

ORTHODOX ENGLAND

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Abbot Æthelwulf: on the Angels

Eaðgar the Peacable

Orthodoxy Shines through Western

Mgths: The Distorted Past:

A Reinterpretation of Europe

Confusion and Delay:

Thomas the Tank Engine

An Answer to Everything

and much more . . .

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Editor: Fr Andrew Phillips

Art Work: Edmund (Design).

Address: Seekings House, Garfield Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 7PU, England.

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Editorial: GALATIANS 1, 11-12

But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ

Galatians 1, 11-12

THE word 'Galatian' has the same root as the word 'Celt'. Indeed, the Galatians of Asia Minor originally spoke a language similar to the Celtic Walloons, whose descendants live in today's Belgium. Hellenized, the Galatians lived in what is now Central Turkey, in and around present-day Ankara. The churches of the Galatians had been founded by the Apostle Paul on his second missionary journey. This epistle was written during the Apostle's third missionary journey, probably in AD 56.

The occasion for its writing was the attack on him by Judaizers, expressing narrow, nationalistic views and claiming that Old Testament ritual practices such as circumcision were necessary for Christians. Trying to discredit the Apostle, they said that his view that such practices were not necessary came about because he wanted to make himself popular with the Gentiles and because he had not known Christ personally. The Apostle was shocked that some of the neophytes in Galatia had been influenced by these attacks.

The basic idea in the six chapters of this epistle is that Christ came for all people, not just for the Jews, and that our salvation does not depend on fulfilling the Law of Moses, but on having a living faith in Christ that brings works of love. The epistle can be divided into five parts. The first part or introduction in the first ten verses counters the arguments of the Judaizers. The second part or defence starts at chapter 1, verse 11 and continues to the end of the second chapter.

In verses 11 and 12 of chapter 1 the Apostle counters his slanderers who claimed that the Apostle's teaching was from himself, a human invention. Paul says that his teaching is not human, but Divine, not from men, but from God – not an invention, but a Revelation. After these two verses he goes on to say that the proof of this is in the great change in his life – instead of being a persecutor of the Church, he became its preacher.

A first question that we may ask ourselves today is to what extent we live according to the teachings of men or of God, to what extent we are secular, conformed to the world, and to what extent we are of the Church, conformed to God. A second question for us today is how we distinguish the nature of Revelation, how we can tell what comes from God and what comes from man. We can take three examples to illustrate this.

For instance, anyone can say that they have had a 'revelation'. But they must prove that is a revelation from God, something revealed by the Holy Spirit. To take a crude example, if someone says that they have had a revelation that we must not eat bread, we can see at once that this is not from God, because Christ ate bread and for nearly 2,000 years the Eucharistic miracle has been performed by the saints and the whole people of God starting with bread. In other words, authentic revelations do not contradict what has gone before.

But suppose someone says that they have had a revelation that we must not use smartphones? There is not anything and cannot be anything in the Scriptures, the Tradition, Church Councils, the Fathers and the Lives of the Saints, our authorities, which directly speak for or against a new technology. Therefore we have to look carefully. Why does this person say this? Is it just to attract attention? Do they mean that nobody should ever use a smartphone, or that smartphones are only bad for some people or in some circumstances? How does this person announce this 'revelation'? Are they full of pride because they believe that they are better than other human beings because they have received a 'revelation', which nobody else has received? And, especially, has this 'revelation' transformed this person's life for the better, as in the case of the Apostle Paul, whose life went from being a persecutor to a supporter of the Church?

In such a case, we will surely find that this person is mistaken. Like all technology, from the wheel to the Internet, smartphones are spiritually neutral. They are things which we can use for good or for bad. In other words, all depends on what is in our hearts, attitudes and intentions, on the use we make of things or technology, not on the things or technology themselves. And here we can refer to statements of authority and parallels. For instance, the Apostle Paul himself, speaking of

money, does not condemn it as an evil, but condemns 'the love of money', which he calls 'the root of all evil' (1 Tim 6, 10).

Our third example is someone who claims to have received a revelation that we must repent because the end is coming on, say, 10 July. Many saints, from the Baptist John and the Apostle Paul to St John of Kronstadt have spoken of repentance and the end being near, so we can accept the first part of this statement. The end is always near, because any of us can die at any time. What we object to is the date. In the Scriptures the Son of God specifically says that nobody, himself included, knows the date of the end of the world; only God the Father (Matt. 24, 36). Here is a clear contradiction with the Word of God.

On the other hand, if someone simply says that we must repent and that the end is coming, we can agree with this. But should we pay special attention to this person? Surely yes – if they live an

exemplary and edifying way of life. But if they do not, then we say that this person is simply a repentant Christian like the rest of us. But this is not a general revelation to all, it is a personal revelation to that individual which may bring them to repentance, that is, may bring a change for the better in their way of life. This is the only true repentance, which stands at the heart of the Church.

In other words, we can always check to understand what authentic revelation is. Firstly, does the revelation correspond to, and in no way contradict, the previous revelations of the One Holy Spirit, the source of spiritual authority that has gone before us, the source of the Scriptures, the Tradition, Church Councils, the Fathers and the Lives of the Saints? Secondly, what is the way of life of the person claiming the revelation? As the Scriptures themselves say, warning against false prophets: 'By their fruits, you shall know them' (Matt. 7, 16).

From the Righteous: ABBOT ÆTHELWULF: ON THE ANGELS

I urge everyone to render eloquent praise in abundance to God on high, and with hands outstretched to the stars to give thanks to the Lord. He sends winged birds in response to the prayers of his devout people who flock to the churches, and then fly back to the stars bearing our prayers with them. They present them to God

Himself for His consideration. How can I describe everything adequately? For angels descend from heaven, shining with light, to carry blessed souls up to the stars. Resplendent with glory, they praise the Lord, decked with crowns of flowers forever.

Abbot Æthelwulf – De Abbatibus

The Decline of England 2: EADGAR THE PEACABLE

By Eadmund

Accession of Eadmund

AFTER Æthelstan had shot like a comet through the firmament, uniting this island under his rule for a brief fourteen years, the situation quickly deteriorated. His nephew Eadmund, at that time a youth of eighteen, succeeded him. Although Eadmund had fought at Brunanburh, he had at that time little to prove his quality and the succession was seen as a good opportunity for a second invasion.

The Vikings under Olaf Guthfrithsson, still smarting under the defeat of Brunanburh, had re-

occupied York by the end of 939, apparently with little resistance. Early in 940 Olaf led them on a great raid over the midlands but on his return Eadmund met him at Leicester with an army which overawed him sufficiently to persuade him into peace negotiations arranged by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. This treaty gave Olaf the whole region between Watling Street and the Northumbrian border: the abandonment to Norse rule of a large Anglo-Danish population, which had been obedient to the king of England for twenty years: an ignominious surrender. Olaf then invaded Northumbria, but he died before the year

was over and his kingdom passed into the hands of Olaf Sihtricsson, expelled from England by Æthelstan in 927. He was milder than his cousin, and in 942 he lost the lands that his cousin had briefly won. The Northumbrians drove him out altogether the following year, and chose his brother Rægnald as their king. Rægnald and Olaf both came to Eadmund's court and were baptized, the king acting as sponsor to each of them, and later in the year Eadmund led an army to the north, expelling both kings, and for the rest of his reign York remained an English town. However this contretemps shows the underlying hatred of the civilized Anglo-Danish population for the Norsemen.

The following year, Eadmund, assisted by the Welsh king of Dyfed, invaded Strathclyde, ravaged all Cumberland and then gave it to his ally, Malcolm, king of Scots, on condition that he should continue as Eadmund's ally. Notwithstanding the fact that Dunmail was once again reigning in Strathclyde within a few years, it shows that Eadmund was enough of a statesman to realize the necessity of setting a limit to his own kingdom in the north.

The king now turned his attention to Europe, and in the first months of 946 sent a mission to the duke of the Franks to negotiate for the restoration of Eadmund's nephew, Louis d'Outremer, to his kingdom. But in May, before he had time to take any further action he was killed while defending his steward against a criminal who had returned from banishment. This tragic death of one who had proved himself a strong and wise ruler (his name means 'fortunate guardian') was a great loss to England. He left two sons, neither of whom was old enough to succeed him, and the crown passed to Eadred, his brother.

Accession of Eadred

Eadred was received as king in Northumbria without opposition, and in 947 Archbishop Wulfstan of York and the northern magnates swore fealty to him and gave security for their obedience; but before the year was out a new situation was created by the appearance of the most famous Viking leader of the age. Eric 'Bloodaxe', the son of King Harold Fairhair, had been driven out of Norway after a short and very violent reign in favour of his milder brother Hakon, foster-son of Æthelstan. To the Norsemen of Northumbria Eric offered a prospect of independence under a leader from the royal house of Norway, and when he

descended on Northumbria they accepted him as king.

Little is known of the barbaric rule of this frightful man in York. Eadred replied by an invasion of Northumbria. He led his army in person, and it seems to have met no organized resistance until, on its return southwards, it came to the passage of the Aire at Castleford. There it was attacked by an army from York and its rear-guard was defeated. However in spite of this disaster the battle left Eadred in a position to dictate terms to the Northumbrians, and he compelled them to abandon Eric, otherwise he threatened utterly to destroy their country. For a few months his authority was recognized, but in 949 Olaf Sihtricsson was back again briefly, until in 952 Eric returned. His barbaric rule was finally ended in 954 when the Northumbrians, weary of his excesses, expelled him. Betrayed with his son and brother by Earl Oswulf, he was treacherously killed by Earl Maccus.

It had become clear that the Englisc monarchy was strong enough to prevent the union of York and Dublin in a single Viking state, and the fall of Eric Bloodaxe showed that a leader who could draw all the landless adventurers of Scandinavia into an army would ultimately fail to establish himself in an Englisc kingdom, although England still offered the chance of a quick profit to any group of pirates which cared to take on the risk of an invasion.

Accession of Eadwig

After a long illness, king Eadred died on 23 November 955, leaving no children. The members of the royal house who stood nearest to the succession were Eadwig and Eadgar, the sons of his brother Eadmund. Eadgar was only twelve years of age when Eadred died, and his brother Eadwig, who was chosen king, was his elder by no more than about three years. Writers of the next generation attributed the happiness of the preceding age to the wisdom of King Eadgar, and indeed one of them said of Eadwig that he could rule neither himself nor others well, but this is rather rough justice. In fact ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia, Byrhtnoth of Essex, and Æthelwold of East Anglia all appear as ealdormen for the first time in 956. Ælfheah of Hampshire, Ælfhere's brother reached that dignity a year later, so it can at least be said of King Eadwig that he agreed to the promotion of good servants. The peace of the years between 955 and 980 is also partly explained by

the expansion of the Viking duchy of Normandy. Originally established by Charles the Simple for the defence of his lands against other Vikings, it had acquired the Bessin in 924 and the Cotentin and Avranchin in 933. Still regarded as undesirable aliens by the men who were continuing the traditions of Carolingian government in France, they offered employment to all adventurers who wished to join them. Their success was to have grim repercussions for England in a later age.

