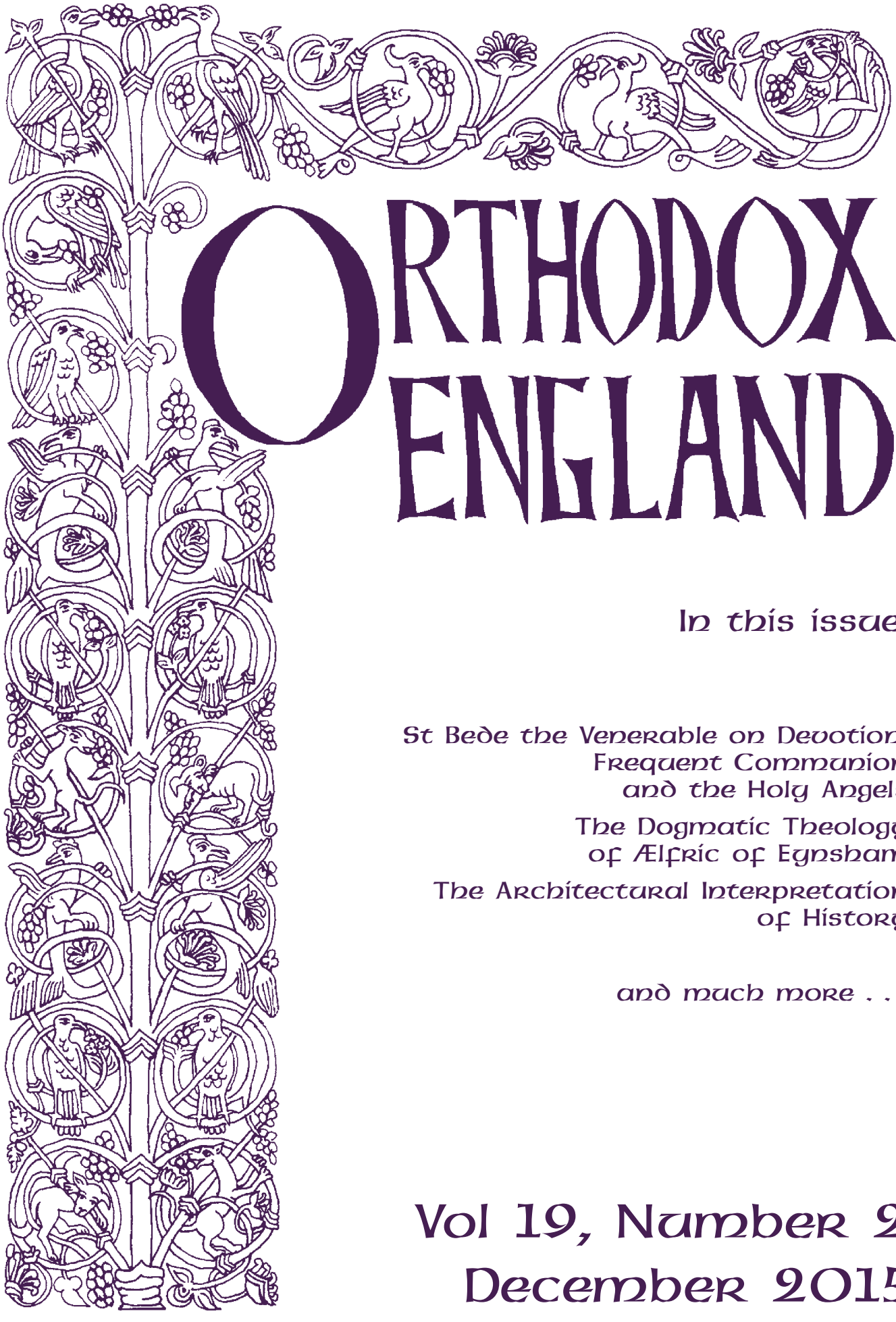

# ORTHODOX ENGLAND

In this issue:

St Bede the Venerable on Devotion, Frequent Communion and the Holy Angels

The Dogmatic Theology of Ælfric of Eynsham

The Architectural Interpretation of History

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# Editorial:
# A CALL TO EUROPE

Below is a foreword written for a German-language series of books called 'Orthodox Europe', the first volume of which, translated into German, was written by the editor. Although written nearly five years ago, we believe that this foreword has lost none of its relevance.

*The Orthodox Church can offer the young people of Western Europe the faith as it was in the first ten centuries ... Before the Schism all of Europe was Orthodox. Therefore what the Church can offer is simplicity and authenticity of faith. We teach purity of faith, ascetic life and spirituality, that which does not exist in the Roman Catholic and other churches. The West was torn away from these values and is now nostalgic for them.*

*His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, 6 December 2010 (www.romfea.gr)*

FROM Western Europe, this tiny corner of the Eurasian Continent, people sailed out for centuries to dominate the world. From Portugal and Spain, from France and Great Britain, from the Netherlands and Belgium, from Germany and Italy, they founded colonial empires all over the world, in Africa, the Americas, Oceania and Asia. However, all too often Western Europeans ruled their new empires in the wrong way and on the wrong principles. All too often they forgot the law of their being, which was to bring Christ to the nations. So what should have been missionary work was deformed into the slavery of exploitation and colonisation.

And so developed rivalries, leading to the tribal wars of Western Europe, which in the last century became World Wars. In these Wars not only did Western Europeans kill one another, but even their colonial troops killed one another – all in the name of Western Europe. After the Second Great War, war-weary, at last Western Europe decided that enough was enough. And so today we have a European Union in most of Western Europe and even in parts of Central and Eastern Europe and also a common European currency in much of Western Europe.

Some say that this Union in its present form is desirable, others that it is undesirable. Some say that this present Union will be successful, others that it will be unsuccessful These are opinions. All we can say for sure is, as we have seen recently in Greece, in Ireland and in Portugal, that this Union is difficult. However, we would speak not of political and economic unity, which is always, ironically, divisive, but rather of spiritual unity. To understand what spiritual unity is, we must first draw a spiritual map of Europe. This map consists not necessarily of capital cities, but of spiritual capitals, spiritual oases great and small.

For example, although these spiritual capitals may in Italy be Rome and in France Lyon, in Ireland the spiritual capital may rather be the remote western island of Skellig Michael, in Scotland the island of Iona and in England the island of Lindisfarne. In Spain it may be the town of Compostela, in Sweden Uppsala, in Belgium Nivelles, in Germany Fulda, in Luxembourg Echternach, in Switzerland Einsiedeln, in Iceland Skalholt, in Norway Stiklestad, in Denmark Roskilde, in Austria Salzburg, in Portugal Braga and in the Netherlands Utrecht. These spiritual capitals can be divided into two types, episcopal and monastic. However, these are in fact one and the same, for our best monasteries have always produced bishops and our best bishops have always been monastics.

These capitals – and many others – mark the presence of the other Western Europe. This other Western Europe is that which was, and invisibly is, in communion with the heart of the Church on earth, with Jerusalem, and, from there with the rest of Orthodox Christian Asia and Eastern Europe, which stretches to the Pacific shores and across them to Japan and Alaska and onwards. The Western Europe that is in communion with this much vaster world is the Western Europe of the first millennium, that of the saints, who are the sacramental signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit amongst us. From Iceland to Sicily, from Spain to Sweden, from Portugal to Austria, from England to Germany, from Norway to Malta, from Slovenia to Ireland, the saints of Western Europe and of the whole Orthodox Church are in our midst.

In the first millennium Western Europe had a unity, a unity that was founded in the Universal Church in Jerusalem which had spread into Asia,

Africa and Europe. Despite pagan invasions, Western Europe remained part of the Christian Empire, whose capital was then in New Rome, called Constantinople, its emblem the double-headed eagle, looking east and west, uniting Asia and Europe. In the second millennium, the tiny corner of Eurasia that is Western Europe, separated and isolated from the Universal Church in Asia and Eastern Europe by rejecting the Church's knowledge of the Holy Trinity, tried to conquer Jerusalem, from which it had fallen out of communion. Cut off from the Universal Church, Western Europe, proudly imagining itself to be the centre and not a province and even claiming to represent the Universal Church, went out to conquer the world.

In so doing, it forgot the Universal Church and the Faith of Jerusalem, which by then had already spread as far as the Urals. Thus, the proud spirit of triumphalism took over Western Europe. In the course of the second millennium, the ideological capital of Western Europe changed many times, for example, from Rome to Lisbon, from Madrid to Geneva, from Paris to Vienna, from London to Berlin. The old spiritual capitals were mostly forgotten, many becoming only obscure villages. As for those which like Rome did not become villages, their spiritually important parts were often overbuilt, buried beneath layer upon layer of the new and now we have to go down into crypts, catacombs and tombs to see where the saints of Western Europe lived and became holy.

For centuries Western Europe has thus all too often been occupied by an alien spirit, a foreign presence. It seems that in its midst has been enthroned the sectarian spirit of pride, superiority, vanity and arrogance, imagined on account of its technology. Failing to understand that superior technology does not make superior humanity, Western Europe still has to take its place among the nations. Today, however, since its double attempt at suicide in two European Wars become World Wars, Europe has been humiliated, brought low. It is our prayer that from this lowliness there may yet come a new humility, a new realism.

The last thousand years in Western Europe have so often seen wars, divisions and controversies. They have seen all too little of the Law of Christ, of the Law of Love. Western European voices of the last millennium have had their wisdom, they have had their truth, but it has often been a divisive truth, a truth without spiritual wisdom. Today, in many other cities, towns and villages all over Western Europe, the haunting voices of Western Europe's saints, its founding fathers and mothers, are mystically calling out of Western Europe's past, calling it, and so us, to spiritual unity. These voices are joined by the voices of the martyrs and confessors of Eastern Europe and Asia, who have been heard here in recent decades. They have been brought here by those fleeing corrupt tyrannies, both political and economic, that have been installed there over the last century.

Western Europe is only the tiny, sunset end of the Eurasian Continent. Without the ancient faith of the rest of Europe, without the ancient faith of Jerusalem and Asia, Western Europe can do little: it is largely only a technopolis without a deeper spiritual significance. For a thousand years, Western Europe has not been a spiritual centre, spiritually it has been a province, struggling in isolation from the faith of Jerusalem and the Church, on which it turned its back.

This multi-volume collection of writings, beginning with an overview of Orthodoxes Europa, will contain information on every part of the Orthodox heritage of Western Europe, country by country. With it, we call on the peoples of Western Europe to return to their lost unity, to their saints, to their roots and so to our Mother Orthodox Church.

*Archpriest Andrew Phillips, Colchester, England / Utrecht, the Netherlands*

*St Job the Long-Suffering, 6/19 May 2011*

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# From the Holy Fathers
# ST BEDE THE VENERABLE: ON DEVOTION, FREQUENT COMMUNION AND THE HOLY ANGELS

IT is said that our master and your patron, the Blessed Bede, said: 'I know that angels visit the services and the meetings of the brethren. What if they should not find me there among them? Will they not say, where is Bede? Why does he not come to the worship appointed for the brethren?

The monk Cuthbert, a pupil of Bede, recorded that when St Bede was dying the texts that came

naturally to his mind were the antiphons from the services, among them the antiphon for the magnificat from the Vespers of the Ascension, which he could not sing without tears.

