
FOREWORD

Charles A. Coulombe

THE PERIOD OF AMERICAN HISTORY that most defined these United States was that from 1865 to 1941. Before those years, we were a collection of semi-independent sovereign States; afterwards we were (and are) an empire dedicated to imposing an ever-changing notion of “freedom” over a world that is by turns accepting and resistant—depending upon what and where we are peddling. But during that period, our national identity gelled. The current methods of celebrating our national calendar of holidays—Labor Day, Halloween, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Lincoln’s and Washington’s Birthdays, Easter, Decoration/Memorial Day, Independence Day, Flag Day, and the rest—developed. Vaudeville, Broadway, Hollywood, and at last radio not only successively entertained but defined America to its inhabitants and the rest of humanity, and the Indian-haunted frontier made way for the National Park System. Cocktails (despite and perhaps because of Prohibition) and canning dominated our drink—and foodways, while Irving Berlin and Norman Rockwell provided sight and sound. From Mark Twain to Fitzgerald and Hemingway, the broad corpus of American literature was being written, as was the Great American Songbook. All the while this was going on, Americans were founding organisations that influence us to this day: the Daughters of the American Revolution,

YMCA, Knights of Columbus, American Legion, Elks, Boy Scouts, and dozens of others. Waves of immigration brought the majority of our non-Indian, Black, and WASP forebears here.

While all of this self-creation was going on in so many areas, nowhere was it more evident than in architecture and landscape. Frederick Law Olmsted and the City Beautiful Movement were creating the parks and urban monuments that dominate many of our cities and towns even today, while such as Frank Lloyd Wright were having a huge impact on house design. But one name stands foremost in architecture during this era: Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942).

Although Cram and his still existing firm of Cram and Ferguson designed and continue to design a wide variety of private and public buildings, it was primarily in collegiate and ecclesiastical architecture that they have left their broad mark on the American landscape. In the former sphere, West Point, Princeton, Rollins College, Rice University, USC, and a number of other such institutions all feature Cram's work. But it was for churches that Cram was primarily known, in most major cities and a number of smaller towns, stretching from Boston's All Saints, Ashmont and New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine and St. Thomas Church to St. Vincent's in Los Angeles and Central Congregational Church in Honolulu. Although comfortable working in such diverse styles as Spanish Baroque and Japanese, it was his distinctly American style of Neo-Gothic for which he is most famous. It is not too much to say that he created the defining look for colleges

and churches that still dominates the American popular imagination to this day.

Were that his only achievement, Ralph Adams Cram would be worthy of our attention. But it is not. Although born to a Unitarian Minister in New Hampshire and raised in that quintessentially American faith, a youthful visit to Rome converted him to what he considered Catholicism—in this case, that variant of the Anglican faith called Anglo-Catholicism. Created in 1830s England by the Oxford Movement (headed by John Henry Newman, who would later convert to Rome, and Edward Pusey, who would not), Anglo-Catholicism had a huge influence on the Church of England and its daughter churches, including the Episcopal Church in the United States, which Cram joined on his return to America. The Anglo-Catholics brought back to Anglicanism such beliefs and practises banished by the Reformation or the English Civil War as devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Virgin Mary, and the Saints; prayers for the dead; and monasticism for both men and women. They conceived of themselves as having the mission of “re-Catholicising” the Anglican Communion: for all, this meant seeing Anglicanism as a “branch” of the One True Church, alongside Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy; for many (including Cram), this also meant working for eventual corporate reunion with Rome.

This creed also had political implications. For one thing, it meant the revival of the *cultus* of King Charles I, the only individual Anglicanism ever attempted to canonise: he was seen as a martyr, since Cromwell and his confederates would have spared the King’s life had he been willing to sign off on the abolition of Bishops in the Church

of England (others noted as well that his intermittent negotiations with the Holy See were another reason for his judicial murder). This in turn led some English Anglo-Catholics (and some Romans there as well) to revive interest in Jacobitism and the House of Stuart, which resulted in the formation of groups such as the Order of the White Rose (forerunner of today's Royal Stuart Society). It also led to opposition to industrialism and monopoly capitalism along the lines of Catholic thinking in Continental Europe and Latin America—and the emergence of such thinkers as G.K. Chesterton and Arthur Penty, who looked to Medieval Christendom for inspiration in building a new social and economic order: this duo would enter the Catholic Church under the aegis of Hilaire Belloc. For American proponents of these views, it also led to a renewed consciousness of the United States as integral parts of the Anglosphere, alongside Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

Cram drank deeply of these religious and political views. A devotee of the liturgical and devotional practises revived by Anglo-Catholicism, he was also a co-founder of the American branches of the Society of King Charles the Martyr and the Order of the White Rose (both of which met in what is now Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum). Cram was instrumental in bringing the Anglican Cowley Fathers to America, even designing their still-existing monastery outside Boston. An avid traveller in Britain and Europe, he came to know Belloc, Chesterton, and Penty well. No doubt influenced by his interaction with them, he became involved with a number of Roman Catholic enterprises in the United States—going so far as

to co-found *Commonweal* (though what he would think of it now is anyone's guess).

