

# ORTHODOX ENGLAND

*In this issue:*

*On Acquiring the Mind of Christ  
St Brendan the Voyager  
Childhood in the Light of Orthodoxy  
Houses of Healing to Houses of Horror  
Summer Evening in Town*

*and much more . . .*

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## Editorial: ON ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST

**I** WAS recently asked why so many 'converts' to Orthodoxy lapse. I did not answer this strange question and rephrased it 'So you are asking why so many who call themselves Christians do not accept the Church?'

When we speak of 'Orthodoxy', we mean the fullness of Christianity, the Orthodox Church, that is, the Christian Church. There is no such thing as (Orthodox) Christianity outside the (Orthodox) Church. And when we speak of 'converts', we mean all Christians. For we are all 'converts' and, hopefully, we are being converted every day of our lives, since conversion is not an event but a lifelong process.

The simple answer to the above question is this: Those who lapse from the Church lack love for Her. And those who do not love the Church lack love for Christ, the Head of the Church, Whose Body the Church is. This is the fundamental reason for all lapses.

We can see it in the origins of Roman Catholicism and all its hundreds of 'Protesting' branches. The reason for the Roman Catholic schism (created by a tiny elite, not by the nominal masses) was ultimately a lack of love for the Church and the preference for a man, the pope of Rome and his worldly, institutional power system, the Vatican, over Christ. But we can see it also among nominal Orthodox. Although baptised, they do not know the Church, spend years without even setting foot in the Church, cultivate all manner of excuses and prejudices, and at best reduce the Church to some local, national institution. And there are plenty of Roman Catholics and Protestants who can set a better example of Christianity than these nominal Orthodox.

Sometimes we can see it also among the few thousand 'converts', people of Western origin, who have over the years *joined the Church*, but not actually *become Orthodox*. Nominal members of

the Church, they have not always absorbed the mentality and world view of the Church, not always adapted to Her. She has not become their Mother. Orthodoxy has not always become instinctive with them, it sometimes remains an intellectual plaything, a hobby, a comfort for dull moments. For a minority of them, She is not life itself, not in their bones and blood. In the words of the Apostle, they do not 'have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2, 16).

If we love the Church, then we are ready to sacrifice our lives for Her. And this does not mean making 'sacrifices' for some personal, egoistic reasons, which give us selfish pleasure, but sacrificing ourselves for Her. The nature of such self-sacrifice is not decided by ourselves, but by God. He asks this of us through Providential circumstances, events and meetings with others. Over the years we have observed those who confuse their egoism and vanity with the Church. They are not at all the same thing. 'Sacrifices' for the self are sacrifices for the idolatry of the self.

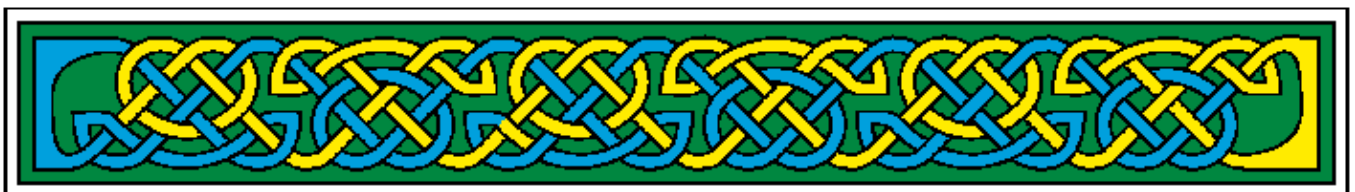
When we join the Church, we have to become Orthodox, in other words, we have to acquire the mind of Christ. This comes through living the Church year, its cycle of feasts and fasts, year in, year out. Otherwise, we shall ever remain outsiders.

*Fr Andrew*

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## ERRATUM

At the end of 'Mild Austerity' (p. 10 of *Orthodox England* Vol. 12 No. 3), we inadvertently said that St Dunstan reposed at the age of 63. We apologise for this error. St Dunstan was born in 909 and reposed in 988. He was therefore 78 or 79 when he passed into the Kingdom of God. Our thanks to Dimity of Moscow for noting this.



## From the Holy Fathers: ST BRENDAN THE VOYAGER (c. 486 – c. 575)

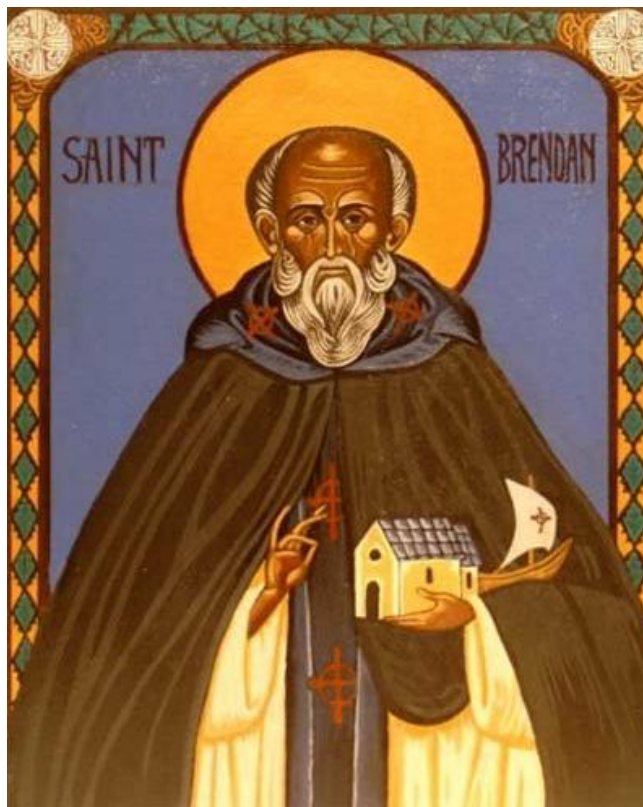
**T**HE ancient Irish Christians longed to be pilgrims, allowing God to guide them to foreign lands. Perhaps the most famous such pilgrim was St Brendan.

Now Brendan was the abbot of a large monastery. One year, at the beginning of Lent, as usual he left the monastery and spent the forty days on a high mountain overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. As he stared out at the sea, he had the idea of sailing across it. At Easter he returned to his monastery and asked for monks to go with him. Twelve monks came forward.

In the coming months Brendan took the twelve monks to the coast and there they made a coracle. The ribs and frame were carved out of oak and then covered with ox hide tanned in oak bark. They smeared the seams with grease to make them waterproof, storing extra hides and grease for repairs. Then they raised up a mast and attached a simple sail. When at last they were ready, they loaded enough food for forty days, allowing



*St Brendan guides the ships into harbour:  
A statue at Bantry in Ireland*



themselves only enough to eat every third day. They pushed the boat down the beach into the water and climbed aboard.

### The Faeroes

They trusted God to send winds and currents that would take them to wherever He wanted. After forty days they arrived at the largest of the Faeroe Islands. There they found a hermit who had arrived there by coracle many years earlier. The hermit was delighted to see Brendan and his brethren and invited them to celebrate that Easter with him.

At their Easter service thousands of birds, all with pure white feathers, perched on the surrounding trees and as the monks sang the Easter hymns, the birds also sang and flapped their wings in rhythm.

### An Iceberg

At the end of the Easter season Brendan and his monks once more set sail. The winds and currents took the coracle into colder waters. One day they saw a vast column rising from the sea. They were

utterly puzzled by the strange object. It shone like silver, it was as clear as crystal and as hard as marble. The coracle drifted toward the column. The monks looked down into the water and could see that the column was as deep as it was high. When they touched it, they understood that it was made of ice. Then the sun appeared from behind clouds and shone through the column to give a dazzling white light.

### Iceland

Eight days later the monks reached a vast rocky island that was bare of grass and trees. As they drew closer they heard a noise like the blowing of bellows, followed by the din of a hammer on an anvil and they could see smoke rising from behind the rocks. The monks trembled with fear and prayed for protection. Then a crowd of men, their faces dark and grimy, came down to the sea, each carrying a huge piece of blazing rock in a pair of tongs. They threw the rocks at the monks. None reached the coracle and as the rocks hit the water, they sent up a thick cloud of steam.

At that moment the wind changed, pushing the coracle away from the island. The monks were relieved to escape. But Brendan was sad because he could not preach the Gospel to those men. He prayed that at some time in the future the people of the island would welcome a Christian preacher and be converted by his words.

### Greenland

After many days Brendan and his monks saw land. The winds and currents brought them to a small creek, just wide enough for the prow of the coracle. Brendan jumped onto the rocks and climbed up the cliff. At the top were two caves facing each other. In the mouth of one cave a tiny spring gushed forth and inside the other was a hermit – who, like the hermit in the Faeroes, had sailed there many years earlier.

The hermit came out to greet Brendan, embracing him warmly. When the other monks appeared, he embraced them all with the same warmth, calling each by their names. They asked him how he knew their names. He smiled, and said: 'I have spent many years in prayer'.

The hermit introduced himself as Paul. Brendan asked him what food he ate. Paul replied: 'When I came here thirty years ago, I crouched on the rocks by the sea and tried to catch fish with my hands,

but I could not catch anything. Then a seal came out of the waves with a fish in its mouth and laid it at my feet. And since that time a seal has always appeared with a fish for me to eat'.

Paul led Brendan and his monks down the cliff to the sea. At that moment fourteen seals appeared, each with a fish in its mouth, which they laid on the rocks. Then the fourteen pilgrims ate together.

Brendan and his monks stayed with Paul for many days. Finally Paul told them it was time to leave. For several hours seals appeared one by one and put fish in the coracle to provide food for the journey.

### The Azores

For forty days the coracle was blown back across the ocean into warmer waters. On the fortieth day a thick fog descended on the coracle, so that Brendan and the monks could not see anything. When the fog lifted, they discovered they had landed on a sandy beach. The sun shone brightly and in front of them lay a vast and bountiful orchard, its trees laden with huge fruit. The pilgrims thanked God for His mercy and ate their fill.

The following day they found a green, fertile country watered by streams of pure, sparkling water. A handsome young man appeared, who, like Paul, knew their names.

'Welcome', he exclaimed, 'you have reached an earthly Paradise, the foretaste of the eternal Paradise which all virtuous people will enjoy. But you cannot stay here. Instead you must return home to describe this island to others. You must promise them that, if they follow God's commandments, they will inhabit an even lovelier kingdom. As proof of your visit you must each pick up twelve stones from the ground and take them home'.

The monks bent down and saw that every stone was a precious jewel. The young man led them back to the coast. They put the jewels in the coracle, together with fruit for the journey. It was so heavily laden that it could barely float. But the wind was gentle and the waves low, so they arrived home safely.

There they told their story to all who would listen and it was noised abroad throughout all Christendom. And from that time forth it has inspired people to be brave and virtuous.



## THE SAINTS OF ENGLAND

### 9. Putting off the Old Man

**D** OUBTLESS, God raised up the great host of English saints at the beginning of things in order to strengthen the work of conversion. This was to make it plain once and for all that the Gospel is practical, that its hardest precepts can be grasped and held, just like nettles, provided the hand is firm enough.

