

# ORTHODOX ENGLAND

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## Editorial: BEAUTY – THE ANTIDOTE TO DEATH

In spring 2008, in a feeble attempt to repay an old debt, I went to the city of Rochester in the USA. There I received a blessing, seeing one of the most beautiful Orthodox churches I have ever seen. Only recently completed, it had been called by the mayor of that great city 'the most beautiful building' in his metropolis.

This set me thinking about the nature of beauty.

'Beauty will save the world', wrote the Russian author Dostoyevsky. These words may at first seem very strange to any Orthodox Christian for, as we know, it is Christ Who has already saved the world, or at least that part of the world which accepts His salvation.

However, if we go a little deeper into the matter, we can understand that by Beauty, the Russian author understood Christ. Indeed, this is the meaning of 'kalia' in the word 'Philokalia', which can be translated as both 'the love of Beauty' and as 'the love of Goodness'.

In a similar way the English author, John Masefield, constantly wrote in his works of a trinity of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, which represents the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, in his *Sonnet LII*, he wrote: 'Beauty, this grace, this spring, this given bread, This life, this dawn, this waking from the dead'. And he called the saints 'the Bringers Down of Beauty from the stars'. For God is the source of all Goodness, Christ is the Giver of Life, the source of all Beauty, and the Spirit is, as St John's Gospel tells us, the Spirit of Truth.

Here we understand beauty not as some mere shallow, æsthetic, worldly, cold-hearted, snobbish, skin-deep, cosmetic prettiness, but as spiritual and therefore moral Beauty. What is there more beautiful than the sacrificial redemption, the death on the Cross, inevitably followed by the Resurrection? The Beauty of sacrifice always leads to Resurrection.

Thus it can be said that the love of Beauty is the love of Christ. And that is what both the Russian and the Englishman meant, whether they fully realised it or not.

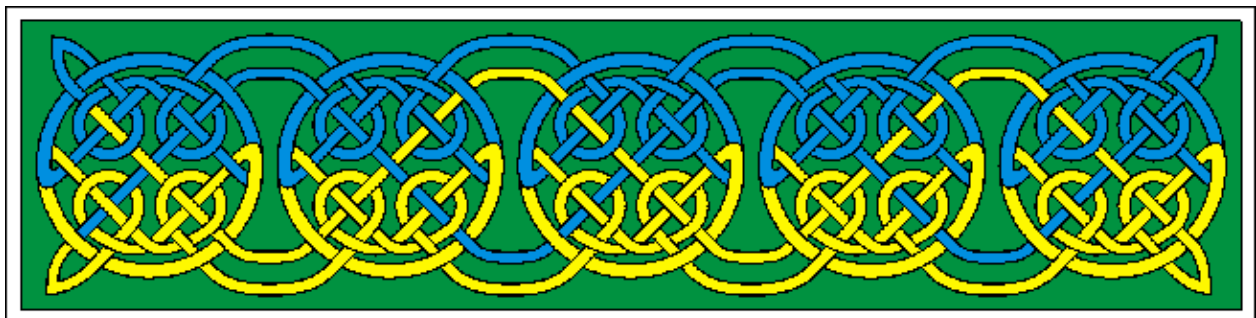
What then is 'good taste' and where does it come from? This question has puzzled me for many years. For instance, there are many rich and educated people who have no taste at all and yet there are poor and uneducated people who do have good taste. But then the opposite is also true.

Some years ago I came to the conclusion that good taste is always linked with modesty – ultimately humility. This is why the *nouveau riche*, who by definition is immodest, never has good taste. Piles of gold, 'bling', gaudy colours and loud noises are always bad taste, because they have no modesty.

Speaking of mere physical beauty, the prettiness that passes and rots in the grave, even the secular fashion guru, Genevieve Antoine-Dariaux, wrote in her *Guide to Elegance*: 'Being beautiful is no guarantee of happiness in this world. Instead strive for elegance, grace and style'.

We should strive to show our children and grandchildren beauty from the earliest age. We should show them landscapes and sunsets, starscapes and moonsets, the oceans and the clouds, mountains and forests, lakes and meadows, natural beauty, as well as showing them real art and architecture, good design and fine furniture, good music and poetry. We can encourage them to record these things in scrapbooks and diaries. In this way they may begin to understand the higher moral and spiritual beauty of kind actions, ultimately the lives of the saints, the highest forms of Beauty. For all true Beauty stems from holiness, from humanity redeemed, and in this sense Beauty is the only antidote to death.

Fr Andrew



## From the Holy Fathers: ST COLUMBA

**I**N Scotland Columba met a young farm labourer called Molluch. Although the young man could not read or write, Columba thought to ordain him a priest.

'If I were a priest', said Molluch, 'I would be able to care for other Christians in this area, and I could also bring others to the Faith'.

Columba decided to test Molluch. He took him to a nearby lake, and found a coracle. 'Go out in this coracle,' said Columba, 'and try to catch fish'. Molluch was puzzled, but did as Columba instructed. For two days and two nights Molluch sat in the coracle, holding a rod over the side, but he caught nothing. Then at dawn on the third day, there was a bite and Molluch hauled the fish aboard. But as soon as Molluch saw the fish with the hook in its mouth, he took pity. He carefully extracted the hook and threw the fish back into the water. Then he rowed back to the shore.

After he had explained to Columba what had happened, Columba smiled, and said: 'You have proved that you have the three qualities necessary for the priesthood. Firstly, you are patient. If you are willing to wait for two days and two nights to catch a fish, you will wait for two years, even two decades, to catch a soul. Secondly, you are compassionate. If you can take pity on a fish, then you will show far greater pity for people in need. Thirdly, you are humble. Even though you were the cause of the fish's distress, pride did not prevent you from saving it'.

So Columba ordained Molluch, who proved to be an excellent priest.



## SAINTS OF ENGLAND

### 7. At the Crossroads.

**T**HE newly formed Church had its edifications and its reverses. Quite early on, St Theodore, a Greek from the city of the Apostle Paul, Tarsus in Asia Minor, travelled to England at the age of 67 to discipline the flock. He made great efforts to smooth out the differences of opinion. The resistance he met obliged him more than once to delay reforms which were obviously required.

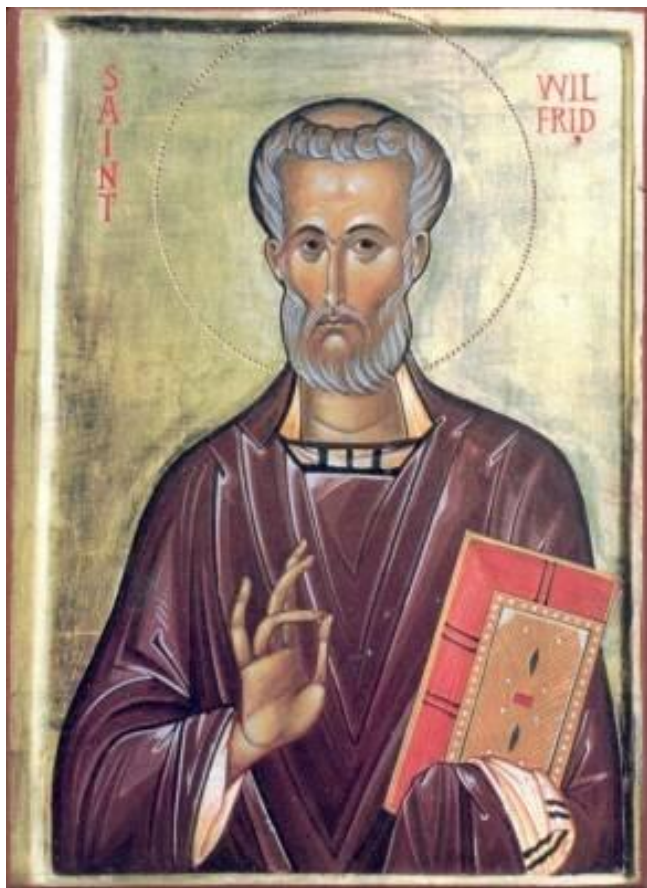
Of these differences the most serious was that identified with Bishop Wilfrid on the one hand, and, on the other, a group of saints, some Celts and others English, but brought up in the Celtic tradition. This was a battle of spiritual giants and it lasted for more than half a century, in fact until the combatants were all in their graves.

The dating of Easter was the chief bone of contention, the question of the precise day on which it ought to be celebrated, a question which agitated the Christian body for generations. Bishop Wilfrid claimed to follow the Apostle Peter's Easter, while the Irish cited the example of the Apostle John the Evangelist. Both were wrong. In fact, the

Celts kept Easter on an old date which had come from Rome, but which had long before, in the mid-fifth century, been abandoned by the rest of the Roman Church as inaccurate. They had then gone onto the dating kept by the wider Church in the East. The news had not got through to the Celts. It must be said, initially at least, that this was through no fault of their own.

And then the Celtic monks had a peculiar tonsure. This exasperated Bishop Wilfrid. To his tidy mind this appeared as something sinister, almost heresy. In season and out of season he brought against his opponents the charges that they were wearing the tonsure affected by the prince of magicians, Simon Magus; and, as though that was not calumny enough, he charged them with worldliness. The point of this accusation lay in the fact that the Celtic tonsure left the monk with a little more hair on his head than the normal Orthodox tonsure allowed, and at that time long ringlets were much affected by the nobles as a sign of daring, power and pride of birth. As for his own Roman tonsure, Bishop Wilfrid was only too eager to swallow the opinion that it was the one worn by the Apostle Peter himself.





*St Wilfrid*

This tonsure squabble wasted the time and energies of able men, impeded the work of saving souls, and disturbed the peace of the monasteries. When St Adamnan, the Abbot of Iona, visited Northumbria and was anxious to give a lead in the direction of unity, he had himself tonsured in the Roman way, thinking that his community might follow suit without argument. He was mistaken. On his return to Iona, he found the black looks of his monks so painful that he packed up and retired to Ireland. What angered the Irish was the charge that they were not proper Christians at all, whereas they had embraced the Faith, and embraced it wholeheartedly some two centuries before the English. Their resentment was such that food and drink blessed by a priest of Bishop Wilfrid's party was pitched out. They would not drink out of the cups until they had more or less been sterilised.

To us it may all seem rather strange, but there is that in each age that which appears strange to its successors. The harshest critics of Bishop Wilfrid have not dared to call him a fanatic, even if they maintain that he had the seeds of it in his system. By fanaticism is meant the strong excitement of a mind, powerfully acted upon by a false or exaggerated opinion. Bishop Wilfrid's opinions were not false, but he exaggerated their

importance and he acted too zealously with respect to the means he employed to gain his ends. But to sustain a true opinion by legitimate means, whatever may be the excitement of him who sustains it, is to play the part of the zealot and enthusiast, not of the fanatic. Otherwise all vigorous action in the interest of a cause must be stigmatised as fanaticism. Philosophers may blame religion for fostering this malady, but philosophy has produced fanatics, nor has it provided a remedy for this, any more than for any of evils of mankind.