As one of the priests of the monastery, a deep devotion to the Eucharist also marked St Bede's life. In his writings, he constantly urged ordained priests to be better pastors and more devout celebrants, while the laity, he felt, should come more frequently to communion. Thus:

> 'Whenever we enter the church and draw near to the heavenly mysteries, we ought to approach with all humility and fear, both because of the presence of the angelic powers and because of the reverence due to the sacred offering; for as the angels are said to have stood by the Lord's body when it lay in the tomb, so we must believe that they are present in the celebration of the mysteries of His most sacred body at the time of consecration'.
>
> *(From St Bede's commentary on the Gospel of St Luke)*

Better is a stupid and unlettered brother who, working the good things he knows, is worthy of heavenly life than one who, though distinguished for his learning in the Scriptures or even holding the place of a teacher, lacks the bread of love.

After Fr Bede had devoted himself for a long time to the study of Holy Scripture, in his old age his eyes became dim and he could not see. Some mockers said to him, 'Fr Bede, behold, the people are gathered together waiting to hear the word of God, arise and preach to them'. And he, thirsting for the salvation of souls, went up and preached, thinking that there were people there, whereas there was no-one but the mockers. And as he concluded his sermon, saying, 'This may God deign to grant us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit', the blessed angels in the air responded saying, 'Amen, very venerable Bede'.

# THE DOGMATIC THEOLOGY OF ABBOT ÆLFRIC OF EYNSHAM (Part 1)

## Acknowledgements

The *Catholic Homilies* of Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham are available in two volumes in the original Old English, parallel with a literal and archaic English translation by Benjamin Thorpe (1844–45) and found in the 1983 re-edition of Georg Olms (1200 pages). All quotations below are taken from here, having carefully been compared with the original Old English and expressed in modern English. We are also indebted for the below to two recent studies of Abbot Ælfric: *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* by Milton McC Gatch (Toronto, 1977) and *Books and Grace, Ælfric's Theology* by Lynne Grundy (London, 1991).

## Introduction

THE future Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham was born in about 955 and learned the monastic life in Winchester under St Æthelwold († 984). In other words he was part of the tenth-century monastic-led revival, the Silver Age of the English Church, whose task it was to restore Church life in England after the ravages of the Viking onslaughts of the past. In 987 Fr Ælfric went to a newly-founded monastery at Cerne Abbas in Dorset as priest and in 1005 he became Abbot of Eynsham in Oxfordshire. He reposed here in about 1010. His most important task in both these monasteries was as an elder and spiritual teacher, among monastics and laity alike.

It was apparently after he had moved to the new monastery in Cerne in 987 that he first conceived the idea of making a collection of sermons, the 'Catholic Homilies'. This carefully constructed series of sermons was intended to serve the needs of people who lacked the benefits of catechism. In the two-year cycle, the sermons give a solid description of the basics of the Faith. By 992 the two volumes of sermons had been issued; in their original form they were the result at most of five years' work in the new monastery.

Abbot Ælfric's confidence in the knowledge to be gained from the study of theological writing, which stems from his veneration for the Church Fathers, is everywhere apparent in his writings. To convey the Tradition is his purpose in his sermons, to compile for his age and audience, not to be wholly original. The teachings of the Fathers,

unknown to ordinary people, are for the protection of the faithful in times of crisis. Such a time will certainly come to every Christian, for, as he says, death brings everyone to a confrontation with the truth.

He cites as his sources a combination of Fathers of the Church in the West – St Gregory the Great, St Bede, Blessed Jerome and especially Blessed Augustine. However, we shall see later how cleverly he transfigured the teachings of the latter, which at times contained erroneous emphases, and made them Orthodox. Even after Fr Ælfric became Abbot of Eynsham he continued to enlarge, correct and reissue his sermons. His strong awareness of his responsibility as a teacher, the guardian of the souls placed in his keeping, remained with him and may be discerned in the background of all his work. As he says, he writes 'for the edification of the humble' and 'for the profit of their souls'.

Abbot Ælfric is convinced that the teaching he is passing on is that which will guarantee safety on the Day of Judgement. Repeatedly, his sermons turn to a sacramental understanding of the Church and participation in the life in Christ. They recognise the importance of the individual as a member of the Body of Christ, where each of us partakes of the mystery of the Saviour. Abbot Ælfric's theology is one which strives to offer, explain and strengthen this participation for even the humblest of the servants of God.

His theology is strikingly different from the so-called theology, in fact rationalistic scholastic philosophy, that was to be produced in Western Europe only 100 years after his time. In this sense he can perhaps be called, together with Wulfstan, Bishop of London, one of the last Orthodox preachers in England until modern times and could be compared to contemporary Orthodox elders, combining the spiritual with the practical. Let us now look at some of the themes in his sermons.

## God: Unity and Trinity

The concept of the Trinity is the subject of a long discussion by Abbot Ælfric in his sermon 'On the Catholic Faith'. Its real subject is the nature of the Trinity. Perhaps in his experience this was the most difficult concept for people to grasp, for the sermon offers many different ways of approaching the mystery. The Trinity for him is no abstract intellectual concept: it is real and living, as for all Orthodox. However, his treatment of the teaching is unique for his age and place.

He teaches that the true God is the Creator and Preserver of the Universe. Creation is the foundation of the knowledge of God's nature available to the mind, and as he sees it, Creation declares God's Unity and Trinity. He allows no misconceptions to cloud the clear picture of one God; at the same time he directs the faithful to a discovery of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity within their own experience. In his teaching on God, God as the essence or origin of all life is simply affirmed. He understands the substantial unity of the Tripersonal God, but looks first at the Unity of God before exploring the Personal mystery of the Trinity.

For him God is All-Wise:

> 'For just as wisdom is so called from being wise and knowledge is so called from knowing, so essence is so called from being. And who can possess being in a higher degree than He, who said to His servant Moses: 'I am who I am'?

The Essence of God is also expressed in His Goodness: the Creator is the Highest Good, from which all Goodness is derived:

> 'Truly nothing is good excepting God alone. If any created thing is good, then its Goodness is derived from the Creator, who is supremely Good'.

## The Incarnation of the Son

As the Father's agent of Creation, the Son reveals God as Almighty. That same Almightiness is revealed for a second time in the Re-creation of humanity through the Son. This Second Creation achieves still more than the first, transfiguring man into the child of God, giving him a regenerate nature, because the Son allows Himself to be humbled to accept human nature. Through His Incarnation, the Son allies humanity with His Divinity so that humanity is raised up to the level of the Divine. The Son's Sonship is broadened to include the faithful through His acceptance of human nature, purifying it and making it worthy of the honour through His own sinlessness:

> 'Man is God's child, because God's Son, Who was eternally begotten of the Father Almighty, received humanity without sin into true unity with His Person, and that same Child of God is the child of man, according to the humanity which He took on'.

Here is the inseparable unity of natures which works a miracle in human nature:

> 'All Christian people are His spiritual brothers and He is the first born in grace and Divinity, the Only-Begotten of the Father Almighty'.

The Incarnation of the Son is the New Covenant, now no longer of law but of grace, in which all may be sons and daughters. The implication of this is that the Son's divinity is mysteriously shared with His brothers and sisters; so it may truly be said, 'Ye are gods'. For Abbot Ælfric the Incarnation of the Son is the turning-point in human history. It is the point at which death is transfigured into life, punishment into glory, exile into Sonship.

Man receives God's mercy which is eternal. God's merciful response to the problem of sin is to send His Son, the agent of Creation, to redeem that Creation:

> 'But the merciful Father, Who created us as men through His Only-Begotten Son, afterwards desired through that same Son to redeem all mankind from the devil and from eternal death'.

The Son's humility in descending from the height of His Divine glory shows the extent of God's love: God came down to the level of Creation in order to raise it up to His level. The Incarnation offers an alternative to solidarity with Adam: instead of an association with sin and condemnation, humanity is offered a brotherhood which frees and elevates in a new and transfiguring Re-Creation through the Son. Christ's acceptance of humanity raises God's chosen ones up to the status of sons and daughters. His Sonship, though uniquely given to Him Who is Co-equal and Co-eternal with the Father, is a gift now extended to all mankind through the Son's Incarnation.

## Divinisation by the Holy Spirit

In his sermon *De Falsis Diis*, Abbot Ælfric finds this inheritance described in Psalm 81, 6 (Septuagint), dismissing the legions of false gods and finally acclaiming the new gods brought into the family of God by the power of their Creator:

> 'I said that ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High. The Merciful Lord gave such honour to his holy servants that he called them gods; nevertheless, no-one has this power through himself, but through the One God Who created all things'.

This is the Re-creative work of God through the Son. The First Creation did not make men gods, even though Adam and his descendants were to have lived a life of blessedness, untroubled by sickness and death. Merely to have restored this life would have been a gracious gift, but in His Second Creation God achieves more than the simple rebuilding of the old Adam. He works a transfiguration of nature by the Holy Spirit. Now no longer restricted to natural humanity, human beings participate in humanity made Divine by Christ. The difference is the grace of the Holy Spirit

## The Redemption

Through His Coming, says Abbot Ælfric, Christ offers the means of regaining the lost relationship with God and through His death He removes all obstacles to the enjoyment of this relationship, ensuring that justice as well as mercy have annulled the devil's usurpation of power. Redemption, as he seeks to show, was not a gratuitous display of might, but a just response to the crisis. This justice is visible first in the sacrifice of Christ and secondly in the deliverance of souls from hell. God's justice requires the sacrifice of one who was sinless to atone for the sins of all humanity. The Son of God accepted the task in the knowledge that only the Incarnate Son could be that sacrifice.

> 'At His birth it seemed as though His Divinity were humbled and at His Ascension His humanity were exalted and glorified. With His Ascension the writ of our condemnation is annulled and the sentence of our destruction is turned aside'.

For Abbot Ælfric, God's response to the spoiling of Creation in providing a new Creation, effected like the first by His Son, is the dynamic mystery of the history of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through Christ's death, reconciliation with God is brought about by the Holy Spirit under conditions transfigured by the Spirit from judgement to love. The alienation or estrangement experienced by humanity after expulsion from Paradise, whether physical or spiritual, is eliminated in the self-giving love of the Son's death.

Abbot Ælfric's particular emphasis is that the Incarnation was God's response to the fact of sin. He does not suggest that God was taken by surprise when humanity failed: on the contrary, the Incarnation was planned before the world began. Thus the events and effects of Christ's life and death were always known to God the Father. In his

teaching, this assertion of God's eternal Omniscience, a necessary attribute of Him to Whom the past and future are eternally present, is combined with the image of God's intercession in the Redemption of His handiwork.

Abbot Ælfric vividly evokes God's mercy as a response to the crisis: the perfect love of God is placed in context when He is seen responding to the sin abhorrent to Him. This emphasis makes the Cross central to the relationship of God with mankind, locating here the moment of Transfiguration, bringing to an end the old dispensation in which the usurping devil held power and initiating a new life of freedom and obedience. The Incarnation is in his view both the culmination of God's plan for mankind, preordained from the beginning, and a loving impetus shown in the beginning of a new Creation.

## Creation and the Knowledge of God

Abbot Ælfric asserts not merely that God alone is Good. He also says that God the Creator is the Source of all Goodness. God's essential Goodness is expressed in His work of Creation, which is therefore a revelation of His mind. Without Creation God's Goodness would have remained unknown. The Abbot also suggests that it is as a part of God's expression of His Goodness that created things are themselves good: created by Good, they partake of His Goodness. That man as a creature has this basic God-derived Goodness is fundamental to his teaching on man (anthropology). He insists that humanity is good, in spite of the fact that it has been spoiled by the sin of Adam. Even sin cannot take away the Goodness inherent in Creation; there is no Calvinism here.

