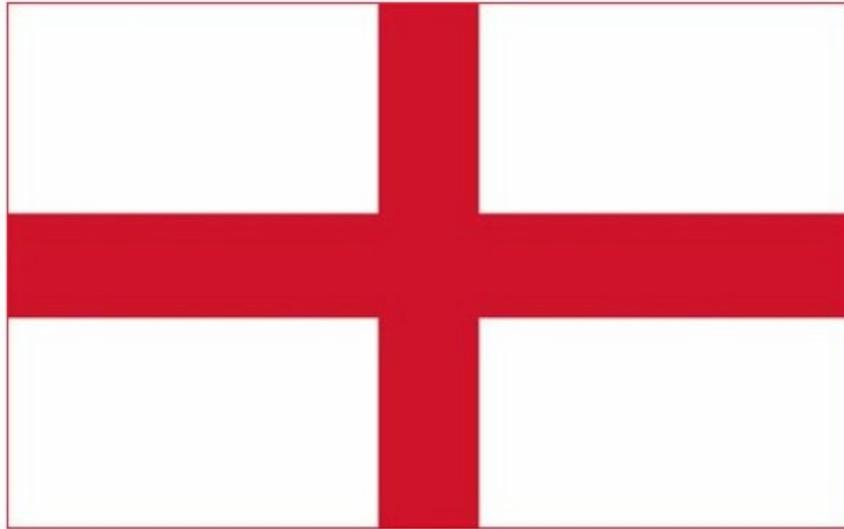


**Orthodox Christianity
and the
English Tradition**



Fr. Andrew Phillips

Foreword to the Fourth Edition

The priest must be above the lordly arrogance of the well-born and overprotected and not cringe or fawn before that arrogance; he must not lower himself or be cowardly before the powerful of this world, but conduct himself with a sense of his clerical dignity, gravely, evenly, in a pastoral manner - and serve unhurriedly, not to please people. He must denounce whims, lordly arrogance and any coldness towards matters concerning the faith.

St John of Kronstadt

Local Transformations Since 2014

Fifty years since the first of the essays in *Orthodox Christianity and the English Tradition* was written and nearly thirty years since the first edition was published, we have been asked to reissue the anthology, as the third edition has sold out. We are now reissuing this work online.

Since that third edition appeared in 2014, we have bought and established more new churches in Eastern England, in Norwich and in Little Abington, just outside Cambridge. These followed the foundation of the new inter-Orthodox parish in my native Colchester in 2008, though we received no help from the Church authorities. We bought this very large wooden building and opened it as a church for Orthodox of all nationalities against the views of the clerical doomsayers, who later became jealous and tried to close us and even told others that we were closed (!), just as we gained ever more parishioners because we had left them. Thus, we now have permanent parishes in Essex, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. This still leaves Suffolk without our own permanent church building. There is work to do here, though we do have a special, indeed mystical, place in mind.

Not having closed our main church in Colchester during the covid persecution - at one point we were apparently the only church in the country to be open - our multinational parish community thrives. Furthermore, my native Colchester was made a City in one of the last acts of the old Queen. And once we were safely anchored inside the Romanian Orthodox Church in February 2022, we received another influx of Orthodox, including refugees from the tragic deviation of a schismatic and spiritually alien 'Russian Orthodox' sect founded in the USA. Today, in 2024, with a throughput of 5,000 Orthodox a year, an average Sunday brings well over 200 Orthodox to church and there are Sundays with as many as 400. Then the church building sometimes looks too small.

The Patriarchate of Bucharest allowed us to defend the church and ‘confound their politics and frustrate their knavish tricks’. First, the money-obsessed wished to take the church from us by legal subterfuge, then, power gone to their heads, they persecuted us and tried to close all our churches and missions and prevent us from providing services and books in understandable English. All this went against the fruit of our life’s work, fifty years of struggle, which they tried to destroy. Thank God for the canonical protection of the Romanian Orthodox Church, as agreed by the two Patriarchs.

With bullying, betrayals and total lack of respect for local people, language and culture, the CIA task of destroying the Russian Church from the inside was made easy. It was all so different from the old and noble White Russian culture of the past. To this new mentality we repeat the old English saying: ‘Tell the truth and shame the devil’. We are English, our forebears fought against Hitler because we love freedom and we the people shall not be persecuted.

International Transformations Since 2014

However, our small struggle in the East of England has been mirrored on a vast scale in world-shaking events. For the publication of this new edition comes at what we can only call a millennial turning-point in history, one which we already knew was coming in the seventies of the last century and which is now here.

The headlines succeed one another at breathtaking speed: Protestant apostasy, Brexit, a schismatic American-founded ‘church’ in the Ukraine, covid, transgenderism, the African Exarchate, the corruption of Washington, the proxy war in the Ukraine, the death of the Queen, the fall of Germany, genocide in Palestine, BRICS expansion, the apostasy of the Papacy, Trump. Astonishing tectonic shifts are turning the world upside down, the Angel of History is looking East, while the West, corroded and paralysed from the inside, looks on.

300 years after the Russian Orthodox Lands (Rus’) became an Empire, based on Western aristocratic ideology, and 100 years after the formation of the USSR, based on Western proletarian ideology, the now Russian Federation has been forced by aggression to choose between the West and the Rest (of the world). At the receiving end of the same bullying and betrayals in the Ukraine, the Federation was welcomed as a leader by the Rest, the Global Majority. This is a historic moment, the long-awaited restoration of the sovereign and multipolar world, the attack on which began not 500 years ago, as some wrongly write, but 1,000 years ago.

The Shakespearian tragedy of the American war against Rus’ in the Ukraine are precisely the processes which both the Russian Federation and the Russian Orthodox Church have to go through, in order to be cleansed of their corruption. Only then can the unity of the Russian Lands be reconstituted. Only thus will a renewed, de-Sovietised, decentralised and cleansed Russian Orthodox Church be made ready for its real destiny after three long centuries of tragic losses, illusions, misdirections and

divisions. The schismatics and bullies who have infiltrated the Russian Orthodox Church have been revealed. Indeed, we were used as one of the baits used to trap the naïve narcissists, who thought they were destroying us, before the Great Cleansing could begin.

The unnecessary American war against the tragic Ukraine and Russia is taking some three years, as the Russian Federation has not only to liberate, demilitarise and denazify the American-occupied Ukraine (its original aims), but the whole of NATO. Delusional narcissists and their lies will be driven out as the real enemies, just as we drove out the delusional narcissists here. As regards Europe, now a vassal of the USA, its spiritual and so moral self-destruction, which began in Sarajevo in 1914, continued in Warsaw in 1939 and was renewed in Kiev in 2014, continues apace.

Hubris

In Greek mythology Hubris, the narcissistic demon of insolence, violence and outrageously rude behaviour was, according to some, the daughter of Dyssevia, which means Impiety. And so it is in Biblical language too - impiety always goes before the fall. Hubris is the superiority complex of arrogant pride – we are better than you, exceptional, and therefore you must do whatever we want. This is in fact the cruel racial pride of Roman paganism which, revived, began to reinfest Western Europe in the eleventh century.

This was the same delusion of Hubris as had infested the builders of the Tower of Babel, then the eleventh-century Papacy, Great Britain before the Titanic and 1914, then was renamed Nazism in Germany, and from there contaminated the USA, indeed many 'ex'-Nazis were at the founding of the CIA and NATO. This last infestation became especially severe after the fall of the Marxist pseudo-paradise, established in the former Russian Empire after 1917 and falling in 1991, whose fall the elite in Washington wrongly credited itself with.

This is not the end of history, as was falsely announced in 1991, but it is the end of the history of that hubristic Western elite. For the great loser of the tragic war against the Ukraine and Russia, the result of 1991 and still ongoing in the Ukraine, is precisely the elite. This war is existential for the elite, whose first victims are not the poor Ukrainians, but the longsuffering peoples of Northern America and Western Europe. The elite will have to dissolve its fragmenting NATO and flee back across the Atlantic in order to struggle to keep unity there, which is threatened by the current internal disintegration of the USA and its huge debt. Will Alaska return to Russia, as some believe?

All the US vassals in East Asia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Australia, will be freed, just as those on the now sinkable US aircraft carrier of Israel. Other losers will be the Baltics, Scandinavia and the UK, that is, the whole basically ex-Protestant Northern Europe, which so deludedly backed the ex-Protestant USA. Impoverished

Europe has made itself not only the political and military graveyard of the United States, but also its economic graveyard.

In North-Western and South-Western Europe

The for now twenty countries of Western Europe (North-Western and South-Western Europe) may yet become a Confederation after the collapse of the US-made EU and after they have re-become nation-states. These countries are for the moment: its leader, Germany, then Switzerland and Liechtenstein; Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland; the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg; the UK and Ireland; France and Monaco; Andorra, Spain and Portugal; Italy, San Marino and Malta. Artificial unions like the UK and Belgium may not survive, new nations, like Catalonia, Scotland and Wales, may re-emerge. The tiny population of Scandinavia will have to back down from hostility to the reality of the reunited Russian Lands.

In the UK, the US-manipulated British Establishment elite will be cast off, new leaders will appear. Hopefully, the liberation of the UK will lead to a reunited Ireland, to an independent Scotland and Wales and, above all, after a thousand-year wait, lead at last to a Sovereign England. Thus, the Isles of the North Atlantic (IONA) can be cleansed of the British imperial myth, which enslaved it after the 1066 tragedy.

In North-Eastern Europe

In North-Eastern Europe, the three tiny, impoverished and depopulated Baltic States and Finland may yet become truly independent republics, allied with the future Union State of Rus' in order to survive economically. Certainly, they will all have to rid themselves of their US-appointed puppet elites, stop behaving like disruptive teenagers, come to terms with reality as mature adults and, with Russian help, become prosperous once more.

The fifth country here, largely ex-Catholic Poland, already has its own Local Orthodox Church, and is where remaining traditional Catholics have worked out what is really going on. It will also have to make its peace in maturity with the reality of a reunited Rus' and stop wasting money on useless weapons. This will be all the more urgent for the Polish Republic, once Germany returns to sanity from anti-German hysteria and commits anew to mutually beneficial agreements with the Russian Federation.

In South-Eastern Europe

The great victors of the American war in the 'borderlands', which is the translation of the Slav word, 'Ukraina', will be Hungary and Slovakia. Then, by repentance, can come a reunited Serbia and Montenegro, (North) Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova, Greece and Cyprus, followed by Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Czechia, with a Bosnia-Herzegovina reintegrated and an at last prosperous Albania, attracting like a magnet Albanians at present living outside it, especially those in Serbian Kosovo and Macedonia. Thus, all the for now sixteen countries of South-Eastern

Europe, many of them Orthodox, can be drawn into a Russia-friendly but independent Confederation, part of BRICS, supplied by Russian energy. All of them have a Local Orthodox Church except for Austria and Hungary, which will surely need a new Austro-Hungarian Local Church.

The Return of the Church

I apologise for the long geopolitical digression above. However, it is necessary, for the results of geotheology are precisely geopolitical and pastoral. Whereas once people could find some sort of spiritual refuge and survival in parts of the Protestant denominations, and then in Roman Catholicism, today most can see that in the Western world where those two structures are not dead, they are dying. The tragedy of the second millennium Western world is that it ended up by voluntarily and suicidally renouncing the values of its own Civilisation, thus ensuring its own death. However, this also means that the Western Lands now have an opportunity to return beyond those to their real roots in the first millennium.

When the masses return to the Church of their ancestors, we must be ready for them, like forerunners, who prepared the way for them. Sociopaths whose evil deeds have already gone down in history, will have to stop persecuting their own clergy, trying to close their churches, forbidding their clergy from doing missionary work, and receive former Roman Catholics and Protestants into the Church canonically, as the 1,000 canonical Orthodox bishops in the world do, outlawing such novelties as ‘corrective baptism’.

Orthodoxy, which has providentially returned to Western Europe, must make ready to receive the believing remnant after it had been usurped for a millennium by structures which are now rapidly disappearing into the black hole of apostasy. The Orthodox Church, battered, bruised and abused after a thousand years of persecution from both inside and outside, has returned. We are indeed at a turning-point. We have made ready for the return of many here in Eastern England, preparing the way against all the extremists of the secularist left and the aliens of the secularist right, ever keeping to the Royal Path.

Archpriest Andrew Phillips,
City of Colchester, England, December 2024

Foreword to the Third Edition

For we hope that the Lord will deliver Russia and the Russian people from the dread years of evil which have now lasted for 70 years. Russia can be reborn only through the repentance of the Russian people, through faith in God, through living the Divine commandments. Therefore the rebirth of the Russian people – the rebirth of personal, social and national life – must be founded on the Holy Orthodox Faith and their life must be built on this. And then once more, as of old, Russia will be Holy Rus, the House of the Most Holy Mother of God.

Prophecy of the Ever-Memorable Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Laurus (1987)

All my life I have been haunted by the European world that was lost by the consequences of the tragic events and sacrifices of August 1914, now exactly 100 years ago. Growing up with nineteenth-century grandparents and great-uncles who had fought in the First European War and with tragic maiden great-aunts, I knew that all of us had to live with those consequences. There has been no peace in the world since then, since the profound injustice of the victory so cruelly and ironically snatched from the Russian Empire in 1917 by Allied treachery and then the German treachery that made the slaying of the Russian Royal Family inevitable. And that, in turn, made the destruction of Germany in the Second European War inevitable, with Russian troops taking Vienna and Berlin. And that, in its turn, made the Cold War inevitable.

That War dragged on until 1991. Then the Slav, Romanian, Georgian and Albanian Churches all lived beneath the yoke of atheism and had virtually no free voices. As for the smaller and weaker Greek Churches, they were compromised by US control. Thus, the impoverished Patriarchate of Constantinople, at one time financed by Anglicanism, had come under US control in 1948, when Patriarch Maximos was deposed by the CIA with threats to his life and despatched into a generation of exile in Switzerland, uttering as he went the words, ‘The City is lost’.

Those were dark days of the betrayal of the Church and, virtually alone, the Church Outside Russia spoke on behalf of us all. For during the Cold War proud anti-Incarnational modernism and ecumenism (heresies, like sects and cults which are created by heresies, are always based on pride), in either their crass, pseudo-intellectual, humanist Protestant/Catholic form, as often in the US, or in their subtle, pseudo-spiritual, personalist Buddhist/Hindu form, as often in Europe, were everywhere. ‘Orthodox’ academic theology was then dominated by that spiritual decadence which may be called ‘captivity theology’. In its intellectualism that ‘theology’, ignorant of the Lives of the Saints, utterly failed to see that Orthodoxy is a

striving for holiness, which is simply a life lived with prayer in conformity with the Tradition.

This was the academic theology of 'Orthodox' intellectuals, who had studied either in Protestant centres (Oxford, Cambridge, Strasbourg, centres in Germany etc) or else in Roman Catholic centres (especially the Gregorian University in Rome, but also Paris, Louvain, Jesuit Fordham etc). The academics infected naturally reflected the proud cultural prejudices of those establishments where they had studied, resulting not in an Orthodox, but a 'Halfodox' vision of the world. An associated mixture of ecumenists, liberals and modernists, those intellectuals wished to reduce the Church to a mere religion, a theory and an institution, just like the Western denominations. This was, consciously or unconsciously, spiritual treachery.

Their 'theology', in fact philosophy, reflected the humanistic personalism and spiritually empty symbolism of that age. Most of those intellectuals have now died, if not they are very elderly. The generation of disciple-imitators that succeeded them has even less conviction or talent. It is hardly surprising – modernism is incredibly old-fashioned in a post-modern world. With the revival of the Russian Orthodox Church inside Russia, that age of decadence seems increasingly distant. I remember at that time, and I mean nearly 40 years ago, being told by an 'Orthodox' academic at one of those above-mentioned universities that if I was not satisfied with their food that did not satisfy my soul, I should 'go and live in Russia'. During the Cold War that was not possible; therefore I took the next best option, to frequent the last emigres of the first generation of the White emigration in Paris and the Church Outside Russia.

This anthology of essays was written between 1974 and 1995, precisely at that time when the Church Outside Russia was isolated, indeed virtually besieged, under attack from all sides and from inside, by the extremes of modernism and 'traditionalism' alike. Indeed, as I came to realise, the Church Outside Russia was then one of the few points of freedom anywhere in the Orthodox Church. Figures in it expressed words of truth similar only to those of the lone Serbian theologian St Justin of Chelije, canonised in 2010, and other figures on the Holy Mountain and in the monasteries of the Carpathians.

Rejoicing in the canonisation of the New Martyrs and Confessors in New York in 1981, when the Orthodoxy hierarchy was still paralysed in the homelands, at that time we also tried to reclaim for the Church the ancient holiness of Western Europe. We knew that all holiness can only come from the Church, as we daily confess in the Creed. Our task was to help gather together the remaining living spiritual and cultural forces of the dying West and to call it back to its roots in its ancient holiness that it had for the most part renounced. This desire is very much reflected in this book. Sadly, since that time we have seen the final death-throes of once Christian-based Western civilisation, witnessing the disappearance of the old culture.

For after 1991, and with great speed, the demons that had operated in the atheist Soviet Union migrated to the atheist European Union, whose spiritual deadweight has

been reinforced by the atheism of North America. Only a few years ago President Putin of the Russian Federation, made wise by the failure and defeat of atheism, warned the then Prime Minister Blair that demon-inspired atheism was literally a dead end; naturally, he was ignored, for deluded arrogance never listens to wisdom. Indeed, ever since 1988 the Church that President Putin belongs to, the multicultural and multilingual Russian Orthodox Church, 75% of the whole Church of God, has been reviving, re-opening or building three churches every day somewhere on the planet.

Together with it there is reviving the social, political and economic life of the Russian Federation, the Russian Lands (Rus) and even other parts of the Orthosphere. In 2007 in Moscow we witnessed the reconciliation of the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church and the re-establishment of canonical communion, a long-awaited miracle of our times. Our great hope of 20-40 years ago for the messianic restoration of Holy Rus, so great that it was a belief, has been coming true through repentance. We have no illusions that we may not see our hopes for the full restoration of the Sovereignty of the Tsar realised, or, much less likely, Europe liberated from its self-imposed ideological yoke, but at least we know that we are on the way. There is much to do, very far to go, but the direction is the right one.

Nearly twenty years on now since the first edition, this book is here reprinted, a few typographical errors corrected, spelling updated, long paragraphs divided and a few minor precisions and corrections made. May this third edition of these essays be a help to all those who seek. May it guide them to the spiritual awareness of the Church and Civilization of Holy Rus and that Orthodoxy is Christianity and that all else, whatever its legacy from ancient Orthodox times, is ultimately but an ism, a distortion and a compromise. 'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith' (1 Jn. 5, 4).

Glory to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

Archpriest Andrew Phillips
St John's Orthodox Church
Colchester, Essex, England

August 2014

Foreword:
Orthodox England

England arise! The long, long night is over,
Faint in the East behold the dawn appear;
Out of your evil dream of toil and sorrow
Arise, O England, for the day is here!

Edward Carpenter, 1844–1929

In this quiet corner of Essex stands this little church, raised up as the sun was going down on Saxon England, nigh on one thousand summers ago. Those who toiled here for the glory of God and the good of their fellow-man little knew that the English land and people were soon to be tricked out of their age-old Christian heritage, which had made them an integral part of the first thousand years of Christendom. For their Christendom, a Commonwealth of Faith, was about to be finally sundered by a movement which would subvert the centre and so the whole of the Faith in Western Europe. As the 11th century progressed, this movement gradually isolated the West from the sources of Christendom in the East.

In England a clear break is marked by the Norman invasion of 1066. The Normans brought with them the illusions of worldly power and glory, of ‘the Establishment’, which have so deluded the governments of these islands down the centuries. The first victims of the Normans were the Old English themselves, the most venal of whom soon accepted the dubious privileges of the race-based and then class-based Norman Establishment. The Normans, the shock-troops of the new spirit of Western Europe, which had made the Western Church into a State, brought Old England to rack and ruin by fire and sword, leaving the fortunate to flee to Constantinople and Russia.

Their next victims were the Celtic peoples, the Welsh, the Irish and the Scots. And after them rulers and barons spread their lust for power abroad in bloodletting in Europe in vain, dynastic claims. Then their descendants sought after power and commerce and exploitation overseas, and that ended in the slaughter of the Great War, when a million young people from these islands were sent by heartless leaders to futile deaths in a Continental war. As the poet Maurice Hewlett wrote in 1916 in his *The Song of the Plow*: ‘The governing class is by the race even now preponderatingly Latin-French with a Scandinavian admixture; by tradition, breeding and education it is entirely so. All the apparatus, all the science, all the circumstances of government are still Norman’. For nearly the whole of the second millennium England and all these islands have been caught up in something other than Orthodox Christianity – because neglecting to seek first the things of the Spirit, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yet behind and beyond the delusions of recent history still there shines that full brightness and beauty of the Christian heritage of that other, inner England of the Old English. Accepting the Faith from Celt and Roman alike, in the West of England there lies Glastonbury and its inspiring legends. On the Somerset coast, in a secret place, the little Saxon church at Culbone still recalls that spirit. In the North, Holy Island and the traditions of St Cuthbert are called to mind in the church at Escomb in County Durham. And in the East there is Canterbury, the Mother-City of English Christianity, whose old spirit can still be felt in the church at Bradwell, which the Apostle of Essex, St Cedd, built down by the sea.

For underneath the outer England with all its illusions that the Normans brought and imposed, flowed and still flows another Christianity, still continued in the East, though cruelly harassed and at times disfigured by States and their hirelings. This Christianity is Orthodoxy. Some, glancing at it superficially, might see in it only a foreign ritual or folklore, a mere culture, but it is in fact the Gospel Faith, the Faith of the Apostles and the Fathers, the Faith and rightful spiritual heritage of the Christian Commonwealth of the first millennium. To it, this land, these islands and all the Western corner of Europe once belonged, before that revolutionary movement of the 11th century which finally cut them off, first from their own past, one thousand years of Faith, and then from all the Christian East in Europe and Asia and Africa. Orthodox Christianity is the Faith revealed to the repentant in their quest for the Holy Spirit; it is thus that confession of the Holy Spirit which brings us to partake of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Should we accept this Orthodox Christianity, we would thus accept the struggle for the Holy Spirit; the struggle for the soul of English History, the soul of England; and in so doing we would accept, 'not ceasing from the mental fight' of prayer, the struggle to build Jerusalem here 'in England's green and pleasant land'. That is to say we would accept the struggle to rebuild the Orthodox Christian heritage of the English land and people, the denormanizing of our hearts and minds, the restoration and resurrection of England.

And this struggle is foreshown by the standard that flies above many of England's churches, as above Orthodox England, the blood-red cross on the field of white, the standard of the Resurrection and the standard of Jerusalem and the standard of England. For after struggle we shall pass from the 'dark, Satanic mills' of the 'mind-forged manacles' of human reason that rejects the grace of God, to the bright, Paschal joy of the heart that leaps, as it is lit by the grace of God.

And the very stones of this little church, grown anxious in their watching and waiting as they approach their thousandth anniversary, whisper to me that it must be so.

Even so, Come, O Lord Jesus!

Fr. Andrew Phillips 21 July 1995, St Edgar the Peaceful, King of All England
St Katharine's Church,

Little Bardfield,
Essex.

1. Premonition

Rain on rain and no end ...

The pigeon-blue smoke is gusted from the thatched roofs and somewhere in the dank glade a clearly ringing voice is echoing a lonely song. The song tells of a brother who lay ill for many long years, sorely tormented by a fever of the mind...

Mist rises up over the sodden and rotting rye and plaintively calling, a crane soars up into the cloud-hung distance; on, on into the thunder-dark expanse and over the living and the sorrowing, the broad and the windswept Earth. Ahead there stretches out the Way of Suffering and the Wind, the Cold, the Rain and the Dark.

The spring-leaves in the grieving birch-woods seemed to be saying a prayer for all those who are lonely and suffering, for the widows and the orphans, the beggars out on the roads, for those in distant lands and on distant waves...

And as if in answer the young pines bent their swaying and supple boughs to the lapping of the floodwaters...

The first primroses have already burst into flower across the sweet-smelling meadowlands.

The sky is shining through the verdant grass and the wind is sighing and yearning in the murmuring reeds. The anxious tolling of a single bell is joyfully carried across the surging and mysteriously harmonious waves of a broad river.

A song is borne across the undulating grasslands, over the impatient waters and through the rustling forests, grown restless with waiting. It tells of a man in a crown who is crossing the length and the breadth of this smelling and prophetic earth...

Beloved Land, soon to be made fragrant and all-holy, shone through and warmed by the love of so many martyrs' blood, there is an unknown redolence and effulgent light in thy still brightening churches; we neither ask why nor question how: – but we know and feel and have Faith.

For that alone, O Lord, we humbly kneel and give thanks to Thee. Amen.

April 1974

2. Reflections on the Separation of Western and Eastern Christendom

If we look at the lives or the works of Western Christians during the so-called 'Dark Ages', the period from about 450 to 1050, we are invariably struck by their intellectual and cultural weakness their unformed, immature, even crude, theological outlook. Whereas in the third, fourth and early fifth centuries we are able to find great Fathers (Blessed Jerome, Blessed Augustine), making their theological contribution to the development of Orthodoxy in the West, and also those who were working to spread the influence of Eastern Orthodoxy in the West (St Hilary of Poitiers, St Martin of Tours, St John Cassian), in the sixth to eleventh centuries, there is a breakdown in the intellectual and cultural growth of the West. There are few indeed at this time who can stand comparison with the great theologians of the East, where the great Œcumenical Councils were held and where the Faith was being formulated. Rome itself fades as an intellectual centre at this time.

The light of knowledge was kept in distant places, by St Isidore in Spain, Bede the Venerable in Britain and Irish Christians, some of whom knew Greek. Their knowledge, however, was vastly inferior to that of the Eastern Fathers, and a man like John Scotus Erigena, who translated some of the 'Pseudo-Dionysius' into Latin in the ninth century, stands out like a beacon in the darkness of ignorance. The holy men and women of the West in the 'Dark Ages' are as different from the great Egyptian, Syrian and Greek mystics of the multi-cultural Orient as Carolingian or 'Anglo-Saxon' iconography is from post-iconoclast 'Byzantine' iconography.

Yet, although there were social, political and economic divergences between East and West, the Church was One. There were local, cultural variations in the practice of the Faith, but at heart Christians were united in their confession of the Orthodox, Catholic Faith. The East was a new and flourishing foundation, intellectually and culturally climbing to its zenith, the West was a fallen province of the Empire, isolated by the Mohammedans from the cultural riches of Constantinople. The West was politically crippled by pagan onslaughts and invasions, living without a great cultural or intellectual awareness of the Faith and searching anywhere for political and military support against its enemies. It was even willing to crown a Frankish king and set up a Western Empire for the sake of self-protection. Spiritual unity, however, remained.

Differences in customs had arisen even in the first centuries. The East, by culture and by history, was more inclined to mystical contemplation and philosophical speculation. The West, on the other hand, was renowned for practical legislation and government. Moreover, after the fall of the Empire in the West, it found itself in ever-greater need of such qualities. The religious and political stability of the See of Rome depended on the activities of governors, overseers, confessors and missionaries to the heathen who had inundated the West. The West required kings and queens of devout life to bring order and protection to its lands from the foes of Christianity.

The East, in contrast, lived in a more stable situation at this time. The seat of the Christian Universe had been fixed in New Rome, the City of Constantine. This City was the centre of theology, art, architecture and churchmanship. All its inhabitants had officially been received into the Church. Men and women had as a result retreated into the desert to form monasteries to pray for the world and the Church of Christ on earth, which now teemed with new converts who were so often Christian in outward form only.

The West lived in an entirely different situation. It had yet to win great spiritual, military and political battles before it too could become fully part of the Christian Empire. Understandably the Church in the West was willing to give its religious sanction to any newly-baptized Franks or Teutons who were prepared to defend it against the heathen. Christendom was not, however, divided into two in this respect. There were, for example, great ecclesiastical administrators in the East, and they needed to be great to protect their Patriarchates from the usurpations and claims of the Emperors and heretics. And in the West there was a great, monastic movement, which had spread from the tens of thousands of monks in the Egyptian desert to Italy, Southern Gaul and up through Europe to Ireland. There were great mystics and saints.

We think of the Celts, with hundreds of hermits and holy bishops, the most famous of whom are perhaps Sts. Patrick, Columba, Columban and Aidan. We think of early English saints such as Sts. Cuthbert and Guthlac whose lives read like those of the desert fathers. We think of the great influence of the Eastern-inspired Rule of St Benedict. We think too of the multitude of early English and Frankish hermits and hermitesses, great abbots and abbesses, bishops, princesses, holy kings and queens; Sts. Edmund and Edward the Martyr, for instance. Yet, although these were all holy people, many of them were illiterate, unrefined, they were insufficiently educated to express their mystical experience in works of theology, as could the great Eastern saints.

The hiatus between the early and undeveloped culture of Christian Rome and the growth of a new Western Christian culture, between, in other words, the fifth and the eleventh centuries, signified the formation of a different cultural ambience in the West from that in the East. The Christian West did not have the time to Christianise the pagan, classical culture of Rome, whereas the East made a new start. The intellectual and cultural world of the West was thus left open to anyone who could successfully Christianise and sanctify it, thus appropriating and sacramentalizing it for the glory of God and the use of the Church. And at this time this work was left undone, the classical culture of pagan Rome lay for the most part ignored. In the meantime the cultural and artistic needs of the West were provided for by Constantinople. Eastern iconography, architecture and art, Christianised, depaganized, flooded into the West, mainly through Italy and Sicily, and radiated out through the Mediterranean lands and up through the North.

However, beneath this process, the intellectual and cultural spheres remained unchanged, theologically unassimilated and undeveloped. The Art of Eastern Christendom was the product of Eastern Theology alone, and the West received only the Art, not the Theology. For linguistic, geographical and other reasons, the intellectual and cultural world of the West was not taken up in the processes of spiritualization, of divinisation, which had brought a complete harmony of wholeness and unity to Eastern Christian thought and culture. The Western heart was Christian, but the head remained ignorant. Although the Orthodoxy of Western Christendom cannot seriously be held in doubt in this period, it can be said that the East was in a much more developed, advanced stage in the growth of the fullness of Christian culture. For this reason we are able to perceive a culturally and intellectually qualitative difference between the East and the West in these centuries. Indeed the West was unable to bring any deep theological prowess to problems, which the East had already resolved, especially in iconography

The rise of the reformed Papacy in the second half of the eleventh century, after a period of shocking corruption, brought about the opportunity to look back to the Ancient World and to consider the theological and intellectual problems of Christianity. Unfortunately, the problems were looked at in the light of pagan logic, the philosophy of the Ancient World. And the theology that was produced as a result was an artificial one, not a living one, a theology of the schools, intellectual solutions to problems that required spiritual solutions, solutions provided by a spiritual intellect. Under the patronage of German Emperors, the West had already tried to Christianise the intellectual and cultural spheres of Christianity – this had been under Charlemagne in the late eighth and ninth centuries. But in the eleventh century there was a deep and consistent attempt to Christianize these spheres.

In hindsight, it seems inevitable that this would happen, given the situation of the West during the 'Dark Ages'. If by the eleventh century the West had not yet discovered that the sanctification of intellect and culture depends not on our autonomous reasonings, but on the wisdom that the saints draw from their hearts, where they have encountered God, then without a very great influence from the East, it would never do so. It is a strange fact that this influence from the theologically more advanced East has only become possible in the twentieth century, 900 years after.

It was precisely in the eleventh century that the Western Church began to diverge seriously from Christian Tradition. The eleventh century is the most important for the study of the causes and effects of the separation of Eastern and Western Christendom. From an Orthodox Christian standpoint the first half of this century forms a series of missed opportunities, when the widening rift between East and West could have been narrowed. If only the West could have renewed its acquaintance with Classical culture through the eyes of the East, the cultural and spiritual treasure-house of Christendom. If only Kievan Russia could have aided Germany in the early eleventh century by acquainting it with Eastern Theology and thus overcoming the errors of the Carolingian heritage and its primitive and politicized views.

If only the work of the half-Byzantine Western Emperor of the tenth century, Otto III, could have been continued more positively in the eleventh. If only the mission of Sts. Cyril and Methodius could have been continued in Moravia and Bohemia, instead of being persecuted for racial and political reasons. If only the Papacy had not been Germanized at the end of the tenth century. If only the Papacy had heeded the request of the Eastern Emperor in the 1040's for an Œcumenical Council. Then, the separation would not have occurred.

In the eleventh century, the West could thus have absorbed the Hellenic and Latin cultural traditions, the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, just as the Eastern Fathers had already done, in a Christian way. Then there would have been no Scholasticism, no pagan Renaissance in the centuries to come. The West failed to do this; it failed to sanctify philosophy, to Christianize the pagan past and its mentality. It failed to attain the integral and harmonious world-view, which had already been formulated by Orthodox Christendom in the East; it failed to attain the fullness and wholeness already attained in the East.

There can be little doubt that the '*filioque*' played a very significant part in this process of Separation. What had begun as a theologically clumsy expression of Orthodoxy became in the ninth century a political tool or pretext in the hands of the Carolingians and then Pope Nicholas I. It was then, at the end of the ninth century, that St Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, opposed its use. The theologically unsophisticated scholars of north-western Europe had accepted the '*filioque*' out of ignorance or political envy, rather than out of genuine theological conviction. It is notable that Rome was always hostile to it until the beginning of the eleventh century, probably till 1009, till, in other words, the first German Popes. Moreover where it was confessed in Western Europe, it was not understood in its later 12th century Scholastic form. It was only at the end of the eleventh century that the *filioque* became more than a misunderstanding, an errant theological opinion of the ignorant, and became a practical issue with practical and visible results and ramifications. The first, consistent Western attempt to defend the '*filioque*' occurred in the 1090's and was made by Anselm of Canterbury, the 'Father of Scholasticism'. What are the practical implications of the '*filioque*'?

The life of the Orthodox Christian should be rooted in his God, the Holy Trinity. A change, therefore, in his conception of the Holy Trinity leads to a change in his way of life. What began as a misunderstanding became in the eleventh century a literally vital issue. The Papal claims are the practical implication of the '*filioque*'. The claim of Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII, in the 1070's to be 'the Vicar of Christ', instead of 'the Vicar of St Peter', which had always in the past been the title of the Popes of Rome, was the outcome of the conscious confession of the '*filioque*'. For if the Holy Spirit proceeds from Christ, as the '*filioque*' states, then it is clear that it must also proceed from 'Vicar of Christ', the Pope. The implication that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from 'the Vicar of Christ' amounts to a confinement, a captivity of the Holy Spirit. A gulf is fixed between God and man; the only mediator is the Pope. Without

the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we are left to use our fallen reason to understand God.

This explains the second great consequence of the separation of the West from the East – Rationalism or Scholasticism. In the Prologue to his work *Sic et Non*, the scholastic Abelard writing in about 1120, notes: ‘The Fathers were guided by the Holy Spirit, but we are not’. In this way he justified the use of fallen reason to make theology. The third consequence of the *‘filioque’* was in popular devotion. Since the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of God, became a theological abstraction, an issue for intellectuals, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit became inaccessible, being an affair only of the Papacy, popular piety turned to the human nature of Christ, the outward aspect of His body. A new, human, somewhat morbid spirituality developed: the devotion to bodily suffering, to crucifixion, ‘the Five Wounds of Christ’, ‘the Sacred Heart’, the Feast of Corpus Christi, the veneration of statues.

The second half of the eleventh century signifies then the separation of Eastern and Western Christendom, symbolized by the date of 1054. It signified the assumption of temporal power by the Papacy, reflected in the so-called ‘Investiture Contest’. This brought an end to the Orthodox understanding of kingship in the West, which had been an imitation, albeit provincial, of the Orthodox concept of ‘symphonia’, or harmonious balance of Church and State. The King, representing the laity, was reduced in importance, as was the laity. Celibacy was gradually enforced on the clergy. Clericalism had begun. Moreover, the separation of the West from the East also meant the loss for the West of the great Patristic heritage of the East, with its clear understanding of the Holy Spirit, the freedom of the human person and the divinisation of the human-being by the Holy Spirit.

From this time on there begins in the West the growth of ‘Augustinianism’, the reliance on only one Father of the Church for theological understanding. The result was as if the East had relied on only one Father for teaching. Worse than this, the Scholastics even took and then distorted certain opinions of Blessed Augustine which did not belong to the common mind of the Church of the first millennium, notably his teachings on grace and freedom. Since the West relied on Blessed Augustine so much, it in fact isolated itself from the Eastern and Western Fathers like St Ambrose, with the result that it was unable to see the views of Blessed Augustine in perspective. This in turn would produce further distortions in Medieval and then Reformation ‘theology’.

By the middle of the 12th century the Scholastic movement was breaking out into full flower. The visible expression of Scholastic theology, the Gothic style, the *filioque* in stone, was replacing Romanesque. It was clear that the West had embarked on a separate course of religious development, leaving Orthodox Christianity to the East. Of course we would not wish to make out that this separation took place in some single event – it was a slow process. The uneducated peasants of the West preserved the Orthodox inheritance of the West for long years. The spirit of popular religion

continued much the same. There were still those who lived theology, religious experience. In 14th century England, writings such as *The Cloud of Unknowing* indicate this. The same may be true of Jan Hus in Bohemia. In England Wyclif wrote: 'The Greeks alone are faithful to Christ'. There were contacts later between England and the Orthodox Churches, in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Bishop Ken, the Non-Juror, wrote: 'I die in the Faith of the Undivided Church'. Others adopted a similar attitude and there were isolated instances of conversion or rather *return* to the Orthodox Faith.

Orthodoxy, in some form or other, emerged now and again in various Western countries as a kind of life-giving, purely spiritual stream of light. On the whole, however, the history of the second millennium of Western Christianity has been the engrossing but tragic story of the reduction and fragmentation of Orthodoxy. The history of the post-eleventh century West is the history of the transfer of energy, faith and commitment from the spiritual realm to the fallen one. Orthodoxy constantly looks inside for an answer to the problems of Christianity whereas the West, since this period, has externalized its spiritual being, rendering its strength into the hands of the temporal.

In the light of these considerations it seems that the only way out of this impasse for a Western European is the adoption of the Orthodox Christian Faith. It is this Faith, which lies at the spiritual roots of all Western people. To become an Orthodox Christian for a Westerner means becoming more truly himself, becoming what his forebears were in the distant past, a confessor of Orthodoxy. The meaning of Orthodoxy in the Western context is the restoration, reconstitution of the Church, reintegration into it, the returning home of the Prodigal Son. The spiritual roots of the East and the West represent the same maximum, the same standard – the Orthodox Faith. Orthodoxy in the West means not only unity with the Orthodox Church but also unity with some ten centuries of Western Christian Tradition. Orthodoxy lies at the heart of Christianity in the West, once all the layers of prejudice, ignorance and illusion are stripped away. Our spiritual roots are in Orthodoxy, the return to the deepest and truest Christian Tradition.

September 1976

3. The Hallowing of England

How unfortunate it is that the Orthodox Faith is often considered to be synonymous with Eastern Europe. To make this mistake is to ignore the fact that the Orthodox Faith has been confessed by so many outside Eastern Europe, from Ireland to India, from Sweden to the Sudan. To overlook this and make Orthodoxy culturally exclusive is to conceal the real nature of this 'mere Christianity' that is Orthodoxy; and that is to conceal the Faith of the Church in Heaven and of so many who still confess Orthodoxy on Earth.