These saints were the descendants, in many cases only a few generations removed, of hardy seafaring farmers who had settled in Britain in three groups. The Jutes, originally from Jutland in today's Denmark, crossed from the near shores of Germany and what is now the Netherlands and settled in Kent, the Isle of Wight and in the south of what is now Hampshire. The Angles, who settled most of the country and gave their name to England, came from the district of Holstein, still called Angeln (the ultimate Old England). Then there were the Saxons, who crossed mainly from Friesland and settled in the south, in Essex (the Saxons of the East), in Sussex (the Saxons of the South), in Middlesex (the Saxons of the Middle) and in Wessex (the Saxons of the West). These three Germanic tribes were one people really, and spoke dialects of a common language, although at that time they had no generic name either for themselves or for their speech.

The Britons lumped them together as Saxons, as in the Scots word 'Sassenachs'. This was perhaps because the Roman army here already had many Saxon soldiers in it by the fourth century, and thus these were the first 'English' with whom the Britons had any contact. In the early eighth century St Bede writes in Latin of '*Angli sive Saxones*', as though it were a matter of indifference, which no doubt it was. His name for the vernacular is '*Sermo Anglicus*' and in the ninth century Alfred the Great called it Englisc. Today we call it Old English. These settlements and the subsequent penetration of these 'Englisc' people into the greater part of the country went on throughout the fifth century.

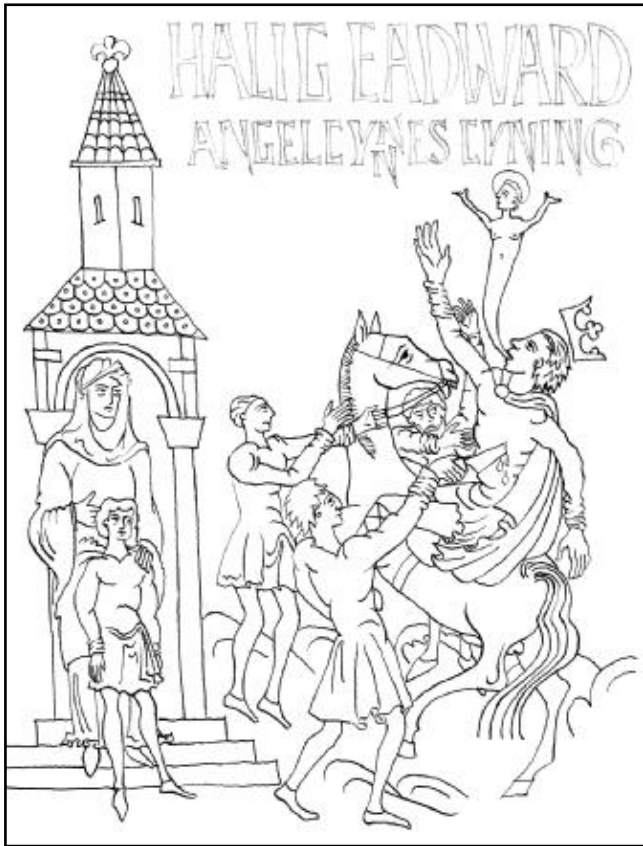
Woden (or Odin) was their chief god, Woden 'the Terrible', 'the Severe', 'the Father of Slaughter', the god who carries desolation and fire; the active and roaring divinity who, through his deputies, the Valkyries, names those who are to be slain. Freya his wife was not a very healthy influence. Then there were Thor, who ruled the tempests and the fields of war, Balder the god of light, Brage the

inspirer of poets and orators, Heimdal the guardian of heaven and the guardian of the rainbow; and so on. The name Woden gives us Wednesday, Thor gives us Thursday and Freya gives us Friday.

The worshippers of Woden who perished bravely in the fight ascended to Valhalla, where the day was spent in furious conflicts, but at eventide the battle ceased, every wound was healed, and the warriors banqueted on boar's flesh and mead which they drank from the skulls of their slain adversaries. The word Hell which we have taken from these pagans denominated the abode which Woden reserves for his enemies. Some of the wiseacres say that they had no idols, or as good as none, the worst that they had in that way being just straws, twigs and similar fetishes. However, the conversion of Northumbria began with the destruction of a mighty idol, as we shall see. Many of the early English kings boasted their descent from Woden, and the water of baptism sometimes never quite washed the idea out of their heads.

For all the holiness that is to be found in the saints of this time, this Golden Age of English Christianity was not clean. No age has clean hands. All are incomplete and imperfect. There were two hereditary influences working in secret against the spiritual and moral values of the Church. These were that of pagan Rome, whose vices were not eradicated, and that of the barbarism which had overthrown it. After their conversion the early English were called upon to fight a fierce and prolonged spiritual and moral battle against their instincts and antecedents. The pendulum took a long time to slow down, so that for centuries we see it alternating between crimes and penances, rape and renunciation, avarice and detachment, sexual violence and chastity. Oswy slew St Oswin, but when he was being attacked by Penda he tried to bribe Providence by vowing his first daughter to God and by a grant to the monks of land large enough to support one hundred families.

St Edward the Martyr was murdered at Corfe Castle, probably at the instigation of his own stepmother Elfrida, who later entered a convent as a penitent. St Wulfhad and St Ruffin, baptized by St Chad, were by their father's order slain while at prayer. This father was King of Mercia and baptized, but he was opposed to Christianity for political reasons. The two boys were buried at Stone in Staffordshire, which took its name from



the cairn of stones raised up over their remains. St Ethelbert, King of East Anglia, was foully done to death by the envoys of the tyrannical King Offa – he of the Dyke, the friend of the notorious Charlemagne. This happened near Hereford, where a little church was built over the martyr's relics, which evolved into the Cathedral and Diocese of Hereford.

Offa's dynasty ended abruptly and went to the posterity of Penda, a fact which the pious regarded as a sign from heaven, just as they did the failure of Henry the Eighth's dynasty, in spite of his six attempts to prolong it. Offa was the father of a saint, St Alfreda (Etheldritha), who had refused to marry St Ethelbert the East Anglian king. As a reaction, she went to Crowland where she lived as a recluse for forty years, reposing in 834, perhaps praying for forgiveness for her cruel father. St Wistan, the young heir to the Mercian throne, was set aside in favour of Bertulf. Then, to clinch matters, Bertulf had him put to death. The murderer was himself deposed before twelve months were out.

Rædwald (Redwald), King of East Anglia, contrived to run the two religions neck and neck, Woden today and Christ tomorrow. So was it even with the Celtic hero Cadwallon. He was a Christian by profession, but in his life and maxims an out-and-out pagan. The decrees of the Church

Councils reveal the strenuousness of the conflict between the old and the new. One of them condemned to the pillory and to the renunciation of their estates all those who, after baptism, were found sacrificing to the pagan gods. And everywhere there was a fair amount of lesser disloyalty. Mothers were constantly rebuked for their superstitious habits of putting their sick children in the cold oven or on the roof of the house and then waiting for something to happen. In the reign of King Edgar we find the clergy told to be diligent in withdrawing people from the worship of trees, stones and springs, while the laws of Canute, in the eleventh century, thought it necessary to stop the worship of the sun, the moon, fire, rivers and rocks, as well as the practice of witchcraft and sorcery.

These spiritual forbears were by no means all pious sheep devoutly taking refuge with their shepherds. Nations are like individuals; they have the same passions, vicissitudes, indecisions and inconsistencies. St Bede relates how once when the vessels of monks were nearly swamped at the mouth of the Tyne, a crowd of spectators mocked them from the beach: 'Let the fools perish; it will cure them of their presumption in trying to live differently from everybody else and in asking us to do the impossible'. Of St Trumwin we know that, for all his missionary zeal, he was chased and stoned, until he gave up and became priest in Whitby. It was ever thus.

The saintly Agilbert had come from France and became a bishop in Wessex. The king, however, grew so weary of listening to sermons which he could not understand that he promptly set up another bid – one for prayers and one for sermons.



*Englisc crypt in St Wystan's Church in Repton, probably built to house the relics of St Wystan*

We are told that Bishop Agilbert folded his tent and faded into the night. In the case of a certain Bishop of Worcester, it was the people who played rough. When, according to the custom, he preached a Lenten course in the forest, the smiths deliberately hammered their anvils for all they were worth, so that none could hear.

When St Dunstan rebuked Edwy for his immorality, the woman in the case set to work, like another Herodias, and had him accused of theft and embezzlement. St Dunstan was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, but it was in vain that he produced his accounts and receipts; he had to flee to Flanders in order to escape arrest. St Swithin was accused of intemperance, much as St Patrick was accused of being a connoisseur of alcohol and of teaching the people to make it. No doubt this accusation was an attempt on the part of drunkards to get their own back, for they were forever being rebuked for their ruling passion.

St Chad, who only wanted to be left alone to serve God, was willy-nilly consecrated Bishop of York, while Wilfrid's back was turned. However, St Theodore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was trying to please all in the interest of peace, decided that the consecration was invalid. Bishop Chad was thereupon deposed, taken to Lichfield and consecrated for the second time as ruler of that see.

Nevertheless, however evil the deeds done in the name of the Christian faith by those who wish to justify their sinfulness, there always blows through the Orthodox period of our history a strong and wholesome wind, the wind of ascetic struggle and heroism.

## 10. Friendships

Although St Cuthbert drew up rules restricting communication between monks and nuns, none of the English saints was on more affectionate terms with the sisters of Coldingham and Whitby. He would preach to them at intervals during the day and lodge for the night outside, to wit on the seashore where he prayed and rested. Cuthbert was resisted the fascination of the wild waves and foaming surf. Besides these communities, there were a great number of women consecrated to God and yet living at home. These also came in for a share of his attention. One of them was his old nurse who had cared for him, after he lost his parents, until he was fifteen, that is to say when he was a man in the eyes of the law.



*An English Icon of St Audrey*

Even when overwhelmed by labours, he never neglected his annual visit to her whom he called his mother. Once when he was with her a great fire broke out in the village. One by one the thatched wooden huts went up in flames. The nurse began to grow uneasy. 'Don't be afraid, mother', he said, 'you won't be harmed'. Nor was she, for as he prayed the wind changed and drove the fire in the opposite direction. The last relaxation which he permitted himself was a meal with St Elflada, Abbess of Whitby and niece of two kings, Oswald and Oswy. When Elflada was stricken with paralysis and found that the doctors could do nothing except shake their heads, she cried out in a fret: 'Ah! If only I had something belonging to my dear Cuthbert, I would be all right, I know I would'. A short time after he sent her a linen girdle which, to the annoyance of the doctors, she put on. In three days she was up as usual.

St Audrey (Etheldreda), the virgin queen as the historian calls her, was another favourite of his. She overwhelmed him with presents, which he promptly gave away. This, of course, was not exactly what she wanted and so, with her own hands, she embroidered for him a stole covered with gold and precious stones, so that when he stood in the presence of God, whom they both served, he might wear this memorial of her and remember her in the sacrifice. Whether St Cuthbert



ever used such vestments may be questioned, but he had no scruples about the linen shroud which the Abbess Verga gave him as a parting gift. He desired to be buried in it and he was. This man, whose faith naturally never interfered with his natural affections, reposed as he had lived.