St Dunstan, by birth connected with the royal family, was to emerge as the central figure in English religious life from 959 until his death in 988. In 956, when he came into conflict with King Eadwig, he was already working for the establishment of a reformed monastic order in England. Eadwig was known as 'Eadwig Eall-fæger', which means 'Eadwig the all-fair', and he seems to have been exceptionally handsome. Apparently on his coronation day, this attractive young man, bored by the ceremonial, had left the solemn feast that followed to amuse himself with a noble-woman and her daughter, each of whom was trying to entice him into marriage. The absence of the king on such an occasion was an insult to the whole Englisc aristocracy, and to avoid serious trouble Dunstan with his kinsman, the bishop of Lichfield, were sent in search of him. They found the teenager, with his crown thrown aside, in the company of these two ladies, and apparently it was only after a violent scene that he was brought back, properly crowned, to the assembly. The younger of the two ladies, Ælfgifu, who was subsequently to appear in the *Liber Vitæ* of New Minster, eventually became the king's wife, and churchmen of the highest merit were willing to come to court when both of them were present. But Eadwig, while not averse to monasticism as an institution, did not forgive Dunstan for what he saw as a gratuitous insult to his wife and her mother, and Dunstan was exiled.

Accession of Eadgar

Within two years of his accession, Eadwig lost the greater part of his kingdom, probably through irresponsibility. In 955 the West Saxons, the Mercians and, presumably, the Northumbrians had separately chosen him king. Between May and December 957 the Mercians and Northumbrians renounced their allegiance to him in favour of his brother Eadgar. There is no trace of any particular feeling behind this revolution: the Ealdormen remained in office and Ælfheah continued to

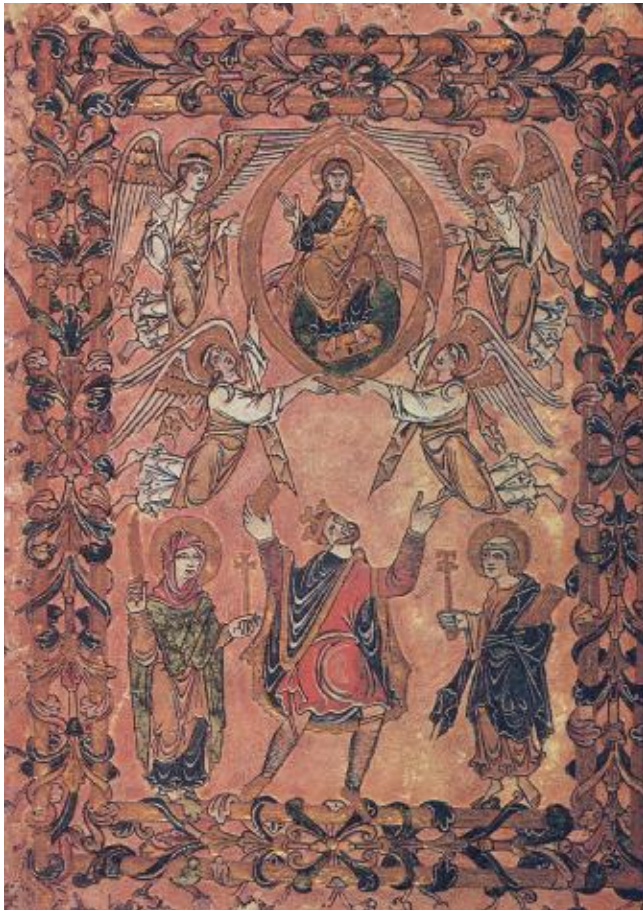
govern Hampshire on behalf of Eadwig. Probably, in the society of his West Saxon friends he fell completely out of touch with the local aristocracy of remoter parts. In a private citizen, Eadwig's failings are understandable and would pass without comment as mere vagaries of youth, but in a king they were much more dire. It is necessary for a king to govern, 'to hold the kingdom', and this Eadwig simply failed to do. He died on 1 October 959, at the beginning of manhood, so we will never know whether or not responsibility might have increased with advancing years and pulled him together. On his death Eadgar was at once accepted as king in Wessex.

In Englisc, the element 'Ead-' means fortunate, and 'Gar' means spear, so Eadgar was not really very aptly named for one who was subsequently to be given the appellation of 'the peacable'. However in order to rule a country one has first to guard it well, so perhaps his baptism was sufficiently accurate after all.

The Reformation of the Monasteries

His accession had little effect on the personnel of the government, but in the ecclesiastical sphere its results were momentous. Archbishop Oda, who had ruled at Canterbury for eighteen years, had died in the summer of 958. Bishop Ælfsige of Winchester, who had been designated his successor, died of cold in the Alps while travelling to Rome to receive his pallium. In his place Eadwig had chosen Byrthelm, bishop of Wells, who had probably been seated at Canterbury for several months when the king died. Meanwhile Dunstan had returned from exile at Eadgar's invitation and had been consecrated a bishop in order that he might always be present at court to advise the king. Soon afterwards Eadgar gave him the see of Worcester, and added that of London to it a little later. On Eadgar's accession to power in Wessex, Archbishop Byrthelm was ordered to return to his former see on the ground that he was too gentle to maintain discipline in a supreme charge, and Dunstan was set in his place at Canterbury.

There are few parallels in any country to the enthusiasm with which Eadgar brought the whole power of the Englisc state to the furtherance of Dunstan's religious policy. Tradition traced it back to the sight of a ruined abbey in his boyhood. Dunstan was already concerned with the revival of monasticism, and the brief exile owing to his differences with Eadwig brought him into direct contact with the monks of St Peter's at Ghent. On



King Eadgar shown symbolically offering the foundation charter of the New Minster to Christ

his return he, and his former pupils at Glastonbury, Æthelwold and Oswald, tackled the business with great vigour resulting in the *Regularis Concordia*, setting out the customs to be followed throughout Englisc monasteries. This is such a powerful document and its effects on Englisc monasticism and culture are so strong, that it would be an undeserved slight to try to treat it within the brief confines of this paper: it needs a separate explanation, and a whole article to itself. Eadgar was personally involved in the expulsion of secular clergy from the Cathedrals, and their replacement with monks.

Eadgar's Coronation

It is a sign of Eadgar's competence as a ruler that his reign is singularly devoid of recorded incident. The first event that made a strong impression on his contemporaries was his long-deferred coronation, which took place at Bath on Whit Sunday 973. For this Dunstan and his associates drew up another new *Ordo*, finally adopted after at least two experimental drafts. This placed great emphasis on the solemn anointing, setting the King apart from other men. Dunstan,

like many Frankish churchmen of his age, was strongly influenced by the parallel between the anointing of a king and the consecration of a priest. Like his elder brother, Eadgar was not immune from fleshly temptations, and had a liaison with a noblewoman, Wilfrida or Wulfthryth, whom he abducted from the nunnery at Wilton where she was a lay-sister. He installed her as his mistress at Kemsing, where she gave birth to an illegitimate daughter Eadgyth. Later Wilfrida returned to the abbey at Wilton where she took orders and eventually became abbess. Her daughter also entered the same house and subsequently became a saint. Dunstan was bound to have reminded the king of this, and it is possible that the coronation was postponed in penance for it. Certainly in 973 Eadgar had reached the age of thirty, below which nobody could canonically be ordained to the priesthood.

The most famous incident of his reign was naturally subsequent to his coronation, when he sailed his fleet to Chester, where six kings came to pledge their loyalty. Traditionally these kings were Kenneth, who became King of Scots in 971; Iago, King of Gwynedd 950-979; Hywel son of Idwal, Iago's nephew and enemy; and Maccus son of Harold, a famous sea-king of that time, and Dunmail, King of Strathclyde, who was reigning in that country when Eadmund ravaged it, thirty years before. They are said to have rowed a boat on the river Dee, while Eadgar steered. There is nothing to suggest that this submission of 973 introduced any new principal to the relationship between the king of England and the princes beyond his borders. The weakness of this relationship was that it was a personal one, and consequently impermanent. However there is evidence that shortly after the meeting at Chester Edgar attempted to secure the allegiance of Kenneth by giving him the English lands between the Tweed and the Forth, which were collectively known as Lothian. Within a century Lothian had become an Anglo-Celtic state in which the English element was rising to predominance, but the change was slow and no Englishman of Edgar's time could have foreseen its consequences.

One of the reasons for the lack of friction in Eadgar's reign was his policy of limiting the responsibilities of his government. He was the first king to recognize that the largely Danish east of England was no longer a conquered province, but an integral part of his realm, and granted autonomy to its inhabitants, and clearly stated that

in return for the loyalty which they had always displayed, such social and legal customs should prevail amongst them as they might choose. When issuing a set of regulations designed to suppress the traffic in stolen cattle, he apologetically insists that they will have to apply universally, but allows the Danes themselves to decide what punishment should be inflicted for their infringement. This was the beginning of the term 'Danelaw' for the shires of eastern England. Of course the King continued to appoint the earls and bishops, and its militia was bound to join him in the defence of the kingdom, and offences against his peace were punished more severely in Danish territory; but within these limits the Danes had freedom. It is this freedom that, more than any other cause, cemented the loyalty of his Danish subjects. There may still have been a few who could trace their descent from Ivar the Boneless, and wished for a king of their own race, but the solid advantages of Eadgar's promise of autonomy in return for allegiance mostly outweighed that desire. Eadgar could be ruthless when occasion demanded it, however. He ravaged the Isle of Thanet in 970 when its inhabitants imprisoned and robbed a group of Northumbrian merchants who had landed there. This was a public demonstration to all Edgar's subjects that the king's peace could not be broken with impunity.

Conclusion

To sum up, Eadgar was an efficient but relaxed administrator. His generosity to the Church in money and in unprecedented time and effort and his close ties with Dunstan revealed him as a saint. But Eadgar was neither required to defend English civilization against foreign barbarians, nor to deal with the problems inherent in the existence of barbarian states within England itself. His part in history was merely to maintain the peace that had been established by his predecessors, and leave the country in healthy state for his successors. Unfortunately he died suddenly and unexpectedly on 8 July 975, when few of his retainers were at court. This was to throw the country, which had enjoyed peace and prosperity for the last sixteen years, into a state bordering on civil war.