Attributing supreme Goodness to God, he does not explain in a rationalistic way how the mind may grasp this concept, but it is clear that for him God can be understood through the nature of Goodness – through His Creation and His reflection in Creation.

> 'In the beginning it was always His eternal purpose to make this whole world and the whole earth by His own power to His own glory'.

Thus, the Abbot places humanity in the context of a glorifying Creation: its potential is realized in worship. Implicit here is the belief that God wants to be known by His Creation and that He seeks a relationship with each person. Nevertheless, the separation between God and His Creation suggests that however successfully humanity realizes its potential in worship, the step towards true communion with God must be a very great one, needing some kind of concession or condescension on the part of God. Direct revelation is the completion of what Creation only begins to know.

For example, the Old Testament records occasions when God approached his people directly, rather than speaking through His Creation. Addressing individual human minds, God showed His desire to be personally and intimately involved with the Jewish people. God spoke, admonished, guided, promised and above all, He made covenants with His people. The covenants had immediate reference to the historical community, but also looked forward to a fuller realization in Christ. The promise to Abraham of blessing for himself and his descendants (Genesis 22, 17–18) is made universal in its fulfilment in the birth of Christ, descended from Abraham through David and Mary (Matthew 1, 1–16), and through Whom all the faithful are blessed (Galatians 3, 29). This blessing remains with the spiritual heirs of Abraham after the institution of the new relationship with God in Christ, the New Covenant with His people:

> 'We are not physically of Abraham's race, but spiritually. As the Apostle Paul said, "Truly, if you are Christians, then are you the offspring of Abraham, and inheritors according to the covenant". The last word of this song of praise is "for ever", for our promise, which God has promised us, will last eternally for ever, world without end'.

The New Covenant is made possible by the intercession of the humanity of Christ, Whose redemptive work is effectively a Re-creation, a second work of Creation. In Abbot Ælfric's glorification of God the Creator, he makes clear the Trinitarian dispensation of that work in which the Agent of Creation is the Word of God. Creation through the Son thus prefigures the Re-creation through the Son, which was necessary after the First Creation had been spoiled. In each case God makes Himself known to humanity through His Son, who acts as the channel of power.

To understand anything of God, we must admit the primacy of Faith:

> 'He who is able to understand that our Saviour Christ is just as old in the Godhead as His Father, let him thank God for it and rejoice. He who is unable to understand

must believe it, so that he may understand it; because the word of the prophet, who spoke thus, cannot be spoken in vain: 'Unless you believe it, you cannot understand it'. (Isaiah, 7, 9: 'Unless you believe, you will not understand').

It is faith, then, that declares that Christ is Co-eternal with the Father and is of the same majesty and glory. In the Trinity and in His own person, He is Almighty God. He is both the Creating God and the Father's Agent of Creation. His work in Creation confirms that He Himself was not a product of God's Creation of the world. On the contrary, He was begotten by God: had His birth been part of Creation, the Son could not be the Creating God, for all that is created is not God. Nor is the birth of the Son confined within time like Creation: the generation of the Son is eternal.

## The Grace of the Holy Spirit and Human Freewill

Providence may readily be defined from Abbot Ælfric's sermons as God's plan for mankind, prepared right from the beginning of Creation. He stresses the way in which this plan affects each individual, for this also implies the need for election. All aspects of this important issue are treated in considerable detail and he states that no-one may be saved except by the grace of the Holy Spirit, which has been established from eternity:

'For no man will be saved, except through the grace of Christ the Saviour: that grace he prepared and preordained in eternal decision before the world was established'.

No-one can learn how to save himself, or acquire salvation through the efforts of will or reason alone. Intellectual understanding can never replace the gift of illumination by the grace of the Holy Spirit, an enlightenment which surpasses, and yet completes, human endeavour. If the Holy Spirit does not illuminate a man's heart, no amount of teaching will suffice for salvation. Abbot Ælfric explains Psalm 126, 1 in these terms:

'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Unless God Himself by His holy grace illuminates the hearts of those who hear His teaching, the teacher labours in vain with His teaching from outside'.

The teacher fails to penetrate the heart that lacks the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Those who are to receive this grace are chosen from the beginning of Creation and they are drawn from all ages of the world. God foreknows the numbers of the elect and will continue to gather them until the total is reached:

'He chose us from all peoples and in this way He makes up that total number which He desires to have for His eternal glory'.

However, as regards the verse 'God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (I Timothy 2, 3–4), the Abbot does not fall into the error of Blessed Augustine, who fell into the Latin philosophy of 'predestination' and tried to express a hidden will of God, and not His revealed will, that all might be saved, so attributing to God what we might now call 'predestination'. Any interpretation of this verse is to be accepted, says Abbot Ælfric, providing only that it maintains God's supreme freedom.

Abbot Ælfric does not attempt any interpretation of this; it is a mystery. All we know is that God is merciful. In this he follows the Second Council of Orange in 529, which rejected Blessed Augustine's harsh error of predestination. The Fathers there upheld the Church's teaching on grace against the Pelagians, but they ignored the erroneous and distasteful teaching on 'predestination'. The twenty-five canons of the Council affirm the need for grace for all things and insist that fallen man owes everything good in himself to God. But these canons do not mention predestination at all. The Council summarised its understanding of grace in the form of a creed, which included a complete rejection of the idea that God might predestine anyone to evil, declaring any who believed this theory to be anathema.

Fr Ælfric takes a view which emphasises God's foreknowledge of the elect to eternal life and of those who will be condemned to punishment. He repudiates any idea that God might 'predestine' a soul to perdition, suggesting that this contradicts the very nature of God:

'He predestined no-one to wickedness, for He Himself is all Goodness; nor did He predestine anyone to perdition, for He is true life'.

It is God's foreknowledge, not predestination, which distinguishes between the obedient, whom He graciously chooses, and the wicked, whom He does not choose:

'He foreknew the chosen for eternal life, because He knew that they would be so in the

future by His grace and their own obedience. He did not foreknow the wicked to His kingdom, for He knew that they would be so in the future, through their own transgression and perversity.

Abbot Ælfric does not say in these lines that God knows, in His eternal present, whether people will be good or bad. He knows whether they will be chosen or wicked. Associated with the chosen are grace and obedience, while associated with the wicked are transgression and perversity. He supplies no pronoun to supplant that which clearly belongs with grace and obedience. That it is the obedience of the chosen (like that of Christ on the Cross), is made clear by his remark that the Incarnation of the Son is redeeming for those who are obedient:

> 'But again the great mercy of our Lord has redeemed us through His Incarnation, if we obey His commands with all our heart'.

These lines illustrate that it is in obedience that the harmony of the grace of the Holy Spirit and human response is found and it may not be possible to say where one ends and the other begins. Zealous obedience is rewarded by salvation in the context of the grace of the Holy Spirit: the obedience of God's chosen is preceded and followed by grace even when it is mostly their own. Obedience combined with the grace of the Holy Spirit is the mark of the chosen. Those who are not chosen are not marked by God in a negative way, but by their own disobedience and perversity: this clearly ascribes the responsibility for sin and the rejection of God to the wicked themselves.

The existence of punishment and reward, under the control of a just God, are for Abbot Ælfric clear indicators that each individual has the capacity to choose. Justice demands that there must be a free decision: a command to turn from sin and to do good is useless if there are some who are 'predestined' to disobey it. If that were the case, then both punishment and reward would be arbitrary and unjust:

> 'If every man's life must always proceed in such a way that he cannot turn aside from disgraceful deeds, then it is unjust that the unrighteous should receive any punishment for their wickedness. Also the righteous are perversely honoured, if it can be true that it was ordained that they should be so'.

In his own approach to the question of what we are worthy, Abbot Ælfric sees that so-called 'freewill' is in fact constrained by both ancestral and individual sin; but the grace of God frees the will to respond obediently to God's commands. The soul corrupted by sin is offered restoration by the Holy Spirit: the disobedience which first rejected it is overcome by a greater grace to which a new obedience responds. Abbot Ælfric does not diminish the value of this response, seeing an active role for the will: the soul will be saved by the grace of the Holy Spirit if it obeys God. The Abbot brings together the responsibility which mankind must take for its predicament and the generous effects of mercy:

> 'If he binds himself with the works of the devil, he cannot free himself by his own power, unless Almighty God unbinds him with the strong hand of His mercy. He is bound by his own will and negligence, but he will be freed by God's mercy, if he is found worthy of that redemption by God.

Abbot Ælfric preserves both the idea of dependence on God's loving-kindness and that of human worthiness. As in all Orthodox theology, they have a mysterious synergy in his theology. The priority of the grace of the Holy Spirit is accepted, but after that initial gift of God, Abbot Ælfric is able to see that the best response of the will is to take that grace to itself. Good is latent in human creation and the Holy Spirit vivifies it:

> 'We must rejoice in our good deeds with true humility and thank our Lord earnestly for His grace, which He has given us that we may do His will through some good deed. No man may do anything good without God's grace: as the Apostle Paul said, 'Man, what do you have which you have not received from God?'

Here the Abbot echoes the words of I Corinthians 4, 7. His conclusion is that all the good man can do must be ascribed to God's grace. Grace indwells the will, perpetually strengthening and energising it. It might be said that the grace of the Holy Spirit becomes the very fabric of the will. The co-inherence of the Holy Spirit and obedience is expressed in love. Love is the presence of God, an indwelling which is shown in obedience:

> 'God dwells in us, if we love one another and His true love is thus fulfilled in us and we are able to fulfil His law by that one means'.

The giving and receiving of love and the confirmation of both in action are inextricably

bound up: they precede and follow each other in natural sequence and form a self-contained source of power.

## The Church

Abbot Ælfric places the beginning of the Church in Christ's commissioning of His disciples to be His witnesses and preach the Gospel to all nations. This worldwide task of teaching the Faith began with the apostles' missionary journeys and continued long after their years of preaching through their writings:

> 'The apostles were witnesses to Christ's works, because they preached His Suffering, Resurrection and Ascension, first to the Jewish people, and afterwards their voice reached every land and their words the ends of the whole earth.

Here he points out not only the extent of the Church's early missionary teaching but also its essential content. The apostles preached the key events in Christ's redemptive work: His humanity and His Divinity and finally His Resurrection and His Ascension, in which all mankind is raised up with Him. In this missionary endeavour of the witnesses, Abbot Ælfric says that the power of God accompanied them and ensured their success:

> 'And God's power was with them, as confirmation of their preaching and of numberless signs; because Christ said, 'You can do nothing without me'.

This verse explains how each individual needs the support of God's grace to achieve anything in His service. As the apostles were given grace, so the Church grew, dependent on the grace acquired by its members. This verse is not merely an explanation of why God's help was provided, but that it also contains the promise that the apostles' labour would thus be sustained.

It is important, too, that the apostles' teaching reached every land, even to the ends of the earth. Universality and catholicity are guarantors of the true Church. As a result of the joint work of apostles and grace, the Church is spread over the whole earth, represented by innumerable small communities. Nevertheless, it may truly be called One Church because of the unity of the Faith professed. Regional variations in languages and customs cannot obscure the unity of Faith and the worship of the One True God which continue to distinguish the true Church:

> 'Many are now God's houses, and yet one, because of the unity of the true faith, which they all confess. There are many peoples who worship God with various voices, nevertheless they all have one faith, and worship one true God, though their voices and their houses of prayer are many'.