If Bishop Wilfrid acted fanatically, he certainly was not encouraged either directly or indirectly by Canterbury. Therefore Bishop Wilfrid appealed to Rome and again, but we gather the impression that they too regarded the dispute as a provincial and irrelevant row. St Theodore was, on the whole and until the end, more against than for Bishop Wilfrid, whom he rather suspected of being one of those who exaggerate an abuse in order to justify his own ferocity in attacking it. The quarrel seems to have bewildered the good man, who had a great experience of Church life and all its variety, and perhaps made him wish himself back in Asia Minor. Bishop Wilfrid has been described as right-hearted, wrong-headed, full of genius, but defective in judgement. His extraordinary natural talkativeness may account for a good deal. In any case, what is important is that clearly he later repented and he is recognised as a saint by the Church.

By a paradox, the name Wilfrid means Peace-Bearer. He was born the day after the battle of Hatfield, a battle resulting in the death of St Edwin the King, the flight of Paulinus from York and the collapse of the Roman mission in the north. The date was 634. On the night of his birth, his parents' house seemed to be on fire. The neighbours tumbled out of bed and ran to rouse the inmates. 'No! Nothing is burning in here. It's this baby of ours. He will become a firebrand. You see if he doesn't.'

Wilfrid had a thwarted and unhappy childhood owing to the cruelty of his stepmother. At fourteen he escaped to the court of Oswy, the King of Northumbria. He joined the monks of Lindisfarne, but then set out for Rome. We are told that he was the first Englishman to make this journey. On his way he stopped at Canterbury and finding that the version of the Psalter in use there was a different one from that read by the Celtic monks, he set to work to forget the old and learn the new. Neither

this first time, nor at any other time, did Wilfrid travel to Rome as a simple pilgrim. He had guides, attendants and a baggage-train. He was destined to spend forty years packing and unpacking this baggage. On the way back, he had himself re-toursured in the Roman fashion. Royal influence was then brought to bear upon the Celtic Abbot at Ripon. He was deposed and Wilfrid installed in his place. The priesthood followed soon after, but our firebrand would not receive it at the hands of his lawful bishop, Colman of Lindisfame. Instead, he was ordained by a bishop from France called Agilbert

Wilfrid stood for a certain magnificence in Church matters, although he was detached and humble in himself. At Ripon he built a monastic church which excited amazement. Nothing like it had been seen before, with its lofty porches and columns of polished stone. On the day of its dedication, he placed on the altar a Book of the Gospels covered with plates of gold set with precious stones. Then, in the presence of King Egfrid and a host of nobles, he solemnly asserted



*The Saxon crypt at Ripon Cathedral: all that remains of Wilfrid's great building.*

his right to all the lands and churches, which had been ceded to him at divers times by divers rich people. The ceremony ended with a banquet over which he presided and which lasted three days and three nights. This grandiosity was surpassed later in the foundation of Hexham where the church for two centuries was regarded as the finest on this side of the Alps.

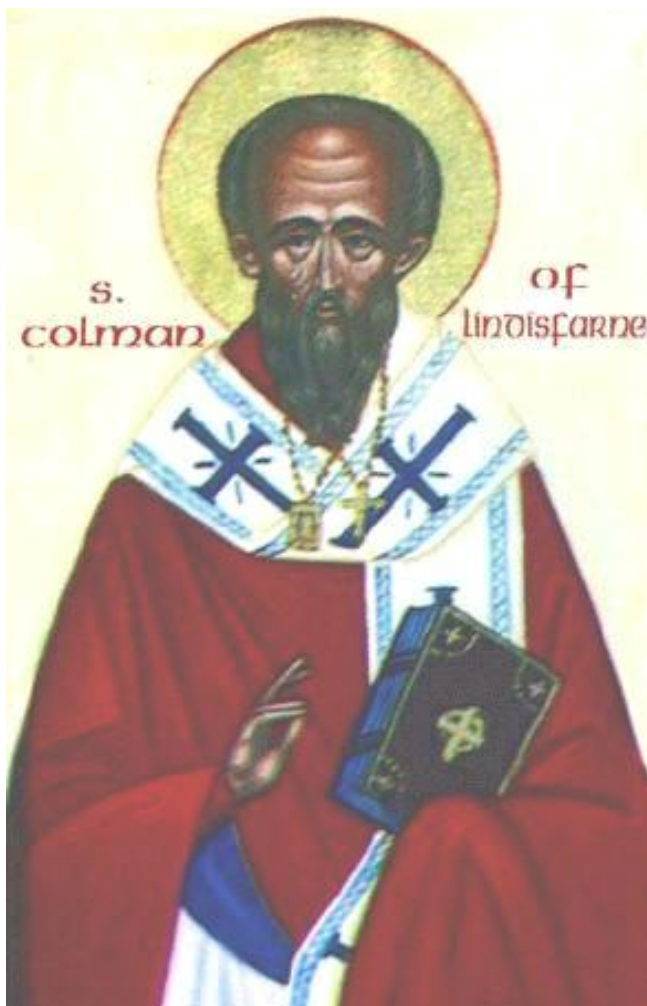
The island monks and bishops, whose cathedral at Lindisfame was built of wood roofed with thatch, perhaps thought over these unheard-of goings on. There are those whose calling it is to promote the 'State' side of religion, but the calling at that date lay in a different direction altogether. But this was not altogether in Wilfrid's line. In course of time, the same Wilfrid accumulated a considerable treasury which he watched with vigilance. His thoughts went out to it even before his repose and he left detailed instructions as to its disposal. Others could make neither head nor tail of that mentality. In short, Wilfrid stood for a Church that could stand up to the State, a Church with property, prestige and privilege – commodities for which his rivals had very little time or use.

This is not at all to say that this struggle was a struggle of race against race, of temperaments radically different the one from the other. Race and temperament were perhaps mixed in with the business, in spite of the fact that Wilfrid had been a pupil of the Irish monks among whom, however, he was never at home. He and his were inclined to regard the latter as uncouth rustics, and so they were in a way. Sts Cuthbert and Aidan were very rustic. Wilfrid had a strong bias in favour of law and order; the Irish then did not have a strong bias in favour of law and order.

The fact seems to be that the crossroads had been reached and the decision to turn right or left had to be made. As usual the situation created two extreme groups, Rightists and Leftists; but, on the whole, the truth was found in the end to lie in a mid-course between the two, though also including the two. True, the Easter date badly needed straightening out. Thirty years before, the south of Ireland had accepted the Orthodox dating of the Church. It did so under the persuasion of Abbot Cummian, a peaceful and gentle soul who settled things without strife and by means of the following: 'Can anything be more ridiculous than our assertion that everyone is wrong except ourselves?' Meanwhile, in England the variation was productive of some absurd situations. In one

royal house, that of Oswy, two separate Easters were scrupulously kept every year. Oswy kept the old one and his queen, Eanfelda, kept the Orthodox one.

Then, at last, the Church had to intervene with a Council. In 664 Oswy called a 'Witan' or King's Council, at Whitby. St Cedd, Bishop of Essex, acted as interpreter and did his work well. Abbess Hilda, who was fifty at the time, had an honoured place in the assembly, a fact which feminists will note. Bishop Colman was spokesman for the Celts. 'Are we to say then, that St Columba and his successors acted contrary to the divine word; men who worked miracles?' This was the position of the Celts in a nutshell. They felt obliged in conscience to hearken to the exhortation of their great founder to adhere strictly and at all costs to the original norms of their religious life. And now, along came this Wilfrid with his baggage-trains and treasury, his banquets and his ostentation to tell them that they are 'schismatics' and even worse. It was the dilemma of the Jews in the presence of the



*St Colman of Lindisfarne*

Christian faith. 'And you ask us to forsake the ways of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?'

However, the Council decided for Wilfrid. Colman refused point blank to accept its decision and with his followers made for Lindisfarne, removed the relics of St Aidan and, shaking the dust of Northumbria off his feet, retired to Iona. He never returned. Nor was it Colman and his monks alone who remained firm. St Hilda's opposition never relaxed even in death. St Cuthbert, who shared Wilfrid's views to the full and was as anxious as he for unity of observance, regarded him as a maker of mischief and would have nothing to do with him. St Benedict Biscop also, staunch enough Orthodox though he was, thought that Wilfrid was going too far.

The Council of Whitby was not the end of Wilfrid's troubles. They had not properly begun yet, and we must admire the stubborn spirit of the man in facing them. Personal suffering and humiliation he accepted like the saint he was. Opposition only tempered the blade of his sword. For all the exclusive side of his character, he was a champion. Although he may have exhibited some of the outward characteristics of the ecclesiastical careerist, he was never that. No compromiser was he. He went into exile and obscurity with the same dogged determination with which he hammered his opponents.

We have no reason for thinking that he loved the limelight for its own sake; and, in fact, the limelight that shone on him scorched and blistered more than anything else. Wilfrid was a spiritual man all right. It was for a cause that he fought – and a good cause – not for self. His personal life was exemplary and unblemished. He it was who cracked the toughest nut in England, Sussex. He did more than anyone for the conversion of Sussex, sent missionaries to the Isle of Wight and was the first Englishman to preach the faith in the heathen Netherlands.

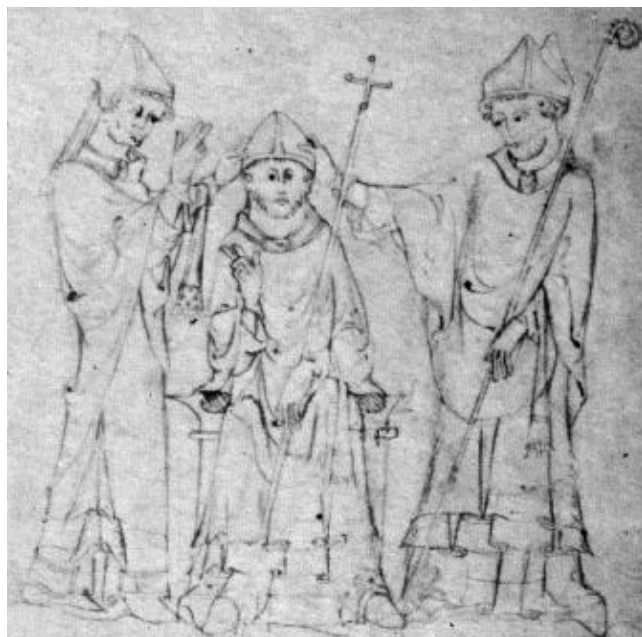
Although at this stage he was acting and speaking like a patriarch, he was not even a bishop. With the departure of Colman from Lindisfarne, it was necessary to appoint a successor. One of Colman's own countrymen was chosen, a saintly monk called Tuda. But he survived the appointment for only a few months, being carried off by one of those pestilences which made such cruel ravages in the British Isles then. St Tuda was the last of the Celtic bishops of Northumbria. At this juncture, it happened that the King and nobles favoured Abbot Wilfrid's party;



and although a Council was summoned to elect the new bishop, its decision was a foregone conclusion. Wilfrid was elected. At first he declined, but eventually he consented. This was one of his great victories, but it was never forgiven by the vanquished, who had come to regard Northumbria as their sacred territory.