Further Reading

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PARADISE JUST BEYOND: Fragments of a Life

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
 yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

Archpriest Andrew Phillips

Dedicated to S., without whose noble and constant self-sacrifice very little of this would have been possible.

4. A Study in the Light: *Dominus Illuminatio Mea* 1974-1980

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom
 then shall I fear?

MY Grammar School days were over. What an act of cultural vandalism, based on the envy and hatred concentrated in the ideology of 'egalitarianism', to destroy most of the Grammar Schools! By reducing all to the lowest common denominator, by 'dumbing down', the vandals deprived so many from modest backgrounds like myself of opportunity and

excellence. Just because three-quarters of the English educational system was underfunded and therefore shoddy, that was no reason to destroy the one part of the system that did work.

The new very intense and full period of my life was to last almost six years, from September 1974 until April 1980. In early 1974 I had gained a place to study Russian (and some French) at University College in Oxford – by legend (but only by legend), founded by King Alfred. Without any consciousness of what I was being pushed into, I only later realized that this was a mistake and that I should probably have gone to University in

London. That would have pushed me more directly to my destiny – or so I think now. In that way I might have avoided more mistakes. Ironically, exactly 25 years later, our second daughter turned down a place at Oxford and chose the University of London in preference to Oxford. So the right thing was done in the next generation.

However, mistakes are necessary for us to understand and pass on that knowledge. Once more, I would not have known what I know now without all this. And that is why I entitle this period with the University of Oxford motto, taken from the Psalmist David: *Dominus Illuminatio Mea* – ‘The Lord is my Light’. Because His Light is Providence and everything in our lives, except for our sins, is His Providence.

There is a song by Alexander Vertinsky called *Chuzhie Goroda* – ‘Someone Else’s Towns’. Oxford was that for me. It was another planet, on which I saw the results of the loss of life, caused by the loss of direct experience, since all is studied, not experienced. This in turn leads to cynicism (the loss of faith), vanity and decadence. At that time Oxford was still dominated by the public school élite and their mentality. They accepted you only if you accepted their Establishment ‘club’ mentality, which was really a mafia. There was no place there for ‘ordinary people’, those from my background. I was not alone in that; we formed a whole underclass who took refuge in the English town, away from the Norman ‘gown’.

For example, I can remember near the very beginning being offered what I later discovered to be sherry. Now, coming from where I came from, I had never drunk any sort of wine. A man said to me: ‘Sweet, medium or dry?’ I had no idea what he was talking about, so I played safe, answering



University College, Oxford

‘medium’, at which he gave me a glass of an alcoholic drink. I later discovered that this was sherry. Then there were bow-ties, which I had not seen before, but which all the public schoolboys knew how to tie. One, the son of a lord, who became a minister in the next government, tied it for me. The room where there was a television was called the ‘Yusupov Room’, since Yusupov, who had organised Rasputin’s assassination by Oxford-educated British secret agents in 1916, had studied there. But enough. The University was not the real reason for my being there. I was there only because I knew that there was a Russian church there, where I had already been in 1972.

On the first Saturday there, at my first opportunity now that I was 18, in September 1974, I went to the Russian church and asked to be received into the Church. I was disappointed to see that the lovely chapel where I had been two years earlier had gone. Later, I would understand the significance of all that I was asked to wait before I could be accepted into the church – again. I had already been waiting for over three years.

Meanwhile, I met two representatives of ROCOR in Oxford. I was told that they were pillars of the London Cathedral. They were sectarian people. They made their cause hopeless, creating a racial tradition out of the Church of God, reducing universality to a set of narrow, ethnic customs. Sadly, this was confirmed by some reading, supposedly representing ROCOR, I had done at the time. It did not seem to be Orthodox, but merely anti-Anglican. It was also full of nonsensical jargon, largely composed of Russian words, misunderstood by Anglican converts who did not know Russian, but thought they were being ‘exotic’. Now, looking back, I realise that I had been given all the wrong things to read. These came from neophyte sources, which were concerned only with psychology, not theology, not loving our neighbour as ourselves. Since I had never been Anglican and, indeed, knew virtually nothing about it, this material presented little interest to me. I decided to enter the Russian Church through what I thought was a Patriarchal parish in Oxford, however unusual the premises they then used.

I attended every service, everything. I was thirsty for prayer and for knowledge. So I was finally allowed to join the Russian Church on Great Thursday 1975. I had been waiting consciously for four years, unconsciously for

fourteen years before that. During the ceremony a terrible thunderstorm took place.

In Oxford I first discovered the two fundamental errors of humanity, to which every human soul is liable – the left side and the right side, which meet, for all extremes meet.

The left side is the side of intellectuals, 'spiritualists', dreamers, disincarnate Gnostics, philosophers and artists. This is the anti-Incarnation side, the side of imagination, the psychic side, at worst that of charlatans and frauds, of 'phoney's', the side of whimsical 'mysticism', spiritual delusion. This side looks down with pride on 'ordinary people', who 'do not know any better', because they are 'simple souls'. (It was in Oxford that a man told me that there was no such thing as 'ordinary people'. He had not understood, as was proved by his later tragic career in the Church).

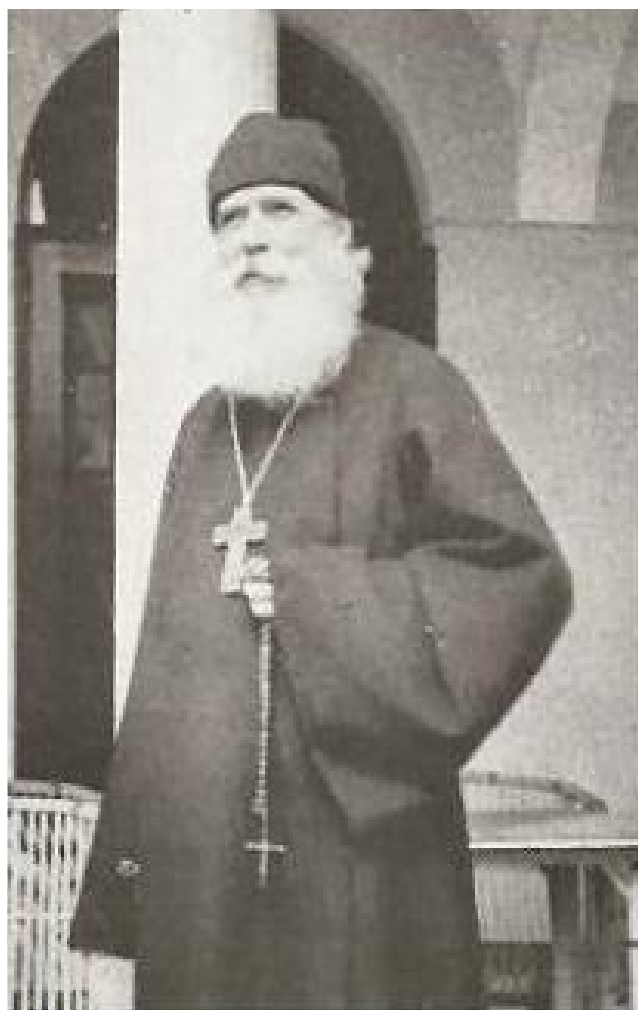
Such was the intellectual pretension of some in Oxford. The more pretentious, the more they cut themselves off from the Church, yet all the while imagining that they 'kept the Church going'. In 1975 one such asked me: 'Who converted you to the Church?' I replied: 'God'. He was amazed by that reply and yet that was the truth. For him conversion had meant conversion 'by someone'. What a strange, human idea! As if we are not all converted by the grace of God, and this every day! Yet he was astonished by the reply because he had thought of everything only in terms of conversion to personality cults. In Oxford some seemed to look in on the Faith from the outside – not from the inside – I suppose because they were not on the inside. I wish I had known someone who could have guided me then. I had to work it all out for myself.

Another time I was told that a certain convert was 'very interested in what Orthodoxy is'. I thought this very strange: It was obvious to me, who had known for years, in fact in a sense since childhood, what Orthodoxy is. It is the life in Christ. Full stop. How strange that the so-called 'educated' could not see this! What I had always felt instinctively and unselfconsciously to be true and obvious – without understanding why – was an enigma to others. I remember an Anglican vicar asking me what the Holy Spirit is. I was astonished. How could you be a Christian and not know what the Holy Spirit is? Others spoke of 'how to pray' and of a 'school for prayer'. I never understood this. For me praying was just natural, common

sense talking to God. There was no need to study all this or read books about it. It was obvious.

So I could never accept the left side. I was too well-rooted, incarnate, in reality. But I could never accept the hard-heartedness of the right side either. The right side is the side of the self-interested, of the Establishment, of political nationalism, elitism, phariseism, of the judgemental and censoriousness of eternal neophytes, who never leave narrowness, of those who also cut themselves off from the Church. They too humiliated 'ordinary people'. This is also psychology, not theology.

Many things surprised me about the Oxford parish. For instance, there was no-one in the parish who had a copy of the *Lives of the Saints* by StDimitry of Rostov. So much was ideas and theories, intellectualism, – not the practical life of the heart. And when the life of the heart dies, the soul is all unlit and unhelped, so that it sickens and sometimes dies.



Fr Nicholas Gibbes, English tutor to the Tsarevich and the first Orthodox priest in Oxford. Eternal Memory!

On the other hand, there were many good people in Oxford. I remember the deeply Anglican and scholarly, old-world gentleman, Fr Kallistos (as he then was), some of whose lectures I attended. However, I did not understand much of his books, because they were written from an Anglican perspective for other Anglicans and I had never had that cultural baggage.

More inspiring to me were the stories of Fr Nicholas Gibbes, the former tutor to the Tsarevich, the first Orthodox priest in Oxford and the founder of the Russian Orthodox St Nicholas Church.

In 1945 he had joined the Moscow Patriarchate for a noble reason, because Bishop Nestor who had ordained him had been forced to do the same when Soviet forces had occupied Manchuria. This then had been a question of obedience. This act had isolated him completely since he would have nothing to do with the future Metr Antony Bloom in London and free Russian émigrés would have nothing to do with the Soviet-controlled Patriarchate. Unfortunately, other bourgeois, liberal Russians in Oxford had been anti-Tsar and had not supported Fr Nicholas. Later, I was to discover the same attitude among liberal Russians in Paris to St John of Shanghai. They did not want the real thing; they wanted a kind of degutted, sanitised, rationalistic, neutered, 'finlandized', bourgeois Orthodoxy.