And such people there are, dwelling in all the Christian lands of the Earth. For in spite of our many attempts to overlay the Faith of the Church with the things of men, to hide it and distort it before human heart and human eye, the Faith of the Church, as established in Christ and by Christ, remains incorruptible. We may admit into the Church a false understanding of Christ, as in the Nestorian and Monophysite groups of the East, or we may admit a false understanding of the Holy Spirit, as in the Roman Catholic and Protestant groups of the West, but the Orthodox Faith remains.

It is Christ's Faith, the work of the Holy Spirit through the Church and in man, which has been given the name of Orthodoxy. Is it not this Faith, and not that of Imperial Courts and State-Churches, nor that of Papal Courts and Church-States, nor yet that of those who rejected the Incarnation of the Church among humanity, is it not this Faith which is the Faith of the spiritually living, on Earth, as in Heaven? And it is to the Kingdom of Heaven that we must look if we seek the place of the ultimate fulfilment of this Faith. For only in the Kingdom of Christ do the nations find their inner selves, only there does the spiritual essence and identity of every Christian people stand in the glory of God, transfigured in holiness.

It is here that I wish to speak of England and her hallowed ones who stand in this Kingdom of Heaven and I would like to consider the significance of our land, one of the most ancient of Christian lands, in this light. For there stands in Paradise a holy company of Englishmen and Englishwomen, who in their earthly lives confessed a noble and a gentle faith, an English faith, which encompassed all that is finest and most beautiful, all that is spiritually fragrant in the heart of this people. There stands St Alban, who stood up for his faith and suffered martyrdom for his independence of spirit, who witnessed to the presence of God in this world and at once was filled with a great and holy gift, the grace to work miracles. St Oswald, a king on earth, who 'toiling for the heavenly kingdom in continual prayer', showed forth his heavenly kingship also, raising up a great cross to the honour of God and so overcoming the heathen at Heaven-field. Cuthbert, long famed as the Wonderworker of Britain, a man warm and beautiful in heart, who 'served his Creator and saw Creation serving him', and who struggled with the demons on his desolate island off the rugged, northern coasts and 'sent forth his spirit to the bliss of Paradise'.

Guthlac, another desert-father in spirit, who lived in the marshes and lonely fenlands of Lincolnshire, and fought a great war against that ancient foe of mankind, that Old Dragon, the Adversary, and who 'spoke with the angels of the heavenly mysteries', from whose mouth there came forth 'a fragrance like unto the scent of the sweetest flowers' and whose passing away was marked by the appearance of 'a fiery tower, reaching from the earth to the height of heaven, turning the light of the sun itself to paleness'. Bede the Venerable, the writer of that history of the early spiritual moulding of England, a righteous and a learned man, 'a candle burning with the Holy Ghost' at a time of darkness, whose soul 'longed to see Christ his King, in His Beauty'. And that mild and blessed Bishop of Winchester, St Swithin, the English rain-saint, who shone through his miracles, which came all from the Living God. And he of whom it is written: 'The English land is not deprived of the Lord's saints, since in English earth lie such saints as this holy king' ... 'Edmund the blessed, King and Martyr, wise and honourable, ever glorified, amongst men as one of them' ... 'He was bountiful to the poor and to widows even like a father, and ruled over his people with goodwill, ever to righteousness'. St Edmund, the Royal Passion-Bearer, who, as Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, chose to suffer the anguish of death at the hands of non-believers, rather than defend himself by the sword.

There also stands Alfred, who is called 'the Great' and who became a legend among the English, 'England's Darling', famed for his wisdom and skill in all crafts, for not only did he save his land from the heathen, but also he greatly encouraged learning and monasticism at a time when they were all but dead. St Dunstan, who came forth from that most ancient of England's holy places, Glastonbury, at a time of the nation's greatest need, to be the holy Archpastor of his people and the father of the spiritual flowering of England, of the homilist who wrote of 'Christ the Golden-Blossom, Who liveth and reigneth with all holy souls', and of those in Winchester who illuminated manuscripts with icons of an English beauty and grace, of an English homeliness, of which neither Rome nor Constantinople knew. Byrhtnoth, the ealdorman of Maldon, who in defeat spoke with the manliness of the English: 'Thought shall be the harder, heart the keener, courage the greater, as our might lessens'. By Our Lord's side stands St Mary, the Mother of God, who shone forth holding a promise of the Heavenly Kingdom to all those who would remain faithful in the dark days ahead, a promise to protect the English land from the Evil One, a promise of consoling warmth and calm, which abides to this day...

And then there came upon the land a dark time of feudal heaviness and oppression, the harmony and unity of the old culture were for ever lost and the nation divided, into master and serf and the Church broken into clergy and laity. 'And they built castles far and wide throughout the land, oppressing the unhappy people, and things went ever from bad to worse. When God wills, may the end be good'. Holiness left the affairs of the State and deserted the clerics and the educated, for they were no longer worthy, and it retreated into the inner heart of the nation, to the common people and to the monks, who alone had remained faithful to Christ. As the Norman barons spread

Civil War, 'men said openly that Christ and His saints slept' ... 'Evil reigned in the land'.

The land groaned under the cruel yoke which men from over the sea had brought into the country, a yoke which was far worse than any before, since it affected the affairs of the Church as much as those of secular life. Salvation became more difficult, and the people fled away from the worldliness of 'the Church' to the only source of salvation, to the mystical life which was best attained to in the eremitic state: 'Only among the monks, where they lived virtuously, was righteousness to be found in this land'. The monks, the nuns, the hermits and lower clergy were drawn from the people, who lived a crushed and downtrodden life for the most part, such as may bring forth righteousness and the spirit of prayer which leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. The spirit of Old England was thus taken and made slave to the feudal lords and was forced to build castles 'filled with devils and wicked men' and huge and gloomy church constructions for the glory of fallen man and his lust for Power and earthly riches, whose spires longed heavenwards, towards the God that the people had known of old and now yearned for.

For some three centuries this oppression continued and the old spiritual traditions of the English were hidden and buried beneath the darkness and ugliness of the Middle Ages. Only when the imperial hegemony of Rome began to fall apart in the 14th century did the English start to live once more. Her masterbuilders created a new architecture, founded on the old lightness and delicacy, the former homeliness and warmth of the Old English churches; the love of the irregular and whimsical sprang forth afresh in wall paintings and carvings; the national spirit was celebrated in the tales of Robin Hood, of those who sought freedom from the oppressor in the greenwood; Chaucer wrote of those who wended their way to Canterbury 'from every shire's end of England'; and, most of all, the prayers of countless men and women rose to heaven in the great mystical flowering of England, in Richard Rolle, in Mother Julian, in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, in a multitude of unknown anchorites and hermitesses, in a host of lay people, who toiled in spirit and suffered, as in William Langland and his vision of Piers Ploughman, the spiritual ploughman of England's broad and green acres, who, 'on a morning in May, amongst the Malvern hills, tired by his wanderings and laying down to rest under a broad bank by the side of a stream, dreamt a marvellous dream ...' This dream was of Holy Church, the true spiritual vision of the Church which had been kept intact and whole in the bosom of the people, despite the false teachings which pervaded those times. 'I will become a pilgrim, and walk to the ends of the earth in search of Piers Ploughman', cried the voice of the people of the true Church of the English land. The longing for a pure faith was still in the heart of the poorest cottager, and it was to remain there for long.

With the passing of the century, however, the spiritual voice of the people was to grow louder and the disaffection increased until it could no longer be contained. But the yoke which was removed in the Reformation would be replaced with a new one, that of the King; once more in their history, righteousness was to retreat into the heart

of the people, into their love for the Bible, which was all that was salvaged from the ravages of the Medieval Church, together with that vision of Jerusalem, the Heavenly Church, which they strived to preserve in their spirit down all the ages, in the hope that it would lead them to salvation. It was this inner vision which the pious lived out in their daily lives and which inspired that great spirit amongst them, Shakespeare, who wrote at times of that vision and expressed in words the hopes of the people and the beauty that they cherished. It inspired also Thomas Traherne, who found 'The Way to Blessedness'; it nourished those kindly and sincere men, George Herbert and Henry Vaughan, and fed the righteous of a whole nation.

Again the yoke changed, the King deposed, and the yoke passed into the hands of the landowners and the growing class of businessmen; the spirit was greatly troubled and the people sorely oppressed; for them there was no worldly hope, their only hope lay in the promise of salvation, which they pursued in spite of the blasphemies around them, and as lovingly as the Holy Scriptures had been translated in the previous century. And when William Blake came to write of his vision of this green and pleasant land; of his vision of Jerusalem, it was with bitterness at those who strove to fabricate an earthen Paradise, an Empire without Faith, those who sought to destroy all that is finest and most beautiful in this land. It was left to the humble and blessed soul, John Clare, and later the lyric heart of the priest William Barnes, the peasant poets of England, to write of how this people was finally brought low and humiliated by the wealthy landowners and industrialists; that was an age of great sorrow and oppression, but also an age of righteousness, when a righteous man or woman, a mystic, was to be found in villages and hamlets up and down the land. It is the fragments of that great and precious heritage with which we are left today...

If the times are sorrowful on earth, then once more we must turn to that glorious host of English people, dwelling in the love of Christ, in the Kingdom of Heaven, and to him who stands at their head St George – the Great-Martyr and Patron-Saint of England, but of him let the late Poet Laureate, John Masefield speak:

'So, I thought, that today is St George's Day, and that today – in the far past, that great knight of God rode out, in the Eastern country, and killed a dragon which had been devouring women, and that Englishmen had thought that deed a holy, and most beautiful and manly thing, and had chosen St George from among all saints to be their saint, and had taken his banner to be their banner, and called upon him, century after century, when they went into battle. For they felt that such a man lived on after death, and would surely help all holy and beautiful and manly men for ever and ever. The spirit of England is the something of the spirit of St George, a manly and beautiful spirit, ready to help someone weaker, and something of the spirit of Shakespeare, a just and tender spirit, fond of fun and kindness and of the rough and busy life of men. That delicate, shy, gentle, humorous and most manly soul is the soul of England. It is in Chaucer, in Shakespeare, in Dickens. It is in the old ballads and tales of Robin Hood, who stood up for the poor, and was merry walking in the green forest. It is in the little villages of the land, in the old homes, in the churches, in countless old

carvings, in old bridges, in old tunes, and in the old acts of the English, a shy, gentle, humorous and most manly soul, that stood up for the poor and cared for beauty. No finer thing can be said of men than that, that they stood up for the poor and cared for beauty; that they cared to be just and wise.’

And is it not this simple, hallowed England, this home of homes, this wooden-steeped land, rich in old beauty, oaken and straw-thatched, many in her woods and fields, fragrant with wild flowers, the homely smell of the earth in her old churches, her country-lanes that wind and twist and meadows of dill, apple-orchards and beehives, distant hamlets and broad ploughlands, old inns and home-love, fresh rains in April and ripe barley in August, the swallows flying on mellow summer evenings, and the old, rambling gardens, redolent of English lavender and sweet-william, the England of the English saints, is it not this which is the true spirit of England?

But let that great Poet-Laureate of England speak once more – for he is more eloquent than I:

‘I know no land more full of bounty and beauty than this red land, so good for corn and hops and roses. I am glad to have lived in a country where nearly everyone lived on and by the land, singing as they carried the harvest home, and taking such pride in the horses, and in the great cattle, and in the cider trees. It will be a happy day for England when she realizes that those things and the men who care for them are the real wealth of a land: the beauty and the bounty of the Earth being the shadow of Heaven.

Formerly, when men lived in the beauty and bounty of Earth, the reality of Heaven was very near; every brook and grove and hill was holy, and men out of their beauty and bounty built shrines so lovely that the spirits which inhabit heaven came down and dwelt in them and were companions to men and women, and men listened to divine speech. All up and down this County are those lovely shrines, all of the old time.

I was born in this County, where there are so many of those shrines, the still living evidence that men can enter Paradise. I passed my childhood looking out on these red ploughlands and woodland and pasture and lovely brooks, knowing that Paradise is just behind them.’

Together with all the saints of the old times, the holy bishops and the kings and the martyrs, the holy abbesses and the humble cowherds, the hermits and the priests, it is these simple country people, those souls of the hidden heart of England, little-known and despised by the world, whose names we often do not even have, who fill this England which is in the Kingdom of Heaven, for they are the bearers of her true spirit, and the England which is their creation of beauty will not perish at the fulfilment of the times, for it is a Kingdom of the Spirit, and that which is hallowed by the Spirit is eternal and all that blessedness will stand with Christ.

O All the Saints of England, pray to God for us!

June 1977

(Note: The quotations from John Masefield are taken from 'St George and the Dragon' and 'The Hereford Speech'.)

4. The Westernization of England

In modern times the word 'Westernization' has come to denote a number of tendencies: Americanization, industrialization, secularization, standardization', the relativization of all values, moral or social or religious. How has this word assumed these meanings?

One thousand years ago neither the word nor the concept existed – even one hundred years ago the concept was not that of today. But it is true that 'the West', that is to say, Western Europe, has been spreading its attitudes and way of life for centuries. Sometimes it has been through its Empires in Asia, Africa, or Australasia and the Americas; sometimes it has been through the military incursions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, called 'the Crusades'; sometimes it has been through the ideological works written in Latin in the Middle Ages, which today have been replaced by technological works written in Newspeak American. Thus, although the word 'Westernization' has not existed for very long and although the concept has changed with the years, the idea of Westernization as such has its origin in the more distant past. If this origin can be found, then it is from that point onwards that we will be able to speak of 'the Westernization of England'. And for that matter, we will be able to speak even of 'the Westernization of the West', a phrase, which may appear to be paradoxical, and yet which may contain radical truths.

First of all, we must define what exactly we mean by 'Westernization'. The attitude, which characterizes best of all the meaning of the word, is perhaps the fundamental notion that somehow 'the West' is superior to or better than any other civilization. From a Christian standpoint, there is here a basic contradiction. For a Christian, only humility can be better or superior. And although the West is not Christian today, most would say that until recently it was. And yet how could the West have been truly Christian if it thought itself superior to others and aggressively tried to destroy other civilizations because of its supposed superiority?

We are faced then with the task of finding a West, which did not feel superior to others, a West that was truly Christian because it was humble. And to discover such a West it is clear that we must go very far back into the past at least beyond the Crusades, which began at the very end of the eleventh century. What could have been the origin of this feeling of superiority, since it does not occur in Christianity itself, and yet has become such an integral part of 'the Western idea' and its massacres of other peoples down the centuries? Where and how did the Western mind obtain this idea? Why did the Christians of the East, in Eastern Europe Russia and the Middle East, not also have this idea? We cannot but think that behind this difference of mentality there is some doctrinal difference between Western Christianity and Eastern Christianity. In modern language there must be some ideological divergence between Eastern Christianity, the Orthodox Church, and Western Christianity. And logically it

must be this divergence, which determines and has determined for centuries the different way of thinking and the different way of life the West.

For Orthodox Christianity the centre of our way of thinking and therefore our way of life, is the heart. We are told by the Orthodox Tradition that we are to put our minds into our hearts, that the heart is the centre of our being, the place where we pray, where we speak with God. If we are faithful, our hearts and then our minds and ultimately our bodies are irradiated, enlightened, transfigured by the Holy Spirit. This is how Christ, the image of perfection and purity, was irradiated by the Holy Spirit; at His Baptism in the Jordan (Mark 1, 10), or at His Transfiguration (Mark 9, 3). The thoughts of the devout and the repentant are the thoughts of the heart – not the heart as the seat of the emotions, but the heart as the place of prayer – thoughts inspired by the Holy Spirit. These thoughts may therefore be beyond the powers of the human reason logically incomprehensible, supranational, paradoxical – precisely because they are inspired from the Creator – and the Created cannot comprehend rationally the Creator. It was in this way that all the Teachings of the Church were revealed to great men of prayer, the Holy Fathers. All the Teachings are supranational, paradoxical, incomprehensible for the reason, for example: the Holy Trinity – Three Persons in One Essence; Christ – Two Natures in One Person: the Mother of God – Eternal Virginity and Motherhood: Man's relation with God – Incommunicable Essence but Communicable Energies, God Transcendent but Immanent.

For the Non-Orthodox, truth is not arrived at through the heart, but through rational analysis. There is a complete divorce of mind and heart; the notions of transfiguration and spirituality are absent. Piety is left to the emotions, and the mind, autonomous and uncontrolled (or 'free', as some would have it), is left to analyse mysteries and events, which are unanalysable, inaccessible to the reason. And it is precisely here that there begin feelings of superiority and pride. The greatest thinker and theologian is he who possesses the best-trained mind, the greatest intellect, the finest powers of rational analysis. All theology thus becomes philosophy, an intellectual quiz of abstract ideas, which may or may not be accompanied by pious emotions. Such a theology is then a personal invention or speculation, it belongs to X or Y or Z. Pride and arrogance arise and men are led to believe that they are gifted with the truth and that therefore others must be forced into accepting it. There is no question here of the action of the Holy Spirit or any of those ascetic feats which lead to the acquiring of the Holy Spirit – such as fasting and prayer, repentance and sacramental life.

What does all this suggest? It would seem that the basic difference between Eastern or Orthodox Christianity and Western Christianity is that there is some divergence in their teaching on the role of the Holy Spirit. It suggests that in Western Christianity, and for the civilization that it shaped, the Holy Spirit has a much lesser role in the acquisition of the Truth, and the human reason a paramount one, that for some motive the Holy Spirit is subject to the reason and the reason is not subject to the Holy Spirit. And we cannot but state the fact that the primary divergence between Orthodox Christianity and Western Christianity for a thousand years has precisely been a

teaching on the Holy Spirit, which was adopted in the West against the background of a universal Christian Tradition. We are speaking here, of course, of the *filioque*, the teaching adopted in the West about a millennium ago. Could it not be then that the source of this 'Westernization', the feeling of superiority with regard to other cultures, has its origin in this teaching, which limits the role of the Holy Spirit? If this is so, then we may indeed speak of 'the Westernization of England', and from precisely that moment when that teaching was definitively introduced into England and its consequences became manifest. Thus 'Westernization' ultimately means 'filioquization'.

If this is the case, it is then the task of all those whom the Lord chooses to call to His Holy Orthodox Church to rediscover the West before its 'Westernization', before the *filioque* was introduced. It is our task to rediscover what happened to the West during this process and zealously guard anything that has survived this process on whatever level and however small these vestiges may be. We believe that the purifying light of Orthodoxy can alone shed light on this, for this light is the light of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Only the Light of Truth may illumine that which has been covered by the shadows of untruth. That which resists the Truth cannot be redeemed, but that which is best in any land does not resist the Truth because it is itself founded upon the Truth.

To 'dewesternize' or 'defilioquize' our land is impossible, above a now when the whole world is 'westernising' itself. But what we can and must do is to 'dewesternize' *ourselves*, in order to re-establish the links with our forebears who lived a millennium ago, before the *filioque*. We have to become truly Western, truly English, to become part of that other 'West', which knows no frontiers, which is part of that 'East' which knows no frontiers – that which is known as 'the Church of God'. The task of Orthodox Christians born in the West is to go beyond what we now call 'the Western mentality', to relive the lives of the old saints, who knew only the light of the Holy Spirit, and not rationalist philosophy, who knew God in the Holy Trinity, and not the pride of their own minds. By the Holy Spirit Who irradiates the Body of Christ, the Church, this may be achieved, provided only that we give ourselves up to this task with humility and repentance.

May 1983

5. Piety and Pietism

Faith will not make the sun rise sooner but it will make the night shorter.

Essex saying

In many Western countries, not least England, the words 'pious' and 'piety' have developed negative connotations far from their original meanings. In modern English these words often suggest a sickly sentimentalism, an unhealthy emotionalism, a morbid or affected and artificial suffering, physical rigidity or self-righteous exclusiveness. These attitudes of 'piety' or more exactly pietism have led many to desert churches. Many who had healthy religious instincts have been poisoned by such unnatural, deformed posturings and mannerisms. We cannot but ask ourselves how this type of pietism evolved in Western Europe in the second millennium and yet was absent both in the Orthodox Europe of the first millennium and in the Orthodox world of the second millennium.

The origin of this pietism, wrongly called piety, seems indeed to have been in the development of a devotion to the human nature of Christ, separated from His divine nature. With this development, beginning according to historians in the late eleventh century, there started the idea of an external imitation of Christ, and imitation of His bodily sufferings. There grew up the idea that through such an external imitation, one might achieve an internal state of mind, a mood, a psychic outlook, which could lead to salvation. The first signs of this emotionalism seem to have been in the devotions of Anselm of Canterbury at the end of the eleventh century, followed by those of Cistercian writers in the twelfth and then by those of Francis of Assisi and his followers.

At the highest levels this psychic state led to the psychological drama of 'the dark night of the soul', described by Spanish mystics, or the physical manifestation known as *stigmata*, the external reproduction of the wounds of Christ. This phenomenon has occurred to several Roman Catholics in the twentieth century and has been photographed and documented. At much lower levels, there are many signs of this pietism: making the sign of the cross in an exaggerated fashion, clasping the hands together and closing the eyes as a sign of prayer, praying while kneeling, raising the hands aloft as though to receive the spirit of God, singing affectedly or straining the voice, wearing a cross indiscreetly, wearing cassocks or vestments affectedly, adopting a rigid and tense stance, giving a mournful and affected expression to the face, bringing libraries of books to church, giving up the mind to sensuous music, images and words in the services. These external signs of pietism reach their peak in the 'Charismatic' movement, where there would seem to be certain hysterical reactions. Where there is hysteria or at the very least extremely strong emotion, prayer in peace and calm would seem to be utterly impossible.

This pietism is in stark contrast to the piety of the Church Fathers of the first millennium. They warned against emotionalism and praised sobriety, calm, naturalness, peace. It is no surprise that the Orthodox liturgies, which are pre-eminently patristic creations, call us again and again to pray in peace. Our spirits should be directed inward, towards prayer to God. Outward gestures should be natural, unselfconscious. We come to church to pray, all is inward at this point, we are concentrated on God. Indeed one Russian word for 'piety' is 'nabozhnost', literally – 'onGodness'. Exhibitionism, emotional excitement, outward displays of feeling are fundamentally foreign to the Orthodox spirit and Tradition, for they can be signs of vanity, pride, self-indulgence and self-admiration, all feelings that are hostile to prayer.

For many who come to the Orthodox Church, contact with its living piety is a revelation of freedom, freedom from pretence and artifice. Often they realize that they have been labouring under delusions as to what Christian piety is and how natural it is. They want to forsake what they had been conditioned to accept before. This is a revelation to the heart that the head must follow, a revelation of humility; and thus a revelation that opens a great battle against our pride of mind. We have to relearn from the beginning, as little children – and that is precisely what the Gospel calls us to do. May the Lord help all those who have understood this.

May 1983

6. What is the Church?

For thousands of years mankind, realising his tragic imperfections, seeing the suffering around him and knowing that his short life would soon end in death, has sought inside and outside himself for the Truth. Two fundamental questions have tormented him.

What is the Truth about my origins and the origins of the universe around me?

What is the Truth about my destiny and what will become of me and my fellow-men after our deaths?

In other words man asked himself where he had come from and where he was going to.

Long ago he came to the same conclusions about both questions. Regarding his origins it was not logically possible for him to admit that he and the vast and starry universe in which he lived was the chance result of a chain of biochemical accidents. Regarding his aim in life it was not possible either to admit that when his body would grow weary and finally altogether fail, his personality would also cease to exist. The answer to both questions could lie only in the existence of some greater Being than himself.

Thirsting for the Truth, mankind created various philosophical and religious systems, expressing his ideas about this Being.

In some countries, for example in Persia, India, Africa, Australia, Ancient Europe, the Americas, primitive man devised religious systems based on the deification and worship of the natural world around him, the worship of the sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the mountains, rivers, trees, stones, plants. In recent times, under the guise of ecology, something of this nature-worship has reappeared in Western countries.

In other lands or at other times, for example in Egypt and Japan, man invented a humanistic religious system in which he worshipped other men, mainly tribal chiefs, kings or emperors, who were the strongest in his people. In recent centuries this man-worship has also reappeared in the adoration of politicians, thinkers, artists, sportsmen or singers.

In yet other places and times, for example in Ancient Greece and Rome, or in Scandinavia, complex mythologies evolved with many 'gods', each one personifying certain human traits, for example, love or fertility, strength or war.

Others developed philosophies which explained men's origins and destiny, for example the philosophical wisdom of Ancient Greece, or the philosophy of Buddha in India, or that of Confucius in China.

All these systems were devised by man in order to fulfil his need to worship and adore something higher and greater than himself and to provide explanations for his origins, destiny and place in the universe. None of them were really religions, however, for a religion (from the Latin word '*reeligere*') means something that reconnects or reunites us to the Divine Being. In other words none of these systems answered a third question that also tormented man:

If there is a Superior or Divine Being, God, how can I get in touch with Him, perhaps become like Him, and then be with Him after my death?

In none of these above systems was this question answered because all of them lacked the means by which man could come into personal contact with God, with the Supreme Being. All of them were abstract or distant, proposing either an impersonal philosophy or else an unknowable, unreachable god, in whose life (if he were living) man could not participate. All of these systems were dead or dry in their impersonality, containing the seeds of their own destruction, for none of them could quench man's thirst to know God. None of them could feed man spiritually, enabling man to live by God before or after his death. All of them were for this reason failures, for they frustrated man's attempts to know God personally here and in the hereafter.

It is clear that since man was unable to know God through these artificial systems, the gods that he had invented for his satisfaction, it was necessary to admit their failure and abandon them. This could be done, however, only if an authentic religion could be found to replace them. Such a religion could not by definition be created by the fallible efforts of man, since man alone was incapable of knowing God, capable only of speculating about Him. The solution to this deadlock could not come from man, but only from God Himself. Man's only hope was that God would reveal Himself. Such a hope in a personal revelation from God seemed most logical, since, if there were a God, He could surely not be a God Who, having created the universe and man, would then sit back and take no further part in His Creation. Surely He would show Himself to man and help him.

In the whole world there was only one people who was worthy of even a partial revelation from God. This was the Jewish people and the history of this incomplete revelation is called 'The Old Testament'. This limited revelation gave man the explanation for his origin and the origin of the universe, the explanation for his tragic state of imperfection, a religious morality by which he could attempt to overcome the worst excesses of his imperfections in everyday life. It also gave him a set of directions for worship and, above all, prophecies that one day a Saviour would come to save man from the curse of death. This Saviour would be the Son of God with a human and a divine nature in one Person. Only when these prophecies were fulfilled, only when these hopes were realized, when the long-awaited Son of God came, would there be a full and complete revelation from God to man. For if the partial revelation of God to the Jews was the beginning of our understanding of the Truth, it is clear that the Coming of the Son of God Himself, as a man, would be the ultimate revelation,

the greatest revelation possible to man, that could never be superseded in time. This would reveal the fullness of the Truth, the Truth as a Person Incarnate.

When the Son of God was revealed on Earth after the passing of many hundreds of years (for there had been no young girl worthy enough to give birth to Him before), then the full revelation of the Truth was made to man.

The Son of God, born of a Virgin, became man. He took on the human body, the human mind and the human will, in other words, human nature. And He conformed that nature to the perfection of God's nature through the greatest struggles and suffering, showing all men and women how they should live.

The teaching of the God-Man was not set forth in learned tomes of philosophy, but was related in simple words in the simplest of ways – by being embodied in life, put into practice. This life was the path of perfection, the revelation of simplicity, humility, peace, innocence, hope, faith, charity wisdom, joy, mercy, goodness, beauty and truth.

When he was 33 years old, He was murdered by crucifixion. However, because of His great struggles and utter self-sacrifice, He had accorded His will with the Divine Will, He had perfected His human nature, He could not die. Therefore, after His 'death', He rose bodily from the dead, resurrecting together with Him all those who had accepted Him.

Thus He showed that the human body, mind, will, the whole human nature, need not be subject to death, if they are accorded with the Will God through struggle. In this way human nature may actually be perfected. As a result of this perfection, human nature is transfigured irradiated by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth and Love, the Holy Spirit, Who communicates the energies of the Holy Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit) to man. Christ showed that if human nature is perfected, death no longer exists for us and suffering becomes only a passing and temporary event. The Holy Spirit is the means to this perfection, which we receive in proportion to our acceptance of the Truth of Christ, our willingness to follow in faith the path of Christ.

What then is the Truth? If we ask this question, as did Pontius Pilate then we shall never find the answer, even if, like Pontius Pilate, that very Truth is standing in front of us. For Truth is not a thing, Truth is a Person, Truth is *the* Person. Truth is Christ, for Christ is Truth.

After rising from the dead, Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ departed physically from this world, taking our human nature into the spiritual world, Heaven. He left behind Him the same Holy Spirit Who had irradiated and transfigured the human nature that Christ had taken on himself without sin. This Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth and Love, and is the means to our self-perfection, communicating us with divine perfection, in proportion to our desire to participate in

that perfection, which is Love. The Church in Her inner spiritual meaning is that community of people, living on Earth or in the realm beyond the Earth, which has to a greater or lesser degree received the Holy Spirit through Christ. They have participated in this means to perfection and have lived or live by it. Christ was the first to receive the Holy Spirit and is therefore the founder, the Head and Source of the Church, and Christianity is the Faith confessed by the Church. Although Christ departed bodily, spiritually He is always with us, since we know Him in the Holy Spirit. What then is the Church?

The Church is God's Life given to man and man's acceptance and appropriation of that Life.

The Church is the Body of Christ, crucified, resurrected and transfigured by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is the life of the Holy Spirit in faithful Christians.

The Church is the place where man may meet Christ in His fullness and become like Him. Man may live like Him, receive the Holy Spirit and rise from the dead like Him, providing that he makes sacrifices like Christ and is faithful to Him, even in suffering.

The Church is the veneration of God's Word, received by man from Christ through the Holy Spirit. This Word is the Truth, for it was given to man by Christ the Word, Who does not and cannot lie because He is the Truth.

The Church is the Body of Christ, the receptacle of the Holy Spirit, Who teaches us in wisdom how to grow into Christ. This wisdom and teaching of the Holy Spirit is called Theology. It is expressed in the councils, dogmas, canons and services of the Church, which are but the decisions, teachings, laws and worship of Love, Who is God, the Unity and Community or Trinity of Three Persons.

The Church is that body of people which is directed towards becoming like Christ, not just becoming physically similar, but above all becoming inwardly similar, by living in Christ. Life in Christ is possible through the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ sent to us from the Father that we might become like Him. This Life in Christ is a process of appropriating the Holy Spirit, of incarnating Love, of becoming transparent to the Light of God. Everything must be subordinated to the furthering of this process. It can be furthered through our prayer, fasting, long services, through ascetic practices. Prayer means conversing with God and is possible everywhere, not only in a church building or at a particular time. However, from experience we know that prayer is much easier inside a church building, whose every detail in architecture and layout is designed to encourage prayer.

The Church is Heaven on Earth, the Invisible rendered Visible. This is possible because when the Son of God became man, the Spiritual became Material, the Invisible became Visible, God took on human nature. In this way, the material world, matter, was potentially purified, redeemed, hallowed, potentially restored to what it

was in the beginning. For it is, written that in the beginning, when God created everything, it was good. So, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, all things can potentially become good once more. Christ showed us that the material world is not to be worshipped. This was the error of primitive man with his cult of the body and material goods – which is also the error of modern man. Neither is the world to be despised as evil, which was often the error of Medieval and Reformation man, with his hatred of the body, rejection of marriage for the clergy and contempt for women. Rather the material world is to be purified by prayer and fasting, so that it may be used for the glory of God, transfigured in the same way that Christ's human nature was transfigured by the Divine Light of the Holy Spirit. All the material world can be so transfigured insofar as it is made holy with prayer and Christlike intention.

This Heaven on Earth is represented by icons, which are spiritual portraits of Christ, His Holy Mother, the Saints and the Angels, all the transfigured and Christlike world. Materially they are but wood and paint, yet they too, as miracles witness, become transparent to the Holy Spirit, become spirit-bearing as the human nature of Christ.

It is represented by the icon-screens in churches, which symbolize the division between Heaven and Earth; and yet we see that there are doors in the screen through which we may pass into the sanctuary.

It is represented in the vestments of the clergy, which are symbols of the spiritual beauty of the raiment that we may all put on in Paradise.

It is symbolized by incense, which represents the fragrance of prayer.

It is symbolized by the sacraments and rites of the Church which are visible actions carried out by clergy, repeating those of Christ, Whom the clergy represent. They are channels of the Holy Spirit, as were the first rites and sacraments which Christ performed when on Earth. These were: His Baptism in the Jordan, the changing of water into wine, the healing of the blind man with earth and His spittle; the changing of bread and wine; the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles; the forgiving of sins – and many other miracles.

It is represented by the bodily remains of holy men and women which are carefully conserved and honoured by the Church, the Body of the Saviour, since they too are irradiated by the Holy Spirit, even though, materially, their bodies were but flesh, bone and blood. We respect our bodies, for it is written that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. The same respect is shown to Nature and animals, for they are all God's Creation. For this reason too the Church does not permit the destruction of the human body through fire, once the soul has left it.

The Church is the honouring of all those who, known to all as Saints, have become Christlike, for through them the Church worships Christ.

The Church is the teaching of humility implemented, the renunciation of evil, the voluntary emptying of evil from our minds, hearts and wills, the conformity with the Will of God.

The Church is neither old nor new, for though in Time, She is also beyond Time. Her Truth is Eternal, Her teachings are timeless and unchanging, and yet always new to those who discover their infinite and timeless beauty. The body of Her teachings is therefore known as 'The Tradition'.

The Church is Absolute Truth in this relative and passing world, for Her founder, Christ, is Truth Incarnate. This Church Truth or Churchliness is not abstract imagination but the Truth embodied and lived in a way of life.

The Church is Beauty and Good, for these are facets of the Truth.

The Church is Truth not recognized and seeming strange to those who do not 'live inside' Her.

The Church is joyful freedom, for the acceptance of Truth frees us from the acceptance of lies, errors and delusions.

The Church is sober and spiritual, as the Truth.

The Church is the meaning of life.

The Church is strength and unity, for She can never be divided or fall. Christ promised that She will exist until the end of the world when He will return and that the gates of Hell will not prevail against Her. Thus in persecutions that the Church has known all through Her history, as Christ foretold, the Church does not grow weaker but stronger.

The Church is the Mother of all faithful Christians. She is the communion of the living and the departed, of the Saints in Heaven and the repentant on Earth, the communion of men and women, young and old, children and patriarchs and all the races of the earth.

The Church is hope and faith in the life to come, in which those who strive to be faithful to Christ shall receive the rewards of the just.

The Church is peace, for our destiny is Paradise and what care can we have, other than that of striving to enter it?

The Church is merciful and compassionate love and does not menace or condemn those who do not know Her and leaves those who reject Her to the mercy and providence of God.

The Church is open to all those of goodwill who seek Her. She is open because She belongs to no man – for man belongs to Her.

The Church is the light of salvation, salvation from all that is false and hurtful, from needless suffering and death, for She brings goodness and beauty, truth and love, mercy and life into the darkness and anguish of this world.

The Church is infallible, for Her Faith cannot fail, Her founder having overcome death, the ultimate failure.

The Church prays for all, teaching us how we may become more like Christ, vanquishing man-made suffering and death around us.

The Church in unceasing joy sings out from Her depths to all the ends of the Universe:

Christ is Risen!

January 1984

7. The Church and the Contemporary World

It must be admitted that in our own times the word 'Church' is little understood, most have only a confused idea of what the Church is. What does the Church say about Herself?

According to the Scriptures, the Church is the Body of Christ and Her Head, therefore, is the Son of God Himself. Since She is One Body, She can never be divided; only parts can fall away with a greater or lesser amount of the Church's Truth. For this reason, the Church is called One. In the Gospels we see that the Body of Christ is glorified or transfigured by the Holy Spirit and then, in the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; hence the Church is called Holy. As the Church has been confessed by so many peoples at so many times in so many places, the Church also receives the title of Catholic – from the Greek words '*kat' olos*', meaning 'according to all'. Finally, since the Church has existed since the Apostles, She is also called Apostolic. All of these four attributes, 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic' are thus applied to the Church.

The Church lives in contrast to various denominations or 'isms', which define former parts of the Church that have separated and lost essential qualities of the Church – either they are not One, or else not Holy, or else not Catholic, or else not Apostolic. In other words, a denomination is a group of people who no longer belong to the Church and form a separate association, which is distinguished by a special name or '-ism'. From distant church history we may think of, say, Arianism, Nestorianism, Apollinarianism, Monothelism etc. A denomination may conserve the outward appearance of the Church to a great extent or it may almost completely lose the outward appearance of the Church. Inwardly, however, all denominations 'hold the truth in unrighteousness' (Romans 1, 18). They may contain many virtues and values, substantial remnants of churchliness, but they lack inward living content, the Holy Spirit. Any falling away from the Church is the result of a lack of faithfulness to Christ and is therefore a separation from His Body, glorified and transfigured by the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospels, the Lord calls us to:

'Be perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect'.

(Matt. 5, 48)

'Worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him'.

(John 4, 23)

To these calls, man replied with the question 'how?' The Church answered thus: 'God became man that man might become god'. 'Man is to partake of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1, 4). This is possible in the Church because the Church is the Body of Christ Which is transparent to the Holy Spirit, Who alone can communicate the divine energies of God to man. However, this can only take place in proportion to man's worthiness to receive the Holy Spirit. Thus everything in the Church is directed towards preparing man to receive the Holy Spirit. This is the teaching given by the Holy Spirit, the teaching of the Church, Theology, the knowledge of God. This preparation is the living of the ascetic life that Christ lived. This path is that of fulfilling the commandments of Christ, to love God and to love one's neighbour. It is not possible to love others selflessly if we do not know and love Christ Who created them. For He dwells in others and to know and love Christ is possible only in the Holy Spirit. To love Christ is the goal of all the universe, for it is how the Creation may ascend towards the Creator.

This contrasts with the beliefs of denominations and '-isms'. Since they are somehow outside the Church, having deviated from Her, they cannot know Christ through the Church and the Holy Spirit. Therefore they attempt to know Him either through the intellect or through the emotions.

The intellect can be used to know about Christ, but not actually to know Him. Through the intellect we can only obtain an exterior knowledge of Christ. Such knowledge comes from the autonomous use of the reasoning powers to speculate about Him, autonomous because the reason is not illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Such rationalism is individualistic, reducing God to the size of each individual's intellect, in the words of Christ: 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?' (Matt. 6, 27). Such rationalism therefore represents profound ignorance, ignorance of God, Who can only be known in the Holy Spirit. Through the cultivation of mental concentration and willpower, it leads to the destruction of the humility of the mind and ultimately even to the worship of the powers of the human reason.

This rigorous intellectualism represents a return to pagan philosophy, which also speculated about God, since it could not know Him through Christ and the Holy Spirit. This Scholasticism is dry as dust, deathly, lacking the living presence of the Risen Christ. It comes and goes in fashions and fads, not being timeless and eternal. In the New Testament it is called 'fleshly wisdom' (2 Cor. 1, 12). The human mind divorced from God is called a 'fleshly mind' (Romans 8, 6-7; Col. 2, 18). In its extreme form, when separated from all religious belief, this rationalism becomes a statement of the imagined infallibility of the individual human reason. Thus, lacking humility, because it possesses no other criteria for judgement than its own, the reason arrogantly denies the existence of all that it cannot itself comprehend. In such circumstances it abandons the rationalistic analysis of religion, and turns to analysing the law or politics, or in more recent times, science and commerce. In such cases, with the total abandonment of interest in religion, rationalist analysis becomes the

occupation of all, atheists included. Marx and Freud are the greatest scholastics of modern times.