Strangely enough, this same warm-hearted man forbade the entrance of women to his church at Lindisfarne. After his repose this prohibition was extended to Durham Cathedral as soon as his remains had been taken there. Of course, the separation of the sexes in public worship dates from the earliest times. Such segregation was simply a feature of Christian life and manners. As for St Wilfrid, St Cuthbert's opposite number in many ways, from start to finish his career was dominated to a large degree by feminine influence, both friendly and hostile.

It has been remarked that although many notable male saints have owed to their wives, mothers, sisters and spiritual lady friends a great portion of their glory and some of their best inspirations, there is not one of them all whose life was so completely transformed by the affection or the dislike of the female sex. As a boy, he was protected and seconded in his destiny by a Queen of Northumbria. Then, by encouraging another Queen of that country, St Audrey, to live as though she were not married, he drew upon himself the enmity of her husband. A third Queen of the North persecuted him for two years, ably and energetically backed up by the Queen of Wessex and the Queen of Mercia. These three together so worked on their husbands that, for a while, St Wilfrid was almost an outlaw in his native land.

At this critical stage of his fortunes, it was the Queen of the pagan Saxons of the South, Sussex, who offered him hospitality. His relations with nuns show much the same contradictions. St Hilda's opposition to him never weakened or wavered, while St Audrey continued to follow his advice in cloister as on the throne. St Ebba, Abbess of Coldingham, delivered him from an ignominious captivity. St Elfleda, St Cuthbert's friend, contributed more than any other to his final triumph. Last of all, on his death-bed, he bequeathed his shirt to a nun.

These exchanges of shirts were simple transactions. It was believed that some virtue or other was inherent in these articles, but they had good enough authority for that. There was the mantle of Elias in the Old Testament; and in the New Testament, the hem of Christ's cloak which the sick

woman touched with so much confidence. Was there not a king who was promised sanity and health provided he would consent to wear the shirt of a happy man? The happy man when found was shirtless, it is true. But up and down the world the belief still persists that a delicate child stands to gain by being put to sleep wrapped in its father's inner garment.

And this same St Wilfrid, if he had enemies in plenty, was loved with passionate enthusiasm by his own immediate followers. He was destined to repose at some distance from them, but he passed the last four years of his stormy life at Hexham. On one occasion had set out to visit Ripon when he was seized by a fainting fit. He was carried into a house on the roadside. But the report of his illness got about; and, at once, all the abbots of his monasteries and even the hermits who owed him allegiance, travelled post-haste to the spot asking anxiously for news of every passer-by they encountered. There was only one desire in the hearts of these men, to see once again their master and father and to find him with strength enough left to name the future abbots of their monasteries. He recovered, as it happened, but he caused the bell to be rung and, when the monks had gathered, he made them a kind of farewell address. At the end they were all in tears. Then he blessed them, recommended them to God and departed to see them no more.

As soon as he had passed on, as sometimes happens, everybody, including those who had resisted him, began to love him. All in distress called in prayer on him who had so well known the distresses of life – the blind, the infirm, the dying, the shipwrecked and especially those who were victims of persecution or of the ravages of war. A touching incident is recorded of a young man, unjustly condemned, who at the moment of his execution turned his face towards St Wilfrid's church and, in a loud voice, called upon the saint to help him before it was too late. At that moment two men galloped into the market-place and declared that they had come to stand security, for the condemned youth. This was legally in order, and the young man was saved.

The town of Hexham which grew up around his monastery had no walls, the universal respect for the memory of Wilfrid serving it instead of ramparts. Four centuries after his death, Malcolm of Scotland ordered, as a reprisal, the sack of the town, and the massacre of its inhabitants. The Galloway Picts, the most ferocious of the Scots,

were charged with the execution of the barbarous order. But St Wilfrid was more than a match for them. He spread so thick a fog over the whole district that the band of assassins could make no headway. They waited until it cleared only to find that the Tyne had risen in the night, risen so high that it could not be forded. Malcolm at this began seriously to consider what he was about and ended by giving up his design.

St Lioba was one of those who seem to have a special genius for friendships. On her frequent visits to the court she was accorded a state reception. Any number of bishops corresponded with her and coveted her advice and prayers. She made her final farewell to her Queen in these words: 'Farewell precious part of my soul! May Christ our Creator and Redeemer grant that we may see each other without embarrassment on the day of judgement'. Sts Lioba and Boniface who had been so united in life, after death shared the same place of rest.

In these early days this spiritual friendship can be seen in the double monasteries, that is, two distinct communities of monks and nuns living in the same place and under the same government. All the members, men and women, observed the same rule and led the same sort of life. The practice is as old as Christian monasticism itself and existed in Egypt as early as the time of St Pachomius and he reposed 348. St Radegund, the wife of Clotaire, whose cruelties obliged her to leave him, established the system at Poitiers long before the conversion of the English.

About the same period, St Fructuosus, who had the royal blood of the Visigoths in his veins, embarked on a similar course in Spain. It was so successful that in a short time that country contained over two hundred monastic establishments. St Bede asserted there was one in Rome. Whatever Ireland may have done in this way, only a single example of it is known for certain. In England, at least, and for quite a long time, the double monastery was the rule rather than the exception: Whitby, Ely, Coldingham, Sheppey, Minster, Wimborne and Barking being prominent instances. And in most cases, at any rate in England, it was the abbess who ruled over the mixed community.

At Ely St Audrey ordered the priests about. At Repton, St Guthlac became a monk under Abbess Elfrida. The social ideas of the time eased the success of this usage. The superiors were generally princesses of the reigning dynasty, who were

vested with authority over the surrounding neighbourhood. All within the range of their jurisdiction belonged to a family whose natural form of authority was maternal. When the future St Cædmon entered Whitby, he brought all belonging to him, including a child of three who was nursed and cared for by the nuns at Barking.

When St Theodore became Archbishop of Canterbury in 668, he determined to regulate the double monastery that had grown up in the missionary circumstances of early England. It had already been forbidden by the Church Councils, no doubt because of inevitable abuses. Experience shows that men and women together are always like fire and straw. He decreed that no new foundations of this kind should be started. They had completely disappeared by the time of the Danes and, in the revival of King Alfred and after under St Dunstan, no attempt was made to resurrect them.

That the system was carried on without any serious or widespread abuses is proved by its duration. However, St Bede did subject the Abbey of Coldingham to severe criticism, but not because Coldingham was a double monastery. He found fault with in this community was its lack of religious fervour and its worldly affectations in the matter of its clothing. This seems to have been the chief source of abuse generally, for the Council of Cloveshoe, held in 747, attempted to check it by means of a solemn decree. It might be inferred from the Penitentiary of Archbishop Theodore that abbesses and even parents were inclined to force young girls into becoming nuns, since this code allowed all nuns professed against their will to leave and marry if they wished to.

The two religious families of each double monastery lived in separate buildings. The nuns were not allowed to enter the monks' enclosure, and vice versa. Wimborne in Dorset, which was the double monastery *par excellence*, consisted of a pair of fortresses each surrounded by a strong wall. Here the priests were obliged to leave the church as soon as they had celebrated the services. Bishops were not permitted to enter the nunnery, and the abbess herself communicated with the outside world and gave her orders through a grated window.

And, far more effectual than walls, the superiors were nearly all recognised as saints. Wimborne in Dorset was started by Sts Cuthburgh and Cwenburgh, two Wessex princesses. When St Tetta was abbess, she let two of her nuns serve overseas

with St Boniface, and both of these nuns are in the Calendar – Sts Lioba and Thecla. Barking was equally fortunate and it was said of St Ethelburgh, the foundress, that she was cheered in her last days by the thought of the welcome awaiting her from the many members of her community in heaven. St Audrey, Abbess of Ely, was a wonderworker of her time. She took but one meal a day, wore no

linen and never returned to bed after the midnight service. Brought up by St Ebba, she in turn brought up the abbess who succeeded her, St Saxburgh. Whitby, too, was a nursery of saints, both male and female. Sts Bosa, Hedda, John of Beverley and Wilfrid the Younger received their spiritual education there, as did St Elfreda who succeeded St Hilda.

## CHILDREN OF LIGHT (Part 2)

### 4. Love

**W**HEN we have gained Faith in God, then we become different, we receive God's message of Love, for God is Love and Faith is learning to love God, to love Love. Indeed does not even the search for Faith make us different? Despite what some may say, although Christians may be faced by the same problems as Non-Christians, they are by their very nature different from Non-Christians. Some seem to think that all the Christian needs to do is to go to Church from time to time and affirm, when asked, that he or she is a Christian. In reality, when Christianity is sincerely accepted, it turns out to be very demanding. Just as the Church is a building very different from the market place or the office or the factory, so the Christian is very different from his fellow-men who are not Christians. Christianity should surely be a faith which it is difficult to accept in a luke-warm manner. Surely, if we are sincere in our Faith, we seek to bring others to our Faith by the example of our life?

In a word, just as Faith, the knowledge of the Love of God towards us, causes Love, out of Love we adopt the moral principles of the Christian Faith. Faith brings us to love God and therefore to love him who is made in God's image, our fellow-men.

*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (Jn.14, 34–35)*

*If ye love me, keep my commandments (Jn.14, 15)*

Christians, it seems, are always talking about Love and its importance in everyday life. What exactly, however, do we really mean when we talk of Love?

Apart from loving God or, in other words, having Faith in Him (see Chapter Three) without Whom of course, no Love would exist anyway, there are different types of Love to be distinguished. We talk for example, of passionate love, motherly love, self-love, Christian love, brotherly love, romantic love and so forth. Yet, what exactly are these different types of love?

Love is how we overcome Evil; it is the great force opposed to all forms of hate, pride, envy, vanity and egoism. Love is self-sacrifice, caring for others

Let us first consider the different forms of Love, except for the moment, self-love, passionate love and romantic love, which I would like to talk of later. All the other forms of love, such as brotherly love, paternal love, loving our enemy and so forth, are in fact all aspects of Christian love. It is easy to love one's kin, it is more difficult to love one's enemy; but we must love our enemy, for he too is one of God's children. Love is helping someone when he or she is in need, it is thinking about his or her problems when, if we were acting selfishly, we would rather be thinking about our own cares. Love is self-renunciation. Therefore, it applies equally when we are thinking about our neighbour's needs or our enemy's needs. In this way we feebly attempt to imitate the way in which Jesus Christ loved us perfectly. If somebody, our friend or our enemy, insults us, then we must not take offence, but must consider the real reasons why we were reproached – was it just? We must consider why we were about to take offence. Was it out of evil inside us? Was our reaction merely out of vanity? If the reproach was just, we should be glad, we should, as a result, love our friend or our enemy all the more, for he has pointed out to us our fault. Why should it make a difference whether it was our enemy and not our friend who pointed out our fault to us?