Yes, Fr Nicholas was eccentric and ill-adapted for parish life, but he had a secret inner life, a faithfulness, which they did not. They did not like his witness to Orthodoxy which, perhaps the only way against the intellectualism of Oxford, was wisdom, that is, foolishness for Christ. It was such thoughts that helped me to choose St Andrew the Fool for Christ as my patron saint. However, history would justify Fr Nicholas when, some forty-five years after he had passed away, a second Russian Orthodox, St Nicholas Church, would be founded in Oxford. I made a point of being present that day. It was in memory of Fr Nicholas.

I remember the Zernovs, Nicholas and Militsa. Nicholas was charming and offered to be my godfather, which offer I accepted. They told me the story of a Spitfire pilot who had been very interested in Orthodoxy 'because he had wanted to meet God', but had died in the Battle of Britain. They said that perhaps in his death in the skies he had met God.

Unfortunately, Nicholas, naively wrapped up in his pro-Kerensky views, had little idea who real English people were, even after fifty years in the country. Nicholas Zernov ran his 'Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius,' frequented by 'High Church Anglicans', who represented a current which I had never met or even heard of before. The academic illusions of North Oxford. Eternal Memory to Nicholas and Militsa!

It was in this way that I first encountered 'Anglicanism', a completely new world for me. This was also a new word for me, I had only ever heard of the 'C of E' before. I realised that it had been set up as a political manipulation by the rulers of the age as a compromise to avoid civil war between Protestant and Catholics. So it was Protestant in doctrine, but somewhat Catholic in outward appearance, in fact a form of Protestant Uniatism. Its spirit of compromise and lack of principle had beset the English character ever since. Now, on secondary issues, compromise is not a bad thing. But this spirit of compromise also meant the lack of any sort of principle in everything important. You cannot make a compromise between good and evil. And what happens when compromise pervades everything is hypocrisy. And this is the post-Reformation English national weakness – it comes from Anglicanism; compromise on everything and that creates unprincipled hypocrisy, 'humbug'.

I remember with fondness the noble and gentle Princess Elizabeth Kutaisova, who was much later to pass away at the age of 99, and the wise Madame Gorodetskaya and that charming gentleman, Sir Dimitry Obolensky, whose lectures I also attended. Later I met people in Paris who had known 'Dima' and admired him as a young man in the 1930s. I remember Lydia Slater, Pasternak's sister. And above all, I remember Alla, an elderly woman from Latvia who lived on the poorest council estate in the Oxford suburbs. She was far and away the most Orthodox of all, perhaps because she was not very literate. I went to see her in her council flat and learned far more from her than from those with doctorates and theories.

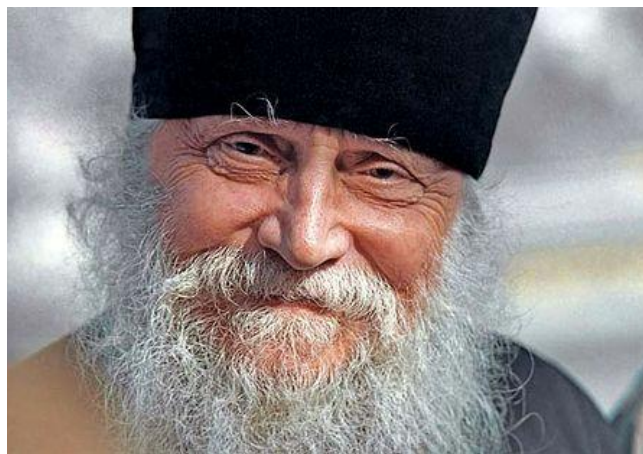
I met others too. There was the very Parisian (as I later discovered) Metr Antony (Bloom). I am still not sure about the origin of his surname. He told me that it was Scottish, but he told Dutch friends that it was Dutch. A lot of Russians think it is Jewish. He behaved very differently when with Russians than with English and others. I much preferred him when he was being Russian. His

mother had been a Skriabina, the sister of the composer. By the time I met him, he had by himself created a tiny 'diocese' around himself (until the early 60s he had been quite alone – Russian émigrés would not go near this 'Soviet bishop'), mainly by ordaining former Anglicans or else men whom no other Orthodox bishop would ordain for canonical reasons. In this way his diocese had begun to rival the ROCOR diocese which had once been far bigger.

The truest thing ever said about Metr Antony was the comment of Patriarch Alexei I, who had visited him in London. His view, relayed to me years later from Moscow, was that Metr Antony should have married. With the right matushka, he would have made an excellent Cathedral priest and a brilliant writer for those outside the Church and for beginners. As a diocesan bishop, he was not what was needed. He was quite different from the Orthodox missionary, St John of Shanghai, who had been in London at the same time as him. I am not sure whether the two ever met. It was like St Seraphim of Sarov and Pushkin, contemporaries who had also never met.

Metr Antony had a personality of immense gifts and charm and wrote very well for those who knew nothing about the Faith. However, as I discovered later, when we came to know him only too well, he had grave weaknesses. The Church was also made into a cult, which is why very few of his 'converts' stayed. His 'magnetic' personality attracted those without their own spiritual experience. The naive believed in him. These were mainly Anglicans, usually unequipped to distinguish between the spiritual and the psychic. Others saw this. For example, there was Fr Barnabas (Burton) – a sincere if slightly eccentric Anglican, one of the many who suffered. From the Metropolitan I saw how dangerous it is to be very gifted. Very sadly, the Church was divided; integrated Orthodox of all nationalities who knew the Tradition from inside left him.

Then there was Fr Lev Gillet, an eccentric French convert. He had little idea of Orthodoxy and yet wrote under the name of 'A Monk of the Eastern (sic) Church'. I am not sure whether he became a Buddhist or a Quaker in the end. I last saw him at Holland Park tube station in 1978, a sad figure. In any case, it was all strange. He was a great friend, as I later learned, of Elisabeth Behr-Sigel in France. She too loved to talk about Catholicism and feminism.



Bishop Basil Rodzianko in old age

Then there was Fr Vladimir (Rodzianko). He was delightful, but also, like his grandfather, one of the naivest people you could ever meet. As a result of his naivety, he was always getting himself into trouble – from which only his practical matushka could protect him. After matushka died, he became a monk. However, a man of his charm and talent would not be allowed to stay in London. Metr Antony, in whom Fr Vladimir, or Fr Vasily as a monk, had confided, told him to go to the OCA, which he did. That was a great mistake and our loss.

Outside Oxford, in 1975, I first met Fr Sophrony (Sakharov) and those of his Paris-founded monastic fellowship or skete in Essex. I was able to cycle there. Fr Sophrony too had left the Russian Church as a result of the anti-monastic actions of Metr Antony in 1965. By origin Fr Sophrony had belonged to the 'mystical', 'Eastern' and pro-monastic wing of the Paris School, whereas Metr Antony belonged to the 'material', 'Western' and anti-monastic wing of the Paris School. In his youth, Fr Sophrony had been a 'God-seeker', as was then fashionable among the privileged and Westernized young Russians. In this way, he had become a Hindu and a Buddhist and searching for a guru, he had looked for some 'new revelation'. Of course, he had not found it. What he did find eventually, however, was the old revelation of the New Testament, embodied in a typical but holy Russian peasant monk, Fr Silouan.

The conflict between Fr Sophrony and Metr Antony had been inevitable and I spoke at length at the time to those who had seen the actual correspondence between the two. Fr Sophrony left the Moscow Patriarchate, angry that Metr Antony had accused him of 'playing at monasticism'; the latter wanted to ordain his monks, use them as parish priests and so build a diocese. Quite

understandably, Fr Sophrony chose to leave Metr Antony. His decision was to go back to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This was in 1965.

Fr Sophrony's skete, outside diocesan life, that is 'stavropegic' or 'a peculiar' in English, was based in a former Anglican rectory and church. For this reason it was not allowed, and still is not, to receive Anglicans into the Church. It came to be adorned with Fr Sophrony's unique and highly original 'pastel' or unfinished, art nouveau style of painting and thinking. However, apart from attracting Cypriots, among whom Fr Sophrony and his monks and nuns did wonderful work, Fr Sophrony's character of artist and philosopher attracted idealists, musicians, artists, composers, anthropologists, philosophers and other intellectuals seeking a new form of spiritualism and identity. At that time Fr Sophrony's monastic brothers and sisters were very poor. It began to prosper through rich Greek sponsors only in the late '70s and then things began to change very rapidly. After Fr Sophrony's death in 1994, it changed yet again and became something of an embassy for its Patriarchate. Fr Sophrony had predicted that they would regret the poor time. We heard him saying so.

As a young intellectual from a bourgeois family, Fr Sophrony had interested himself in the esoteric and theosophy, but had then become a great admirer and one of the disciples of the future St Silouan (Silvanus), whose relics I would venerate on Mt Athos in 1979. He would later write down his version of his life, as seen through his philosopher's and artist's eyes. When I asked the monks then, who had also known St Silouan, about him, they all agreed that he was a saint. They remembered Fr Sophrony as the learned librarian, always with books, and offered me his place as librarian. That was definitely not for me.

Later, in the '80s, I would meet people who had known Fr Sophrony as a young artist in Paris in the early '20s and again, after he had left Mt Athos, in Paris in the 1950s, when he had wanted to become the Russian bishop there and had had unfortunate experiences with a convent that he had tried to set up. As far as I know he and St John of Shanghai, in Paris at the same time, also never met. These people gave me many insights to understand this unique philosopher-artist-monk. Much later, I learned that the academic Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) understood him, as Fr Raphael (Karelin) and others too.



The Russian Church at Ste Genevieve des Bois

Of the three monks who had, highly unusually, left Athos in the 1940s (the future Archbishop Basil Krivoshein, Fr Sophrony and Fr Silouan), I actually preferred the wise old Fr Silouan, whom I met in 1980 at the Russian cemetery of Ste Genevieve des Bois outside Paris, where he virtually lived. Like Archbishop Basil, he had stayed loyal to the Russian Church. As an authentic Athonite monk, he also gave me many insights.

In Oxford I realised clearly that our struggle was for holiness, the source of all authentic civilization, which was why the world does so much to warp and poison our perception of holiness. So it was at this time that I began compiling a calendar. First of all, in 1975 I wished to add the local saints, those of the Isles, who were not commemorated in it. For this I went to research in the Bodleian Library. Thus I added my beloved local saints, Edmund, Albright, Botolph, Cedd, Osyth and others, known and sensed from childhood, when their presences had first haunted me. Two years later I discovered that Fr Mark (Meyrick) in Walsingham was issuing a calendar, but rather than including major Western saints, he was including some very obscure Welsh and Irish saints, unknown outside their villages. Later still, I discovered the American St Herman calendar, which had also begun including some saints of the West.