Unfortunately, Abbot Wilfrid refused to be consecrated by any of the bishops of his own country, even by the Archbishop of Canterbury. To make sure that the ceremony was validly performed, he started for France, accompanied by his baggage-trains and the pomp so much to his liking. There he was bishoped by his old friend Agilbert, assisted by no fewer than twelve bishops. At the of the service, he was carried out of the church in a golden chair, the bearers being the said bishops who alone were deemed worthy of this honour: shades of Sts Cuthbert and Aidan? Then, as though to give his rivals the *coup de grace*, he was instituted bishop, not of Lindisfarne like his four predecessors, but of York like Paulinus. On returning to England a painful surprise awaited him. The royal prop on which he had leaned had grown rickety in his absence, nor had the Celtic faction been idle. The upshot was that an outsider, no other than St Chad, was elected to the See of Northumbria in the very teeth of Agilbert and his twelve suffragans, and in defiance of the golden throne and baggage-trains and all besides. This was in 669. Such is the humility that God provides for the proud.

The next thirty or forty years of Bishop Wilfrid's life were a succession of appointments and depositions, expulsions and returns, victories and defeats. He fell out with the Archbishop of Canterbury; he went to Rome to appeal, returned and was clapped in prison as a dangerous character and went off to Rome once more. This time Rome was beginning to realize that this provincial squabble was becoming serious, and so Bishop Wilfrid's grievances were carefully and impartially examined, the process occupying four months and involving seventy separate sittings. The decision was certainly in his favour, but its terms were extremely moderate and his adversaries were most tactfully spared. Indeed, one thing emerges amid all the dust of the conflict and it is that Rome was not nearly so excited as Wilfrid was. She was not excited at all. From first to last they never authorized his procedure or his methods. Rome remained passive, perhaps even bored throughout.



*Drawing from an early manuscript showing the Consecration of a Bishop*

Similarly, the Archbishop of Canterbury was out of the picture nearly all the time. So much so that it has been suggested that he was jealous of the uncalled-for splendour of the new Bishop of York. If Bishop Wilfrid had a bee in his bonnet, it was his own bee or very nearly so; it was certainly not the Orthodox variety. Orthodox Rome used to rebuke this excessive zeal again and again. Bishop Wilfrid might have recalled the common-sense instructions of the holy Pope Gregory in the very hour when England was being brought to Christ: 'You know', he wrote to St Augustine, 'the usages of the Roman Church, but if you should find elsewhere a usage which you believe to be more pleasing to God, I recommend you select it and give it a place: practices are not to be esteemed because of the places they are derived from, but rather the other way round. Choose then what is reasonable and, out of it, form the use of the Church. Adopt what you think is best. He is a fool who makes his position a reason for refusing to learn from others'.

By another paradox, Wilfrid reposed as quietly as a baby in its cradle. In his old age he wished, like Elijah, to see the monasteries he had founded. He arrived at Oundle. All at once he fell ill and reposed while his monks were singing the verse of Psalm 103: 'Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created: and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth'. Soon after a chapel was built on the spot where the water that had washed his body was poured away. For centuries in the North, this Sword-Bearer of the Spirit held a place second in



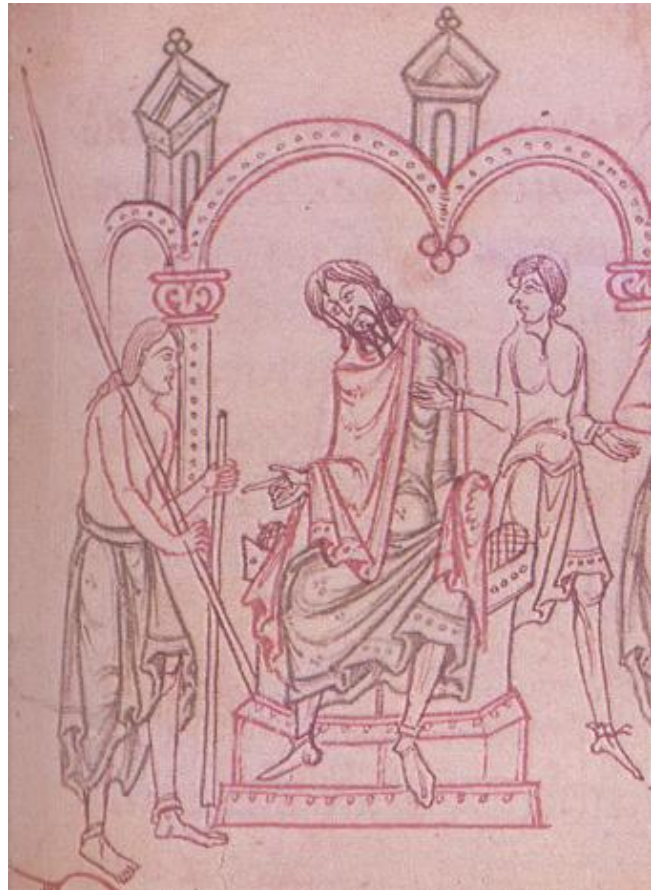
popularity only to St Cuthbert. Much later, at the Battle of the Standard in 1138, his banner was planted between that of St Peter and St John. His monastery at Oundle was plundered and burnt, but before the Conquest the church was rebuilt by a Bishop of Winchester and became the parish church. A carved stone of the age remains, but no part of the ancient building is to be found in the present fabric.

Wilfrid championed the Roman way against the Celtic and in this he succeeded. The disintegration of the latter almost coincided with his death. Whatever may be thought of that, the services which he rendered to the Church were immense and lasting. Although he owed much to the patronage of secular power, he succeeded in wresting from it the right it claimed of electing and deposing bishops. By himself converting Sussex, he applied the finishing stroke to the work of converting England. Wilfrid was the first in a long line of able prelates and his relics are said to rest in Canterbury Cathedral.

An interesting aftermath relates to Iona. It was an English monk, Egbert, who brought Iona round to the Orthodox Easter, and he did it by sheer force of tact and goodness. In the year 729, twenty years after St Wilfrid's repose, this Irish stronghold capitulated and kept the festival of Christ's Resurrection on 24 April like the rest of Orthodox Christendom. Egbert reposed on the same day after the liturgy. He was ninety years old, so that one might say that he had been kept alive for this very purpose.

Seeing Bishop Wilfrid's repentance, St Theodore was to cease his opposition to the bishop and wrote to the King of Mercia a letter which is worth quoting here:

'Dear Son, this is to inform you that the reverend Bishop Wilfrid and myself have now come to a right understanding and therefore, I ask you for the love of Christ to afford that holy prelate all the favour that lies in your power. If I am still in your favour, I would like you to come to me so that I may bless you before I die. But do not forget to act on my entreaty, who am almost on the verge of the other world. Farewell! Live answerably to your Creed, and may God protect you'.



*Detail from an English manuscript illumination showing St Cuthbert appearing to King Ælfred the Great*

## 8. A Mild Austerity

A spirit of insularity and independence appears to have governed the ascetic impulses of English saints generally. Self-denial, of course, but self-denial in the English way. That seems to have been the motto, more or less. While realizing its value and necessity, the English generally drew the line at going to extremes. In this matter, they appear to have been motivated by a national aversion to extremes. Religion can be a pretty tight corner in many ways, but the English keep cool in tight corners, and they are not inclined to lose their heads, even when they set about bringing the body into subjection. It was more a kind of frugality and moderation. Perhaps it is all to do with the climate!

Even as bishop, St Cuthbert retained the simplicity of the monk. He slept but one night in three, and would walk round his church to keep himself awake. Although he imposed on his community the strict obligation of wearing a simple and uniform dress of undyed wool, in contrast to the English love of bright colours, he had no illusions about such modes and manners, not even about the kind of life that he himself

delighted to live. 'It must not be supposed that, because I prefer to be out of reach of all secular care, my practice is superior to that of others. The life of a good monk living in community is much to be admired. I know many such whose graces are more exalted than mine, especially my dear old Boswell'. This St Boswell (Boisil) was a monk of Melrose under whom St Cuthbert had once lived.

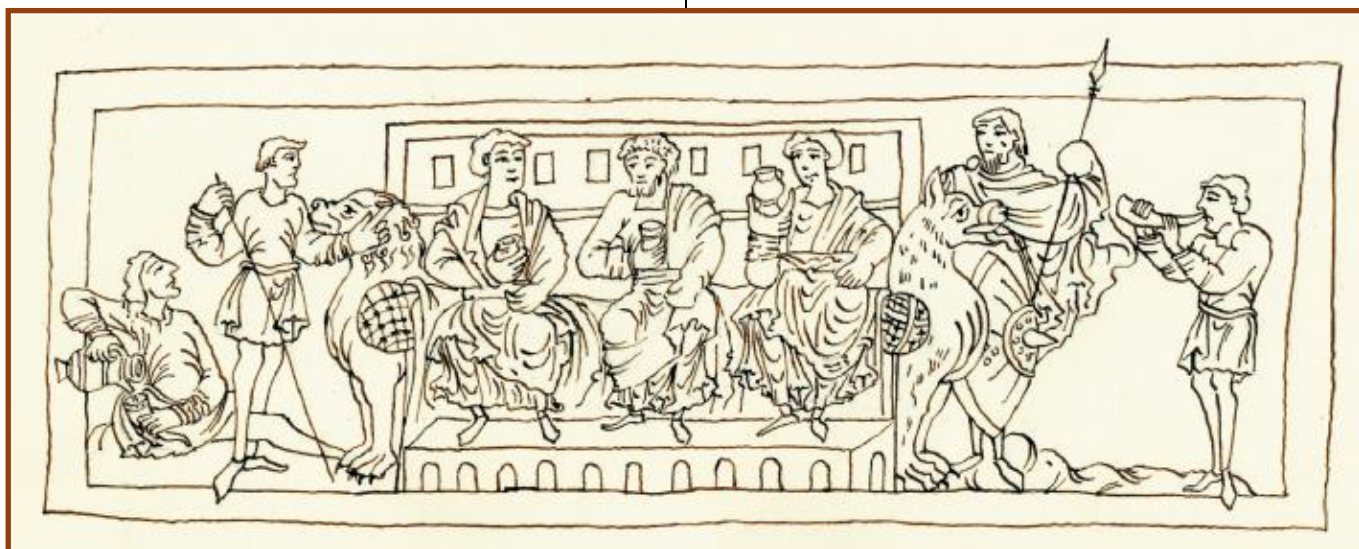
Long ago Tacitus wrote that to out-drink the day and night was not considered disgraceful by the Germanic peoples. The festivals of the Church were often disgraced by drinking-bouts. In one such Edmund the First was murdered, a catastrophe attributed to the drunken condition of the King's attendants and bodyguard. It was Edgar the Peaceable who invented the knobs on the drinking cups. After that, you could prove yourself a man by drinking from one knob to another, instead of from the brim to the base. St Dunstan, too, had the tankards of the innkeepers marked in the same way so that, on being handed from mouth to mouth, each might not drink more than his share. Hence the saying: 'A peg too low'. However, these pegs and knobs are very likely the same, and were the joint invention of St Dunstan and St Edgar. On all festive occasions, it was not only the harp that was passed along; the beer jug went the round as well. St Cædmon, on the eve of becoming a poet, left the servant's hall as much on account of the jugs as of the harp. The harp he could not play and the ale he would not drink.

