

ORTHODOX ENGLAND

In this issue:

St David of Wales and Jerusalem

*St Columba of Iona
and the Sign of the Cross*

*The Saints of England 2:
Four Hundred and Fifty Years*

*'They do say that time
stands still in the valley ...'*

and much more . . .

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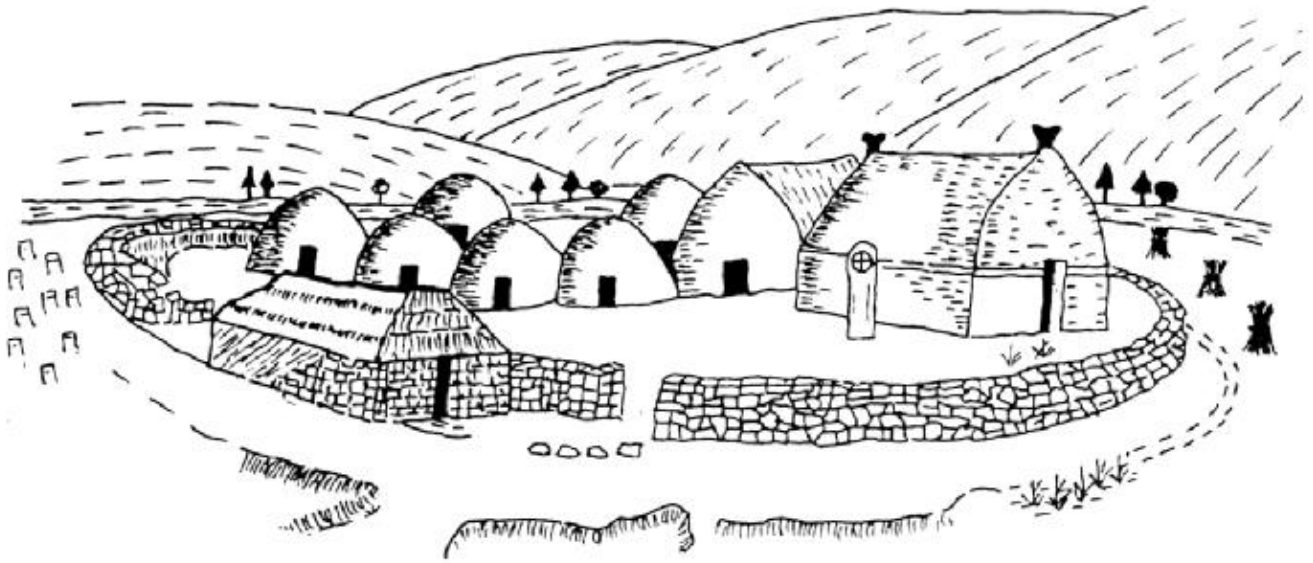
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Editorial: ST DAVID OF WALES AND JERUSALEM



Introduction

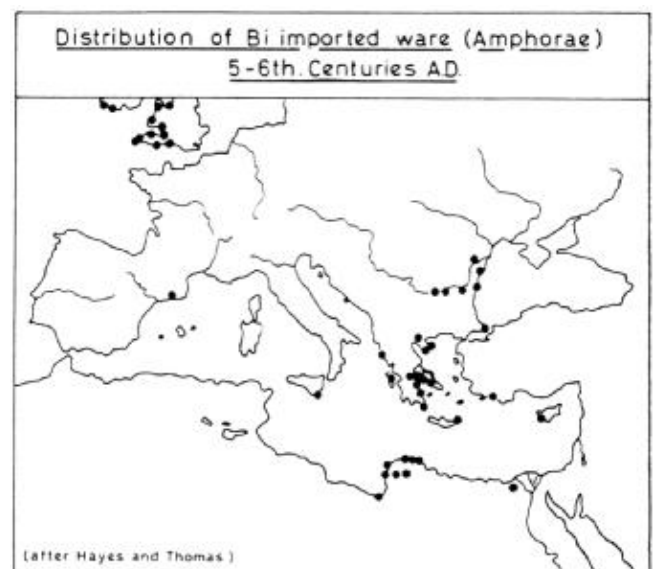
WE know relatively little about St David (Dewi) of Wales (✠ c.589), apart from what is in his much later life. This was written 500 years after his repose by Rhygyfarch, the eldest son of Bishop Sulien of St David's, in about 1090. However, this Life does confirm our knowledge that St David was a great ascetic who lived in the sixth century and that he was feasted on 1 March. It also contains in its earlier sections much that is trite, much that concerns eleventh century politics and not always much that is certain about St David. Nonetheless, in its later sections, the Life gives much of interest, including St David's preaching against Pelagianism and a detailed description of St David's way of life. This has been called the best description of life in an early Celtic Christian monastery that we possess.

The Life also tells us mysteriously that 'Sts David, Teilo and Padarn visited the Patriarch of Jerusalem in order to be consecrated to the episcopate' and that the Patriarch 'promoted holy David to the Archepiscopate'. This latter statement has provoked much controversy and has been rejected by most scholars of the subject. Most have seen in it a late eleventh-century political scheme to ensure the independence of the Welsh from Canterbury. This may be the case. What it also suggests is that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem had been willing in the sixth century to consecrate a bishop on territory which, on paper at least, belonged to another Patriarchate, that of Rome.

And that makes the story even more unlikely. Nevertheless, perhaps this story of consecration of the Welsh Metropolitan in Jerusalem can be understood symbolically and much more profoundly.

Links with the East

First of all we know that links between the west of Britain and the eastern Mediterranean go back well before the coming of Christ and that the Phoenicians traded there for tin and perhaps other metals in prehistoric times. Archaeologists have even drawn up a map showing finds of fifth and sixth-century amphoræ, containing wine for the Eucharist, coming from all over the eastern



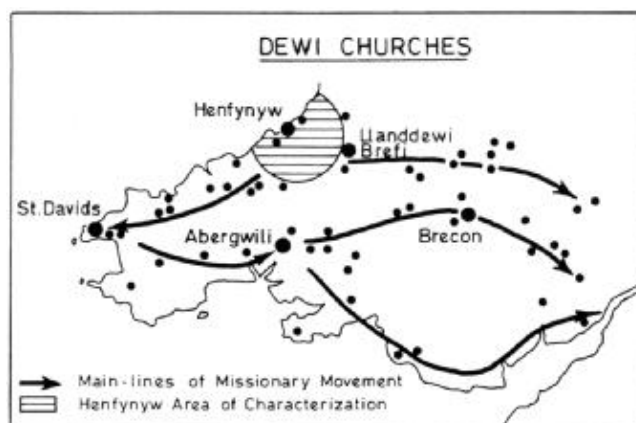
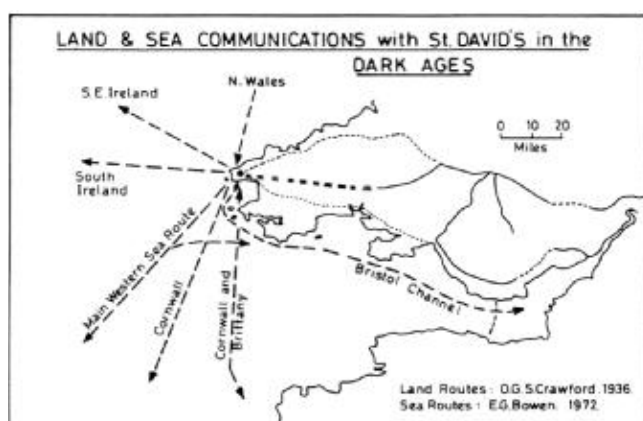
Mediterranean and found on the coasts of Cornwall, southern Wales and southern Ireland. We know that sea-routes direct to Britain from the eastern Mediterranean, passing through the Straits of Gibraltar existed before and during the age of St David. The fact is that Egypt, Palestine, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Rhodes, the Aegean Islands, Tarsus, Athens, Antioch and Constantinople were in direct contact with the coastlands of south-western Britain.

If pottery and wine could travel along the coastline of the Bristol Channel to monasteries on the shores of the south-west of Britain, so too could ideas, pilgrims and monks. From archaeology, we know that full monastic life began in this part of Britain, probably as early as 475, precisely at Tintagel in Cornwall. And Tintagel, like so many other early monastic sites, including St David's, is on the coast, accessible to those coming by sea. As it has been written by one historical expert (From Tintagel) 'the monastic pattern spread rapidly afterwards to such sites as Llanilltyd Fawr, Llanbadarn Fawr, Nantcarban, Llandaf, Caldey, Glastonbury and St David's, before passing over to southern and central Ireland'¹.

Now we can understand another statement made by Rhygyfarch in the fifth section of his Life of St David: 'In imitating the Egyptian monks, David led a life similar to theirs'. The fact is that St David's monastic and ascetic tradition, like that of all the Celtic saints, came ultimately from St Antony the Great and Egypt, the source of monasticism. It then spread rapidly throughout the eastern Mediterranean and further to what is now Romania and France and, finally, to the Celtic lands of the West, in which we are interested.

St David's Rule

We know that St David stressed an austere monastic life under the spiritual guidance of an



Abbot. Everyone did physical labour, using spades and mattocks and other agricultural tools. Abbot David would himself draw the plough with a yoke on his shoulders. All shared simple food, with meals of bread, herbs and water, without any alcohol. Fish was given only to the ill and elderly. He was known as an '*aquatus*', one who never touched alcohol or meat. His clothing was simple in the extreme, possessions were regarded with disdain and everything was shared in common. To work hard and own nothing, the voluntary poverty of non-possession, was the ideal. Naturally, the monks attended church daily. One form of asceticism favoured by St David was to stand in the cold river, even in the depths of winter, reciting the Psalter.

'When outdoor labour was over, the monks returned to their cells and read, wrote and prayed', says Rhygyfarch. No conversation beyond what was indispensable was permitted, in order to train the mind and heart in the interior work of prayer. However, others were not forgotten. The poor and needy were helped. We are told that one of the most important functions was 'to feed the bereft, the orphans, the widows, the needy, the weak, the infirm and all pilgrims on their travels'. St David and his disciples preached in various parts of South Wales and, 'the report of David's good name was noised abroad, kings and princes of this world were encouraged to forsake their kingdoms for the monastic life, like St Constantine, King of Cornwall, cousin of St Illtud'.

In all of this we should not forget that St David was himself said to be of royal descent, great-grandson of Cunedda, the King of Ceredigion. From the Romanized people of the Votadini, he had come down from Hadrian's Wall in the early fifth century to free it from Irish invaders. Of royal blood, abbot of a great monastery, archpastor of his flock, St David tilled the impoverished soil of the Welsh Uplands, as many of his countrymen

both before and after him. In this way, the people identified with him for centuries, considering him to be one of themselves, one of the brightest spiritual lights in all these Isles of the West. Indeed, his last words have gone down in Welsh history and inspired many: 'Rejoice and keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us'.

Conclusion

On the occasion of the Disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Wales in 1920, there was a great meeting with Orthodox clergy at St David's in the far west of Wales. There came Damian, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Photius, Patriarch of

Alexandria, Antony, Metropolitan of Kiev, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, and other Orthodox bishops. They were coming as pilgrims to the spot where an ascetic once lived and strove to purify his heart and those who sought salvation together with him. For, whatever then the actual truth in the words that speak of his consecration by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, they matter not, St David was nevertheless consecrated by the Jerusalem that is on high.