This unity is the Church's most important quality because it is the sign of God's presence, it is essential for salvation. Abbot Ælfric remarks that the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are valid only within the unity of the Church and the common bond of the united Church is itself a required characteristic of the saved. Christ's gift of the key of heaven to Peter symbolises this unity:

> 'For this reason the key is especially committed to Peter, that every nation may know with certainty that whoever cuts himself off from the unity of the faith which Peter then confessed to Christ, to him will be given neither the forgiveness of sins nor entry into the kingdom of heaven'.

We note that the emphasis is on 'the faith which Peter then confessed' and not Peter himself, still less 'the pope of Rome'. Fr Ælfric lived before the eleventh-century Western Schism and the invention of Roman Catholicism. Nowhere in his homilies does he even mention the pope of Rome. His homilies are 'Catholic' in the Orthodox sense of the word, not 'Roman Catholic'.

The image of the Church in Abbot Ælfric is that of a living building with foundation, construction and interdependence. It speaks of the support offered by one course of stones to the next, all of which are borne by the foundation stone. He speaks of the transfiguration of people into the material of which Christ's Church is built. The effect of the Holy Spirit is to make these raw materials suitable for the task: they cannot by themselves become stones of the right quality for the temple. Christians become part of this organic structure when they are spiritually reborn. The chosen are pulled out of the pile of rubble and reshaped into suitable material for the building and Christ is the foundation of that living building, which will endure for ever.

The foundation of the Church on the faith confessed by Peter and from there to all believers is an extension of this idea. Christ gave his disciple Simon the new name to signify the new faith. However, Abbot Aelfric is as interested in the suitability of the name for Christ as well as for Peter

and for the whole people of God. He shows that Christ is the Rock, the true foundation of Christianity, and so in his interpretation he combines the images of foundation and Peter's faith as typical of the faith of all in the Church of Christ, the One Rock on which both foundation and faith depend:

> 'Christ is called "Petra", that is, the Rock, and from that name the whole Christian people is called "Petrus". Christ said, 'You are of stone, and on this rock, that is, on the faith which you now confess, I will build my Church; on myself I will build my Church'.

This may be compared with the explanation offered by Christ Himself in Matthew 16, 18, where the faith of Peter in the Son of God is said to be the rock on which the new community is to be built. As an Orthodox, Abbot Ælfric shifts the emphasis from Peter, the foundation, to Christ, the builder and foundation stone. This has the effect of ensuring that his interpretation is centred on Christ and not on His disciple (let alone a bishop of Rome). Moreover, the fact that Abbot Ælfric naturally draws attention to Peter's faith rather than to Peter's person points the listener to the catholicity and community of the Church: the stress is on the common Orthodox Faith of all, not on some individual authority, who can always be mistaken. Abbot Ælfric very strongly emphasises that the Church grows through Christ alone, not through the human efforts of human-beings, whoever they are.

## The Mother of God

In his homily for the Nativity of the Virgin, Ælfric says that it was in order to redeem mankind that the Son chose His Bride:

> 'The Saviour redeemed us by His holy blood from the eternal slavery to the old devil. Then He chose for Himself, as the Scriptures tell us, the Holy Church as a Bride for Himself, that is, for all God's people who now believe in God'.

The Church is like Mary, both in Her perfect devotion to God, which is the devotion of a Bride, and in Her fruitful virginity. This Bride retains Her virgin purity, yet brings forth new children of God. The marriage of the Bridegroom and Bride is pure yet fruitful. The spiritual birth of these children links them with the Son of Mary, for although Mary gave birth to Christ in the flesh, She did so by means of the Holy Spirit, and the Church daily brings forth the members of Christ's Body by the Holy Spirit. Here Mary and the Church are one, because as the Mother of Christ's limbs, the Church may truly be said to be the Mother of Christ:

> 'The whole of Christ's Church is Christ's Mother, for She gives birth to the limbs of Christ Himself, through holy grace in holy baptism'.

The identification of Mary and the Church means that the latter may properly be described in terms which refer to the teachings of faith concerning the Mother of God:

> 'Through holy faith She is married to Him, the Mother of us all, and She is nevertheless a Virgin, eternally spotless, when She dwells eternally in the faith of God and will not bend from the Saviour's faith to any heathenism'.

Just as Mary maintained Her virginal purity within Her marriage, so the virginal purity of the Church is seen in Her refusal to admit any other suitor: both heresy and heathenism are rejected as the Church maintains a steadfast devotion to the Bridegroom and Lord. Mary's role as the type of the Church therefore includes the teaching on Her Ever-Virginity, for only as a model of pure, unsullied faith does She express the Church's ideal.

Her pre-eminence in virginity is a sign and model both for the whole Church and for Her individual members. As it is for the Church, Whose pure faith is typified by the Virgin, so for the individual it is essential that Mary remains a virgin at every stage of her life. Each is called to a purity of faith which contributes to the purity of the whole Body, and additionally, each may adopt Mary's standard as one to strive for. Abbot Ælfric finds that this standard applies not only to the physical life of the faithful, but also to the spiritual.

Mary's perfect virginity is attested by Scripture. The Abbot discusses the frequent prophecies of the manner of Christ's birth to be found in the Old Testament, among them those which contain particular reference to the Virgin Mary. Of these the most important is Ezechiel's prophecy (44, 1–2) which described the gate closed to all except the Lord:

> 'The closed gate in the house of God symbolised the holy virginity of the Blessed Mary. The Lord, the Lord of all lords, that is Christ, came into Her womb, and through Her was born in human nature, and that gate

is locked for eternity; that is, Mary was virgin before the birth, a virgin at the birth, and a virgin after the birth'.

Abbot Ælfric observes that no other virgin can also choose to be a mother as well: that privilege was uniquely Mary's. She alone is blessed with the most perfect expression of both motherhood and virginity:

'In no other person is there virginity if there is fruitfulness, nor is there fruitfulness if there is unbroken virginity. Now for this reason both Mary's virginity and Her fruitfulness are hallowed through the Divine birth and She surpasses all others in virginity and fruitfulness'.

Pre-eminent in virginity, Mary is glorious in motherhood. Mary's excellence, both in virginity and in motherhood, undoubtedly exalts Her above all those who seek to emulate Her. Yet, Abbot Ælfric suggests, the humble obedience which She offered God is something attainable by each Christian. He says that although Mary was greatly blessed in the honour given to Her of bearing the Son of God, Her loving response to God's command, in which her perfect humility and obedience were expressed, was a much greater blessing. Furthermore, although the first honour was uniquely bestowed upon Her, the greater blessing is one which all may seek by emulating Her:

'But She is yet more greatly blessed because She loves and keeps God's word. In the same way all those who hear the holy word of God and keep it with love are blessed'.

To encourage all who have dedicated their virginity to God, Abbot Ælfric invites his listeners to look for ways in which they can be like Mary, emphasising these points rather than the unattainable aspect of Mary's virtue. He assures them that the pattern of Mary's obedience and love may be followed by virgins even now, in such a way that they too may claim for themselves the motherhood of Christ:

'And the same is the honour of all virgins who love Him while maintaining their purity; they may also be Christ's mothers if in their lives they do His Father's will'.

*(... To be continued)*

# The Decline of England 10
# WILLIAM THE BASTARD

By Eadmund

WHEN I was at primary school, we were given a small printed booklet of tables. These were mostly mathematical, starting with 2 x 2 = 4 etc. and going on to feet and inches, *avoirdupois*, the more arcane regions of Troy weight with its drachms, and then there were paper sizes and so on. It may even have contained logarithms, but of course we never penetrated that far. However at the back of the book was printed the litany of the English kings, that we had to recite, and eventually learn by heart, beginning: 'William the Conqueror, 1066–1087; William II, 1087–1100; Stephen: 1100–1154 ... etc.' 1066, we learned, was where real history, as distinct from the nursery legends of Alfred and Arthur, was deemed to begin. It was about fifteen years later that I eventually discovered that 1066 was in fact where English history *ended*, and the dreary table actually contained the bones of a story of foreign tyranny and oppression, the echoes of which even yet reverberate around us.

## The Truth Behind Norman Propaganda

Norman propaganda's efficiency in portraying the Conquest as the restoration of civilized Christianity to a rude Saxon backwater of Europe has recently been unmasked as cynical mendacity. We have seen in earlier articles in this series just how well the Englisc church was organized; and how culturally advanced England was – she possessed an administrative machine unsurpassed in the whole of Western Europe. Trained officials ran both central and local administration; a royal Exchequer received taxes and a Chancery[1] produced standardized writs conveying instructions around the provinces where local officials had been trained to obey them. Scirgerefa[2] looked after the King's interests in the shires that covered the whole kingdom and had precisely defined boundaries. There was no vagueness about what belonged to where, and as a result it was difficult, if not impossible, for any person or place to evade the control of the scirgerefa. Every shire had a court

meeting twice a year, at which all the principal men were compelled to attend, and was divided into hundreds composed of neighbouring villages, with a similar court which met every four weeks. At these gatherings judgements in lawsuits were given and the king's orders received. This system had become sufficiently strong to endure roving Viking armies, plague and pestilence. Even in the reign of Æthelræd, the country was still rich enough and well enough organized to pay huge sums in Danegeld without blinking. When used by a sensitive and humane ruler this resulted in prosperity for the country. When commandeered by a barbarian tyrant like William the Bastard, determined to screw the last farthing out of his conquered people, it resulted in constant misery, woe, famine and starvation. The much-celebrated Domesday survey, in which William had the country catalogued in great detail for tax purposes, which has often been quoted as an example of Norman efficiency, could not have been made but for the existing exemplary civil service of the Englisc, whose clerks were probably compelled to record it.

## William grabs all the Land in England

William antedated his accession to the throne to the death of Eadweard III. This meant that anyone who had fought against him at Hastings became technically a traitor, and all their lands were by that fact forfeit to the crown. He also annexed all of England, nullifying all the charters that had granted land under the Englisc kings. Henceforth nobody but the King was to own English[3] soil, and the land was 'leased' to the various barons, knights etc., who held it from him as a 'fee'. This situation is still in force today, and even 'freehold' land is actually held from the crown 'in fee simple', i.e. with no charges upon it[4]. The freemen who had formerly made up the bulk of the Englisc folk, and who had the opportunity to better themselves by achieving the rank of thegn, were now irremovably fixed on the manors where they lived, and were no better than slaves.

## The Status of Women

Women had always had equal status in Englisc law, but in the Norman view, corrupted by the French whose lands they had conquered, they had no status. The Normans considered them either as heiresses, to be married off as quickly as possible, when their husbands seized all their property, or passive transmitters of cultural memory. Englisc

An anachronistic mediæval representation of the Coronation of William the Bastard in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066. A non-existing second bishop has mysteriously appeared.

women who had previously owned their own land and managed their own businesses were suddenly reduced to nothing: a situation that only began to be remedied in 1870 by the Married Women's Property Act.

## The Norman looting of England

The Normans shipped boatloads of Englisc treasure back to Normandy. There was not a church or a monastery in the country that did not become impoverished, stripped of bullion, works of art and relics. The profits generated by the extreme taxes and the sale of much of the treasure found in England went to build castles. These mighty towers, now crumbling into ruin and viewed with a wistful curiosity by tourists, were once the instruments whereby the fear of Norman reprisals were brought to every town in the land, replacing the protective, encircling ramparts erected by the Englisc folk. However the Normans, deficient in architecture as in everything else, could only pile great masses of stone with mortar little better than dried mud. From the light structures of the Englisc, whose walls rarely exceeded the thickness of three feet, the Normans imposed massive walls whose thickness was never less than three feet, and often much more.