The use of emotional techniques to know about Christ is known as mysticism or pietism. These techniques appeared in Western Europe at the same time as Scholasticism and Rationalism. They are in fact the other side of the same coin. Emotional knowledge is open to all, for all can claim to go into ecstasy or hear voices, but only the chosen few are given the powers of intellectual analysis and logic. Emotional 'knowledge', through ecstasy, can be obtained through extreme physical privations, self-flagellation, intemperate fasting or enclosure and extreme mortifications, causing morbidity. Such negative violence against the body, which according to the Holy Apostle Paul, is called to become spiritual (1 Cor. 15, 44), is possible only if we reject the Church teachings concerning the divinisation and transfiguration of the body by the Holy Spirit.

This emotional 'knowledge' can thus be obtained from various psychic techniques and imaginings, which can release psychic forces in us. Such techniques include meditation to exercise the fantasy, the contemplation of the human nature of Christ (separated from His divine nature), suffering in the Crucifixion, the veneration of human images, bodily postures creating nervous tension etc.

The results of such self-imposed sufferings and psychic techniques are sensations of physical warmth, levitation, the hearing of mysterious voices, hysterical outbursts, bizarre visions, self-righteous pride, possessive exclusivism, morbid feelings. All this is witnessed to in the lives of countless people in medieval and modern times.

When separated from religion, these emotional attitudes and techniques can lead to the growth of magic and superstition, but also to the development of artistic life. In recent times there has been a violent reaction against the mortification of the body (although every year in the Philippines acts of self-crucifixion still take place on Good Friday). This reaction has resulted in the modern obsession with sex.

The results of attempts to know Christ with the intellect or the emotions have had two consequences:

Firstly there have been and are many experts *about* Christ. They have written thousands of books about Him. But such knowledge in itself cannot bring salvation. Indeed such a mass of exterior knowledge easily puffs up the mind, causing it to become proud and thus reject the interior, spiritually revealed knowledge given to the humble. Such puffed-up minds gradually become incapable of understanding and accepting the Church, looking down on Her from the 'heights' of intellectual illusions with contemptuous pride.

Secondly there have been and are those who claim to have had some 'mystical' experience of Christ in visions and voices, interior physical sensations, dreams and psychic phenomena. According to the Church Fathers such experiences should at all

costs be avoided since they are at best delusions, proceeding from our own psyche, at worst they are demonic, induced to make us proud and so render salvation almost impossible.

This then is the difference between the Church and denominations and 'isms'. The denominations use man-made techniques to apprehend the spiritual world. The result is that they end up looking into their own intellects and psyches. The Church, however, awaits revelation, revelation that comes from our obedience to the Gospel and its Commandments of Love. The Church shows us the way, the ascetic path already taken by thousands of Saints and Fathers before us, and first of all by the Saviour Himself. This is the path of spiritual sobriety, based on the Truth revealed to us in the Life of the Son of God become man, and proved in the splendour of His Glorious Resurrection from the dead. This path of the Church is not an elitist, intellectual teaching, nor a series of esoteric, emotional experiences, but a way of life open to all. And this is what the Church offers to the contemporary world – the opportunity to find Christ through spiritual knowledge and not the delusions of men.

January 1984

8. The Calendar of the Orthodox Church

For many years now there has been much strife throughout the Orthodox Church about the calendar. Let us therefore try to identify the real heart of this controversy

Since time immemorial man has, as the Psalmist says (Ps. 103, 21 and Ps. 135, 9–10), measured time by the sun and the moon. In this way there came into being solar and lunar calendars. Let us first look at some of the solar calendars:

1) The 'Astronomical' Solar Calendar

The solar calendar is based on the measurement of one year i.e. the time it takes for the Earth to complete one revolution around the Sun. Using contemporary methods this has been established as 365.2419 days, or 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 46 seconds (to the nearest second). In a period of 10,000 years there would therefore be 3,652,419 days. If, however, we needed to establish a calendar over a longer period, this figure would be inaccurate. For example in 100,000 years there would be either more or less than 36, 524,190 days. Thus we can see that absolute exactness is impossible. Moreover some scientists believe that the Earth does not revolve around the Sun at a constant speed. Some suggest that it is speeding up. It is clear that, for astronomical reasons, which we are unable to alter, all calendars are inexact. It is not possible for us to move the Earth into an orbit around the Sun which would be constant and measure a round number

2) The Julian Calendar

Also called the Church or old calendar. It was adopted by the Church at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea in 325. It is kept by the Russian, Serbian and Georgian Churches, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Fathers of Mt. Athos and Mt. Sinai, substantial minorities in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and in the Diaspora. At present the civil calendar (see below) is 13 days ahead of the Church calendar. This is because the Church calendar measures a year as 365.25 days.

3) The Gregorian Calendar

Also called the new or civil calendar. It was adopted in Rome in 1582 and subsequently by other countries. It is also inaccurate because it measures the year as 365.2425 days. However, it is more astronomically exact than the Julian calendar.

4) The Meletian Calendar

Also called the new or 'corrected Julian' calendar. It was devised by Patriarch Meletios (Metaksakis) of Constantinople and adopted under State pressure by the Church of Greece in 1924. Today it is observed by the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and the official Churches in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland as well as in some parts of the Polish, Czechoslovak and

American Churches. The difference between this calendar and the Gregorian one is minimal and in fact the two run parallel for the next 800 years. The Meletian calendar is also inexact, being based on a calculation made in 1900, which measured a year as 365.2422 days. Since the difference between the Gregorian and Meletian calendars is at present non-existent, we shall refer to the Meletian calendar henceforth as the Gregorian or new calendar.

Let us now turn our attention to the lunar calendar. This is based on the time the Moon takes to turn around the Earth. This period of time is not constant but varies between approximately 29 days 6 hours and 29 days 20 hours. Using modern techniques astronomers have fixed a mathematical average of 29.530588 days or 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes and approximately 2.8 seconds. This period represents the duration of an average lunar month. 12 lunar months thus represent about 354 days. It is clear that it is therefore very hard to reconcile the solar year with the lunar year. Indeed to do so with mathematical exactness is impossible, except over periods of millions of years. In other words there is no common denominator or multiplier between the solar year and the lunar year. And yet to find the date of Easter, it is absolutely essential to harmonize the solar and lunar calendars. What did the Fathers of the Church do when faced with this issue at the First Œcumenical Council at Nicea in 325? How did they overcome this seemingly intractable problem? Before answering these questions, we should perhaps first consider a theological aspect of time.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians (5, 16), we are called to ‘redeem time because the days are evil’. These words call us to prayer, because prayer is the only way of making use of time to the full. Time, which by definition is temporary and not eternal, is forever lost if it is not hallowed i.e. eternalised through contact with the Eternal, the Creator of time. The Church calls us to hallow all things, time included. St Gregory of Nyssa in his *De Octava*, PG XLIV 609A, talks of time as ‘dirty’ or ‘sullied’. The reason for this is that since the Fall, all Creation is tainted with sin – and therefore time also. The inexactitude of time, the impossibility of measuring time with astronomical accuracy, is a consequence of the Fall, a symbol of imperfection. Therefore, any attempt to ‘absolutise’ or eternalise time by fixing it in a calendar is illusory. Time is imperfect, sullied and will come to an end in any case. Both time and our inevitably imprecise methods of measuring it are doomed to disappear. To attempt to create a perfect, astronomically exact calendar is to attempt to create something perfect out of something naturally imperfect. We cannot undo the cosmic cataclysm of the Fall by making astronomical measurements or adjustments. It is as if we were to try to perfect man by taking measurements of his body. Realising this, the Church Fathers in 325 showed that there is, however, a way of hallowing, Christianising and purifying time.

One of the tasks of the First Œcumenical Council in 325 was to fix a universal calendar for all Christians. The importance of this task lay in the fact that at that time Christians were celebrating Easter on different dates. Therefore it was essential to establish Paschalia – tables for the dating of Easter – in order to strengthen the unity

of the Church and put an end once and for all to disputes and schisms about the calendar. The Fathers decided that there was only one way of doing this – to base the calendar on Christ, and most notably on the most important event in His Life and in the whole history of Creation – the Resurrection. Thus the Fathers looked at the events which in chronological order preceded the Resurrection and determined its date. They are as follows:

- 1) The spring equinox i.e. the moment when on the 21 March the day is as long as the night.
- 2) The first full moon after this equinox (the full moon being the moment when the night sky is illuminated by a maximum of light).
- 3) The first Sunday after this first full moon. Sunday is the third day after the Crucifixion and the first day of the week (Matt. 28, 1). It is the day of the Resurrection, the Lord's Day.

The Fathers also asked the question why Christ *chose* to rise from the dead at precisely this time. According to the Gospels, the Saviour chose His time, often fleeing from the Jews, but finally accepting death with the words, 'the hour has now come' (John 12, 23 and 17, 1 for example). The Fathers explained this by drawing a parallel between the first 'week' of the world (the Six Days of Creation) and the week at the end of which Christ rose from the dead. These two weeks are the most important in the history of the world, and the second one we celebrate liturgically as Great and Holy Week. (For details of this explanation, see the 'Anatolian Homily' on the date of Pascha, written in 387, which portrays what the logic of the Fathers must have been at the First Council).

According to the Fathers the first day of Creation coincided with the spring equinox (Gen. 1, 2–5). The day and the night were equal and the world was created as coming into flower. The fourth day of the Creation was the day of the full moon (Gen. 1, 16). This was the day when the moon was created; it is natural to suppose that it was created as a full moon, i.e. fully illuminated as seen from the Earth, for the inhabitants of which it was created. The creation of man took place on the sixth day (Gen. 1, 26–31). The sixth day, considered to be the day of the Fall, was Friday, the seventh day, the Sabbath, was the day of rest (Gen. 2, 2).

In the week of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection, the first event is the equinox, the second the full moon, followed by Friday, the sixth day, the anniversary of the Fall, when Christ was crucified for the sins of the world. On the seventh day, the Sabbath, Great and Holy Saturday, Christ rested. On the eighth day there occurred the third event, Christ rose from the dead. The eighth day is also the first day of a New Creation. And the first day is the day when the world began (Gen. 1, 3), when God created the Light. Thus Christ, the Lord of Creation, 'by Whom all things were made', becomes the New Adam, 'recreates' man by redeeming him. All that was undone by man through his Fall is made anew in the Re-Creation, the Resurrection of Christ.

Together with man, all Creation is renewed. Thus time, also part of Creation and sullied by the Fall, is hallowed, purified and resurrected by the time which the Saviour chose for His saving Passion. The half-light of the equinox is illuminated by the full light of the full moon and then fully lit by the glorious light of the Resurrection, when the sinless human nature of the God-Man was irradiated and transfigured by the Uncreated Light

The problem for the Fathers then was how to imitate the order of the events of the Passion Week, the week in which man was recreated and saved, and guard the theological truths contained in that week, representing them chronologically in the calendar. Practically speaking, how could the solar calendar (according to which the equinox is dated) be combined or harmonized with the lunar calendar (according to which the full moon is dated)? In the Passion Week the sun and the moon had come together to worship the Creator, to bow down before Him, – how could this be expressed in the form of a calendar? As we have already seen, and the Fathers saw long before us, it is impossible to harmonize the two calendars with absolute astronomical accuracy. The Fathers therefore chose to base the calendar not on an imperfect astronomical calendar, but on a perfect theological calendar. Let us look at this more closely.

The Fathers chose to introduce a new calendar into the world – the calendar of the Resurrection, the calendar of the Church, which although linked to astronomical time, the fallen time of the fallen world, is not the same as astronomical time. And it is not the same because it is centred on the time of Christ's Victory over Death, and not on the movements of the stars, planets and satellites of the Fallen Cosmos. By adopting the Julian calendar and a lunar calendar, neither of which was quite accurate, the Fathers managed to harmonize the solar and lunar calendars to the end of time. Accuracy in time for the Fathers was of little import when time itself will end. What was important was the Resurrection of Christ which takes man across time into Eternity – Timelessness. The Fathers showed that, while it is impossible to find harmony in astronomical, i.e. fallen, time, it is possible to find harmony through the Resurrection. Thus, at the First Œcumenical Council, the Church gave harmony to the disharmony of Fallen Creation. For the Church is harmony in a disharmonious universe, hallowing all things by the Holy Spirit, restoring them, transfiguring them into the things of Christ. The new-found harmonization of the solar and lunar calendars represent the harmony between God (the *Sun* of Truth) and Man (the moon being a symbol of the Mother of God, Who represents the greatest holiness attained by Man). The Church calendar is spiritual harmony restored to the universe by the Resurrection of Christ, which is also the Resurrection of Man and the whole Cosmos.

In sixteenth century Rome, however, none of this theological depth was understood. This was because the criteria of thought at the time were not Christian but humanist, worshipping not Christ, but fallen man, with his fallen reason and its fallible understanding of the world around it. In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII agreed to change the calendar that had been universally observed more or less since the First Council for a

new calendar, one which would be astronomically more correct. Having introduced this calendar, the dating of Easter, the Paschalia, would also be affected. This change led to disharmony between the solar and lunar calendars and the loss therefore of all the dogmatic and theological harmony and symbolism of the Julian calendar and its associated Paschalia.

Indeed, as the Orthodox Church in the sixteenth century saw, the new Gregorian calendar and Paschalia are anticanonical. A number of canons (The Apostolic Canons VII and LXX; Laodicea XXXVII and XXXIX; Antioch I) state quite clearly that the Christian Easter must neither coincide with nor fall before the Jewish Passover. These ancient canons had been established to preserve the historical and therefore theological order of events of the Passion of Christ. It would be senseless to celebrate Easter before the Jewish Passover, for Christ is precisely 'the New Passover'. The new calendar of Rome was thus condemned and anathematised by the Orthodox Church almost as soon as it was introduced in 1583, 1587 and 1593 at councils of the Four Eastern Patriarchs and representatives of the other local Orthodox Churches. This condemnation was upheld by all Orthodox until the beginning of our own century, until after the Fall of the Russian Empire. Indeed even Patriarch Meletios did not dare introduce the Gregorian calendar into the Orthodox Church, given the awful anathemas of the Patriarchs; instead he resorted to a piece of most un-Orthodox casuistry, with the 'Meletian calendar', which is not the Gregorian in theory, but in practice runs parallel for the first 800 years.

In parentheses it is interesting to note that the calendar change of Pope, Gregory was not the first one. As early as 1324 certain Greeks, influenced by the same rationalistic, pagan philosophy as the humanists of sixteenth century Renaissance Italy had already attempted to change the calendar. And at that time too the Church had rejected any change, putting Theology above Astronomy. (For details see *The Calendar Question* by Fr. Basil Sakkas, pp. 23–27).

A recent Russian study of the calendar by A. N. Zelinsky confirms that between 1851 and 1950, for example, Roman Catholics and Protestants celebrated Easter no fewer than 15 times before the Jews celebrated their Passover. This is clearly anticanonical. Unfortunately the Orthodox Church in Finland and a few parishes of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Church in Holland also celebrate Easter according to the new calendar and associated Paschalia. In Finland this innovation was responsible for the virtual destruction there of monastic life. Monks, refusing to live in conflict with the canons, fled the country.

Another problem exists for those who, like the Greek Church, retain the Church calendar for Easter but have introduced the new calendar for feasts with a fixed date. Firstly they celebrate these fixed feasts at a different time from the majority of Orthodox, not to mention from the dates kept by countless generations of their forebears and the saints now in Heaven. Secondly, when fixed feasts coincide with feasts whose date is determined by the date of Easter, chaos and absurdity ensue. Let

us take the case of the Fast and the Feast of the Holy Apostles. For example, in 1983 Easter fell on April 25 (May 8 in the new calendar) and thus the Fast of the Holy Apostles (which starts every year 58 days after Easter) began on June 21 (July 4 in the new calendar). The Feast of the Holy Apostles, however, fell according to the new calendar on June 29. Thus the Fast in preparation for the Feast began 5 days after the Feast! Such absurdity causes regular embarrassment and ridicule. Worse than this, the new calendar churches seem to dishonour the two greatest Apostles of Christendom

There is also yet another problem for the local churches that have adopted the new calendar for the fixed feasts. This is schism, particularly serious in Greece and Romania. Those who have wished to observe the old calendar have been and still are directly or indirectly persecuted. With calendar schisms these churches have been undermined and unable to offer the resistance that they might well have been able to offer to the secular-minded governments of their countries. Such governments have of course taken advantage of these splits to further weaken the churches and secularise the country. In Poland and North America, the local churches have permitted some parishes to retain the church calendar, while others follow the new. There are even some parishes which have both calendars at the same time! The results everywhere are chaos, confusion, discord and disharmony – which was precisely the situation before the First Œcumenical Council and one of the main reasons why that Council was called.

Nevertheless, at the present time, a number of arguments are put forward in favour of the new calendar and its associated dating of Easter:

1) All Christians should celebrate their feasts at the same time.

In answer to this, it may be asked what is the most important thing – the unity of Orthodox with Non-Orthodox, or the unity of Orthodox with one another and their hundreds of millions of ancestors in the Church Triumphant?

2) For Orthodox Christians living in states that have fixed public holidays according to the new calendar, it is easier and much more convenient for them to celebrate feasts according to that calendar.

In reply it may be said that an Orthodox Christian must decide what is more important: to live in convenience and psychological comfort conforming himself to the others around him or to live in accordance with the ordinances and traditions of the Church of Christ? Ultimately, whatever the concessions we may make on secondary questions, we have to accept the Church with all the discomforts. Do we live according to the ascetic path of the Cross or according to the world? The Cross of Christ has always been a stumbling-block to ‘Greeks’, as St Paul called those who put rationalism above Love. And where do we see the greater piety and church-going – among those who live according to the new calendar or among those who have remained faithful to the Church calendar?

It cannot be denied that many who wish to change to the new calendar are motivated only by worldly reasons, an inferiority complex before the world, a wish to become like 'the others', a wish to integrate secular establishments. If we follow such logic, then it would lead us to abandon Orthodox Christianity altogether. Orthodox living in Muslim countries should become Muslim, in Roman Catholic countries Roman Catholic, in Protestant ones Protestant. The logical conclusion of such an argument is, in a word, apostasy. Whatever concessions on the calendar question may be made in exceptional circumstances out of pastoral economy, we must remember that these are but concessions to our weakness. We must not attempt to justify them. For this is the path of apostasy.

3) It is absurd to continue to live according to a calendar that everyone admits to be astronomically wrong. We live in the 20th century and we can no longer keep this unscientific anachronism.

In answer – do we then live according to science which, with all its fads and fashions, is merely a constantly fluctuating attempt to define the laws of the fallen world with our fallible and fallen reasons? Do we not rather live according to Theology, the teaching and life of the Church, revealed through Her by the Holy Spirit? (Or is it that many prefer science to the Church because, apart from the outward, human aspect of the Church, they do not know Her, as our Mother?). Given that an absolutely accurate calendar is in any case impossible, we must choose between a theologically harmonious calendar, canonical though astronomically inexact, and on the other hand, a calendar which is theologically disharmonious, uncanonical, unhistorical, anathematised but astronomically less inexact, which since its introduction has caused untold strife and schism. Which should we choose?

4) If we continue to observe the Church calendar, then eventually we shall find ourselves celebrating Easter in the autumn and Christmas in the summer.

In answer – no feast has to fall in a particular season. To say otherwise is either folklore or else nature-worship. Indeed Orthodox in the southern hemisphere already celebrate Easter in the autumn and Christmas in the summer. They do not seem to suffer from it. In any case it would take some 20,000 years for this to happen in the northern hemisphere – and then those in the southern hemisphere would have Easter in the spring and Christmas in the winter.

5) To adhere to a certain calendar is a sign of Judaizing ritualism, from which Christ freed us. The calendar can have no importance for our salvation; what is important is love for others.

Of course what is essential is the cultivation of love in accordance with the Gospel commandments. This is possible through the Church and our obedience to Her. For if we are not obedient to the Church, the Body of Christ, how can we be obedient to Christ and the Gospel? If we disobey the Church, then in some way we separate ourselves from Her, everyone making for himself his own 'church'. The only thing

that has any absolute significance is our faithfulness to Christ and the Church that is His Body and therefore our Mother. This faithfulness is witnessed to in our faithfulness to the ordinances of the Church, whose authority is the Holy Ghost Who speaks through the saints to us. If we disobey this authority, then the Church is rent by splits and schisms with groups breaking away from Her.

As regards the calendar for example, if the whole Church met in a Council, blessed and hallowed by the Holy Ghost and saintly Fathers, and took a decision to change the calendar, then it would be wrong to disobey. In the history of the Orthodox Church, we have an excellent example of this in the case of the Russian Old Ritualists. They refused to give up certain rites peculiar to the local Russian Orthodox Church in favour of other rites observed by the rest of the Orthodox Church. The Russian Church as a whole had decided to adopt these other rites in order to strengthen the bonds of catholic unity in the Church; the Old Ritualists rejected this conciliar decision of the Church and thus formed a sect. The error of the Old Ritualists was not their wish to conserve their rites, but to disobey the Church. Indeed, in the nineteenth century some Old Ritualists returned to the Church, but kept their old rites. The sole thing that is important is the unity of the Church in the Faith.

The catholicity of the Church is upheld in numerous writings: 'Hold fast the traditions which ye have received' (2 Thess. 2, 15); 'Guard the deposit' (1 Tim.6, 20); in the canons (Seventh Œcumenical Council, Canon VII; St Basil the Great, Canons LXXXII and LXXXIII; Apostolic Canons XXXI) any tradition or teaching of the Church must be preserved, if it is of the Holy Ghost. We must fight to preserve the catholic unity of the Church. As the steward in the Gospels (Luke, 16, 1–13), we shall surely be judged according to our faithfulness to the Church. And if we are not faithful in such matters as the calendar, how can we be faithful in the great things? Love cannot be obtained without obedience, and obedience is obtained by renouncing our own wills, a hard and difficult path, the saints tell us, composed of ascetic struggles and privations. It is an unfortunate fact that those who wish to introduce the new calendar also wish to introduce other innovations, in disobedience to the age-old practices and traditions of the Church. Some have remarked that, so far, there have been no saints in the new calendar.

When we see the spiritual confusion and the schisms sown in the Church because of the introduction of the new calendar, perhaps we recall Esau (Gen. 25, 29–34), who exchanged his birthright for a mess of pottage. Surely the Orthodox birthright is the theological, dogmatic and symbolic beauty of the Church calendar? Surely we should keep this spiritual heritage, the spiritual heritage of both East and West, from the dark forces and powerbrokers of this world. Should we not be thankful that we have managed to keep the church calendar, which signifies our obedience to the Church, which is in the world, but not of it? Is it not rather the world that in recent times has become out of step with the Church, turning to worship the stars and not the Maker of the stars? As Orthodox Christians, we must decide what we praise more, our own fallible attempts to measure the movements of 'the sun, moon and all the stars of

light' (Ps. 148, 3), or the God-Man Who rose from the dead, giving the Resurrection unto Life to all those who are faithful to Him. Do we then value fallible human reason more than the Word of God? Do we respect Astronomy more than Theology, the temporary more than the Eternal? Ultimately – which do we worship – the Creator or the Creation? – This is what we must decide and our decision will be reflected in our attitude to the calendar.

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9. The Church and *Filioquism*

Preface

‘We all have the same God’. How many times have we heard this in the mouths of those who wish to justify their indifference or indolence in matters of religion? Indeed very few think of the implications of this hackneyed phrase. For, if it were true, it would mean that the differences between the faiths of the world would merely be cultural, political linguistic, economic and social, in other words, all due to mere human factors. It would mean that we could do and say whatever we wish in the name of God, with impunity, without any reference to any criteria of truth. It would mean that God would be no more than an invention of human culture, a sociological reflex, a reflection conditioned by the human mind, conditioned by what we would like Him to be.

In fact, of course, although there is only one God, human perceptions of this God are different because of various, human conditionings. And God remains One in spite of these conditionings, not because of them. We believe that there is a God Who is Absolute, Who remains above all the various human, cultural perceptions of Him, and that He is revealed to mankind in the Person of Christ, not invented, imagined or conditioned by the human mind. We believe that this God is the God of Orthodox Christendom, of the Church of Christ.

At this point, no doubt, some will object. Granted, the God of Non-Christian faiths is not the Absolute God, because these faiths never received the revelation of Christ, the Son of God become man. But why should this Absolute God, He Who stands above cultural misunderstandings not also be the God of Non-Orthodox Christianity? It is this question that we wish to answer in this brief article. For we wish to explain why we believe the vision of God has somehow been blurred or even lost outside the Orthodox Church – and this because of the *filioque*, the original reason why Western Christianity separated from Orthodox Christianity. It is then our aim to explain something about how this happened and, above all, the implications of the addition of the ‘*filioque*’ to the Creed of the Church, – ‘*filioquism*’. We wish then to show the dangers of a false belief, for a false belief may lead to a false attitude to God and so a religion in which our knowledge of God is somehow impaired or distorted

The History of the *Filioque*

Some scholars have tried to trace back the *filioque* to the Early Church Fathers. Others reiterate another version, that the ‘*filioque*’, the addition to the Creed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son (as well as the Father), first appeared in the sixth century in Toledo in Spain. The Orthodox scholar, Adam Zernikav, says categorically that when in the seventeenth century he examined early manuscripts in the libraries of Western Europe, the word ‘*filioque*’ had each time been interpolated at a later date.

According to him, the *filioque* first made its appearance in the Creed in about 800 at the Court of Charles the Great (Charlemagne) in Aachen. Contemporary scholars seem to agree with this and even if the word '*filioque*' appeared before, for instance in Spain, it was not in the Creed.

From Aachen, it seems that Carolingian scholastics slowly spread the *filioque* all over Western Europe. This was a political act, undertaken to undermine the authority of the Universal (Ecumenical) Roman Empire, centred in New Rome (Constantinople), and therefore assert the authority of Charlemagne in Western and, perhaps later, Eastern Europe. At first the *filioque* spread to north-western Europe, but finally spread everywhere, starting at the top of the social and ecclesiastical hierarchy, into other parts of Europe. In 1009 or 1014 it spread to Rome itself with the arrival of German Popes. With the papally-sponsored Norman Invasion of 1066, England too fully received this innovation. By the end of the 12th century, the only areas which had not received the *filioque* were those like Scandinavia, Ireland and Southern Italy, areas the furthest away from the Franco-German ideological hegemony in north-western Continental Europe. The spread of the *filioque* was thus a slow process.

Some at this point may feel lost. But how can the addition of one word, '*filioque*', make any difference to our confession of the Christian Faith? What difference does it make if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father or from the Father 'and from the Son?' It is to this question that we now wish to address ourselves, explaining that, although few may understand the theology involved, we all understand the practical implications of the *filioque* involved.

The Practical Implications of the *Filioque*

We live or try to live according to what we believe. What we believe thus determines our daily way of life. We see this most clearly in the way of life of the Saints. They experienced the power of God and it is this experience that they live and speak of. The *filioque* therefore changed the way of life of those who accepted it, and in all realms. First, let us look at the change of spirit.

The first thing that Orthodox notice when entering a Non-Orthodox church is the difference in atmosphere. This is most striking when entering a Uniat church i.e. a Roman Catholic church, which imitates all the externals of an Orthodox church – the spirit and the atmosphere, are totally different. Many speak of a 'warmth' or 'presence' in an Orthodox church, absent in other churches. Could this not be connected with the confession of the Creed in the Orthodox Church without the *filioque*? A different confession of the Holy Spirit would surely affect the spirit or atmosphere inside a church building, first of all.

When we penetrate further into the theological background of the *filioque* in an attempt to understand this difference in atmosphere, then we notice something else. According to the traditional teachings of those denominations which confess the *filioque*, the Holy Spirit is not so much a Person, but more the relationship of love

between God the Father and God the Son. According to this notion, the Holy Trinity, God, is therefore no longer a tripersonal unity, but a kind of blurred or hazy unity, an essence or substance. It is no longer a revelation of Love but a rationalist and impenetrable speculation. Indeed, such a God would ultimately be unknowable since the Holy Spirit could no longer communicate with us, for the Holy Spirit would be but the relationship between the Father and the Son. And for this reason, that the Holy Spirit is locked up between the Father and the Son, even the human nature that Christ took on Himself in the Incarnation, would be excluded from the Holy Spirit. The human nature of Christ Himself would not be divinised and transfigured by the Holy Spirit's communicating of grace to it. The implications of this are profound and far-reaching.

First of all, since the human nature of Christ is not divinised and irradiated by the Holy Spirit, but simply inorganically joined on to His divine nature, the way is open to the cult of this human nature, separate from the veneration of the whole divino-human Person of Christ. This would explain the post-Schism Western cult of the Cross – separate from the Resurrection, the importance of Good Friday and the overshadowing of Easter itself. It would explain the more or less total ignorance of the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ among Non-Orthodox. In secular terms we would suggest that the cult of the human nature of 'Jesus' (as child or adult) led to the whole doctrine of humanism, the cult of man divorced from God. God, if He exists, becomes but a distant abstraction, a mere idea to be speculated about with the philosophy of Aristotle – that privileged by the Middle Ages and thence Modern Science. In such a context, where the Living God is unknowable, for He cannot be communicated to us by the Holy Spirit, it is quite logical to speak of 'the Death of God'. The human reason, creating God in its own image, kills the real God, leaving the void of humanism, a god who is a myth.

The attitude to the god of the *filioque* can be twofold, either intellectual or emotional. For since this god cannot be known by the Holy Spirit, he can be known either by the intellect or else the emotions. This explains why in the second millennium, there was a divorce between dogma and mysticism, often expressed as a false choice – dogma or mysticism, when in fact all dogma is mystical and all mystical experience the source of dogma. The emotional attitude to faith was an interest in pietism, meditation, sensual art and instrumental music. The intellectual attitude led to Scholasticism, which in secular terms, led to an obsession with Science and Technology, the foundations of which can already be seen in Medieval Gothic architecture. The idea that God can be known through the human reason led to the intellectualising of religion, it became the exclusive domain of the learned. The sacraments of Communion and Chrismation (Confirmation) were withheld from children, because they had not yet reached 'the age of reason!' (As if adults understood!).

As regards the Tradition of the Church, the breathing in Her of the Holy Spirit, it was separated from the understanding of the Scriptures and set against it. The Tradition was corrupted by the addition of the things of men, then totally rejected because it had

been corrupted. The Bible became the subject of argument between various rival intellectuals, all of whom failed to understand it wholly because they were all arguing outside the very Holy Spirit Who inspired the Scriptures. In this way their understanding became fragmented. Thus another false question, Bible or Tradition, was devised.

As a result of this distancing of the Holy Spirit from human life, according to the theology of the *filioque*, those who sought righteousness found it not internally, but externally. The life in Christ became, from the Middle Ages on, ‘the imitation of Christ’, with all the psychic phenomena associated with such an emphasis on external piety. The body was looked down on – this led to Puritanism and then the modern reaction to Puritanism in sexual licence. In this connection we would link Roman Catholic clerical celibacy and the bizarre attitudes to women found in the post-Schism, i.e. post-*filioque*, West. Women seem either to be seen as semi-divine or else as soulless slaves. The modern, feminist reactions to these attitudes are well-known, being based on the desire to imitate men and thus fall into the same spiritual abysses as have men, instead of attempting in Christ-loving wise to lead men up from those abysses.

Behind all these attitudes there lies the deformed theology regarding the Mother of God – ‘Mariology’ and the Immaculate Conception. For the Early Church, the Mother of God is not a Virgin-Goddess. Her sanctity is due not to some special dispensation, but to the action of the Holy Spirit on Her Who freely accepted to receive the Holy Spirit. There is here all the mistaken theology of the Fall, ‘Original Sin’, free will and the Redemption. The mistake lies in the inability to recognize that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Love, was communicated to us by Christ’s co-suffering with us throughout all His Life, above all on the Cross, and then by the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Since, according to the *filioque*, the human nature of Christ could not be transfigured by the Holy Spirit (because it was locked up in a heavenly duality between the Father and the Son), the Incarnation has not been fully understood either. We can clearly see this in the Non-Orthodox attitudes to icons and relics. These have varied between superstitious and uncomprehending worship and outright, iconoclastic, rejection. The notion according to the *filioque* that the Holy Spirit could not communicate divine energies to the human nature of Christ, and hence all human nature, led to the semi-Manichean attitude to the body and the whole material world. This explains the worship of the natural world by romantics, hippies and ecologists on the one hand, and, on the other hand, its ruthless exploitation by industrialists and others.

The cremation of the human body after the departure of the soul, occurs for the same reason, – the disbelief in the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit on the material Creation. Given such a position, it would be fully logical to cremate the body of Christ, rather than bury it in a tomb, were He to come back and be crucified again. The use by Roman Catholics of unleavened bread in the Eucharist is part of the same

mentality. If Christ is risen in His Body, then we must represent this with leavened – risen – bread. The same attitude of disbelief, or perhaps rather misbelief, is again witnessed to in the non-acceptance of Divine Providence and miracles in general. Indeed if the *filioque* were correct and the Holy Spirit were held captive by some distant and even vengeful god, miracles would be most illogical. With such a god, ‘contemplation’ and prayer would be a waste of time and the ‘active’ life the only way out.

Thus we see that once we accept the *filioque*, we accept its implications – and these, we submit, have had a profound effect on shaping the Western world, both ecclesiastically and secularly. Yet, when we think about this, it is all most clear. If God is at the centre of our lives, and then our understanding of God changes, the centre of our life changes also. In the light of this we can understand why the Church Fathers were so strict in questions of the Faith. If these are some of the implications of the *filioque* for our understanding of the human person, what then can we say about its practical implications on human society?

The relationship between Church and State in the theology of the Church in the first millennium was based on the Church’s understanding of the Incarnation. If, as is the case of the West since the 11th century, our understanding of the Incarnation changes because our understanding of the Holy Spirit changes, then the relationship between Church and State also changes. With the *filioque*, the divine nature of Christ is no longer organically linked to His human nature, indivisibly but without confusion. In the same way the Church is no longer organically linked with the State. Either the Church is superior to the State, or else inferior, divisibly or with confusion. Moreover the nature of the Church changes in conditions of ‘*filioquism*’. For the Church should be the Body of Christ, but if the members of this Body can no longer be penetrated by the Holy Spirit, then where is the authority of the Church? The faithful people of God, who should be organically one with the faithful clergy, are no longer able to speak by the Holy Spirit. Then the human nature of Christ, represented by the people, is incapable of sanctifying itself, and so is obliged to submit itself to the exterior authority of the divine nature, represented by the clergy. Thus the people and the clergy are separated, the Church and the State are separated, the Pope and royal authority are separated. Organic unity or ‘symphony’ between Church and State are lost. This is the beginning of clericalism in all its many forms.

Authority belongs to the clergy, above all to the Pope of Rome. Indeed it was at the end of the 11th century that the Popes for the first time adopted the title of ‘Vicar of Christ’. Indeed, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from Christ the Son of God, Who is no longer present on Earth because, according to the *filioque*, we have no contact with the Holy Spirit, there is need for a ‘Vicar’ or substitute. And the authority of this Vicar must be infallible, since it is from him and through him and his hierarchy that the Holy Spirit proceeds. It was thus that the monolithic monarchism of the Medieval Western Church was founded. In effect it was an attempt to absorb the State into the Church. The Holy Spirit, absent according to the *filioque*, was replaced by legalism.

Where legalism did not work, it was replaced all too often by the sword and inquisition.

As a reaction to the monolithic structure of the Medieval Church, the kings of Europe gradually prepared to seize power from the Pope. This was the Reformation and the end of feudalism, which had been the secular form of clericalism. As the bishop in his palace, so had been the baron in his castle. Feudalism had been but the secular reflection of the structures of the Medieval Church. The Reformation was in fact a reaction to all that had gone before. The idea of a Church that assumed the identity and functions of the State was replaced with State-Churches, Churches which were absorbed into States. In the Middle Ages the Church, the divine nature, became like the State, the human nature. After the Reformation the divine nature, the Church, was swallowed up by the human nature, the State.

The individualism of the Reformation, secularised was to produce capitalism. Many historians, such as Weber and Tawney, have recognized this. And the excesses of Capitalism, by reaction, have produced Communism. However Western Europe, secularised, cannot escape the origins of its modern, secular system. All modern movements have their origins in the *filioquism* of Charlemagne. The Crusades, like Napoleon's wars, like the Kaiser's War, like Hitler's War, were all born in the same Franco-German heartland of Continental Western Europe. And today, by reaction to Hitler's War, a new temptation, an economic one, is born. It is born in that same Franco-German heartland, like Charlemagne, and like him, it was confirmed in Rome – we speak of course of the EEC. The origin of this idea, like the *filioque*, is in the desire to make man independent of God, to set up an earthly Empire, without God. The Holy Spirit is locked away in Heaven, and man is left to construct his own fate. The bloodied history of the West in the second millennium and especially in the 20th century leads us to fear what that fate might be. Does man really think that he can continue to live without God? Can man continue without the transfiguring power of the Holy Spirit? This question will be answered by the 21st century – if there is one.

April 1984

10. The Diaconate

If we look back into Church history, it is clear that the service of the deacon has varied according to time and place. Thus in Acts 6–7, we read of ‘serving tables’, we read the defence or homily of the Protomartyr and Deacon Stephen to the Jews, we read of the help given to widows. We also know of the tradition of ‘episcopal deacons’, who worked as bishops’ secretaries and then often became bishops themselves – we have an example in St Athanasius of Alexandria. We know that St Ephraim the Syrian was a deacon and yet he wrote magnificent homilies. In Greece today it is often the deacon who administers communion at the liturgy or takes it to the sick. We also know of deacons involved in the running of orphanages and distributing clothing to the poor. We also know that many deacons serve only liturgically and have no other role. What then is the specificity of the deacon, what is it that deacons have always done ‘at sundry times and in divers manners?’ (Heb. 1, 1)

It is the duty of the priest to pray, to intercede, to stand before the throne of Christ and serve the liturgy. As for the deacon, it is his specific and essential task *to call to prayer*. The deacon (in Greek, *diakonos* = servant) performs the service of the angel, the messenger who passes from the throne in the altar to his position before the doors of Paradise with the people. He calls them to prayer (In peace let us pray ... Again and again...), and so to participate in the sacramental service of the priest, the agent and intermediary between Heaven and Earth. And the deacon in turn is the intermediary between the priest and the people – like an angel. The whole symbolism of his vestments is angelic, his movements and gestures are to be light-footed, soundless, angelic, like an angel coming down to the Earth and appealing with all his being (Let us all say with all our soul and all our mind, let us say...) to the people to pray. This is the essence of his service, to call to prayer.

Why should this liturgical role be central? It is in answer to the command of the Gospel: ‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven...’. The liturgy may be likened to the sun, the parish to those who partake of the sun, and the world to that which may be illumined by the sun if it wishes to flee the darkness. The liturgy is precisely the seeking of the Kingdom. The Church is the Body of Christ and therefore the Body of Christ, the eucharistic liturgy, is at the centre of the Church’s life. The liturgy carries us out of this world (Let us put aside all worldly care...), even though we are in the world. This is the Incarnation of the Son of God, True God and True Man, God Transcendent and God Immanent. It is inevitable that the primary role of the deacon should be as liturgical servant – to call to prayer.