Holy Father David, pray to God for us!

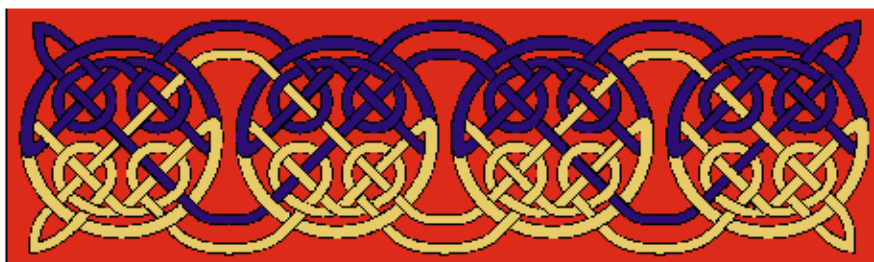
¹ See *The St David of History*, Professor E. G. Bowen, Aberystwyth, 1982

From the Holy Fathers: ST COLUMBA OF IONA AND THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

THE sign of the Cross, or saving sign as it was called, was widely used by St Columba to keep evil away. Before the cows were milked, the sign would be made over the milk pail. Once when a young novice forgot to do this, the demon got into the pail. St Columba was sitting in his cell writing, when the novice came up to him, carrying the wooden pail full of new milk on his back. As usual, he asked the saint to bless his burden. 'The Saint ... raised his hand and made the saving sign in the air, but the pail was at once greatly agitated: the bar which fastened the lid of the pail ... flew off and fell far away, while the lid fell off and most of the milk was spilled. The novice laid down his vessel with the little milk that remained and knelt down in prayer. 'Get up, Columban', said St Columba. 'You've been negligent in your work today. You forgot to banish the demon that was lurking in the empty pail by making the sign of the Cross of our Lord over it before the milk was poured in. Now, as you can

see, unable to bear the Power of the Cross, he's fled away in terror, disturbed the whole pail and spilled the milk ... Bring the pail to me here, so I can bless it. This done, the half-empty pail was immediately found to have filled by divine operation'. (*The Life of St Columba*, II. xv)

Tools were also blessed with the sign of the Cross, so that work could prosper: the pen was crossed, so that the writing might be to the glory of God: the seed was crossed, so that the crops might escape the spells of the evil one. This sacred sign appealed to the Highlanders of Scotland and was surely the origin of the custom of raising up crosses, to wage unceasing warfare against the powers of evil and commemorate at certain spots the victory of Christ over the devil. The sign of the Cross was also used at sea. We read how sailors were directed to raise the sailyards in the form of the cross and spread the sails on them and, 'thus, putting to sea ... they were able to reach their island that same day'.



FAMILIES OF ISLAND SAINTS: THE CELTIC ARCHIPELAGO

God loves three things especially: True faith with a pure heart; a simple life with a devout spirit; generosity inspired by love (*St Ita*).

The measure of prayer will be until tears come (*St Columba*)

Introduction

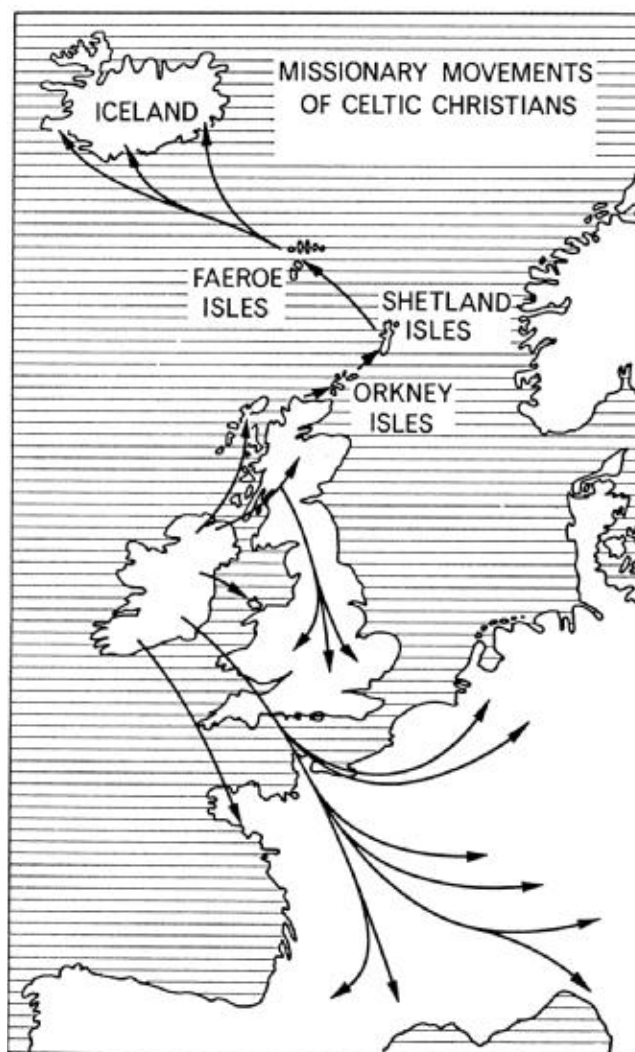
THE Celtic saints lived all over Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, Ireland, Scotland and on the hundreds of isles off their coasts. Remains of some of their so-called 'beehive' monasteries, chapels, shrines and holy wells are scattered all over the west, especially in Ireland and on the archipelago of little islands off the coasts of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Discovering the lives of these saints is made particularly difficult, for among them the word 'saint' was used for any righteous and pious individual, especially any in the monastic order and hermits. For example, there are in Ireland some 300 'saints' called Colman. Clearly, we have to understand who among them were saints in the more usual usage of the word.

Here we are not aided by the fact that, just as with the lives of the Desert Fathers of the Egyptian Thebaid or those of Mt Athos, we have the lives of only a few of the Celtic saints and even fewer of their sayings. Just as we have the sayings of only a few dozen of the Egyptian Desert Fathers or Athonite Fathers, though they numbered tens of thousands, so we have few lives of the Celtic saints. Even in the case of those, where we do have some details, we do not have everything. Again this resembles the lives of many Egyptian and Athonite Fathers. For example, in the case of St Silvanus (Silouan in Russian), we have only a short account of some things that he said, written down by one of his disciples. Many other traditions about him, kept on Mt Athos, have not been written down, especially regarding his views on the persecution of the Church in Russia. So too with the Celts, our information is only partial.

Furthermore, for the most part, lives, dates and even the names of the Celtic saints are confused or lost. We have relatively few edifying words and sayings from them. Many lives of Celtic saints were written down much later, sometimes 500, sometimes even 1,000 years after they lived. These late lives were compiled by individuals who were of another faith and they are corrupted either by

A man without a spiritual father is like a body without a head (*St Comgall*).

Work with piety is the most excellent thing of all (*St Maelruain*)



pagan folklore or else by mediæval financial and political interests. Most of them are to be completely disregarded, or at best can be interpreted only symbolically. As a result, in this respect, the lives and writings of perhaps only four Celtic saints stand out – those of St Patrick, St Gildas, St Columba and St Columban.

Nevertheless, families of Celtic saints and the places hallowed by them do stand out. Just as St Antony the Great († 356), St Pachomius the Great († 346) and St Macarius the Great († 390) were all linked, so also were the Celtic saints. In later times and elsewhere, the same thing occurred

between the saints of the Kiev Caves Monastery, the dozens of disciples of St Sergius of Radonezh or the saints influenced by St Paisius of Neamts, St Seraphim of Sarov or the Optina Elders. To paraphrase St Seraphim, it takes only one person who is saving his soul, that is, who is attaining holiness, for thousands to be saved around him. This we see even today, with the example of the Athonite Elder, Fr Ephraim, in the USA. Monasteries act as seedbeds, on which depend whole dioceses of parishes.

Thus, the monasteries founded by the Celtic saints were seedbeds of holiness which endured for generations. They were often located on islands (in Irish Gaelic, Inish, in Scots Gaelic, Inch, in Welsh, Ynys). Thus in Wales we find monasteries and hermitages on Flatholm, Caldey, Bardsey (Ynys Enlli), Ramsey (Ty Dewi), St Tudwal's Island, Anglesey, Holy Island and Ynys Seiriol and Ynys Tysilio (Church Island) off Anglesey; in Ireland, on islands in loughs (lakes or lochs), on Scattery Island, Inismor, Iniscarra, Inismurray, Inishbofin, Skellig Michael (Skellig meaning Rock), the Aran Islands in Scotland on Iona, Bute, Inch Kenneth, Mull, Arran, Eigg, Skye, the Flannan Islands, North Rona, Barra, indeed, all the Inner and Outer Hebrides, on islands in lochs such as Loch Lomond, on the Orkneys, the Shetlands the Faeroes and even Iceland.

How did the Celtic Thebaid begin?

In Wales, the roots are in Romano-British Christianity, which found refuge in Romanized South Wales. Uniquely, this part of Britain was unaffected by the invasion of the pagan English to the east. This Romano-British Christianity was revitalized by contact with monastic influences from Gaul and Rome, especially through St Germanus of Auxerre, whose Welsh disciple was St Illtud († 530). His disciples, St Paternus († c.550), St Dubricius (Dyfrig) († 546), St Paulinus (Paul Aurelian) († 573) and St Samson († 565) also appear to have kept especially close to the Romano-British tradition, as is indicated by Latin names. Another of his pupils was St Gildas († c.570). And the roots of the renewal in Gaul and Rome came ultimately from Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, there may even have been direct contact with Egyptian monks who could have arrived in Cornwall at Tintagel, possibly as early as 475, south Wales and southern Ireland. This Welsh influence spread all over Wales, to northern Britain, Ireland, and in

particular crossed to Cornwall, Devon and Somerset and then to Brittany.

In Scotland and Ireland, the roots are clearly in St Ninian's and St Patrick's Romano-British Christianity, inspired by St Germanus, his spiritual master. Again this had been revitalized from Rome and Gaul through St Vitricius of Rouen, St Germanus of Auxerre and the influence of St John Cassian and St Martin of Tours and their Egyptian monasticism. Again there may have been direct contacts with the eastern Mediterranean. In Scotland St Ninian's input was later renewed by the Irish, who repaid their debt to St Patrick's Britain very generously, returning to the rest of Scotland through Iona and St Columba and many others. In Ireland, the roots had originally come from southern Wales and northern Britain, partly through the Romano-British from Wales, partly through St Ninian, partly through St Germanus and his deacon St Palladius, from Gaul and Rome, especially through St Patrick, and through direct contact, especially with Egypt.

However, in all this we should clearly understand that there was considerable movement from one part of this archipelago to another. There were Irish saints who went to Wales, then moved to Scotland, there were Scottish saints who went to Ireland, then returned, there were Breton saints who moved to Wales, then went to Cornwall, before moving back to Brittany etc. Many of the monks involved either came from the same monasteries and had ties of spiritual fatherhood, sonhood and brotherhood, or sometimes there was an affiliation not only by spirit but also by birth, father and son, uncle and nephew, mother and daughter, brother and sister etc. Who were these saints and what their relationships? Below we list some of the relationships of affiliation between them, according to the regions in which they originated.