Then, as now, it was not easy to determine the point at which drinking ended and drunkenness began. One of the early English Church canons declared: 'This is drunkenness: when the state of

the mind is changed, the tongue stammers, the stomach is swollen and pain follows'. An illumination on one of the Harleian manuscripts shows a convivial party in full swing. The musicians are as frenzied-looking as a jazz-band; a forlorn poet stands by, crowned with laurel, declaiming to deaf ears; four men are sprawling over the dinner-table, two are dancing a reel in the middle, and one, who has all the appearance of being fairly sober, seems to be knocking a great jar of ale onto the floor.

St Cuthbert's natural element was water. He never drank anything else, it seems, except once. Shortly before his death, he paid a farewell visit to Abbess Verga, whose convent was at the mouth of the Tyne. After the meal, he was thirsty. Wines and beer were brought, but he would not touch them, and so his favourite drink was set on the table. He blessed it before drinking and, by so doing, turned it into wine. Wine it became, and the finest wine at that, so that St Columba's companions drank it like true monastics. St Wilfrid went even further in this matter of refreshment. He abstained altogether or nearly, never drinking even in the summer heat, except for a mouthful of spring water out of a small phial which he carried in his pocket. He made up in other ways by his nightly shower of cold blessed water.

Some of the stone bathing places in which St Cuthbert passed whole nights are still identified. At Farne, where he lived in a cell hollowed out of the rock and from which nothing could be seen except the sky, he loved to say his prayers immersed in the sea. His initiation into this form of penance began at Melrose, where one stalwart monk used to pray standing in the ice-cold waters of the Tweed. He



*A drawing after an English manuscript illustration for the calendar month of April, showing feasting*

was asked once how he could endure it, and his reply, was the very English understatement: 'I have known it colder'.

St Eadbert, who succeeded Cuthbert at Lindisfarne, had the roof of the cathedral covered with lead instead of the thatch which St Finan had put on it. But he was faithful to the spirit of his master. Twice a year, during Lent and for the forty days before Christmas, he retired to a solitary promontory and lived alone. When St Cuthbert had been gone eleven years, he had a new coffin made for him. He would not allow the grave to be filled in however. 'It will soon have a new tenant', he declared. He reposed within the week and thus the two rested together.

St Aldhelm the southerner was a very different type of man, but he had a great deal of asceticism. He was fond of reciting the Psalter in pools and ponds and we are told that, as a sedative in certain temptations, he would plunge into the water. Day or night, winter or summer, it was all the same to him. He drew his last breath in a little wooden church and had a stone for a pillow.

The Orthodox English seem to have been quite as fond of baths as their descendants. Their Church certainly did not discourage them, except by way of penance – a fact which itself shows how attached the people were to the habit. 'There was a fair amount of ceremonial cleansing in the early Church generally; the washing of the feet of the newly-baptised and the bathing of an infant seven days after baptism, for examples. On Palm Sunday the head, feet and even the whole body of catechumens were washed. Those entering the sacred edifice washed their hands and faces in the well set up in the courtyard.

It was an understood thing, besides, that the convert should take a proper bath on the eve of his or her reception, and all priests on the eve of festivals. Hence, in documents, baths actually figure among the buildings within the precincts of churches. One of the Popes built one near Old St Peter's in Rome in which the poor, who came for alms at Easter, were accustomed to bathe. A certain Bishop of Naples went so far as to create a foundation, the proceeds of which he spent on the purchase of soap. Things got out of hand, it seems, for Tertullian condemns as superstitious the 'common custom of having a bath before every act of prayer, and Blessed Augustine characterizes as pagan the practice of going to the sea on the feast of St John the Baptist and bathing in his honour.

St Chad was the tacitly accepted patron of our old-time medicinal springs and of those who used them. There are quite a few Chadwells among the place-names still surviving in the country, Chadwell Heath in Essex for instance. Chadderton in Lancashire, Chatterton in Yorkshire, Chaddleworth near Wantage, Chadshunt in Warwickshire, Chadbury near Evesham, Chadkirk near Stockport, Chadwick in Worcestershire, Chadmoor (Cannock Chase) and some others may be named after the saint. Chadswell in Gray's Inn Road was, at one time, the favourite spa of the Londoner. At one time quite eminent folk went there to drink and so keep the doctor out of the house.

The Church rulers of England were, for a very long time, from the monasteries. These they left in order to assume cares of office and the direction of affairs. But most of them had their hearts in the cloister. A marked feature of great hierarchs is the persistency with which they returned to their old homes in order to take thought for their own soul and to recover their spent energies. Dunstan was born near Glastonbury and brought up in its monastery to which, after a spell, he returned to become a monk. At the age of thirty-six he was made Primate. No Churchman has ever wielded, greater power over the affairs of this Kingdom. But he never forgot Glastonbury. Over and over again, in the very thick of the pressure of business, he would pack his case and go there. This was, for long, the most sacred spot in all England. It has been asserted that the Britons named it 'Glassy Island' because the water round and about it was so clear. In the nineteenth century, the poet Tennyson wrote of it

The island valley of Avilon  
Where falls not hail, nor rain, nor any  
snow;  
Nor ever wind blows loudly: but it lies  
Deep meadowed, happy, fair, with orchard  
lawns  
And bowery hollows, crowned with  
summer sea.

St John of Beverley, too, obeyed the prevalent urge and, as a bishop, would frequently retire to a solitary churchyard about a mile and a half from Hexham, there to pray among the tombs for forty days at a stretch. They were no mere men of affairs these churchmen. John usually took some poor man with him and cared for him all the time. Once he took a dumb youth whose head was covered with sores. The Saint made him a cell beside his

own and taught him to speak. First, he loosened his tongue by making the sign of the cross; then he began at the beginning and taught his pupil the ABC and the word Gea or Yes.

St Alphege became Primate in the end, but he began as a strict ascetic. The son of a nobleman, 'he feared the snare of riches' and so became a recluse at Bath. He would say that it is better to be a layman than an indifferent monk: 'To wear the cassock of a holy man and not be one is a perpetual lie'. He wandered about at night praying.

It is related of St Swithin that he always made his journeys during the night to avoid being fêted. He is the patron of Winchester and was canonised by a veritable hurricane of popular acclamation. His self-abnegation endured to the end and after. He wished to be buried in a corner of the churchyard where the passers-by might tread his grave underfoot, and where the raindrops might fall on him. Tradition says that when the executors thought to go back on their instructions, it rained for forty days and so fiercely that they had to give up. Hence, the legend of St Swithin's Day:

St Swithin's Day, if thou dost rain,  
For forty days it will remain.  
St Swithin's Day, if thou be fair,  
For forty days 'twill rain nae mair.

In some parts, when there is a downpour on St Swithin's Day, the simple say that the Saint is christening the apples. And who is to prevent him, I should like to know?

Life expectancy amongst the English was not particularly high. The record appears to have been held by St Gerald who was abbot of an English community in Mayo in Ireland. One hundred saints are said to have come from his monastery. St Willibald was 87, St Wilfrid was 76, St Boniface was 75, St Bede was 62. In many of them there was a frailty combined with a powerful physique. St Dunstan, for example, who was taken ill for no apparent use, preached a farewell sermon to his people at Canterbury, reposed two days later at the age of 63. St Ceolfrid felt robust enough to undertake a journey to Rome, but he reposed on the way. St Cuthbert, too, more or less collapsed at the age of 50. When St Dunstan came to dedicate St Edith's Church at Wilton, he was to weep during the service. Afterwards he made it known that St Edith's sudden repose had been revealed to him. She was only 23.

THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT (Part 1)

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now  
are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of  
light  
  
*(Ephesians 5, 8)*

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Preface (2009)

**I** HAVE been asked when I first started writing and where I get my ideas from. Here are my answers.

I began writing as soon as I could hold a pen, when I was four, and seriously when I was eleven. Then I began making sure that I always had a pen and paper in my pocket, since ideas came to me anywhere and at any time. I was first drawn towards Russian Orthodoxy when I was twelve and by the time I was fifteen, my whole future seemed clear. This is reflected in writing from the time.

I wrote my first book when I was seventeen and it is a summary of what I had understood by that time. That book was never intended for publication. When I was twenty, I was told by a religious writer, Peter Hammond, that I should show others what I was writing, because nobody else was writing such things. He greatly encouraged me at a time when I received encouragement from no-one. I am in his debt.



Most of what I write and say, whether talks, articles or sermons, is felt rather than thought. My ideas for these have been inspired by people, by places which I have found to be haunted by the presence of people, by experiences and, finally, by reading. In the case of sermons, this reading is usually the Gospels, the Epistles or the Lives of Saints. Often these four different sources are combined.

Inspiration for sermons often comes during Vigil Services, that for articles often comes in the night and I sometimes wake up early and have to hurry to write everything down before I forget it. Occasionally, I look back at what I have written and I am surprised, not able to believe that I wrote what I wrote. That is the reason why, until recently, I did not sign what I had written, because I am still not sure where it came from and whether I really wrote it.

For over 35 years the following typescript, typed out in autumn 1973 on an ancient manual typewriter that I had borrowed, has sat on tissue-thin typing paper in a battered old suitcase. As a product of isolation, youthful inexperience and literary influences, it was never intended for publication. Indeed, for most of the last thirty-five years I had forgotten that I had ever written it. Recently, I came across it again. A friend, to whom I showed it, suggested that I publish it in *Orthodox England*. I hope that it might be of interest to someone, even though it was written in the now rather distant early 70s of the last century.

Fr Andrew

## Foreword

It seems clear to me that the time has come when we must make a return to the way of life of the Early Christians – to the Christianity as it is described in the Epistles. Living in this manner, we can also make use of the basic scientific discoveries made through the course of the centuries and also of the affirmations of the correctness of the Christian Faith, as made by the Saints and other members of the Church, including artists and thinkers, in the course of the past 1900 years. In this way we shall harvest the fruit of the good seed sown by the Holy Spirit in the world. We possess the necessary knowledge and have possessed it for a long time already. We know the Truth: with the Grace of God it is, I believe, our duty as Christians to carry the Truth into Life to the fullest possible extent.