Of course, the deacon also has secondary activities, though most of these could be performed by lay-people. These secondary activities are all results of the primary activity of calling to prayer. They include keeping the altar clean, the catechising of children, adults and catechumens, visiting the sick and bereaved, helping the poor, especially widows and orphans, serving at table at parish feasts, and even preaching.

This last function, though rare, does exist and can be of help in dual-language parishes of the diaspora, where the priest does not speak one of the languages. It is, however, to be stressed that these 'social' functions can only be genuine if they result from liturgical life and service. Orthodox Christians, who have a sacramental and therefore liturgical life, are not mere social workers, as is so often the case with Non-Orthodox, especially the clergy. Every act of charity must also be a call to prayer, if it is not, then it will only be an act of self-interested humanism. And humanism, as the twentieth century must surely by now realize, is not enough.

The deacon's life must therefore become in itself a call to prayer through his personal example. People should be able to look at him and think that they want to pray. The deacon should live the litanies that he proclaims. 'Let us commend ourselves and one another, and all our life unto Christ our God'.

Even such a brief article as this would be incomplete if we did not mention the deacon's wife. Often incorrectly called 'matushka', her correct title, in Russian as in Greek, is 'diaconissa'. In historical practice it seems that the deacon's wife took over the role of deaconess – as is suggested by this word 'diaconissa'. In other words, as so often happens today, it is the deacon's wife who helps at female baptisms, the organization of parish sisterhoods, the cleaning of the church, the baking of prosphora, singing etc. In this sense it may be asserted that the role of deaconess is not in fact defunct in the Orthodox Church today, as some like to make out, but that it is alive and well and performed by the deacon's wife, the diaconissa – the deaconess. Like the role of the priest's wife, the matushka or presbytera, this role of deacon's wife is one that requires great humility and modesty, being performed almost silently and invisibly, with great discretion. But without clergy wives, parish life would be incalculably more difficult.

In conclusion it may be said that the situation of the average parish today, where there is no deacon, is deeply abnormal. Parishes were not meant to be deaconless – the norm is surely for every parish to have a deacon. May the Lord God look down on us sinners and may faithful laymen more and more come to the deaconate, and thus call the people to prayer – to the one thing needful.

March 1985

11. Patriarch Nikon and the New Jerusalem

The year 1453, the year of the Fall of Constantinople, New Rome, was a fateful year for all Orthodox Christendom in the Middle East and the Balkans. For them it meant that any hope of pushing back the Muslim Turks and freeing their Orthodox homelands from oppression would be definitively lost for some 400 years. However, for Russia and the Russian Church the significance of this date was no less great.

Firstly it meant that the Russian State was the only Orthodox land free to protect and conserve Orthodoxy from the dual threat of Islam and Roman Catholicism. From history we know that the realization of this Messianic task came to be called the idea of 'Moscow the Third Rome'. Secondly it also meant that Russia lost touch with ancient centres of Orthodoxy in the Holy Land and the Holy Mountain. In this way Russia lost touch with a broader, more catholic vision of Orthodoxy that had been the norm in Constantinople with its cosmopolitan relations and missionary efforts.

The temptations that the Russian people and State underwent after the Fall of Constantinople can clearly be seen in a number of events in the 15th and 16th centuries. There was first of all the difference of tendency between the 'Josephites' and the Transvolga Elders, followers of St Nilus of Sora. This was in fact a difference of view between those who supported the growing influence and power of the expansionary Russian State over the Church and those who considered the role of the Church and especially monasticism to be purely spiritual and independent of the State.

The second notable conflict was at the end of the 1560's when Ivan the Terrible had St Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, murdered. Here again the conflict was that between Church and State. Ivan, torn between the duties of the Orthodox Emperor or Tsar and the increasingly Western, especially Renaissance Italian, influences of his entourage, had become what today we would call a 'schizophrenic'. Only this can explain his alternating outbursts of Christian fervour and Machiavellian megalomania. This tragic personality split mirrored a potential split between Church and State. This split would continue until either the two sides could be welded together in the symphonia of Orthodox Theology or else until one side totally dominated and subjugated the other. When this moment came, when, in other words, Russian history came to a turning-point, the Russian Church was presided over by its greatest Patriarch: Nikon.

Of peasant origin, a man of the people, this brilliant bishop was above all a monk, whose inner life was centred on monastic feats and ascetic endeavours. Such were the qualities of this monk that it soon became clear that the Church would call him to serve in another capacity also. And so it was that in 1652, he was called on to become Patriarch. Here we must be quite clear, Nikon himself never desired to be Patriarch, indeed he at first refused the proposition, and finally accepted only on condition that all the Russian Orthodox would be obedient to the Tradition of Holy Orthodoxy and

to him as their Patriarch. Here we see that the holy hierarch sensed the manifold temptations that Russia was undergoing at the time and saw that the only solution was the full confession of Orthodoxy. Russia should become like a monastery, the Russian people, Tsar included, should owe him obedience in all spiritual matters. He would be 'the Abbot of Russia'.

Herein there was no arrogance – for his part he had refused to be Patriarch, it was the Tsar and the people who had pleaded with him to be Patriarch. Nikon must have understood what would be necessary if Russia were to remain an Orthodox land and the measures that would have to be taken if the problems that had accumulated were to be dealt with. These problems were such that only a monastic and ascetic attitude towards them *on the part of the whole land* would lead to a solution: hence his call to monastic obedience – which he obtained. How then did the Patriarch, unanimously elected, deal with the problems that had come to a head, and what was the exact nature of these problems? How did the Patriarch nearly succeed and how was his work undone? Is there any truth in the accusation that the Patriarch was responsible for the Old Ritualist Schism through his overbearing pride? This accusation was continually made against him throughout the Synodal period of Russian Church history, when the Patriarchate was abolished and the Church run on Protestant lines by a Ministry, and the accusation was then faithfully repeated by Western historians. Let us attempt to answer these questions in the light of the Orthodox Faith.

The first great issue in Russian Church life of the time of Patriarch Nikon was perhaps the conflict between the spiritual descendants of St Joseph of Volotsk and St Nilus of Sora. St Joseph and his disciples had said that monasteries could be landowners, working together with the State. St Nilus and his followers had said no. As a man of prayer and fasting, Nikon could not help sympathising with the monastic and Hesychast tradition of the 'Nilites'. On the other hand, as Patriarch, Nikon was fully aware of the need for close collaboration between Church and State, as in the tradition of St Joseph, who had already been canonized by the Church. He knew well the dangers of a disincarnate mysticism and spiritualism, but he also knew of the dangers of the Church being subordinated to the State. The Patriarch was a deep theologian and wished to see a full Orthodox symphonia, or harmony, between Church and State. He was a theologian of the Incarnation, but he was perhaps above all one who valued balance and harmony, understanding that Nilus was also a saint, one day to be canonized also. In Church-State relations Patriarch Nikon desired to see balance and harmony. The ramifications and implications of this appreciation of the traditions of both St Joseph and St Nilus, we shall further see below.

The second issue was not an internal problem, but an external one. It concerned the differences between Russian liturgical books and practices and those of the Greeks. Being himself of the people, the Patriarch knew how attached the devout peasant was to the rites of the Church. He knew therefore that any harmonization of Russian practices with the Greek ones, any 'reform', would have to be carried out with a certain suppleness and diplomacy. On the other hand, he also realized that it was

necessary to bring Russian liturgical practice into line with the practice of the ancient Orthodox East. This was because he saw the need for Orthodox unity on a worldwide level against the twofold menace of Islam and the West. Russia could not truly accept the responsibility of being 'the Third Rome', if the Russian Church did not agree in all things with the rest of the Orthodox Church. Russia could not remain an isolated province when the rest of the Orthodox world was calling on her to defend the integrity of the Orthodox Faith. If Moscow were to be the Third Rome, it would have to assume responsibility seriously, otherwise the title would remain hollow. The breadth of vision of the holy Patriarch continues to astonish us at a time when we consider ourselves to be international. And not only did he have this vision of a strong and solidly unified Church, unified even to the point of liturgical custom, but he was also ready to put this vision into practice, staking his own position on it.

In considering Moscow to be the Third Rome, the Patriarch could not but take into account the fates of the first two Romes. The First had fallen to the temptation of worldly power, offered to it by the semi-barbarian Franks, in exchange for the right to corrupt Western Christendom by altering the Creed with the addition of the *filioque*. The Second had fallen to a similar temptation, that of selling its faith to the West at the Council of Florence in exchange for the dream of military protection against the Turks. It must have been clear to the Patriarch that the same fate could befall the Third Rome, if it should agree to exchange its faith for worldly power and glory. Already there were those who, bigoted and ignorant, considered the Russian State infallible and were ready under Western ideological influence to sacrifice all to the State. In order to counterbalance the growing dangers of this ideology, the Patriarch put forward a new notion – that of Moscow the Second Jerusalem.

This was not a mere notion, an idea; the ever-energetic genius of the Patriarch implemented the idea by building the New Jerusalem complex south of Moscow. Choosing an area that resembled quite remarkably Jerusalem and a river, the Istra, that resembled remarkably the Jordan, the Patriarch incarnated the idea of Moscow the Second Jerusalem. At the heart of Russia, the centre of worldwide Orthodoxy, there would be an inner Jerusalem, incarnated in stone, so that the Russian State would be unable to forget its true, Messianic vocation. It would be able to bring the New Jerusalem, Sion, the Church, to all the peoples of the Earth, to uphold and protect the Faith of the Church against all aggressors, to make the human divine, to bring Heaven to Earth by raising up Earth to Heaven. Such was the theology of this new Church Father, Patriarch Nikon. New Jerusalem would be open to all peoples, made Orthodox, who would pray and work together in a living icon, related to the heavenly prototype of the New Jerusalem. Here the peoples of the Earth would dwell together in catholic unity, in the image and resemblance of the Holy and Life-Giving Trinity.

For Moscow to be a New Jerusalem, however, yet another issue would have to be settled; this was the question of relations between Russia and the West. This issue, as we shall see, was in many ways the most significant, even if most people were not conscious of it at the time. Patriarch Nikon was. He realized that Western Europe had

through its ideology and therefore technology already become the most significant power in the world. Western influence had penetrated among the court nobles, there was a strong Western influence in the West of Russia, a strong, Western mercantile influence in Moscow and the memory of the Polish occupation of Moscow only two generations before was still fresh in the minds of many. How long would it be before this influence would make itself felt in the Church or on the Tsar himself?

In order to combat these influences, the State and the Church tried to contain foreigners, 'Germans', to certain areas and convert them to Orthodox Christianity. Symbolic of this was the denunciation in 1655 of 'Frankish' icons. These 'icons', or rather religious pictures, were so called because they were painted in a Western, realistic style. They resembled more the sentimental, fleshly art of Poland and Italy than the iconography of the Church. The Patriarch collected these 'icons' from the houses of nobles and on the Sunday of Orthodoxy 1655 anathematised those who painted or possessed these Latin images. The pictures were then either buried or else over painted in the Orthodox manner, becoming icons.

This action was deeply symbolic, for it signified the desire of the Patriarch that Orthodoxy be purified and renewed, freed from the ever-growing menace of the West. The Patriarch wished to see the renewal of an Orthodoxy whose image was being deformed, despiritualized and deChristianized through a forgery and travesty of the Christian Faith. Ominously, the obscurantist and ignorant enemies of Patriarch Nikon, xenophobic isolationists or westernising nobles, began to call the holy Patriarch an iconoclast. These enemies were those for whom Orthodoxy was simply a set of external, formal rites, or else an appendage to the State, or, worse still, an Eastern rationalism. This third group was very strong in the south-west of Russia and in Kiev. Having been influenced from Poland, they had made Orthodoxy into little more than an Eastern Scholasticism on the Roman Catholic model, in method and form and spirit.

The great Patriarch Nikon had undertaken to protect the Orthodox Faith, with the agreement of the Church, the Tsar and the nobles. In view of Russia's rise as a world power, he had taken all possible precautions to secure the future of the Church in Russia and world Orthodoxy. The way to a strong Church in Russia, to the unity of the Orthodox Church as a whole, to missionary action in Siberia, China, Alaska, Japan and even the West had been opened by this extraordinary hierarch. He had never sought to be a bishop, let alone Patriarch, but sought only the heavenly Jerusalem for all mankind and this was incarnated in the building of the New Jerusalem outside Moscow. Where then was the weakness, if the holy bishop had taken all possible precautions?

The first indication that all was not well came in 1656 when Tsar Alexis, with whom the Patriarch's relations had at first been so balanced and harmonious, returned from the Russo-Lithuanian War. The Patriarch wrote that the Tsar '... had become proud, started to despise the commandments and even tried to interfere in the affairs of the

Church'. (A History of the Russian Church by Metropolitan Macarius, Vol XII, p. 309). It would seem that from this time onwards, exalted by his worldly victories, the Tsar no longer wished to accept the situation of 'symphony' between Church and State. Influenced by Western ideas, he wished to see an absolutist monarchy on Western lines. What was happening in these fateful years was that the Orthodox monarchy was developing into monarchism, in other words, an anti-ecclesial ideology. It is no surprise to learn that from this point on the State began to intervene ever more in Church affairs, in particular it was the State which was responsible for the Old Ritualist Schism. Patriarch Nikon, seeing what was happening, again in 1658 tendered his resignation.

The State was the direct cause of the Schism of the Old Ritualists. The Patriarch was quite willing for those who did not wish to accept modifications to Russian Church ritual, to bring it into line with the practices of the rest of the Orthodox Church, to continue to use their 'old' rites. He was a man of the people and well understood the desire of the simple to keep their former ways. He required only one thing, that those who kept the 'old' rites remain in obedience and unity with the rest of the Church. Metropolitan Macarius writes that if Nikon had continued to be Patriarch, there would never have been a schism. (*A History of the Russian Church*, Vol. XII, pp. 225–226). The schism did not start until the Patriarch had been removed from office and indeed it only gained strength after the Patriarch's repose. The State did not share Nikon's tolerance. It required full uniformity. After the repose of the Patriarch, it began to persecute those who continued to use the 'old' rites, thus embittering those who resisted change and ensuring that the Old Ritualists would endure. Patriarch Nikon, on the other hand, did not persecute, even though he knew that many of the 'old' rites were in fact relatively recent innovations. Against the conservatives he opposed the Tradition, the breathing of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Without persecution the Old Ritualists would have died out by themselves. The State, however, did not view matters in this way. Little wonder that many called the successor of Tsar Alexis, Peter I, 'Antichrist'.

We know that in the later history of Patriarch Nikon, he was at first slandered and then condemned, later to be restored, but too late, after his repose. As in the earlier case of St Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, there were many intrigues against Nikon, many sold their souls to the State, and the most important intrigues went as far as Rome through the apostate and defrocked (for sodomy) Uniat bishop, Paisius Ligarides. Some slandered Nikon by asserting that he was a careerist, he wanted absolute power for himself. Of course the Patriarch had no pretensions. He never wanted to be Patriarch, offering his resignation twice, in 1655 and 1658. Nevertheless, we also know that for the Russian people, both at his repose and after, Patriarch Nikon was looked on as a saint, as a righteous passion-bearer for the Orthodox Faith, a confessor. Indeed many miracles were recorded, right up to the Revolution, at his tomb in the Monastery of the Resurrection in New Jerusalem to the

south of Moscow. But what can we say about the consequences of this momentous Church-State conflict? What can we conclude? What lesson can be drawn?

In defying the Patriarch and therefore Orthodoxy, Tsar Alexis opened the way for Peter I and then the German Catherine, who so violently persecuted Russian monasticism, and the whole Synodal period of Russian Church history. The idea of Moscow the Third Rome became a nationalist State ideology, because it was not shared with the spiritual idea of Moscow the Second Jerusalem. The whole mechanism of Church and State became unbalanced, disharmonious, deregulated, like a machine running out of control. Although some of the later Tsars were most virtuous – we can think especially of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas – they were trapped in a system that was headed for destruction. Ritual had to be balanced by inner content, by prayer. The international breadth of vision of Patriarch Nikon was lost in a sometimes chauvinistic and intolerant State ideology.

As for the ‘Frankish’ icons that the Patriarch had publicly condemned, they soon became so widespread in Russian society that the Old Ritualists became virtually the only ones who remained faithful to canonical Orthodox iconography. But we should not paint too black a picture of the consequences of this Church-State conflict, of this self-imposed deChristianization of the Russian State. There were certainly tragedies in the Synodal period, when Russia for over two hundred years remained without a Patriarch — but there were also triumphs of the spirit. We must not forget the sacrifices of those bishop-saints of the 18th and 19th centuries who remained faithful to Orthodox Tradition. We must not forget the efforts of Sts. Paisy (Velichkovsky) and Seraphim of Sarov, by whose prayers Russia was probably saved from the demonism of both Napoleon and Hitler. We cannot forget the saintly hermits, the Elders of Optina and the great flowering of monastic-led, Orthodox piety in the last century. They culminated in the worldwide missions of Orthodoxy in Asia and even the West. In Russia they led to the spiritual phenomenon of St John of Kronsadt and prepared hundreds of thousands for the ultimate sacrifice in the contemporary martyrdom of the Russian Church.

From this greatest of Russian Patriarchs we learn, however, the greatest of lessons: if our lives are not based on prayer, on the New Jerusalem, then our kingdom shall fall, for the Lord Jesus Christ is at the centre of all things. And if for a time, the duration of which is known to God alone, the New Jerusalem, that icon of Heaven built by the holy Patriarch, lies silent and deserted in the Moscow countryside, it in no wise signifies that our hearts, also called to be icons of Heaven, need lie silent and deserted. For as long as Christ lives within us, the New Jerusalem also lives within us.

October 1985

12. The Meeting of the Contemporary West with the Church

The often violent meeting between the West and Non-Western cultures always seems to lead to two results. The first is the disintegration of the indigenous culture, often following genocidal massacres by Western invaders. The second is a reaction to the first: the fanatical and unreasoning rejection of everything even remotely connected with the West. As examples of disintegration we may take the wholesale destruction of civilizations and cultures in South, Central and North America, or the 'absorption' of Aborigines in Australia and the Pacific. As examples of fanatical resistance we may take the attitudes of Muslims towards the West in many parts of the world, or that adopted by the Chinese and Japanese in the last century and the first half of this one, or the rejection of the West by Hinduism or that of African countries since decolonisation. Very often these same attitudes may exist side by side in the same country and there is a division between 'Westerners' on the one hand and 'Anti-Westerners' on the other hand. Countless examples of this can be given, such as the division of Korea and Vietnam, the latter largely being the result of the clash between Buddhism and colonial Roman Catholicism.

As regards the meeting or encounter between the West and the Orthodox Church, it first took place long before Western Europe even discovered the New World. The first encounter goes back to the ninth century. Like all subsequent encounters, Orthodox were faced with an aggressive ideology. We may think of the Orthodox Christians in Spain who preferred Muslim domination to that of the Carolingians. Or we may think back to the denunciation of the *filioque* by St Photius the Great in the ninth century. Or else we may look back to the Anglo-Saxons who preferred exile in the Imperial Roman Capital of Constantinople to the domination of Norman feudalism blessed by German Popes. There comes to mind St Alexander Nevsky who defended the Orthodox Church in Russia against the Teutonic hordes, preferring humble submission to the Mongols, who did not interfere in spiritual concerns. Then there is the case of St Gregory Palamas who set forth through his life the doctrinal opposition of the Church to the anti-Christian ideology of Renaissance humanism. We cannot forget the Greeks who preferred the Turk to the soul-destroying self-worship of the West. This persecution of the Church and Orthodoxy has continued, directly or indirectly, right up to the present time, be it by Roman Catholics in Croatia and Bosnia, the Middle East and south-west Russia, or by Protestants in Romania and Finland. What have the results of these encounters been?

At first sight it may seem that the results have been the same polarized ones as we find when the West comes into contact with other cultures. On the one hand there have been those who have wished to conform to Western culture, adapting Orthodoxy to it, on the other hand there have been those who have wished to violently reject Western culture and break away in nationalist politics. The former we may perhaps call 'New Believers', the latter 'Old Believers'. The former include left-leaning

intellectuals, philosophers and religious thinkers who have attempted to redesign Orthodoxy to fit in with their mental world, trying to combine the Orthodox Faith with Western humanism. Faced with the sociological problems of Orthodoxy, their philosophies have been rationalistic. Influenced by Western philosophy and bourgeois political systems, they have tried to create a compromise between the revelations of the Church and the humanistic ideology of the West. They have failed, because they have attempted the impossible.

The way of the Church is not to compromise, but rather to rise above oppositions and divisions, not to swim with the tide, but to take the hard way. This is the path that Christ took when he accepted the Cross that led to the Resurrection. The undiscerning intercourse with the Western world has led these thinkers and their followers into the dead end of humanism. On the other hand the 'Old Believers' are those who have violently rejected everything Western. For psychological reasons, out of insecurity and injured, national pride, they have also chosen sectarianism. They prefer an external 'purity', a fidelity to outward customs, not the fullness of Christian life. Ultimately these people find themselves in the same isolation as their adversaries, the 'New Believers'. The former wish to 'renovate' the Church, the latter to stick it into a time-warp. Both then are in a dead end. Both 'Old Believerism' and 'New Believerism', consciously or unconsciously, have been based more on politics or nationalism than on the acquiring of the Holy Spirit which is the one real purpose of the Orthodox Christian life.

However, beyond these superficial tensions and actual painful oppositions, there are the voices of those in the Orthodox world, who are actually Orthodox and also know the Western world. These voices show that the culture of the Church is fundamentally something other, standing beyond and transcending the 'New and Old Believer' worlds of purely human culture and sociological reaction. They show that the Church survives against all the odds, because She alone is the recipient of the fullness of spiritual truth, the ultimate and unique spiritual truth, Christ the Son of God become man, crucified and resurrected. And this survival against all the odds is indeed in the Gospel promise of Christ. Individuals and personalities are heard at times, but never triumph over the voice of the Church. The royal path, leading ever upwards, has been seen in this century too, in the voices of those who have strained to speak in the way of the Saints, of the Fathers, of the Gospel. This is not the superficial mumbling of scholars as they pore over dusty texts, but the continuing and uninterrupted path of the Fathers, those inspired by the Holy Spirit, Whom they have known in their lives.

Voices on a global scale have been heard, global because of their attachment to Christ, the Saviour of all, above and beyond human culture, and yet incarnate in a human culture transfigured by the Church of Christ. There have been the voices of St John of Kronstadt, the Elder Silouan of Athos, Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, Bishop John Maximovich, Fr. Justin Popovich, (all now canonized: note of 2014) Fr. Joseph the Hesychast, Fr. Amphilochios, Archimandrite Tavrion and countless others, some living, whose names we cannot mention, but above all the innumerable martyrs for the

Faith in all Russia and the Balkans, whose sacred acts the Church never ceases to praise and glorify. They are those who teach us to accept the reality of modern life and then transcend it, avoiding its overbearingly anti-Christian spirit with discernment.

Humanistic culture with its emphasis on materialism, power and debauchery is in fact the opposite of Orthodox Christian culture with its emphasis on non-possession, humility, obedience and purity. The theology of these saints is not an academic one, but a living one, living because it is lived, incarnated. Their strength is a unitive strength, of concern to all, transcending deviations and sectarian factions, rising above artificial syntheses, because the source and the goal of their strength are both divine and human. They stand atop a pyramid, towards which we all, who stand at the base of that pyramid, must aim. Our direction must not be horizontal, to left or to right, but rather vertical, towards that Paradise that is the vocation and destiny of all mankind.

The meeting of the West with the Church has a special sense because the roots of the West are in the Church. And although the lords and masters of the West long ago forsook the Church and attempted to spread their apostasy among the people, not all are opposed to Christ. Orthodoxy has a special calling – to call the West back to its senses, back to its roots, before it is too late. In this way the West may yet redeem itself and all those it has brought under its sway. For this we pray and live.

December 1985

13. Towards Marriage

Monasticism or Marriage

‘You are making a great mistake and are seriously deceiving yourself if you think that one thing is asked of a layman and another of a monk; the difference between them is that one enters into matrimony, the other does not, in all other things they are subject to the same responsibility... both the layman and the monk must attain to the same heights, and both of them, should they fall, will receive the same punishment.’

(St John Chrysostom, *To a Believing Father*, Homily 3, Chapter XIV.)

For an Orthodox Christian there can be no difference between monasticism and marriage, inasmuch as the aim of both of them is the same: to lead us to salvation through overcoming the passions. There comes a point in the life of any young man or girl when he or she decides which of these two paths to pursue. For some it may be clear or may have been clear even from very young. In the lives of the saints, we read how many chose the monastic path from childhood, others, likewise, know when still children that their vocation is marriage and not monasticism. Others find their path only later, or even may have difficulty in choosing, and need great prayer and the aid of a spiritual father. Whatever the case it would be strange for one not to choose sooner or later, and preferably sooner so as not to waste time. For we know of several cases where people have remained in a state of indecision until quite late in their lives, lacking the courage to take the cross of either monasticism or marriage on themselves, and this is always a misfortune. To remain outside either monasticism or marriage is, spiritually, not an easy way out, as some delude themselves into thinking.

Whom to Marry?

If we have decided on the path of marriage, the next issue is to find a partner, and this can be a most difficult problem. First of all, it must be clear to all the faithful that they cannot find a partner in the street, but only in the Church, because only here do we have a clear vision of ourselves and others. Apart from the essential quality of compatibility, for which a certain maturity and self-knowledge are needful, in choosing a partner we should always bear in mind the questions: Can I be saved with this person? Is it with this person that I shall be able to pass through bodily death and enter into eternity?

Aside from the practical need to visit other parishes in order to meet other people, prayer and the advice of a spiritual father or confessor is most necessary in the matter of finding a partner. Ultimately indeed, we do not ‘find’ a partner, but one is revealed to us by Divine Providence. We should ask the prayers of a spiritual father, patron saint and guardian angel. But, above we should seek the prayers of the Mother of God, since She helps especially in this matter.

The Two-Sided Illusion: Romanticism and Concubinage

The Devil wants to destroy marriage. That is why marriage is today one of the most attacked aspects of our way of life. But the Devil does not do this directly, he uses subtlety and cunning. Since the days of the troubadours, who first appeared in France at the end of the eleventh century, the Devil has been using an illusory form of love and been replacing Christian love with it. This pseudo-love, in fact a mask for sexual indulgence, is known as Romanticism (because of its origin in Romance-speaking countries). The knight and the lady of medieval times are but the ancestors of the violence and sex of modern times.

This Romantic view of the world stems from a false view of man, a false anthropology. It is a view of man as an emotional animal, devoid of any spiritual being. Romanticism has fed both man's emotional life and his physical, animal life. Today it is hardly surprising to see that, while 'romantic' novels sell like hot cakes, most young people live in concubinage or, worse still, debauchery and pornography. Romanticism and concubinage are the opposite sides of the same coin, a view of man without a soul, without God, an autonomous body, a living corpse. It is no coincidence that today marriage is disappearing, be it in Los Angeles or Geneva or Leningrad. Wherever people have lost their faith, there they divorce. The phenomena of a 50%+ divorce rate and the consequences of one-parent 'families', venereal disease, abortion, loneliness, delinquency and social decomposition cross all national frontiers.

Civil Marriage and Christian Marriage.

It must be clear to any responsible person, believer or not, that some civil contract of marriage needs to be drawn up between any couple. Such a contract gives security and protection with regard to property and money, especially to the woman who could become pregnant and yet have no legal or civil protection in case of desertion, illness or the death of her husband.

There are those who argue that a civil contract is unnecessary. In such a case we might well ask if the couple in question really love one another, since love seeks the protection and security of the other. In a similar way others argue that if they marry, even civilly, they will no longer be able to change partners, they will feel 'tied'. In such a case it is clear that the whole relationship is merely based on sexual convenience, a kind of mutual prostitution.

For believers, the importance of a civil marriage is outweighed by the importance of a Christian, Church, marriage. For the believer, man is not some juridical, physical, intellectual or emotional entity, but an immortal being, called to live with God the Holy Trinity. The spiritual part of man, if not looked after, soon becomes deregulated and comes to a halt, like a machine without oil. Being a realist, the believer knows his weaknesses and knows that his marriage may not work without the help of grace, the Holy Spirit received in the sacrament of marriage. He has fallen in love, or, in

Christian language, he has been granted to see divine beauty in another. He must know that in order to conserve this vision of the Beauty of God in God's Creation, he needs the Holy Spirit to keep his inner eyes open, to keep his heart alive. Christian love is, as witnessed to by the crowns in the Orthodox Christian wedding-ceremony, a martyrdom. It is a life of self-renunciation and self-sacrifice for the other and for the children. This is its Trinitarian sense, its noblest and highest meaning, divinising what is human.

Children: Saints of the Future

'Marriages are made in Heaven'. So runs the proverb – and it is true. But this does not mean that they are built in Heaven, that, somehow, they fall ready-made out of the sky. In fact they are built on Earth, but with heavenly help, and this, over a lifetime. What in romantic films is billed as 'The End' is in reality just the beginning. To build a marriage, we must pray and deny ourselves, accepting the cross of the marriage crown, thus becoming royal, noble, worthy of that crown, as king and queen of our marriage, kings and queens of our souls. Even proverbs recall the need for prayer: 'The family that prays together stays together'.

Sacrifice means work on ourselves, and, by Divine Providence, we find that this sacrifice is rendered possible by the birth of children. Our salvation is not limited to our partner, but it is to be found in our children. It is in them that we begin the real business of humility, which is the basis of sanctification. We are called to bring saints into the world and to bring them up in it. This is one of the reasons why the Church is reserved with regard to contraception. In many cases to practice contraception is to take away a couple's chance of sanctification or at least their opportunity to learn humility. An effort of prayer is necessary, from conception to pregnancy, birth, the naming of the child, when it takes on the name of a heavenly patron, and onwards.

To call our children potential 'saints of the future' may seem daring, even presumptuous, – and yet surely it is the ultimate purpose of Christian marriage: to be spiritually fruitful and not spiritually sterile, to bring up the saints of the future and thus hope for our own salvation. As the English poet John Masefield wrote in his work, 'The Everlasting Mercy':

And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in Kingdom come,
And she who gives a baby birth
Brings Saviour Christ again to Earth.

This surely is our high calling, it is up to us, however weakly, to answer it.

January 1987

14. Knowledge and Wisdom

‘Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?’

(Matt. 6, 27)

‘We preach Christ crucified ... unto them which are called ... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.’

(1 Cor. 1, 23–24)

‘For our rejoicing is this ... that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.’

(2 Cor. 1, 12)

‘Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.’

(Heb. 13, 9)

One of the greatest problems for us today is that we are constantly bombarded by knowledge. Brought to us by satellite, computer, the media, this knowledge is superficial, exterior, explaining what, but not how or why. We lack a key with which we could unlock its inner meaning; we are unable to interpret it. All these facts flooding over us, act as a shadow over our hearts, blocking out the light which otherwise our inner eyes might see. This is because this factual knowledge is presented in the absence of the God of Love and Truth; it excludes His Providence. It is a knowledge that filters into our minds, puffing them up, making us think that we are intelligent. As the old proverb says: ‘Knowledge is folly except grace guide it’. For our minds are not the source of truth, they are only receptacles for truth.

With his mind man cannot know God, he can know only himself. This is why the theology of rationalists is merely a reflection of their own psychology; they are talking about themselves. Today man, who is created, is seeking out knowledge of the Creation and not seeking out the Creator. This is why he does not understand the inner meaning of Creation – because he does not see the source of Creation. For example, God has given man a great knowledge of medicine. Man uses it and then claims that he has ‘saved’ a patient. In reality, of course, nobody has ever been saved by the use of medicine, but God has granted them a postponement of death, in other words, He has given them more time to repent.

Practically speaking, all this knowledge makes our minds proud and leads to a certain activism. Thus today we constantly hear about the organising of conferences, congresses, ‘workshops’, discussion groups, renewals, and this even in the Church.

Yet all this activism in fact conceals an inner emptiness. Truth is not discovered through discussions; it is revealed from on high. Discussions lead only to opinions and opinionatedness. Christ had no opinions – what He knew in His human nature was revealed to the purity of His heart. Activism does not see Providence, the free gift of the Holy Spirit, made by the Wisdom of God, by Love. Activism forgets that in the Church man proposes, but God disposes. Activism pursues abstract knowledge about ritual, architecture, even theology, not realising that this knowledge is of no use for our salvation. We are not saved by knowledge. Such knowledge does not make the Church ours, for the Church is Christ's. We may have read libraries of books, but this will not help us at the Dread Judgement-Seat.

Our knowledge of the world does not edify the human heart, because it is knowledge *of the world*. We must know how to discern between God's Truth and the passing factual truths of this world, which are without eternal significance in themselves. Sometimes it is better to be silent than to speak of what is happening. An old saw says: 'Wise men have mouths in their hearts, but fools their hearts in their mouths'. For example, we are constantly hearing of the war between Iran and Iraq. Yet we never hear about the legions of demons that have invaded those two countries and pushed them to the brink of Hell, how those demons had prepared for that war long before it happened and men prepared for it; nor do we hear about how those demons operate, nor do we hear about how we can defend ourselves against them through inner warfare. Had this been reported in the 1920s and 1930s, the German people would never have been possessed by legions of demons who inhabited first their leader, then thousands of others, leading to mass-possession.

No knowledge of this world can help us in itself. However, all knowledge can help us and edify us, if the ground is prepared, if, in other words, our hearts are ready for the seed of the Sower (Luke 8, 5–15). Even an atheist can read the Bible – but it will have no effect on him, if his heart does not previously thirst for the Truth. Worldly knowledge, or 'fleshly wisdom' as the Holy Apostle Paul calls it, does not render us Christian. What does? 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.' (Proverbs 1, 7)

Christian knowledge or, more simply, wisdom, is the harmony of reason and faith. It renders us Christian because it is based on the fear of God, that is, the fear of losing God's Love. This is also called humble-mindedness, being 'meek in spirit' or 'foolishness for the world'. The culture of the Church and Her way of life is based on this. But this wisdom will not come to us, if we do not cleanse ourselves to acquire the Holy Spirit. This wisdom is the foolishness of the Cross, the Wisdom of Him Who was humbled and then exalted.

It is our thought that today's world has too much knowledge, but too little wisdom. The modern world knows what is happening 12,000 miles away but it does not know what is happening 12 inches away in its heart. And herein lies its tragedy.

‘Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know Thy wisdom.’

(Psalm 50)

September 1987

15. A Parable

There was once a great city, in the centre of which stood a very tall building, whose top was lost in the sky. It was said that everyone who reached the top was very, very happy. You would have thought that everybody would have wanted to get to the top. But such was not the case.

There were some who lived in parts of that city who had never even seen the tall building. Still others had seen it, but did not know what was inside. Yet others, though they had heard about how pleasant it was at the top, either did not believe it or else simply refused to go and look, saying that they preferred to stay where they had always been.

Nevertheless there were great crowds milling about the building. Many tried to enter it, yet somehow never managed to, even though the doors were wide open. They said the doors were too narrow. Some of them would try to enter through a window or look for other doors. They never succeeded. Some would peer in through the doors out of curiosity, others would actually go in, but quickly come out again, saying that they did not like the look of the ground floor.

Inside, on that ground floor, there were throngs of people scurrying about, very busily. Some of them were looking for the lifts that had been installed to replace an ancient staircase, the remains of which could be seen in the panelling of the lifts. Many people found the lifts and got in; however the lifts were out of order and did not go very far. Some realized this and got out of the lifts in disgust. Certain people got out and began looking to see if there was not somewhere another ancient staircase.

To their surprise, there, not far away for those who bothered to look, there was indeed another staircase, and there were many people who were already going up. Unfortunately there were those who, having found the staircase, did not go up it. Some of them simply stood there, admiring the carpet; others stood looking at the woodwork, comparing it to that in the lifts. Still others just stood there at the bottom writing books about what it was like at the top – though they had never been there. What imagination!

Of those who started going up the staircase, a certain number kept looking around and would then come back down. Of these some would complain that it was too hard to go up. Others complained about other people who were going up the stairs, many of whom, apparently, did not speak English. And yet there were others who went up their stairs and did not come back down, and there were many who went right up to the top. I know, because a cloud of witnesses has told me so. And although I am still at the bottom of these stairs, I am determined to start going up and not look back. And how about you, will you come with me?

September 1987

16. The Reawakening of England

‘Formerly, when men lived in the beauty and bounty of Earth, the reality of Heaven was very near; every brook and grove and hill was holy, and men out of their beauty and bounty built shrines so lovely that the spirits which inhabit Heaven came down and dwelt in them and were companions to men and women, and men listened to divine speech’.

(John Masefield, Poet Laureate, in his speech in Hereford, 23 October 1930)

It was in the year 597 that with silver cross and icon of Christ Our Saviour the Roman monk Augustine and forty other missionaries first preached the Gospel to the English nation. They were to set hearts aflame, to provide the power to transfigure pagans into followers of Christ. St Gregory the Great, Pope of Old Rome, had sent them to convert Angles into Angels, to set the image of Christ in their hearts, to build a church dedicated to the icon of Our Saviour in Canterbury, the future spiritual capital of England. Had we remained faithful to the teachings of St Austin, as our forebears affectionately called him, what would our land be like today? Had we all heeded the Apostle of the English, what vision would we have of England now? How would we love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind?

Firstly, with all our hearts we would love God through the saints. They would be familiar to us, literally familiar, part of a family to which we would belong. And not only the universal saints, such as Sts. Peter and Paul, the patrons of London, but also the local saints. The long litany of their names would be known to us by heart, we would feast them on high days and holy days; there would be national festivals in their honour. Instead of absurd ‘Bank Holidays’ (as if banks could be holy, or worthy of feasting), there would be national holy days on the Feasts of the Apostles of England, on 12 March (Feast of St Gregory the Great) and on 26 May (Feast of St Augustine of Canterbury) and no doubt on other saints’ days. We would name our children after these saints and children would know their lives when still small.

How could we forget Sts. Mellitus and Justus, Laurence and Paulinus, the patron of York and all the North? Long ago we would have asked the French authorities to give back the relics of St Peter of Canterbury. St Oswald of Heavenfield would be venerated amongst us; St Benedict Biscop, that lover of icons and holy books, would be a patron of Church Art; the great Theodore, the first Greek Archbishop of Canterbury (may God send us a second), and his faithful companion Adrian, would have their icons hung in our schools and seats of learning. The Wonderworker of Britain, St Cuthbert, would be known to all, Sts. Wilfrid and Bede and Aldhelm would intercede for us at the Throne of the Most High. We would read the life of the great fen Father, Guthlac, the English Antony, as we read the lives of the ascetics of Egypt and Syria and Russia. Women would find their place in living according to the examples of Audrey and Hilda, Mildred and Edith and that host of holy women who

were drawn to the great Abbesses. St Erkenwald, 'the Light of London', would be commemorated in the Capital, St John of Beverley would stir Yorkshiremen.

The altruism of young people would be stirred by those greatest of missionaries and Englishmen, Boniface of Crediton, Apostle of the Germans, and Clement who brought the light of Christ to the Frisians and much of Holland, who went out like elder brothers and sacrificed themselves for the love of the Gospel. Edmund the Passion-Bearer would be the patron of East Anglia, the humble Swithin would heal the sick in our hospitals. The Feast of King Edward the Martyr would once more be a day of national penitence as before, and the town of Shaftesbury would again be called 'Edwardstowe'. At our end we would utter the same words as St Oswald of Worcester: 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit'.

