broken.

* *Ante*, p. 118.

We have here enough of the original work to give us a clear idea of the intention. The whole is a solid miniature stone house with carved sides or upright wall, a tiled roof, and ornamented gable ends. I saw Roman tiles, the exact shape of the two rows distinctly seen on both sides of this roof, taken out of the excavations at the Roman baths in the city of Bath this year. The ridge has been knocked off by the early English wallers to suit their work. It was not hog-backed or curved but a straight ridge.

The reader must remember that II and III, give views of the *two* sides of the stone. The back of II has been scabbled away until there is scarcely any of the original work left, but the other half of the stone has been scabbled on the *opposite* side, and thus we can see what was originally carved on *both* sides. I thank the mediæval mason for sparing to us, though unwittingly, the whole design, as well as for his own very perfect and beautiful work.

The side walls of this grave-house were both covered with serpent forms plaited or intertwined. In III the head, mouth and eye of the creature are seen. The body is divided lengthwise, into one central broad band and two outer narrow bands by lines apparently drilled or picked out or worked with a pointed tool.

Here is the Vala's description taken from the Voluspa Strophe 42, of the habitation of Helia, the goddess of death, born of Loki and Angrboda, she who dwells "beneath the gratings of the dead."

She saw a hall standing,
far from the sun,
in nâ-strönd;*
its doors are *northward* turned,
venom-drops fall
in through its apertures :
entwined is that hall
with serpent's backs.

* The strand or shore of corpses.

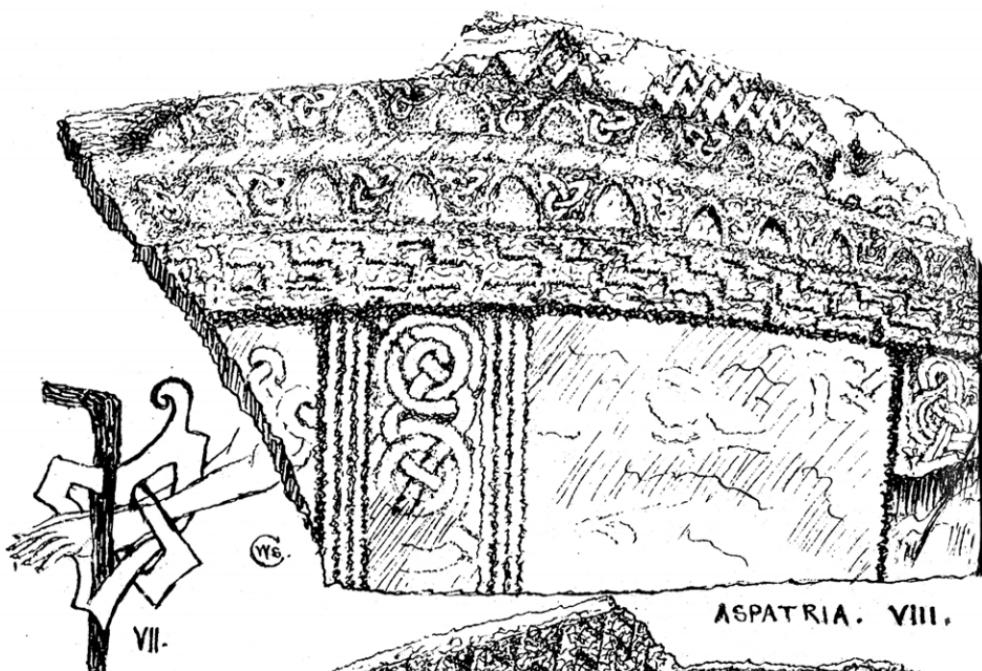
But

But the dead man here has hope of deliverance by the power of the Holy Trinity, and his shrine-like tomb has its gable ends signed with the Holy symbol, the Triquetra. There was no cross set up at the head or foot here. The stone was intended to be complete in itself, and the sign of the Holy Trinity takes the place of the cross. This symbol is here formed of a single broad flat band, with lines marking a triple composition, and having the lower ends in one case (IV) prolonged and ornamented in a peculiar manner. This form of knot reminds one of the knots by which in one of the illustrations to Caedmon's MSS. Satan is bound hands and feet over the flames of hell. I have given a tracing of this knot, fig. vii.