Love is the opposite of giving way to the evil feelings which lurk inside our hearts. We must not hurt, we must be compassionate, understanding, gentle and tolerant. Love grows within as we meditate about human life; Love grows through our knowledge of the human heart; Love grows from within the accumulated wisdom and experience inside our own hearts. We must pray for and also actively help all those in distress and in need of comfort. Let us help the lonely and the suffering, whether they are our relations, friends or enemies. It does not matter who they are to us. For are they not all human beings? All this is Christian love.

Just as Faith is Sight, so Love is Healing. Love is Non-Violence. The French poet, Verlaine, once said: *Nothing is better for the soul than to make another soul less sad.*

But what about the other forms of love? Let us first consider self-love.

Now, sometimes people talk of self-love as egoism; this is the usual sense of the word. However, we should never forget that Jesus Christ told us to love one another as ourselves. What did He mean by this? Certainly, He never instructed us to be egoists. What was meant was that we should have the same Christian love for ourselves as for our neighbours. We must have the proper attitude to ourselves, to our own beings; for as Christians we recognise our closeness to God, the fact that we are God's creatures. We realise this as an atheist or an agnostic does not and cannot. St Paul, in the Epistles, tells us not to misuse our bodies, for: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (1 Cor. 3, 16)

Our bodies then can be made holy because of our souls, which dwell inside them. If we love ourselves in this Christian way, we decline from insulting ourselves – for would that not be the same as insulting our neighbour? Before we do anything, we ask ourselves: is this to the greater Glory of God? We do not insult ourselves by watching a film which is full of sexual temptations, we do not smoke or swear: not because all these things are evil, but because they are not to the greater Glory of God. Thus self-love too in this sense is nothing but Christian love. Just as we must have reverence to our fellow-man, because he is part of God's Creation, so we must have reverence for ourselves. For we too, however unworthy we may be, are God's creatures, part of God's Creation.

Let us now pass on to the other forms of love: romantic love and passionate love, which both fit into the category of love between man and woman.

First of all, let us recognise that romantic love is an invention of the Western European mind. We should not, as Christians, love our partners more than God. Love between man and woman is neither a worship of the beloved, nor merely a physical relationship. This love is not the animalism that some people think of it as.

In ordinary Christian love (see above), we try to draw nearer to the feelings and viewpoints of our friend or enemy by overcoming through Love our own weaknesses, our sins, and thus we are helped to an understanding of our fellow-man. Love between a man and a woman, however, is when a spontaneous drawing-together of souls takes place. It is not the poet's veil over sex, for example, the admiration of the beloved's hair or legs or her slenderness or the colour of her eyes. Two such human souls who come together of their own free will do not come together in order to admire or worship each other, in a kind of mutual self-praise, but rather in order to worship and thank God for giving them the power to see another's soul in its full beauty.

Such a love, at its most profound moments, is a near perfect feeling-together. It is a state of voluntary union of two souls in the sight of God, two merged freedoms, two souls in tune. In this sort of love God helps us to see more clearly than at any other time the fullness, the reality and imminence of the Spirit of God in our neighbour. The veils of human artifice are lifted. And that is love between man and woman. It is a whole merging of two beings, a voluntary, dual, self-complementing self-sacrifice. This is Christian love at its most perfect in human beings. Sometimes, of course, problems arise; for it only takes one of the partners to withdraw his or her (most often, it seems, his) part of the voluntary compact of Love for the union to break down. Sometimes, also, the freedom of this voluntary giving turns into a compulsory giving and that is certainly neither Freedom, nor Love. It is passion.

Passion occurs as soon as we allow ourselves not to worship God, but another human being. We become totally dependent on that other human-being, we are in bondage to him or her. As a result we suffer cruelly. We are loving purely for selfish reasons, in order to fulfil our own egoistic, vain or jealous emotional needs. Instead of being free, as



in our love of God (for we can never love the Perfect enough), however great that love of God may be, we become slaves, in passionate love. We are free in our love of God, He being perfect, but in our passionate love for a person, we love a being who is fallible, who is incapable of doing anything, without God's help (whether he or she realises that or not). Before God we are nonentities. Therefore passion is in many ways the exact opposite to the allness of Christian love, whatever external form that Christian love may take on. It is also the opposite to the self-renunciation of the love between man and woman.

Moreover, passions are usually of a sexual nature. Love is not sex. The reason why men and women get married, when they love each other with that near-perfect Christian love, praising God, is that such a love provides a very firm basis for the raising of children. When sex is not in this family, reproductive-linked context, it becomes meaningless. Shakespeare writes of it in his *Sonnet 129*:

*The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action; and till action, lust  
Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame  
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust  
Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight*

Of course, one would not expect a sexless marriage for, unless we are in possession of the power of abstinence, it is impossible wholly to deny physical needs or desires. Apart from this, spiritual closeness can tend to mean physical closeness or togetherness. Sexual sins can sometimes, though not always, be among the worst, not because they are bad in themselves, but because they are sins against the human personality, against the human soul.

How then should a Christian man and woman live together in marriage? The answer is simple. It was long ago offered to us in the Epistles. The Epistles, referring in various places to married life among early Christians (I Cor. 6, 12–20; I Cor. 7, 1–40; I Cor. 11, 8–12; Ephes. 5, 12–33; I Peter 3, 1–17) present a very clear picture of how our married life ought to be conducted. About this there can be no doubt. The need to channel the desires of the body and all vain and animal-like relationships can clearly be seen. The romantic myth of love – the misted veil over secular passion and sex – is found to be non-existent. In the time of the early Christians they lived with God – the poets had not yet conceived of this veil. Man and woman should live together in mutual love, humility and self-sacrifice, thanking and praising God.

It is worth pointing out here the mysteriousness of reproduction, of becoming one in flesh and spirit. God, in His desire to express to humanity the Mystery of the Holy Trinity gave us many illustrations of this Great Mystery in human life. One of them is the mystery of becoming one in flesh and spirit. Here we see, in human – and therefore partly physical terms – the mystery of one being in three and three beings (the child who will be born as a result) in one. This is the trinity of human love. Here we begin to comprehend the mystery and the holiness of woman's womb, the place where the Holy Spirit, in the form of the Divine inspiration in the human soul, enters into the child to be born. This is why Christians are so pained to see the abuse of woman and her body in the pornography and abortions of modern society. Here sex is neither the human dignity of Love, nor of freedom; sex is tyranny.

There is still one more aspect of love between man and woman to be taken into account. We know how subject woman's heart is to the realisation of the presence of God, to Faith. It is, after all, part of woman's emotional make-up, as compared to man's relative rationalism. Most Christians are women. Woman in marriage can therefore help the Non-Christian husband to come to Faith. *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may also without the word be won by the conversation (= conduct) of the wives* (I Peter 3, 1).

Is this not similar to Goethe's meaning in his saying (*Faust*, Part II):

*All things corruptible are but a parable;  
Earth's insufficiency here finds fulfilment  
Here the ineffable wins life through love;  
Eternal Womanhood leads as above.*

Is not childbirth, the entry of a human soul into the world, the great gift of God, which He has conferred upon woman – a gift which it is not given to man to know? Is not this the Glory of the Mother of God? Is not by this that Eve has been redeemed?

In conclusion to the original question – What is Love? – we can say that fundamentally there is only one love and that that love is the great and all-embracing Christian Love. This Love may take on many, superficially different forms: but all, ultimately, are reconciled and made in to one by the all-embracing arms of Christian Love. Christian Love is the Love, which is grateful to God, towards God's Creation, towards our fellow men and

women. Therefore Love is holy, for it hallows human life, it overcomes Evil. Love is a glue, sealing and mending, healing and tending.

Love is all-powerful and the sacrifices made by it can both prevent and cure Evil. Even modern psychology, usually so inimical to all religious faith, witnesses to that. Christian Love is that which helps and comforts those who have fallen by the wayside, those who have stumbled and fallen away from the true Path. Christian Love is both outward and inward, it consists of both the inward mysticism of prayer and the outward practical asceticism of tending the sick. If we have the least faith in God, then because God is all, we must love our neighbour also. *Are we not all One Whole with God?* (1 Cor. 12, 12-31). In this way we cannot fail to love one another. To hurt our fellow-man is to hurt ourselves. For our enemies are also God's children. For if we do not love, we make ourselves our own enemies, if we do not forgive, opening our hearts, if we do not try to achieve mutual understanding, we attack, not others, but ourselves.

Christian Love is perhaps seen at its best in the children, in their innocence, when we are giving and we do not expect to receive back. This is the love of Prince Myshkin in Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, of the fool in Christ, the love of sublime humility: the simple, the burning, the compassionate love of Christianity. Love implies the possession of the correct attitude towards Life, it implies the operation in our daily lives, of Christianity of Christian morality. We work for the greater Glory of God: *All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not* (Cor. 10, 23). *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all for the glory of God.* (1 Cor. 10, 31).

Thus we have seen the nature of Love, and yet we have not seen some of the problems which face Love in everyday life, what it is necessary to overcome in order to love. Perhaps we can see this most clearly in the most difficult and yet by far the most important task which Love must face: the task of loving our enemy. It is in this that we are tempted to abdicate Love, in favour of violence and arrogance, whereas in reality we must make self-sacrifices, we must suffer, we must be humble and, moreover, with a joyful heart.

Suffering is perhaps the most paradoxical problem in Christian experience. It is necessary to suffer in order to conquer Evil – and yet how unwilling we are to allow ourselves to undergo

suffering. *In your patience possess ye your souls* (Lk 21, 9)

In various places the Scriptures refer to the old and well-known truth that suffering is good for the soul. Indeed, all suffering is for the good of mankind: would God, knowing us, desert us? Would He let us suffer without cause? Of course not for it is our suffering which witnesses to the Truth. Suffering is Victory over our own imperfections. Suffering is the reality which hides beneath the everyday life of mankind. It is suffering which must come, which is inevitable in life. The philosopher Berdiaiev said that if there were no suffering or pain in our lives, then the Animal in mankind would triumph. The devil, as he is already doing in present-day societies, temporarily made artificial and superficial, would win our souls in our sloth and apathy, were it not for suffering.

Without suffering our lives would become mechanical and therefore meaningless. If we tried to avoid suffering, the only consequences (as among those who attempt to do so in the West) would be Evil. And yet beyond the many apparently different forms of suffering, there is in reality only one suffering: the spiritual inability to overcome suffering: for we are so weakened by our own sins. With prayer we may overcome our sufferings and sorrows, and thus, prepared to sacrifice ourselves for others, we may defeat Evil in ourselves and in others. Suffering leads us to patience, to understanding and from there to Love.

In order to attain Love, we must be humble. To be compassionate we must be humble; are we Christians, after all, not servants of this world? We, as Christ said that He was, are servants, and yet we are of course able to look up to Christ, the servant of the world, as our Lord and Master: for it was He Who suffered the most.