Or perhaps we would think of St Alfwold of Sherborne who so loved the Saints of England that at his end, before an icon of St Swithin, he could only repeat the words of his favourite hymn from the service to St Cuthbert. And what can we say of St Ethelwold, 'the Father of Monks', or of St Dunstan whose Byzantine coronation rite is still essentially that used by our monarchs today. And we would ask the prayers of St Neot, who together with St Cuthbert, appeared in a vision to King Alfred the Great and blessed him to victory against the pagan Danes. And of the martyred Archpastor of England, Alphege, of whom it is written:

Captive then was he who had been the head of the English nation and of Christendom. Misery was to be seen where before had been bliss, in that unhappy city whence first came to us the Christian Faith and joy in the sight of God and man.

And we would keep the customs of old – the calendar of our forebears. At midnight at Christmas would some not take their children to farms to see the cattle kneeling in their sheds and stalls in honour of the new-born King? Is that not what our forefathers and foremothers believed? And at Holy Easter would there not be some to go at sunrise to see the sun dance to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection? Are there still any who do that today? Have any remained faithful to the Apostles of the English? Are there any among the English who yet wish to become like the Angels?

Secondly, with all our souls we would love God through places. We would know a spiritual geography of England, a geography where the English Earth would meet an English Heaven and an English Heaven meet the English Earth. On Thanet, where that wonderful Apostle of Christ, Augustine came ashore, there would today be a great monastery, a centre of pilgrimage and there we would kiss the earth as holy, for Christ trod there through his servants. And we would honour Canterbury as our spiritual capital, the Mother-City and cradle of the English Faith, the spiritual birthplace of England and its 22 sainted Archbishops. London would remember the Holy Apostles, Paul, in the East, and Peter, in the West. Westminster would once again be the monastery in the West. The Holy Mountain of the English Church, the Athos of England, would not be a mountain, but an island, Holy Island, Lindisfarne.

There would be a pilgrimage to Glastonbury, the English Jerusalem with its traditions, unproven, perhaps untrue in fact, but true in spirit. And another pilgrimage to Walsingham, the English Nazareth. There would be a great monastery in the fens at Crowland, to honour St Guthlac, to whom the holy Apostle Bartholomew gave a scourge against the Devil. There we would remember all the martyrs, Theodore, Sabinus, Ulric and the others, slaughtered like lambs by the heathen. We would go on pilgrimages, 'from every shire's end of England' to Winchester and Worcester, Wimborne and Winchcombe, Jarrow and York, Whitby and Hexham, Ely and Evesham, Lichfield and Wilton, Dorchester and Hereford, the Buries of St Alban and St Edmund, the great cities and the little hamlets where visions and saints have been seen. And all along the roads there would be crosses and wayside shrines, where lamps would shine in the darkness to show the way. And thus there would be isles and havens of peace in this land.

Thirdly we would love God with all our minds. We would not think of some Economic Community, but of a Spiritual Commonwealth. Our industry would build churches. All the tools of the modern world would be turned Godwards. Our culture would be dominated by the quest for the Spirit. In Art we would paint icons and great frescoes of the spiritual history of England. Our literature would be about the lives of the virtuous. Our cinema would show ascetic feats, our schools would train young people either for married life or else for monasticism. In a word, our minds would be occupied with the one thing needful, the salvation of our souls, the love of God.

And so have we English become Angels as the Great Gregory wished? What have we done with that icon of Our Saviour that St Augustine brought to these shores in the year of Our Lord 597? Alas, we have buried it in the tombs that our hearts have become. Let us bring the light of repentance to our hearts that the icon may be found again, and honoured and revered and wept for. And then all we who are spiritually dead in the tomb shall be awakened anew to the Way and the Life and the Truth, Our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

May 1988

17. Who is Rebuilding Russia?

‘The canonization of the Imperial Martyrs will be for Russia the lifting from her of the sin of regicide; this will finally deliver her from the evil spell.’

Fr. Gleb Yakunin writing in *‘Russian Thought’*, 6 December 1979

Nearly every day now we hear the words *‘glasnost’* (transparency) and *‘perestroika’*, which literally means ‘rebuilding’. The media tell us that it is Mr. Gorbachev who is rebuilding Russia. And yet how can he, a convinced Communist, rebuild Russia? For it was the Communists who have attempted to annihilate Russia, to wipe it and its name from the face of the Earth. Why should they undo their work by attempting to ‘rebuild’ what they have destroyed? Who then is behind Mr. Gorbachev, behind the *‘perestroika’* of which he is only the agent, the puppet manipulated by the tide of history? Who is changing the spirit of the times? What are the spiritual sources and roots of these outward changes? Who, in other words, is rebuilding Russia?

For those who believe in the saints, the answer to this question lies in an event, much mocked by the media at the time, that occurred in 1981. It was then that the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in the emigration, based in New York, took the step of canonising all the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, an uncountable cloud of witnesses of the Orthodox Christian Faith. The Synod had delayed this act, which had been proposed many years before, both in the Russian Church¹ and outside it.² It had been delayed because the Russian emigration had not been ready for it.

There were, for example, monarchists who wished to politicise a canonization and turn it from a canonization of martyrs into some sort of approval for the political system which they admired. Then there were those who wished to turn the Synod of Russian bishops into some kind of sect, and, since failing, have left it. On the other hand there were those liberal humanists opposed to canonization on political grounds – their only attachment to the Church being cultural. In such circumstances how could canonization take place? For canonization does not mean ‘making’ saints, it means our recognition and acceptance of those who have already been glorified by God in the Holy Spirit. Canonization cannot therefore take place until we are ready to recognize and receive the saints as saints and to wish to ask for their prayers and emulate them.

And so it was that the Orthodox world waited until 1981. And by that time voices from the more churchly elements in the emigration, from other local Orthodox Churches and, above all, from churchly elements in Russia had spoken out so forcefully and so clearly that the conscience of the Church expressed itself in the act of canonization. This, in the face of a disbelieving and mocking world, took courage and faith.

In 1917 the American journalist Reid wrote about the Revolution as 'ten days that shook the world'. Why was the world shaken? Because the Body of Christ in the world was to be crucified anew and the earthquake of Golgotha was to be repeated, announcing the bloodiest and most brutal persecution of the Church of Christ that the world has ever seen. And yet in the last seven years, since the canonization of the New Martyrs and Confessors, we have witnessed extraordinary events: The deaths of three Soviet leaders; The reopening of three major monasteries and scores of parishes; The official admission last April by the present Soviet leader of 'serious errors' made with regard to the Church; And at the end of last March the admission of the Chairman for the Council for Religious Affairs in the Soviet Union, K. Kharchev, that the Communist Party is 'confronted with an extraordinary phenomenon; despite all our efforts not only has the Church survived, but it is starting to revive'.³

Is the Lord not speaking through the courage and the faith of the New Martyrs and Confessors and those who canonized them? Has he not heard the voices of these Saints crying out to Him as St John the Divine mystically saw in the Book of Revelation? Is it not the fruits of their prayers that now work to revive the Russian Church, to raise the body that has been down to the Soviet hell, that lies crucified, tortured, exhausted? Are not the prophecies of the holy men of Russia coming true? St John of Kronstadt spoke of 'deliverance from the East'. The Elder Alexis of the Zosima hermitage, the Elders Anatolius the Younger and Nectarius of Optina, the Elder Barnabas of the Gethsemane Skete, Schemahieromonk Aristocleus and St Seraphim of Sarov himself all prophesied a flowering before the end.⁴

Our hope cannot come from the Western countries, because the once full-hearted Faith of the West has been whittled away by centuries of man-worship. Our hope is from Russia, because our hope is in Christ and He is confessed there, not only in words, but also in deeds. Our hope is from Russia, but not from the Russia of Communist bureaucrats and their servants, nor from the Russia of intellectuals who wish to set up a Western-style democracy there, just as the tragically mistaken idealists before 1917 who thus paved the way to the Bolshevik terror. No, our hope is from the living and suffering faithful on Earth and in Heaven, the Martyrs and Confessors of Christ, the One Lord and Saviour.

Is then the seventy-year Babylonian captivity of the Russian Church now coming to an end? As yet we cannot know for sure. We shall be certain only when all those many Martyrs and Confessors are venerated without exception, openly, officially and universally in the Russian land, when the work begun in New York is brought to its fullness in Moscow; this will be the 'True Pascha' of which St Seraphim prophetically spoke.

Who is rebuilding Russia? It is the Russian New Martyrs and Confessors who are rebuilding Russia by their prayers, for their prayers have at last been asked for and accepted on Earth. The glorification and canonization of the New Martyrs and

Confessors is a gift of God made through the Church for the spiritual enrichment of the whole Orthodox Church, of all the Orthodox Christian peoples.

The true and only real 'perestroika' in Russia and everywhere is not firstly the rebuilding of an economic or political system, but the rebuilding of souls. And when souls are rebuilt, they and all things shall truly become transparent.

Holy New Martyrs and Confessors, pray to God for us!

June 1988

1. One thinks in particular of Archbishop John (Maximovich) at the All-Diaspora Council in Yugoslavia in 1938, though almost every ROCOR bishop held this view.
2. Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich) of the Serbian Church or Bishops Methodius (Kulman) and Alexander (Tian-Shansky) of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.
3. Printed in the Russian newspaper Russian Thought (Russkaya Mysl'), May 1988.
4. All these prophecies were brought together in a lecture entitled '*The Future of Russia and the End of the World*' by the Ever-Memorable Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) in 1981. (See '*The Orthodox Word*', No. 100)

18. 1989

A historic year for Europe must be a historic year for the whole world. For Europe is, as it has been for centuries, at the centre of the world. Its influence has spread westwards to North America, eastwards to the Communist bloc, the Second World, and southwards to Africa, Asia and South America, the Third World. And the year of grace 1989 is indeed a historic year.

It is 75 years since the outbreak of what we call the Kaiser's War, the Great War, which started as a European War but then became a World War. In 1914 in Sarajevo, Archduke Franz-Ferdinand was assassinated in a masonic plot. Heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire whose powerful Roman Catholic Church was persecuting the Orthodox in what we now call Yugoslavia, his assassination sparked off war between the powder keg of European Empires by a complex chain of alliances. This war would lead to the fall of all those Empires. It would lead in 1917 to the Russian Revolution, the enslavement of the Orthodox Church authorities in Russia to the Communist State. And with the fall of the Russia of the Tsars, protectors of the Orthodox Church everywhere, it would lead to the enslavement of the Church of Constantinople and the rest of the Greek Orthodox world to the new Greek State and the forces of this world.

It is 50 years since 1939, the outbreak of Hitler's War, the Second World War. National Socialists (Nazis), greedy for Jewish money and Slavic territory, split Poland with State Socialists (Communists) under Stalin. There began a series of terrible genocides, leaving some 54 million dead worldwide.

It is 25 years since 1964, that period which saw the acceleration of a technological revolution, with all its dangers, the collapse of Western religious institutions and a revolution of morals that has all but destroyed the family and brought disease, drugs and terrorism in its wake. At the same time in Russia the tyrant Khrushchev launched a vicious and brutal persecution designed to completely eliminate the Church within a few years. It comes as no surprise that the Russian writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, called this period the Third World War, which, according to him, the West lost.

And as regards 1989 itself, we see that Europe is still at the forefront. Only a few days ago there was a historic meeting at Windsor Castle. The ex-head of the KGB, M. Gorbachev, sat down to lunch with the great-niece of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II, H. M. Queen Elizabeth II. We do not know of what they spoke, but the favourite theme of the Soviet leader is at present 'our common European home'. Whether this is merely a political ploy to divide Western Europe from the United States, or a sincere ideal, it is not for us to say. But can we in fact, who live in this 'common European home', in 1989 be optimistic about the future, or are we in reality on the brink of a 'Fourth World War', a new and final one?

If we look at Europe today, it seems difficult to be optimistic. In Western European circles, the only movement is towards a vulgar commercial union. It appears to mark the end of the few remaining traditions and values of Western Christianity, whose two main branches have long since tended towards secularisation. Since the eleventh century Roman Catholicism has put the Pope at the head of the Church. Since the 16th century the Church of England, like other Protestant groups, has confessed its secular ruler as its head. In Western Europe today the pervading philosophy is not Christ, but 'market forces', in other words, the freedom to make money at all costs

'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

(Matt. 6, 21)

'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.'

(Matt. 6, 24)

Eastern Europe, on the other hand, has lived through another diabolical illusion of totalitarianism, the idea that through State intervention, a paradise can be built on Earth. This paradise, in reality a hell on Earth, has cost the Russian people over 70 million lives so far.

Meanwhile in the South, the Third World, people die wretched and starving. Apocalyptic pictures of corrupt and wicked governments, debt-ridden in fratricidal wars, abound. The Book of Revelation, which has been unfolding itself throughout our century, speaks to the rich:

'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'

(Rev. 3, 17)

'And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny: and see thou hurt not the oil and wine.'

(Rev. 6, 6)

Who is there to heed the warning?

'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.' (Rev. 18, 2)

In our twentieth century we have received three great lessons, three opportunities which should have brought us to repentance. Is this fourth lesson, the year 1989, to be lost too? Are we now going on to nuclear and ecological catastrophe? We have already received the warning of Chernobyl, which in Ukrainian means 'Wormwood'.

‘And the name of the star is called wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.’

(Rev. 8, 11)

But we have also heard the voices of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia:

‘What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation ... Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.’

(Rev. 7, 13–17)

Has perhaps the whole of this century not been a kind of Lent, which is to end, yet, in a great Paschal celebration, the return of man to God through repentance?

‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.’

(Rev. 3. 19)

The question in fact is if this fourth generation of the twentieth century is going to see the cleansing of our hearts, a great unsullying of the dirt we have heaped on ourselves. Ultimately, is this last generation of the second millennium to be the last generation in history – or not?

March 1989

19. A Parable

At one time everyone walked. But one day a horse was sent. So people hitched up several carts, got into them and found the going much easier. A lot of other people followed behind on foot, finding that the horse and carts were going too fast for them. As time passed some of the carts got unhitched, though they kept moving for some time under their own momentum. Eventually there were only two carts left. And then someone had the idea of putting the second of these two carts in front of the horse. (Apparently it was a question of prestige). But what happened was that the horse and the first cart just went on their way, pushing aside the second cart that had been placed in front of them, leaving it to roll away down a side road. Some people, not noticing this, followed behind the second cart.

Many years passed. Then things happened.

First, some people who had been following the horse and cart noticed at some distance from them the second cart in the side road. It was very attractively decked out with all sorts of gadgets which they had never seen before. So off they went.

Second, some of the people in and behind the cart in the side road noticed that their cart was slowing down and actually seemed to be coming to a halt. And then they realized that they were in a side road. So they went across taking only their most precious possessions to the horse and cart and, managing miraculously to catch up, got in. They were welcomed by all in the cart, but not at all understood by some of the people who were following behind it.

Third, some people inside and following the cart in the side road started looking at the horse and other cart. Many of them said that this other cart looked very pretty. The strange thing was that they did not seem to pay any attention either to the people in the cart itself and still less to the horse. Some of them thought this first cart so attractive that they actually considered getting into it. But the horse and cart were far away and moving further all the while. And then these people who stood looking at it had an awful lot of possessions which they did not want to part with, all kinds of lumber and bric à brac. And then too it must be said that some of the people following behind the horse and cart were rather ropey characters. Sad to say, some of them had been involved in murky dealings with other ropey characters who had been following behind the cart in the side road.

It really is a most curious thing how easy it would have been simply to ride in the cart behind the horse. It is strange how so many people want to make life difficult for themselves.

May 1989

20. Fanaticism or Martyrdom?

Recent events both in Britain and abroad have brought the words ‘fanaticism’ and ‘intolerance’ into the headlines once more. First there was a blasphemous film, to which extremists in Paris reacted by burning down a cinema. Then there was the Rushdie affair, Khomeini’s death-threat and the assassination of a moderate imam in Brussels. The critics of religion have not missed these opportunities to attack religious belief in general.

Indeed it must be admitted that religions of the law do have elements of intolerance in them. It is true of Islam, whose history is coloured by militarism (the jihad or holy war) and brutal physical punishments for transgressions of its laws. There is a strong resemblance between this and Judaism, with its ‘eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth’ ideology, as put into practice, for example, by the revenge attacks of the Israeli State against Palestinian nationalists. And it is also true of certain Christians, who fall back from the grace of the New Testament into the law of the Old Testament. It was true of the Crusades and of the Inquisition, true of the Spanish in South America, and the Catholic Ustashi in Yugoslavia, who only 45 years ago massacred some 800,000 Serbs in the name of their god. It is also true of Puritan groups with their Old Testament literalism, witch-hunts and phobia of ‘impurity’. (‘Cleanliness is next to godliness’). It is true of the Catholic–Protestant conflict in Ulster and of the Catholic–Muslim one in the Lebanon. It is also true of many sects, ranging from Scientology to the truly demonic Jim Jones and the 913 victims of collective suicide in Guyana in 1978. But does all this mean that religion is inherently fanatical and intolerant? What are the sources of fanaticism?

Fanaticism can appear on two levels, individual and collective. On an individual level, fanaticism is bold in sick minds and psychologies. It stems from personal pride, lust for power over others. It says ‘I am right’, and therefore cuts itself off from all others in sectarian self-righteousness. It uses its supposed exclusive truth as an axe to grind, as a stick with which to beat others. It loves laws, behind which it can conceal its own insecurities. In saying that he alone is right, the fanatic is automatically wrong. The Saints never said that they were right. The signs of absence of fanaticism are peace, humility and love – not saying that one is right. Fanaticism and intolerance stem in fact from a weak faith, insecurity, and often affect neophytes, recent converts. True religion does not admit of fanaticism.

On a collective level fanaticism is the lust for power over others. It takes the form of virulent nationalism, jingoism – this is political, State-guided intolerance. Fanaticism stems from hatred of others; true religion from love of others. Historically, fanaticism is associated with periods of decline and decadence in religious life, when outbursts of pride and loss of faith affect individuals and groups. Individual and collective fanaticism are the opposite of the Christian virtue of love for one’s neighbour, expressed either individually or collectively in the form of patriotism, home-love, the

love of one's country. Only the patriot can love other countries; the nationalist hates them.

If we look at the history of the New Testament Church, we see that She treads the royal path, finds the golden mean, which is in humility. And humility is neither in fanaticism nor in humiliation. The Church in Her Saints neither feels hatred for those who hate Her, nor does She give way weakly to humiliating pressures from outside in an Erastian manner. Rather She stands up for the Truth; She speaks fearlessly in defence of the Truth. In Church history we find a multitude of examples: St Athanasius the Great, St Gregory the Theologian, St John Chrysostom, St Maximus the Confessor, St John Damascene, St Gregory Palamas, St Mark of Ephesus, St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, St Nectarius of Egina, St Vladimir the Metropolitan (of Kiev), the many-millioned host of New Martyrs of Russia, Archbishop John (Maximovich), Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich) and Father Justin (Popovich), whom Orthodox already venerate as saints (all are now canonized; note of 2014). In these examples, we clearly see that when official representatives of the Church fall silent out of human weakness in one land, the Lord raises up others in other lands to speak the Truth undaunted. The Church speaks not words of hatred, of censorious accusation, of aggressive condemnation, of tasteless polemics, but bold words of spiritual truth and purity, to burn out the pollution of the heart, to fire the soul to repentance.

The fruits of fanaticism are, in the short-term, success, but, in the long term, failure. The attitude of a firm stand taken by the Saints in defence of the Truth brings 'failure', slander, often martyrdom, in the short term, but in the long term, success. There is no greater example of the Church attitude to the defence of Truth than that of the martyrs. The Church is founded on their blood, from Abel to Christ, from the martyrs of the first three centuries who brought the Light of Christ to all the ends of the Earth, from the Balkan New Martyrs of the Muslim Yoke, to that of the Russian New Martyrs and Confessors, whose light is yet to shine forth in all its radiance to all the ends of the Earth.

And even in our own days, it seems that we may live to see a miracle, the day when the red stars on the Kremlin towers will come crashing down to the ground. Crosses will go up again as living symbols of the reality of the victory of those who were neither humiliated nor fanatical. They are those who stand firm for the Faith, threatening and hating none, but loving all, because their hearts are aflame with the love of Christ; they are those who speak bold words with a clean soul. And this miracle, if God wills it, will be worked when the Communists say, as Julian the Apostate 1600 years before them, 'Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!' And this miracle will be worked by the prayers of the martyrs, of those who spoke with peace in their minds and souls, with humility and love – in fearless defence of the Truth.

May 1989

21. A Pilgrimage to Austria

‘Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.’

(Matt. 24, 9)

Like many born in the fifties, when I was small I lived off the still vivid war-stories and reminiscences of my father and uncles. At that time, before the upheavals of the sixties, the war affected not only those who had fought in it but also their children. Thus I heard about my father’s first trip outside Essex and Suffolk – to Cairo via the Cape, taking Italian POWs to camps in India, then El Alamein,¹ Libya, Algeria, Italy, Cassino and then the last days of the war in Austria.

3 June 1989. The Orient Express to Bucharest. Ulm. Augsburg. Bavaria. Baroque churches with their onion-domes. Rich farmhouses with carved, geranium-bedecked balconies. As we cross into Austria, the mountains rise up around the green valleys. Mist. Snow is still lying on the peaks.

6 May 1945. The 11th Infantry Division of the British 8th Army, which has battled its way from the Egyptian desert, crosses the Austrian frontier from Italy. One of the first sights of these soldiers, my father amongst them, is thousands upon thousands of Cossacks. It is a sight from another world and another age. Like Israel of old, fleeing Pharaoh and the Egyptian land, it is a whole people, women, children, priests, icons and cooking-pots. It is startling and magnificent. Dressed in Cossack hats and wearing long, leather boots, draped in bandoliers they proceed, led mostly by White Russian generals from Paris. Proud and independent, a whole nation is on the move, with thousands of horses and plank carts. They are, in their view, fleeing the servants of Antichrist, the Bolshevik terror, and they are ready to die in giving fight as Orthodox patriots.

But for ignorant British politicians in London they are enemies and traitors who must be given back to their ally, Stalin, the greatest mass-murderer in history.² And so the soldiers are ordered to repatriate this people, if necessary, by force. At least 25,000 were repatriated in that part of Austria alone, most tragically of all at Lienz, where the violence of some British soldiers was brutal. And what did Stalin’s NKVD men do with them? Once disarmed by British soldiers and handed over, the generals were atrociously tortured and hanged, the officers machine-gunned and most of the others starved or froze to death in Siberia. Worst of all was the unspeakable fate of the women and children. Many preferred suicide to repatriation. Mothers first killed their children, then themselves. Young girls and women thus saved themselves from gang-rape and mutilation.³ And as regards those who resisted repatriation, as at Lienz, British soldiers were ordered to threaten them with flame-throwers, a number died, others were beaten with rifle-butts. This is the truth about what British politicians

ordered and what British soldiers were ordered to carry out in 1945. This is a national sin, whose bloodstains have not yet been washed from souls. Apart from some 75,000 Cossacks handed back in Austria, the British and American governments gave back up to one million Russians forcibly: Stalin had most of them slaughtered in his blood-soaked death-camps.

My father, a staff sergeant, was not at Lienz, thank God. But he saw the Cossacks, saw them handing in their arms, little knowing that his Government was about to betray these Christian warriors to the Devil's servant. He saw their beautiful horses being slaughtered for meat for the British Army canteens. In my childhood, shocked in my soul and attracted to Christ's soldiers, I naively asked the question: 'But why did the British obey?' I received the answer: 'Because in wartime, disobedience is treason. And for that you were shot on the spot'.⁴

And now 44 years later I am here, a clergyman of the Orthodox Church. I have come back, remembering my father's stories of nearly 30 years before. I have come back, not as a veteran, but as a pilgrim, to the place of martyrdom of a nation. I have come back to pay homage and to pray for the repose of their souls. I have come in penitence, for these are the souls of those who were betrayed by the hypocrisy, stupidity and downright inhumanity of the political leaders and bureaucrats of my country at the time. 'Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do'.

I echo the words that I have proclaimed at the memorial service on Sunday 4 June this year:

To all those martyred and cruelly murdered in
Lienz and all over the Austrian land,
Eternal Memory!

June 1989

1 In Arabic 'El Alamein' means the town of St Menas (Feast 11 November). It is here that the tomb of the saint is to be found. In 1942, on the eve of the Battle, the saint appeared in the German camp; the soldiers of the Afrika Corps were so panic-stricken that the British were able to rout them. In gratitude for the victory a monastery was established on the site.

2 Details can be found in the works on the subject written by Count Tolstoy and Lord Bethell, *'The Great Betrayal'*, *'The Ministers and the Massacre'*, *'The Last Secret'* and *'Victims of Yalta'*. Perhaps the only defence that can be made of Britain's role is that the Yalta Agreement was made by Roosevelt and Stalin over Churchill's head. Churchill, unlike Roosevelt, knew who Stalin was and had wanted to invade Europe not via Normandy but through Greece. This would have prevented Stalin from tyrannising Eastern Europe after 1945.

3 The Holy Canons permit suicide in cases where women and girls can thus avoid rape.

4 Even so, some British soldiers did disobey orders, helping some to escape forcible repatriation. Such was the measure of their revolt at the injustice of what they saw. All glory and honour to them.

22. The Present Situation of the Orthodox Church

In 1917 the Russian Orthodox Empire fell. With it fell the last successor to the Roman Emperors, represented by the aptly named Romanov dynasty. 'What withholdeth' (2 Thess. 3–6) was removed from power and Satanic forces were unleashed in the world. The whole Orthodox Church lost the benevolent influence on its affairs of the Orthodox Empire. Ever since the Orthodox Church has been laid open to the attacks of evil.

Today it would seem to the outside observer that the Orthodox Church is delineated into two camps, both of them fashioned and shaped by the forces of this world, and this as a direct result of the Revolution of 1917.

On the one hand there are the local Orthodox Churches of the Creek tradition, situated in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since the loss of Russian protection, they have all been in great difficulty. The Patriarch of Antioch is forced for political reasons to reside in Damascus. Squeezed between Uniat and Muslim, much of his territory is destroyed by the war in the Lebanon between these two factions. The Patriarch of Alexandria lives mainly in Athens, on which he depends both financially and politically. The Church of Cyprus has lost much of its territory and property to the Turkish invaders. The Church of Greece, uncanonically torn away from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1833 by the British government of the time, is weakened and undermined: First by calendar schism, following the imposition of the civil calendar on it by the Greek government in 1925, and then by a series of decadent leaders who have continually interfered in Church affairs.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople itself, the 'leader' of this world, is squeezed between Turkish Islam and the Vatican. In the 1920's it lost much of its territory and then most of its people through Turkish invasion. Then its troubles deepened with the 'election' of a freemason, Metropolitan Meletios Metaksakis, to its throne.¹ It was he who in 1920 got the Orthodox world involved in ecumenism. It was he who introduced the civil calendar into the Greek Churches, thus creating bitter and as yet unhealed schisms in the few Local Churches which were forced to adopt it. When the Americans installed Patriarch Athenagoras in Constantinople (a Greek-American freemason of the 33rd degree), his unlawfully deposed predecessor, Patriarch Maximos was heard to say: 'The City is lost'. Today the Patriarchate of Constantinople has set its sights first on becoming a kind of 'Eastern Papacy' and then unity with the Vatican.

On the other hand there are the local Orthodox Churches of the Slav tradition, less ancient but far more populous. These churches include the small ones of Japan and North America, unrecognised by the Churches of the Greek tradition. They also include the Romanian and Bulgarian Churches, as well as the Polish and Czechoslovak Churches. The Romanian and Bulgarian Churches and parishes in

Finland have also been forced into accepting the civil calendar, which has once again caused schism and discord. Many Churches are enslaved by atheistic Communism. So tragic is their situation that they are unable even to recognize their own martyrs, often officially denying even the existence of millions who died for the Faith in recent years. At the recent Russian Church Council at the Trinity St Sergius Monastery near Moscow, one of their bishops, Metropolitan Antony Bloom, who is not a Soviet citizen, spoke out thus: *'We are the only ones who continue to pass over in silence the heroic faithfulness and abnegation of thousands of believers, often unknown, who saved the Church from total destruction. We alone remain silent ... We could at least ... thank God for these witnesses of the Faith who ... remained faithful to Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour, and who thus entered into the brightness and the holiness of the Russian Church.'* How shameful is this lack of freedom and refusal to confess the holiness of one's own saints! What sort of Churches are these?

There are those who say, however, that now that Communism is dying, these Churches will soon be free. Others affirm that the changes in the Eastern bloc are merely superficial, a question of public relations in order to disarm the West and squeeze money from its governments. This is not the place to speak of politics but it must be admitted that, whatever the changes, the damage inflicted on the Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe means that normal Church life will be impossible there for very many years to come.

We said at the beginning of this article that 'to the outside observer' there appear to be two camps in the Orthodox Church today. In fact this is a gross simplification. The free voice of the Orthodox Church can be heard in a number of places today.

First of all, there is the Holy Mountain of Athos. The voices of many holy fathers have spoken out against the forces that threaten the integrity of Orthodoxy. Secondly, there is the Serbian Church whose bishops stand solidly Orthodox and which has remained largely free of direct political interference. It has spoken out through the voices of two saintly and learned men, Bishop Nicholas Velimirovich and Fr. Justin Popovich. Thirdly, there is the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Only weeks ago, on 22 May this year its Holy Synod met and suspended participation in all activities compromising the integrity of the Orthodox Faith. In the words of Patriarch Diodor: 'We must defend the purity of Orthodoxy and the flock which has been entrusted to us'.

Fourthly, there is the Russian Orthodox Church of the emigration, the most independent and free Orthodox Church in the world today. Part of the Russian Orthodox Church, it represents the free voice of that Church, and commands immense sympathy and authority inside Russia, where the Church authorities are totally paralysed by the State. This Church canonized the New Martyrs of Russia at the demand of Russians inside Russia, who despaired at the paralysis of the State-appointed bishops inside Russia. It also commands great respect among those in Romania, Bulgaria and Greece who wish to remain faithful to Orthodox Tradition. It

continues the millennial tradition of the Church outside Russia, where it already existed long before the Revolution in its churches built for missionary and pastoral needs before 1917 all over the world.

What can we say of the future? If, finally, the Churches of Eastern Europe can free themselves from their governments, then we can look forward to many changes. We can hope that one day all the New Martyrs of the Communist yoke will be glorified and freely and openly venerated in their own countries. We can hope that the positions of those hostile to Orthodox Tradition in all the Orthodox Churches will collapse and we shall return to the stability of before 1917.

As members of the Orthodox Church, we pray that such transformations may yet occur, but as realists we must admit that none of this may occur without a miracle – mass repentance.

May the Lord have mercy on us and bring us all to His salvation.

July 1989

1 See the official 'Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate', No 2, where we find full details of his masonic career. Other particulars of his masonry can be found in the masonic journal Pythagore-Equerre, Vol. 4, Part 7, 1935, where his obituary was published. It seems that he was the first Orthodox bishop in history to call for an end to missionary work by the Orthodox Church (Point 10 of his encyclical of 1920). Other bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople have openly followed this policy, but we do not know if this is because they are also freemasons or whether it is for other reasons. Among present-day masons of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, we know of one who invites his clergy to become freemasons. The late Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras was a notorious freemason. Freemasonry is strictly forbidden on pain of excommunication by the Orthodox Church.

23. Why?

‘In those days men sought for stars, now they rake the gutter for gossip.’

John Masefield, *So Long to Learn*.

Why in previous times was architecture beautiful? Why were clothes elegant? Why were elementary principles of morality respected by the mass of the population? Why were Beauty, Truth and Goodness honoured in Art, Literature, Music and Sculpture? Why were the values of Wisdom and Love upheld in daily life? Why was the family strong? Why?

May I suggest that it was because a majority of men and women had Christ in their souls and that, whatever their personal failings, they brought their faith in the ideal of Christ, in the ideal and brightness of the Kingdom of Heaven, to all that they did. And once this Faith was lost, then all brightness and beauty fled away from all that they did, be it house-building, politics, painting, furniture design or the purchasing of stocks and shares. For the Beautiful in Art, moral beauty, is but the reflection of the Beautiful in Nature, physical beauty, which itself is but the reflection of the Beautiful in the Creator, spiritual beauty. As the poet William Barnes wrote in the last century: ‘There is no art without love’.

This can be seen even in the recent past. It is why we are attracted to many, though by no means all, sides of the Victorian and Edwardian periods and to what remained of civilized values in the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. All that period before the troubles of the 60s was marked by principles, values and ideals which ultimately stemmed from the Christian Faith. True, there were many failings in this period, and there was much hypocrisy. But the difference between that age and our own is that that age had Faith, had an ideal, whereas our age has none. The roots of the contemporary world’s sickness (which we fear may well be ‘a sickness unto death’), is the general apostasy from the Christian Faith that has been taking place with ever-increasing rapidity for many long years now.

We reject the intrigues of those who wish to desacralise our way of life, who wish to take away all that is holy from the Church, from Nature, work marriage, study, childhood. Our fight is for the rehallowing of our land, our call is to return to the rightful heritage of true English Tradition, that is the fullness of the Christian Faith.

April 1990

24. Woman – Salvation of Man?

Why is it that so many women and girls today simply want to be imitations of men? Why is it that so many modern women have adopted everything that is bad in men, from their jobs to their clothes? Why is it that women dressed as men, with men's hairstyles think that they are attractive to men? Why do women today abandon womanhood for pseudo-manhood? In betraying what is noble and beautiful in her own soul, woman rejects her self.

Today so many women's faces are harassed, tired before their time, faces whence woman's softness has fled away and is replaced with the artificial softness of make-up. Why does modern woman have to follow the foolishness of modern man? When Adam and Eve fell, Adam's punishment (the fruit of his sin) was to have to work 'by the sweat of his brow'. And so many modern women thirst, it seems, for the same punishment, symbolized by the wearing of trousers, the sign of Adam's punishment, labour. Why take on extra – was not Eve's lot, giving birth in pain, enough?

In rejecting the traditional role of Christian mother and spouse, woman loses all her power over man. Once it was said: 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'. In previous times, the house, or rather, the home, was a kingdom where woman reigned. Her husband was just that, bound to the house, and duly handed over his earnings to his wife at the end of the week for the housekeeping, which the wife was in charge of. O woman, what have you lost! The Christian mother and wife, following nearly two millennia of Tradition, free from the bondage of woman's servile position in the heathen world (many examples of this bondage can be seen in today's neo-heathen society) brought up Christian children. As the proverb said – 'God could not be everywhere, therefore He made mothers'.

She influenced her husband in all things and the world was balanced by woman's influence over man, and such was her meekness and modesty in doing this that it gave rise to various sayings such as: 'Behind every great man stands a great woman'. Woman inspired her husband to noble acts of self-sacrifice, making him to surpass the egoism natural in him in the name of the greater entities of family or nation. She tamed his wild passions, channelling him, civilising him, in a word, bringing him salvation. As the priest and Poet William Barnes wrote over a hundred years ago:

'From a generation of bad mothers no nation can ever hope for a generation of good men. While our girls are being unwomaned ... morally spoilt in the factory and the field ... the statesman wonders why their children are so degenerate and demoralized ... Man has to do the rough work of life and it tends to make him coarse, harsh, animal, Godless ... but woman is the refiner of his rudeness, the purifier of his affection and his abode.'

And modern woman? Many are imitations of what is worst in modern man, many have lost their matriarchal authority in the family, punished themselves by working outside the family home, encouraged weak men to divorce. For what is more miserable or more tyrannical than the system imposed by men on women whereby a double income becomes a necessity? Rejecting her inner self, woman fights against her own wifely and maternal soul and instincts, which lie buried beneath the idiotic conditioning which men, who wanted cheap factory labour, have imposed on her in modern times. And this slavery was then disguised under the name of 'equality', – for indeed all slaves are equal. And that is how woman lost her superiority to man. For in fact woman is called to be superior to man, and the proof of this is that the greatest 'man' in the Kingdom of Heaven is the Mother of God.

And modern man? Without the guidance of his helpmeet, without a true mother for the children, without the bright and inspiring example of the humility and modesty of womanhood before him, without her perspicacious intuitions to direct him through the tortuous web of male reasoning, he has lost his way. The words 'husband and wife' are no longer used, they have become so despiritualized that they now talk about 'Partners'. All that is left is meaningless, empty, irrelevant, dull, animal. Man and woman have become unisex robots, conditioned and programmed by and for Mammon, the Money-god who does all he can to efface the Physiological and psychological differences that remain. He seeks to destroy the sense of fatherhood and motherhood among men and women.

Where is love? Where are the smiles and laughter of happy children? Where is society? Where is the world?

O woman, come back to your senses, come back to yourself, and in so doing you may yet save man from the horror into which he has plunged the modern world. You may yet save man, who depended on you for good sense and intuitive judgement, and thus you may save the world. 'This is a great mystery.'

April 1990

25. Sunday Best

There was a time, and it was not so long ago, when the term Sunday best was widespread and well-known. It meant quite simply dressing up to go to church. Today this term has become rather rare, indeed we more frequently hear of 'dressing *down*'. This is an expression alien to the Christian who holds Tradition dear, for he looks *up* to Heaven, to 'the hills whence cometh his hope', not *down* to the abyss of black despair.

One may wonder why so much of the spirit of Sunday has been lost. The spirit today often seems to be 'Sunday worst'. A finger points directly to many so-called 'Christian leaders' who decided to do away with a 'uniform' for the clergy. (Imagine if some surgeon decided to do away with the doctor's white coat, or if a general decided to abandon army uniform, or an admiral drop the sailor's turnout, what then?) Abandoning the clergy's 'uniform' meant first sending all those wonderful, hand-embroidered vestments to museums. The next step was to abandon the cassock, and then abolish the clerical collar. This is the way to contradict everything that had been done in the preceding nineteen and a half centuries. With these examples before them, how could the laity not follow and abandon in their turn 'Sunday best?'

Sunday best means giving the best of yourself to God. This is outwardly expressed in clothing. In some countries it is still the custom in the villages to dress in the local folk costume to go to church. This costume may be elaborate, changing according to the liturgical season, so that one wears something of a particular colour or at least something new according to the feast. The women, of course, always cover their heads in church, in obedience to the ordinance of the Holy Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 2, 5).

Sunday best is still observed today by those who hold fast to sacred traditions and live according to them. Let us pray that the coming new millennium will see a return to the rhythms of life that have already lasted for nearly two millennia. Indeed, if there is no return to the Church's way of life, it may well be that the new millennium will be that of Armageddon. For when Sunday best altogether disappears, so will Sunday.

April 1990

26. The Infidelity of the Nations

‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing’?

(Psalm 2, 1)

Every nation, every people has its own identity. Thus we say ‘La Belle France’ and expect her to be beautiful, we say ‘Holy Russia’ and expect her to be holy. From Italy we expect pleasant song, from Spain noble dignity, from Germany order, and from Ireland saints. And yet in our tragic times, what have we seen? In France pornography, in Russia militant atheism, in Italy cacophony, in Spain a youth degenerated by drugs, in Germany war, tyranny and anarchy, in Ireland sadistic terrorists. In our own century each country has totally betrayed its God-given holy calling and identity, and so is brought to self-ruination.

And what shall we say of our own native land?