Then, in 1976, I wished to add the New Martyrs of Russia, who, for some reason which I could not

understand then, had still not been canonised by either part of the Russian Church. Among them were the Royal Martyrs. Intuitively I had understood that it had been the overthrow of the Tsar and the mystical horror of the events of 1918 which held the key to everything, the whole nightmare history of the twentieth century. About that time someone told me how a monk in Romania had told them that all the woes of the whole Orthodox Church had come about because the Russians had overthrown the Tsar. Indeed, all the woes of Russia and of all the Local Orthodox Churches had been caused by the betrayal and apostasy of most of the aristocratic and well-off classes in Russia before the Revolution. I realised then that one day, when people were back on the necessary spiritual level, it would be essential to restore the Monarchy in Russia.

To gather information about the New Martyrs I bought Fr Michael Polsky's books from Jordanville and then picked out the saints one by one, inserting them into my hand-written calendar. Some years later, I had the joy of seeing these New Martyrs canonised – and also the local saints accepted – however reluctantly by some of those concerned.

I used my time at University to read, mainly in the Bodleian Library. I had access to so much knowledge there. In particular, I studied the Lives of the Saints and the history of the Old English Church. In 1976, I also discovered the writer John Masefield. He had had a childhood like my own. He was a kindred spirit. His early years were also mine, but as a writer, he had expressed our parallel experiences that I could not express.

He has always been the greatest literary influence on me. I consciously and unconsciously changed the way I wrote because of him. I had always been attached to English words, rejecting a Victorian Latin style and anything bureaucratic; plain short words definitely sat best with me. However, under Masefield's influence, this all became very conscious. Unfortunately, Masefield had never known the Church, and therefore he had remained disincarnate and had made many mistakes. Much later I went to see the site of his last home, on the Thames, outside that lovely town of Dorchester-on-Thames, where St Birinus still lives and walks.

In 1976 I won yet another trip, a scholarship to Krasnodar, that is, Ekaterinodar, in the south of Russia. I stayed at the University. At the Cathedral there I saw my first living saints, a priest and an old



John Masefield in his youth

lady, whose faces shone after communion. (Later, I was to see two others, monks on Mt Athos). Their faces radiated light. This is not something you can see among Non-Orthodox, whatever their measure of sincerity, righteousness and piety. Outside the Church, there are many virtues, but there is not holiness. Of course, if Orthodox do not live their Orthodoxy and have no care for holiness, then this will have no importance for them and they will conclude that all religions are the same. But for any who thirst for holiness, then the Orthodox Church is the only path.

During many days in Krasnodar I met Fr Lev Lebedev, who was one of the most brilliant minds in the Russian Church at the time, a real genius. He put me wise to many of the delusions of Orthodoxy in the Diaspora, especially in England, France and the USA. For that I will always be grateful to him, despite his later misjudgements, certainly caused by his illness, as Archbishop Antony of Geneva had also concluded. Fr Lev taught me how to express my intuitions in writing.

Meanwhile, Fr Lev urged me to study at the Moscow Theological Academy once I had finished at Oxford. I soon found out that this was impossible because I had a British passport and



Archpriest Lev Lebedev

relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union were then very frosty. I would not be allowed to study inside Russia. It was one of the many disappointments in a very long series. It would have been a wonderful opportunity. However, through Fr Lev, I received the blessing of the Elder Seraphim of Belgorod. I have no doubt that his prayers played a very important role in my life.

After these events in 1976, I declared that I would not return to Russia until the Church there was free. And indeed I did not return until the reconciliation of 2007, in the presence of thousands and of Patriarch Alexis II, Metropolitan Laurus and President Putin. That was a very different Russia indeed.

That summer of 1976 I also met one who, unknown to him, played an important role in my life. I mentioned to him that there was very little written about Orthodoxy and the first centuries of Orthodoxy in the West, especially in England. He told me that was true and that therefore I should do it. I had never received such rash encouragement before – or any encouragement to speak of. When I then asked him how this was possible, since I did not know very much and simply wished to learn from others above all else, he uttered just one word: 'Read!' That is what I began to do, in ever greater earnest than before.

From this I realised that if I did not do the thing that seemed to me to be very necessary and which had not been done before, then it would never be done. I learned that if something that is needed does not exist, then you have to do it yourself. You can expect nothing from anyone else. This advice was a great boost to my missing self-confidence. It

implied that I could do something. And that is why I have continued to make public my writings – not because I think that they are very good or important – but because no-one else has been doing them. I have been working in a vacuum, trying to fill in a blank space, trying, however poorly, to express an Orthodox view of the West from inside the West. As long as some find this helpful, as they do, so they tell me, I will continue to do it.

I had realised that Orthodoxy was wine, but in England this wine needed a local container, just as it had those containers in Greece, Russia, Serbia, Romania and so on. One person I met who spoke Polish pointed out to me that second-generation Poles born in England simply stopped going to Polish-language Catholic churches and instead went to English-language Catholic churches. The problem among Cypriots and Russians etc was that they had no English-language church to go to. It was from this that I understood quite clearly that we needed English-language Orthodox churches which were also authentic, in other words, that had exactly the same atmosphere and every detail as, say, Russian churches, except for one thing – the language. It was from this that I also clearly understood that Anglican-Orthodox churches with their fake Orthodoxy, Anglican churches with icons, whether liberal or conservative, new calendarist or old calendarist, were of no use.

I have been asked if MI5 ever tried to recruit me – they were well-known for recruiting Russian-speaking Oxford graduates. The answer is definitely 'No'. (I was hardly a second Balfour – a second 'Fr Dimitri'). I know that MI5 used to search the rooms of undergraduates who studied Russian. Maybe they did that. All they would have found in my room is books on the Russian Church. In any case I did not have a public school background – they would not have been interested in me. And morally I would most certainly not have been interested in them. I would never have compromised my integrity with one compromised side against another compromised side. Spiritually, I knew that the fall of Communism would never come through spying or military operations, conducted from outside the Soviet Union; it would come only when the hearts of the people who lived inside it were repentant. If MI6 (and the CIA) had known that, they could have saved themselves millions of lives and billions of dollars.

I graduated from Oxford in 1977. At once, in early July, I took a temporary job as a gardener-

chauffeur at High Beech in south Essex. I needed money, since I had no other income. At that time I had hoped to go to Kenya to help in the Orthodox mission there. I had even been learning Swahili. But in early August 1977 came the news that my sponsor, Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, had died. Once again I was thwarted and disappointed. After Archbishop Makarios' funeral, I met Metr Pitirim of Volokolamsk. He had attended the funeral, together with many Patriarchs. He said that such a huge event would only have been possible in Russia before the Revolution.

I needed time to think about how I was going to earn my living. I had received no careers guidance in Oxford. Once again I was left to my own devices to try and work things out. Some have asked me what I would have done, had I not chosen the Church. I think now that if I had chosen a secular career, I would have liked to become a teacher at a rural primary school. However, I chose an unpaid path in the Church. On the other hand, had Russia been free, I would have been very happy to have been a parish priest there, perhaps with some teaching of Western Church history in a seminary. Looking back, it is now clear to me that I should have gone to Jordanville. I regret that I had had no guidance in this matter. First of all, there were those with anti-Russian Orthodox political prejudices (either themselves Russian or else ex-Anglicans), who were against, but worst of all, there were members of ROCOR who had told me directly that I could not go there because I had 'no Russian blood'. So, as usual, I had to work it all out alone, inevitably making mistakes.

I left my temporary job that autumn and enrolled for a teaching course in Cambridge. After the course, in June 1978, I obtained a job teaching at the Vafopoulou English School in Thessaloniki in Greece from September onwards.

Meanwhile, in July and August 1978 I taught at a language school in London, where many of my students were Iranians. They were charming and cultured people. There was soon to be the anti-American Revolution in Iran. I think historically the Iranians had been much mistreated, first by the British Establishment, then by the American. Their natural wealth of oil had become their curse.

After these weeks in London I headed by coach to Thessaloniki, just after the earthquake that had taken place there. Greece and Cyprus were the last 'Orthodox countries' that were free then. That is why I went there. If Russia had been free, I would have gone there, to St Petersburg, as had many



The White Tower, Thessaloniki

Englishmen before the Revolution, among them the future Fr Nicholas Gibbes

Working, living and going to ordinary churches in Greece for nine months was very useful, because it taught me to put everything into perspective, to see what my way was. Northern Greece was still then quite Orthodox, rather as Russia had been before the Revolution. You could see everything, good and bad. There was no place for hypocritical Western pietism. However, I still



St Panteleimon's, Mt Athos

regret that I never found the local old calendar parish which is part of the Greek Church.

I had similar experiences on my visits to Mt Athos, where I saw great holiness and also great decadence side by side, especially at St Panteleimon's Russian Monastery, where I spent Holy Week and Easter 1979. I asked the old monks about St Silouan and they told me about Fr Sophrony. Fr Misail told me how as a young man in the 1930s, he had seen Communists enter a church on Easter Night and shoot a priest in the neck, killing him. I learned much more beside this.

I was particularly impressed by Fr Ephraim at Philotheou, the Athonite monastery that I preferred. Fr Ephraim later went to the USA, tried to join ROCOR, and became a monastic founder. I told him that there was no doubt that I would marry, if I could find someone who could put up with me. I was not monastic material and I had always known that, though I have always looked up to authentic monasticism as a model. He was a great encouragement and inspiration to me in all ways. He did not abandon me; I felt his prayer.

It was thanks to my time in Greece, where I stayed until June 1979, that I decided to go and study at what I thought was a Russian seminary, the St Sergius Theological Institute in Paris. I undertook everything that was necessary to go there in September 1979. I have been asked why I did not think of the American options which I knew of, St Vladimir's and Jordanville. As regards St Vladimir's, I had by then read the books of Fr Alexander Schmemmann. I did not find in them the spiritual content that I sought, just flat rationalism, and they contained things which were obvious, which I had known for years. In this way



Fr Ephraim

I found them like the books of C. S. Lewis, which had not much impressed me either. This was even the case of Fr Alexander's best book, *Great Lent* (*sic*). The other books published by St Vladimir's and graduates I had met had impressed me mainly by their Protestant spirit. There was no food for the soul there at all; it was just poor intellectualism.

As for Jordanville, very sadly, I had been told categorically by ROCOR members in London that it only accepted Russians and I could not go there and that was that. Some of the convert literature had also put me off by its lack of instruction. It was misguided zeal and only superficial knowledge. On the other hand, the OCA appeared to be superficial knowledge without any zeal. Perhaps these views were wrong, but they were the clear impressions and facts given to me by the representatives of both places whom I had met and expressed by the literature I had read. Such is the importance of examples given to us.

Meanwhile, in order to pay my way I had taken a summer job at a language school in Cambridge. And so, after a summer working, I returned to Paris. My destiny and my premonitions were unfolding, but, as usual, in the most unpredictable ways.