When we suffer, we should think of Christ. Was His suffering not the most perfect of all? For in His suffering, He had no sins to be redeemed: He suffered entirely for us in so that our sins should be redeemed. His suffering was therefore the perfect sacrifice: we may only attempt to imitate Him, the Son of the Creator of the Universe: *I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep* (Jn. 10, 11). *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (Jn. 15, 13). Through suffering and self-sacrifice we are enabled to love; not to be violent, not to be angry, but to be patient and compassionate, despite the difficulties which may face us.

Love then creates Life and heals it in times of pain and suffering. Love is sanctified Life -for in Love Life becomes simply a growing awareness of God, an approach to His Person and to His Love. Therefore, the nearer we approach Him, the more we learn of Love and its wisdom: for God is Love. Love is togetherness, Love is all-forgiving. Love is humility – for Power brings out the worst in mankind; Power becomes Evil. Love is the opposite of weakness – Love alone is stronger than Death, as Christ has witnessed to us. It is through Love that Christians may know one another.

Let us therefore live in Love, sharing in common. There is a Trinity in human life that teaches us about the power of Love. That Trinity is the Trinity of Conception (before Birth), Marriage and Death. All are unions. Conception is that which calls us into existence, which invests us with a soul, with a spark of the Spirit of God. It is an entering into the knowledge of God; from Conception on we become free to choose between Good and Evil, between God and the devil. It is our first free knowledge of God. The second member of this Trinity is Marriage. Marriage is when we join together in order to become one in body and soul with another soul in the Kingdom of God. The third member is Death. Death is freedom and release from the necessities of this world. Death is when after Marriage we once more become one with our Maker.

At Birth we entered the difficult, dual world of mankind, at Marriage we entered the world of another soul – a difficult world also if we are not prepared to make any sacrifices. Death is when we enter the world of God. Death is Resurrection and Eternal Reconciliation, a perfect union. It is in the framework of this Trinitarian structure of human life that we discover the power of human and divine Love, where theoretically it is possible to free all the potential of the human being.

It is when we meet the man who denies God, who denies the wealth of Christian Love and Existence, who denies true Freedom, that we come to understand that Love may also be born out of external freedom. Love and its consequential Christian morality, like Faith, creates spiritual freedom within us; through our growing awareness of the presence of God, of Love, we are freed from slavery to our own faults and the faults of others. Yet that Love itself is created in external freedom, in freedom of choice. We can either reject Christianity and the ways of Love, or we can accept it, and thus also accept inner, spiritual freedom. This choice can only be made in conditions of external freedom. People cannot be forced to believe in God, in Love. They must accept it for themselves in conditions of external freedom, they must choose for themselves. Without external freedom Love therefore becomes impossible. Without external freedom, spiritual freedom therefore becomes impossible.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



I know that St Paul says that Orthodox women cover their heads in church, but is there any other reason?

*J. L., San Francisco*

It is an instinctive, natural, almost common sense sign of modesty, which is witnessed to in all religions.



What do you think of East and West as the way of Mary and the way of Martha? Are not the Catholic and Orthodox Churches two parts of the One Church?

*L. P., Walsingham*

This is the branch theory and has been firmly rejected by both parts of the Russian Orthodox Church since 2000. There is only One Church of Christ, either it is in Roman Catholicism, or else in Orthodox Christianity. People must choose, instead of justifying their procrastination with such fantastic theories.

Anybody who loves God must love his neighbour, otherwise, in the words of St John the Theologian, he is a liar. (Though it is true that a false humanistic love for one's neighbour, without love for God, can and does exist). The myth that the Orthodox Church, 'the way of Mary', does not care about social problems, 'the way of Martha',

can easily be dismissed. For example, read the following extract from pp. 196–98 of *Kievan Russia* by George Vernadsky, Yale, 1948:

‘Education, as well as the care of the sick and the poor, was considered in the Kievan period the concern of both the princes and the Church. Hardly anything was done in this field prior to Russia’s conversion. It was Christianity that supplied the driving motives for such activities: the ideas of Christian enlightenment and charity.

The educational policies of the princes and the church will be dealt with in another connection. Here we shall deal briefly with social care. It should be noted first of all that there was much more cohesion in Kievan society, and in medieval society at large, than in modern society, as a result of which the need for assistance on the part of the state to individuals was less marked than it is now. Each family commune (zadruga) and each guild customarily took care of its own members whenever they needed care. In their turn the prince’s retainers could always count on the prince for assistance in any emergency, and so with the members of a boyar’s household. However, with the gradual dissolution of the guilds and the separation of the family from the zadruga, that new social unit—the family—being smaller, was more vulnerable in the face of elemental disasters such as war or famine and consequently afforded less protection to its members. Simultaneously, the growth of the cities and the gradual proletarianization of small landowners likewise resulted in the appearance of men and women deprived of regular means of subsistence. All of them needed aid and to a certain extent such assistance was given to them by the princes.

As we know, Vladimir the Saint was the pioneer in this field as in many others. Even granting that both the chronicler and the biographer exaggerated the neophyte prince’s Christian zeal, we must admit that he laid the foundation of public charities in Kievan Russia. At least some of his descendants followed his lead and the distribution of food to the poor became an essential feature of every important state and religious festival, even if not made continuous. As an example, on the occasion of the transportation of the relics of the martyr princes Boris

and Gleb (1072) the sick and the poor were fed for three days. In 1154 Prince Rostislav of Kiev distributed all of the estate of his uncle, which the latter had bequeathed to him, among the churches and the poor.

That the princes generally considered the care of the poor as part of their duties may be seen from the words of Vladimir Monomach’s ‘Testament’, already mentioned, in which he advises his children: ‘Above all things, forget not the poor, and support them to extent of your means. Give to the orphan, protect the widow, and permit the mighty to destroy no man’. From the last phrase it may be seen that a new idea is here expressed: not of mere charity but of a social policy having as its object the protection of the underprivileged. As we know, Vladimir Monomach himself entered upon such legislation.

The Church in its turn contributed much to social care by founding hospitals, homes for the aged, and hostels for pilgrims. It is significant that in Kievan Russia the physician (lechets) was considered one of the ‘Church people’, which means that he enjoyed the protection of the Church’.



How much in modern money is thirty pieces of silver (the price which Judas received for Christ)?

*S. P., Felixstowe*

This was the price of a slave at that time. I have read that it would be equivalent to about £7,500 today.



Why do Western people clasp their hands together in prayer? What is the origin of this strange custom?

*V. K., London*

Its origin is in the late eleventh century feudal custom of paying homage to a secular lord. It is thus purely secular and unOrthodox, as is feudalism. Previously, as in the Old Testament, people used to hold their hands up to heaven and open in prayer, as can be seen in icons, for example of the Mother of God ‘orans’ (praying), or as among Arab and other Orthodox today.



Regarding the Western European saints of the Early Church – what is the attitude of ROCOR in general? It would seem reasonable to acknowledge all the saints who lived in Europe before the falling away



of the West as authentic saints. However, the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate made no automatic decision regarding the saints of Britain, which I found rather odd – if the Apostle Paul stands in no need to have his veneration revised by the Moscow commission on canonisation, why does St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne? However, I am looking for firm ground in this matter – in case I am accused of venerating someone who is not found in any Orthodox calendar, and may possibly be charged with introducing the *filioque* rather than praised for his struggle with Arianism.

A. K., Spain

There was a terrific battle here in England in the 70s regarding the early saints. Metr Antony Bloom and his admirers – who were also his jailers – were at first against these saints (but they had changed their attitudes by the early '90s in political manoeuvring). However, ROCOR was for these early saints, which is why many converts left the MP for ROCOR at that time, both here and in the U.S. Although it was not easy inside ROCOR either and the test case was St Edward the Martyr († 979). Once he had been accepted at ROCOR Synodal level and by someone as conservative as Metr. Philaret, the floodgates opened.

Basically, all the saints of the West are accepted up until 1000, except for the papist and anti-Photian Pope Nicholas I and, earlier, the obvious cases of Charlemagne and those around him, who promulgated the *filioque*. This is not the original anti-Arian Spanish *filioque*, which was justified at the time by St Maximus the Confessor, his friend St Theodore of Canterbury and lately by Vladimir Lossky. (This is why the Spanish St Leander of Seville has always figured in Eastern calendars).

There is a more reserved approach to those after 1000, since in 1014 the *filioque* was first used in Rome. Then, of course, after the purely symbolic (but still very useful) date of 1054, there is a complete cut-off, except of course in southern Italy where (Greek) Orthodoxy survived well into the 12th century and after.



Should Creationism be taught alongside Darwinism in schools? What is the Orthodox view?

D. R., London

It seems to me that the real problem is that theories are being taught in schools as fact. Most children's and school biology books show a series of pictures of human beings 'evolving' from apes and they proclaim that this is the truth. It is not

evolutionism is an atheist theory, which for believers is as absurd as believing that the moon is made of cheese or that the earth is flat, – which by the way is anti-Scriptural ('for He made the round world so sure ...').

This is not to say that there are not problems with creationist theory – and theory it is, like all 'isms'. The fact is that we do not know much about any of this, for the simple reason that we are not God the Creator, but man the creation. It is the arrogance of those who teach Darwinist theory presenting it as fact which really worries me. Why not teach in books and schools something like this:

'Those who do not believe in God claim that the universe and man were created through a random process of evolution, at every stage involving trillions of chances. They say that man evolved from animals, in the later stages from apes. Those who believe in God believe that the Universe and man were created by God Who is Almighty and can use all sorts of methods to create, both instantly and in stages, as is explained in the Christian Bible. For those who believe in God, there is a great difference between human-beings and animals – this is that human-beings have an immortal soul, which they could not possibly have inherited from animals'.



What are the conditions for Apostolic Succession? Why do both Orthodox and Roman Catholics deny Apostolic Succession to the Church of England and so (re-)ordain Anglican clergy who join the Orthodox Church and become Orthodox priests?

R. M., Worcester

From the viewpoint of Orthodox canon law, there are two conditions for Apostolic Succession to be maintained. These are:

1. A provable and unbroken chain of ordination by at least two canonical bishops acting with the blessing of other bishops, without force and without simony.
2. Continuous belief in the sacrament of ordination.

Thus, for example in the case of the Lutheran Church of Norway, there is no doubt that there was an unbroken chain of ordination from pre-Reformation Catholicism to Lutheranism. However, the Church of Norway denies the existence of the sacrament of ordination. In the case of the Church of England, there are many arguments about the first condition, but even if

there were agreement that the first condition had been met, the second is not, since the vast majority of Anglicans have no concept of what a sacrament is – hence the contemporary ‘ordination’ of ‘priestesses’. In any case, from an Orthodox viewpoint, even if both conditions were met, this would only mean that Anglicans were lapsed Roman Catholics, i.e. still outside the Church.



What would you reply to those who say that Orthodox are anti-Semitic? After all it was Orthodox who carried out the pogroms.