No. VIII and IX, are the two sides of an elaborately carved white sandstone ridged and roofed house shaped tomb of very remarkable character at Aspatria. It was brought to light from amongst the building material of the old church which was pulled down when the present church was built on its site. The fragment measures forty-six inches in length, twenty-seven inches in height, and eight inches in thickness.

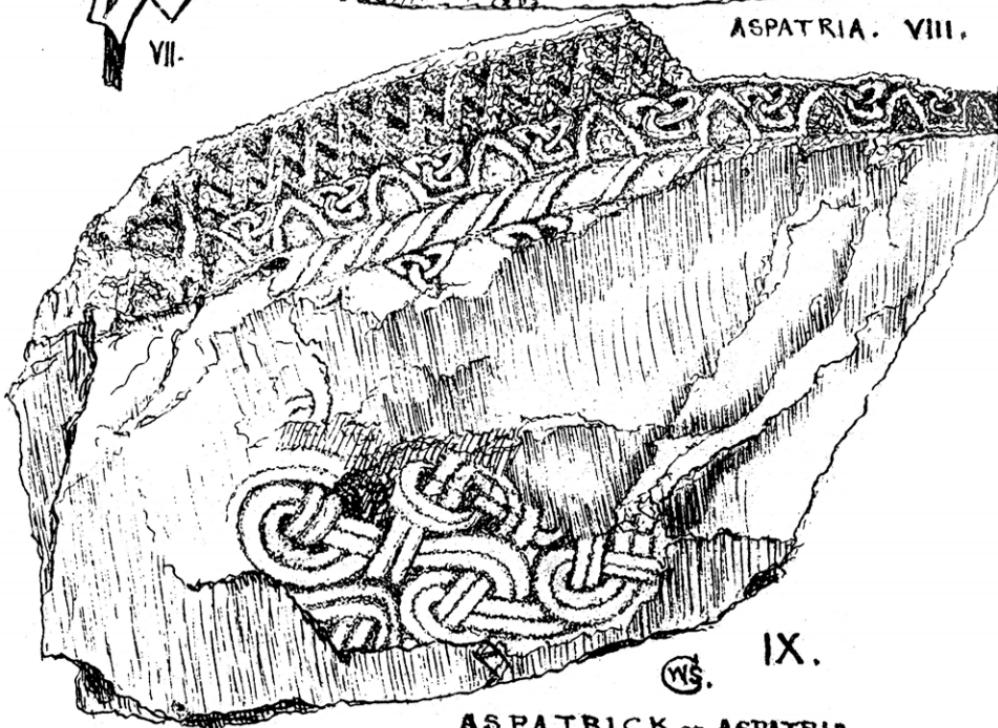
At the top is a tall, thin, highly decorated ridge three inches thick, having two zig-zag flat bands worked upon it, standing up about three inches from the roof below. Then comes, on a curved and bulged surface, an ornamented roof with recessed work, looking like two rows of delicately moulded tiles richly adorned with a simple Triquetra on each tile, only that the tiles could never be made to sit on such a rounded surface, and, moreover, between the two rows of this recessed work is a rounded band or *syme*, with a narrow flat riband twined gracefully round it, plainly intended to bind down and hold the thatched roof, with its decorations, in its place. Along the eaves is a broad band worked with a kind of key pattern.

At the upper sinister corner of VIII, and the dexter corner of IX, under the ridge and upon the upper row of devices,



VII.

ASPATRIA. VIII.



IX.

ASPATRICK or ASPATRIA.

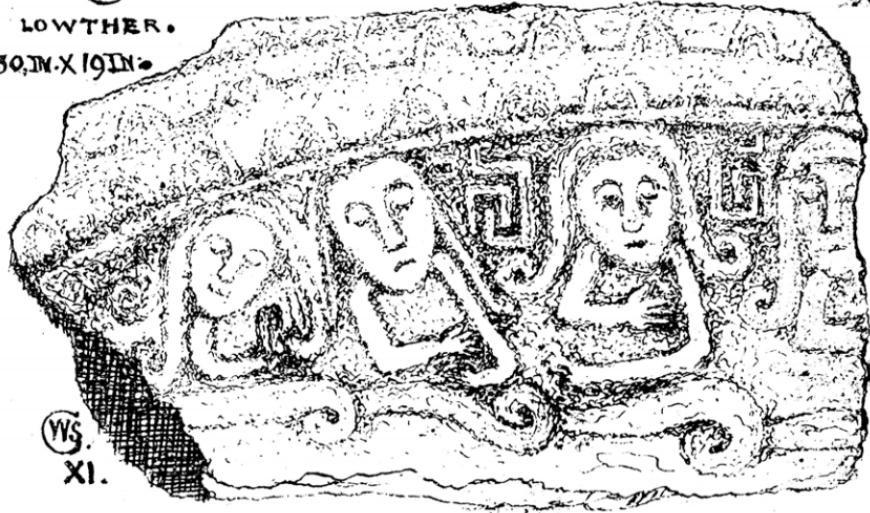


(WS.