Saints of Northern Britain (Scotland and the North of England)

Whithorn. St Ninian († c.450). St Ninian spiritually influenced St Patrick († c.461) and certainly over St Enda († c.530), who was trained at Whithorn after St Ninian. St Enda was a spiritual brother of St Ailbe († c.525), who obtained one of the Aran Islands for St Enda and spiritually influenced St Govan († 586). St Enda himself had a sister St Fanchea († c.585) and two main disciples: St Ciaran of Clonmacnois (c.545) and St Jarlath († c.550). In the next generation we find

their spiritual children in St Finnian of Moville († 579) and later St Kentigern († 612), who is linked not only to Scotland, but also to Cumberland and North Wales. St Kentigern, linked with St Columba († 597, see Iona below) had as spiritual father St Servan, the sixth century Apostle of Western Fife, who is linked with the evangelization of the Orkney Islands. One of St Kentigern's spiritual sons was St Finan of Aberdeen († 595), who may also have worked on Anglesey in Wales. St Kentigern also knew St Asaph († 601), who had been born in Strathclyde, but worked in Wales.

Iona. St Columba († 597) lived in Ireland, where he almost certainly founded the three monasteries of Derry, Durrow and Kells. One of his disciples in central Ireland was St Brendan of Birr († 573), called 'Chief of the Prophets of Ireland'. Another Irish disciple was St Murtagh († c.580?), first Bishop of Killala. However, in 563 St Columba went to Scotland with twelve companions, all related to him by blood, and became the first Abbot of Iona. Two of these were St Odran († 563), who reposed soon after (See Eastern Ireland for his origins) and St Finlugh († c.580?) who later became Abbot of Derry, which had been founded earlier by St Columba. St Finlugh was the brother of St Fintan, patron saint of Doon († c.580?), who was a disciple of St Comgall († c.601) and of St Fintan of Clonenagh († 603) (see North-East Ireland below).

Among the visitors to St Columba from Ireland was St Comgall († c.601), with whom St Columba appears to have evangelized the area around Inverness and St Kenneth († c.600). Monks of St Columba on Iona include St Machar († c.590) who evangelized the Picts around Aberdeen, St Farannan († c.590), who returned to Ireland, and St Drostan of Aberdeenshire († c.610), honoured as one of the apostles of Scotland. A monk of Iona, St Donan († 618), was martyred by pirates on Eigg in the Inner Hebrides with 52 companions on Easter night 618, as foretold by St Columba. We should recall that Lindisfarne was founded from Iona (see Lindisfarne below). Other later Abbots of Iona include St Failbhe († c.680), St Adamnan († 704), who wrote the Life of St Columba, St Dunchad († 716) and St Failbhe the Little († 754).

Lindisfarne. St Aidan († 651), the first Abbot, came to England and Lindisfarne from Iona. St Finan († 661), the second Abbot, was also from Iona, as was St Colman († 676), the third Abbot

Lindisfarne became in its turn a seedbed of saints and the source of the Christianization of the whole of the north of England, sending missionaries into the south of England also. This was the so-called 'Northumbrian Renaissance' and the origin of one of the greatest of saints of these islands, St Cuthbert the Wonderworker († 687).

Saints of Wales

South Wales. Here the main spiritual descendant of St Germanus of Auxerre († 448) was St Illtud († 530), who founded the great monastery of Llanilltud Fawr. St Illtud had a brother, St Sadwen († c.540?), who was also a disciple of St Cadfan († c.540), see South Wales and Brittany). Among St Illtud's disciples and later spiritual descendants were St Germanus († c.480, see North-East Ireland 1 below) Bishop of the Isle of Man, St Paternus († 550), St Congar († 520) of Somerset, who was a cousin of St Illtud, the brother of St Kew of Cornwall († c.500) and the uncle of St Cybi. Other disciples of St Illtud include St Cadfarch († c.525?), St Dubricius (Dyfrig) († 546), St Paulinus (Paul Aurelian) († 573), St Eigrad of Anglesey († c.550), a brother of St Samson, St Samson († 565, see South-East Wales below), St Gildas († 570), St Maglorius († 575) and St Kyned (c.580), the son of St Gildas. St Gildas, who lived for a long time in Brittany, worked with St Cadoc († 560), who returned to Britain and was martyred by the pagan English.

Wales and Cornwall. St Brychan, King of Brecon († c.475), who was of Irish origin) was the remarkable father of a family of saints. Unfortunately, we know very little of him or of many of his children. Of them, however, we may mention St Almedha (Aled, † c.500), St Tydfil († c.480), St Nectan of Hartland († 510), St Gladys († c.500), St Dwywnwen († c.480), St Dingad († c.500), St Morwenna of Morwenstow († c.500), St Endellion († c.500), St Juliot († c.500), St Clether († c.510), St Mabyrn († c.525), St Keyne († c.505), St Ninnoc († c.500) and St Clodock (Clydog, † 520). His grandchildren include St Enoder († c.525), St Nonna († c.530, see West Wales below), the mother of St David, St Gwen († 544) and St Minver († c.530).

South-West Wales. Sts Gundleus and Gladys († c.523) were the parents of St Cadoc († c.570, see Wales and Cornwall above). St Cadoc's spiritual sons included the Welsh St Barrog/Barry († 560) of Barry Island, the Scottish St Machar († c.570) and the Irish St Finnian of Clonard

(† 549, see Eastern Ireland below), whose spiritual sons included the Irish missionary in Scotland, St Kenneth († c.600), who was the spiritual brother of St Columba (see North-East Ireland below and Iona above) and St Ciaran of Clonmacnois († c.545, see Whithorn above).

West Wales. St Nonna († c.530) was the granddaughter of St Brychan († c.475, see Wales and Cornwall above). Her sister was St Gwen (Candida) († 544) who lived in Cornwall, married St Selevan († c.540) and was the mother of St Cybi († 555) of Ynys Gybi (Holyhead in Anglesey and St Cybi's Isle). He was the most important saint of Anglesey, together with St Seiriol of St Seiriol's Isle (Ynys Seiriol, also called Priestholm or Puffin Island). St Nonna's cousin was St Tudy († 560) and her son was the greatest Welsh saint, St David of Wales († c.589), who was baptised by the Irish St Ailbe († c.525, see Whithorn above). (An Irish disciple of St Ailbe in Wales was St Govan the hermit [† 586]). St David worked with St Dubricius (Dyfrig) († 546) (See South Wales above and South-East Wales below), and was the spiritual son of St Justinian († 540) and St Paulinus († c.550). To this day St Justinian's relics rest together with St David's in the Cathedral at St David's.

St David's cousins include St Afan and St Sulien († c.580) and his nephew was St Dogmael († 505). St David had several disciples, St Kinemark and St Weonard (both early 6th century) and St Teilo († 560, see South East Wales below), and also worked with St Deiniol (Daniel) of Bangor († 584). St Deiniol was the son of St Donatus (Dunawd) († c.560), grandson of St Pabo († 530) and the father of St Deiniol the Younger († c.600). He was a cousin of St Tysilio († 640) and St Asaph († 601). St Tysilio's grandfather was therefore St Pabo († 530). St David had three Irish disciples in St Modomnoc (c.590), St Maedoc (Aidan, † 626) of Ferns and St Molagga († c.655). His disciples in Wales include St Ismael († 605), see South-East Wales below).

South-East Wales. St Dubricius (Dyfrig) († 546), a later spiritual disciple of St Germanus, worked with the children of St Brychan (see Wales and Cornwall above) and ordained St Samson († 565), the most important missionary in Brittany. One of the Isles of Scilly is named after him, as is a town on Guernsey. Another spiritual descendant and also cousin of St Dubricius was St Teilo († 560), who stayed with St Samson and influenced

St Paulinus (Paul Aurelian) († 573) who also crossed from Wales to Brittany. St Paulinus' main disciple here was St Jovan († c.562), who succeeded him. St Teilo influenced St Ismael († 605), who succeeded St David as Bishop of Menevia, now called St David's (see West Wales above). St Samson's disciples included St Mewan († c.617). His disciple was St Austell (c.594) and a later spiritual disciple was St Winnoc († c.717) in northern France.

South Wales and Brittany. St Armel († 552) was said to be the cousin of St Samson († 565) and also St Cadfan († 540), founder of the monastery on Bardsey Island, where, according to a local tradition, 20,000 saints are buried and await the Resurrection. All three migrated to Brittany, where veneration for them was great.

Saints of Ireland

The following are the major Irish monasteries with their dates of foundation: St Finnian founded Clonard in c.530, St Kieran founded Clonmacnois in 541, St Columba founded Derry in 546, St Brendan founded Clonfert in 552, St Comgall founded Bangor in c.554, St Columba founded Durrow in 560 and then Iona in 563.

Northern and Western Ireland. The disciple of St Germanus († 448), St Patrick († c.461) had many disciples, notably Sts Auxilius, Iseminus and Secundinus (c.460?), bishops sent to help him in 439, presumably from Wales. They also included his sister St Darerca († c.480?), his nephew, St Loman († c.450), Sts Fingar and Phiala († c.455), converted by St Patrick and who settled in Cornwall, St Mochta († c.470), St Sincheall († c.475), founder of Killeigh in Offaly, where there were 120 monks, his cousin St Germanus († c.475), Bishop of the Isle of Man, St Fiace († 480), St Machai († c.480), who founded a monastery on Bute in Scotland, Bishop of the Isle of Man, St Mel († 488), consecrated Bishop of Ardagh by St Patrick and whose disciple was St Macaille († c.489), Bishop of Croghan, St Machalus († 498), Bishop of the Isle of Man, St Kenan († c.500), who built the first stone cathedral in Ireland at Damleag, St Kieran of Saighir († c.500), consecrated bishop by St Patrick, but who also travelled to Europe, St Macartan the Wonderworker († c.505), consecrated Bishop of Clogher by St Patrick, St Macanisius († c.514), St Brigid of Kildare († c.525), baptised by St Patrick and tonsured nun by St Mel and St Macaille (see above). St Brigid, much venerated

in south-west Wales, she was associated with St Conleth († c.520) and St Monenna († c.518), a spiritual child of St Patrick and St Brigid.

Western Ireland. The first great saint of this area was St Senan of the Scattery Islands († c.544) in the estuary of the Shannon. He worked with St Dermot († c.550?), founder of a monastery and six churches on Innis Clothran (the island of Inchcleraun) on Lough Ree. The first Abbot of Killaloe in Co. Clare was St Molua († c.590). He was the spiritual brother of St Senan of the Scattery Islands († c.544), who in turn worked with another island-dweller, St Caimin of Iniskeltra († 553?). A disciple of St Molua was St Flannan († c.630) of the Flannan Islands in the Outer Hebrides.

Eastern Ireland. St Finnian, Abbot of Clonard († 549) went to Wales and learned the monastic life under St Cadoc († c.570), St Gildas († c.570) and St David († c.589). He was called the 'Teacher of the Saints of Ireland' and his most famous disciples were St Kieran († c.545), founder of Clonmacnois, St Odran, Abbot of Meath († c.563), St Kenneth († c.600) and St Columba of Iona († 597) (see under Iona above). St Kieran of Clonmacnois was ordained through St Enda († c.530) on Aran Island (see Whithorn above) and then went to St Senan († c.544) on Scattery Island (see Western Ireland above). He is also associated with St Kevin of Glendalough († c.618), who went to meet him just before his repose.