*M. L., Pennsylvania*

I cannot wholly agree with your last statement. I think we have to see the so-called ‘pogroms’ in their economic context. Pogroms took place all over Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. Therefore they were not carried out uniquely by Orthodox, but rather by all Europeans. The ‘pogroms’ in Berlin and Vienna were particularly bad, far worse than in western Russia. As regards the attacks in what was then the Russian Empire, they were carried out mainly by Catholics and Uniats in Polish-speaking, Ukrainian-speaking and Romanian-speaking areas.

These pogroms should not be viewed in a religious context, but a cultural one. They should be seen in the context of economic jealousy on the part of nominal and decadent Christians, not on the part of practising Christians. It is a fact that most Jews were often hardworking (more than many Orthodox) and successful. Some of them, the non-practising Jews, used their economic success to exploit others – both Jews and Non-Jews. (Karl Marx should be seen as one of these – he exploited the naïve with his absurd ideology, which he reckoned to be ‘scientific’).

This exploitation caused jealousy, especially in poor parts of Europe, like Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine and Romania. (It should be noted that Jews were only living in large numbers in these areas of Central and Eastern Europe, because they had been expelled by the mediæval anti-semitism of Catholic Western Europe, especially in countries like Spain, France and England, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe they enjoyed complete religious freedom and prospered there). So it is pure hypocrisy on the part of Western Europe to talk about their persecution there. They were only there because of Western persecution and in Central and Eastern Europe they had complete religious freedom, unlike in Western Europe.

Thus Orthodox who were involved with the attacks on Jews, in which dozens, perhaps hundreds of innocent Jews were killed (not tens of thousands, as some people claim) were only nominal, not practising. These attacks were condemned time and again by Orthodox. For example, by the future Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, then bishop of the strongly Jewish town of Zhitomir, or St John of Kronstadt who wrote of the Kishenev pogrom: ‘What are you doing? Why have you turned into barbarians – destroying and robbing people who live in the same country as yourselves?’ (My thoughts on the violence of Christians towards Jews in Kishinev). St Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, wrote: ‘We have heard reports of Jewish pogroms ... Orthodox Russia! May this disgrace pass you by. May this curse not affect you. May your hand not turn crimson in the blood that calls out to heaven ... Remember the pogroms – this is dishonour for you’. (Message of 8 July 1919).

In other words, I think we need to see the pogroms (like the tens of thousands of times worse Jewish genocide carried out by the Western European Nazis who received the co-operation of the ‘Catholic’ French, Lithuanians, Croats, Slovaks and many other peoples) in the context of the deChristianisation of Europe, which process sped ahead from the mid-nineteenth century on and led to two great European Wars.

We cannot forget how the Jews lived in Constantinople, much to the scandal of the late 11th and 12th century. Crusaders, who performed the first pogroms in the Rhineland in 1095, which marked the beginning of ‘Anti-Semitism’ in Europe, were astonished by this. Indeed, the fourteenth century Patriarch Philotheus was racially a Jew. (Can you imagine a Pope of Rome at the time being racially a Jew?). Some sources say that Emperor Michael II was also a Jew, as were many other saints, for example St Romanus the Melodist. Some 100,000 Jews joined the Russian Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century alone. Of course, this is no different from the case of the Apostles – racially Jews – and the Mother of God and the human nature of Christ.

(By the way, the word anti-Semitism is incorrect, for the Arabs are also racially Semites. To call the Arab Palestinians anti-Semitic, as some do, is absurd. The term should surely be anti-Jewish).



What practical advice would you give to new converts to the Church?

*L. S., New York*

1. Do as other Orthodox.
2. Do not get obsessed with externals, especially monastic externals.

Externals will not save you, it is what is inside you that will save you – or not. Thus Orthodox do not wear 'Orthodox T-shirts' or 'icon-badges' (I have actually seen such things) or crosses outside their clothing. Crosses are hidden inside clothing, worn next to the heart. Similarly, you will notice in normal Greek, Romanian, Russian etc. parishes that virtually no men wear beards. And yet it is often easy to spot a convert, because he has a long beard. Do you seriously think that a beard will save you? Do you seriously think that one priest is more spiritual than another because his beard is longer? Respect the behaviour of the Church-going laypeople around you – they have been Orthodox for generations longer than you. Do not think that you are better than them, however they may sometimes conduct themselves.

Similarly, male converts can get obsessed with having long hair, female converts with wearing what appear to be tablecloths on their heads, instead of small, modest, lightweight headscarves or other headware. All the advice about how we should dress in church can be summed up by the one word – modest. I would much rather see a modestly-dressed woman without a headscarf than an immodestly-dressed woman with a headscarf. Similarly, it is possible for a woman to wear trousers modestly, but a skirt or dress indecently.

Both male and female converts sometimes appear to be obsessed with carrying prayer knots (chocki / komposchini – for some reason called by some prayer ropes, they do not in any way resemble ropes). Unless you are a monk or a nun, prayer knots should never be visible to others. They are for private prayer. We do not make private prayer into public prayer. As St Matthew's Gospel says, we should go into 'our own chamber and pray'. The obsession with dressing in black also seems to exist among some converts. Wear joyful colours, Orthodoxy is not only fasting, it is also feasting!

Finally, stop all this pseudo-intellectual conversation about 'the Fathers', or mispronouncing Greek and Russian words (cradle Orthodox either pronounce them properly or use the correct

English word. Mispronunciation simply makes you look pretentious and foolish to others). Stop name-dropping or being obsessed with exotica, names like Isaac and Ephraim, Symeon and Euphrosyne, Leave that to monastics who accept such names and are under obedience.



When did Roman Catholics change the way of making the sign of the cross, going from left to right?

*B. S., Paris*

It was gradually, during the Middle Ages. (Clearly, it could not have happened before the eleventh century – because Roman Catholicism did not exist at that time). This is what the *Catholic Encyclopedia* has to say:

'Ælfric (about 1000) probably had it in mind when he tells his hearers in one of his sermons: "A man can wave about wonderfully with his hands without creating any blessing unless he make the sign of the cross. But if he do the fiend will soon be frightened on account of the sign of victory. With three fingers we must bless ourselves for the Holy Trinity" (Thorpe, 'The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church' I, 462). Fifty years earlier than this, Anglo-Saxon Christians were exhorted to 'bless all their bodies seven times with Christ's rood token' (*Blicking Homilies*, 47), which seems to assume this large cross. Bede in his letter to Bishop Egbert advises him to remind his flock 'with what frequent diligence to employ upon themselves the sign of our Lord's cross', though here we can draw no inferences as to the kind of cross made. On the other hand when we meet in the so-called 'Prayer Book of King Henry' (eleventh century) a direction in the morning prayers to mark with the holy Cross 'the four sides of the body', there is a good reason to suppose that the large sign with which we are now familiar is meant.

At this period the manner of making it in the West seems to have been identical with that followed at present in the East, i.e. only three fingers were used, and the hand travelled from the right shoulder to the left.



When was Jesus Christ born according to the reckoning of the Orthodox Church?

*R. K., Lancashire*

Since about the fifth century at least, the Orthodox Christian reckoning has been that Christ was born in what is now called 8 BC. Historically, this is more or less borne out by the following facts.

Firstly, we should recall that though the BC/AD reckoning is Greek/Alexandrian in origin, it only came into use under Charlemagne and then into common use in Roman Catholic Europe. This was between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. Indeed, Portugal was the last Western European country to accept the reckoning in the fifteenth century. Everybody now agrees that this reckoning is inaccurate and that Christ was born some time before what we now mistakenly call 4 BC, when Herod died.

Secondly, we know that Christ was born while Quirinius was governor of Syria (Luke 2, 1), that is, when Caesar Augustus was in power. This puts His birth some time between 12 BC and AD 9. However, since he was born during the reign of King Herod (Matthew 2), he must have been born before 4 BC, when Herod died. This means that He was born between 12 BC and 4 BC.

We must then take into account the story that the wise men came from the East to visit Jesus (after seeing Herod). It was after this that Herod massacred those under 2 years of age in the Bethlehem area (Matthew 2). This indicates that Jesus was up to 2 years old at the time when Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt. This puts His birth between 12 and 6 BC, dating it to about the time that Tradition says – 8 BC.

Over the years several rationalistic commentators have also tried to date Christ's birth from the appearance of the star of Bethlehem, associating this with a planet (especially Jupiter), conjunctions of planets, comets or stars. However, the Tradition of the Church is unanimous and Roman Catholics still agree with it. The Tradition is that the star of Bethlehem was not a star (stars do not come down to earth and 'stand over where the young child was born'). The star of Bethlehem was the Holy Spirit



What is required in order to become an Orthodox priest?

*J. S., New York State*

For the priesthood four things are required.

By far the least important is some general reading and knowledge about the Church, theology, history etc. etc., in other words everything you get in a seminary.

You should have read the Old Testament through at least once, together with a study guide, the New Testament you should read regularly (daily calendar readings and otherwise) and you should also read regularly the Lives of the Saints. The latter will teach you pastoral and ascetic theology, dogmatics, Church history etc. They are far more important than seminary.

Thirdly and even more importantly, there is the knowledge of the services, how they fit together, how they are constructed, how to do them. The best way of learning this is to be in the choir for some years. Serving in the altar for a long period will also greatly help.

Finally, the most important thing is being able to put up with people, laypeople and clergy, whose views are quite different from your own, who will despise, hate and slander you for no reason other than jealousy, oppose the good you try to do and denounce and bully you. Here, long-term patience, tolerance and humility are vital. I know many people who have all the book knowledge to be priests, but would be impossible as priests because of their characters.

Of course, there are also the canonical requirements, such as being physically sound, not violent or alcoholic, being married once and to a wife who has only been married once etc.



How many Orthodox bishops are there worldwide?

*M. S., Colchester*

I do not know exactly, but would think that with 203 bishops in the Russian Church today, the total must be around 450.

## CHILDHOOD IN THE LIGHT OF ORTHODOXY

*Below we publish an account of a childhood which was directly and indirectly influenced by Orthodoxy. We would be pleased to accept contributions on the same topic from other readers.*

### 1. Growing up on a Communist housing estate outside Paris

**I** WAS born in Annaba in Algeria at the end of the Franco-Algerian War, during which over two million people lost their lives. After France had



lost the war, all European settlers in Algeria of all origins, Swiss, French, English, Russian, German, Greek, Spanish and above all the majority Italian, were faced with a choice: 'The Suitcase or Death'. Indeed, when I was still in my mother's womb, my parents were threatened and nearly had their throats cut by an Algerian fanatic who was promoting this 'choice'. Fortunately, my parents, and therefore I, were saved by an older Muslim man, who intervened and defended us. I owe my survival to a Muslim.

Annaba is the Arab name for Bone or Hippo, the city of which Blessed Augustine was bishop in the fifth century. I was baptised there in St Anne's church, which was bulldozed by the Muslims the very next day. For all I know I may therefore be the last local Christian to have been baptised in the city of Blessed Augustine.

As a result of the relentless pressure on Europeans to leave Algeria, most remaining Europeans did leave and were scattered all over the world. The members of my extended family fled wherever they could. Today I have relatives in Western Europe, Canada, Argentina and Polynesia. Some never made up for what they lost, others, like my father's cousin, Claudia Cardinale, did very well.