Having been promised introductions by Metr Antony (Bloom), with whose blessing I was going to study at St Serge, I arrived in Paris by train and ferry one dusky September evening to find that nothing at all had been done. No-one had been expecting me or had even heard of me. Nicholas Lossky, whom I met, said, 'Typical', and I was temporarily housed at the Exarchate in Paris. I was very grateful for this hospitality. It was my first appointment and my first disappointment.

At the Exarchate I met the Exarch, now Metr Philaret of Minsk, and Metr Pitirim again. I could see how these bishops were not free, hostages, although I found all the published books of Solzhenitsyn in the Exarch's room, where I had been staying.

When I went to St Serge for my appointment there, I found that they had, they said, never received my letter of application sent from Greece. That explained why they had never replied. Another disappointment. I was learning about disorganisation. Not discouraged, I still applied to St Serge, taking the entrance exams and beginning studies, in October 1979.

Here I was careful to choose courses that were essential. I knew that I would not be able to afford

to pay for more than two years at most. (Obviously, I had to pay for everything myself – there was no question of the Church paying for me). These courses concentrated on the services and the Typicon, Canon Law, Patristics, the New Testament and the Old Testament. I did as many of these courses as possible and read as much as possible to fill in the gaps.

I was careful to avoid all the courses given by renovationist and ecumenist teachers, on Philosophy – Ancient Philosophy, Western Philosophy, Russian Religious Philosophy, Liturgical Philosophy, Pastoral Philosophy, Dogmatic Philosophy etc. (the last three courses were called 'Theology', but they were not). Even then I realised that this was not a seminary. The Franco-Russians of Rue Daru would make a philosophy out of everything. They were not interested in saints, but in philosophers. This was the Paris disease, the god of the philosophers, not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

At St Serge, in *Rue de Crimée* – Crimea Street – I was only much later to learn the further role that the Crimea was to play a role in my life – I met a gallery of characters, both among the international



Protopresbyter Alexei Kniazev

students and the teachers. It was a very enriching experience.

By far the best teacher, a real seminary teacher, was the rector, Fr Alexei Kniazev. He was a most interesting man, though with an occasional temper, who had wanted to take the Rue Daru jurisdiction back into the Russian Church under Moscow in the 1970s, like Bishop Methodius (Kulman) and others. (He would certainly have done so after 1991, had he been alive then).

Somewhat eccentric with his one eye and very strongly Russian-accented French, he taught me a great deal as regards the Old Testament, Hagiography and Canon Law in particular. The anecdotes about him were legendary. I am very grateful to him. He was one of the few people who had ever stood up to the American-installed Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople and told him that if he were not 'a little Balkan bishop', whose boss was the Americans, but an Orthodox Patriarch who had the right to claim the whole Diaspora, then he should start behaving like one.

Another good teacher was Nicholas Koulomzin (later Fr Nicholas). With his distinctive French beret, he was typical of the older generation of French Russian intellectuals. Only later did I learn of his personal drama and his sacrifice. Then there was Nicholas Ossorgin, who taught us about the services and directed daily Matins and Vespers at the church. He had difficulty explaining himself in French (all the courses were in French) and he had some very modernistic views, rejected all Non-Russians (he said, they should all be Roman Catholic or Protestant), but he was a wonderful choir director, perhaps the best, knowing the services by heart. Only his mind, not his heart, was wayward. The Cypriot Fr Andreas Fyrrillas taught the Church Fathers. He was a much frustrated but very good man.

I do not wish to dwell on negatives, but there were negatives. One course was attended by large numbers of Catholic women. It was all very Parisian. Other teachers were also Uniat in ethos. It was here that I clearly saw just how intolerant liberalism is. As a result I decided not to stay for a second year at St Serge, but instead to buy all the pre-Revolutionary style Russian seminary books and manuals from Jordanville and study them. This was much cheaper (I was financing myself at St Serge by working part-time teaching in Paris) and far more profitable than staying at St Serge. In one year I had got the most I could out of it. And I

had obtained a bibliography there. There was no more to be gained.

I also met Fr (Baron) Alexander Rehbinder in Paris. He was a real Russian priest who had refused to go to America when other Parisian clergy had gone in the '40s and '50s. He did not want to be 'contaminated' by America. He was so Russian that he refused to speak French and disliked France. We much loved his sister, 'Tiotia Mara', who lived in Passy. She was a saintly old lady who spoke perfect Edwardian English and could recite nursery rhymes taught her by her English governess long before the Revolution. Their father and uncle were both New Martyrs.

In 1980 I met Fr Alexander Schmemmann in Paris. I had no idea who he was. He looked like an American businessman, dressed in a lounge suit and smoking a cigarette. Soon after I met Fr John Romanidis. He was much more Orthodox, though in a very Greek way, but still a real Patristic scholar and a disciple of Fr George Florovsky. He also taught his Greek students that one of my childhood heroes, Robin Hood, was Orthodox.

Meanwhile, I explored the Russian churches of Paris and was rewarded in many ways. It was here that I met my future wife. A cousin of Claudia Cardinale, she was of mixed Sicilian, Sardinian, Romanian, English, Maltese, Indian and Irish origin, who had been born in Bone in North Africa. Bone was in ancient times Hippo, the city of St Augustine and his house was shown a few doors away from where my wife lived as an infant. She was baptised in St Anne's church, which was bulldozed by the Muslims on the very next day. After this she had been taken by her refugee family to France in 1963 – together with two suitcases. They had lost everything in Algeria.



Claudia
Cardinale in
Paris

Her mother's father, British but born in Malta, had served in Royal Navy submarines in the Second World War. Having arrived in France, he had decided to walk to England, the homeland which he had never seen. Together with his wife, they began walking with their suitcases. They had reached Amiens in northern France when he had a heart attack and died, never seeing his beloved England.

My future wife had been brought up with the children of the Russian emigration in Paris, that generation born in the 50s and 60s, the children of the first Russian generation to have been born, or at least brought up as children, in Paris. It was my future wife who introduced me to the saintly Archbishop George Tarassoff (who even attended our wedding at St Nicholas church in Boulogne-Billancourt in April 1980 – an honour indeed). Archbishop George, the head of Rue Daru, had been a Russian pilot, sent with other Russian Forces to help the Allies on the Western Front in the Great War. He had been stranded in Belgium at the end of the War. Then he had married and been widowed young.

Archbishop George had never wanted to be a bishop, but the policy of Rue Daru was always to have a weak bishop, so that the jurisdiction could be politically manoeuvred by a powerful lay elite. This was composed of French-speaking liberal intellectuals who, like their ancestors, the westernised pre-Revolutionary Russians (and the older generation of French intellectuals), still seemed to think that Paris was the centre of the universe. There were the descendants of aristocrats who had been utterly opposed to the Royal Martyrs – which is why they still do not have icons of them.

Their tragedy was that they blamed the Tsar for their loss and exile. In reality their ancestors were themselves to blame for the fall of the Tsar and their own loss and exile. This is why, to this day in 2012, they are still cut off from the Russian Church, whereas neither part of the Russian Church Herself, both repentant, has this problem. These Parisians will not be able to return to the Russian Church until they show repentance instead of self-justification. In the meantime they imagine that their isolation ('freedom', in their words!) from the Russian Church is good.

Archbishop George was a weak and ill man, living in extreme poverty and neglect, to the shame of those at the Cathedral. He was also hopeless at administration and organization, ever regretful of his wife. He was cared for only by



Archbishop George (Tarassoff)

Barbara (Spiganovich), a wonderful woman who reposed only recently. It was she who taught me of my responsibility for the Church, that I could not let others take over, just because of their nationality. Without her, Archbishop George would have died years before.

Archbishop George was strongly disliked by the powerbrokers of Rue Daru who would publicly boo and hiss him. They looked on him as an incapable old man. We looked on him as a St Seraphim-like character, a living saint. He lived in and for prayer, especially for the departed. It was hardly his fault that he was very old. From him I learned of the importance of the Proskomidia – with him it lasted for hours, for he would begin it on Saturday evenings. He had tens of thousands to pray for.

I had met a very fine Russian Orthodox bishop, one whom I did not appreciate enough at the time, as I had imagined that there were many others like him. In my inexperience I was wrong. How wrong! We left France in June 1980. Looking back, I see that this return may have been a mistake because it was premature. But hindsight is a wonderful thing and who knows what a mistake is? Perhaps we can only learn through negative experience.

... *To be continued.*

Orthodoxy Shines Through Western Myths (12): THE DISTORTED PAST: A REINTERPRETATION OF EUROPE

Older Western scholarship on Church history is not generally of much use to Orthodox. Most of it is simply anti-Orthodox and therefore anti-authentic Christianity, even openly boasting of its 'Judeo-Christian' and not Christian civilization. The anti-Orthodox prejudices of such scholarship, when it mentions Orthodoxy at all, come simply from the fact that history is 'written by the winners', and even despite the First World War, up until the Second World War most Western scholars thought that the West had won.

It is different today, when the near-millennial crimes of the West are visible to all and nobody any longer listens to the voices of ecclesiastical institutions which moulded the last thousand years of Western history – they are clearly compromised.

Interestingly, contemporary secular scholarship, which in its ignorance of Orthodoxy cannot in any way be accused of being pro-Orthodox, is an excellent source for Orthodox to understand what went wrong with the West. We can understand how, by renouncing the Orthodox Christian Faith in its anti-Trinitarian and anti-Christic *filioque* heresy, its former Church became a series of -isms, Catholicism, Protestantism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism etc, which have bred modern-day secularism and will eventually lead to the end of the world.

In the following article, the latest in a series taken from various works of secular scholarship, we have selected extracts from a religious scholar. These are from *The Distorted Past: A*

Reinterpretation of Europe by the Spanish historian Josep Fontana, Blackwell, London 1995. These extracts seem to illustrate abundantly the modern post-Orthodox deformations of Western culture which originally began with the spread of the new filioque culture behind the Papacy.

Although ominously threatened for nearly three centuries before, under Charlemagne, these deformations were not definitively implemented until the eleventh century. The date of 1054 is thus seen to be symbolic of the very real spiritual fall which took place in Western Europe in the eleventh century. In the year 1000, the fall had by no means been certain. In 1054 it was. And it is that fall which has defined the subsequent history of not just Western Europe, but the whole world. But let the learned author speak of modern Western myths:

p. 5. On the Western myths of 'liberty' and 'democracy' and on Aristotle, on whose philosophy Western Scholasticism was founded.