North-East Ireland 1. St Colman of Dromore († c.550) was the founder of the monastery of

Dromore in Co Down. His spiritual son was St Finnian of Moville († 579, see Whithorn above), whose spiritual son was St Columba († 597, see Eastern Ireland above). In 563 St Columba left Ireland and went to Iona in Scotland (see Iona above).

South-West Ireland. St Ita († c.570) was called 'foster-mother of the saints of Ireland'. Her nephew was St Mochoemoc († c.620). Her spiritual sons include St Brendan the Navigator, Abbot of Clonfert († c.575) and St Fachanan († c.600), who learned the monastic life from St Finbar of Cork (c.610). St Brendan also learned monasticism from St Erc (6th century), visited St Columba († 597) in Scotland (see North-East Ireland 2 below and Iona above) and may have visited St Malo († c.600) in Brittany.

North-East Ireland 2. St Fintan of Clonenagh († 603) was a disciple of St Columba († 597, see Iona above). His spiritual son was St Comgall († c.601), first Abbot of Bangor, which became the largest monastery in Ireland. St Comgall, who worked with St Columba, also taught St Fintan Munnu, Abbot of Taghmon († 635), St Blane of Dunblane († c.590), a native of Bute, whose uncle was St Cathan (Chattan) († c.570), St Columbanus († 615), St Mirin of Loch Lomond († c.620?), St Gall († c.630) and St Fintan Munnu, Abbot of Taghmon († 635).

All the Saints of the Isles of the West,
pray to God for us!

THE SAINTS OF ENGLAND

2. Four Hundred and Fifty Years

FROM 616 to 1066: from St Ethelbert of Kent to Harold of England. That is to say, the long list of saints opens with one king and closes with another; a unique distinction in itself.

Ethelbert was fifth in descent from Hengist, who had brought the Jutes to England in 449. These and their fellow-invaders, within the space of a century and a half, made themselves masters of what now bears the name of England with the exception of the coastal and mountainous regions of the West. By force of arms they hewed out the Seven Kingdoms, whose stability Ethelbert was the first to shake, for his authority came to be acknowledged by all the English princes south of the Severn. He was the first English legislator to publish a Code.

His Judgments are one of the earliest of English documents.

Then came St Augustine and the sequel. St Ethelbert displayed any amount of English caution, but he was baptized at length and with him ten thousand of his subjects. This was on Christmas Day 597, and the baptism took place in the River Swale near the mouth of the Medway. Pope Gregory's joy at the news breaks out in his letters. He wanted to tell the world, including Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria. It was his idea that London should be the primatial see; but this was outside Ethelbert's kingdom, so Canterbury it had to be. For long after his death, a light burned before Ethelbert's tomb in Canterbury, which, after all, was his creation. He is the secular founder of that see. The apostolate identified with



*King Ethelbert meets St Augustine
in the open air at Ebbsfleet*

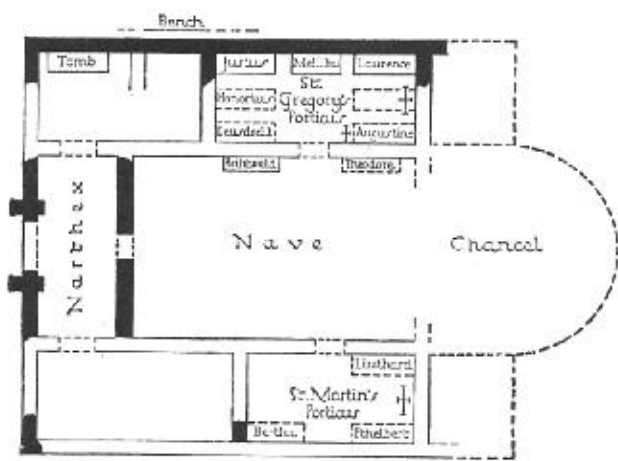
Sts Augustine and Ethelbert came to grief to such an extent that the country had to be reconverted. This task was accomplished by the combined efforts of the Celtic monks and the remnants of the Roman mission, the proportion of credit being about two-thirds to one-third. All the same, the

King of Kent may be called the godfather of the English Church.

Thus, St Ethelbert and King Harold represent our historical boundaries. On the geographical side, apart from the preponderance of the North, our saints divide the country fairly and squarely

RIGHT: The excavated tombs of Sts Justus, Mellitus and Lawrence in the north (St Gregory's) porticus of the church of Sts Peter and Paul, Canterbury. King St Ethelbert and his wife Queen St Bertha were buried in similar tombs in the south (St Martin's) porticus (see plan BELOW).

The coffins were inserted into the tombs, and the gap sealed with concrete. They were broken open when the Normans rebuilt the abbey complex after the conquest.





A new and well-researched statue of King Ethelbert recently erected in the centre of Lady Wootton's Green in Canterbury. The city wall and the mediæval Cathedral can be seen in the background.

between them. St Ebbe, the Bernician princess and Abbess of Coldingham, stands like a sentinel at the Scottish frontier, looking towards the rugged land, whose king she very nearly married. Her famous and tragic monastery was built on the summit of an isolated promontory which still bears the name St Abb's Head. At the other extremity we have Ebbsfleet, Ebb being another St Ebbe, the foundress of Minster. On this spot Hengist and Horsa are supposed to have landed and also St Augustine.

And they are distributed, rather unevenly perhaps but still distributed, among all ranks and classes of society. In those days, each male member of the community had, legally, a cash value derived from the wergild, or payment exacted for his manslaughter. The fact that women do not figure in the list drawn up by these actuaries may be an indirect testimony to the respect entertained for them by the age. A king, an archbishop, a bishop, a priest or lay thane, and a peasant were worth (respectively) thirty thousand, fifteen thousand, eight thousand, two thousand and two hundred shillings. However, when it came to holiness there was no discrimination, and in the old English Calendar we find kings and serfs, bishops and simple monks, princesses and peasant-women bracketed together as being entitled to the same commemoration.

The chronicles have counted more than thirty kings and queens of the English kingdoms who entered the monastic life during the seventh and eighth centuries. Each dynasty of the Seven Kingdoms furnished its quota. A goodly proportion

of them became saints. Some of them had begun badly; but, as can happen, they were assailed by one or other of those blows of fate that make even the great remember their First Beginning and their Last End. Thus, St Werburgh of Chester, the nun, and successively Abbess at Weedon, Trentham, Hanbury, Minster, Sheppey and Ely was a Staffordshire woman. The offspring of a mixed marriage, she had two strains in her character, the one proud and fearsome, the other gentle and winning. Her mother, her grandmother and her mentor were all saints, but her father was one of the most headstrong of the Mercian kings. All the same, this same father was converted in the end, and, as soon as he had become paramount among the Seven Kingdoms, he invited his daughter to assume the direction of all the nunneries in his dominions.

St Werburgh ranks high among women of all time, and was long one of the most widely-known and best loved of the English saints. She reposed at Trentham and she directed her executors to bury her at Hanbury. But the nuns at Trentham refused, locked up the coffin and mounted guard. Then the



An Icon of St Walstan

Hanbury folk mustered. There might have been strange scenes, but during the night the nuns on guard all fell asleep, the bolts shot back of their own accord, the locks were picked by the angels, and the body was carried off without any one in the Convent being aware of the fact. Later it was removed to Chester and buried where the Cathedral now stands.

St Neot was a councillor who became a hermit in Cornwall; St Alnoth was a servant turned hermit; St Wilgils, late in life, abandoned the court and lived as a recluse at a lonely spot in the Humber valley; St Drihthelm had been for long an enthusiast, but a vision he had of the Day of Judgement brought him to the a monastery of Melrose. St Walstan was another St Alexis. He renounced, his property, became a servant and worked incognito on his own farm. He died in the act of reaping the harvest and so came, to be invoked in Norfolk by sowers, and mowers and farmers generally. St Cuthman was another such, only he was poor from the cradle in which he was formed to perfect virtue. On emerging from this extraordinary cradle he never disobeyed his parents, was never late home in the evening. For a time he kept sheep and then, when his mother was widowed, he kept her and even begged for her support. Eventually, he built a little cottage for her with his own hands in a solitary place, Steyning by name, near Shoreham. He made a great impression on his generation.

There were many who, in that age, sought spiritual peace by drawing near to nature. In some clearing of the forest or cave of the seashore they contemplated creation, and accustomed their eyes to recognize the bonds that unite the physical order with the spiritual. St Guthlac of Crowland sprang from the Mercian dynasty. While still quite a youth, he put himself at the head of a band of freebooters whose pastime it was to pillage and loot – a kind of aristocratic Robin Hood. And like Robin Hood he was good to the poor, good in a way even to his victims, for he made a point of restoring to each one third of the plunder. One night, when lying awake by the camp fire in the forest, he fell out of love with the life he was leading, and in the morning he said to his merry men: 'Choose another chief. I'm joining Christ's band'. And so he went to the monastery at Repton and was received. Then, with due permission, he hired a boat and rowed over the fens to the little island of Crowland. There, like another Anthony of



An illustration from a GWR publication Legend Land, showing the occasion when St Neot is said to have prayed for the wild animals to help him when his abbey's plough oxen were stolen by thieves. A pair of stags promptly submitted themselves to the yoke.

the desert, he was assaulted by the fiends. Not far away his sister, St Pega, lived the same solitary life.

St Dunstan, man of affairs though he had to be, was also a solitary at heart. He loved to retire to his cell at Glastonbury to recover his spent force. It was here that his celebrated combat with the Prince of Darkness took place. One evening while he was employed at his forge, the devil put his head through the window and began to make devilish suggestions. The Saint waited patiently until his tongs were white hot; 'then, with a quick movement, he transferred them from the fire to the nose of the fiend who bellowed so lustily that the whole neighbourhood resounded with the clamour'.

The early English saints made their mark, for they have left it in our place-names. Thus, Beetham in Westmorland is said to be Bede's Hill; Weaverthorpe in Yorkshire, Wilfrid's Village; Bewholme near Hull, Bega's Home; Kirkcudbright is Cuthbert's Church, and Tewkesbury is called after the hermit Theoc. As for St Botulf, we have Boston in Lincolnshire, Botesdale in Suffolk, Botolph in Sussex, Botolph Bridge in Huntingdonshire and, of course, Boston in Lincolnshire – and in Massachusetts.

All shapes and sizes then – literally all sizes, for England can claim to have produced one of the

smallest to be accorded the honours of sainthood. This is Rumwold, a new baby and prince of Northumbria, who lived only long enough to be baptized and to make a profession of his faith. Into the bargain, there is St Neot. He was so diminutive that he had to stand on a stool in order to celebrate

the offices: but he was tall enough spiritually, and no one doubted that he had gone straight to heaven. There were even prophets among them, three at any rate, Cuthbert, Brithwald and Boisil, or Boswell, who was also noted for his devotion to the Holy Name.

ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN INFLUENCES IN THE CONVERSION OF SWEDEN

Introduction

FEW are the English saints who have been or are widely venerated outside England. The select group would include perhaps only St Alban, St Oswald¹, St Botolph, St Bede, St Willibrord, St Boniface (who both spent most of their lives outside these islands as missionaries), St Edmund, today, increasingly in Russia at least, St Edward the Martyr, and finally St Sigfrid

The case of St Sigfrid, the English missionary to Sweden, is particularly interesting, since around the year 1000 he baptised a future Russian saint, St Anna of Novgorod². However, there is another English saint who was also widely venerated in Sweden and indeed all over Scandinavia. This is St Botolph of Iken.

St Botolph

Certain English saints were known in the monasteries of Scandinavia, but one – St Botolph from East Anglia – stands out. He survives in the liturgy and dedications of three countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and during the Middle Ages was as well-known there as in his homeland. Even after the Reformation St Botolph remained in folk memory, especially in Sweden.

Botolph founded a monastery at Iken in East Anglia in 654. The monastery was destroyed in the Viking invasions, but by the tenth century St Botolph's relics were divided between Thorney, Bury St Edmunds and Westminster. In the eleventh century his life was written by Folcard. During the Middle Ages sixty-four churches were dedicated to him, mostly in south-eastern England and those parts of eastern England most influenced by Viking settlement. His feast day, 17 June, was observed in many places, but above all in East Anglia³.

Twelve churches were dedicated to him in Denmark, two in Norway and two in Sweden. Two bell inscriptions, a St Botolph Guild, St Botolph fairs and market days are also known. There seem to have been relics in Broddetorp, since the golden



Detail of an altar frontal from Årdal stave church, Sogn, c. 1300, now in Historisk Museum Bergen, Norway, showing St Botolph of Iken

altar there has an inscription about the relics of three saints, the third being St Botolph. There are representations of St Botolph in all three countries. The personal name of 'Botulf' appears from the thirteenth century in Norway, Sweden and in Swedish Gotland.

Virtually all known mediæval calendars in Scandinavia show St Botolph on 17 June. Sixty-nine examples are known, twenty-six of them accord him high status, and all through the Middle Ages up to the Reformation. All the Nordic dioceses are represented. Litanies usually show



midsummer was an appropriate time for planting root crops, and in parts of Sweden St Botolph was known as 'rov grubben', 'the turnip man'. These factors will surely help to explain the occurrence long after the Reformation of the boy's name and the Botolph Fairs that took place in several towns until the eighteenth century. The phenomenon of veneration for St Botolph in Scandinavia is one of the most enduring signs of the English role in the Christianizing process in the Nordic lands.

Russian Influence

There were also Russian influences in Sweden. Although the main trade route from the Baltic to the Continent went via Hedeby in southern Denmark and from the coast south-west inwards to Frisian Dorestad, there was an important route eastwards. From the ninth century or even earlier, there was constant traffic between the Baltic region and the Roman Empire in Constantinople. Swedish and Danish traders and Vikings crossed over the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland, and travelled further inland along the Russian rivers, to Staraya Ladoga and Bulgaria, which were important centres of commerce.

St Botolph among the confessors. When we turn to missals, we are faced with forty-five fragments from Sweden, only one from Denmark and none from Norway. Breviary material is the most abundant and indeed the most important. Scandinavia provides the only witness to a Service to St Botolph and to some previously unknown hymns and antiphons with their musical notation. The usual English Life used for readings at St Botolph's service is also represented.

How do we explain the virtually universal cult in Scandinavia of this early English saint and his continuing commemoration? Firstly, there must be a close connection with the conversions that were taking place in Scandinavia in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The implication is that the clergy came from Eastern England and East Anglia in particular, and spread to every part of Scandinavia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Later, the popularity of St Botolph may have developed with his association with seafaring and with those who plied their trade over the North Sea. Several churches dedicated to St Botolph are located in market-places and on quaysides. Yet this cannot be the whole explanation.

In the later Middle Ages, St Botolph might have found favour in Scandinavia due to the season when his feast day falls. The approach of

The main products exported were fur and amber, and in exchange northern traders acquired Arabic silver coins in great number. Impressive hoards of these coins are still discovered, especially on the island of Gotland. The Arab traveller Ibn Fadlan has written a vivid account of his encounter with these exotic visitors. Many of the travellers went on as far as Constantinople, where some of them were recruited into the Emperor's Varangian guard. In Agia Sophia there is still a memento from this time. On the balustrade of one of the galleries, a Scandinavian visitor has carved a line of runes, which, unfortunately, are no longer readable.

The Scandinavians played a vital role in the formation of Russia. The Nestor Chronicle, written by a monk at the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev around 1100, introduces the story that a dynasty from Sweden was invited to take power in the kingdom of Kiev around 860, because of the political chaos there. A Swedish chieftain named Rurik thus became the forefather of the ruling dynasty in Kiev. The name of Rus for the kingdom of Kiev – later on transformed into the name Russia – has been interpreted as coming from Roslagen, the name of the Swedish coast-line north of Lake Malar. This name is related to the English verb to row, thus 'ros lagen' implying a team of oarsmen.



A Viking treasure hoard from Birka, Sweden, buried c. 975 including Arabic coins

However it may be, it is obvious that a Scandinavian connection existed. St Vladimir, the first Christian ruler in Kiev, baptized in 988, belonged to a half-Scandinavian dynasty. This is evident from the many personal names of Northern origin in the family, such as Olga (Helga) and Igor (Ingvar). The Slavonic name of Vladimir accordingly spread to Scandinavia in the form of Valdemar, the name of several Danish kings. The Norwegian King Harold the Hardrada is said to

have spent part of his youth in Kiev. St Vladimir's son, Yaroslav the Wise, married Ingegerd, the daughter of the first Christian king of Sweden, Olaf Eriksson. She came to be venerated as a saint in the Russian Church, Saint Anna of Novgorod².

With such facts in mind, it is reasonable to ask the question: Was there a corresponding traffic from Constantinople and Russia to the Baltic region in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and if so, are there any traces left? Many arguments for such a mission have been put forward by Swedish scholars. Many Eastern Roman objects have been found in Scandinavia and especially along the Swedish east coast, notably in Sigtuna by Lake Malar. There is also a considerable number of Russian pendant crosses of precious metal or bronze, often in the form of encolpia, or portable reliquaries (also found in Poland). Glazed ceramic eggs from Kiev have also been found in tombs. A relief of the Mother of God with Greek letters also found its way to Gotland. Other objects such as pewter spoons and ivory combs are thought to have perhaps pertained to the Eastern liturgy. At the very least all these objects are signs of an on-going trade with the East.

Of more interest are the intriguing remains of wall-paintings in the twelfth century churches of Kallunge and Garda on Gotland, and possibly in some other churches on the island. They have obviously been painted by Russian artists and are dated to the end of the twelfth century. In particular, two figures of saints in the Orthodox style in the church of Garda (possibly the martyred princes Boris and Gleb) are well-preserved. From the fifteenth century there is evidence of Russian churches on the island, and the ruins of one of these has been partly preserved in the city of Visby. These churches were obviously used by Russian traders. There has thus been a certain presence of Russians on Gotland.



C10 bronze oval brooch found near Moscow and a C11 silver cup with an Arabic inscription, found at Barsoff Gorodok.



Objects brought back from the Middle East by Vikings LEFT: A bronze Arabian brazier found at Hamrånge, Gästrikland. RIGHT: C10 bronze flask, Persian in form, found at Aska, Östergötland.

Some Swedish runic inscriptions mention Scandinavian expeditions to the East. Quite a number of these refer to a certain Ingvar, who was the leader of such an expedition, which may have penetrated as far as Georgia. Some formulas found in Sweden have been believed to be of Eastern origin, but this is very uncertain. The expression 'Mother of God' in some inscriptions is not exclusively Eastern Orthodox, but is known from England and Frisia as a translation of Latin *Dei Genetrix*. Some crosses on rune-stones may have been inspired by Orthodox pendant crosses, which must have existed in great numbers.

There are some obvious Orthodox elements in Scandinavian art during the period of Christianization, especially on baptismal fonts. But these influences may not have reached Scandinavia across the Baltic. From about the year 970 there was a strong Orthodox influence in the German Empire, due to the Empress Theophano, the wife of Emperor Otto II. These impulses spread northward and are also to be seen in Scandinavian art.

But the question of Eastern influence remains, especially when we turn to the east coast of the Baltic, to Finland, Estonia and Latvia. (Lithuania was always closely connected with Poland). For example, there is the case of Bishop Osmund. According to Adam of Bremen, Osmund was an Englishman, who went to Norway and then to Sweden as a missionary. After studying in Bremen, he went to Rome to be consecrated bishop but failed. Instead he turned to 'a Polanian Archbishop'. This could be the Polish Archbishop

of Gniezno, but it is true that the people around Kiev were also called Polanians. Could he have been consecrated by the Metropolitan of Kiev?⁴ For some time Osmund was bishop at the court of Emund, the third Christian King of Sweden, but without the consent of Bremen and he was therefore frowned upon by Adam. According to the *Liber Eliensis*, he returned to England and stayed at the court of Edward the Confessor. There is a monument to him in Ely Cathedral.

There is also the presence of some Russian loan-words in early Finnish and Estonian. They are words such as Finnish *raamattu*, 'Bible', from Russian *gramota* (= Greek *grammata*), *risti*, 'cross' from Old Russian *krestu*, and *pappi*, 'priest', from Old Russian *popu*. Is this an indication of Orthodox influence, perhaps of a Russian mission around the Gulf of Finland? Perhaps not, but there were certainly contacts with the Russian Church.⁵

Conclusion

Standing between east and west, Sweden received influences from English Christianity from the west and the Danish south and also influences from Russian Christianity from the east. Nowhere was this so marked as on Gotland. However, the English influence was deliberately missionary, in other words active, the Russian influence was passive, simply by trade and example.

The reason for this could mainly be linguistic. The English of the time spoke a language very close to Swedish. Moreover, we should remember that most of the English missionaries were in fact from the east of England, that is Anglo-Vikings. Thus, there would have been no problem of finding a common language. This was not the case with Russians, who, speaking the Old Russian of the time, could not have communicated easily with the Swedes.

1 See *Oswald, Northumbrian King to European Saint*, Eds. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge, Stamford 1995.

2 See our *Orthodox Christianity and the Old English Church*, 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2005, pp. 38-40.

3 See 'From Suffolk to Kiev: St Botolph of Iken' in *Orthodox England* Vol 5, No 4, pp. 6-11.

4 See 'St Audrey of Ely, Mother of East Anglia' in *The Lighted Way*, pp. 15-23 and in *Orthodox England* Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 2-6.

5 For a full survey of this subject, see 'Rom und Byzanz im Norden: Mission und Glaubenswechsel' in *Ostseeraum während des 8-14. Jahrhunderts* 1-2, Ed. Michael Mueller-Wille, Mainz und Stuttgart 1997-98.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Can you give a few indications as to how we should write down the names of others in the books and papers we give to priests for commemoration at the Proskomidia?

T. L., Birmingham

1. Get these lists to the priest on time. Ideally, this should be done at the Vigil Service before the Liturgy. If not, then at the Hours in the morning. In the Russian Church, there is a dispensation (economy), that priests will accept such lists for commemoration right up until the Cherubic Hymn, but no later. Other Local Churches are not that generous in their practice. The booklets or papers should be sent up with two prosphora (offertory bread), one for the living and one for the departed.