But beyond all that, Cram left us a large number of works on political and social issues, to which the one before you—*Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh*—is a splendid introduction. Not bothering with our national superstitions regarding Church and State, he points out that America needs what any Christian society needs to survive and thrive—a Sacramental view of life, Monasticism, and proper philosophy. He would enlarge upon these views in such works written before and after this one as *The Great Thousand Years*, *Towards the Great Peace*, and *The End of Democracy*, as well as articles in such journals as *The American Review* and *The American Mercury*. As he shows repeatedly, we Americans—for all of our uniqueness—are not immune to the laws of history, human nature, and indeed, the religious requirements of God. If we are to survive, we must somehow accommodate our system—based as it is on very different premises—to these realities.

All that being true, one might well wonder why his work, so long out of print, is important to us now. Partly, it is because the issues he raises and attempts to offer some reply to are still very much with us, and it were well if we examined the work of a man who saw so much so clearly. Partly because, alongside the work of such as C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, T.S. Eliot, Arthur Machen, and others, Cram's legacy is part of that Anglican Patrimony which Benedict XVI created the Personal Ordinariates within the Catholic Church to preserve, and which he described as “a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinate and as a treasure to be shared.”

A last question that might well be asked is that if Cram saw things so clearly, accepted Papal primacy, and so often defended the Church against anti-Catholic prejudice, why did he not convert himself? The answer is to be found in the enormous success of the Anglo-Catholic movement in his lifetime (and to which he mightily contributed). The huge Anglo-Catholic Congresses and pilgrimages during the interwar years and the multiplication of such Anglican religious communities as the Cowley and Mirfield Fathers and the Nashdom Benedictines across the British Empire and the United States seemed to indicate that the Anglo-Catholic Movement would succeed, and that a Catholicised Anglican Communion would seek corporate reunion with the Holy See in the relatively near future. He could not have foreseen what would happen after his death.

What did happen—the collapse not merely of Anglo-Catholicism but even of “mere Christianity” within the Anglican Communion—has been an agony that he was spared. Inevitable as it seems now, given Anglicanism’s ecclesiological nature, it has nevertheless been a tragedy to watch for those who love the English-speaking culture with which it has been so bound up. That tragedy is in many ways connected with the self-inflicted implosion that has struck the Catholic Church and Western culture as a whole in at least the past six decades. But the creation of the Ordinariates gives hope that whatever was worthwhile in the Anglican Patrimony—not least Cram’s literary and architectural legacy—shall survive within the Church, and help stimulate her revival and a true “New Evangelisation” in the Anglosphere. If he is in a position to enjoy it, the fact that the American Ordinariate’s recently-built cathedral in

Houston was designed by his old firm of Cram and Ferguson must be a source of intense joy to him. Certainly, as with the rest of Cram's legacy, it can be to all who those fortunate enough to enjoy it.

Charles A. Coulombe

Monrovia, CA

Feast of Ss. Cyriacus, Largus, and Smaragdus

August 8, 2018

PREFACE

OF THE THREE ADDRESSES that make up this volume, the first was delivered in 1917 before the students of the General Theological Seminary in New York, the second at the fiftieth anniversary of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York, in 1918, while the third was read at a meeting of the Clerical Brotherhood of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia, in 1919. All three have been published in *The American Church Monthly*, and permission to reprint has been given by the editor, the Reverend Selden Peabody Delany, D.D. The third of the addresses, "The Philosophical Necessity," has also been republished by the Reverend Thomas Edward Shields, D.D., in *The Catholic Educational Review*.

For the doctrines, statements and inferences that are to be found in the three addresses, no responsibility can in any degree be attached to the governing body of the General Theological Seminary or to the officers of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament or to the Bishop of Pennsylvania. The various papers were read without having been first given a *nihil obstat* by any one in authority, and I desire to take entirely on my own shoulders the responsibility for what I have said. As the third essay is in a sense an extension and amplification of the second, and as it was given before a different audience, certain repetitions occur, but it has seemed best to leave the papers in their original

estate, except that from the second has been omitted the philosophical argument for the doctrine of Transubstantiation (this also was left out in *The American Church Monthly*) which was later amplified into the Philadelphia address.

The title "Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh" means simply this: Gold is the pure, imperishable quality of the monastic ideal, Frankincense the supreme act of worship through the Blessed Sacrament, Myrrh the saving quality of a right philosophy of life that yet must be bitter to the taste of many people. Together they are the three gifts that must again be offered by a world once more led, though now by the red and malefic star of war, to worship and fall down before the Incarnate God so long and so lightly denied.

RALPH ADAMS CRAM.

23rd June, 1919.