The image of a Greek polis inhabited by free citizens who collectively participated in government is a mirage. It hides the burden of slavery, the relegation of the peasant to a marginal existence (masked by a false opposition between the 'cultured' city and the 'backward' countryside), the subordination of women (considered inferior to the point that Aristotle, convinced that they had fewer teeth than men, assigned them a purely passive role in conception as incubators for the reproductive power of men), and marked divisions between rich and poor citizens.

Athenian democracy never claimed to be egalitarian. Solon had been concerned to 'leave, as before, all the magistracies in the hands of the wealthy', and did not grant the people any more power than the minimum that was strictly necessary. The democracy for which the Athenians strove signified little more than the privilege which allowed a small group with full political rights – perhaps a tenth part of the Attic population – 'to debate matters of state in their assembly and to choose the magistrates by lot, with the aim that each one should have, at the proper time, a share in power'. (Herodotus himself was a foreigner in Athens and had no such rights.) Words such as 'liberty' and 'democracy' did not have the same meaning for the Greeks as they have for us.

p. 58–59. Western arrogance and the hypocrisy of the Crusades

Although it cannot be said that the crusaders undertook their adventure with material gains in mind, it is certain that, once they had them in their grasp, they did not scorn them and kept up commercial activities which were vital for the survival of the Latin states in the East. In his travels through these lands Ibn Jubayr was amazed to see war and business existing side by side: 'At times the two armies face up to each other and form up in battle order; but caravans of Muslims and Christians come and go among them without being stopped'.

The crusading spirit has distorted our view not only of Islam, but of eastern Christianity too, and has led us to exclude Byzantium from the history of Europe (we see Byzantium as a decadent civilization, with oriental features *Byzantinus est, non legitur*), and to exclude Russia born of the amazing fusion of Scandinavians, Slavs, and Mongols, and, worse, to exclude Asiatic Christianity. What we call 'the Byzantine Empire' never existed. The Byzantines called their state 'the Roman Empire' as they had every right to do, since imperial history there suffered no break with the past. In Byzantium people went on studying and glossing Homer's poems at times when in the European West ignorance of classical culture was such that somebody thought Venus a man, and Francois Villon included Alcibiades among the 'women of yesteryear'. Byzantium kept a notable interest in scientific knowledge going too. – Alexius I frightened off the Scythians by knowing beforehand that an eclipse of the sun was going to occur.

The fact that the Byzantines were Romans and Christians was not enough to persuade western Christians to give them any help. First there was the Fourth Crusade, which captured Constantinople in 1204 and shared its wealth and lands out among those taking part. The crusaders, said Condorcet, 'amused themselves by taking Constantinople and sacking it, as they were allowed to do, since its inhabitants did not believe in the pope's infallibility'. Later when the final campaign by the Turks began, and even though the Churches of East and West were reconciled by then, Latin Christianity had no qualms about accepting that an Ottoman sultan could become legitimate heir to the imperial throne of Constantine – as it showed by hastening to appoint a new patriarch of the Church in the East. The price paid for this was that 'Europe lived under fear of the Turk' for the next two and a half centuries.

p. 59. Western ignorance of missions in Asia.

Furthermore we have forgotten even the memory of that Asiatic Christianity which in the thirteenth century extended from Egypt as far as the China Sea, with ancient and well-rooted nuclei in Mesopotamia, Armenia, the Caucasus and Syria, and with more recent converts in central Asia among Turkic and Mongol peoples. To attribute the disappearance of these Christian communities to the triumph of Islam is to confuse the result with the cause. The religious situation of central Asia went on being unstable up the fourteenth century at least. The nomadic Asian peoples were tolerant or indifferent in religious matters and distrusted both the Chinese Empire and the expansionist tendencies of Islam, which led them to consider Christianity as a religion that helped them to civilize themselves without expecting them to renounce their own personalities.

The first Christian expansion into Asia was carried out by the Manichaeans, reaching its most brilliant point with the conversion of the Uighur people. These established an empire, maintained active trade with China, and had their capital at Karabalgasun with its twelve iron gates and a large royal palace.

The Uighur people collapsed in the middle of the ninth century, but Manichaeism survived: in the tenth century there was still a Manichaean monastery in Samarkand, and the faith seems to have survived into the thirteenth century in some of the small Turkic states.

p. 158-9. Modern Western myths: modern art; intellectuals and Fascism; Eurocentric history and the people's history stolen to advance the myth of 'progress'.

'Philistines' (a term which German students applied to the non-university person) were not to be allowed access to 'great' art. Artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wrote, painted, and composed for cultivated minorities. Later, their agents and dealers discovered that the vanguard was something that would fetch a good price from bourgeois suckers. They described themselves as '*poetes maudits*', thought themselves above the morality of the masses, and took refuge in esoteric cults reserved for select initiates.

'Intellectuals' despised the masses and at the same time feared them. Like Niebuhr, they thought that if one day the masses woke up to the deception on which their submissiveness was

based, they would rebel and destroy the intellectuals' world. If not all of them felt, like Nietzsche, able to make publicly 'a declaration of war against the masses', there were many who abominated that democracy which placed political decisions in the hands of a majority of the least suitable people. 'The great game' – said Ernst Jünger – 'is the one played between the *demos* with its plebiscites and what remains of the aristocracy'.

This led the intellectuals to dream of new Caesars, and some thought they had found them in Mussolini and Hitler, who had many more admirers among the European intelligentsia than is often believed, since few remained consistent in their views after the defeat. Most of them managed to get their adhesion forgotten, like Juenger (who in any case thought Hitler too plebeian), or like Heidegger, who had demanded that research and teaching should be devoted to the service of the National Socialist revolution (but the Nazis found him too 'metaphysical').

This struggle against the plebeian masses is never open warfare. Enemies to be fought would be too numerous, and in any case they have to be kept alive and deceived so that they go on working to provide for the expensive needs of their 'betters'. Internal enemies are invented in order to segregate certain human groups as inferiors or even as enemies: Jews, tramps, strikers and foreign immigrants (when they have ceased to be needed). In this way a double aim is achieved: to strengthen the illusion that a community of interests exists between the unsegregated masses – the good citizens – and their rulers, and to have someone who can be loaded with blame for problems.

It is not enough to attack these facts because of their injustice, claiming equal treatment for those excluded. That would be a pointless undertaking, unless at the same time we were to dismantle the framework of ideas that justifies the exclusion. In this framework an essential component is the view of history which legitimizes the superiority of Europeans because of their role in fomenting universal progress, and which seeks to convert us all into born accomplices of all their abuses by hiding from us the fact that that progress has been achieved at a cost to the greater part of those same Europeans too. For it is not a case of this Eurocentric view depriving non-Europeans of their history (though it does this). Its most important aim is surely to snatch their history away from great parts of European peoples themselves, concealing from them the fact that there are pasts other than

that which has been canonized as official history. It hides from them also the fact that they can find a wealth of hopes and unrealized possibilities in those pasts, and that much of what has been presented to them as progress is only a mask to cover various forms of economic appropriation and social control. When we take their history and their consciousness away from the lower classes,

we reduce them to the role of savages in their own countries.

This happened in the past to the countryfolk who tried to look for progress within the framework of their communally-based agriculture, and to the craftsmen who wanted machines put to the service of mankind. Today it is the turn of the factory worker and the employee ...

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



What would you say to those Roman Catholics, who, seeing the divisions of the Orthodox Churches, assert that what Orthodoxy needs is a focus of unity, i.e. the Pope?

M. A., Paris

First of all, they should stop playing the hypocrite and look at themselves. Ever since Roman Catholicism was invented in the eleventh century, precisely by dividing Christianity and splitting off Western Europe from the Church, it has been plagued by divisions.

First, there were so many divisions in Italy, Switzerland and Flanders, then with the Albigensians in France, then with Wyclif and Hus elsewhere, that they had to start Inquisitions, arrests, tortures, imprisonment, burnings at the stake etc. Then came the 'Protestants', so-called because they are Roman Catholics 'protesting' against Roman Catholicism. These have divided ever more. As for those who remained Roman Catholic, in virtually every century more have broken away, with Old Catholics and recently 'Traditionalists' etc.

All this does not take into account various 'orders' (which began precisely after 1054, especially in the 1100s), the latest being *Opus Dei*. These orders are also very divisive. Today most Roman Catholics seem to disagree with their own Pope. I cannot imagine any other religion as divided and divisive as Roman Catholicism. They certainly do need a focus of unity. As Orthodox – we would suggest the Holy Spirit.

Now let us look at so-called 'Orthodox divisions'. Let us be honest, these are mainly of Western fabrication. The sack of New Rome, the

Centre, in 1204 by Roman Catholic Crusaders was what began division. After it there came the Turkish occupation of 1453, which was directly caused by 1204. Divisions in the Balkans were intensified by this loss of the Centre in New Rome. In the 13th century the future Third Rome in Moscow was fighting off simultaneous invasion by the Mongol Tartars and more Roman Catholic Crusaders, the Teutonic Knights. After 1453 British and French embassies intrigued with the Ottomans against the Eastern Patriarchs (just as the Americans do today). The same embassies also intrigued in Russia. Emperor Paul I was murdered in a plot organised and encouraged by the British ambassador of the time and Nicholas II was deposed by a plot aided and abetted by Buchanan, the British ambassador of that time.

The so-called 'Christian' West invaded Russia in 1612 under Catholic Poland and then again in 1812 (Napoleon was a nominal Catholic). Next, it prevented Russia from freeing New Rome and the Balkans from Ottoman oppression, with which it sided, in the Crimean War. Then there was nineteenth century nationalism – a Western import into the Balkans together with German princeling rulers who were imposed there.

Then came the War of 1914, sprung on Russia by Catholic Austro-Hungary, and the February 1917 Russian Revolution, organised by the British and the Germans, greeted by the French and the Vatican, and financed from America. Both the USA and the Vatican negotiated with the Bolsheviks against Orthodoxy. This Western-organised fall of the Centre in Moscow caused further division. And in 1941 came yet another Western invasion by a nominal Austrian Catholic. And after Communism fell in 1991, both the Vatican and American

Protestant 'missionaries' tried to invade Russia and the Ukraine.

Of course, there has been division in the Orthodox world – but it was created by the West, often the Roman Catholic West. But whenever the Centre is restored (in the past in New Rome, today in Moscow the Third Rome), divisions are greatly weakened and even tend to disappear, as at the present time.



Britain is famous for its eccentrics.
But what is eccentricity?

N. P., London

Spiritually speaking, eccentricity is pride, the desire to stand out and be different in order to attract attention. Genuine Orthodox (unlike some convert fringes) are as discreet, modest and unassuming as possible. Outwardly, in dress and appearance, we are not at all different from others and cannot be spotted in a crowd through our outward appearance.