2. The Christian names, and Christian names only, should be written clearly. Often they are not!

3. If you have a permanent booklet (pomianik) rather than just slips of paper, then why not do as some devout people do and write the names for the health and salvation of the living in red, and the names of the departed in black. For the departed you can also insert the date they passed on.

4. Write the names in order, Bishops, Priests, Deacons and then laypeople. By the way, do not write the names of Priests as 'Father so and so'. Formally, they are Priest so and so. Similarly deacons are commemorated as 'Deacon so and so' not 'Father Deacon so and so'. Similarly, laypeople should be commemorated by their baptismal names, e.g. Catherine, and not a diminutive, e.g. Cathy. Some people put in brackets after their names the surname and the date of repose. This can be useful. Firstly, you never forget who it is, secondly, you recall the anniversary of their repose, so that memorial services can take place.

5. Children before the age of confession are commemorated as 'Infant so and so'.

6. Update your booklets regularly. People pass on. Their names need to be transferred into the Departed section. On the other hand, there are also baptisms.

7. Finally, as regards Non-Orthodox, there are different practices. Naturally, those outside the Church cannot be commemorated at the Preparation (if I may translate Proskomidia), for particles cannot be taken out of the prosphora and put into the chalice in remembrance of Non-Orthodox. However, out of economy, some priests in parishes where there are people of a Non-Orthodox ethnic background, encourage these faithful to write the names of Non-Orthodox, living and departed, in a separate section of their booklets, so that their names can be read silently by the priest in the altar and he can ask for the mercy of God for them also. Of course, it is a duty for all of us to pray for Non-Orthodox of our acquaintance in our private prayers, in the mornings and, if possible, also in the evenings. We pray for the peace of 'the whole world', not just part of it.



What came first, the chicken or the egg?

A. P., Felixstowe

God.



How is it that Adam and Eve's children were able to marry each other? If brothers and sisters marry, their children will surely be disabled.

N. D., London

Adam and Eve contained the gene-pool of all humanity. There was then an enormous genetic wealth in them. As humanity multiplied, this was no longer the case and genetic deformities began to occur, as one faulty gene reinforced another. Nowadays, this can happen even when two complete strangers marry. (By the way, if incestuous marriages do take place, the handicaps that result are not often physical – they are much more likely to be mental and spiritual). At the same time, Adam and Eve's children clearly felt none of that natural revulsion that we now feel at the mere concept of close relatives marrying one another. That revulsion is an instinctive self-defence, given that we now know the consequences. When there were no consequences, like handicapped children, there was no natural revulsion.



The date 1054 is, you have said, useful as a symbol for dating the Schism. But in this case when exactly is the cut-off point, for example, for saints?

J. E., Manchester

As ever, there are two extremes to avoid. One is the ultra-ethnic view which more or less denies any holiness in Western Europe after the fourth century (and even that is generous among some of these ultra people). The other is the modernist viewpoint of those who paint 'icons' of Francis of Assisi and other anti-Orthodox crusaders and seem quite happy to think of them as saints – in fact some of them have no limit. I can remember a conversation with the late Elizabeth Behr-Sigel in France who seemed to venerate all Roman Catholic saints, especially Charles de Foucauld!

On the one hand, it is true that Charlemagne was a heretic, that problems began in other words at the end of the eighth century. On the other hand the Empress of Germany at the end of the tenth century was the Orthodox Theophano and in the first half of the eleventh century Henry of France married Anne of Kiev and Western pilgrims were freely given communion in Jerusalem and Constantinople and Eastern pilgrims did the same in Rome.

I think the roots of the Schism were obviously present well before 1054, but, and this is the important point, nothing became inevitable until that date. Therefore, although the excommunications that occurred in that year only concerned two people, that date of 1054 is still the one cut-off point that we can rely on for most of Western Europe (the only sure exception being Sicily and the south of Italy, where Orthodoxy survived for several decades after that date). Therefore, we come back once more to 1054, with the exception of Charlemagne and those around him who were openly anti-Orthodox



What is the most important book for Orthodox after the Holy Scriptures?

R. T., Felixstowe

Without any doubt, the twelve volumes of the *Lives of the Saints* – some 8,000 pages altogether. In Orthodox Russia these used to be given as a wedding dowry to brides, on which they could build their family life. After the many martyrdoms of the twentieth century, these would probably now extend to over 12,000 pages



What would you recommend as healing for depression?

M. T., Cambridge

Read the Psalter. This lifts the soul up out of itself and its dependency.



Why is it that so many Russians and Greeks go to church and yet appear to understand nothing? Surely, to understand the services is the main thing? Why else go?

B. S., Oxford

We should be careful not to fall into the convert syndrome of rationalism, which is brought into the Church from the Non-Orthodox world. We do not go to church principally to understand, we go to pray and repent. Rational understanding comes second. It is much better to pray in church without understanding a single word than to understand everything and not to pray. Of course, it is good to pray and understand, but we must have our priorities right. In any case, when bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, do we really think that we can understand anything? The Church is a mystery and therefore we must respect Her, in prayer and repentance.



Why should you not whistle in front of icons? I have been told off for that.

M. J., Paris

In the Orthodox understanding, whistling shows a casual disrespect for the sacred. Whistling is associated with demonic mocking. Therefore we do not whistle in front of the presence of the sacred. In the same way, we should not sit with our legs crossed in front of icons. This also shows a casual disrespect



What view do you take on organ donation, or transplantation? Is there a correct Orthodox position? Also, another question: what should we say to friends who say they will have an abortion if their child has some incurable, medical illness? One that will cause them to have a short and painful life?

G. F., Texas

These issues have come up before over the years in *Orthodox England*. These questions are not ones where the Church has a dogma in answer; they have not been 'dogmatized'. In other words, there is no 'Orthodox position' on these matters. These are pastoral issues. However, I would say

this in general, and I think that most Orthodox would agree with the general points I make:

Both issues result from a humanist/atheist view of things, that 'a good life' in the here and now is the only thing that counts, because there is nothing after death and God cannot take control of human destiny and perform the miraculous, if we let Him.

We believe exactly the opposite to all this, that this life is to prepare us for the future, that the events of this life are in God's hands. If we are told by humanist/atheist doctors that we need a transplant through an organ donation, then we should first turn to God and His saints for healing or humbly accept that our time has come and we are ready to leave this world. Let His Will be done. If we are told by humanist/atheist doctors that our baby will be handicapped (as we were with our fourth child), then we let God take over, either the baby will pass on, according to His will, or else it will be healed – in our own case he was healed. Short and painful lives need not happen, if we obey God. They are our own creation. Only the devil blames God for such lives.

I am not saying that organ transplants are quite unacceptable (though I do personally think that about heart transplants). What I am saying is that all these questions arise from the faithlessness of today's secular world. In reality, where there is faith, these are simply non-problems. God is continually speaking to the world through the fog of this world, challenging it to have faith through such 'problems'. The only real problem is that the world is deaf and constantly turns aside from Him.



Which fruits are blessed at the Transfiguration?

L. F, London

In Greece and Italy, grapes. In Russia and England, apples. It is a question of climate and what we can grow locally.



Which political party or parties should we vote for at elections? Can you give some advice?

N. S, Portugal

I think it is wrong for clergy to advise parishioners who to vote for. I know that in Europe it is a practice in Roman Catholic and Protestant countries, and in Greece, but I still think it is wrong.

Generally, I would say only the following. First we should vote. The only election we should on

principle boycott is that which will take place at the end, when Antichrist will ask us to vote for him as master of the world. In the meantime, we should simply vote for the political party which is the least hostile to our Orthodox beliefs and values, vote, in other words, for the lesser evil. I know that can be a very difficult choice, but it is the choice of the conscience. That is why only we can make that choice.



I am interested in your views on the East-West schism. It seems to me that both the Roman Catholic formula of the Papacy and the Orthodox *primus inter pares* do not apply to the Papacy during the first millennium. This primacy is really much more complicated than it seems. I'm sure if St Peter was Pope of Rome in Pope Benedict's place today, the whole Church would trust him – because he is St Peter. It's Pope Benedict we don't trust. It seems to me, father, that this present situation is a result of the alienation of East and West before conflicts appeared. And at times it also seems that it is not a battle of truth and delusion but rather a battle of mentalities and cultures. As one of their bishops has said, the East differs from the West even at the points where it doesn't differ at all ... Alexis Khomiakov once wrote to an Anglican that even if they did have the full truth, they'd still approach it in a Protestant manner. I think something like that can be applied to the Romans as well. It's their mentality that's wrong. Their dogmas just happen to be corrupted. And so at times I really wonder if there is in fact anything that we and they actually have in common ... So the problem must lie deeper ... Most of us stick to the dogmatic differences. Some look deeper and say 'No, it's the primacy that does it'. But I've been led to believe that the root of the problem lies even deeper. The primacy may have divided the Church, but it's the result of something. And I think that something I can't define is really the root of the trouble.

E. L., Greece

As you know, Sts Peter and Paul are commemorated as Chiefs of the Apostles. They had a sort of 'primacy' (but not supremacy) over the other apostles, though it is clear from the Icon of Pentecost that this primacy is not understood at all in the Papist sense. Orthodox do not dispute this. No-one seriously doubts either that both were martyred in Rome. Of course, the see founded by St Peter was Antioch, St Paul founded Rome, as is witnessed to by his Epistle to the Romans.

The real problem is why, regardless of historical facts, the Roman Catholics should think that only their Popes automatically inherit some kind of mystical authority from St Peter, when they do not even share in his faith. This is quite incomprehensible. As in the troparion to St Leo the Great, of course he spoke with the voice of Peter (as the Greeks said at the IVth Council), but then all Orthodox who are inspired speak with the voice of Peter.

About thirty years ago I was much preoccupied by the above question of culture and faith, in effect the chicken or the egg question, which came first the Roman mentality or the *filioque* heresy and the papal claims?

I came to the conclusion that certainly the cultural mentality was there (the pagan Roman Empire was there before Christ), but then came an Orthodox period. Sadly, as so often happens, the pagan mentality (culture) began to creep through and eventually created the ground for the *filioque* and the papal claims, the *filioque* simply being the theological and dogmatic expression of the Papal claims and the whole mentality that went with it. In other words, the tragedy of the West is that it gave its local culture supremacy over the spiritual beliefs of the Church. It took 1,000 years for this process to happen, but it did happen, as we know.

Of course, this is the tragedy of many, the Monophysites for example, who put their ethnic culture above spiritual truth. And it is the tragedy of so many nominal Orthodox, who in effect are really only 'cultural Orthodox'.

This does mean, however, that if Western people really accept the Orthodox faith, spiritually, and incarnate it into their lives, they can become real Orthodox, but this is a question of putting Orthodoxy first, and Western culture second and

allowing that culture to be transformed by Orthodoxy. It is no good, as some Western people do, joining the Orthodox Church and putting it into a little slot on Sunday mornings and then continuing to live as the rest of the pagan Western world, with all its values, political, economic, social etc. This sort of thing often happens in the USA, but then in the USA so many ethnic Orthodox do the same themselves, becoming merely cultural Orthodox.



How should we view animals and especially pets?