Heavy and ugly Cathedrals also replaced the light and beautiful Englisc examples, for the Normans wanted to demonstrate their dominance in the spiritual as in the material sphere. The massive pillars of such as Durham bore down as heavily on the Englisc soil as the tyranny of their designers bore down on the Englisc folk. But the spiritual enslavement of England went much further than this. The liturgy did not change recognizably, but the creed had been altered by the addition of the *filioque* and the Holy Spirit was no longer in it. A new church, a simulacrum of the former one, replaced mercy with judgement, and oikonomia with inflexible rules. The new Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, ruthlessly purged the long list of over three hundred Englisc saints, and only allowed devotions to a few of them to continue. His successor Anselm further polluted the office that had been held by saints like Augustine and Dunstan by reducing their faith from a living entity, informing the whole of life, to a spiritless and therefore dead affair, postulating uselessly on such questions as how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. This cynical and rational attitude to the church, which used to be a guardian of mystery and spirituality, caused corruption to begin and eventually to flourish, as even those with authority no longer performed their offices out of love, and even paid others to do them in their stead.

## Norman Roman Clergy Replace Englisc Orthodox

In Englisc times Abbots and Bishops had been charged, like other landowners, with the defence of the realm, and had to provide troops for the fyrd. Some of them would ride to battle, but there was no expectation that they would take part in the fighting. However the Normans were Roman Catholics, not Orthodox, and their attitude was exemplified by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, whose only concession to his position was to carry a mace instead of a sword, with which he took delight in pulverising the skulls of the Englisc warriors[5]. Norman candidates replaced most of the saintly abbots and bishops soon after William took power, with the single exception of Wulfstan of Worcester, who had been taken by Harold on his journey to the north. Wulfstan was such a saintly man, and so dedicated to the welfare of his people rather than to politics[6], that no one dared to expel him from his see. As a final indignity, the monks of Canterbury were compelled to relate the Norman version of the fall of their kingdom in an Embroidery that was eventually to hang in Bayeux. The attitude of the Norman clergy is typified in the behaviour of the first Norman Abbot of Glastonbury, Thurstan, who sent archers into the Abbey Church to subdue the monks, who refused to accept his Norman 'reforms' of the chant in place of the ones that they had been taught. The result was that two monks were killed outright and fourteen others were wounded. One of the Abbot's servants missed his aim, however, and shot the knees of the crucifix, which emitted a stream of blood. The guilty man ran out of the church and in his madness fell down and broke his neck.

## The English Language is Proscribed

Courts that only used Latin or Norman French, in which all law and business was now conducted, no longer understood the Englisc language – the speech of the folk. Indeed Englisc, which had been used to record laws, to transmit writs, for literary and scientific treatises and into which the Gospels had been translated, almost entirely ceased to be a written language. When it began to recover its status about two centuries later it had lost its power to create its own words, and itself had become a bastard, reliant on the expressions of foreigners. Latin and Norman French were the keys to advancement, and anybody who did not have these was doomed to the slavery that had become the lot of most of the Englisc folk. This perpetuated a particularly vicious form of class distinction, which is still felt today.

## Discrimination

One must not run away with the idea that the Englisc society was a classless one: in fact the structure of Englisc society was clearly marked, and everyone had a particular part to play, from the slave, at the bottom of society, to the king at the top. However the road to improvement was always open – many of the free ceorlas (churls) were so well off that they were on the edge of the thegn class, and could easily break into it. A slave, if he worked hard and used his intelligence, could achieve manumission. A similar downward traffic operated as well: a man could be deprived of his thegndom and outlawed, and a freeman might even be punished for misdemeanour by enslavement. I get the feeling that though an Engliscman knew his place in the social system, if he cared enough about it and was prepared to devote the energy to changing it, then his friends and relatives

would probably give him a helping hand, and not many would sneer at him. However after the Normans came, there was a very definite bar between the conquerors and the conquered. The division was no longer between ability and circumstance, which could be changed; but between one's birth on either one side or the other, and that could not be changed and would remain a marker for many centuries. If any Englisc man did make it across the divide, he would be lost to his fellow countrymen from that moment, regarded as a 'quisling'. Even when times changed in the 15th century, and the old Norman aristocracy finally lost its dominating influence, the memory of past times persisted, and the feeling, ingrained, remained for many centuries more – even to this present day.

## The Forest Laws

Another blow dealt against the Englisc commonality was the sequestering of vast tracts of land as a royal game preserve, in which the king or local magnate and his select party were the only ones who were allowed to kill any deer. Although the Englisc kings were great hunters, they never made any attempt to set aside areas that were declared outside the law of the land. The name 'forest' does not mean 'woodland', but refers to this setting aside (Latin *foris*). The New Forest is the only one of these areas that has survived almost intact, but there are many others – often signified by the word 'Forest' or 'Chase' – that were once subject to this blight. Formerly prosperous settlements were disrupted, houses burned and peasants evicted, all to serve the pleasure of a foreign tyrant and his henchmen. Those permitted to remain were severely restricted in the use of land that they had previously relied on for their livelihoods. At the height of this practice in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, fully one-third of the land area of southern England was designated as royal forest. At one stage in the 12th century, all of Essex was afforested, and on his accession Henry II declared all of Huntingdonshire 'forest'.

## Norman Introductions

The Norman aristocracy also introduced a number of animals to this country, which ranged from harmless exotics to outright pests. Peafowl, shown on the Bayeux embroidery as a feature of William's court in Normandy, now screeched raucously across the Englisc countryside. Fallow deer from Turkey, perhaps *via* the Norman colony in Sicily, were introduced here long before they arrived in France or other parts of Northern Europe. Rabbits, known to the Romans but apparently hunted to extinction in England, were reintroduced from Normandy. The word 'warren' is a Norman import, and the warren itself was carefully protected, with special warreners to guard it and terriers trained to control its rapidly multiplying population. Rabbits, bred for their fur as much as for their meat, thus became an all too common feature of the English landscape and Englishmen were forbidden to kill one on penalty of death.

The human population was also mixed with exotic new imports. The Englisc knew of the Jews only through the Bible, there being no Jewish settlement in England. However after 1066 Jews were deliberately transported to England and settled in English towns under the direct supervision of Norman lords, the victims of a particular paradox within Christian society. The Bible laid down strict prohibitions against usury, which were common to both Jews and Christians, but such prohibitions did not extend to loans made between members of one religious confession and another, so that, even in the strictest application of theory, a Jew might charge interest on loans made to a Christian and *vice versa*. The Jews were under the direct authority and protection of the King, and from this it was only a short step to their taxation and exploitation. Within a century they had become a major source of revenue to the English crown.

## Englisc Resistance

Englisc resistance was by no means quashed by the Battle of Senlac, but of course it lacked cohesion, and worse than that, it lacked a leader. It is conceivable that someone of the stature of Ælfred or Eadmund Ironside might have been able to rally the scattered Englisc fighters, lead them in a skilful guerrilla war, and either confine the foreign tyrants to a small portion of the country, or even drive them out altogether. Tragically all people of such stature had been killed at Senlac, and there was nobody left to co-ordinate strategy: thus the various rebellions that were mounted were isolated, lacking in cohesive strategic aims, and therefore quickly put down.

By the end of March, six months after his landing, William decided that he could risk an overdue visit to Normandy, but on the 6 December he had speedily to return. He had left the country in charge of his seneschal, William Fitz Osbern, whom he had made earl of Hereford, and his own

half-brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, whom he made earl of Kent. However the military government of the earl and the bishop had alienated all who were within its reach.

In remoter parts there was a new determination to resist. In 1068, the men of Exeter started the process with a frosty answer to a demand for fealty, and William marched into Devon with an army. In spite of the attitude of some of the thegns of the city, who gave hostages and promised submission to William while he was still on his way, the city held out for eighteen days, and in the end surrendered upon terms. Later in the year three of King Harold's illegitimate sons, who had collected a raiding party in Ireland, descended on Bristol, and after the townsmen had beaten them off, sailed on to Somerset and defeated the local militia; but this was a private adventure, and had no real effect on the general situation.

Edgar the Ætheling fled to Scotland with his mother and sisters, where he received a kindly welcome. Earl Edwin and his brother Morcar, disappointed in the hope of marrying one of William's daughters, also left the court for the north, where a strong anti-Norman movement was coming to a head around the city of York. In response, William undertook an extensive campaign, building a castle at Warwick, which brought the earls to submission. He then raised another castle at Nottingham, which alarmed the northern insurgents, and he entered York without a battle. His stay was marked by the submission of many Yorkshire magnates, and negotiations with the king of Scots, which prevented a Scottish invasion of England on the Ætheling's behalf. In the course of his return south, he founded the castles of Lincoln, Huntingdon and Cambridge. In 1069, however, fighting began in Northumbria beyond Tees. William decided to send Robert of Comines, whom he made earl, in command of a considerable force. As he approached Durham, he was warned by the bishop that a large Englisc army was in the field, but he ignored the warning and in the early morning of 28 January 1069 his enemies surrounded the town, destroyed his men trapped in the streets, and burned him in the bishop's house.

## William's Reprisals

William, once roused, was a terrible enemy. In the 1050s, when men of Alençon in southern Normandy had rebelled against his ducal rule, manning the walls of their town and banging pelts to taunt William for his ancestry as a tanner's bastard, he exacted a vicious revenge, having their hands and feet cut off. He was now determined that neither Mercia nor Northumbria should ever revolt again. In the winter of 1069, he led an army across the Pennines to suppress northern resistance. Pillage, deliberate starvation and all the more ghastly accompaniments to military action against a civilian population were unleashed. These once proud and mighty countries, always independently minded, and the source of the first wonderful fruits of Christianity, were harried and burned from end to end, and the survivors were left in what was little more than a wasteland. Orderic Vitalis saw this 'harrying' as a crime in which William succumbed to the cruellest promptings of revenge, condemning more than 100,000 Christian men, women and children to death by starvation, besides countless others slain by fire or the sword.

## Hereward

In the remote fenlands of East Anglia a local landowner called Hereward earned a heroic reputation for himself as captain of the Englisc 'freedom-fighters'. Like Ælfred, in the marshes of the Somerset levels, he organized a guerrilla campaign and fought the Normans at Peterborough in 1070, then making a final, desperate stand in the Cambridgeshire fens at Ely in 1071. He and his men were forced to watch as the Normans slowly built a causeway towards them, eventually taking the island with the great bloodshed that the Englisc had come to expect of them. His stout, although eventually vain resistance, earned him the myths that still surround his name; but the only surviving account, the *Deeds of Hereward*, are so fictionalised as to make it impossible to discern the truth. However the Domesday survey records a clear path of destruction from London to the Fens caused by the passage of William's army, sent to put down the rebellion.

As late as 1085, there were repeated rumours that Cnut IV of Denmark, cousin of the late King Harold Godwinesson and son of the Danish King Svein Estrithsson, who actually attempted invasions of England in both 1089 and 1070, would mount a major expedition in league with his father-in-law, Count Robert of Flanders.

## More Unrest

Even the Norman barons themselves were not always content with what had been given to them by their leader, and the Northumbrian Earl

Waltheof, the Breton, Ralph, Earl of East Anglia, and Roger, earl of Hereford, were decisively crushed in 1075 by King William's loyal viceroy, Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, without the King even having to return from a brief period in Normandy. William did not order the execution of any close member of the ruling dynasty of Wessex, or of the Godwinessons, even when members of these families were caught in the most blatant of conspiracies; preferring instead to keep them in durance, either under 'house arrest' at his court or in an actual dungeon. But this was less out of the goodness of his heart and more about not creating martyrs who might polarize resistance to his tyrrany. The exception was Waltheof, who was beheaded as a result of the 1075 revolt of the earls. This execution was treated in some circles as an act of martyrdom, showing that William's usual policy of adopting a feigned courtesy towards his defeated opponents was sound.