England has deserved not one but two epithets. The first is ‘Merry’, a title that dates back to at least the Middle Ages. Of course when we speak of ‘Merry England’, we do not mean merry in the modern sense of the word. We mean ‘merry’ in the old sense, as in the greeting ‘Merry Christmas’, or as in the carol ‘God rest ye merry, gentlemen’, where it means ‘blessed’. Has England remained ‘Blessed’, remained true to her calling through all these past years of motorway and shopping mall, divorce, abortion, terrorism and riot? The answer must be a sad ‘no’. England has lost her blessing.

England’s second epithet is ‘Old’. England is Old, because she was given the task of guarding sacred tradition by St Augustine of Canterbury who began the Conversion of the English to the Orthodox Christian Faith nearly 1,400 years ago. Have we been true to this sacred trust? Or have we destroyed our traditions in war and woe, in apostasy down the ages? What is left in England that is ‘Merry’ and ‘Old’?

The nations have not been faithful to their national ways, to their inner beings, to themselves. They have chosen the paths of adulterous materialism. In denying God, they have denied themselves, their historical paths, and the nations have opened themselves to the nihilism of devilry. We must call our nations back, back to their true selves. And to do that we must ourselves heed all that is best in English culture and history, by referring to the spiritual identity of the nation, that which is borne by her saints. But this will only happen once we venerate them and ask them for their prayers. And thus we shall share the same faith as they professed, the Orthodox Christian faith of St Augustine, the Apostle of England, and the whole Old English Church. And then once more we shall speak of ‘Merry England’ and ‘Old England’. May it be so, O Lord, may it be so.

April 1990

27. Imperial Faith or Metric Faithlessness?

The theory of evolution would surely have been one of the greatest jokes of the 19th century, had it not been for the fact that some people actually believed in it.¹ For the Christian the difference between man and animal is clear: man has an eternal and intelligent soul, the animal does not. Those who believe in evolution are those who have lost faith in an immortal and intelligent soul because they have lost faith in the Creator of that soul. The believer knows that the Creator is present in His Creation and that nothing is left to chance in it. For him the theory of evolution is just as absurd as revolution.

It is for this reason that the believer also rejects the metric system. This system was thought up by revolutionary atheists; they were the forebears of those who decided that their ancestors were chimpanzees. They decided to replace traditional systems of measurement with their man-made and man-worshipping system, based on the number of 10. In so doing they rejected the presence of the Maker of all things in other systems. For it is the Maker's hand which is visible in the Christian numbers of the Universe. Thus 3 represents the Holy Trinity, or the primary colours or land, sea and air. 4 is for the Evangelists. 6 is for the days of Creation. 7 is for the seventh day and the colours of the rainbow. 8 is the eighth day, eternity. 9 is for the nine angelic orders. 12 is for the Apostles. 40 is for the days of Lent, the 40 days that Christ fasted in the wilderness. These are but a few examples and all of them are reflected in the Imperial system of measurements, our measurements of time (which not even French revolutionaries managed to change) and in the old British currency. Thus there are 3 feet to one yard, 7 days in a week, 8 pints in a gallon, 12 inches to one foot, 12 months in a year, 12d in a shilling, 14 (2 x 7) pounds in a stone, 16 (2 x 8) ounces in a pound, 21 (3 x 7) shillings in a guinea, 144 (12 x 12) in a gross, 240d (12 x 20) in a pound, 360 (6 x 60) degrees in a circle etc. etc.

Today atheist numbers, with their soulless 1s and 0s are being imposed on the whole world. They represent the faithlessness which rejects the presence of the Maker in the world. In rejecting traditional systems, they deny that the Universe was created by the Divine Mind, the Wisdom of God. We must therefore do the opposite and affirm the presence of God in the world – by affirming His presence in our daily lives.

April 1990

1. 'Darwinian evolution has turned into a modern myth, to the detriment of science and social life.' (Professor J. Purant at the August 1980 Conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.)

28. The Crisis

‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness’

It has become commonplace to hear or to read that: ‘The Orthodox Church is in a state of crisis’, Of course this is untrue, indeed it is ontologically impossible, for ‘the gates of Hell shall not prevail’. What people mean is that the outward, fallen, human organization of the Church is in crisis.

Thus in one Local Church a Patriarch resigns and many of its bishops admit to having lied about a bloodthirsty regime. In another Church the Patriarch is seriously ill and married Metropolitans vie for his place. Bishops declare themselves hostile to monasticism, though they themselves are supposed to be monks. Other bishops openly proclaim their sympathies with freemasonry. A slavish and shameful attitude to the State is widespread. The people are left in ignorance for want of pastors and pastoral leadership. But not only are we witnesses to this ‘semi-Orthodoxy’, but also to a ‘neo-Orthodoxy’. So-called theologians preach non-Orthodoxy and even anti-Orthodoxy, local Churches are rent asunder by calendar disputes. Division and pain seem to be all around. – Indeed, outwardly, to those who have not seen the Risen Christ behind the Body of Christ Who suffers on the Cross of human infidelity, the picture must seem grim.

Inspired theologians and bishops of the free part of the Russian Orthodox Church, praying and working at Jordanville and elsewhere, have analysed the situation. They have developed a theological understanding of the period we are living through, the Age of Apostasy, indeed the beginning of the Apocalypse. The source of this Apostasy lies in the separation of the local Church of Rome from the Orthodox Church and Her teachings on the Holy Trinity, the Son of God and in particular the Holy Spirit. Since this separation from the Church began in the eleventh century, Apostasy has been spreading in the world, slowly developing over the centuries. Secularising itself, this Apostasy has become known as ‘Westernization’. It is none other than the desacralization of life, in other words the growth of the secular at the expense of the sacred, to the point where nothing is sacred, nothing is honoured or valued or respected any longer, to the point of ultimate blasphemy, the worship of Satan. A new world has been founded, autonomous of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit

This process of desacralization came to Russia at the end of the seventeenth century and then culminated in the great Russian Apostasy of 1917. Since the death of the last Orthodox Empire on Earth, the whole Orthodox Church has been attacked from all sides, in an effort to destroy the Church’s influence. They have wanted to take away from the Church the hallowing power of the Holy Spirit, the power to ‘sacralise’ all aspects of human life, they have wanted to reduce Her to an empty shell, a mere cultural institution, a dust-filled museum. This attack is the ultimate one to remove

from the Church the transfiguring power of holiness, the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from God the Father and comes to those who are worthy through the Body of Christ, the Church. This attack is then none other than an attack on the Church. To counter it, it would seem that we need a reaffirmation at every level, social, cultural, political and economic, of the Church, of the *One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church*.

The reaffirmation that the Church is One would counter this attack socially. Today, through the illusion of ecumenism, the Oneness of the Church is under attack. Ecumenism is in fact the ideology of the Antichurch, whose master is Antichrist. The reaffirmation of the Oneness of the Church would transfigure the way of life of all those who entered Her embrace, and so socially transfigure our existence on Earth. The acceptance of this Oneness is the acceptance of Christ Who is One, the acceptance of Christ in all His fullness and all His beauty, which was lost outside the Church in the West when they desired to replace Him by a human-being, a 'Vicar'.

The reaffirmation that the Church is *Holy* is essential if mankind is to be saved culturally. Under the effects of Apostasy, we see more and more how Church culture, the sense of 'churchliness', is being lost. This attack is being carried out beneath the banners of Modernism, whose purpose is to annihilate all sense of Tradition, that is to say the workings in history of the divine and saving Providence of the God of Love through the Holy Spirit. It was this Holy Spirit Who was rejected by the leaders of the West in favour of human agency. Modernism, with its reforming, renovating Spirit, Started by attacking the Church calendar and then set its intellectual victims to work on diluting the canonical and liturgical traditions of the Church. Not understanding the Divino-human nature of the Church, they saw in Her inspired traditions only the accidental events of human history.

Modernism is in fact a new outburst of iconoclasm, whose aim is to demolish the iconographic and sacred Tradition of the Church, Her transfiguring power of Holiness, the mystery of Her sanctification. Modernism says: we know better than two thousand years of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on man. Only the reaffirmation of the Holiness of the Church will save mankind culturally, will save the best in his culture. And thus those of goodwill will be brought to the awareness that one cannot tamper with the dynamism of Church Tradition, with that which is holy, for 'our God is a consuming fire'.

The reaffirmation that the Church is *Catholic* will save mankind politically. The Catholicity of the Church is Her unity in diversity at all times and in all places. It is based on the Church's theology of the Holy Trinity, which was lost by the West after the eleventh century. The lack of understanding of the Catholicity of the Church (including the total deformation of the meaning of the word 'catholic'), has for centuries caused division and strife. First Europe was divided by 'Wars of Religion', then by nationalisms resulting in World Wars. Today Europe and the whole world is threatened by the opposite trend, the movement towards 'World Government', the convergence of formerly hostile blocs, the formation of a 'United States of Europe',

the new Babylon. Patriotism is mocked and scourged, slandered by deliberate confusion with nationalism, as moves are made to prepare for the enthronement of Antichrist in Jerusalem. Only the reaffirmation of the Catholicity of the Church, in Her theology of the Holy Trinity can save mankind politically

The reaffirmation that the Church is *Apostolic* can save mankind economically. For centuries the Western world, and thus today the westernised world, has been divided into first Catholic and Protestant. When these two contrasting movements became secularised the division was into collectivism (corporatism, socialism, central planning, State intervention) and individualism (Capitalism, the free market). Ultimately we can call these two movements Communist Atheism and Materialist Mammonism. The Church through Her Apostles (Acts 2, 42–47) and subsequently through pious lay people and especially through Her monasteries, settled once and for all the question of property, economic development and ecological stewardship of the Earth's resources. It is through the present world's rejection of the Apostolicity of the Church, so particularly apparent in Her monastic tradition, that the world's economic problems and divisions have taken root. Only the reaffirmation that the Church is Apostolic can save humanity from economic and thus ecological catastrophe

In Greek the word 'crisis' means judgement. Indeed whenever a crisis occurs, a judgement is made – against us or for us, according to how we react in that crisis. It is therefore ever more urgent for us to understand the Church and to enter into Her life and mind. And without the affirmation, individually and collectively, of the Church, of the *One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic* Church, we, mankind, are lost, for the Church, 'the King's Daughter', is 'all glorious within. (Psalm 44, 13)

May the Risen Christ, Who shines forth in the darkness of the present age help us to affirm the Church and our life in Her, that we may all come safely to the brightness of His Everlasting Kingdom.

Easter 1990

29. Orthodoxy and the post-1989 World

‘I have continued to long for missionaries from the East, to give us a tranquility, but have come to think it more likely that western barbarism may engulf even what remains of Eastern tranquility.’

John Masefield, *In the Mill*

1989 will stand as one of the four great landmarks of 20th century history. The first was 1914, exactly three generations before, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire triggered off the First World War. In so doing it brought about its own downfall and that of several others, including the Russian. The second landmark was 1939, exactly two generations ago, when the Hitlerites launched a second blood-bath. The third landmark is 1964, one generation ago, when the Western and westernised world fell to a wave of unheard-of moral and spiritual decadence. This it did by abandoning the very foundations of Christianity which its religious institutions had inherited from the first millennium, and then guarded in one form or another for nigh on a second. The fourth landmark of 1989 is that when Communism was rejected by the peoples who had for so long borne its yoke, only to fall into the ‘One-World’ temptation.

Today we live with the consequences of all these historic dates. The last one has left behind it the remnants of Leninism, a whole series of countries reduced to the drunken stupor of spiritual and therefore moral, cultural, social, economic and ecological decadence. But it has also left a huge question-mark, hanging over the world like a sword of Damocles, – where will the Soviet Union and Russia go from here?

Some predict civil wars, similar to those in Africa and Asia following decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s and more recently. Others predict the Westernisation of the East. Their be-all and end-all is the ‘free market’, the ‘panacea’ of consumer-good materialism, the spiritual suicide of economic materialism. Is it possible that these are the only two possible fruits of 75 years of demonic obscenity in Russia, that the greatest mass-genocide known to humanity, the Gulag, was simply so that more killing could occur, or so that Russian teenagers could eat ‘Big Macs?’ Have no truths been learnt? Is there no other way out of Russia’s dead end?

In today’s world there seem to be a number of blocs. The first is the Western one, that of North America, Western Europe and the Pacific Basin nations, symbolized by Japan. In spite of trade tensions and rivalries between them, they form one, complete, capitalist bloc. Commercial unions are being set up inside them. In Western Europe, this Union is sucking in Scandinavia, Austria, perhaps Poland, Hungary and the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. Oneworldism is strong here, as in the Pacific, with the Asian dragons and Japanese eyes set covetously on China, Siberia and the mineral wealth of Australia.

The second bloc is 'the South', the 'Third World'. This includes Africa, South America, India, China and the Arab countries. These countries rejected the colonial models and today are rejecting Marxism, with which they have played with catastrophic results, they are at a dead end. They can go neither left, nor right, the only way for them is up – unless, like Iran, they prefer to go down into Islamic fundamentalism.

There is also, however, a potential third bloc, a bloc which does not exist as yet, because it is still in a state of Apostasy. If it repents, it will be born. This bloc would consist of one sixth of the Earth's surface – all the Orthodox parts of the old Russian Empire. It would include the Russian Republic, the Orthodox Ukraine and Belorussia, much of Kazakhstan, Georgia, Moldavia, perhaps non-Orthodox Armenia. Other Orthodox nations could join it – Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro. This third bloc would be no other than an Orthodox Commonwealth of Sovereign States, a renewed Byzantine Empire. To it would be attached all Orthodox living all over the world, in parts of the other two blocs.

The first aim of such a bloc would be its own spiritual regeneration, which would lead to a more general rebirth in all domains. Thus the Greek-speaking Churches, especially, would be freed from petty nationalism through this restored Byzantine Empire. They would also be freed from the undermining influences of obscure forces to which their Present episcopates have so much succumbed since the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. As for the Slav and Romanian Churches, they too could be freed from State-appointed episcopates. Orthodox minorities could be protected in countries like the Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Croatia and wherever they come under persecution. Such a Commonwealth of Faith could aid Orthodox missions all over the world, in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas. The results of the existence of such a Commonwealth would be far-reaching indeed.

Its existence and strength would restrain the world from its headlong rush into catastrophe. It could lead to the regeneration of the spiritually and morally decaying Western world. This Commonwealth could become the breadbasket of the Third World. Its huge natural resources could stop starvation and let it know of Orthodoxy which so far has been little preached in areas which have undergone only forced conversion to deformations of Christianity.

Of course many will object that this is only a dream. And, humanly speaking, this objection is correct. Humanly speaking, Russia and the formerly Orthodox countries face either civil war or else the soulless vulgarity of the West, with its hard rock and Coca-Cola. But the restoration of an Orthodox Commonwealth of kingdoms is possible if, collectively, we refuse to exclude the divine, if we agree to co-operate with God. How is this possible?

Firstly, all Orthodox Christians everywhere must repent. It is useless to blame others for our own sinful choices. Orthodox must cleanse their souls from all manner of sin. This means the acceptance and active veneration of the saints, especially the New

Martyrs and Confessors of all the Orthodox lands. Orthodox episcopates must be renewed; at present most of them are discredited through their unheard of Erastianism, their subservience to the enemies of the Church, with disastrous results. Only free Orthodox episcopates, genuine monastic bishops, can serve the Church.

The hopes that we have expressed here are not new. The great Russian theologian and pastor, Church Father of the twentieth century, Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev expressed them before the Russian Revolution. His hopes then were dashed by internal treachery, by the apostasy of Orthodox, by those who mocked the sombre prophecies of St John of Kronstadt who, like St John the Baptist of old, called to repentance. If this time we ignore calls to repentance, then our future will be apocalyptic.

May 1990

30. England of the English Saints

O England, home of homes, ancient, wooden-steepled land,
Many in Thy woods and fields, sweet-scented by God's hand;
Distant hamlets and broad ploughlands, oaken and straw-thatched,
Little lanes that wind and twist, in beauty all unmatched.

There stand four-square Thy Saxon churches with homely bell,
And the lovely rambling gardens, fair soft-green, all's well;
Sweet with lavender, wild rose and birdsong from above,
Bee-hives in the apple-orchards, old inns and home-love.

Fresh rains in April, the wheat that ripens in July,
Thou, beloved homeland, wast blessed from on high;
Made fragrant, all-holy; a mystic light shines in Thee
Since crossed of yore by Christ and His saints, from sea to sea.

From Durham stone to Kent's white coasts,
From Malvern hills to Suffolk hosts,
From Walsingham to Glastonbury,
From York's fair walls to Canterbury,
From North to London and South Downs,
You who in the saints are not towns,
But hallowed life drawn from our goal,
The looking-glass of England's soul.

O England of the English Saints!

Your voices in our prayers we have heard, your names oft we know,
You, holy martyrs and confessors, godly kings and noble queens,
Hallowed bishops and mild monks, holy abbesses, meek cowherds,
Heroic princes, humble nuns, you, lowly hermits righteous priests,
O all you many faithful souls of the hidden heart of England,
Unknown and unloved of the world,
You who fill that fair land of England that is in Heaven,
You, our forefathers and mothers,
Call us back – into the Church of God.

O, holy company who weep for a once holy land,
You who confess the noble and the true,
The fine and the firm, faith of Christ,
You, who scattered from your shrines,
Haunt this green land,
Where ever dwells your spirit,
Give unto us again those words of life,

Utter unto us the old truths,
And bring us back, like Adam, to Paradise,
Bring us back, like the Prodigal, to the Father's house,
Bring us back, like the Thief, who repenting said,
Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.
O, hallowed company who hallowed our land,
Now, as we seem altogether to be failing,
Bring us back to that Bright Kingdom of our churchly past,
And by the power of Christ, hallow us once more.
For all that is hallowed is eternal,
And your blessedness is from everlasting to everlasting,
And ever shall stand with Christ our God. Amen.

September 1990

31. From *Filioque* to Humanism

‘The Creator of all creatures begat a Son, and sent forth of Himself the Comforting Spirit: through the Son He created all creatures that are, and quickened them all through the living Spirit.’

Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham, *The Life of St Cecilia*, written c. 1000. (Skeat, Vol. II, p. 365.)

One of the great myths of Church History is without doubt the notion that a Schism between Eastern and Western Christianity took place in 1054. That a Schism took place is of course fact. But the date of 1054 is the date of nothing more than a symbolic event. We must first understand that the separation of Eastern and Western Christianity was not an event, but a process. Moreover, this process began at the summit of Western society and its consequences only gradually spread downwards. As the English proverb says ‘A fish always stinks from the head’. But when did the process of Schism begin? And when did it end? To these questions we shall now attempt to reply.

We believe that the Schism process begins at the end of the 8th century among a select few at the Court of Charles the Great, Charlemagne. It began with the revival of pagan Roman knowledge, of the Judeo-Babylonian legacy of Rome. In the sin of pride, Charlemagne wanted to set up a new Roman Empire in the West. All Western rulers have since tried to do the same, but all their Empires, like Charlemagne’s, have fallen, because they lacked God’s blessing in their pride. To renew the Roman Empire Charlemagne had first to reject the Christian Roman Empire, Romanity, whose capital was in New Rome, the City of the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantinople.

Ideologically this was possible by reviving the pagan or classical Roman system of thought. This meant, in other words, reviving rationalism, the use of the human reason, the syllogism and dialectic, what St Paul calls ‘fleshly wisdom’ (2 Cor. 1, 12) The knowledge and the use of this logic came to Charlemagne’s Court above all from Spain, where it had been learnt from Jewish thinkers who had preserved the legacy of Roman and Greek pagan philosophy. The head of Charlemagne’s school, Alcuin, sums up best the nature of this rationalism in his work on the Holy and Undivided Trinity: ‘Only the subtlety of categories can shed light on the profoundest questions concerning the Holy Trinity’. The uses of such rationalistic techniques eventually led, in the late 11th century, to a new culture, a new way of thinking. They led to:

The rejection of theology in favour of philosophy.

The rejection of monasticism in favour of scholasticism.

The rejection of monasteries in favour of universities.

The rejection of the Gospel in favour of pagan writers.

The rejection of cultivating the heart in favour of cultivating the intellect.

The rejection of ascetically-won grace in favour of intellectually-won learning.

The rejection of the knowledge of the world to come by the Uncreated Light in favour of the despair of the graceless knowledge of the fallen world here and now.

Ultimately it is this graceless and godless rationalism that built the modern world as we know it, from the Atomic Bomb to the IBM computer.

Through this rationalism, wisdom, which is the harmony of knowledge and faith, gave way to godless science. Wisdom, Who rode on the back of an ass, gave way to 'the pride of life' (1 John 2, 16), but 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men'. (I Cor. 1, 25). For in rationalism, these reasonings of the fallen, human mind, one finds not God, but psychology, a reflection of the self, and all the demonic impulses to which the fallen mind is prone. The theology of the rationalist is only the psychological extension of the self, a god built in one's own fallen image. Thus, in the Middle Ages, the Western mind saw God as a stern, vengeful feudal baron. In the Renaissance, Michelangelo portrayed Him as a sensuous, fleshly deity. The 18th century 'Enlightenment' depicted Him as a god of Reason, the expression of deism. Today, if the West says that God does not exist, it is simply because He does not exist in the mind of 'modern' man. This does not mean His objective non-existence, it simply means that 'modern' Western man has succeeded, after centuries of efforts, in chasing God from his mind. Man feels abandoned by God – but this is only because man has abandoned God, not because God has abandoned man.

The rationalism that began at the end of the 8th century with Charlemagne had spread by the 11th century to Rome (which until that time had refuted it) by means of German Popes. From here on the separation of Western Christendom from Eastern Christendom became inevitable. And, unfortunately, the East did not pay great attention to this at the time. Firstly, the West was populated by perhaps only 10 million, whereas the Eastern capital, Constantinople, had itself a population of 1 million. And then also only a minute fraction of the Western population knew anything about philosophy and categories and rationalism. Only a minute fraction had even heard of the new, rationalistic doctrine, called the '*filioque*'. The East, moreover, had little appreciation of rationalism, which the Fathers of the Church had long ago overcome.

Viewed from the East, the events of 1054 seemed to be just another barbarian revolt in distant provinces. As soon as a Roman Pope could be appointed, the whole issue would die down and the Roman Christian Commonwealth, Romanitas, could be made whole again. Although it was not understood at the time, in fact the events of 1054 were the beginning of a final struggle between Jerusalem and Babylon, between Christian and Neo-Pagan. It would lead sacral, peasant kingdoms, with their unity of

Church, Monarchy and Nation, firstly into feudal tyrannies, lastly into secular, urban demagogueries. Christian Roman architecture would give way to the Gothic masons' rationalist domination of the world. The squat, Pre-Romanesque, expressing the Incarnation of God on Earth would give way to the Gothic spire yearning skywards in search of God no more on Earth: the appointment of His 'Vicar' in Rome was proof of it.

Behind all these changes and the date 1054 itself, lay the culmination of all the consequences of rationalism. This was and is the speculation of the *filioque*. It was and is the *filioque*, the statement that the Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, that locked up the Holy Spirit between the Father and the Son. In human terms, it locked up the heart, the receptacle for grace, between the reason and the body. By divorcing man from God in this way, by distancing the Holy Spirit from the Earth and putting Him where the Gothic spires pointed, in the empty sky, the Holy Spirit was put beyond man's reach. Thus man was deprived of grace as well as of the principle of authority and in the Church. The only solution was to replace the Holy Spirit with a human institution.

The error of giving all power and authority to one individual is that eventually everyone will claim the same. This is exactly what happened in the West with the Reformation, with Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, Henry VIII and umpteen others. In secular terms this dilution of power was reflected in the rule of the masses, democracy; in philosophical terms, this is man-worship, humanism.

Humanism is the religion which states that man is the measure of things, that he is independent, autonomous of God. Instead of glorifying God, we glorify man and his rational faculties. Man is put in the place of God. But reason is not the source of Truth, merely the receptacle for expression. And this was precisely the error of the thinkers who had gathered at the Court of Charlemagne. Thus another thinker of the 9th century, Erigena, wrote: 'For those who seek seriously and strive to discover the reason for all things, all the means of reaching a pious and perfect doctrine reside in the science and discipline of philosophy'. We must only adopt the opinions of the Fathers if with them we need to strengthen our arguments in the eyes of those who reason poorly and thus yield to authority rather than reason'. 'True reason, since it relies on its own strength, has no need whatsoever to be strengthened by any authority'. Reason, as the philosophers of Charlemagne, did not understand, because of their self-deluding pride of mind, is but the receptacle of Truth. The source of Truth is the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, 'Who proceedeth from the Father' according to the Gospel. But the rationalists, through the *filioque*, had distanced and removed the Spirit of Truth, fixing Him between the Father and the Son.

Humanism is driven on by a spiritual force which strives to incorporate itself into fallen man and change the world after its own patterns. Humanism preaches the worship and glorification of man in his Fall, in his sin. Man has been flattered into thinking that, despite the Fall, despite his sin and his fallen and sinful reason, he can

still reason aright. The worship of fallen man is thus actually in part the worship of sin. This is why modern man has been able to empty his mind and heart of God – he has put sin in the place, the only place where God cannot abide. Thus, absurdly, he has become an atheist, an ‘agnostic’, he has grown ‘grace proof’, locked in the bubble of his own egoistic godlessness, his own self-worship. And he finds himself lonely and lost in a meaningless universe. Humanism is then ultimately the mocking of demons over fallen man. So the Russian writer, Gorky, wrote: ‘Man, whose name has so proud a sound’. This is the rasping laughter of devils as Stalin extinguishes millions of human beings and Hitler tens of millions of others – all in the name of man – and humanism. Humanism is the end-result of the Schism, of rationalism. But it is also the beginning of something else, the mystery of iniquity, the Antichrist, Who comes in place of Christ and so against Him. Antichrist and all his hordes and minions do not see that they have lost – for the last word in human history will be the Word of God. ‘Come, Jesus!’

October 1990

32. Fragments of Orthodoxy in English Popular Tradition

‘They were old men with no scholarship. They told me of their thoughts: the things they said within themselves as they sailed with the stars and with the wild waters about and beneath them. I have never heard fairer things than fell from the lips of those unlettered men. It was the poetry of the grace of God.’

(From a letter concerning the fishermen of Leigh in Essex of c. 1900)

If we take a human lifetime as the Biblical threescore years and ten, only fourteen lifetimes ago the English Church was an integral part of the Orthodox family, belonging to the Universal Church of Christ. For nearly five centuries the English were in communion with the rest of Christendom. There were close contacts with Eastern Christendom. One England’s sainted Archbishops, Theodore of Tarsus, was a Greek; Greek monks and a bishop lived in England at the end of the 10th century, and Gytha, the daughter of the Old English King, Harold II, married in Kiev. It is clear that during such a long period, a half-millennium, the Christian faith impregnated the way of life of the people and the Old English monarchy. It is clear that traces of the Faith of the first five centuries of English Christianity, a Faith that was Orthodox though not Byzantine, must have remained after the 11th century.

Of course it is true that England suffered the 11th century Papal reform of the Western Churches, and indeed this was particularly brutal in the British Isles, following, as it did, the papally-sponsored Norman Invasion of 1066. It is also true that England suffered another blow in the Reformation instigated by such tyrants as Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and the iconoclast Cromwell. All this represented a loss of spiritual culture, the denial of the saints, the deformation of ecclesial tradition, and the resulting loss of ‘texture’ or spiritual quality of English life. This is not to say, however, that the falling away or apostasy of England and the other Western nations from Orthodox Christian Tradition occurred everywhere at the same pace. Since the 11th century, England has experienced high and low points in her spiritual and cultural life.

The high points represent a slowing down in the process of apostasy, the low points a speeding up. The high points have been spiritual and cultural peaks, when the English nation, her perception sharpened through prayer, fasting, repentance and love of the Gospel, has been guided by Christ, the Mother of God, her national saints and her Guardian Angel, and so glimpsed her soul. Conversely, the low points have been those moments when the English nation abandoned her spiritual and cultural traditions and moved away from her divine calling and destiny. However we may judge the past, and some high points and low points seem to be apparent at once, it seems clear that, as with other Western peoples, today is a period when the apostasy is speeding up and we are heading more and more rapidly for the Apocalypse.

But it must be said that the very nature of the cause of the separation of the West from the Orthodox Faith, the *filioque*, implies that the process of the Western apostasy is gradual. The practical consequences of the *filioque* have only slowly filtered down into the life of the people, only slowly distorted the forms of popular piety. The Orthodox Christian heritage of the first five centuries of the English nation has survived in fragments. These fragments or vestiges are to be found particularly among country folk in the stock of accepted folk wisdom, in folk memory and fable, proverbial knowledge, ecclesial sense and the traditional practices of simple folk. What is traditional outwits the changing fashions of religious decadence and rationalist speculation, which were and are inherent in the *filioque* and its consequences. The Christian Faith, which is made incarnate in the Christian way of life, can only be uprooted when the urban culture of 'reason' penetrates into the midst of those living in the rural, traditional, popular culture of the simple-hearted. In Western countries this only happened to any great extent in the last century. And here and there one may still meet individuals who have resisted the modernist rationalism of the towns until our own times.

One is aware of this in small villages in England, where perhaps survive a Saxon church or foundation, the Hall, and clustered around them, the inn and black and white thatched cottages. In my own experience I know for example of old people who through family tradition still regard the Julian calendar as the only true calendar. (In England the Julian calendar was changed for the Gregorian in 1752, when 2 September was followed by 14 September, which caused rioting – not surprising when one considers for example that a month's rent would have to be paid only nineteen days.) Indeed the Julian or old calendar was until recently known as 'English style' and the Gregorian or new calendar as 'Roman style'. (See the Oxford English Dictionary.) In old books one still finds the doggerel:

In seventeen hundred two and fifty,
Our style was changed to Popery,
But that it is liked we don't agree.

In farming families of my acquaintance in East Anglia, 'Old Christmas' was religiously kept right up to Hitler's War. The same for 'Old Michaelmas'. Similarly parish feasts, fêtes or 'wakes' are still in some areas kept according to the 'English style'. Such faithful people know from their grandparents' grandparents that Easter in England is kept on wrong date most years. Such people, outside the Orthodox Church, bring to shame the Orthodox New Calendarists who seem to have less sense tradition than they.

I would like now to speak of those traditions which I have either seen myself or read of, which all go back to a time when the English world was still part of Undivided Christendom.

It would seem that those ancient traditions are particularly associated with the Nativity of Christ. The Birth of Christ was an invitation to the whole of the cosmos to

celebrate. It was said that at the moment of the anniversary of the Nativity that all Creation stood still – rivers ceased to flow, birds stopped in their flight. After this moment bells rang, even from churches that had disappeared under the waves, as at Dunwich in Suffolk or from St Wilfrid's Cathedral, which long ago sank beneath the waves off Selsey in Sussex. And then dogs barked, birds sang, bees buzzed, cocks crowed. All Creation united in praise of the Creator become man. A child born on Christmas Day (or for that matter on any Sunday) would never drowned, so it was said.

Men celebrated in other ways. Everything had to be prepared before Christmas Day. Any work done on the day itself would turn out badly. On Christmas Eve, it is still the custom to set up window-lights, that is to put candles in the windows, to guide the Mother of God and St Joseph, for whom there was no room at the inn. Holly is used as a decoration in homes and churches; the green is to remind us of the evergreen, everlasting life brought to us in the Birth of Christ, the red (berries) remind us of the blood on Christ's brow from the crown of thorns at the Crucifixion. Mistletoe is hung at home, but never at church. A tradition says that this was because mistletoe was formerly a tree used in making the Cross. Because of this shameful use, it was then reduced to a parasite.

The Christmas tree itself, according to German tradition, originates from the event when the 8th century Devonshire saint and Apostle of Germany, St Boniface, cut down an oak used for pagan worship. The oak fell in the form of a cross and a fir-tree sprang up from among the roots, as a token of new life, and thus the new life that we have in the Birth of Christ. It is said that when Christ is born, the oxen and the cattle on farms kneel down in worship and, according to some, weep. When in 19th century England a learned scholar mocked this belief, affirming that he had never seen it, he was informed by farm-labourers that this was because the scholar had been watching on 25 December, and not on the true date according to the Julian calendar. We are told that on hearing this characteristically Orthodox response, he departed in his pride, none the wiser. To this day the Glastonbury thorn and thorns taken from its cuttings flower not on 25 December, but around the 7 January. Similarly at the real Christmas rosemary, the rose of Mary, would blossom. The ash is also associated with the Nativity, for ash-logs are said to have been used to warm the Mother of God at the birth of Christ.

The food associated with Christmas was also symbolic. Christmas Pudding, for instance, traditionally has thirteen ingredients, one for Christ and one for each of the Apostles. The mince-pie, which has been round in shape since Cromwell (who tried to ban it), was originally oval. This was to remind us of the shape of the manger and also the tomb of Christ (as on icons of the Nativity). The exotic ingredients, formerly with meat and Spices, each represented qualities which the Birth of Christ had introduced into the world This 'sacred' food was to be eaten in silence, while reflecting on the meaning of Christ's Birth. Today this has degenerated into simply pausing and making a wish before eating the first mince-pie. It was also said that every mince-pie

eaten ensured a happy month in the coming year. Associated with this is the still existent custom of keeping piece of Christmas cake all year.

Christmas carols were once far more various and also theologically more profound, like the Little Russian 'koliady' or the Serbian folk-songs of Orthodox Tradition. Incidentally the Church year was formerly celebrated popularly by all sorts of carols for every feast; today Christmas carols are virtually all that remain, and these mainly in Victorian guise, though some of the melodies are ancient.

After Christmas, Childermas or the massacre of the Holy Innocents used to be, and I believe, still is, celebrated by special muffled peals of bells. Theologically, this feast is most significant, since it commemorates the sanctity of unbaptized but martyred children; perhaps in our churches the list of Holy Innocents should also include all those children who have been aborted from the beginning of the world. In general the English art of bell-ringing is quite unique and surely reflects some of the glory of our Orthodox heritage.

Candlemas, the Feast of the Meeting in the Temple, 2 February 40 days after Christmas according to the Orthodox method of counting which counts inclusively, was once much celebrated. Today it remembered only by weather sayings and the names 'Candlemas bells', 'Christ's flowers', 'Fair Maids of February' or 'Purification flowers' for snowdrops.

The childhood of Christ was also celebrated by various customs. Thus the juniper tree was said to have special qualities, for it protected Christ during the Flight into Egypt. To this day it is said that hunted foxes and hares find shelter under it, as did Our Lord. Lavender is said to have obtained its sweet fragrance from the fact that the Mother of God hung Christ's swaddling-clothes on it to dry.

In spite of Reformation iconoclasm, the Mother of God is still remembered in popular tradition in England. It was not for nothing that England was formerly known as 'Our Lady's Dowry', the equivalent of the Russian title, 'the House of the Mother of God', which was given to Russia in the days before the Revolution. We are left today with the beautiful names of the Feasts; Lady Day for the Annunciation, Our Lady in Harvest for the Dormition and Our Lady in December for the Conception of the Mother of God. The ladybird is in fact 'Our Lady's bird', and nearly a dozen flowers are named after the Mother of God, for example, Our Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*), and the marigold is in fact 'Mary's Gold'. How appropriate it would be to use such flowers to decorate icons of the Mother of God on Her various feast-days. Indeed, one wonders if such a practice might not be the ultimate origin of the names themselves?

As far back as the eighth century the Venerable Bede made the Madonna Lily, also called the Mary Lily, the emblem of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, likening the white petals to her spotless body and the golden anthers to her soul glowing with heavenly light. To this day the saying that a bride must wear something

blue at her wedding goes back to the liturgical blue, worn for the Feasts of the Mother of God. If a bride wears something blue, she is in fact asking for the blessing of the Mother of God on her marriage. The terrible tragedy is that the reverence of old for the Mother of God has so degenerated in modern speech. The real meaning of the swearword 'bloody' is 'By Our Lady': it is in fact therefore a blasphemy.

As regards flower-names, many are connected with the Saviour or the saints. Rose-campion is called 'Our Saviour's flannel' on account of its soft, velvety leaves. *Hypericum calycinum* is commonly called 'St John's wort' and also 'Aaron's beard'. *Verbascum thapsus* is generally known as 'Aaron's rod'. And the *campanula medium* is usually called the 'Canterbury Bell'. Ragwort is also called St James' wort and there is also of course the Michaelmas daisy, so named from the coincidence of the feast and its flowering. The cowslip is also called St Peter's wort. [Incidentally another name for the haddock is St Peter's fish, since he was Said to have caught one (Matt. 17, 27), leaving marks on its back made by his finger and thumb.]

A great many traditions were and are connected with the Lenten cycle and Easter. The Saturday before Lent began, was and is called 'Egg Saturday', for then people started to use up their eggs, having already given up meat. The proverb 'Marry in Lent, live to repent', reminds us of the Church's prohibition of weddings during fasts. 'After every Christmas comes Lent', reminds us that the Church's Year was set by a rhythm of feasts and fasts, and also induces in us a sense of sobriety. The daffodil is still sometimes called 'the Lenten lily'. A common, meatless dish was Lenten pie. Lent was also the marble season. This was so until a few years ago. The marble season finished at noon on Good Friday. The marbles were symbols of the stone that was rolled away from the tomb at the Resurrection of Christ.

Palm Sunday was also called 'Fig Sunday', for on this day figs, the fruit of the palm, would be eaten in pies and puddings. Donkeys were treated with special kindness on this day. Incidentally, the cross-shaped mark on the backs of donkeys is said to come from the fact that the Lord rode upon a donkey. Holy Thursday was kept with great piety, just as Good Friday. Even in my childhood all shops were closed on Good Friday – except the baker's for hot cross buns (see below). It was called 'Good' from the old meaning of the word 'good', signifying holy or spiritual, as still the case when we call the Bible 'the Good Book'. The elder was a tree never used by carpenters because it was said to be the tree from which Judas hanged himself and was called 'the Judas tree'. On the other hand if the aspen tree is popularly called 'the shiver tree' it is because Christ was crucified on one. So to this day it shivers with shame and horror. On the English borderlands the Skirrid was said to be a holy mountain and the great cleft in its side is said to have been made by the earthquake at Christ's Crucifixion. Churches in the English Marches were often built on earth brought from it. It was also sprinkled on coffins within living memory as a token of the Resurrection. Another Good Friday custom in the south of England was skipping; the skipping rope was said to symbolize that with which Judas had hanged himself.

As at Christmas, Good Friday and Easter were marked by cosmic events. All Creation participated. Thus it is said that the hawthorn groans on Good Friday, because it was used to weave the crown of thorns. If the violet droops its head, it is because the shadow of the cross fell upon it at the Crucifixion. The robin has a red breast because he pulled thorns from Christ's brow, thus staining himself with blood. The expression 'touchwood' comes of course from the custom of touching the Cross (wood) to protect oneself from the Evil One. To this day hot cross buns are eaten in England. Traditionally they have a healing power and are still eaten in some parts in much the same way as Orthodox eat prosphora of blessed bread from the Vigil. A few years ago a Herefordshire baker was recorded as saying: 'Bakers are important men – the Birth of our Lord and his Death – we're at them both. We make mince-pies for His Birthday and hot cross buns for His Deathday.' Good Friday was also considered a day of blessing for certain activities. Thus if seeds are sown at noon on the day, flowers will come up double (a token of new life and resurrection). Also bread baked on Good Friday will keep fresh all the year. On the other hand it was said that any sewing done on this day would come undone.