I had always thought that statues were not venerated in the Orthodox Churches, but I recently heard of one that existed in 19th century Russia and was much revered. Can you explain, please?

N. K., Washington

Your belief is correct. No three-dimensional images are canonical in any of the Orthodox Churches, which are ruled by the same canon law. However, there were cases of statues in the Russian Church that crept in under influence from Poland as early as the mid-seventeenth century (together with decadent icon-painting). At first these were sculptures in relief, then they became actual free-standing statues. These were initially burned by the canonically-minded holy Patriarch Nikon, but once the persecuting Russian State had removed him and imprisoned him, these statues and reliefs became relatively more widespread. Thus, some isolated cases survived into the 19th century, becoming the objects of superstitious peasant veneration. This is what you must have heard of.



Years ago I heard a talk relating how the Four Evangelists each mention the superscription placed over our Lord on the Cross, yet each renders it slightly different than the others. I recently decided to contact the speaker and ask him if he could elaborate on the matter. Here is his reply:

There's nothing much to elaborate, except to say that my point was that while each

version has the words 'king of the Jews', each is slightly different in wording thus demonstrating that there is no 'literal historical' unanimity in exact language in the different gospels, and so no 'historical inerrancy' (for either three of the four versions, or perhaps even all four, are historically incorrect), but different oral traditions are being reported that are essentially the same but literally different. My reason for pointing this out is to rule out any notion that the four gospels, and the Bible generally, has no historical errors in it, which is extremely important to admit, especially these days, when too many people hold that there are no mistakes in the Bible of any kind, and if there are, the Bible is 'not true' and is therefore useless as a witness to the faith.

While we avoid over literalizing (*Sola Scriptura*, the Quran is eternal, etc.), the contrary is equally problematic (i.e., my concern being that the above leans thus). So Luke and John lay particular emphasis on trustworthy eyewitness accounts of events, the latter having beheld the superscription himself. Yes, proper interpretation can become an idol like anything, but without it we aren't prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. Sounds good but I'm still uncertain.

J. D., California

The Bible, like Christ, Whose Word it is, is Divino-human. Thus, we have to avoid the excesses of fundamentalism (Monophysitism). Such people believe that the apostles inserted chapter and verse numbers and every comma by Divine inspiration! They forget that they are the works of mediæval copyists and typesetters. But we must also avoid liberalism (Arianism), that anything goes, all was merely human, so it does not matter what the Scriptures say.

The Four Evangelists are like four eyewitnesses, with four different angles of the same object. They were telescopic and saw the essentials from their viewpoint. Thus, it is typical that St Luke sees details and the three languages – he was the educated chronologist. It is typical that St Mark, author of the shortest, most universal Gospel, saw only the essential, seen by all four, the superscription: 'The King of the Jews'. In reality, the superscription that was probably present was the maximum, which we can compile from all Four Evangelists: 'This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the

Jews' (in 3 languages). Thus, there are no mistakes, but different versions of the essentials. Your speaker seems to lean slightly to Liberalism.



What is the difference between Orthodox monks and Non-Orthodox monks?

G. S., Derby

Orthodox monks (and nuns) are balanced all-rounders and their minds and bodies are subservient to their hearts – where they pray from. However, most heterodox monastics are intellectuals, using their brains at the expense of their bodies and hearts and so they spend most of their time in studies. I can remember a Serbian student who visited a Catholic monastery in England and expressed his astonishment to me that the monks did nothing for themselves, but had servants to do everything for them. Thus they did not even know how to change a plug, but would call in an electrician to do it. Of course, not all are

like that, but it is still very different from Orthodox monasteries where manual work is vital (the devil makes work for idle minds – and for idle hands) and all have manual obediences. This means that Orthodox monastics are far more down to earth.



To anyone who was thinking about monasticism in an Orthodox monastery where English is used, where would you recommend?

S. G., Edinburgh

Without any doubt, Holy Cross Hermitage in Wayne, Virginia. This is in fact a male monastery with some 25 monks and no longer a hermitage as it was 25 years ago. There are hopes that one day a convent could be started a mile or two away, which could be served by priests from the monastery.

CONFUSION AND DELAY: THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE

AS a result of children's television and merchandising 'The Railway Series' is now better known as *Thomas the Tank Engine*. In fact it is a set of children's books about a railway on a fictional Island of Sodor, located between North-West England and the Isle of Man. Its landscapes resemble the Lake District. There are 42 books in the series, the first published in 1945. Twenty-six were written by the Rev W. Awdry up to 1972 and a further 16 have been written by his son up to 2011. Like many an Anglican vicar, Awdry was a railway enthusiast who lived in his own world, but keen that his stories should be realistic.

However, in reality his stories have a Protestant moral aspect. Each engine represents a character fault to be found in any human being, including in whimsical Anglican clerics, whether pride, vanity, cheekiness, rudeness etc. The Sodor railway overall represents the genteel, insular and disincarnate world of an Anglican deanery. The Dean is represented by the Churchillian figure of 'The Fat Controller'. The greatest compliment that

he can make is that an engine is 'really useful'; the greatest fault is that an engine has 'caused confusion and delay'. Here we see fragments of Orthodox Truth.

Spiritually, 'really useful' is a pragmatic term that means that someone has helped someone else to salvation. This, after all, is the greatest use that anyone can be. 'Confusion' means heresy, for heresy means to confuse truth, spiritual reality, with human fantasy, and so confuse human salvation. 'Delay' means schism, for a schism delays salvation, perhaps critically. In this regard we may say that these stories, although reflecting Protestant moralizing, do have an Orthodox aspect, for confusion and delay are exactly what Non-Orthodox England has suffered for nigh on a thousand years.



OPINION PAGE

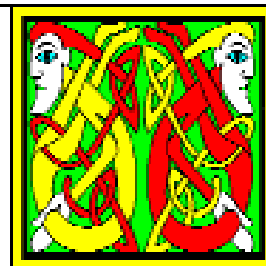
Forty Years in the Wilderness

ON 28 October 1971 a fateful decision was taken by a minority government to yoke us to the alien Treaty of Rome. What has followed over the past forty years and more can only be described as a wilderness, where the nation has lost its sense of its role and its place in the world. The decision was brought about by a people forgetful of its Divine destiny, which has not even revolted to destroy the servitude to the supranational EU, as it now is, so reminiscent of another tyrannical Union – the Soviet Union.

The answer as to why the people have not revolted also lies in the fact that over the forty-year period the cunning enslavement has been gradual. Treaty after treaty has passed into Statute Law, like an incoming tide rising and flooding the land. However, these laws are unconstitutional, as they are in conflict with Statute Laws which remain in force.

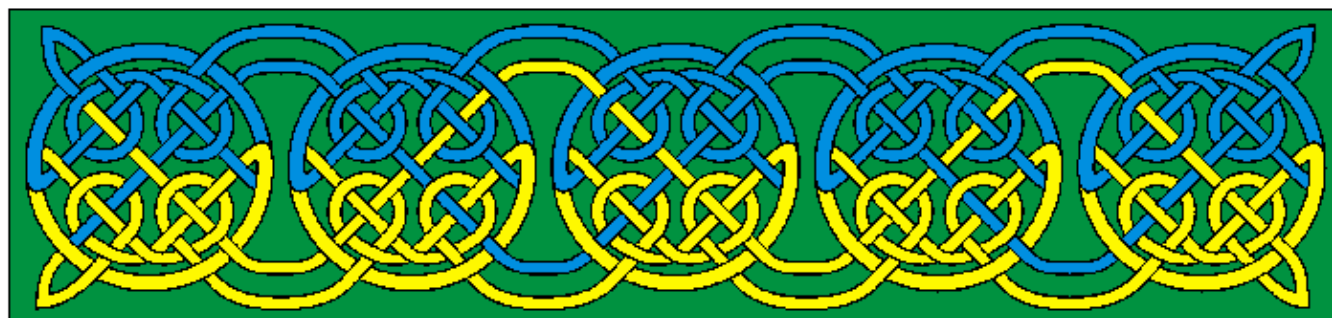
From the beginning the politicians have acted as false shepherds with the lie that we were only joining a customs union in Europe with no loss of sovereignty. It was, they insisted, for our financial benefit and because we could not continue alone in the world after losing the empire. All know differently now because of the financial crisis.

On 28 October 1971 before the fateful vote on Europe was taken that evening, the Prophet Isaiah spoke to me from Isaiah 28, 9-16: *Expect thou affliction upon affliction, hope upon hope: yet a little, yet a little, by reason of the contempt of lips, by means of another tongue: for they shall speak unto this people, saying unto them, This is the rest unto him that is hungry, and this is the calamity: yet they would not hear. Therefore the oracle of*



God shall be unto them affliction upon affliction, hope upon hope, yet a little, yet a little, that they may go and fall backward; and they shall be crushed, and be in danger, and shall be taken. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye afflicted men, and ye princes of this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, 'We have made a covenant with Hades, and agreements with death; if the rushing storm shall pass through, it shall not come upon us: we have made falsehood our hope, and by falsehood shall we be protected': therefore thus saith the Lord, even the Lord, Behold, I will lay for the foundations of Zion a costly stone, a choice, a corner stone, a precious stone, for the foundation.

This warning should have been heard that day in London – a New Jerusalem – but it was not. Now, forty years later, we are starting to experience 'the overflowing scourge' that is passing through the banking system, as the tables of the moneychangers are overturned. Are we now at last to emerge from the European 'wilderness'?



AN ANSWER TO EVERYTHING



For all the negative things we have to say to ourselves, God has positive answers:

We say: 'It's impossible.'

God says: All things are possible. (Luke 18:27)

We say: 'I am too tired.'

God says: I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28-30)

We say: 'Nobody really loves me.'

God says: I love you. (John 3:16 & John 13:34)

We say: 'I can't go on.'

God says: My grace is sufficient. (2 Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

We say: 'I can't figure things out.'

God says: I will direct your steps. (Proverbs 15:6)

We say: 'I can't do it.'

God says: You can do all things. (Philippians 4:13)

We say: 'I am not able.'

God says: I am able. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

We say: 'It is not worth it.'

God says: It will be worth it. (Romans 8:28)

We say: 'I can't forgive myself.'

God says: I forgive you. (1 John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

We say: 'I can't manage.'

God says: I will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19)

We say: 'I am afraid.'

God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear. (2 Timothy 1:7)

We say: 'I am always worried and frustrated.'

God says: Cast all your cares on Me. (1 Peter 5:7)

We say: 'I don't have enough faith.'

God says: I've given everyone a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

We say: 'I'm not smart enough.'

God says: I give you wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

We say: 'I feel all alone.'

God says: I will never leave you or forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