Thus, by living in togetherness both in Faith and in Life, we shall be able to defeat the two great Evils of our age: the Evil of Capitalism and the Evil of Communism. 1917, the date of the Bolshevik Revolution, and 1945, the date of the use of the Atomic bombs in Japan, were two major warnings that man had gone too far; that man, like Faust, was selling his soul to the devil in return for knowledge, in a vain attempt to set up a paradise on this earth, something which is in contradiction to what Mephistopheles himself said to Faust (*Faust*, Part 1):

Good. Here's Nature's recipe,  
Without a doctor, gold, or sorcery:  
Begin at once a life of open air,  
To dig and trench and cultivate the ground,  
Content yourself within the common round,  
And for your dinner have the homeliest fare.  
Live with the beasts, on equal terms, be sure  
That, where you reap, your hands must  
spread the dung.  
And there, my friend, you have the certain  
cure,  
By which at eighty years you still are young.

The devil speaks even now through the mouths of those who advocate the further destruction of God's world; through those who invent new and still more horrifying weapons with which to destroy one another. Man has for a very long time been burdening himself with unnecessary knowledge, a knowledge which corrupts because man, in his weakness, can only uncover it in perfidiously small amounts. The results of the unleashing of this knowledge in the form of industrial growth could according to studies made by various learned groups even culminate in the deaths of thousands of millions of human beings.

Why not rather follow the Man, Who on this earth was All-knowing, One Who possessed, on this earth, the Spirit of Truth, that is, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? (Matt 6, 27)

Man has nearly forgotten God. As a consequence he is forgetting his fellow-man.

Hand in hand with the threats of industrialisation from Capitalism and Communism goes also the fundamentally anti-religious nature of both philosophies. Capitalism creates wealth and thus seduces men's hearts into the naïve belief that affluence makes for happiness. Communism, on the other hand, apart from creating the same

illusion that paradise in this world is possible, also operates more violently against all religion, persecuting and slaughtering its adherents. Yet, paradoxically, it has made some of its gains in this world by adopting some outward signs of early Christianity and thus making its outer ugliness and brutality temporarily attractive to those oppressed by Capitalism. Namely, it has adopted the original Christian concepts of poverty, equality and community life – living in togetherness. It is now I believe the duty of Christians to retrieve what is their own birthright, thus depriving Communism of the Christian and baring the satanic depths of its insanity and immorality.

We can take the concepts of the individual and practical social concern as propounded more in the contemporary Non-Christian West. We can take the concepts of collectivity and mysticism, as they are to be found in the contemporary Non-Christian East. And then we can join them together in a Christian marriage, in a return to the Apostolic past, simultaneously making use of the wisdom of the present. In this we merely need follow the example of the Orthodox Church. We must take the path of Martha and of Mary (Jn 11; Jn 12, 1-8; Lk 10, 38).

This means hard work, sweat, suffering – and none of those can be talked of lightly. But I believe that through the prayer, the love and mutual interaction of Christians working and living in togetherness we can overcome the problems which will beset us. With God all things are possible (Matt 19, 26).

There is one thing however that I feel most keenly of all: how desperately we must race: for we must either destroy the Evil among us or let ourselves be destroyed by it.

### 1. The Legend

Like all my fellow-prisoners, I have been imprisoned here since I was a child.

For how long exactly I do not know. It must be many years, however, for my hair is already greying and some of those whom I knew as a young man are already dead. But time loses its meaning in prison and each day seems to pass like every other. Death sometimes appears to be the only ending.

I spend my hours, days, weeks, months and years staring through the bars of my prison-window. A ray of golden light comes gliding

through the bars, recalling to me all the intensity and mystery of my childhood, now intangible and forgotten in the dark cells of my memory. I do not understand the light, but I ponder about it often.

In the prison, from where it is said nobody is ever released, there is the Legend. The Legend hangs like smoke in the obscurity of the prison air; it seeps out from the floors and the ceilings and every granite block seems to exude its presence. Without the Legend nobody in this prison would even continue to live.

The Legend tells of a Stranger who came to visit our prison once, a long time ago, in the depths of history. It was he who told the prisoners about the outside.

On the outside, so the Legend relates, man is free and indeed Freedom is his duty. These outside men have feelings in the place where their hearts beat: feelings such as we prisoners can have little knowledge of. Outside, so the Stranger is reputed to have said, men live in joy and unity of being; and yet they are poor and they do not live in comfort, in soft clothes and eating good food like us prisoners. They live in the open spaces under the light of the sky and they grow their food in the earth of the fields, instead of making it in laboratories. They have, he said, no entertainment, not even the magic lanterns<sup>1</sup>, which provide us prisoners with so much amusement. Another peculiarity of these people outside is that they often deny themselves the fulfilment of their physical desires. The Stranger, explaining this in the Legend, saying that this was because those outside felt that these desires were not needs and that therefore their fulfilment would create still more evil.

There was one thing in the Legend which interested and amazed us prisoners much more than anything else. The Stranger said that all the men and women on the outside had been released from inside the prison. We prisoners still spend whole evenings talking about the possibility of being released. It enthalls and excites us beyond measure. Some prisoners, who claim to have met the upper ranks of the prison warders, say that the Prison Governor, whom no one has ever seen, releases one prisoner every twenty years. Still other prisoners, however, who also claim to have come into contact with these ranks, declare that there is no Governor at all; it is merely that the warders know that if they do not continue to build up and expand the prison, the prisoners would lose heart in the prison system itself and the warders would

then find the whole prison, their jobs and security tumbling down around them. Thus it is fear of change that holds the system together.

These latter prisoners also maintain that no one is ever released, but that many prisoners do mysteriously disappear. Whenever this occurs there is a great fuss and sensation among the warders and many are demoted. It is also said that there is nobody inside the prison, not even among the youngest prisoners, who can recall anything about the beginnings of his or her life. It is rumoured that nobody ever enters the prison under four feet in height. In this way no-one in the prison knows where he came from, when exactly he or she came from or, indeed, very much at all apart from a few hazy and usually made-up memories. So the reader can imagine the prisoners' excitement about the Legend when the Stranger speaks of release.

Concerning release, the Legend hands down the following. Every man or woman who is released leaves the prison through the Door. The Door is the Door that leads to Life. The Door may be approached from any direction. For each person there exists an individual path to the Door, but no man can be told where his path lies, for he must find it for himself. The Door is the only way of release, it is the Door to the Freedom and the Joy on the outside. To find the Life on the outside, you must first find the Path to the Door, to find the Path you must first find the Truth, for the Path lies through the Truth.

This is all that the Legend hands down. No more. There are some in the prison who hold the opinion that the Legend may be true, there are others who say that the Legend is simply a lie. Strangely, there seems to be no-one among us who believes that the Legend is true. Yet everybody here in the prison spends much of his or her spare time staring through their cell windows, talking, thinking and dreaming about the Legend.

And so Life passes by here in the prison where countless men and women sit and discuss the Legend. There are those who die, some seem to disappear mysteriously. New and young prisoners, however, appear each day and take their predecessors' places.

Sometimes, when I am alone in my cell staring at the ray of light beaming through the bars of the window, I seem to sense something there, beyond my own being, an insight, a flash of a distant and intangible dream, and at moments like those I

begin to think of the Stranger and the Door, just as though I had suddenly grasped the Truth and was setting out along the Path towards the Door that leads to Life ... For I too wish to disappear mysteriously with all those thousands of prisoners who, it seems, have already done so ... Sometimes, in fleeting dreams, an image rises before me and I see myself raising a fist to knock on a door and the door being opened in a sudden flood of light ... and I feel ... so near ... so near.

## 2. Life and Death

Mankind lives in a world of Death. Around him Nature literally lies in Death. For the plants and animals there is no escape and there can be none: Death will come. And yet from the Death and the compost of the once living, but now dead, there proceeds New Life.

If mankind were a plant or an animal he too would live and die in the same manner. He would live out his brief 25,000 days and then revert to the same compost as the plants and the animals. But God did not create Evolution, thousands of millions of years of constant, regulated development, so that mankind, the crown or ultimate product of Evolution, should die like Nature, his sole comfort being that the worms could feed off his body. Therefore mankind was given immortality, a soul, and the Saviour Jesus Christ, so that he should not know Death. Mankind alone has been selected for Eternal Life. But in order to receive Eternal Life in all its joy and fullness, his soul must know God before he may pass from this world into the next.

It is through Faith alone that man may pass from this earthly illusion of Time into Timelessness. And so, according to Christ's promise, we shall be saved. Verily, verily I say unto you. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. (Jh 6, 47.)

Die, Death! This is the Christian cry of joy.

Through Faith alone we become immortal ... Through Faith alone Life is made holy, for Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in this world. Life is the Holy Spirit flowing through God's Creation. In this way both Life and Death are hallowed by Faith: Faith makes sense of Life and Death. A famous writer once said that Life is a dream and Death an awakening. For it is only when we have died to this world that we awake into the true light of the Glory of God. Through Death we conquer the illusoriness of this world, with all its sufferings and bodily needs. Death therefore is a welcome

release. It is Liberty: only beyond Death do we become completely free.

All this is possible however only if we have Faith. Faith is knowing God. If we do not know God, and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, how can our sins be redeemed by His sacrifice, how can we be resurrected, if we deny Christ's Resurrection?

So it is that Christians believe that the most important thing for any man or woman is the attainment of Faith. Faith makes Life holy and defeats Death. Through it blind eyes are given sight. Death is no longer feared, but rather looked forward to by Christians as a release from the sinfulness of this world. Death becomes an entrance into Life, an entrance into the Light, into the Life of the Spirit

### 3. Faith

But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

*(Matt 6, 33)*

Only when we have attained Faith should we seek to know about the other things of Life.

The attainment of Faith is at once simple and complex. Faith may be obtained through reading, in particular, the New Testament, but also other devotional works, such as the Philokalia. It is obtained by speaking with God, through prayer, by simply asking Him for Faith. Seek God among those who have already attained Faith and talk to them about it

Faith is a great Light, a warming inside the heart

Do not expect it to come to you at once, it may take you a long time to receive it. Do not however give way to despondency, but persevere.

About Faith the Scriptures have the following to say:

Ask and it shall be given You: seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. (Matt 7, 7)

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. (Matt 7, 24)

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt 11, 28)

How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? (Matt 18, 12)

With God all things are possible. (Matt 19, 26)

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matt 21, 22)

Neither shall they say, Lo, here or, lo, there for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you. (Lk 17, 21)

In your patience possess ye your souls. (Lk 21, 19)

A man can receive nothing, unless it be given him from heaven. (Jh 3, 27)

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (Jh 14, 1)

If ye shall ask anything in my name, I shall do it (Jh 14.14)

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (Jh 14, 18)

Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Rev 3, 20)

The discovery of Faith is merely the discovery of how much God loves us: Faith generates Love. In Faith we become potentially equal, for true equality will only be found in the spiritual dignity of Man. Faith leads us God's treasure house. It leads us to the joy of Love, for God is Love. Open your hearts and let Him in.