Just as the Russians have eggs blessed at Easter, so in England 'pace-eggs' (paschal eggs) were blessed in church before they were eaten. In some places the tradition of 'pace-egg rolling' still continues – consisting of rolling paschal eggs down slopes in play. These eggs represented the stone that was rolled away from Christ's Tomb. On Easter Sunday, often called 'God's Sunday' or 'Holy Sunday', one always wore something new (the 'Easter bonnet'), as a token of new life. After the Easter-service, Easter breakfast (i.e. the breaking of the fast; it took place at about midday) would be eaten. Here the eggs (always dyed red and only red – the colour of blood) would be eaten with the main Easter dish, lamb – the finest Canterbury lamb. This was garnished with mint sauce, an allusion to the bitter suffering through which the Lamb of God, the Risen Son, had passed. (Lamb is the traditional Greek dish on this day).

There was a custom of getting up before sunrise to see the sun dance for joy at the Resurrection – a custom that existed in Russia too. Some said that a lamb could be seen silhouetted against the disc of the rising sun. Sceptics were told that if they had not seen the sun dance, it was because the Devil was so cunning that he always put a hill in the way to hide it. In some parts it was held that one had to look at the sun reflected in a pool, in order 'to see the sun dance and play in the water, and the angels who were at the Resurrection playing backwards and forwards before the sun'. Much weather-lore also concerns Easter. Thus: 'Whatever the weather on Easter Day will also prevail at harvest', or 'If the sun shines on Easter Day, it will also shine on Whitsunday', or again 'If it rains on Easter Sunday, it will rain on every Sunday till Whitsunday' or even 'A white Easter brings a green Christmas'. The linking of one feast with another through the Weather shows the popular liturgical sense and how it was interwoven with the working year. As for tree-lore, the yew was and is used to decorate churches at Easter, since the yew lives for a thousand years and more, and is thus a symbol of the Eternal One, Christ. Graveyards were also decked at this time of

year: the departed were not forgotten. Even today many put flowers on graves at Easter.

In 1991 the Orthodox Church celebrates 'Kyriopascha', that is to the conjunction of Easter and the Annunciation. An old proverb about this is: 'When Easter falls in Our Lady's lap, then let England beware of a sad mishap'. Let us hope that this will not be so.

Easter celebrations went on throughout Easter (Bright) Week and on to 'Hocktide', the Monday and Tuesday of the following week, which corresponds to the Russian 'Radonitsa'. A custom still observed Hocktide is that of 'heaving'. Local people literally lift one another off ground, singing 'Jesus Christ is risen again'. This unusual custom is said to celebrate the resurrection of the departed, the rising from the ground the saints. We should not forget that the word 'Easter', from 'East', itself refers to rising, although in the sense of the rising sap of the Spring and the rising of the sun.

Ascension Day was celebrated piously in former times. If it rained on the day, the rainwater would be carefully collected and drunk. It was said that by His Ascension, Christ hallowed the sky and so the rainwater on this day had healing powers. I know that there are those who keep this custom to this day. On the other hand clothes must not be washed on Ascension Day, otherwise the life of a member of the family will be washed away.

Whitsun (Pentecost) means literally 'White Sunday' from the fact that many were baptized on this feast and thus dressed in white baptismal gowns, but perhaps also from the white light of the Holy Spirit.' In Somerset, 'God's Land', it was customary for women to wear white ribbons in their shoes, or at least carry a white flower, perhaps a daisy. It was a great feast and bells which were rung on this day were decorated with red ribbons to remind the faithful of the tongues of fire of the Holy Spirit. The main dish this day was veal, in other words, the Biblical 'fatted calf, with gooseberry pie. This became a problem with the calendar change in 1752 for gooseberries are not ripe for an early Whitsun.

Although saints were less venerated after the Reformation and many customs have been forgotten, some saints have remained in popular tradition. There are a great many sayings connecting saints' days with sowing seasons and the weather. By far the most well-known is that connected with St Swithin:

St Swithin's Day if thou dost rain
For forty days it will remain;
St Swithin's Day if thou be fair
For forty days 'twill rain no mair (more).

Less well known is: 'Till St Swithin's Day be past, Apples be not fit to taste'. Of a multitude of saws, which deserve an article in themselves, connected with agriculture we may mention: 'David and Chad, Sow peas, good or bad'. (Do not delay sowing

peas after 1 and 2 March).’ On St Barnabas Day (11 June) mow away, grass or none’, or ‘Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright, The longest day and the shortest night’. The great problem with these sayings is that after the 1752 calendar change, most of them became untrue. For example St Barnabas Day was the longest day and the shortest night, but after 1752, it fell simply on June 11. What we now call an Indian summer is still called St Martin’s or St Luke’s little summer. The exclamation ‘By George’ was originally an appeal to the nation’s patron saint for help and intercession.

The sign of the cross is recalled in a degenerate form in crossing the fingers for luck and the schoolchild’s solemn promise, ‘cross my heart and hope to die’. I know of housewives who still make the sign of the cross over any bread, cake or pastry they bake to ensure that it turns out well. Incidentally they make the cross in the Orthodox fashion – it should not be forgotten that the Roman Catholic inversion only goes back two or three hundred years. Similarly I know of people who still place a poker Crossways over a fire, thus making the sign of the cross, to ensure that the fire does not smoke. Until the nineteenth century crosses would often be carved on doorsteps, sills and lintels, to ‘keep out the Devil’. At weddings millers used to set the sails of their windmills in a position known as ‘the Miller’s Glory’, i.e. like a St George’s cross, not a St Andrew’s, Cross.

There are also birth and burial customs of great Christian significance. A Child born at the ‘chimes hours’ i.e. the hours when bells chimed for Church Services, the third, sixth, ninth hours and before Liturgy and Vespers is still considered by some to receive a special blessing. The Churching of women on the 40th day was also considered to be very important, a sure remedy for post-natal depression. The first thing to be placed in a baby’s cradle was the Gospel. In Lincolnshire there was until recently a custom, or perhaps rather superstition, of receiving confirmation twice – this was thought to cure rheumatism! In the Marches confirmation was said to cure lumbago and sciatica. In Northumberland, just as among pious Romanian peasants to this day, the funeral clothes of a bride bridegroom were an integral part of any wedding trousseau. In the West England the faithful would put rue, hyssop and wormwood in coffins, as symbols of repentance. How far have we come from such piety today!

In spite of 400 years of Protestantism, it is still customary in country areas to eat fish on Fridays, a mere remnant of Orthodox fasting – nevertheless something of which today’s ‘Neo-Orthodox’ seem to be incapable.

As regards blessings, it should not be forgotten that the origin of expression ‘Good-bye’ is ‘God be with you’. Until the Reformation, expression ‘Thank you’ was less used, being replaced by ‘God ’a’ mercy’ (God have mercy), which still survives in the Cockney ‘Lawks a mercy’ (Lord have mercy). A popular bedtime prayer was and is ‘the White Paternoster’: ‘Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, bless the bed that I lie on’; I can remember being taught it in childhood.

One local tradition that I cannot fail to mention is that of the old shepherds on the Essex marshes. When they died, they were always buried with some sheep's wool in their hand. It was said that when at the Last Judgement, they would be asked why they had not attended church Sundays, they would hold up the wool and thus be forgiven – for they had been tending their flocks in Christ-loving wise.

Of all these fragments, reminders of the common Tradition, the most important in my view is that of Christian charity, the practice of the Faith I have been told countless times by folk of how in our village poor families would systematically cook an extra plate of food for dinner. And this was during the Depression, when all my father had to eat was two crusts of bread and an 'oxo mess' a day. Nobody knew who the extra food was for but invariably a tramp, beggar or unemployed man, fallen on hard times would come along and then a plate of food would go to him, with the words, 'God bless you'. If that is not Orthodoxy, then I don't know what is.

In these crumbs from the Tradition, fallen like the Canaanite woman's from the table of the Master, we are reminded that God does not forsake the sincere and the devout, however far from the Church their 'leaders' have taken them. Deprived of so many of the riches of the Church, God has remembered them, for 'the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth' (John 3, 8).

In former times England was called 'Merry', not in the corrupt modern sense, but in the ancient sense of the word, 'Blessed'. Such customs did indeed bless a land. God does not forsake us, only we forsake God. Old English culture and tradition declared that all Creation is with God and shares in the joy of His Kingdom, for the Earth is here to call us to God. All that exists is a mere reflection of the non-material, real world beyond this one in which we have faith. That is why, in Old English, the word 'Orthodox' was translated by geleafful – faithful. At a time when we are faced with a choice between turning to the 'West', to Mammon, and turning to the 'East', to Christ, these traditions may help us to make the right choice. The fragments I have described above, and a great many others, may yet one day be reintegrated into that divine Tradition that we call the Orthodox Christian Faith and Church. May it be so, O Lord!

October 1990

33. The Resurrection of England

‘The isles shall declare my glory among the nations.’

(Isaiah 66, 19)

In the heart of London stands the great royal church, Westminster Abbey. Inside visitors may see the Coronation Chair, the very throne on which the kings and queens of these islands are crowned. And under that Chair lies a stone. According to legend that stone is said to be the stone of Bethel, the stone on which Jacob laid his head and dreamt of the ladder on which angels ascended and descended. The legend says that the stone was brought from Egypt to Ireland, then taken to Scotland and in the thirteenth century from Scotland to England and Westminster. It is known as ‘Lia Fail’, the Stone of Destiny, the legendary symbol of our national destiny and faith in that destiny. Our sense of divine calling, the ‘English Idea’, the vision of Jacob that came to dwell in these islands and in England is founded on this Stone. Tradition says that should it be taken from us, our monarchy and so our nation shall fail. Whatever the truth of this legend, its very existence is the sure sign that even from ancient times our nation has had a special sense of its part to play in history, a special destiny in the unfolding drama and inner meaning of history. (Since this was written the Stone has been returned to Scotland; note of 2014).

Another legend handed down through the centuries tells us that Our Lord Himself came with His Most Holy Mother and dwelt in this land, and there in Glastonbury was built the first place of worship, a church ‘not built by the hands of men’. To this day in the West, men and women still utter the old saws, ‘as sure as God’s in Priddy’ (Somerset), or ‘as sure as God’s in Gloucestershire’.

And if we find these legends hard to believe, then this much can be said – that the disciples of Our Lord walked here and preached the Word of Truth. Some say that St Joseph of Arimathea came here. Eastern sources speak quite clearly of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul coming to these shores, baptising and bringing many to the Faith. The dedication of the two main London churches to St Peter (Westminster) and St Paul’s (the East Minster) rests on these traditions. Some say that St Lazarus and his holy sisters, Martha and Mary, sailed with St Joseph. The Lives of the Saints state that St Simon the Zealot, one of the Twelve, whose wedding-feast had been blessed by the Saviour in Cana of Galilee, came and tell of how he enlightened many heathen with the Faith of Christ. And what of the disciple of St Paul, St Aristobulus, the brother of St Barnabas, who was also here within a few years of the Rising from the Dead of Our Lord, Aristobulus, who preached and baptized and ordained and then received the crown of martyrdom in the year 58?

And if there are still those whose faith is so weak that they cannot believe the most ancient statements of the Lives of the Saints and the witness of historians of the very

first centuries, then surely they can believe that the Lord came and dwelt here inasmuch as he dwelt in the hearts of His saints, who since have walked the length and breadth of these islands. For the names of them that came from Jerusalem and Gaul and Rome and those that grew in the Faith here are legion.

What of the British chief, St Lucius, who, as old traditions say, asked the Bishop of Rome to send Christian missionaries in the second century? What of St Alban and the many other martyrs who confessed their faith in the Living God in the face of the oppressor and suffered martyrdom? And what shall we say of St Helen, mother of St Constantine the Great, proclaimed first Christian Emperor of the world in York, whom ancient tradition affirms walked in Colchester:

‘From Colchester there rose a starre,
The rayes thereof gave glorious light
Throughout the world, in climates farre,
Great Constantine Rome’s Emperor bright.’

And what of that great host of British saints working mainly in the west and the north – St Patrick and St David, consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Ninian, the Apostle of the Picts, St Gildas, St Illtyd and St Dyfrig, St Columba and St Columban?

But let us now speak of the hallowed ones of the English who stand in the Kingdom of Heaven, that holy company of Englishmen and Englishwomen who confessed Christ and so were brought to Paradise. There stand the holy monks, Augustine, Austin, the Apostle of the English, Paulinus, Laurence, Peter and Justus. There they hold the cross and the holy image of The Saviour which brought them to dedicate the Mother-Cathedral of the English nation Christ, Christchurch:

‘Day breaks on England down the Kentish hills,
Singing in the silence of the meadow-footing rills,
Day of my dreams, O day!
I saw them march from Dover, long ago,
With a silver cross before them, singing low.
Monks of Rome from their home where the blue seas break in foam,
Augustine, with his feet of snow’.

Flecker

And there before us stands Mellitus, Bishop of London, who remembered how the great Apostle Paul had preached at Ludgate and so nearby dedicated the Cathedral of London to him, where it still stands, having defied the bombs of the new barbarians. There is the holy King Ethelbert or Albert and the Abbesses Mildred and Eanswythe. With St Aidan, St Oswald of Heavenfield who prayed without ceasing. There go the holy brothers Chad and Cedd and their faithful monk Owen, and the sisters Saxburgh and Audrey of Ely and the priest Huna whose hermitage is now a farm on the windswept fen, but his voice can be heard in the wind. Here is the great St Hilda and

the humble minstrel Caedmon who praised the might of the creator, Who 'wrought heaven as a roof for the children of men'. The righteous Cuthbert and his soul-friend Herbert, recluse on his island in Derwentwater, Cuthbert, 'the Wonderworker of Britain', who 'sent forth his spirit to the bliss of Paradise'. And Benedict, who loved the learning of wise books and prayer before the holy icons, stands with the reverend and gentle abbot-saints, Ceolfrid or Geoffrey and Eosterwine and all the saints of Hexham.

Theodore, the venerable Greek, shone as Metropolitan of the English Church, and there with him the holy Abbot Adrian the African. There is lowly Alnoth of Stowe, the learned Aldhelm of Malmesbury, stern Wilfrid of York and Guthlac, the English desert-father, who fought against the Old Dragon, the one they still call 'Black Shuck' in the fens. Near his holy sister, Pega of Peakirk, there – St John of Beverley, the Wonderworker, and Bede the Venerable, the 'candle burning with the Holy Ghost'. And all those holy ones who left these white shores to learn and then to teach: the holy virgins, Sethrida, Ethelburgh and Erkengota; the great Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, Clement, Apostle of the Frisians, Willehad and Philip, Lioba and Lull, the holy brothers Ewald and Ewald and all those who laboured long to bring the light of Christ to the North and to the West, 'declaring the glory of God among the nations'. Here passes the humble shepherd Cuthman who so loved the church in Steyning. And that mild and blessed Bishop of Winchester, St Swithin, the English rain-saint. And Edmund the King, who as Christ in Gethsemane of his own will gave himself up to martyrdom, with all those others who suffered for God, Theodore and his companions in Crowland, Hedda in Peterborough and the monks of Chertsey.

And what of the saintly Alfred, venerated amongst the people as 'England's Darling', 'England's Shepherd', 'England's Comforter'? He was the King, who like Solomon of old, uttered his wisdom in proverbs 'Each day thou art useless if thou thank not God for thy life!'. It was to him that the people attributed the feast of the Twelve Days of Christmas. He was pastor and scholar and warrior who forgave his enemies and baptized them instead of slaughtering as the heathen. He created a Kingdom of ordered living with freedom, that was to become the envy of the world. He was followed by the devotion of King Athelstan and St Edgar the Peaceful, King of All-England, who loved monks and received the homage of all the kings of these islands on the Dee at Chester in 973. And here in the holy throng Edward the Martyr, whose martyrdom was to be chastised within less than a hundred years.

But we must mention the holy three, responsible for the spiritual flowering of England in those last years: there St Dunstan, 'First Abbot of the English Nation', the Archpastor who possessed the gift of tears, statesman and mystic, 'commanding and venerable with his snow-white hair, like an angel to look upon'; Ethelwold of Winchester, called 'the Father of Monks'; Oswald of Worcester, who passed to Heaven after washing the feet of twelve poor men as was his custom throughout Lent, and who, before reposing prayed with his beloved monks in Ramsey, 'May the Lord bring us together in Paradise': 'Orphans and widows, strangers and peasants, monks

and clerics, all of them wept and mourned in their grief ... Merchants left their markets, women their looms, all hurrying to his door ... they loved him in life, they honoured him in death'. And how can we not mention Alphege, the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sigfrid and his holy nephews who baptized in Sweden and the North? And St Alfwold who went to glory before the sacred image of St Swithin, with the words of his favourite antiphon to St Cuthbert on his lips.

The Old Faith brought unity of monarchy and people in the Church. It brought unity to the people of these islands. The Faith of the first ten centuries founded in Christ was the golden age of Christian England. It was a sacral, peasant Kingdom, entrusted with the guardianship of the Faith.

After this Age of Faith, they tried to lay waste the Kingdom in feudal tyranny, tyrannic humanism, Republic or mercantilism. They led us into Egypt, took us away into captivity, but the firmness of the foundations of the first centuries has not been overcome. The spiritual reality of England stands sturdy and eternal as the Stone of Destiny on which our monarchs are crowned. So we can pray in the words of St Edgar, first King of All-England, over one thousand years ago: 'I give Thee thanks, O Christ, High King, Who rulest those Thou lovest, Who has set me over Thy people and given it to me to gather together so many of Thy servants, men and women, to render to Thee Divine Praises for Thine honour.

Part Two: The Two Englands

'The isles await me.'

(Isaiah 51, 5)

'All must go from bad to worse on account of the people's sins, before the coming of Antichrist'. So wrote the Archbishop of York, Wulfstan, in the year 1014. These premonitions and dark dreams were about to become living nightmares after 1066 when the English nation was divided and harried by the Norman Invader. Men wept as the golden age of Christianity in these islands that had lasted a millennium and more ended in blood and strife.

The people's monarchy was taken over by feudal oppressors. Noble Saxon Earls were displaced by wicked barons who filled the land with bloodshed in passion of rivalry. In later times their like would be displaced by tyrant and then mammonite who ruled with naked power or industrial might.

Our home and heritage, this little England, was embroiled in foreigners' wars, one hundred years on the Continent, then in later times, in mercantile wars. Instead of going abroad to spread the Word of God, as in the heroic eighth century, men took the world of world expansion for gain of lucre – and loss of soul.

The Faith of our fathers and mothers, the love of God and the love of neighbour, the life-wisdom of noble ideal and practical sense, was perverted into the arid booklore of

brain-ridden schoolmen and jurists. In later times, in an Erastian Church, founded by a State-worshipping King, this same Faith would be persecuted in new ways, and then would follow the bigotry of the individual human mind which devised a multitude of sects.

‘Thus Faith and Throne and Home were led into captivity’.

The land was built upon, made ugly with fortress and brooding castle, ‘filled with demons’. Gothic spires would then search aloft for the unknown God, pushed back to Heaven by man grown wicked. Came others, syphilitic Henry, ruiners of the Church, who sold it off, ‘privatised’ it, to their favourites for gold. Oppressors of our brother Celtic peoples, they were forerunners of regicide, Republic and image-breaker Cromwell. There came Revolution and Dutch and German monarch. There followed new ‘cathedrals’ in honour of Mammon, begrimed with the filth of his cult, of the idol of the mercantile, not spiritual, empire. Here black deeds created a black country and slum and dirt and a jealous Kaiser started the first German war. Today the cathedrals of grime have been displaced by newer cathedrals, monuments to modern madness, blocks that soar in honour of the religion of man who strives to grow wiser and nearer to Heaven – without God But these Towers of Babel will fall – like the one of old – they are but prisons where men lose their minds in folly.

And yet side by side with this, Old English Life and Faith continued to shine within the inner man, a candle blowing in the wind. The inner light remained. Saxon thoughts and treasures, belonging to the England that is eternal, were hid from uncomprehending eye of the outer man. The stream of the Old Faith, a thousand years old, continued to flow on its way into the infinite ocean that is God.

In slumbering village, roofed in thatch, in Saxon-founded Hall, village alehouse in whitewashed and oak-beamed cottage, flint-stone and frescoed Saxon church, in this world drowned in images of eternity, the Old Faith lived on. Under the mystical leadership of the nation’s Guardian Angel, the patronage of St George and all the English saints, we survived the Middle Ages. A new flowering took place as Papal hegemony began to crumble. Strong men and heroes came, in the greenwood and on land and sea, where ‘He blew and they were scattered’. Despite 500 years of oppression, the same people remained with the same thirst for truth, righteousness and freedom. We fought against Gallic vice, atheist Revolution. We fought against the faithless, scientific lore of the German who had cast aside the sweet teaching of St Boniface. Angels came to our aid in desperate hours at Mons and again at Béthune in Northern France, and at Dunkirk and again over Kentish skies, and yet again when we went out to free the peoples of Europe four years later in the greatest Armada of all.

At all times of calamity, in spite of all the errors in all their forms in all the ages, the isles have awaited divine aid and so the Lord has come – and led us out of Egypt and across the Red Sea towards the Promised Land.

Part Three: Israel and the Golden Calf

‘In that day the Lord will extend His hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people from the isles of the sea’.

(Isaiah 11, 11)

Some two generations ago now we were led through the Red Sea – the last war – and since then we have wandered in the contemporary wilderness. And there is no Moses to guide us. We await the coming. Then the Mystery of history will be fully revealed, in all His brightness and glorious might.

And until that day there will be Two Englands.

The first is Babylon. It worships Mammon, the Golden Calf of Commerce, and belongs to those dark forces which are preparing the enthronement of the Evil One in Jerusalem. This Babylon advocates the immorality of disordered living that it calls freedom, together with the spiritual oppression that it calls ordered living. Having lost its faith, it has sold its soul and heritage for the mess of pottage that it calls material well-being. Here then is the result of that desire to be great without God.

The second England is Jerusalem. This England, true England and Israel, remains faithful to the spirit and understanding, life and traditions of the Old Faith, planted in these isles so long ago, by the Lord Himself through His Apostles and Disciples and Saints. Faithfulness to Her is faithfulness to national, patriotic tradition. Haunted by Her Saints, She worships the Living God and mystically belongs to the Commonwealth of all true Christian peoples. It was Her faithfulness to Christ which created a land of freedom and ordered living which lasted until our own times. But this England is now retreated and hidden, in readiness for the Coming of Christ, Her Messiah.

And at that time, God’s good time, the whole of the English Church shall gather. They shall come out of the North and the South, the East and the West; there shall go Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Abbesses, Her religious, and faithful clergy, and all the righteous people of God and their bright endeavours, all who have taken shelter beneath the broad and sacred raiment of Christ down all the ages. They have come out of the fiery trial, from weariness and want, to the Great and Everlasting Whitsun, the Bright Kingdom of the Spirit.

And this will be the first day, of the Resurrection of England.

January 1991

34. To the Russian Reader

‘In chastising the Russian people, the Lord has at the same time shown them the path of salvation, for He has made of this people preachers of Orthodoxy all over the world. The Russian Diaspora has made Orthodoxy known to the ends of the Earth; most Russian émigrés, largely unwittingly, have become preachers of Orthodoxy ... Russians in exile have been granted the gift of enlightening the world with the light of Orthodoxy, so that other peoples, seeing their good works, might glorify their Heavenly Father and so themselves win salvation.’

Blessed John (Maximovich) at the Council of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, 1938

In Russia, as in Western Europe, as everywhere, we live amidst changes which indicate that the world is now hastening to its end. The Orthodox Christian can look forward to the Coming of Christ ‘with fear of God and faith’, as he looks forward to the chalice of Christ. But he can also look back, beyond the material and outward changes of history, to the deeper truths, to the noble, spiritual traditions of his people, to his God-inspired roots. Thus in Russia we can look back beyond modern apostasy, beyond the betrayals that led to the three generations of Babylonian captivity of recent times, back to the age-old traditions of Orthodoxy. Thus the Greeks, the Romanians and the Bulgarians can look beyond the Erastianism of recent times to the eternal truths of the Faith; other peoples, like the Serbs and those in the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem still remain in Orthodox Truth without basic compromise, though under great pressures.

But what of all those, in England, in France, in Italy, in Germany, in Spain, in the Americas and elsewhere, who have been brought back to the Orthodoxy of their forebears by the holy and providential witness of the Russian emigration and the Faith of the millions of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia?

It is my conviction, shared with others, that beneath the successive layers of error in Western history, there lies a pure undercurrent of Orthodoxy in the West; behind the 20th century Apostasy, 19th century Industry, 18th century deism, behind the Reformation and the neo-pagan Renaissance, beyond Medieval Scholasticism and the fateful Papal Schism of the 11th century, there lies the pure Truth of Orthodoxy.

The consequences of this conviction are manifold. It means that the West, this ex-Orthodox Continent, now through the grace of Orthodoxy has the opportunity to return to the Church. With one heart we can say, ‘Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has brought us together’. Together, in these times of worldwide Apostasy, we shall pray in the strength of Christ and His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, with all the Saints and the words of St John:

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Holy Great Martyr George the Victorious,
Patron Saint of England, 23 April 1991

35. England's True Glory

‘Forget six counties overhung by smoke,
Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
Forget the spreading of the hideous town,
Think rather of the packhorse on the down.
And dream of London, small, and white, and clean’.

William Morris, *The Earthly Paradise*

‘A nation which has forgotten its past can have no future.’

Winston Churchill

‘The question now put to the world is simply this. Which are you going to choose? Better or brighter humanity, or better and brighter bombs? We are unduly proud of certain parts of our past, like any other nation, and unduly ignorant of the rest... . The barbarians say, let the dead past lie. Men who misuse the present always mock an interest in the past.’

John Masefield, *I Want! I Want!*, 1944

I grew up after the War, in the England of the Atom Bomb. A nation where it is not God that has deserted man, but where man has deserted God in the faithlessness of modern times. And as a result man has discovered that in losing his faith he has also lost his humanity and gained, not freedom, but folly. ‘The fool hath said in his heart there is no God’. But I was born in the Brave New World of motorways and television, shopping centres and riot, divorce and abortion. This, I saw, was the England that worships Mammon, greed for gain, concrete, brash modernity, an England that has rejected a millennium and more of Tradition, an England that has lost its way in tasteless and mindless materialism. I do not belong to that England. I belong to a generation that has found heart in the old truths, a generation that has found sense and direction and meaning in continuity, in a deeper, truer, enduring England.

Behind and beyond the senseless and ugly commercialism there is another England, Old England, the faithful Guardian of Tradition. This is a world, parallel to the new one, a world which can be entered into at will by all those who have the faith to seek it. It is there, in the secret places, along the narrow lanes, banked by high hedges, and in the grassy tracks, and far away down in the hollow where nestles an old inn, and oak and thatch dream in the midday still. It is there in the cool, stone church that the Saxons built sure and strong, fortress of faith, with its lovely, carved and gilded screen and its ancient paintings faded on the walls. It is there in the evening breeze of the long shadows of the churchyard, guarded by the yews, grown old when Alfred was enthroned to win the Danes for Christendom.

It is there in the old beams of the black and white hall that hides along the sweetly-lavendered and foxgloved path. It is there in the lovely cottage gardens that green under the gentle rains. It is there in the log-fire in the crisp autumn night. It is there in the simple smile and the courtesy, the kind gesture and sense of fairness of our people. It is there in the freedom with order that we hold dear in our way of life, the dream of the world. It is there in our saints of old, hermits who pray for us still and missionaries who went out centuries ago and brought the Light of Christ to pagan Europe across the waters. This is God's England, our little England where dwells the English spirit in the mystic presence of St George and all the hallowed ones of the English land, whose voices come crying to us from down the centuries, out of the depths of our national history, calling us back to our true path, our national identity (for the saints are our national identity), in other words, to our God-ordained destiny.

We can of course reject all this our heritage, which is mainly what has been done since the War. And yet it was that very War which had a message for us. In it we lost our worldly greatness, by which we had been allowed, though unworthy, to rule half the world that it might be hallowed by the Gospel. But Gospel-like did we lose an earthly Empire, – by sacrificing ourselves for others, by going out in war and fighting and triumphing over the tyrants and all their faithless vaunting. We were then alone, and yet once more we were the hope of all Europe, of all the world enslaved by the powers of darkness. For once more we were fighting for another greatness, the greatness of freedom and fairness and truth, Gospel greatness England's earthly greatness died in England's following Christ. This was the message of the War, the very fruit of our English heritage.

And so, should we reject this and follow the path of the nations of Europe which wander all lost and adrift in the miasma of modernity, Where dream has been overtaken by nightmare and hope by despair, then we too shall altogether lose our way. We can choose between an England stunted by money that will turn us into spiritual dwarves, or an England touched with Beauty that will turn us into quickening spirits. Let us seek not that first England, all fallen and laid low, but rather England restored in that sinless God and Man, Christ. Let us return to the ways of our own historic little island; let us heed the Israel of Old England, our roots, our secret land, haunted by the faith and prayers of our forebears and the sweet and pure and wholesome teaching of Christ. It was with this teaching that once Englishmen and women brought pagan Europe to Christ, the same Europe that then sent the Norman usurper to corrupt and then divide us, and now has all but lost the Faith that England gave it messianically of old. This Faith, the Old Faith, is the English Idea, the philosophy of England; no highfalutin' theory or faithless lore, just a clean soul and kindness to your neighbour. And if we do that, visible England will be the true England that enshrines invisible England, God's true England.

Let us return then to this white island at the end of the world, land of old delight, where folk could be wise and fair and free, and Beauty and Truth and Goodness could reign in English hearts of oak. And therein we shall recover England's True Glory.

June 1991

36. The Assault on the Church

‘And there was war in heaven.’

(Rev. 12, 7)

One is often asked the question what the greatest problem of the Orthodox Church is today. To this question the obvious answer is, – the same as it has always been – the problem of the world. For it is the world and only the world that can take our salvation away from us, for ‘the world lieth in evil’. Of course it is true that the ways in which the world and its master, Satan, attack the Church vary down the ages.

Thus the first attacks against Christ Himself were those organized by an institutionalised religion, Judaism, which wished to safeguard its all too comfortable relations with the pagan Roman Empire. The next attacks against the Church were those of the pagan Roman Emperors, and all those who used the same pagan logic in their vain attempts to destroy the purity of the Church’s teaching. The following assaults were those of ungodly Emperors and Empresses in Constantinople. Then came the attacks of worldly, false religions and the ensuing enslavement of Orthodox lands and the glorious martyrdom of the faithful to the swords of Crusader and Muslim warrior alike. In recent times the Church has been attacked by secular, westernised States which have attempted to reduce the Church to nationalistic morality movements. All these movements have been manipulated by the external enemies of the Church in their attempts to destroy Her.

However, there have also been attacks mounted by internal enemies. These are the attacks of heresiarchs who have striven and still strive today to destroy the purity of the Orthodox Faith and its teachings. Many of these teachers of heresy have been and are actively supported by the Church’s external enemies, by Emperors, States, militant atheists and other false religions.

The way in which the world is today attacking the Church is very specific. This attack is the most pernicious of history, because it is in the form of worldliness itself. This attack is aimed at desacralizing the Church, at removing Her essence, Her power to hallow. The names of this attack are legion – secularism, modernism, humanism, iconoclasm, renovationism, ecumenism, rationalism, Uniatism, Westernization, Protestantization. The sole objective of all these movements is to make the Church conform to the world and all its spirit and values, in a word, to create a pseudo-Orthodoxy, a rival Orthodoxy.

The first factor in this process of creating an illusion of Orthodoxy is ecumenism. The chief aim of ecumenism is, though many do not realize it yet, to destroy the Church. This means removing from Orthodoxy all its essential churchliness, its churchly qualities and attributes. In this way Orthodoxy will no longer represent the Church but a mere historical denomination. Using its reductionist and relativist methods of

analysis, it takes away from the Church all Her absolute and unique values and principles, thus minimising the Orthodox Faith into a denomination with no more saving power and grace than any other denomination. In such a way the Orthodox Faith would be reduced to just another form of deism, belief in some ‘superior Being’, albeit with a certain quaintness.

The ‘advantage’ of such a belief as deism is precisely that it is the belief in a god who is so distant from human affairs that man is conveniently left to do exactly as he likes. At the same time he is left with the external rituals of Orthodoxy, thus comforting him with the illusion that he is still Orthodox. More than this, the notion of a deistic god is so vague that this ‘superior Being’ could even turn out to be Satan himself, clothed as an Angel of Light – Lucifer. However for Orthodoxy to be reduced to this, it must be first be compromised with syncretistic ecumenism. Secondly all attributes of Christ, the God-Man, and thirdly all attributes of the Holy Spirit, must be removed through reductionist and minimising assaults. What forms do these assaults on Christ and the Holy Spirit take in the new ‘pseudo-Orthodoxy?’

Pseudo-Orthodoxy must be Christless. After ecumenism has weakened faith in the Church, this is the next step in the secularist assault on the Church. It is for this reason that modernists attack the images of Christ in the Church. They attack the clergy, attempting to introduce a beardless, shaven-headed, cassockless clergy, thus erasing the physical icons of Christ. They attempt to do the same with the episcopate and also introduce a married hierarchy. This helps in their attacks against monasticism. In most local Orthodox Churches today the episcopate is monastic only in name and form. All this virulent anti-clericalism is justified by a wish to ‘democratise’ and ‘modernize’ the Church. In reality this is a form of iconoclasm, the desire to destroy the image of Christ.

To this movement belongs the urge of the modernists to do away with the iconostasis or, if they dare not go this far, at least to remove the royal (holy) doors, or, at the very minimum, to serve the Divine Liturgy with them open the whole time. This is explained by saying that ‘in the Early Church they did not have iconostases’. I shall reply later to this typically Protestant argument. The abandonment of the Church calendar for the civil one is part of the same iconoclastic movement. ‘Let us destroy the images of the Orthodox Tradition and replace them with modern, scientific, rational ones’, they say. The facts that the civil calendar was anathematised, that martyrs have died for the Church calendar and Tradition, that all these things are dear to faithful Orthodox because they were introduced by the Saints and Fathers worries them not a bit. The worship of the stars with astronomic exactitude for their own convenience is their only concern.

The modernist onslaught on Christ has also tried to destroy Orthodox sacramental piety, the sacraments that were instituted by Christ and have nourished the people of the Church since Apostolic times. Thus the rites of baptism and chrismation are cruelly shortened and baptism is often performed by sprinkling or pouring, even when

immersion is quite possible. The sacrament of matrimony is abridged and performed even when both partners are divorced or one of them is not even baptized. Unction is falling into disuse – many Orthodox do not even know what it is. The canons regarding ordination are cast aside – with pernicious results later. The sacrament of confession is reduced to a ritual and automatic absolution, or else distorted into a ‘general confession’, or worse still, is abandoned; we know of priests who freely give communion for years on end without ever confessing the communicants. And as regards Holy Communion itself, the Body and Blood of Christ are distributed in certain ‘progressive’ parishes as though it were a for all and sundry, regardless of ‘denomination’, preparation or regular confession. At these words we tremble with fear lest the righteous wrath of God strike us down for our impiety. Where is the sense of the sacred, the faith and fear of God?

Pseudo-orthodoxy must also rid itself of the Holy Spirit. ‘Orthodox’ liturgical scholars, wittingly or unwittingly, have aided much in this. They have dissected the Orthodox liturgical heritage and discovered that it is made up of ‘layers’ of creativity. From this the modernists have concluded that they can do very well without whole sections of services. ‘The Early Christians did not do this, therefore neither will we’. The falseness and even blasphemy of this statement is clear. First, we are not Early Christians – we do not have their martyric faith, and to compare oneself with them is the height of pride. Second, this type of Protestant reasoning is ultimately blasphemous because it denies the providential presence, action and guidance of the Holy Spirit in its creative role as the inspiration of countless holy hymnographers and liturgists of the Orthodox Church through nearly 2,000 years. The Church is Heaven on Earth, none of what occurs liturgically is a random chance. As the Holy Spirit was acquired by hymnographers, so their spiritual enlightenment and knowledge was embodied in the liturgical treasure-house of Church Tradition. This accounts for the layers of creativity, which in fact represent layers of revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the liturgical life of the Church. All Orthodox theology is expressed in our liturgical heritage, and theology is the Word of God given to man by the Holy Spirit.

The very attitude of admiration for the Early Church on the part of ‘Orthodox’ modernists is symptomatic not of piety, but of a disincarnated intellectualism. A view of Church history, which sees everything in terms of cause and effect, in terms of human psychology, as understood by positivist science, is simply a denial of the Church as the Body of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit acting providentially in Her through the Saints. The modernists, however, go even further and claim that ‘the sanctoral has taken the place of the temporal’. (In other words the Menaia and the services to the saints have replaced and taken over the function of sanctifying time as expressed in prayers in the daily cycle of offices). In fact this development is the miraculous sign of the sanctifying power of the Church through human history. ‘But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels’. (Heb. 12, 22). This is what the

liturgical reformers do not understand. In the same spirit they criticise the iconostasis, not understanding its significance as a spiritual revelation, as an image of the Kingdom. The result of the modernists' efforts is the tendency to reduce the Church to a 'Sunday Church' as in their Protestant and Roman Catholic models.

And from here the reformers wish to reform the Divine Liturgy itself. Among them the Proskomidia may take place in the middle of the Church, 'so that the people can participate'. What liturgical and historical ignorance can justify this? Even the Renovationists in Russia in the 1920s never went so far. The reformers say that the liturgy is 'too long'. For this reason they abridge it by omitting the litany for the catechumens. In any case, they say, this litany is 'offensive to non-Orthodox visitors'. This is but the first step to intercommunion. Then the modernists read aloud or rather shout out the Eucharistic Canon, which should be read in secret, because they want 'the people to understand'. As if the people were so stupid and inferior to modernist intellectuals that they need to understand. Nobody seems to have informed the modernists that we are not saved because we 'understand'. This is purely intellectual snobbery. And where is their sense of the sacred? Nobody understands or can possibly understand the Eucharist and the changing of the Gifts into the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Christ. The secret prayers are read secretly because they concern the 'mysteries', i.e. the sacraments, which cannot be understood by anyone, however loudly the secret prayers are shouted out. Moreover the prayers concern the 'performer' of the sacraments, that is, the priest or bishop celebrating. These prayers are therefore sacred. And what if someone should know them and profane the words? Our souls quake and tremble at the mystery of the Eucharist.

It must be said that the only results achieved by liturgical reformers are the destruction of Orthodox liturgical piety. They reduce the fasts, even mock them. With their civil, worldly calendar, they reduce the length of the Apostles' Fast by thirteen days. They bring into disrespect the liturgical traditions of the Church, they mock the clergy, ignore the canons and ultimately profane the church building. All this they justify with their rationalistic arguments, but in reality they attempt to justify only their worldliness their laziness, their secularism and their desacralization of the Church and Her Spirit-inspired Tradition. It is the Devil who mocks them and their intellectual justifications and 'corrected' calendar and all those who know better 2,000 years of saints.

We may not yet here be called to martyrdom, but what is certain is that we are called to confession, to confess the Truth of Church Tradition, to show steadfast faithfulness to the Faith of the Church. In this way we shall be confessors of Orthodoxy, defending the Faith against the Assault on Heaven, which has already started.