My parents and grandparents watched as the orange plantations that had been planted by my English great-grandfather and which had supplied many European markets were torn up by the Arabs and burned. With this act of self-destruction came the opportunity for the more business-minded Israelis to begin selling their Jaffa oranges all over Western Europe. Thus, in late 1963, finally we too fled Algeria, abandoning our house and everything, except for a single suitcase.

Although we had no French blood and France was a country which we had never seen, we were to land in Nice, as exiles. My parents had learned French in Algeria and only the former colonial power, France, was willing to accept us as refugees. Most of my father's Italo-Romanian family settled in France. As for my mother's father, an Englishman from the English colony in Algeria, he decided to cross France. He wanted to walk to England, the country he had never seen, despite having served in the Royal Navy (Mediterranean Fleet) in the Second World War. Together with his wife, my Indo-Maltese grandmother, suitcase in hand, he walked north until he reached Amiens in northern France. There he had a heart attack and died, never reaching his promised land.

As for us, we eventually moved to a modest flat in a fourteen-storey block in one of the many Communists suburbs which ringed Paris. At that time virtually everyone who worked in the municipality, including the teachers in the local schools, were card-carrying Communists and atheists. They had to be, in order to be appointed by the local mayor, who ruled his municipality like a despot.

Spiritually, we had been deprived of the missionary Catholicism of the White Fathers, with its genuine liturgical and ascetic traditions. We had landed amid the revolutionary modernism, not to say, iconoclasm and atheism of 1960s French Catholicism, which had contributed so much to the fatal Second Vatican Council. We were lost. Perhaps it was for this reason that we soon discovered and at once felt at home among White Russian émigrés in France. Like us, they too had lost their country, they too were exiles and their only anchor was their Church, which we discovered through them.

In any case, from the age of six, I, the child of exiles, was brought up with the grandchildren of Russian exiles, feeling at home in their close-knit community in the Russian Orthodox village in Paris. Thus, I lived in two worlds. On the one hand, there were Communist blocks of flats and a Communist school, with all the delinquency, drugs and teenage abortions which a religion-less life created. On the other hand, there was the richness of Church life, patterned by its cycle of feasts and fasts, its choral singing, its spiritual and moral teachings and values, a way of life which in so many ways was just the opposite of the world around me.

And it was here that I grew up and was inculcated by Orthodox values, the Tradition which no-one will ever take away from me. Perhaps in this respect at least my childhood was not so different from that of many Russian Orthodox inside the Soviet Union. What I do know is that, like many Russians, just before the Great Fast, we sing 'By the rivers of Babylon', I still feel deeply and know that my only hope is to find the Heavenly Homeland, for it is not to be found here on earth.

# OPINION PAGE

## Houses of Healing to Houses of Horror? The Transformation of our Hospitals

*by Eadmund*



**B**OTH my mother and my mother-in-law worked in hospitals: the former as a radiographer, the latter as a nurse. From a very early age my wife and I thus came to accept hospitals as places where you went to get well, and doctors as people who dispensed healing. I remember my local GP being accorded an almost god-like status, and I am sure that others of my age will have similar recollections. Unfortunately it is partly this very reverence for the medical profession, which has enabled the unscrupulous among them to intro-duce insidious ideas and practices.

Yet, recently a nurse in a hospital in Kent was suspended from duty and threatened with dismissal for offering to pray for a patient. The hospital board subsequently exonerated the nurse and allowed her to recommence her duties, but the fact that such an incident could have happened shows the depths to which we have descended.

When you visit a hospital today, you find that many changes have taken place. One very minor one, but nevertheless significant in a symbolic sense, is that you have changed from being a patient to a number (or, perhaps even worse, a 'customer'). Admittedly, this has the advantage of allowing your records to be accessed at any terminal of the National Health Service (NHS)<sup>1</sup>. It has also removed the need for anyone to study them in any detail.

The old-fashioned methods of diagnosis, which required personal interaction with medical staff, sometimes over a period of time, are rapidly disappearing. You are plugged into a machine that takes your blood pressure and temperature almost automatically, and your blood and urine are tested: the results of these tests determine your treatment. There is almost no need for a nurse to attend the patient in person, and although good and caring nurses, thank God, still exist, they are perhaps becoming more and more scarce.

My daughter had the misfortune to be in hospital a few years ago to have her appendix removed. The wound became infected with MRSA. She was discharged prematurely, and owing to the non-existent state of the aftercare, we had to take her into hospital as an emergency admission in the

early hours of the morning on two separate occasions. She had a tendency, I believe not all that uncommon, for infections and other indications not to show up in her blood, so this infection was minimised by the doctors, who seldom approached closer than the foot of her bed. Only when a doctor actually felt the wound with his fingers, thus causing a huge emission of green pus, was the seriousness of the infection admitted and she was given a large dose of the correct antibiotics, on which she quickly recovered.

This kind of thing can of course be put down to the extreme pressure that the hospitals are now under and the resulting pressures on the over-worked and overstretched staff. Many of the practices that have recently come in are superficially good and enable a great deal of diagnostic work to be undertaken quickly and efficiently, so that the great majority of patients depart satisfied. Apart from the occasional outbreak of MRSA or C-difficile that reach the news from time to time, the system appears to be working tolerably if not well, but other dangers lurk.

You may not be aware that the basic sustenance necessary to support life is no longer considered a necessity. It is administered, along with drugs, prosthetics etc. as treatment, and can be withdrawn. So if you are unfortunate enough to be brought into hospital in a coma, or to lapse into one, you are in danger of having your life support withdrawn. You can be starved or dehydrated to death if, in the opinion of the doctors in charge of the case, you are unlikely to survive and are in a 'permanent vegetative state', notwithstanding the many cases when people have been declared 'brain dead' and have then come round<sup>2</sup>.

It is not only coma that is to be feared. A forty-three-year-old man with Down's syndrome, who could not swallow because of a stroke, was not provided with a feeding tube and starved to death 'in agony' in a hospital. Doctors mistakenly thought nurses were feeding Mr Martin Ryan, who died after twenty-six days without food. The Mencap charity says in a report that the health service has also failed other people with mental difficulties, citing a young woman denied cancer

treatment and a young man who died during treatment for a broken leg.

As you approach the end of life, when you hope to be relieved of such worries, you have to be very careful to have a document to ensure that treatment will be carried out according to your wishes. However this Living Will business can cut two ways, as it can include requests for the withdrawal of food and drink. Doctors in Britain could be prevented from practising if they disobey them, according to predictions about draft guidelines to be published by the General Medical Council. Care Not Killing said: 'A doctor who treats their patient can now be actively breaking the law.' Ms Nadine Dorries MP said vulnerable and elderly people would be worried by the proposed rule. Ms Melanie Phillips, the commentator, described this aspect of the guidelines as potentially forcing medical staff to do harm. People's wants, not necessarily written down, were to be prioritised over their needs.

The leader of Scottish Catholics, referring to the recent Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act<sup>3</sup>, has even compared the British government to the Nazis. In an open letter to Mr Gordon Brown, the prime minister, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, called the embryology bill misguided and compared its various provisions to the horrors of the Hitler regime. He writes: 'The hideous savagery of [Nazi] experiments convinced the civilised world that such practices [had to] be outlawed forever.' The Cardinal urged Mr Brown to amend the bill 'as a matter of great urgency and human decency.' Lord Winston<sup>4</sup>, the fertility specialist, described the Cardinal's remarks as 'unhelpful'. Cardinal Edward Egan, the Catholic Archbishop of New York also described how Hitler and Stalin regarded certain groups as sub-human and likened this to the treatment of the unborn. With such men as Mr Brown and Lord Winston in control of the NHS, we may well tremble.

Persecution of the elderly is being heightened, however, by the advocates of assisted suicide, and the Culture of Death seems to be gaining momentum despite warnings from many people, not all of them bishops and priests. Nearly two fifths of family doctors in Britain support euthanasia and would assist suicides, according to a recent survey of 460 respondents described in *GP* magazine. Twice as many support changes to the law on assisted suicide as did five years ago. A 2004 survey found four fifths of such doctors against euthanasia. However The British Medical Association repeated its opposition to changes to the law and The Royal College of General

Practitioners has not changed its view, but one cannot rely on this. The Care Not Killing organisation has written to all 129 members of the Scottish Parliament asking them to oppose moves to legalise assisted suicide and/or euthanasia. It calls Ms Margo MacDonald's recent proposal highly dangerous and said it would bring about euthanasia on demand (Ms MacDonald has Parkinson's disease and wants to end her own life).

This unnecessary meddling and reopening of the subject, including the showing of gruesome plays by the BBC, also in my view 'unhelpful', has paved the way for Mrs Patricia Hewitt, a former British health minister, to attempt an amendment to the Coroners and Justice Bill to make it legal to take people abroad to commit suicide. This is an unwarranted threat to disabled and vulnerable people. Paul Tully, the general secretary of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), said: 'The pro-euthanasia lobby is seeking to change the public perception of suicide – to make it seem like a reasonable and proper course of action for people who are suffering.'

Ms Hewitt also wants assisted suicide legalised in Britain. She says she would help her husband kill himself (a statement that seems to me sufficient to debar her from making any public pronouncement). The chairman of the English and Welsh Catholic Bishops' Department for Christian Responsibility and Citizenship warned that Ms Hewitt's amendment would put pressure on patients to consider suicide. The Most Rev Peter Smith wrote of many people 'who might persuade themselves, or be subtly persuaded by others, that [assisted suicide] is the best course for them – and for those around them.'

The advocates of the Culture of Death are always pleading that their alterations of the law will contain inbuilt safeguards for those wish to allow God to choose when they die. However, safeguards in Oregon do not stop abuses of its law. Mr Wesley Smith, a lawyer and member of the Discovery Institute, Washington, DC writes that two cancer patients in the state were told their treatment was too expensive but that the government would pay for them to kill themselves. Evidence from the Netherlands shows that, even with safeguards, around 900 patients a year are being killed by doctors without request or consent, besides those who volunteer for death. In order to truly safeguard patients, what is needed in the UK is wider understanding of the pain control available, and the rewriting of recent pro-euthanasia legislation and protocols to make clear that intentional killing is not acceptable.

The picture is not wholly black, however, and I should mention that a considerable amount of research is being done into new treatments for the diseases commonly associated with old age, such as dementia. However I must quote here Antonia Tully of Patients First Network, who said: 'Pouring resources into cures and treatments for old-age illnesses is missing the point that people need care and love in old age, whether they're ill or not.' This statement seems to sum up a great deal of what is wrong with the government-manipulated (that is, accountant-manipulated) NHS today.

Should you fall victim to a car accident you will soon need to consider the possibility of having your organs harvested without your consent, as Mr Brown seems set on introducing a measure which will presume consent as against the *status quo*, in which consent has to be asked. This is a thorny problem, but again many people are not aware of precisely what today's medical personnel define as 'death'. 'Brain death' has been introduced by physicians eager to reap the harvest of kidneys, hearts and livers, because of course if the heart and lungs cease to function and one becomes 'dead' in the hitherto accepted sense of the word, the organs become unviable.