*... to be continued.*

<sup>1</sup> For those who are not accustomed to our prison way of life I must explain the nature of our magic lanterns. They are quite simply curved pieces of mirror, which distort the world around them, inside which the images of a so-called natural world are flashed. This natural world is said to be the perfect world in which we shall all live one day if we are good. It is quite different from our ordinary everyday prison life, when we see the colourfulness and the glare and we hear the noise and the jangle of this world, full of its people made of plastic, wearing plastic faces and plastic clothes, we feel grateful for the happiness that it brings into our lives. Sometimes, so great is our gratitude that we bow down and worship our magic lanterns



## TOWARDS AN ORTHODOX VIEW OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Smashing the distinctive spiritual principles of the life and culture of each and every people, it (Western civilisation) does not and cannot replace them with any other spiritual principles. It merely transplants the outward forms of a way of life, which is based purely on materialism, utilitarianism and rationalism. As a result of this European civilisation, the souls of Europeanised peoples suffer an unheard of spiritual bankruptcy, which makes them sterile with regard to spiritual creativity and indifferent or savage with regard to moral values. At the same time, this civilisation is accompanied by an immeasurable greed for earthly riches and the sin of pride. With its ineluctable logic it leads to the building of a new Tower of Babel.

*N. S. Trubetskoy, The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues, p. 331*

### Introduction

WITH an estimated 72 million victims, the Second World War was not only truly a World War, but also by far the bloodiest in history to date. It was an industrial and technological war of attrition or extermination, involving anti-human ideologies. These led to mass genocide with events of an unheard of barbarism, and ended with two Atomic Bombs.

Some view this War as a series of four different wars. The first was a further conflict between Japan and China (1937–1945), the second was the continuation of the Great European War of 1914–18 and concerned Western and Eastern Europe with several changes of sides and constantly changing fronts (1939–1945), the third concerned access to oil resources and was fought largely in the Western Desert of North Africa (1940–1943), and the fourth was for the mastery of the Pacific, which mainly concerned the USA and Japan after the Japanese conquest of the Asian outposts of the British Empire (1941–1945).

As the Second World War produced two victors, the English-speaking USA and the apostate Orthodox Soviet Union, it is of interest to us in our context to sketch out some Orthodox views of this tragic period of history. None of the views below

are held dogmatically or with the idea that they are correct – they are simply a tentative attempt to shed some Orthodox light on some recent history. Whether they actually do so remains to be seen.

### An Inevitable War

After the barbarity of the misnamed First World War, which was in fact not the Great, but the Greatest, European War in a series stretching back over centuries, and its nine million dead, it was clear that Europe had not yet finished destroying itself. Having lost most of its vestigial Christian Faith and so restraint, it was clear that a sullen Europe would go to war yet again. This time it would be aided by a killing technology, undreamed of in times past. It would be total War.

Firstly, the inhuman ideology of the Soviet monster created by the Kaiser's Germany in 1917 was not going to accept its unjust borders. And as for Germany, it was never going to accept the equally unjust borders imposed on it by the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 and Woodrow Wilson's insane liberal interventionism. The absurd 'justice' of punishing peoples (the Germans, the Austrians and the Hungarians), rather than punishing the élites who has ordered the slaughter of the gallant but uninstructed peasant masses of Europe brought its fruit only a few years later. (Punishing the élites would have meant punishing themselves – this was not on for the top-hatted toffs who met at Versailles in 1919). Thus, two extremist ideologies, Communism and Fascism, grew up out of the horrors of the First World War and the inane Treaty of Versailles, which guaranteed another War. Their extreme violence was already visible in the Fascist /Communist Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, which was nothing but a bloody dress rehearsal for what was to come in the 1940s.

The spark that triggered the War in Europe, the German (and Soviet) invasion of Poland, was curious. The German occupation of the Czech-populated Bohemia and Moravia (though not that of the mainly German-populated Sudetenland) would surely have been a very 'reasonable' spark for entering into war against Hitler. Little wonder that the Czechs felt betrayed by France and Britain, when they did not defend their country. However, French and British appeasement of Nazi Germany

was based not on reason, but on cowardice caused by the trauma of the Great War.

After all, the Fascist Catholic government of Poland was in some ways a cause not worth defending (though the Polish people were). The Polish government's occupation of a large part of Belarus and the Ukraine after 1919 was unjustified. Its treatment of its huge Orthodox minority (eight million) and its dynamiting of some 250 Orthodox churches, many of them destroyed in 1938-39, can never be justified; nor can its treatment of its large German minority, who lived mainly in Silesia. Reliable sources point out that the Polish government had been planning an invasion of Germany before Germany invaded Poland. And the story of Poland's treatment of its Jews between the wars is hardly edifying. (It might be said that the spark that caused the First War, the invasion of Belgium, was also strange – arguably the Belgian elite, which had enslaved and exploited to death millions in the Belgian Congo was only receiving its retribution).

Nevertheless, the Nazi treatment of Poland and all its peoples was far worse than anything the Fascist Poles could manage. Even Stalin, even with his brutal massacre of some 23,000 Polish officers at Katyn in spring 1940 and even with his cynicism in August and September 1944 as he let the Nazis massacre the gallant Polish Resistance in Warsaw, looks benign when compared to Hitler. The fact is that war with Germany was inevitable sooner or later, because of the profoundly evil nature of Nazism. Hitler was a racist maniac. He was possessed by a legion of demons. Nobody could have stood by any longer.

The mass killing of disabled Germans of the 1930s soon became the mass killings of Jews, Slavs, Gypsies and others in some 300 concentration camps. Even Stalin did not do this and hardened Red Army troops were to be horrified by the massacres and mass rapes by the German soldiery of Jews and Slavs during Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. (It is said by German sources that every second German soldier became a rapist in Russia). Although nobody believes that the Nazis killed all the millions of Jews in gas chambers, the detail of how they were killed is irrelevant. The fact is that they were killed. According to most estimates, over 5 million of them were killed. They died above all through exhaustion, maltreatment, exploitation, disease and shooting, as well as through gassing and torture.

Six times worse in terms of numbers was Hitler's racist holocaust of the Slavs. For him the Slavs were 'Untermenschen', subhumans. Thus, at least twelve million East Slav civilians, mainly Russians, Belorussians (one in four) and Ukrainians, some three million Poles and as many as one million Serbs, were massacred by his troops or their allies. Altogether over 30 million Slavs died in Hitler's holocaust. The only Slavs temporarily spared were the more Germanised Czechs and Slovenes, and Slavs whose governments had turned Fascist, like the Croats, the Slovaks and the Bulgarians under their German puppet-king. If Hitler had been allowed to continue, he could have killed all the Jews in Europe and a hundred million Slavs before he died. He had to be defeated.

### Allied Hypocrisy

Thus, Hitler's 300 camps, like Auschwitz, Dachau, Belzec, Ravensbruck, Buchenwald, Treblinka, Belsen, Mauthausen and Majdanek, became the killing grounds for Slavs, Jews and Gypsies, any whom Hitler's racist ideology despised.

However, those in countries in Western Europe other than Germany, should not feel superior or surprised. Hitler's attitude towards the Slavs was no different from that of the Spanish and Portuguese towards native populations in Latin America, or from that of the English towards the natives of North America, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania and Black Africa, whom they enslaved and ruthlessly exploited. (Concentration camps were invented by the Spanish in Cuba in 1899 and developed with great 'success' by the British in their genocidal Boer War two years later). Hitler himself proclaimed that he was only doing in Eastern Europe what other countries had done in their colonies. If English settlers could treat the 'Indians' of North America like vermin, why could he not do the same with the Non-Aryan Jews and the Non-German Slavs?

We cannot help recalling the fate of the millions of Black Africans enslaved and sent to the Americas by white people (even if they were sold to the whites by African or Arab slavemasters, the latter of whom also traded in huge numbers of white slaves). We cannot forget how the Belgians (especially their Royal Family) ruthlessly raped the Belgian Congo, how the French exploited Indo-China and North and West Africa, how the Italians massacred in Ethiopia, how the Portuguese exploited their African colonies, how the British

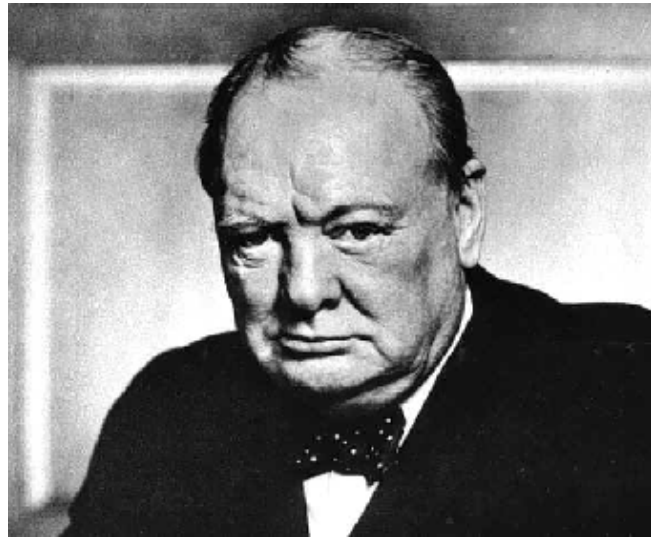
exploited and ruthlessly controlled with their heroin wars and their despicable concentration camps in South Africa in the Boer War and again, as recently as the 1950s, in Kenya. But then the ruling elites of Western Europe had treated their own working-class soldiers in the trenches of the Great European War of 1914 no better than those 'native' peoples – as vermin.

As for Americans, we cannot forget the way that their own Black soldiers were often treated before, during and after the Second World War. The United States, founded mainly by settlers from England, had after all been based on 'Hitlerite' racialism. For example, as early as 1640, it was made illegal among the settlers in Massachusetts, 'to shoot off a gun on any unnecessary occasion or at any game, except an Indian or a wolf'. George Washington sought the destruction of Indians and a little later Andrew Jackson urged American troops to kill all Indian women and their 'whelps'. As for Thomas Jefferson (1829–1837), who held the 'self-evident' 'truths' that 'all men are created equal', he wrote that the American government was obliged to pursue the Indians 'to extinction'.

Hitler was a demonic abomination. But he was also only the extreme fruit of a whole Western mentality. He invented nothing, he simply industrialised and systematised, in the efficient German way, Western racial arrogance and applied it in Europe. Genocide according to a railway timetable was his system. It is no good Allied historians piously hypocritically expressing their ritual astonishment that 'such a thing could possibly happen in a civilised Western European country'. Hitler was only doing what Western Europe had been doing ever since their eleventh century 'crusades' in Spain, Sicily, Italy, England in 1066 and then the Holy Land – only more efficiently. Those who stood up to him and defended the Jews and others, like Norwegian Lutheran clergy in 1942, the Bulgarians whose Church saved 50,000 Jews in March 1943, or the Danes in September 1943, have honour. Those who helped Hitler massacre the Jews, as did Vichy Frenchmen, fanatical Croats, brutal Lithuanians and Ustasha Waffen SS Galicians from the Ukraine, have no honour.