X.

LOWTHER.

30,IN.X 19,IN.



(WS.

XI.

devices, there is a raised portion and traces of an enlargement of the stone. I have sometimes thought the figure of a stag could be seen.

The upright sides of this house are covered with interlacing flat bands on one side (VIII), and the walls are strengthened with pilasters highly ornamented—there has been a central broad pilaster and a narrower one at each end—one end has been broken away—the whole of this side has been covered with work done with a narrow or pointed tool. I have not been able to complete the whole design on account of weather and want of time to examine it in different lights. The other side (IX) has suffered by the stone having split off. Sufficient of the surface remains to shew that it was covered with knot work of double strands. The broad band at the eaves has disappeared, but sufficient of the roof and tall ridge remains to shew that both sides of the roof were of like design though the walls differed in their ornamentation. I give a figure of the Triquetra as it appears on this stone and on the Gosforth cross (Fig. VI.) though the two works are of a quite different character.

Nos. X and XI are the two sides of a coped tomb found by me at Lowther, Oct. 1st, 1886. Red sand-stone—length 2 ft. 6 in.; height 1 ft. 6 in.; thickness 1 ft. Coping of tiles, partly broken away. The walls are decorated with human figures. A long serpent form coils and stretches along the lower portion as though a survival of pagan belief. Sacred symbols (key pattern—or interlocking S shaped pattern) appear, notably on either side of what seems to be the central figure of a group (XI). In the dexter corner of each drawing will be seen a figure with folded hands as in prayer. The figure to the right in the upper drawing (X) reclines on his right elbow and appears to hold a ring. The designer has been content to give one arm and one long curled lock to each of the three figures accompanying the one who prays.

prays. Each hand is pressed to the breast. In the lower drawing, the central figure, between the sacred signs, has full flowing locks curling over the shoulder ; each figure has *both* arms and hands, which the artist has made out of all proportion in order to accommodate his space and drawing. I think there may have been a fifth figure. Is it the descent of our Lord into Hell ?

The chief figure in XI. has an Eastern look. The limbs of the figures are very rudely and falsely drawn, but the faces have been good and true. The stone is so worn by time and exposure that much which might have explained the intention is lost. I hope that Mr. Lees who was present at the finding of this fragment and assisted me to take rubbings of the figures will be able to identify the scene portrayed.

We pass in this glance at four so called Saxon hogbacks through many phases of religious thought and we are brought into contact with the manners and habits of life of many races. In imitating the home of the living as a memorial of the dead it was but natural that the Church House should be taken as the model, and it may be that the mud and wattle-woven shrine, done in stone, with its carefully constructed roof and graceful ridge, all richly decorated and covered with the sacred sign of the Holy Trinity, is nothing less than a survival and may indeed carry us back to a time before there was any stone church on these shores. He for whom such a tomb was not too costly must indeed have been noble in the eyes of those who reared this monument. In Aspatria Churchyard are several fragments of crosses unknown to the general antiquary or the books, and one of them, a white stone cross, certainly dates back beyond anything on this side of St. Kentigern or possibly and more probably St. Ninian.

There is no trace of pagandom in this wonderful piece of work.

APPENDIX I.

At Plumblond there is a coped stone of much later date than the one given here (to be figured at some future time) placed upon the churchyard wall near the gate leading into the Rectory garden. Built into the tower wall on the inside I have found a fragment of white sandstone spiral sculpture belonging, as I think, to the earlier missionary labours.

At Aspatria there are many other remains of the greatest interest, which should be engraved and made known, for the value of the story they have to tell about the early days of Christianity on the two shores of the Solway.