## Norman Barbarity

In general, however, the Norman knights behaved as if the local population lay quite outside the bounds of Christian warfare, and their behaviour became worse the further from London they were. Being barbarians themselves, who failed to observe the chivalric niceties, they treated the people they found on the frontiers of Wales or the more distant parts of Scotland and Ireland with maximum prejudice, and by the 1230s the English crown was paying a bounty of a shilling a head for all hostile Welshmen decapitated on the Marches.

## Englisc Exiles

However the Englisc were eventually forced to bow to the inevitable, and to yield to an outward, grudging collaboration with their conquerors, or go and live elsewhere. One outlet for frustrated Englisc lay in Constantinople: a long and tiresome journey whether across the north sea and then overland along the old trade routes via the Dnieper and the land of the Rus to the Black Sea, or by the seaward route around Spain and across the Mediterranean via Gibraltar. However as early as the 1040s, John Raphael, the New Roman Emperor's protosparthios, commanding a Varangian regiment in southern Italy, was in correspondence with England: his lead seal was discovered recently in an archæological dig at Winchester. By the 1080s as many as 1,000 Englishmen were attached to the Varangian guard, and had established a settlement, known as 'New England' in the Crimea. The English soldiers discovered their tombstones, inscribed with their names and epitaphs, while setting up camp at Scutari during the Crimean War. The inscriptions were copied, but the copies were burned in a fire in 1870, and by the time anyone returned to the stones themselves they had been smashed up for rubble. By a cruel irony this was done at the behest of the descendants of the men who had forced the Englisc into exile in the first place[7]. In 1096, when Bohemond of Taranto and his Normans were received in Constantinople, together with Duke Robert, the eldest son of William the Conqueror, King of England, at the start of the First Crusade, they had a very frosty welcome, doubtless owing something to the bitterness with which the Englisc, now exiled there, regarded their Norman guests.

## William's Death and Burial

William died early on the morning of September 9, 1087. He was fifty-nine years old and had imposed his tyranny on England for twenty-one years and on Normandy for thirty-one more. There are two accounts of his death: the nearly contemporary *De Obitu Willelmi* by an anonymous monk of Caen (where the king was buried) and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis, which, even though it was written some sixty-five years later, is the more reliable. In Book VII, Orderic recounts William's death and burial.

Six weeks before, William had attempted to capture the French town of Mantes, where the king, 'who was very corpulent, fell ill from exhaustion and heat.' (William of Malmesbury, a contemporary of Orderic, adds in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* that William, his stomach protruding over the forward part of his saddle, was injured when he was thrown against the pommel and his internal organs ruptured.) William retreated and returned to his capital at Rouen.

His condition continued to worsen and, mindful of the afterlife to come, he 'gave way to repeated sighs and groans.' Begging folk to pray for him, William confessed his sins and sought pardon. His treasure was distributed to the churches and the poor, 'so that what I amassed through evil deeds may be assigned to the holy uses of good men.' Gifts also were sent as penitence to the clergy at Mantes so that they might restore the churches William's army had burned.

Bishops, abbots, monks, and physicians all were in attendance. William's eldest son Robert

was not there as four years earlier he had joined his father's enemy, the king of France, in rebellion. Nor was Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, the king's half-brother, who still was in prison for treason. Entreated to forgive them both, William wearily relented. Odo was released and Robert, in spite of his disloyalty, was invested with the duchy of Normandy. William Rufus, the younger son, was given custody of England and immediately left to claim his throne, while Henry received five thousand pounds in silver, which he hastened to secure, having it carefully weighed out to make certain that none of his appanage was denied him.

Having grown up in England as a boy, Orderic was aware of William's cruelty against the English, and may well have heard a first-hand account of his death. He has the dying man confess.

> 'I treated the native inhabitants of the kingdom with unreasonable severity, cruelly oppressed high and low, unjustly disinherited many, and caused the death of thousands by starvation and war, especially in Yorkshire ... In mad fury I descended on the English of the north like a raging lion, and ordered that their homes and crops with all their equipment and furnishings should be burnt at once and their great flocks and herds of sheep and cattle slaughtered everywhere. So I chastised a great multitude of men and women with the lash of starvation and, alas! was the cruel murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of this fair people.'

When William died, commending himself to the Virgin, the wealthier in attendance immediately left, anxious to protect their property now that the king was dead. Those who stayed behind, says Orderic, 'seized the arms, vessels, clothing, linen, and all the royal furnishings, and hurried away leaving the king's body almost naked on the floor of the house.'

It was determined that the body would be taken to Caen and buried in the Abbaye-aux-Hommes (which William had founded as penance for having married Matilda of Flanders against the wishes of the Pope). But all the royal dependents having left, there was no one to make preparations. It fell to a common knight to make the funeral arrangements and have the body conveyed down the Seine and then overland to Caen. There, as the abbot and his monks came to meet the bier, a fire broke out, destroying the greater part of the town. All rushed to extinguish it, leaving only the monks to complete the service.

William was eulogized before the assembled bishops and abbots of Normandy, and a request made that, if ever he had done wrong, he was to be forgiven. Incredibly, someone loudly proclaimed that the church had been built on land forcibly acquired from his father when William was duke. 'Therefore I lay claim to this land, and openly demand it, forbidding in God's name that the body of this robber be covered by earth that is mine or buried in my inheritance.' The man was compensated sixty shillings for the place of burial (William of Malmesbury exaggerates and says that it was one-hundred pounds).

Then something even more macabre happened. The monk of Caen writes that William was 'great in body and strong, tall in stature but not ungainly.' When it came time to bury the heavy body, it was discovered that the stone sarcophagus had been made too short. There was an attempt to force the bloated corpse and, says Orderic, 'the swollen bowels burst, and an intolerable stench assailed the nostrils of the bystanders and the whole crowd.' Even the frankincense and spices of the censers was not enough to mask the smell, and the rites were hurriedly concluded.

William Rufus commissioned a memorial for his father, 'a noble tomb, which to this day shines with gold and silver and precious stones in handsome style' with an inscription in gold. This memorial was to survive until 1522, when William's body was examined and re-interred. Forty years later, it was destroyed by a Calvinist mob and the remains scattered. Only a single thighbone survived, which was preserved and reburied under a new monument in 1642: but even this was destroyed during the French Revolution. Now only a simple stone slab marks the burial place of William the Bastard.

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1 Writing office.

2 Scirgerefa = Sheriff

3 In this and previous papers, I have used the term 'Englisc' to stand for both 'Old English' and 'Anglo-Saxon'. However the term English will now be used where it is applicable, to signify that the 'Englisc' period has come to an end.

4 Or was in the late 1960s when I worked for a brief time in the Land Registry. I am not aware of any subsequent modification.

5 There is in fact some doubt as to whether this representation on the Bayeux embroidery is factually true. Odo commissioned it, and wished to have himself represented in a heroic light: whether or not he actually crushed any skulls, the fact that he wished to be shown as having done so is sufficient for the present argument.

6 He worked hard against the slave trade, which even at that early time had taken hold in Bristol.

7 Lords Raglan (son of the Duke of Beaufort), Cardigan (of the Brudenell family, introduced from France in the thirteenth century) and Lucan (alias George Bingham, a grandson of the distinctly French-sounding Earl of Fauconberg, derived from Fauquenbergues to the east of Boulogne, from whence came the Fauconbergs settled in Yorkshire by the early twelfth century): the charge of the Light Brigade risked the shedding of almost as much Norman blood as William the Bastard's great charge at Senlac.

# Orthodoxy Shines Through Western Myths (20): THE ARCHITECTURAL INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

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 civilisation. 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 next in a series taken from various works of secular scholarship, we have selected extracts from *The Architectural Interpretation of History* by John Gloag, A and C Black, 1975. These extracts seem to illustrate abundantly the post-Orthodox deformations of Western culture which 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:

## pp. 156–157. Norman Romanesque Architecture – An Architecture of Power and an Unholy Alliance

ITALIAN, French, German and English Romanesque buildings shared a common relationship to such functionally frank Roman structures as aqueducts, bridges, town gateways and gate-houses, watch towers and fortified posts; there were some traces of Byzantine *(sic)* influence; but most emphatic and outstanding of all variations of the style was Norman which was pre-eminently an architecture of power, asserting the efficiency of a formidable race of warriors and administrators. Every line of Norman architecture suggests the unabating virility of the Northmen who had established themselves in France early in the tenth century. Those northmen – soon to be known, respected and dreaded as Normans – adopted the language and social customs of France; and in their own land of Normandy, and in Apulia which they conquered in 1042, and in Sicily, where they took Messina in 1060 and the whole island in 1090, they built splendidly.

At Caen one of the finest examples of Norman architecture is the Abbaye-aux-Dames, 'La Trinité', built 1062–1066,and founded by Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror. But the greatest triumphs of the style were the Anglo-Norman cathedrals and abbey churches. In England the Normans built arrogantly. The castles with their high, square keeps and towering walls say as clearly as words shouted in anger: 'We are the masters now'. For a century after the Conquest of 1066 Norman architecture in England records an unholy alliance between Church and State, formed and maintained to overawe a subject people, for that was what the English had become, and for several generations

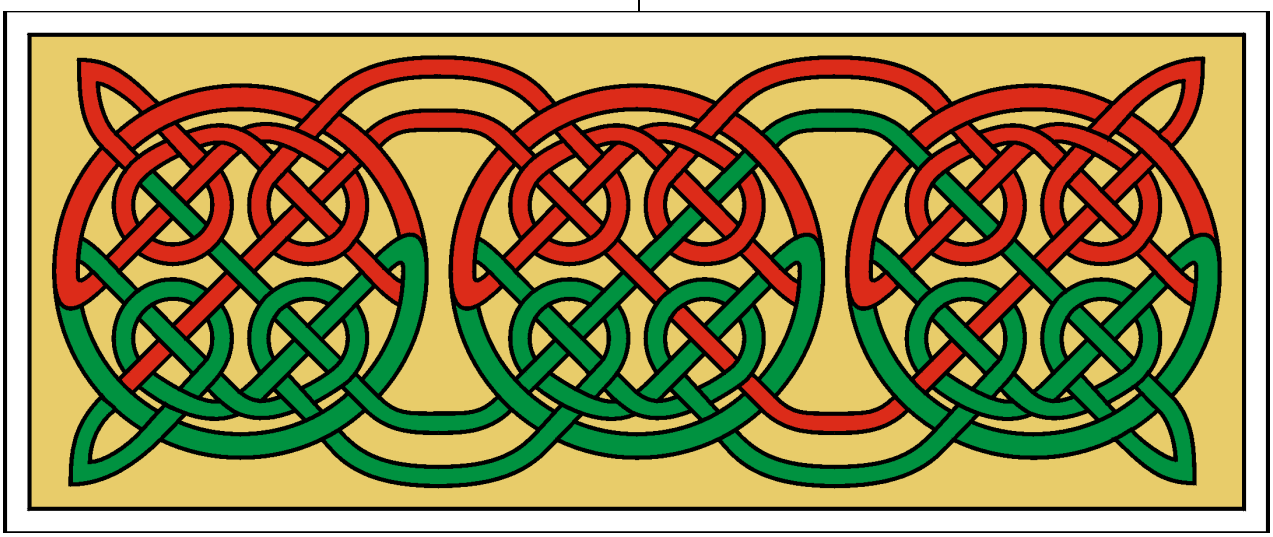
they remained a servile and inferior though never docile people. The fortress-like cathedrals and abbey churches, especially those in the North, show the extensive support the Church could and did give to the secular power. 'We are at one with the state', is the message of the church militant.