LifeSiteNews (LSN) reported last autumn that Dr Tibbals, a prominent Melbourne practitioner had written that, contrary to popular belief, most organ donations take place before the donor is actually dead. He argued that the vague criterion of 'brain death' had blinded potential donors to the fact that their organs are often harvested while they are still alive. He called on medical institutions to review their organ harvesting guidelines to ensure that donors are aware of their full consequences.

Dr Tibbals points out that current medical practices usually contravene the law, which states that a donor must display irreversible cessation of all functions of their brain or of blood circulation. Australian doctors usually wait only two minutes after a heart has stopped beating before allowing harvesting. But Dr Tibbals says two minutes was established purely for utilitarian reasons, and is inadequate time to determine whether the loss of circulation is 'irreversible'. Waiting longer could threaten the viability of donated organs. He observed that 'It could be troubling for the public to realise that doctors looking out for organ donors are also the ones formulating guidelines on how to declare death for organ transplantation.'

Organ donor groups, who seem to regard their injured brethren as potential collections of spare parts, have criticised Dr Tibbals' article, as you would expect, expressing concern that it may

cause donors or potential donors to reconsider their commitment. 'This could be very damaging to public confidence of brain death diagnosis, because a lot of people might say, "we don't believe in this any more," and as a consequence, people might die on waiting lists,' said Bill Silvester, the medical director of LifeGift. (Many people today seem to regard the sacred loan of their life as some kind of right, and not something that God can call in at any time). Dr Gerry O'Callaghan also dismissed Dr Tibbals' ideas, claiming that donors should be confident that a brain death diagnosis always means true death. 'There is no possibility that they would be conscious, that they would have the capacity to feel pain, that they have the capacity for independent life,' he said.

However LifeSiteNews (LSN) has reported several recent cases in which patients deemed 'brain dead' resuscitated only moments before their organs were to be removed. Such cases have brought more evidence to the table, showing that the highly contested definitions of 'brain death,' and the later idea of 'cardiac death,' do not eliminate the possibility that donors may yet recover from seeming lifelessness. LSN published the story in June of a Frenchman who, after suffering cardiac arrest for at least ninety minutes, was being prepared for organ removal when doctors noticed he was breathing, his pupils were dilating, and he reacted to pain. Within weeks, the patient that had been considered 'brain dead' was walking and talking.

In another example last year twenty-one-year-old Zack Dunlap was spared from dissection when a relative saw him react to touch, minutes before he was scheduled to have his organs removed. Zack was originally deemed eligible to donate his organs when doctors could detect no blood flow to his brain. He later said, however, that he could hear the doctors pronouncing him dead as he lay seemingly unconscious. In his article 'Organ Donation: The Inconvenient Truth', LSN medical advisor Dr John Shea reveals the disturbing similarity between these 'miraculous' cases and other organ donors whose surgeries were successful.

Apparently people who are having organs removed after they are 'dead' are often anaesthetised, to prevent any movement of their body occurring during the operation, as movement by the donor is 'distressing to doctors and nurses.' So I should think. Anyone would be distressed to see a body that they have been assured is 'brain dead' jerking about in direct contradiction.

As a post script to the arguments on transplantation, we will finally add the comment of Professor Sir Richard Gardner of Oxford University, so gruesome and macabre that one can hardly believe that it was uttered in twenty-first century England and not Nazi Germany, who has advised the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority that he wants aborted children's kidneys and livers to be used for transplantation. Professor Stuart Campbell, who has developed pre-natal scanning techniques, said it would be a shame to waste aborted children's body parts. The Christian Medical Fellowship said the procedure would be immoral and Comment on Reproductive Ethics said it was horrifying, but the fact that highly-placed medical experts are making these comments in all seriousness must surely give us all cause for concern.

A recent news release, however, has sent a chill down my back. At the moment we are grateful to make use of donated blood if we should be brought into hospital with severe blood-loss, or found in need of a surgical procedure. However all practising Orthodox and Roman Catholics are soon going to find themselves in a similar position to the Jehovah's Witnesses if they are taken into an NHS hospital, as the national blood bank is due to be corrupted with blood from, effectively, murdered embryos.

British scientists are planning a groundbreaking research project to create synthetic human blood from embryonic stem cells. The results could provide an unlimited supply of blood for emergency

transfusions, free of the risk of infection. It could revolutionise blood transfusion services, which currently rely on a network of human donors to provide a constant supply of fresh blood.

At least when the Nazis condemned a man to Auschwitz, he knew what to expect. Nowadays we have to deal with institutions that wear the lineaments of healing, but some of whose practices seem to be as bad as, or even worse than, anything that the Nazis' hate-filled brains could dream up.

- 1 The National Health Service, because of continual meddling by politicians, constant under-funding and the increasing cost of medical research and new drugs, is rapidly becoming overstretched. Perhaps it will soon be known as the NSS, the National Sickness Service, for all that it will be fit for is treating and sometimes creating the sick.
- 2 I will return to this question of mistaken diagnosis later on in this article.
- 3 The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act allows more-or-less unlimited experimentation on human embryos, including the creation of so-called chimæras: embryos which containing the characteristics of both human beings and animals.
- 4 Lord Winston, who gives the impression in his many television appearances of a 'benevolent uncle' figure, is one of the leading protagonists of IVF, an infertility treatment which, by practising *in-vitro* (test-tube) fertilization, creates large numbers of viable embryos, only a limited number of which will be reinserted into the mother's womb in the hope that one of them will attach itself and continue its development. The principal questions that Lord Winston seems not to have confronted are 1) Who has given him the right to decide which embryos shall be implanted and which not? 2) What happens to all the unsuccessful candidates over whom he has assumed god-like control?

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Square Peg

Unless religion is a mystical thing, it is not important to the soul.

*The Square Peg*, p. 87

*The biographer of the Poet Laureate of England, John Masefield, was Orthodox. She was Constance Babington-Smith and passed away on 31 July 2000. How well I remember paying visits to her prim and proper flat in Little St Mary's Lane in central Cambridge in the mid-1970s to talk about John Masefield, on whose biography she was then working. I think I did persuade her to broaden her views of Masefield's religious values<sup>1</sup>. I hope that*



*this was reflected in her wonderfully-written and meticulously prepared biography, which has now been re-issued. It is to Constance that I dedicate this article. May God rest her soul.*

**T**he *Square Peg*, subtitled 'The Gun Fella' was published in 1937. It is now little-known and only available as a second-hand obscurity. That is a pity; it deserves better, both as a good Masefieldian yarn, but also for its symbolism.



It tells the story of Robert Mansell, the dynamic businessman and inventor behind the 'The Mansell Gun'. From a poor family, he represents the classic self-made man, ambitious, efficient and successful, but also arrogant, demanding and intolerant. His aggressiveness is symbolised by his obsession with machine guns and explosives. His redeeming feature is his great love of the arts, of which he is a generous patron.

Such a man is, symbolically, gunpowder amid any old establishment. He has been made cynical by the Europe of the First World War, of which he says: 'He had lost friends in the War, from several lands, and wished those men to be commemorated by a better Europe, which would be a public confession, that in killing those young men, she had followed cannibal gods. However, Europe had not been bettered; far from it, she had gone farther towards cannibalism' (p. 182).

Given the above, we can expect explosions when Mansell buys *The Mullples*, a rundown estate in the country on very poor agricultural land. It is situated near his family's home town and he intends to restore it and renew it, so that he can live there once he has married his fiancée, Margaret. In this situation he finds himself opposed to the country set. These puritanical philistines have only one love in life – fox-hunting, to which Mansell is deeply opposed. All the more so since Margaret loves nature and wildlife and wants to make a bird sanctuary in woods where the hounds hunt.

The snobbish and hypocritical fox-hunters symbolise the old country culture, falling apart after the First World War, in which slaughter they were deeply implicated. Their world is rundown like *The Mullples*, decadent and without initiative for the future. They stand at the end of a world, for neither puritanism nor fox-hunting have a future, as Mansell's gentle father observes: 'The English have had only two pleasures ... in the last three hundred years; puritanic religion and fox-hunting. Both seem to me now to be in their decadence' (p. 86). As for Mansell, he cynically comments on the whole post-Great War 'civilisation' which they represent: 'And what does it (civilisation) amount to? Money-snatching in cities and fox-hunting in the country. Who would be tuppence the worse if the whole of Europe died to-night?' (p. 88).

After Margaret's tragic death in a car accident which is caused by a drunkard – and there are plenty of drunkards in the country set – Mansell, made bitter and vengeful, begins a cynical feud

with this minor country aristocracy. His abusive rudeness towards them is softened only by his love of the arts. His wish is to see the arts flourish in the country. However, even here he finds opposition from the narrow philistines who surround him.

He is redeemed quite unexpectedly by someone from outside this closed and feuding English world. This is a Russian ballerina, Margaret Sorya, a distant cousin of his fiancée. Although she comes from elsewhere, she is yet connected through her English grandmother with this provincial England. As she comments on Mansell's attitudes: 'This isn't very usual among your countrymen' (p. 289). But I will leave readers to discover the happy ending for themselves...

There is much that is autobiographical in this novel. Firstly, there is Masefield's own sad experience with the fox-hunters at his home in Pinbury in Gloucestershire, which made him move away from there in 1938. There is also Masefield's stubborn idealism, even in old age, as in his Second War brochure *I want! I want!* (1944) and again in the closing pages of his autobiographical *So Long to Learn* (1952). As regards his very deep attraction to the beauty of ballet, we are reminded of his verses for *Tribute to Ballet* (1938) and other similar poems.

There is much that is symbolic in this novel. First of all, there is the opposition between town and country, between old and new, which is a constant theme in Masefield's work. Then there is his visionary hope for a New England, a garden city, a new Eden, to be built in the old Wasteland, the wilderness which is reminiscent of T. S. Eliot's post-Great War poem *The Wasteland*. As Masefield writes in the novel: 'He would begin a new England up there in the Waste' (p. 286).

Lastly, there is the fact that was becoming obvious in Masefield's time – that England cannot be redeemed by herself. She needed to escape from the spiral into which she had been taken by her own history. Her redemption could only be achieved by a force from elsewhere, herein symbolised by the Russian ballerina Margaret Sorya, who, though foreign, yet understands England through her own English blood. I believe that Constance also realised these same things in the last three decades of her life.

1. In 1979 there appeared a full and excellent German-language study of Masefield's religious views. See: *John Masefields Stellung zum Religiösen* by Sr. Adelheid Gfoellner, Universität Salzburg, Austria.

## Summer Evening in Town

From window pushed wide open to golden evening gloam  
Comes music sounding in the roads of my provincial home.  
As first-seen stars shyly show in fragrant summer skies  
Pigeons perched grey-blue on chimney tops softly sing their sighs,  
While beneath the roofs and swiftly-fading light from west  
The weary souls of men and women look to welcome rest.

*Oxford Road, Colchester, June 1974*