### Churchill and the British Role

Sir Winston Churchill is a hero for many British people. But history does not forget that in the First World War he was responsible for the catastrophe of Gallipoli, that he was a dreadful peacetime



leader, with only haughty aristocratic contempt for the working classes, and that he was democratically and decisively rejected in the elections of 1945 by the British people.

Churchill was an Imperialist, a White Supremacist, and the ordinary troops of Britain were shocked when, posted abroad from 1940 onwards, they saw how the British colonial ruling classes had for years been mistreating Indians, Egyptians, Africans, Chinese, subject peoples, like themselves, of the British Empire. And all of this had been going on for years behind their backs, but in their name.

In recent years Churchill has also been accused of knowing about the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915, the German raid on Coventry and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and doing nothing to stop them for strategic and political reasons. Similarly, he has been blamed for the disastrous August 1942 Dieppe raid as well as the Imperialist disasters in the Far East, when in February 1942, for example, British troops were marched directly off ships in Singapore into Japanese captivity, from which only a minority survived. That was the greatest defeat in the history of the Empire – apart from Churchill's other defeat at Dunkirk. Many other tactical errors have been attributed to him, though, in fairness, hindsight is a wonderful thing.

It is true that without the anti-Nazi Churchill, a literary genius and Nobel-prize winner, Britain might not have been on the winning side in the Second World War. It was the half-American Churchill who urged the USA into the War and it was the USA that undoubtedly saved this country from a humiliating surrender to Nazi Germany and possible occupation. Without the USA, we could

have been starved into surrender in 1942 and millions of us sent off into slave labour camps in Germany or to fight against the Soviet Union. Even when our first victory came at El Alamein at the end of 1942, it came only because at last our troops had large quantities of decent guns and tanks, sent to us from the USA, rather than the pathetic and obsolete equipment, which our Army had in any case lost on the beaches of Dunkirk.

The fact is that the Second World War was won by the US and what was called the SU, the United States and the Soviet Union, not by Great Britain. (Though it is also true that if the naïve Roosevelt had listened to Churchill's opinion of Stalin, Yalta and the ensuing division of Europe might not have happened).

Of course, the American people were themselves generous and noble and helped us, but the American government did have motives of self-interest. American help for us to survive came at a price. First of all, there was the American price of dismantling the British Empire. This perhaps was not a bad thing. The problem was that it meant that the British Empire was replaced by the American Empire. The second piece of self-interest was that the American government knew that, if it did not invade Western Europe, using England as its aircraft carrier, Europe would either become Fascist under Hitler or, much more likely, Communist under Stalin. Neither scenario was in the US interest. True, there were some negative aspects to the peaceful American occupation of the United Kingdom and the two million US troops who brought coca-cola and chewing gum – and gave generously. But they saved us from surrender to Hitler. The American occupation was indeed a welcome invasion.

From an English point of view, the finest moments of the Second World War were when we stood alone, defending England as in the so-called 'Battle of Britain', or, more correctly as it is called in other languages, 'The Battle of England'. Then British arrogance and British Imperialism disappeared. Then we defended everything that was worthwhile in Englishness, what was and is best in our culture, a civilisation, the English way of life, Garden England, thatched cottages with hollyhocks and roses, tea and white tablecloths, cricket on village greens, the old-world courtesy and fair play of gentlemen and gentlewomen (sadly and ironically so much of which post-war British governments have destroyed far more successfully than Luftwaffe bombs ever did). We were at our

best only when we were not defending blinkered and blundering, inhumanly rigid bureaucracy and the British Imperial myth with its sordid 'Black Country' and squalid injustices towards other peoples. We were at our best only when we were defending real moral and spiritual values.

Churchill's greatest crime must be his terror-bombing of German civilians, carried out under the utterly callous Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris and the RAF, in which he also involved the USAF, with huge losses of young flying crew. For example, the much-vaunted Dambusters raid of May 1943 killed 1,294 people, most of whom were not even German civilians, but slave-workers, among them 493 Ukrainian women. 'Area bombing', later with fire-bombing and firestorms in German cities like Hamburg in July 1943 (still later Dresden in 1945), was repeatedly condemned by the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell. Already in 1941 he had denounced it as 'barbarian' and it was quite possible that this cost him the position of Archbishop of Canterbury, since in England it is the British Prime Minister, then Churchill, who *de facto* appoints the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was all inexcusable. Over 550,000 German civilians and tens of thousands of innocent slave-workers were massacred by Churchill's carpet-bombing. Why?

Churchill's second greatest crime was the forced repatriation of up to two million mainly Russians and Ukrainians to Stalin and thousands of Serbs to Tito, as has been chronicled by the late Lord Bethell and Nikolai Tolstoy. True, the Americans also played a lesser part in this, but none of it would ever have happened without Churchill and his servant, Eden. Churchill knew exactly what Stalin would do, shoot the victims or send them to camps in Siberia where many froze to death. This too was inexcusable. Churchill never had to stand trial for these two war crimes.

### The Great Russian Tragedy

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the Second World War, apart from it happening at all because of the outcomes of the First World War, was the Great Russian Tragedy.

The initial amazing success of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, which took place on the Sunday of All the Saints of the Land of Rus in June 1941, came about firstly because Stalin had ignored all the warnings about Hitler's imminent invasion, including precise warnings from Churchill. Secondly, it came about because before





*Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta*

the Second War Stalin, always the paranoiac maniac, had purged his armed forces of most of its competent officers and made of those forces a politicised, demoralised and underequipped rabble. In the early days of the War these, often unarmed, soldiers were soon taken prisoner and sent as slave labour to Germany, where most of them died of maltreatment and starvation. Thirdly, Nazi success came about because on seeing for example the crosses on German tanks, the much-persecuted devout peasants of Belarus and the Ukraine thought that Christian liberation from the hated Soviet Antichrist had at last come and mistakenly welcomed the German forces.

The later Russian success against Stalin can be attributed only to the fact that Stalin handed most of the management of the war over to intelligent and patriotic Slav Orthodox generals like Marshal Georgy Zhukov and was obliged to give some measure of freedom to the Russian Orthodox Church. The huge twenty-five year old torrent of Russian Orthodox martyrs slowed after 1942, though other forms of persecution and the stream of confessors did not. In reality, the Soviet Union lost the war against Hitler. It was won by the re-invigorated Russian Orthodox peoples.

If, in summer 1941, Stalin had been ousted by a patriotic *coup d'état* which had restored a free Russian state, all manner of later evils could have been avoided. It is the Great Russian Tragedy that he was not so ousted.

Firstly, we can think that millions of lives would have been saved, because competence would have taken the place of incompetence and the War would perhaps have finished in 1944.

Secondly, we can assume that when troops of a freed and victorious post-Soviet Russia later advanced into Poland, Germany, Austria, Hungary etc, they would have come as disciplined and genuine liberators, not as occupiers seeking

revenge for occupation, massacre and the millions of rapes carried out in their homeland by maniacal German soldiers.

Thirdly, we can think that a freed Russia would not only have advanced into Germany and freed the German people from the Nazis. Perhaps, if the war had ended earlier in 1944, then, as in 1814, Russian troops would have had time to advance into France (and Yugoslavia) and free Paris (and Belgrade). Then, Russian troops would have retired back to historic borders, not strangling Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States with Communism for the next 45 years. Thus, the irony of a war with its tens of millions of dead, caused by the occupation of Poland by a dictator, would not have ended with the occupation of Poland by a dictator, albeit a different one.

Fourthly, we can think that after the War the borders of Eastern Europe would have been fixed with a much greater sense of history and justice than Stalin possessed. Thus, the borders of the Baltic States could have been established justly. The Orthodox left in Poland around Bialystok could have been taken into Belarus. On the other hand, the problems of Benderite Uniat Galicia and Lvov could have been left to Poland, which created them. Thus, the borders of the Ukraine would have been established without the pernicious influence of the Polonised Galician Uniates, who would have remained in Poland. On the other hand, the Lemko peoples of north-eastern Slovakia and south-eastern Poland could have been taken into a free Carpatho-Russia, established as an independent East Slav State, instead of being divided or established as the ridiculous Stalinist Transcarpathian region of the Ukraine.

With a Russian (and not Soviet) liberation of Yugoslavia, the country could have been dissolved into its natural parts of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. There could have been population exchanges between Nazi Croatia and anti-Nazi Serbia and fair borders established, avoiding the absurd 1990s prospect of the artificial creation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Pro-Nazi Albanian colonists could have been settled back in their homeland of Albania. And much the same in Hungary and Romania and other Eastern European countries, all still saddled today with absurd borders. Then Eastern Europe could have settled down, for instance avoiding the disastrous wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, which in reality continue into the twenty-first century.

Fifthly, after the war had ended, captured citizens of the former Soviet Union, freed from

Nazi concentration camps, would not have been shot or sent to Soviet concentration camps. They would instead have been greeted as heroes. Neither would there have been any forced repatriation – only voluntary return to a homeland in twofold freedom, from both Hitler and Stalin.

In such a scenario, there would have been no Cold War with its ever-impending nuclear holocaust, perhaps no foundation of the State of Israel and consequent Middle East conflict, and no later bitter break-up of the Communist bloc in the 1990s. There would have been another and Communist-free world. But in 1941 Russia was not ready for repentance, for the removal of Stalin and his gang. The world had to wait until 2000 for any real measure of freedom in the former Soviet Union.

### Conclusion

From this alone, we can learn the lesson that to delay repentance is always a catastrophe. Is it not time that the Western world also learned this same lesson and also repented for its errors of creating two World Wars? This will require colossal humility. The greatest Western self-delusion that came to the fore after the Second World War is that of Western politicians, historians and journalists, hypocritically lamenting: 'But how could this happen in our civilised Europe?'

The answer is very easy, for the much glorified First Reich, 'Europe', become the Western world, was founded in 800 by Charlemagne on just this barbarism and racial arrogance. Although, fortunately, Charlemagne's concentration camp

experiment, or 'Holy Roman Empire', failed, it was restored nearly eleven hundred years later in 1871 by Bismarck ('the Second Reich') and then by Hitler's 1933 regime ('the Third Reich'). It is this Western ethnic pride and illusory sense of superiority that lie behind feudalism, the Crusades, continuous mediaeval wars, the Inquisition, the Wars of 'Religion', slavery, the Industrial Revolution, Imperialism, the Atom Bomb and every Western crime, including Hitler's massacre of tens of millions of Slavs, Jews and other 'subhumans'. All of this is simply in the long Western racist tradition of ethnic pride which goes back to the paganism of the Roman Empire.

Thus, we see that the extermination of tens of millions of Slavs, Jews and Gypsies in Nazi concentration camps and wars in the 1940s was but the culminating point, to date, in the long history of Western ethnic arrogance, inculcated by centuries of Western tribal leaders among their peoples. This Western argument runs: 'We have the most advanced technology, therefore we are the most civilised human-beings, therefore we have the right to exploit and run the world, eradicating and destroying anyone who opposes us'.