### p. 157–158. The Militarisation of Caesaropapist 'Church' Architecture

The suggestion that large-scale sacred buildings had a secondary and military function has been made convincingly by Mr. Frank Morley in his book, *The Great North Road*, and a great deal of architectural evidence confirms it. For example, the fortress element is certainly present in the tower of St. Albans Abbey, in the hill-top cathedral at Lincoln, also in the Cathedral Monastery of Durham, sited on a rocky peninsula above the River Wear with the Castle of the Bishops perched on an eminence to the north. That particular castle was a military structure, built to protect the monastery from raiding Scots and sea rovers, but also useful for intimidating the townsmen. In the territory of the Danelaw, that extended from the Thames to the Cheviots and in the North Midlands from the Lancashire coast to the North Sea, temporal interests determined the siting and architectural character of monastic institutions. The territory was turbulent and unruly; in the towns especially sporadic outbreaks of independent spirit were brutally repressed by the Norman rulers, and permanent reminders of their authority were established, not only by such structures as watch towers and fortified posts, but by a strongly-built cathedral church in the town centre proclaiming yet again the unity of Church and state. The occupation of the town centre by Norman monks who were hand-in-glove with the hated Norman ruling class originated the conflict between 'town and gown' which has lasted for centuries; in some university cities an annual bout of fisticuffs between undergraduates and townees took place as late as Victorian times, as we may read very cheerfully in Edward Bradley's *Verdant Green*, published in the mid-nineteenth century. The antipathy of town and gown still persists in a mildly snobbish form.

### p. 158. Norman Destruction Began even under Edward the Confessor

Norman ideas had penetrated England before the Conquest, when Norman masons began to influence the English version of Romanesque, for there was an international traffic in skill: despite the disturbed state of many European countries, the unsafe roads, the brigands and predatory landlords, craftsmen apparently moved about as freely as churchmen. Stone churches had been built in the Anglo-Saxon *(sic)* kingdoms since the late seventh century. As a matter of policy, the Normans minimised Saxon *(sic)* achievements in the arts, so Saxon churches were rebuilt, and tombs and inscriptions in them defaced. A few small churches survived, like Escombe in Durham and St Lawrence's, Bradford-on-Avon, which both date from the early eighth century. We referred in chapter one to the use of materials taken from the deserted Roman city of Verulamium for building the Abbey Church of St Albans, a task begun by the Saxon abbots, Ealdred and Ealmer at the close of the tenth century. Work continued slowly until the building was completed in 1077, by the first Norman abbot, Paul of Caen, who in the interests of political propaganda, destroyed the tombs of his predecessors.



# A WESTERN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ORTHODOX UNDERSTANDING OF PAPAL PRIMACY: STS GILDAS AND COLUMBAN: PATRISTIC CELTS AND THE CHURCH IN THE WEST

BEFORE we examine the attitudes of the Celtic saints to the Papacy, we must consider the position of the Papacy within the Western Patriarchate in general. From very early times the popes of Rome had been regarded with veneration as bishops of the only great apostolic see in the West, their advice had been sought and given in decretals. They held a primacy of honour, and other churches might submit their cases to Rome for papal jurisdiction. Yet though the popes were recognised as successors of Peter, the commission to bind and loose had been granted not only to Peter, but to all the apostles.

The bishops as a body were successors of the apostles, with responsibility for the Church, and each church enjoyed a high degree of local autonomy, though a council of bishops might overrule any individual decision. St Cyprian stressed the unity of the Church, a unity which began in the commission of power to Peter, but continued after the resurrection, by extending authority equally to all the apostles. Thus, Blessed Augustine saw St Peter as representing the Church; the powers granted to Peter were inherited by the Church.

Moreover, the spirit of autonomy in the Metropolitan Churches was strong, and the centralising Pope Leo (440–461) was opposed in Gaul by St Hilary of Arles, when the former attempted to intervene in a case already tried by a Gaulish Council. In any case, the popes were not always well-informed, their machinery of government was quite inadequate to exercise any claims to primacy, and their political power tenuous, so that even a pope as able as St Gregory the Great was forced to flatter rulers in his attempts to gain his ends.

Thus, the attitudes of both Sts Gildas and Columban towards the Papacy are in line with Patristic thought. St Gildas, writing in the mid-sixth century, had nothing specific to say about papal authority, but his oblique references are of interest. He regards Peter as 'the prince of the apostles', but he uses the phrase 'the see of Peter the Apostle' to mean the office of any bishop. He comments on the phrase of the Petrine commission in the following terms:

> ... As the Lord asked whom the disciples thought him to be, Peter answered, 'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.' And the Lord for such a confession said: 'Blessed art thou, Simon bar Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven'. Thus Peter, taught by the Father, rightly confesses Christ; but you (i.e. the priests of Britain), instructed by your father the devil, iniquitously deny the Saviour by evil deeds. To the true priest it is said: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church'. You, however, are likened 'unto a foolish man who built his house upon sand'. ... To Peter and his successors the Lord says: 'And unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven'; but to you: 'I know you not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity ...' . To every holy bishop it is also promised: 'And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven'. But how do you loose anything so that it shall be loosed in heaven also, when because of crimes, you are severed from heaven and fettered by bands of monstrous sins ... .

St Gildas is very much aware of the divine powers granted to all the true successors of the apostles. The whole episcopal order exercises spiritual authority in the Church and inherits the power which Christ first granted to St Peter. St Gildas lays particular emphasis on the importance of a pure life in those who hold episcopal office, and fiercely attacks the sin of simony. It is likely that anyone educated in this tradition would set a very high value on purity of life, and that, in any dispute, he might be expected to appeal to the spiritual quality of the protagonists rather than to papal judgement.

In 613 another Celtic saint, St Columban, sent a letter, the third in a series, to the papal see about the old-fashioned and incorrect Irish reckoning of the date of Easter. It was addressed to Pope

Boniface IV in 613, who had been suspected of schismatic leanings by some of St Columban's associates for his part in the 'Three Chapters' controversy. He begs the pope to clear himself from all imputation of heresy, and in so doing he defines more specifically his attitude to papal power. In it he gives the Patristic view that the glory of Rome does not rest on imperial might, but on 'the dear relics' of Peter and Paul. Rome is now 'head (*caput*) of all the churches of the world, saving the special privilege of the place of the Lord's resurrection'.

On account of this, the pope has a pre-eminence of dignity: 'your honour is great in proportion to the dignity of your see'. But papal honour is attached to papal office, and passes away from an unworthy recipient. 'For power will be in your hands only as long as your principles remain sound; for he is the appointed key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven, who opens by true knowledge to the worthy and shuts to the unworthy; otherwise, if he does the opposite, he shall be able neither to open or shut'. There is here nothing contrary to contemporary Orthodox principles. And even the successor of Peter, endowed with such authority, may not pervert the faith; if he does so, the whole Church must rise up to correct him:

'Therefore, since those things (i.e. the need for sound doctrine in a pope) are true and accepted without contradiction by all who think truly, though it is known to all and there is none ignorant of how Our Saviour bestowed the keys of the kingdom of Heaven on St Peter. And you perhaps on this account claim for yourself above all some proud measure of greater authority and power in things divine; you ought to know that your power will be the less in the Lord's eyes, if you even think this in your heart, since the unity of the faith has produced in the whole world a unity of power and privilege. In this way, freedom should be given to the truth by all men everywhere, and the approach of error should be denied by all, since it was his right confession that privileged even the holy bearer of the keys, the common teacher of us all ....'.

On matters of doctrine, the Pope must be guided by the consensus of opinion within the Church. He is, as it were, the commander-in-chief but he cannot change its law. Sts Gildas and Columban thus reveal a Church in line with Patristic opinion. St Gildas stresses the divine authority of the whole episcopate, as Sts Cyprian and Augustine had done; St Columban recognizes, in doctrinal matters, a power vested in the whole Church which is superior to that of any individual pope. Celtic churchmen of the sixth and early seventh centuries recognised the popes as leaders of the Church and successors of Peter, yet they did not give up their powers of independent judgement.

Although contacts between the Irish and the papacy were resumed in the seventh century and although between about 630 and 768 all the Irish and the Britons updated their dating of Easter, the Church organisation of the Celts was little affected until the eleventh century. As far as we know no Celtic bishop went to fetch a pallium from the pope, no tribute for the papacy was collected, and the popes sent no legates to the Celts. Celtic Christians of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries travelled to Rome, not to lay cases before the papal curia as in the Middle Ages, but to visit the shrines of the apostles and martyrs.

To a Celtic Christian the body of a saint, entombed at the place where he had died, signified not only the place of his death, but also the 'place of his resurrection' The saint's grave was a link with heaven. Monastic story-tellers knew of a service of angels between heaven and the saint's tomb, and the poets of Derry described their enclosure as 'angel-haunted', 'full of white angels from one end to the other'. The cemeteries and tombs of the Celtic saints at home were sought out for the spiritual protection they could give, and Rome, with its crowd of great saints, including Peter the key-bearer, must bring the gates of heaven almost within sight. So learned clergy travelled to Rome, like the three who arrived in Cornwall and went to King Alfred's court in 891, of whom one, at least, was 'a man blossoming in the arts, learned in literature, an eminent teacher of the Irish'. The three set out for Rome, as *magistri Christi* are often accustomed to do', intending to go on from Rome to Jerusalem.

Sometimes such Irish scholars were men of wealth, accompanied by dependants and servants, like that Irish bishop Marcus who remained at St Gall on his way home, keeping his books and valuables, but dividing his horses, mules and 'many coins' among his angry servants, who had to make their way home as best they could without him. Poor pilgrims set out *ad limima*, like the old priest, footsore and ill, who begged help from the bishop of Liege. Princes occasionally journeyed

there, as did Cyngen, King of Powys, who died in Rome in 854/6, or Dwnwallon, the North-British prince of Strathclyde, who visited it in 975. Busy Church administrators sometimes retired from office and set out for Rome, intending to seek the place of their own resurrection near the tombs of the apostles. Most of them journeyed in devotion and gained the peace which they sought, though some seem to have been disillusioned, like that ninth-century Irishman who found:

> To go to Rome
> Is much of trouble, little of profit:
> The King whom you seek here,
> Unless you bring him with you, you will
> not find.

The Celtic Christian's idea of Rome as the burial place of the saints was so powerful a conception that the word 'rom' in the Irish language gained a secondary meaning as a burying ground. One poet in c. 800, writing a martyrology on the festivals of the saints, comments that the tiny settlements once occupied by twos and threes are now the burial places of multitudes. A later life of St Coemgen describes Glendalough as one of the 'four best Romes of burial in Ireland'. Bardsey Island, off the north-west coast of Wales, the burial ground of 'twenty thousand holy confessors and martyrs', was proverbially known in the twelfth century as *Roma Britanniæ*. This idiomatic use of the word 'rom' clearly shows Rome's primary significance in the Celtic mind. The living pope was respected, but it was his great predecessor Peter, with the other saints and martyrs, who drew Celtic pilgrims to Rome. The power of the dead saints was a far more potent force than that of the living pope.