M. P., London

Animals are a gift to us from God. They help us in our work, feed us and give comfort, especially to those who live alone. We should learn how to look after them according to their needs, but not according to our desires. We should feed them as they need and give them shelter and affection. Animals depend on us; they imitate us. This is why we see the real phenomenon of pet dogs looking like their owners. If we show animals, particularly if we keep them as pets, intelligence, kindness, gratitude and loyalty, they will return them, because they reflect our example. If, on the other hand, we are cruel to them or frighten them, they will also return that. We never beat animals. That is a sin. After all, unlike us, they only live once and their well-being depends on us. On the other hand, we should not treat them as people, idolising them, preferring them to human-beings, as often happens nowadays. I am shocked how much some people spend on their pets, while human-beings are starving. It is all a question of proportion. We must know our place as stewards in the scheme of Creation, but we also must know theirs.

BOOK REVIEW

The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church, by Fr Seraphim Rose (Platina, California: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, revised edition, 1996).

by Vladimir de Beer

THERE are one or two Orthodox writers who blame Blessed Augustine, Bishop of Hippo († 430), for most of the Western theological deviations from the Orthodox Christian faith. A



prime example is the youthful doctoral dissertation of the ever-memorable Greek Orthodox theologian, Fr John Romanides, published in English as *The Ancestral Sin*. In it he contrasted the teaching of the Eastern Fathers of the 2nd and 3rd

centuries with that of Blessed Augustine on the subjects of sin and grace. In his judgement, the great Latin theologian inaugurated erroneous teachings on fallen human nature, the impossibility of divine-human co-operation, and divine predestination to both salvation and damnation, which would later become Roman Catholic and much of Protestant doctrine. However, Fr John Romanides defended the North African theologian against the accusation of introducing the heretical Latin teaching of the double procession of the Holy Spirit (from the Father and the Son). He admits that Blessed Augustine's teaching in this regard refers to the temporal mission of the Spirit, and can therefore be viewed as a Western Orthodox *Filioque* (see www.romanity.org).

The Greek philosopher, Christos Yannaras, whom some Greek Orthodox consider to be a heretic, took up an extreme anti-Augustinian line in his *Elements of Faith*. He argues that Blessed Augustine's theology was situated within a legalistic Latin framework inherited from Cicero, the Latin Father having been a student of Cicero's jurisprudence. As a result, Western theology became enmeshed in a comprehensive system of definition, in a sustained project to define the ineffable mysteries of Faith. In this way the 'dynamic indeterminacy of life' (a favourite phrase of the philosopher) became replaced by static formulations, thereby undermining the free expression of the human will. According to Yannaras, this Augustinian inheritance was seized upon by theologians of the Carolingian Empire in order to provide a differentiated cultural base to the opponents of the Christian Roman Empire (called the 'Byzantine Empire' in the West). Thus the doctrinal errors of Augustine and his followers obtained a lasting cultural and socio-political framework.

Does this highly critical view of Blessed Augustine in fact represent the Patristic consensus? Not so, as Fr Seraphim Rose, co-founder of both the St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood and the Platina Monastery in California, argued in his above-mentioned work. Himself a Western Orthodox, Fr Seraphim briefly surveys Blessed Augustine's teachings on grace, free will and predestination, and compares it with the Orthodox Patristic position as represented by St John Cassian especially. It is correctly stated by Fr Seraphim that the Latin Father suffered from an over-logical mindset that inevitably led to one-sidedness and exaggerations, the more so in the heat of his long-

lasting polemics with the Donatists and Pelagians (pp. 33–4).

Fr Seraphim next searched the opinions of undisputed Orthodox Fathers to assess the Patristic judgement regarding Blessed Augustine. Firstly, he refers to St John Cassian and St Faustus of Lerins, the leading representatives of Western Orthodoxy in the 5th century debate on grace and free will. It is appropriately noted that this was a controversy within the Church, and not a dispute between the Church and heretics (p. 51). Both St Cassian and St Faustus recognized Blessed Augustine as a Patristic authority, albeit a lesser one, while opposing his views on grace. Ultimately it was St Caesarius of Arles, a monastic follower of St Cassian and an admirer of Blessed Augustine, who reconciled the two parties that had formed in Gaul. He convened the Council of Orange in 529, at which a modified version of the Augustinian teaching on grace was accepted, avoiding his more extreme views on irresistible grace and predestination. In fact, the doctrine of 'predestination to evil' (a distortion of Blessed Augustine's 'predestination to death') was condemned as a heresy. However, the Orthodox teaching on synergy held by St Cassian and St Faustus was not referred to. As a result, the Council maintained the freedom of the human will, but 'within the framework of the overly logical Western view of grace and nature' (p. 60).

It is noteworthy that the Gallic Orthodox monks who opposed Blessed Augustine did so on the basis of his doctrine on predestination, not on original sin and the need for divine grace. Yet even on predestination the Augustinian position is surprisingly mild at times. For example, he saw Jesus Christ as the greatest example of predestination, because his humanity was never other than the person God intended him to be. The case of Jesus of Nazareth is the only one where there is a perfect convergence between divine foreknowledge and divine predestination (James Wetzel, in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 2001, pp. 50–52). It appears that Blessed Augustine might be unfairly blamed for extreme positions on double predestination taken by some of his followers.

Furthermore, contrary to some received opinions, Blessed Augustine did not deny the freedom of the human will. He did, however, emphasise the role of prevenient divine grace in our salvation – in other words, divine grace precedes the operation of the human will (p. 38). How did the Latin Father arrive at this conclusion?

Blessed Augustine taught that ever since the Fall humans have been unable to do good, either due to ignorance of what good is or due to finding it too difficult to will the good. Anything good in humans is therefore a gift from God, who either produces the will to good in them or co-operates in its production. Yet neither ignorance of the good or weakness of will is in itself culpable – rather, the human soul is guilty of not seeking knowledge or strengthening of will from God, Who is always willing to give it by His grace. Therefore, although goodness in will is a gift from God, human sins are still culpable because it is our own fault (Eleonore Stump, in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 2001, pp. 131–133). It would be difficult to find fault with this line of reasoning from an Orthodox perspective.

Fr Seraphim then looks at the views on Blessed Augustine held by prominent later Fathers of the East and the West. Already at the Fifth Œcumenical Council, held at Constantinople in 553, the Emperor Justinian, who convened the Council, recommended the Latin Father with the same enthusiasm that he held for the leading Greek Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries. In his turn St Gregory of Rome compared Blessed Augustine's commentaries on Scripture to delicious food with which one could be spiritually fed. This recognition of Blessed Augustine as a Church Father was also prompted by his willingness to retract some of his own writings and to correct himself, as in his later Retractions – evidence indeed of Christian humility.

While the Western Orthodox Fathers who opposed Blessed Augustine on grace wrote in Latin, the *Filioque* controversy that erupted between the Greek and Latin churches in the 9th century required a Greek theological response. This was provided by St Photius the Great, who became the first Greek Father to examine Blessed Augustine's theology carefully, as Fr Seraphim pointed out. While rejecting the Latin teaching of the procession of the Holy Spirit 'also from the Son', St Photius was careful not to condemn those Fathers who had erred. He thus expressed the classic Orthodox attitude towards Fathers who have erred in certain respects: 'We, though, who know that some of our Holy Fathers and teachers strayed from the faith of true dogmas, do not take as doctrine those areas in which they strayed, but we embrace the men' (p. 67). This soundly Christian approach was maintained by St Gregory Palamas in his defence of Orthodox Trinitarian

doctrine. As Fr Seraphim speculates, Blessed Augustine would probably not have taught the *Filioque*, if he had been familiar with the fully developed Eastern teaching on the Holy Trinity.

Fr Seraphim then takes a closer look at the great defender of Orthodoxy at the Council of Florence in the 15th century, St Mark of Ephesus. In the first place, St Mark recognized Blessed Augustine as a Father of the Church, referring to him in several places as 'blessed' and as 'divine Augustine'. In contrast, he refers to Thomas Aquinas (who had by that time replaced Blessed Augustine as the leading Latin authority) as 'Thomas, the Latin teacher' (p. 70). Secondly, he continues the distinction made by St Photius with regard to Fathers who have erred in certain respects, by referring to Gregory of Nyssa's condemned teaching on the final restoration of all things. To the astonishment of the Latins, St Mark held that it is possible for one to be a Teacher of the Church and to err in his personal opinions. Finally, St Mark approvingly quotes Blessed Augustine to the effect that only the canonical Scriptures should be treated as infallible, adding the Latin Father's request that his own writings should be read critically. This, Fr Seraphim remarks, is precisely how the Orthodox Church has always treated Blessed Augustine (p. 74).

Before considering the opinion of Blessed Augustine held by modern Orthodox writers, Fr Seraphim discusses the meaning of the term 'blessed' (Russian 'blazhenny') in Orthodox usage. In the early Church the word was used more or less as synonymous with 'saint' or 'holy', but by the late 'Byzantine' era a distinction (though not a consistent one) had been made between 'blessed' and 'saint' – the latter reserved for Fathers of the greatest authority, the former for others, such as Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine and Jerome. Among Orthodox writers of the 18th and 19th centuries, St Tikhon of Zadonsk, the recluse George of Zadonsk and St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain venerated Blessed Augustine, the latter including him in his Synaxarion, to be commemorated on June 15. This practice was confirmed by no less an Orthodox luminary than St John the Wonderworker of Shanghai and San Francisco, who commissioned a special service for Blessed Augustine. The Vespers and Matins to Blessed Augustine was compiled by the ever-memorable and remarkable Patristic scholar Fr Ambrose Pogodin, well-known to the older generation of Orthodox in London, and was approved by the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in 1955. The

service is added as an appendix at the end of this book.

In conclusion to his survey, Fr Seraphim remarks that Blessed Augustine's controversial, dogmatic writings have often been emphasized to the neglect of his more moral works, such as the *Soliloquies* and the *Confessions*. These works reveal the great Latin theologian as a 'Father of Orthodox Piety', as Fr Seraphim puts it (p. 80). He quotes a modern commentator who expressed his disappointment at Blessed Augustine being a 'typical child of his age', such as fitting into a landscape 'filled with dreams, devils and spirits' – in other words, for being a pious Orthodox Christian. In view of the extensive modernist Western project of 'demythologising' (Bultmann) and 'deconstructing' (Derrida, Caputo) the Christian faith, does this accusation not ring a familiar bell?

During his all-too-short lifespan as an Orthodox Christian writer Fr Seraphim Rose undertook a commendable task in striving to rehabilitate the most influential Western Church Father in English-

speaking Orthodox circles, of which this book is the culmination. The revised edition also includes three letters by Fr Seraphim concerning Blessed Augustine and 12 pages full of passages from the *Confessions* that Fr Seraphim especially loved. One shortfall is the lack of reference to Blessed Augustine's *magnum opus*, the *City of God* – to be precise, there are only two references to this huge work, of which one is in the preface by Abbot Herman. A comprehensive evaluation of the *City of God* would be highly relevant for the Orthodox Church of the third millennium, struggling to situate itself in a world dominated by secular humanist values, if not outright opposition to the Gospel of Christ. Nevertheless, *The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church* can be recommended with enthusiasm to Orthodox Christians striving towards a more balanced perspective on the crucial theological issues discussed by Blessed Augustine.