This is no better than the argument of any Mafia gang, of which the Nazi Party was simply the best-organised example. As Gandhi said: 'Western civilisation? An excellent idea.' And so it will remain until the West repents and at last once more accepts Christ's words as they are written, and not as they are deformed. If the West could do it for the first thousand years of its history, it can do it again for the third thousand years of its history. It only needs repentance.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



How does the Orthodox Church recognize a saint? I know the Roman Catholics need miracles. Is this the same?

*L. T., London*

There are three outward signs of holiness. Patriarch Nectarius of Jerusalem († 1680) wrote of



these three qualities thus: 1) Impeccable Orthodox Faith. 2) The possession of all the virtues and the readiness to witness to and defend the Faith to the point of martyrdom. 3) Incorruptible relics or a fragrance given off by the bones.

It should be added that the last sign is not always required. Thus we have the well-known

case of St Nectarius of Aegina whose relics crumbled into dust, but in this way his dust has been taken all around the world. We see Providence in this sign. It should be added that what above all is required is long-lasting and continuing (not faddish or temporary) veneration among the Orthodox faithful. If this veneration is strong and lasting enough, the local bishop or synod will appoint a committee to investigate further. It will decide either that God has already manifested His glory in this saint or else, in the case of uncertainty, it will recommend that we wait



Fr Alexander Schmemmann used to say that there never was such a thing as 'Holy Russia', that it was a national myth. What would you say?

*N. N., New York State*

I think I too have read that somewhere in one of his books. Of course, there never was a country where everyone was holy. But that is not what 'Holy Russia' ever meant. Holy Russia meant (and means) a country where the national ideal is and was holiness. And in that sense, Holy Russia did (and still does) exist. The problem with literalists and iconoclasts, and Fr Alexander was one of them, is that they destroy ideals. And that is a very dangerous thing to do, because then we lose the star by which to guide our national and personal ships. We have seen this many times in the last 100 years, with, for instance, the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917, and from the 1960s, the falls of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. National myths are not helpful, but national ideals most certainly are.



Is there any truth in the story that St Isaac the Syrian was a Nestorian?

*S. E., California*

I first heard this story from academics in Oxford in the 1970s. It appears to have come from the discovery of little known writings attributed by the academics to St Isaac. Orthodox scholars, anchored in the Tradition of the Church, have told me that these writings, although largely by St Isaac, were interpolated by a Nestorian writer with Origenistic tendencies at a later date. This explains why they contradict the much more ancient writings, which were definitely composed by St Isaac, who as a bishop was very strongly anti-Nestorian and suffered greatly for Orthodoxy from the Nestorians.



Does ROCOR have an official teaching about Fatima?

*T. N., Texas*

I am not sure that any Local Orthodox Church or part of one, like ROCOR, can have an official teaching about such things. It is all opinion, as for example, with the question of evolution. These matters are not like the dogmas of the Holy Trinity or the One Person and two natures of Christ. However, the well-known Jordanville theologian, the very traditional Fr Constantine Zaitsev, wrote the following some fifty years ago about Fatima:

'We will not dispute the miraculous nature of the original appearance of the Mother of God, as we will not suspect the authenticity of some less clear similar appearances in recent times, as noted by the Roman Catholic press. All these signs have one general task: to warn the Roman Catholic faithful of coming disasters and to call them to repentance, to change their lives, to draw closer to God – in order to avoid these disasters. For the unprejudiced conscience all these appearances, especially the miracle in Fatima, have a content which concerns Russia. This is clear and beyond dispute. Orthodox Russia has experienced a disaster ... Is there here the slightest hint that Russia must be converted to Catholicism for the salvation of the world? Not at all!'

*(Pastoral Theology, Part II, p. 42, Jordanville 1961).*

In other words, such appearances are calls to the Western world to repent, to return to Orthodoxy. Well after Fr Constantine's time, there were more claimed appearances at Medjugorje in Croatia. Although these are much disputed, including by the Roman Catholic authorities, some Serbs point out that they occurred just near where the Roman Catholics committed dreadful anti-Orthodox atrocities during the Second World War, which were to be repeated in the Vatican-encouraged anti-Serb Balkan Wars of the 1990s.



Why is it that some converts, who were formerly traditional Protestants or Roman Catholics become ultra-liberal Orthodox? And also why is it that some converts become fanatical Orthodox?

*R. C., California*

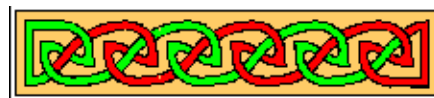
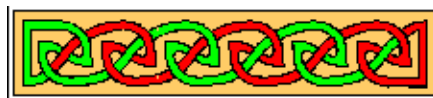
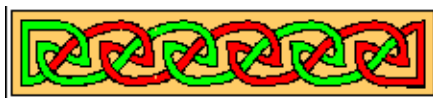
There is no such thing as a 'traditional' Protestant or Roman Catholic, because they do not

have the Tradition. However, there are conservative Protestants and Roman Catholics. And conservatism is simply a relative mentality, not necessarily anything to do with the Tradition. Once some such people become Orthodox, they discover that what they thought was 'traditional' (that is, conservative) is not traditional at all in the Orthodox sense and they position themselves on the liberal fringes of the Orthodox Churches, never integrating.

The Tradition is at once far more traditional than mere 'conservative' and far more radical than mere 'liberal'. But you can only have this understanding, once you have the sense of the Cross, and that is unavailable outside the (Orthodox) Church. I remember the late Fr Sophrony once telling a new and moaning convert to his astonishment: 'The Church hurts'. What he meant was that to become a member of the Church is to take up our cross, in

accordance with the Gospel, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Matt 16, 24).

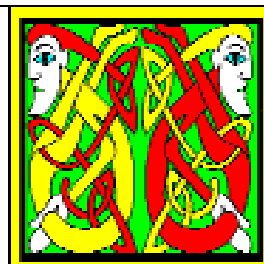
Others, who have an extremist psychology and who, unfortunately, enter the Church ill prepared, with that psychology unchanged, try to make of Orthodoxy an adjunct to their personal psychological weakness (i.e. their inclination to fanaticism and extremism). These people often call themselves 'traditionalists'. I remember in 1976 how the late Fr Mark of Walsingham in talking about just such a group of people, who had got themselves 're-baptized' after several years of being Orthodox in both the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR said: 'This is not theology, this is psychology and at that, unhealthy psychology'. He was absolutely right.



## OPINION PAGE

### Essentially only Two Religions in This World

*From The Traditionalist*  
a free journal compiled and edited by Mrs Mary Hopson,  
Tregate Castle, Llanrothal, Monmouthshire NP25 5QL.



This extract concerns a sermon by a Dr James Kennedy.

**D**R KENNEDY told his congregation that there are essentially only two religions in this world. It is not the religion of Christ and the religion of Mohammed; it is not the religion of Christ and the religion of Confucius; nor is it the religion of Christ and the religion of the Buddha; in fact, it is not the combination of any two religions in this world. The two religions in this world, according to Dr Kennedy, are the religion of Christ and the religion of you. Religions like Taoism, Hinduism and Islam will teach you a way, show you a way and point out a way for you on life's journey. However, the philosophies of these religions teach that you have to walk that way alone. Now in the Christian religion, Christ is the Way and the Christian walks the Way with Christ...

Dr Kennedy explained that heathen religions are essentially the 'religion of you'. You and you

alone save yourself. Christians recognize that human beings are full of sin; we are born with sin and we have sin in our hearts. So it is absolutely impossible for us to save ourselves. Only a Sinless Saviour, Who is God Himself and at the same time Man, can do that.

At the end of his sermon, Dr Kennedy acknowledged that many of his congregation would feel uncomfortable with the Biblical text where Christ states that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that no-one can come to the Father except through Him. 'That is your privilege,' said their minister, but he went on to warn them that their discomfort with the text, their disbelief in it and any avowal that they make which contradicts it, have all horrendous consequences 'But bear this in mind, you are calling Christ a liar'.

## Obituary: THE PRISONER HAS ESCAPED FROM THE VILLAGE



**O**N 15 January 2009 it was announced that the Irish actor Patrick McGoochan had died at the age of eighty in California.

Born in the USA, the son of Irish emigrants who then returned to Ireland, McGoochan was eventually to grow up in England. It was here in the 1960s that he made two TV series, *Danger Man*, and in 1967 *The Prisoner*, the latter of which became a cult. It was after *The Prisoner* series that McGoochan moved to Switzerland and finally settled in the USA.

McGoochan was a devout Roman Catholic and, naturally, show business found his moral and spiritual convictions objectionable. Not only was he fiercely protective of his private life, but also of his religious beliefs, rejection of the material world and condemnation of sexual depravity, which is both the result of and the cause of spiritual blindness. McGoochan also

detested publicity, once commenting: 'I abhor the word "star". It makes the hair on the back of my neck want to curl up'.

Little wonder that McGoochan turned down the role of James Bond, taken by Sean Connery, which role he quite rightly found immoral, and the equally immoral role of The Saint, taken by Roger Moore. As McGoochan explained: 'When we started *Danger Man*, the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. Television ... has a moral obligation towards its audience.' McGoochan lived out his beliefs and last year celebrated his 57th wedding anniversary with his one and only wife, with whom he had three children. Their first great-grandchild was also born last year.

McGoochan will above all be remembered for his role as 'Number Six', in *The Prisoner*, the surreal series of 17 episodes which he wrote, directed and acted in. Set in a unique Italianate



seaside village in North Wales, the series describes the Orwellian-Kafkaesque life in 'The Village' of Number Six, an imprisoned but still rebellious secret agent. He and the other residents are electronically surveyed by a mysterious Big Brother, called Number One. (Not so far from the surveillance society in which we live today).

When 'Number Six' finally confronts Number One, he is wearing a mask. When the mask is pulled off, it reveals a monkey mask. And when that is pulled off, the face of McGooohan himself is seen. The message is that we are all prisoners of ourselves, our attachment to materialism, symbolised by the animal, or monkey, part of our nature. The only escape from this is to participate as little as possible in the animal cult of the modern consumer society. It is interesting to note that in the 1970s the same spiritual and ecological message was again delivered to the Western world by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He

called on it to 'limit itself, ' for the sake of our own well-being and that of the planet.

'I am not a number', will perhaps remain McGooohan's most famous words. These words resound in the increasingly totalitarian world of 2009, where we are all becoming numbers on government computers and we are all encouraged to worship the materialist god by overspending and overconsuming, thus getting into debt. This is the temptation which resides in each one of us and which explains the present state of the world and its economic, banking and credit crisis. Instead, we should, said McGooohan, take responsibility for ourselves, stop blaming others, reducing our consumption of the consumer society to a minimum.

Fortunately, full escape from 'The Village' is possible, but only with the escape of the soul from the prison of the body – which escape the Christian Patrick McGooohan has finally managed.



*Jesus and the Money-Changers (Boris Olshansky, 2006)*