Such was the situation of the Celtic Orthodox until the second half of the eleventh century, when a new and schismatic Rome forced itself on all Western Europe. This included on distant Wales (under the Normans, who replaced dedications to the Welsh saints with St Peter and other saints of the Roman calendar), Scotland (under Queen Margaret, ✙ 1093) and Ireland (under Pope Gregory VII – 1073–1085 – and after), an influence that grew all the more greatly in the twelfth century.

# THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD THAT WAS LOST WITH THE SCHISM

## Austria and Britain

ONLY the upper classes of the cities emigrated from Noricum, now part of Austria. The Christian graves of humble *Romani* continued to be made around St Severinus' church in Lorch. The Roman Christianity of Noricum, largely deprived of leadership, became a folk religion – to such an extent that memories of distinctive Early Christian, late Roman practices, such as public penance, survived into modern times in the folk-songs of Slovenia.

In the Alpine hinterland of Noricum, away from the dangerous banks of the Danube, large basilicas, modelled on the churches of northern Italy, flanked by hospices and pilgrimage-shrines containing exotic relics, continued to be built long after the death of St Severinus of Noricum (✙ 482).

Indeed, on the Hemmaberg, that rose above the River Sava in Austrian Carinthia (Kaernten), the narrow plateau was covered with no fewer than five large churches. It was a thriving pilgrimage centre similar to the many others that stretched right across the Christian world of the late fifth century, from St Albans in Britain, through St Martin's at Tours, to the new sanctuaries of St Symeon the Stylite in northern Syria and that of St Menas in Egypt.

The deprivation of leadership that happened in Noricum happened also in Britain, only earlier, for by 450 there was very little left, at least in eastern Britain. The withdrawal of the Roman armies, after 406, left a power vacuum on the island. An entire governmental elite vanished. The buried treasures that lie in such numbers beneath the soil of East Anglia speak of the sudden loss of an imperial order. In one such hoard, recently discovered at Hoxne in Suffolk, 14,600 gold and silver coins had been stowed away in wooden chests. The tableware alone included 78 silver spoons and a woman's golden body-necklace weighed 250 grams.

In a province with twenty-eight walled cities, 'castellated towers and gatehouses ... reared menacingly skyward', the surviving elites of Britain had felt that they could look after themselves,

without an empire to protect them, but they were wrong.

## The Basque Country

Although the remoter rural highlands of the Basque country only became Christian quite late, perhaps towards the end of the first millennium, lowland Calahorra possesses a genuine cult of early martyrs. It is vouched for by the work of one of the most distinguished literary figures the region ever produced, the Christian poet Prudentius (348 – *c*. 400). Probably the son of Christian parents, it has been argued that he came from Calahorra. Indeed, mediæval tradition has it that he was born at Armentia, a site now represented only by a fine Romanesque church, on the outskirts of Vitoria in Alava. This particular belief may have arisen when the see of Calahorra was possibly transferred to Armentia in the aftermath of the Arab conquest of Spain in 711. Prudentius' body is also recorded in the tenth century as having been preserved in the Rioian monastery of San Prudencio de Laturce.

It is thought that Prudentius composed his *Peristephanon*, his Latin verse celebration of the martyrdoms of Spanish and other saints in twelve parts, for the consecration of Calahorra Cathedral *c*. AD400. His work is the earliest literary evidence for the cult of those Iberian saints, such as Eulalia of Merida, whom he includes. Amongst others are Sts Emeterius and Celidonius, the patrons of Calahorra, and indeed it is with them, appropriately enough, that the poem begins.

According to Prudentius's account these two brothers were soldiers who refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods, and as a result suffered torture and martyrdom. The poet himself has to admit that the record of their deeds and sufferings was sparse, and he puts it down to deliberate suppression of their memory by the authorities. The outline of the story would seem to fit the standard pattern of martyrdom accounts of the Decian (*c*. 250) or Diocletianic (*c*. 303–6) persecutions. The two saints were known to Gregory of Tours (d. 594–5) in Gaul, explicitly on the authority of Prudentius.

In the concluding lines of the poem devoted to them, Prudentius makes clear both his own association with Calahorra, and also the fact that it was still regarded as a city of the Basques (*Vascones*): 'Believe ye now, ye *Vascones*, once dull pagans, how holy was the blood which cruel superstition sacrificed. This blessing the Saviour himself bestowed for our advantage when He consecrated the martyrs' bodies in our town, where they now protect the folk who dwell by Ebro's waters'.

## England

An English Church Council, in 786, condemned the wearing by ecclesiastics – men or women – of 'elaborate dress died with the colours of India'. We do not know what the assembled churchmen of eighth-century England might have understood by 'India'. But we do know that exotic goods, sometimes from very distant parts of the world, were reaching the England during this period.

A famous account of the deathbed of Bede has come down to us: among the 'little presents' distributed by the dying monk to his brethren were pepper and incense. St Cuthbert's pectoral cross, which may still be seen at Durham, had as its centrepiece a garnet backed by a shell which had come from the waters of the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean. His liturgical comb was made of elephant ivory from India or East Africa. When his body was re-interred eleven years after his death, in 698, it was wrapped by silk from Constantinople, although perhaps originally from Persia or even China.

## England and France

Historians of costume agree that women's dress – and to a lesser extent men's too – among the Franks and the English changed under the influence of Mediterranean and especially Byzantine (*sic*) models in the wake of the coming of Christianity. A telling example of this is furnished by the so-called 'Chemise de Sainte Balthilde' preserved in St Balthilde's monastery of Chelles just outside Paris: a fragment of a linen shirt, with embroidery in four colours round the neck to simulate a necklace with a cross pendant from it. We cannot tell whether this garment really did belong to St Bathilde, though it would seem to date from her lifetime.

Its main point of interest for us is the manner in which the necklace was apparently worn: necklaces with pendants were a fashion derived from the Roman Empire in the east. The Empress Theodora, Justinian's wife, is depicted wearing one in the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna. The embroidery on the Balthilde garment represents a fashion which clearly derived from such a model. An English example is the necklace with pendent

cross found in a grave of *c*. 700 at Desborough, Northamptonshire.

## Africa

The Coptic Christian Church of Egypt continues to this day. The example of Ethiopia suggests that isolation need not always mean loss of confidence and vitality. But further to the west the experience was bleaker. There, the Christian presence became a shadow of its former self. The symbiosis of Berber warrior highlanders (Blessed Augustine was himself a Berber) with Latin-speaking townsfolk ended only with the arrival of Islam. A Roman-style town council, recorded in Latin inscriptions, survived at *Volubilis*, near the Atlantic coast of Morocco, up to the 650s. Moorish kings adopted Latin names. The Berber ruler who held the Arab armies at bay in the late seventh century bore the name *Cæcilius*, a common Latin name in Africa, once borne by none other than St Cyprian.

Through their influence, knowledge of Christianity penetrated the oases of the deep Sahara, so that, in the Touareg language, the word for any sacrifice, 'tafaske' was derived from the Christian festival of Pascha/Easter. The Pope, writing to Bishop Thomas of Carthage in 1053, lamented the fact that there were only five bishops left in the whole of North Africa. There had been over 600 in Blessed Augustine's day. These remnant communities slowly faded away as the years passed. Some were an unconscionable time dying. At Gafsa, deep in today's Tunisia, research has revealed a little society of Berber Christians which – almost incredibly – survived into the fifteenth century.

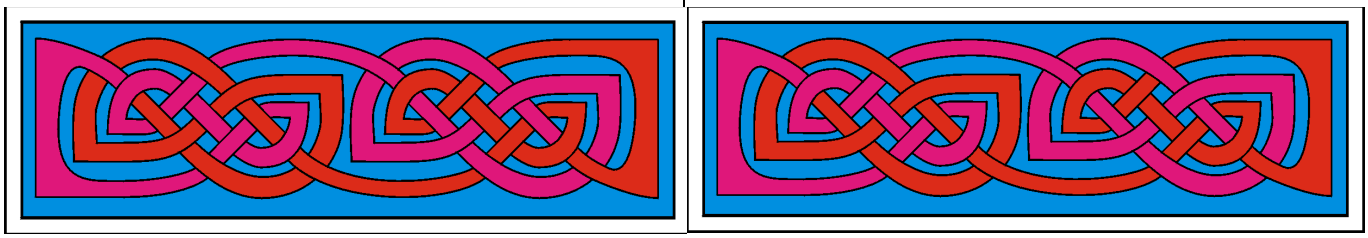
## St Columba in Iceland

If we can trust the evidence of the Icelandic *Landnamabok*, the 'Book of Settlements' compiled in about 1130, Iona's influence may certainly be detected in the religious affiliations of Orlygr Hrappsson, nephew of the celebrated Viking Ketil Flatnose. Orlygr was fostered by a Hebridean bishop, otherwise unknown, named Patrick. When Orlygr wished to emigrate to Iceland in about 880 or so, Bishop Patrick told him to build a church there in honour of St Columba and provided him with timber, a bell, a missal and consecrated earth to lay beneath the corner pillars of the building. Orlygr did as he was bid, and founded a church dedicated to St Columba at his farmstead near Reykjavik.

## Hungary

German churchmen were preceded in Hungary by Greek. As early as the 920s a cleric named Gabriel was sent on a mission to the Magyars, though how he fared we do not know. About twenty years later an imposing delegation from the Magyars arrived in Constantinople. One of its leaders, a chief named Bultsu, was baptized. The Emperor Constantine *Porphyrogenitus* was god-father, the new convert was loaded with rich presents and given – a rare and signal honour – the imperial title of *patricius*, 'patrician'. The occasion was splendidly illustrated in the manuscript, now in Madrid, of our main informant, the chronicler Scylitzes, with a picture of the emperor hovering by the font from which his new spiritual son was about to emerge.

A few years after Bultsu's baptism another Magyar chief named Gyula was given the same treatment. When he returned to his people he brought with him a monk named Hierotheus who had been consecrated a bishop for the Magyars by the Patriarch of Constantinople. We are told that Gyula thereafter lived at peace with New Rome and that Bishop Hierotheus made many converts. Greek influence among the Magyars, which was to continue strong for two centuries to come, was concentrated in the eastern half of the lands they settled, roughly speaking to the east of the River Tisza.



# T. S. ELIOT'S ORTHODOXY

**From *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939), pp. 7–8 and 80–81**

We may say that religion, as distinguished from modern paganism, implies a life in conformity with nature. It may be observed that the natural life and the supernatural life have a conformity to each other which neither has with the mechanistic life ...

We are being made aware that the organization of society on the principle of private profit, as well as public destruction, is leading both to the deformation of humanity by unregulated industrialism, and to the exhaustion of natural resources, and that a good deal of our material progress is a progress for which succeeding generations may have to pay dearly. I need only mention, as an instance now very much before the public eye, the results of 'soil-erosion' – the exploitation of the earth, on a vast scale for two generations, for commercial profit: immediate benefits leading to dearth and desert. I would not have it thought that I condemn a society because of its material ruin, for that would be to make its material success a sufficient test of its excellence; I mean only that a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere a wrong attitude towards God, and that the consequence is an inevitable doom.

For a long enough time we have believed in nothing but the values arising in a mechanized, commercialized, urbanized way of life: it would be as well for us to face the permanent conditions upon which God allows us to live upon this planet. And without sentimentalizing the life of the savage, we might practise the humility to observe, in some of the societies upon which we look down as primitive or backward, the operation of a social-religious-artistic complex which we should emulate upon a higher plane.

We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it; and the purpose of reascending to origins is that we should be able to return, with greater spiritual knowledge to our own situation. We need to recover the sense of religious fear, so that it may be overcome by religious hope.