Film Review

'They do say that time stands still in the valley ...'

By Stuart Millson

IN 1944, Ealing Studios released a film entitled *The Halfway House*. Directed by Basil Dearden, with Associate Producers Michael Balcon and Alberto Cavalcanti – and music provided by the English composer, Lord Berners – the story

concerned a strange Welsh country inn and a disparate group of visitors who arrive there on one glorious summer's day. One of the visitors is an orchestral conductor, and we soon learn that he has only a short time in which to live. Another guest is a once-distinguished army officer – who has just served a prison sentence for misappropriating regimental funds. We also meet a British merchant navy captain who has left the service after a grave 'mistake' at sea, and his lonely and mourning French wife, a tragic figure who dreams only of speaking to her son once more – the young man having been killed in action during the war. Other visitors also find their way to 'The Halfway House' – each person carrying a great emotional

burden, or trying to find their way out of a moral predicament or hiding from the same.

The day on which the visitors arrive seems heavy with the heat of summer, and somehow the black-and-white film seems to capture the dusty, pollen-filled air and bright sunshine more effectively than any digital production from our own time. The landlord of the inn – Rhys – suddenly materialises out of nowhere – the visitors and the viewer not being entirely sure where he has come from. In another scene in which Rhys is pictured standing close to a mirror, we see – right at the last moment – the door close, the landlord leave the room, but no reflection of him appears in the glass. Rhys's daughter, Gwyneth, also evokes a sense of the supernatural when she crosses the lawn – and casts no shadow. Meanwhile, Rhys is tending (what one of the characters describes as) 'his ghostly garden', whistling to the birds as time passes by and commenting in his other-worldly way to a guest: 'they say that time stands still in the valley'.

But soon a stronger feeling of mystery overcomes the weekend party when they see the inn's collection of daily newspapers – the whole batch carrying last year's date. 'A year back in time!' marvels the orchestral conductor, suddenly realising that the possibility of life after 'death' exists. Later, when an air raid destroys 'The Halfway House', the guests are seen leaving through the ruins and flames, the Frenchwoman knowing that she will once again see her son; the captain realizing that the sea is his only life and that he is still needed for great work; the army

officer presented with a second chance to prove his honour in battle with his beloved regiment.

Rhys and Gwyneth are angels, positioned on a bend in the road somewhere in Wales – their inn providing a precious moment of escape and regeneration to weary humanity. When I first viewed this production, I was suddenly struck by the extraordinary similarity between the film's ghostly whitewashed inn, with its background of dense forest and winding country road, and a real-life place far into West Wales which I had discovered on a holiday in the 1980s. The spot, not far from the Carmarthenshire border, is actually a farmhouse, but if a modern-day film-maker ever wanted to remake *The Halfway House*, this kindly old place could easily provide the perfect setting for our supernatural escape.

I have returned here time and time again – and it has never let me down. A bolthole at times of anxiety; a sanctuary of complete peace, far away from the increasingly built-up, over-regulated and crowded world of present-day England – in fact, a form of emigration without actually leaving the borders of our disappearing and somewhat unhappy Kingdom. My own welcoming 'Halfway House' almost seems to exist in a different world – or at least, I am still able to imagine this, thanks to the continuing rural peace of the landscape in which it stands. As a tractor draws slowly across fields, late on a summer's day, I can almost hear Rhys – 'they do say that time stands still in the valley ...'

(A DVD of *The Halfway House* cannot be obtained in shops, but it can be obtained on the internet through E-bay).

OPINION PAGE

Let there be low-energy light during Lent

By Jane Shilling

From The Times January 26 2007



IT'S not even the end of January yet. I've still got a couple of new year's resolutions that I haven't got around to breaking. But already the Church of England is looking ahead to Lent. This week the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Drs Rowan Williams and John Sentamu, apparently launched a campaign whose aim is to inspire Christians to take a fresh look at Lenten duty. I say 'apparently'

because I have somehow missed the fanfare that accompanied the launch of this admirable initiative. Never mind. The advantage of starting a campaign so madly early is that it gives stragglers plenty of time to catch up – so let's see what the Archbishops have in mind for us.

Though I have drifted a long way from the fervent attachment that bound me to the C of E

throughout my childhood, the old thread still twitches a bit, especially during the church year's two great periods of self-examination and repentance, Lent and Advent. As a child of gloomy and gothic inclinations, I liked the theatrics of Lent especially: the satisfyingly lugubrious hymns, the altar bare of hangings, the crucifixes tied up in little purple bags, the riotous mess of pancake-making followed by the ash-smeared face, the darkness and mourning, the slightly perverse pleasure of self-denial involved in not eating sweets for 40 days. Plenty there to catch the imagination of a child, and of adults, too, especially now that, as a society, we seem to be groping our way towards embracing the attractions of self-denial, thrift and taking personal responsibility for our behaviour, not just towards our fellow man, but our fellow creation.

Exciting times for the Church, you might think, with all this moral questing in the air. So what do the Archbishops propose as their Lenten initiative? Well, from this week, you can text the word 'Lent' to 64343 and receive a daily suggestion for a Good Deed, beginning on February 19 until Easter Monday, April 9. Sample suggestions include paying more for charity-shop goods than the marked price, giving a hug to someone who needs one, giving up your place in a shop queue to someone in a hurry, leaving money in your supermarket trolley for someone else to find, buying low-energy light bulbs, wearing a jumper and turning down the central heating and saying nice things about someone behind their back. Plus there is a website, www.livelent.net, offering 'downloads, prayers ... and PowerPoint presentations to help you Love Life Live Lent to the max'.

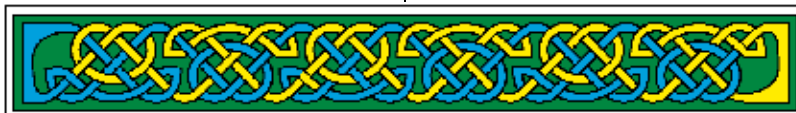
At first sight, something strikes one about this Lenten push. Not the website design, with its hippy combination of a vast yellow smiley on a vivid puce background (though that is undoubtedly very striking indeed), but the curious tone, at once hortatory and apologetic, in which the suggestions for Lenten discipline are couched. 'Who is this for?' reads one of the suggestions in the FAQ section of the website. Answer: 'LLLL is a Church of England initiative and we encourage everyone to get involved. Thinking about others and making a difference are something that anyone and

everyone should do. Some of the actions may suggest going to church or other activities that you're not quite sure about. But these are only suggestions!'

Only suggestions, indeed. In fact, I know any number of quite fervent atheists who set considerable store by turning down the heating and using low-energy light bulbs all year round, not just for 40 days in late winter and early spring. Not to mention assorted agnostics, humanists, Sikhs, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Wiccans and Roman Catholics with nice manners who readily give up their place in a queue to someone in a hurry, routinely refuse change for goods they have bought at charity shops, automatically respond to human distress with a hug and habitually speak kindly of their absent acquaintance. The only thing I don't think any of them would do is leave cash knocking about in a supermarket trolley on the off-chance that someone needy might find it. Is that it, then? The thing that distinguishes an Anglican from a nice person of any other denomination or religion, or none at all, is a tendency to leave loose change in Waitrose trolleys during Lent? Crikey. To think that people were burnt at the stake for this.

Perhaps the Archbishops of Canterbury and York would say that I am arguing from a position of deliberate perversity. Then again, these are the men who wrote this week to the Prime Minister in support of the Roman Catholic Church's position on the gay adoption-issue, saying that 'the rights of conscience cannot be made subject to legislation, however well-meaning', while at the same moment the Education Secretary, Alan Johnson, was asserting on the Today programme that Anglican adoption agencies have made it clear that they are willing to comply with the legislation. Which is it, I wonder, conscience or legislation?

Of course, I'll never know, because the unseemly contortions that the C of E is willing to perform in order to accommodate every point of view have left it hollow at the heart, unable even to surf the wave of desperate good-life-seeking that is the unmistakable mood of the times. Off it drifts towards schism – well-meaning, tentative, and utterly pointless – waved off by people like me with sensations of intense exasperation and (oddly enough) regret.



PASCHA 1955 – IN A CAMP BY LAKE BAIKAL

Down all the centuries long the news of
Christ was sent
And crossed the seas and bounds of
every continent
And no pagan, nor progress, nor prison
Have yet silenced that news
– Christ is Risen!

Turgenev

Fr Alexis Kibardin's (1882–1964) first period of imprisonment in a concentration camp in the far north of Russia and exile to Siberia lasted from 1930 to 1941. He was imprisoned in Siberia for a second time from 1950 to 1955.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the Soviet authorities began to review the cases of those who had been imprisoned unjustly (at least of those who had survived). By 1955, prisoners had been given the right to move freely around their camps and believers had been given the right to pray openly. Some imprisoned priests were even allowed to have antimensia and serve the liturgy.

And so in 1955 the Paschal Feast approached for Fr Alexis. He gave his blessing that everything should be prepared to celebrate the forthcoming feast as solemnly as possible. The whole camp was activated – sewing vestments or carving liturgical utensils out of wood. On Easter eve, the camp commandant summoned Fr Alexis and asked him why the prisoners were so excited. Fr Alexis reassured him, explaining that there would and could be no riots, that the great Paschal Feast was imminent.

Before the Paschal service began, everything had miraculously changed – priests appeared in white vestments sewn out of sheets and cloths. At 11.30 pm they began to sing the first hymn from the canon of the midnight service, ‘In the wave of the sea’. Then there was a sign, a wave from the lake hit the shore with a loud noise and the water sprinkled and blessed those who had gathered in the open to meet the Paschal Feast. At exactly midnight the priests began to sing: ‘The angels in heaven sing of Thy Resurrection, O Christ the Saviour, vouchsafe us on earth also, to glorify Thee with pure hearts’. Hundreds of tapers lit up – the whole area was illumined with light. A multitude of voices took up the Paschal hymn. It echoed out over the forest, rising up to the heavens. Many prayed with tears.

Fr Alexis was the first to cry out:

'Christ is Risen!'

'Truly He is Risen!' answered the choir of voices.

The echo of the answer was carried into the taiga and all the forests, clouds and waters, the whole of nature responded to the call. At that moment a great many birds rose up into the sky. They flew over the camp, rejoicing, making glad together with the people. The believers embraced one another three times. Fr Alexis read aloud St. John Chrysostom's homily of instruction and everyone kissed the cross. The liturgy began – wooden chalices had been prepared and all who wished took communion.

The Lord worked such a miracle – probably there had never been such a Paschal celebration anywhere on earth. After the service people began to eat and drink after the fast – there were even eggs, kulich and paskha, that is Easter cake and cream cheese. One of the prisoners who before the Revolution had worked in many countries as a foreign correspondent said to Fr Alexis: 'I have been at the Paschal celebrations in Jerusalem and Constantinople, and in other blessed places, but I have never anywhere felt such grace as today'.



Lake Baikal is the largest and deepest fresh-water lake in the world – larger than Lake Superior in Canada. God's grace has indeed returned to it, and today it is a picture-postcard holiday location, but it still suffers from pollution from chemical factories installed during the Soviet period. Much work is now being done to limit the effects of this