At Lowther there are two "Hogbacks" (*in situ*) six feet and five long—probably not sculptured—cope about eight inches deep—no ridge tiles or enlarged ends, otherwise of the Cross Canonby type. A similar "Hogback" lies in Bridekirk church yard. On the south side of Lowther church, in a solid cross socket of two steps above ground (split) stands the shaft of a cross cut into a sun dial stem—sides chamfered.

A similar cross shaft stands in the churchyard of Hutton in the Forest, Penrith. I found a carved portion of it walled into the North side of the church, on the outside.

The thin side stones of the "Giant's grave" at Penrith have something of the character, though not the ornamentation, of the Aspatria stone VIII. and IX. I have lately been able to make out the carving upon the cross at the head of the Giant's grave, and I find that no less a personage than the Evil One, *Loki himself*, is figured upon it—bound as usual. This sculpture of the man fiend of Northern thought has most likely given rise to the tradition concerning the "Giant's grave."

The Rev. C. H. Perez, H. M. Inspector of Schools, has sent to me a very good photograph of the Cross at Rockliff, Carlisle, which appears to be of such a character and to have such ornamentation as would accompany the Aspatria tombstone.

I gladly take this opportunity of conveying my thanks to the clergy of the parishes here named for their kind assistance in facilitating my efforts to make known the fragments in their custody.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX II.

HOGBACK STONE AT LOWTHER, BY THE REV. THOMAS LEES, M.A., F.S.A.

In his exposition of the Gosforth Cross Mr. Calverley has shown how the designer of that venerable monument had embodied thereon ideas drawn from Scandinavian mythology and the Apocryphal Gospels. When on its discovery I watched Mr. Calverley gradually work off the rubbing of the Lowther Stone, it struck me forcibly that its design was derived from one of the same sources—the Gospel of Nicodemus. From the first I had accepted the suggestion that these monumental hogback stones, shaped like houses, or the mead-hall of Valhala, with roofs tegulated after the Roman fashion, were intended to represent the Hell, Hades, unseen and enclosed place, *Limbo*, where the souls of the departed await their final judgement, and the discovery of this stone seems to me to confirm its correctness. I take the various human figures to represent the Fathers of Old Testament History, warded by Satan and Hades, awaiting in Limbo the coming of the deliverer. The snakes lying in front of the figures I think represent Satan and Hades keeping watch on their charge.

The second part of the Gospel of Nicodemus, (of which part there are three various forms, one in Greek, and two in Latin), contains an account of our Lord's descent to the unseen world to preach to the spirits in prison. It represents Karinus and Leucius, two of those who had risen with Our Lord, going into Jerusalem and bearing testimony before Annas and Caiaphas of what they had seen in Hades. They declare how to the Fathers of the Old Testament, Adam, Seth, Abraham, David, Enoch, and Elijah, and the Prophets, John Baptist first appears and discloses to them how he had baptized the Lord, and still as His forerunner, has descended to Hades to announce "that the rising Son of God is close at hand to visit us, coming from on high to us sitting in darkness and the shadow of death." While the Patriarchs are exulting at the news, Satan orders Hades (who is here personified) to prepare to take charge of Jesus as of other departed souls; but Hades, reminding him how they had not been able to retain Lazarus and others whom the Lord had raised by His word, declares that he believes that He who could do these things is God, and that if Satan brings Him down "all who are here shut up in the cruelty of prison and bound by their sins in chains that cannot be loosened, He will let loose and will bring to the light of His Divinity for ever." The Penitent thief, bearing his cross, appears as the immediate precursor of the Lord who enters amid the crashing of the bars and bolts of hell and the jubilant greetings of the spirits, and commits Satan to the custody and guardianship of Hades.

Such

Such is a very short and imperfect summary of the second part of the Gospel of Nicodemus; but I trust I have given enough to show that there is some ground for the opinion that this stone represents the Patriarchs in *Limbo*.

I would say, in conclusion, that the fact of the Gosforth Cross and Lowther stone drawing their illustrations from the Apocryphal New Testament does not militate against the great antiquity of these monuments. We know that at the end of the Fourth Century S. Ninian, who had been educated in Italy, returned to spread Christianity among his countrymen on the Solway shore, and that in the Sixth Century the Christianity of this region had had time to degenerate into Pelagian Heresy—so I think we may conclude that the household stories of Christian dwellers on the Mediterranean shores may well have penetrated by that time to this remote corner of the Islands of the West.
