

OBITUARY

DR. JOHN ROBINSON, of Trinity College, Cambridge, a founder of the B.S.T.S.

In Spring we learned with sadness of the deaths of Shroud pollen analyst Dr. Max Frei, and former Shroud owner ex-king Umberto of Savoy. This month, with very deep regret, came the news of the passing of Dr. John Robinson, Dean of Chapel at Trinity College, Cambridge, and one of the founders of the British Society for the Turin Shroud.

Dr. Robinson's active association with the Shroud began with a memorable letter of 30 July 1976, addressed to Father Peter Rinaldi:

"You won't know me, though you may know me by name as the notorious bishop who wrote *Honest to God* and therefore about the last person to be a believer in the Shroud, if that is the right word! But for a long time I have been very much impressed by the evidence ... that there is here something that cannot easily be explained away..."

Following this letter Dr. Robinson was introduced to those in Britain researching the Shroud at a time the subject was still little known. Via articles supportive of the Shroud's authenticity, and his personal participation in the *Silent Witness* film, he gave immense encouragement, the impetus from which greatly assisted the formation of the B.S.T.S. The Society's very name, carefully chosen to avoid any foregone conclusions, was John Robinson's personal inspiration.

At the time of the exposition of the Shroud in 1978 Dr. Robinson travelled to Turin to view the cloth for himself. He was so moved by the concluding Mass in Turin cathedral that in a true spirit of ecumenism he received Catholic communion. Like others, his enthusiasm for the Shroud's authenticity was jarred by the findings of Dr. McCrone, but he looked to the outcome of any radiocarbon dating as the proper arbiter for any change of heart.

Last June Dr. Robinson and his wife Ruth learned that he had inoperable cancer, and had only months to live. Characteristically he refused to be bowed by this, and continued until the end working on a book on the gospel of John that was to have formed the subject of his Bampton Lectures, due to be delivered in 1984.