July 1991

36. 'It's Later than You Think'

'And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'

(Matt 24, 31)

31 December 2000. From our London Correspondent.

The situation here is still very tense after European Federal troops attempted to invade the British provinces through the Channel Tunnel late last night. The attack failed since British defence forces had previously dynamited the Tunnel with several thousand tons of TNT packed into Juggernaut Eurotrucks. On detonation the Tunnel was flooded, washing away at least two hundred Federal Super-leopard tanks. British commentators compared this to the defeat of Pharaoh when he tried to pursue the Israelites across the Red Sea; it is estimated in Berlin that the drilling of a new tunnel would cost several tens of billions of Euromarks. The European Federal State Parliament is to meet in closed session tonight amid threats that this time it would implement 'the final solution' to 'the British problem'.

In Frankfurt, the headquarters of the EFS (European Federal State) Bank, Eurofed, it is rumoured that Federal missiles are to be targeted on institutions in the City of London in an effort to break British resistance and reimpose the European Germany, 'the only alternative to a German Europe'. A source close to the National Salvation Front in London has said that if Federal bombers or missiles attempted to knock out targets in Britain, British Home Guard forces would retaliate. Frankly, it is difficult to see how this is possible since Belgium has consistently refused to sell stocks of ammunition to the British and reserves must now be very low. Also in London the British Liberation Front, which staged the successful coup against the Federal quisling government, has said that in case of invasion, 'safe havens' would be prepared in the Northern hills.

The National Salvation Front has ordered the arrest of a great many traitors mainly politicians, industrialists and media personalities. They are to be detained in the cramped quarters of the Tower of London, while awaiting trial for treason. A spokesman confirmed that the Front would be issuing British passports in the next few days. 'Bonfires', he said, 'would be prepared up and down the land' where citizens could burn their Europassports. He has added that tomorrow cash dispensers would be open all over the country where citizens would be able to exchange their Euromarks for the new currency, called pounds, shillings and pence. The NSF has already replaced the European flag with the Union flag. In much of the country the Metric system has been replaced with the Imperial system of measurements. Hated Euroholidays were abolished last week and national saints' days declared holidays, Independence Day being declared on September 15, the day the NSF declared UDI.

On the diplomatic front several countries have already recognized Great Britain, as the British provinces are now known. These include the Kingdoms of Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania as well as the Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and Croatia. Speculation is rife about forthcoming diplomatic recognition from Tsarist Russia. Tsar Nicolas III, in a recent speech in St Petersburg, declared that the EFS was in any case no more than 'a masonic plot' and called for the right of all sovereign peoples to determine their own futures without outside interference. Within the last few hours we have heard that the Russian Baltic Fleet is at this moment steaming into the North Sea to help the newly-formed 'Royal Navy', which consists of British mutineers and captured vessels of the Federal Navy.

Despite the great tensions and war footing, the British people are ecstatic at the news that the British Royal Family is returning home from its three-year exile in New Zealand. Scenes of unparalleled joy will await the youthful King William V who has borne the sorrow of his father's assassination by Federal agents in Auckland two years ago with great fortitude.

In Scotland Federal trawlers have been taken over by Royal Navy teams. 'Royal Air Force' (former British members of the Federal Air Force) crews have landed helicopters on Federal oil-rigs in the North Sea. A spokeswoman for the NSF in Edinburgh said that Scotland would reclaim its fishing grounds and its oil and gas fields from what she called 'Federal Imperialism

Meanwhile there have been revolts in other parts of The EFS. In newly united Ireland, Protestants and traditionalist Catholics joined forces burn down EFS offices in Dublin and Belfast. In Athens the EFS appointed President has been arrested by the new government. In the North of Europe heavily-armed Norwegian resistance fighters have landed in Bergen and Stavanger in gunboats from Iceland. Rioting has been reported in all the Scandinavian capitals. In Italy columns of tanks and troop-carriers are advancing from the south where they took Naples two days ago without a shot being fired. They are converging on Rome. Disturbances have been reported from Portugal where many Spanish refugees have fled. From Poland, where Pope Peter of Rome has been in exile for the last three years, satellite pictures show troops massed on the borders with Germany in case Berlin still intends to invade Silesia. Even in the south of France it is reported that Federal troops are being brought in to quell rioting by French peasants.

In the administrative headquarters of the World Church in Jerusalem, Pope Lucifer I has called for a crusade against 'forces of reaction' which reject his supremacy over all religions of the World Church. However, he did not actually name the Kingdom of Great Britain where, as readers may recall, the anti EFS-revolt first started last April after the mass shootings at the banned St George's Day marches in London and Manchester. In a statement released to the world media and signed by assorted bishops and senior figures, Pope Lucifer, the reconciler of all modern religions, sovereign ruler of Jerusalem, defender of Judaism, Islam and the Church, said that the

first united Europe had been founded by Charlemagne in the Franco-German heartlands and confirmed in Rome twelve centuries ago. He went on to recall that those who rejected the EFS were also rejecting the supremacy of the World Church. Nobody, he said, had the right to reject his authority or the world religious unity that he represented. Any who did so were schismatics and would face economic excommunication and be severely punished in the same way that all traditionalist Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox who had rejected his authority had already been punished

Stop Fax

It has just been announced in Brussels that the EFS President has been rushed by private ambulance to an EFS hospital in the city, suffering from massive heart failure. A further statement is expected shortly. There has still been no denial that the EFS Defence Minister has flown to Baghdad to seek asylum, but other EFS gerontocrats are still intending to meet tonight. Meanwhile there are unconfirmed reports in both London and Dublin that plans are afoot for a political merger between Great Britain and Ireland. The new sovereign state would be called 'The Kingdom of the British Isles'. In a late fax, English guardsmen, still in exile in New Zealand, are reported to have demanded the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury and have put forward Bishop Alban of Wellington as a successor. He would replace the former abortionist, Archbishop Arius, who was appointed by Pope Lucifer only two years ago, and who is currently said to be in hiding near Calais.

No less than two minutes ago we received a most dramatic fax from Damascus. According to this, Imperial Russian Armies have now crossed the Caucasus and are heading in a two-pronged attack towards Constantinople and through Turkey and Syria towards Jerusalem. Tsar Nicholas III has issued a communiqué calling for the overthrow of Pope Lucifer and the return of Patriarch Theophilus of Jerusalem, who was so brutally expelled from office when Pope Lucifer came to power three years ago. Since then he has been living as a virtual recluse in a Russian monastery. Pope Lucifer who so recently brought peace and unity to the world with the support of all governments, has called on the billions of people in all nations who worship him as the One True God to rise up and 'spew out' what he called 'the mobs of Bethlehem', in other words all those traditional Christians who have so far resisted his supreme authority. Troops loyal to Pope Lucifer are massing in Israel to repel the Imperial Russian Armies. Pope Lucifer has called on his forces to prepare for 'a holy war' and 'the mother of battles' at a site called Armageddon. Further developments are imminent.

July 1991

38. Two English Orthodox New Martyrs

Since the end of the Second World War and all its ensuing pain and disruption, a small but not insignificant wave of some thousands of conversions, or rather returns, to Orthodox Christianity has occurred in the British Isles. The fruit of this is now before us – the growing up of a second and even third generation of Orthodox Christians of British blood and island ancestry. It would therefore seem not inappropriate to recall now our Orthodox forerunners and forebears. I speak not of those who in ancient times confessed the Orthodox Faith in these islands. Neither do I speak of those who were privileged before the war and even in previous centuries to embrace and confess the Orthodox Faith and drink of Her living waters, nor even of those who were counted worthy of the priesthood, like Fr. Stephen Hatherly (in the 1870s) or Fr. Nicholas Gibbes (in the 1930s). I speak above all of calling to heart and mind those who were worthy to share in the holy suffering and martyrdom of sister-peoples of the great Orthodox Commonwealth in most recent times.

Among the countless host of Orthodox martyrs of this century, we should not forget an English Orthodox. Born in Russia of an English father, he is Nicholas Johnson, private secretary to the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, together with whom he was martyred just after the Grand Duke's brother, Nicolas II, was martyred. The holy martyr Nicholas (Johnson) is mentioned in the stichira at Lauds in the Matins to the Royal Martyrs, together with the other martyred Grand Dukes and their faithful servants, who are all commemorated on 4 / 17 July.

It seems fitting that the English Orthodox who are faithful to the memory of the New Martyrs should honour a compatriot who was deemed worthy of the martyr's crown together with the Russian relatives of our own Royal Family. May our veneration for the New Martyr Nicholas, a servant of Orthodoxy faithful to the end, be seen as a small wreath laid by faithful Orthodox people of these islands at the feet of the many millions of Russian Orthodox martyrs. And may we, though unworthy, through the prayers of the holy martyr Nicholas and through naming our sons after him, be remembered in the Kingdom of Heaven, of which he was counted worthy.

Holy New Martyr Nicholas, Pray to God for us!

On 30 April / 13 May 1876, in another martyred part of the Orthodox world, there took place the holy and noble sacrifice of an earlier Englishman, Sir Henry Abbot.

He was a partner in the company of R. Abbot & Sons, which was a large landowner and had considerable influence in the northern Greek city of Salonica, then still part of the Ottoman Empire. Aged 34, he was married to one of the daughters of Constantine Karatheodori, personal physician to Sultans Mohammed II and Abdul Mehdjid in Constantinople. Apart from his business interests, Henry Abbot also represented the

German Consulate in Salonica. Henry Abbot, an Orthodox Christian, was martyred in the following way.

In a Salonica street on that spring day in 1876, a group of Orthodox Christians, helped by the American Consul, had just rescued a young Bulgarian Orthodox girl whom a Muslim mob had been trying forcibly to convert to Islam. The enraged Mohammedans demanded that the girl be handed over to them at once. According to some reports, they managed to snatch back the girl and the American, and then drag her into a mosque (which, in point of fact, had formerly been a church dedicated to the Mother of God, but then desecrated by the Turks). At that moment Henry Abbot, helped by the French Consul, entered the mosque to rescue both the girl and the American, which they succeeded in doing. In revenge the mob then seized Henry Abbot and the Frenchman and proceeded to beat them to death with iron bars, until their bodies were but mangled heaps of flesh, blood and broken bone. According to another version, the American Consul himself had already managed to retrieve the girl a second time, driving himself and her away in his carriage before the Muslims could get her inside the mosque. And it was then that the mob took their cruel vengeance on Henry Abbot and the Frenchman.

Unfortunately we don't know what saint's name Henry Abbot had taken when he was received into the Orthodox Church. But surely here is another case like those of the early Russian and Russo-Scandinavian saints who took saints' names on baptism but are known in Russian calendars by their pagan names, since it was considered that they had hallowed their former names through their personal holiness. Examples include Sts Boris (Roman), Gleb (David), Olga or Helga (Helen), Vladimir or Waldemar (Basil). Given that we are ignorant of Henry Abbot's Orthodox name, we are obliged to use his 'name in the world', which we may consider he hallowed by his sacrifice.

Our source for these notes is a book entitled 'Bulgaria – a French Chronicle 1876–1878', (Sofia, 1988, in Bulgarian). The author, Vasil Vasilev, writes the following: 'He looked like a saint ... In Nero's times the first tortured, dismembered Christians, beaten to death, were canonized because they refused to renounce their faith. ... This feat was no less worthy – at the cost of human life, a young Bulgarian girl escaped conversion to Mohammedism'.

Although Henry Abbot has never officially been canonized by the Church (like many others martyred directly or indirectly as a result of their Orthodox Faith), he is surely worthy of our prayers and veneration, as the many millions of Orthodox martyrs of all nationalities, persecuted 'at the hands of heathen nations, of apostates, and of heretics', as we say at morning prayers. The feat of Henry Abbot reminds us of Our Lord's words in St John's Gospel: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'.

May his feat of self-sacrificing love and the feat of faithfulness to the end of the New Martyr Nicholas inspire in us the daily confession of the Orthodox Faith. 'Remember

them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation', (Heb. 13, 7). And may their example inspire us also to meet with a martyr's faith all those sinister and insidious movements which today threaten the fullness and purity of the Orthodox Faith over the whole of the Orthodox world.

Holy New Martyrs, Pray to God for us!

November 1991

(We wish to thank the Most Rev. Archbishop Antony of Los Angeles for information regarding the New Martyr Nicholas. As concerns the New Martyr Henry Abbot, we wish to thank Fr. Christo Petkov, a Bulgarian priest, who first drew his martyrdom to our attention.)

39. The Cross and the Redemption

Some Old English and Modern Russian Parallels

‘For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks see after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.’

(I Cor. 1, 22–23)

‘The Fathers had the Holy Spirit, but we do not.’

(Abelard, in the Prologue from *Sic et Non* PL 178.)

‘All social and intellectual changes are dependent on the existence of a spiritual force without which they would not have been.’

(C. Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*.)

‘It is far more reasonable to suppose that in 1058 a great revolution in world history took place.’

(G. Tellenbach, *Church, State and Christian Society*.)

‘Between the end of the 11th century and the end of the 12th, everything changes in the West.’

(Y. Congar)

All secular historians are in agreement in saying that the great events which took place in Western Europe during the 11th century transformed the religious outlook, indeed the very nature and function of religion, in the West. The Roman Catholic historian, Christopher Dawson, insists that: ‘Early Medieval culture (of the West) and Byzantium were closely akin – the West from the early 12th century is different from all else’. A. N. Whitehead, the great historian of science, writes in his ‘Science and the Modern World’ that the development of the West is due to ‘the medieval insistence on the rationality of God’.

Non-Orthodox historians view the external consequences of the 11th century transformation of Christianity in the West but are incapable of explaining its spiritual origins. This is because they are themselves in thrall to post-11th century Western cultural reflexes. Orthodox Christian historians escape this conditioning and are therefore interested in the internal reasons and processes behind this religious, intellectual and social transformation, in the revolution in the theological understanding of the world at the time. We believe that these external changes are due to spiritual decline, the loss of spiritual knowledge and understanding of God and the world, as so excellently summed up above by the Scholastic Abelard, who was writing in about 1120.

In fact the statements of secular historians can be explained by the new *filioque* theology, officially adopted in the West and actually defended for the first time on dogmatic grounds in the 11th century. This theology, concerning the nature of God the Holy Trinity, stands at the heart of all that separates the Western denominations from the Orthodox Church. The *filioque* represents a loss of spiritual understanding and experience, an isolation from the life of the Church and therefore Her mystical-dogmatic teachings. The *filioque*, by locking up the Holy Spirit, the 'Comforter, the Spirit of Truth', in a relationship between God the Father and God the Son, means that all human life and activity are distanced from the source of sanctification and spiritual vitality. Man, spiritually deprived, separated from God, is left to his autonomous reason to live his life. With the *filioque*, God and spiritual knowledge are pushed back from man and he falls backwards into a neo-pagan renaissance of Greco-Roman humanistic rationalism, a Judeo-Christianity into which Arius, Nestorius, Pelagius and countless others had fallen before.

In the *filioque*, man's direct spiritual relationship with God is cut off and the Holy Spirit, in the words of Aquinas, is reduced to the mutual love of God the Father and God the Son. The *filioque* error leads to despiritualization. Once it is accepted, man's relationship with God is left to be conducted on intellectual, philosophico-scholastic, or emotional, psycho-pietistic, planes. The experiential understanding of God's grace and the soul, as expressed in Church teaching, is abandoned. New teachings are formulated by human intellect and emotion, to which are given the name 'humanism'. By affirming that the Holy Spirit was no longer in the world, the rationalists implied that Christ was no longer present in the world through the Holy Spirit. From this point it was only a short step to replace Christ by a 'Vicar', a substitute, the Pope of Rome.

Through the centuries of spiritual decline, but worldly greatness, in the West, the Divine Presence has gradually been eliminated from almost every sphere of human life. We have now arrived at the ultimate consequence of *filioque* theology: contemporary Western culture, made worldwide, in which a forgotten God has been shut up in a distant heaven amid preaching that 'God is dead'. A godless and aimless mankind yearns for a 'saviour' who will approve of man-worshipping humanism, that same humanism which has led to World Wars, concentration camps, the Atomic Bomb and ecological catastrophe. The name of that 'saviour' whom man awaits is 'Antichrist'.

The consequences of the *filioque* and the process by which the 11th century West went from Orthodox theology to Scholasticism can be seen most clearly if we examine the theological understanding of the central events of the life of Christ. We shall look specifically at the changes in the understanding of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection and how we are thus brought to Redemption and Salvation. We shall compare the views of Old English theologians, especially Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham and Wulstan, Bishop of London, later Archbishop of York, with those of Anselm of Aosta.

This Anselm lived at the end of the 11th century and was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury a few years after the success of the papally-sponsored Invasion of England by William of Normandy in 1066. The first conscious defender of the *filioque* 'against the Greeks', he is known to history as 'the Father of Scholasticism'. In 1098 Anselm wrote a treatise called 'Cur Deus Homo', in which he set forth his views concerning

the Redemption. According to this, our Redemption was brought about by Christ's death on the Cross, for only the death of a God-Man could make reparation for man's sins. Man could not make any reparation for all that he did was sinful. The damage caused by man's sin could only be repaired by one who owed God nothing, who was similar to God.

In Anselm's view, since God's 'rights' had been damaged by Adam at the Fall, the Incarnation was required to make reparation. 'The heavenly city must be completed by men, but this could not prevail unless the prescribed satisfaction was made, which could not be done except by God, and was not owed except by man. A God-Man (Deus-Homo) had to do it'.¹ In other words restitution of God's 'rights' had to be made by one who had no sin and could therefore pay a debt he did not owe. The 'satisfaction' offered by God the Son to God the Father was expressed by God's death, according to Anselm. From this legalistic and feudal logic of the 'satisfaction theory', it is clear that in Anselm's scheme of things, the Resurrection of Christ had no value – only His death counted, for only His suffering through death could bring 'satisfaction'. From an Orthodox viewpoint this theory seems to have more significance for its sociological or anthropomorphic value than its theological value. It reflects the encastled Norman baron as God the Father who demands his 'rights' from his feudal serfs or slaves.

All this represented a revolution in theological thought in the West. Nobody had ever spoken in this way before. It was in fact the beginning of the dismantling of the Orthodox Christian heritage of the first millennium of the West, a heritage which had still been alive until the first half of the 11th century.

The Old English, for instance, Abbot Ælfric and Bishop Wulstan, had a totally different understanding of the Redemption. For them Christ's death was not an end in itself, what mattered was Christ's Passover from death to life. Christ was presented in their thought, as in the iconography of the period, in both His Divine and His human natures. He was presented as God and King of Creation, Victor over the Devil and at the same time as the Son of Mary, the Mother of God, suffering and dying on the Cross. Christ's Death and Resurrection were seen as two aspects of a single event – God's salvation of man. For instance on Holy Friday, the Old English Church mourned Christ crucified but also already recalled His Resurrection in this antiphon sung during the veneration of the Cross:

'We adore Thy Cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection; for behold through the Cross joy came into the whole world.'²

In the same way on Easter Day the Church sang thus:

'In the taking on of mortality we recognize Him as the God of majesty, and in the glory of His divinity we confirm as God and man Him Who destroyed our death by dying and restored our life by rising.'³

For Old English theology the significance of Christ's death was that it defeated death, which is why Christ's Crucifixion is never separated from His Resurrection. For example in the famous Old English poem 'The Dream of the Rood' (7th or 8th century), the poet, perhaps Cynewulf, refers to Christ's Death and Resurrection, Ascension and future Return to judge, all at the same time. The preacher Abbot Ælfric spoke of Easter as the Feast of Christ's Passover from death to life, from suffering to glory – again all at the same time. The Bishop of London, Wulfstan, describes Christ showing His authority over life and death, freeing man from eternal death and granting him eternal life:

'They named this day the day of victory, this name betokens that victory in which the victorious Lord withstood the Devil, in overcoming eternal death by His death.'⁴

In the Easter Day Sermon of the Blickling Homilist (written at the end of the 10th century) the reason for the Incarnation is expressed as follows:

'He was not compelled by any necessity, but came down to earth of His own will ... and He endured death for us because He wanted to give us everlasting life. And He utterly broke the gates of Hell and their bronze bolts. And through Christ's Cross all the rejoicing of the princes of darkness has been turned to grief.'⁵

This clearly implies that Christ's sacrifice was made not out of coercion by God the Father who wanted justice for His 'rights' but out of love for humanity.

For Anselm, on the other hand, God was obliged in 'justice' to demand reparation for Adam's sin, for it was a sin against Him, God. In this anthropomorphic view of God, Anselm saw man as responsible for an *offence*, the offence of sin. Man had angered God. For Ælfric, on the other hand, sin is something that man suffers and Christ is the co-suffering God:

'We behold Christ's death so that death may not harm us; we behold life's death; who is life except Christ? ... Christ is life and yet He was hung upon the Cross ... He is true life yet He died in His humanity, not in His Divinity. By Christ's death, death was destroyed.'⁶

The attitudes to suffering are clearly quite different. For Anselm Christ's sufferings were necessary to satisfy an offended God; for the Old English Christ's sufferings were a sign of His love and humility.⁷ Like the angels these writers expressed wonder at God's suffering, for how could the sinless suffer for the sinful? There is no hint of an 'offended' God, a proud God, but a clear indication of the immensity of God's love for man who suffers on account of his sins.

What is also quite striking, even in this brief study, is that the Old English writers saw Christ as both God and man, whereas Anselm, like those who followed him, see Christ only as a man, only in His human nature:

'A man hanging on the Cross suspends eternal death oppressing the human race.'⁸

Anselm's theology is a humanistic theology, or rather philosophy, in which man is separated from God, a gulf fixed between them. Christ is a weak human-being. The Son seeks to satisfy the Father by offering Himself on the Cross. The Father is satisfied with the victim of His demand for justice after being offended. The Old English homilists present Christ as God, at the same time as He appears to be but a man suffering on the Cross:

'Then the young Hero – He was God Almighty ... mounted on the High Cross ... I saw the God of Hosts violently stretched out ... All Creation wept, lamenting the death of the King; Christ was on the Cross.'⁹

Thus speaks the author of 'The Dream of the Rood', that masterpiece of Old English Orthodox literature. Christ is the suffering God and man, rather than a mere suffering man. This is perfectly illustrated in surviving Old English iconography, where Christ wears a crown as a symbol of His divinity, or where the Sun and Moon bow down before the Creator stretched out on the Cross, suffering in his human body and nature. Creation and Redemption are one. Redemption is seen as Re-Creation. Christ's death was no reparation for an offence. Man was created and then redeemed by the same God:

Afterwards (after the Creation), truly the Creator hung on the Cross on the sixth day (Holy Friday) and freed His handiwork, Adam's offspring, through His own death, and afterwards lay waiting in the grave on the seventh day, which you call Saturday."¹⁰

True, Anselm is conscious of Christ's divinity, but he cannot partake of it. In his *Oratio ad Christum*, Anselm considers his exile from the presence of the Risen Christ and his inability to share in Christ's life."¹¹ Nowhere is there a clearer reference to the effects of the *filioque*, the separation of man from the Holy Spirit, his spiritual deprivation. This is most strange in view of the Scriptures, which invite us to be 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1, 4). Anselm looks on at human suffering in despair; Abbot Ælfric in the Patristic tradition sees divine victory – and human and divine are never separated. Anselm sees tragedy, Abbot Ælfric the tokens of victory – both see the Cross, but their understanding of it and our salvation and redemption are totally different. For Anselm the Cross is the source of tragedy, for Ælfric the Crucified is bathed in the light of the Resurrection – He is the source of victory.

The implications of the theological revolution of the 11th century, of which Anselm is one of the foremost representatives, are far-reaching. Through it thought was separated from piety, intellect from faith, the Church on Earth from the Church in Heaven. Iconography became decorative and not grace-giving. For the Anglo-Saxons, iconography had the function of making Christ present. Thus Ælfric:

'Truly Christians should bow down to the holy cross in the Saviour's name, because we do not possess the cross on which He suffered; however its likeness is holy, and we always bow down to it when we pray, to the mighty Lord Who suffered for men;

and that cross is a memorial of His great Passion, holy through Him, even though it grew in a forest. We always honour it, to honour Christ, Who freed us by it with His love; we always thank Him for that in this life.”¹²

This theological revolution, as we shall see, has by no means yet been outlived in the West; its implications are still very much with us.

Modern Russian Parallels

At first sight it may seem rather extraordinary to draw parallels between churchmen at opposite ends of Europe and nine centuries apart. On reflection, however, it should seem natural since Old English Theology and contemporary Russian Church Theology draw on the same common Patristic mind, on the same heritage, the personal experience of the Holy Spirit in the Church context of Tradition. In drawing a parallel with the modern Russian theology of the Redemption, I am inevitably drawn to the interpretation of the Redemption as set forth by the saintly¹³ Patristic figure Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), without doubt the greatest Russian theologian of the 20th century.

He attempted to revive the Patristic theology of the Redemption at a time when the Scholastic satisfaction theory, imported wholesale from Catholic seminaries in the 17th century, still predominated in Russian theological institutions.¹⁴ There is an extensive literature on this subject,¹⁵ but it is clear today that the Patristic understanding of the Redemption is once more predominant in the Orthodox world. That this is so is largely due to the tireless efforts of Metropolitan Antony and one who worked under him, Blessed Justin (Popovich) (now St.; note of 2014). For them, as for the other Church Fathers of earlier centuries, the Redemption is the work of the co-suffering God of Love, accomplished through the Incarnation and the whole life of Christ, culminating in the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

What is noteworthy in this context is that those who opposed Old English redemption theology would have had much in common with those ‘neo-Scholastics’ who opposed Metropolitan Antony in the 1920s and 1930s – and even today.

Firstly those who opposed the early medieval tradition, that of the first millennium, of the Fathers, were in fact opposing the Church. True they officially still outwardly belonged to the (Western) Church, but in reality this ‘Church’ was in the process of becoming a State. The Medieval Church, that of the beginning of the second millennium, was directing military campaigns, invading England, Ireland, the Holy Land, massacring Jews in the Rhineland, slaughtering heathen and Orthodox alike in Lithuania and Belorussia. This ‘Church’ had become a ‘Church-State’, having assumed all the functions of a State. Its ‘theology’, if we may call it that, therefore reflected this state of mind. Its theology was more a sociological and psychological reflection of feudalism, of papocaesarism. At its crudest, this was a religion of fear, in which an offended God exercised totalitarian authority in the name of divine ‘justice’.

Now among those who opposed the revival of Patristic theology, led by Metropolitan Antony, most were simply indifferent to spiritual realities, and simply swam with the tide set by the State. These were those who accepted the Protestant model of the State-Church, introduced into Russia by Peter I ('the Great') and all the Western 'theology', or rather ideology, that went with it. They rejected the traditional ascetic and monastic theology of the Church in favour of the Erastianism of Protestantism, rejecting the Orthodox teaching of 'symphonia' which regulated Church-State relationships on the basis of the Patristic theology of the Incarnation. They also dismissed the Patristic view of the Redemption and adopted 'the satisfaction theory'. After the Revolution, this Erastian view was pursued to its logical extreme by the State in Russia, which used some churchmen to promote atheism.¹⁶ When found out, these hostages of the State justified themselves by declaring that they were doing this 'to save the Church'. Is there not here a mystical link between their understanding of the Redemption and the practical consequences of such a belief?

'Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword; thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?'

(Matt. 26, 52–53)

The offended God was neither Norman baron, nor Pope of Rome, but the all-saving Soviet State, in the name of which the adaptation of Sergianism (the subservience of the Church to the State) was developed. Our redemption and salvation, according to this, comes about by serving the demands of the Great Dictator, not by keeping the Gospel commandments of love, of Him Who went of His own will to the Cross in love and humility. By death He destroyed death, just as the New Martyrs in Russia went to their deaths and thus destroyed the spiritual death brought on the Church by those in high places who betrayed Her to militant atheism.

To this day there are still a few who attack the Patristic understanding of the Redemption, as revived by Metropolitan Antony. Deliberately distorting what he meant, they accuse him of despising the Cross and its central importance in the work of our salvation. In reality, what the Metropolitan said is that our redemption and salvation come about not only, though chiefly, through the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, but also through the whole life of Christ, starting from the very beginning. (See the Orthodox troparion for the Annunciation: 'Today is the beginning of our salvation...') We would suggest that their real motivations are not theological but political; otherwise they would be obliged to reject the Fathers, including the theologians of Old England. For example the Bishop of London, Wulfstan says that Christ's whole life was an offering to God, his death was only one part of that offering, to be completed by His Resurrection.¹⁷

There was also another group who strongly criticised and deliberately deformed the Patristic revival led by Metropolitan Antony. These were a small group of intellectuals and free-thinkers, who in no wise wanted to see a return to the authentic

ascetico-patristic theology of Church Tradition. These were the modernists of the 'Paris School', the new Alexandria with its new Origenes, who wanted to develop a syncretistic ideology in pursuit of the old myth of combining 'East and West'. They wished to combine Orthodoxy with the Western humanism in which they had been brought up before the Revolution and then in Paris. Adherents of this modernist grouping combined Western-style academic knowledge of Patristic thought with the humanism of the West.

One of the main fruits was the 'Sophiology' of Archpriest Sergius Bulgakov. According to this Gnostic and Humanist speculation, man is somehow already saved. The importance of the cross and all the redemptive work of Christ throughout His whole life is put in the background. This speculation, condemned as heresy throughout the Russian Church, both in Russia and outside, is very much the result of a reaction to the satisfaction theory, a reaction to the old image of an offended God demanding a victim. Sociologically it corresponds to the reaction to this same theory in modernist Catholic circles. The tragedy is that, having rejected Medieval Catholic 'theology', these Russian philosophers chose not to return to Orthodox theology, but to devise their own ideology, inspired by Gnosticism. Although universally condemned, the now elderly disciples of this school are still active.

The practical results of their modernism is a type of Pelagianism, teaching that less effort is required for salvation, that we are already incorporated into the Divinity, that somehow our fallen nature is already redeemed.¹⁸ As a result, fasting, vigils, prayer, the Church calendar, the sacrament of confession, repentance, penances, ascetic practices and traditional monasticism itself are all neglected or openly despised. This too is swimming with the tide, worldliness, for it is simply adapting to the Western way of life in which such people live. It not only accepts but also justifies the laxity of Western life, rather than combating it ascetically. Here too there seems to be a mystical link between their 'theology' of the Redemption and their everyday working out of salvation. If, by reaction to the old satisfaction theory, we assert that somehow we are all already saved, then why work for salvation at all?

The real and terrible irony of the Paris modernists, however, is that they could much more easily have achieved their ambition of combining East and West if they had not identified the West with modern humanism and Orthodoxy with a mere Orientalism. There is another West, which in their ethnocentrism and cultural narrowness they ignored – the pre-Schism West of the first millennium. The 'Paris School' sought after wisdom ('sophia') but they did not look to the Church of Christ (Christ, the Wisdom of God) to find it. East and West were long ago combined and reconciled in the Person of Christ, the Wisdom of God.

This is so absolutely clear in the remarkable coincidence of thought and expression, sometimes word for word, between the liturgical texts and theology of the Old English Church and those of the Russian Orthodox Church and the theology of its theologians. Thus the spiritual unity of Kiev and London, of Metropolitan Antony and

Bishop Wulfstan, of East and West. One cannot help thinking that a knowledge of Old English or a Russian emigration to debate with village greybeards from Abbot Ælfric's Oxfordshire Eynsham might have served this part of the Russian Church much better than a knowledge of French and German philosophy and emigration to Paris.

Spiritual leaders such as Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky attempted to lead Russian Orthodox theology out of its captivity to the post-Schism Philosophy of the West, as represented by Anselm. Those who attacked the Metropolitan, wilfully deforming his teachings and reading into them what was not there, and not genuinely misunderstanding them,¹⁹ seemed to have led Russian theology even deeper into captivity to the post-Schism West, out of captivity to Medieval philosophy, into captivity to either humanism or else Erastianism, to either the fruit of the Renaissance or else to the fruit of the Reformation. In the case of the Patriarchal Church in Russia, it was to the captivity of Protestant-style Erastianism, taken to its logical but absurd and ignominious extreme, the physical captivity of 'a State-Church in an atheist State'.²⁰ In the case of the Paris School, a philosophy later exported to the United States, Constantinople and all through modernist 'Orthodox' thinking, it was into the intellectual and spiritual captivity of the humanism of Roman Catholic modernism.

Spiritually inspired, Metropolitan Antony and those who followed after expressed purity of theological teaching because of the purity of their lives. They shared the common Patristic and ascetic mind which was also expressed by the Old English preachers at the beginning of the 11th century. Nowhere is this clearer in their shared belief that our redemption comes about as a result of Christ's whole life, especially His Crucifixion and Resurrection, which are inseparably connected, as are His divine and human natures. Our Redemption was not brought about by Christ's death in itself, as Anselm considered, but by 'His Suffering and Resurrection', exactly as Abbot Ælfric had written in England one thousand years ago.²¹ This is the exact parallel to Metropolitan Antony's view in which he emphasised the redemptory meaning of *the whole of Christ's life*. This theme was taken up and developed by another 20th century Church Father, Blessed Justin (Popovich), basing himself solely on the Fathers.

In an age of ever-decreasing spiritual purity, it is with gratitude that we look to those who helped revive Orthodox theology with the unquenchable source of spiritual life and tradition of the Orthodox Church. For they showed that the Cross, the source of the Resurrection, is the source of our salvation. It is neither a stumbling-block, as it appears to 'Orthodox' modernists, nor foolishness, as it appears to those who resort to the 'help' of an atheist State to 'save the Church'.²² Contemporary 'Jews' and 'Greeks' have been shown that the Redemption is the work of the God of Love, who suffers together with man by assuming his human nature.

Glory be to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

July 1992

1. *Cur Deus Homo* II, vi. (Edited by Schmitt).
2. *Regularis Concordia*, iv, 44. Edited and translated by Symons, 1953. This 'Monastic Concord' was compiled by St Dunstan of Canterbury in about 970.
3. *Missal of Robert of Jumiéges* (Edited by Wilson, p. 102). A work from the early 11th century.
4. *The Blickling Homilies*, No. vi (Edited by Moms, p. 67). See Hosea XIII, 14 *Catholic Homilies* of Ælfric I, xv. (Edited by Thorpe, p. 224). *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, Nos. vi, vii, xi (Edited by Bethurum, pp. 154, 160 and 227).
5. *The Blickling Homilies*, Easter Day. (pp. 82 and 83 in Morris).
6. *Catholic Homilies II*, xiii. (Edited by Godden, pp. 135–6).
7. Anselm: *Meditation on the Redemption of Man*. (Schmitt III, 84); Wulfstan, *Homilies* No. vii (Bethurum, p. 159); Ælfric, *Homilies* No. xiii (Edited by Assman, p. 152); *Catholic Homilies I*, xv (Thorpe, p. 224); Wulfstan, *Homilies* No. xiii (Bethurum, p. 227); *Blickling Homilies*, No. ii (Moms, pp. 15–17 and 23).
8. Anselm: *Meditatio Redemptionis Humanæ* (Schmitt III, 84–85).
9. *The Dream of the Rood*, translated in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry (Everyman)* by R. K. Gordon, pp. 235–8.
10. *Catholic Homilies II*, xiv. (Edited by Godden, pp.148–9) and I, i and xx (Thorpe, pp. 24 and 292).
11. Anselm: *Orationes* ii (Schmitt III, 6–9).
12. *Catholic Homilies II*, xviii (*The Invention of the Cross*) Godden (pp. 175–6).
13. To my knowledge his canonization was first publicly suggested by Bishop Nathanael (L'vov) in *The Orthodox Observer*, June 1978. (In Russian)
14. See especially *The Turning-Point in Ancient Russian Theology* by Hieromonk Tarasius, reprinted in Montreal in 1979. (In Russian)
15. For a full discussion of the subject, see *The Collected Works of Metr. Antony*, Vol. VIII. His *Dogma of the Redemption* was translated into English in 1979 (Montreal). There is also a very informative discussion of the subject in *The Dogmatics of Archim. Justin Popovich* in Vol. I of *The Church and Her Teaching in Life* (pp. 68 – 102) by Protopresbyter George (now Bp. Gregory) Grabbe. (In Russian).
16. All the facts were revealed in recent articles in the Russian Press. (See: *Argumenty i Fakty* No 1/1992; *Priamoi Put'* No.1 and 2/1992; *Izvestia*, 22/1/92, *The Eternal*

Slave of the Cheka, Moscow News 9/2/92; *Riddles of the Holy Synod; Russkaia Mysl'*, 28/2/92, *The Only Way for the Church; To Tell the Whole Truth*).

17. *Homilies*, No. vi (Bethurum, pp.152–3).

18. See especially *The Doctrine of Sophia, the Wisdom of God* by Blessed John (Maximovich) and also his *The Veneration of the Mother of God and St John the Baptist and the New Direction of Russian Philosophico-Religious Thought* (Reprinted in *The Chronicle of the Veneration of Archbishop John*, Platina, CA, 1980). Blessed John makes clear the Gnostic links of such thought. The same theme is taken up in a 'catechism' called *Dieu est Vivant*, Paris 1982?, translated into Russian as *Zhyv Bog*, London 1990. Strong Origenistic tendencies are present here. For an excellent survey of Gnosticism in Russian 'religious' thought, see *La Gnose Universelle* by Etienne Couvert. This work (Chiré 1992) explains clearly how 20th century Russian thinkers (Bulgakov, Florensky, Berdiaev) following Soloviev, came to distort the thinking of the Church Fathers under the influence of German Gnosticism

19. There seems to be one genuine case of a tragic misunderstanding, that of Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov). See the article by Archbp. Averky in *Pravoslavny Put*, 1973, pp.102–126.

20. An expression first used, I believe, by Lev Regelson in *The Tragedy of the Russian Church*.

21. *Catholic Homilies I*, xxii (Thorpe p. 312).

22. The fact that Patriarch Sergius, the founder of this Erastian notion, in his youth opposed the satisfaction theory in brilliant academic work shows the danger of academic theology. However Orthodox it might appear to be, it is not Orthodox if it is not lived. Orthodox Christianity is not a set of intellectual values, but a way of life. True theology is always applied theology.

40. Our English Faith

The gentle folk of England have slept
And now by nightmares our fate is kept.
The undoing of sovereign land by heathen art
Is our destiny if there be no change of heart.

Courage! In vision and dreams I spy
England's flag inspiring from on high.
The blood-red cross stands shining forth on field of white,
O Resurrection banner of the Lord of Light!

Led by Holy George, bright souls appear –
All English hallowed now gather here,
Come from distant ages of English history
To crush them that would defile England's mystery.

September 1992

41. Nativity

Through the centuries and long years,
Despite wrong teachings, vain ideas,
All the errors and faithless fears,
Thy Church called us to salvation;
The Trinity's Revelation
In the Gospellers' narration.

Thy coming we have awaited
To save the world Thou created,
Healing scars of sin and hatred,
Gathering good among all men.
Teaching the truths beyond our ken,
Making us clean in soul again.

Amid the quickening dark of night,
The Virgin-Mother bearing light
To those bereft of inner sight
Declares once more the age-old call –
Thy Church's voice that spoke by Paul –
True God is born True Man for all.

December 1992

42. The English Idea

‘Yet nations, like men, sometimes turn away from their true selves to follow false selves, and to serve false gods. All the old Bible is full of stories of a little nation sometimes true, sometimes false to its soul, and falling into calamity, and then being quickened and helped, and returning to the truth and coming to marvellous things, to the green pastures, where goodness and loving kindness follow men all the days of their life.’

John Masefield, *St George and the Dragon*

One would have thought that the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe would have led to the collapse of inhuman, materialistic ideas elsewhere. In fact the idea that material objects can bring human happiness, that Paradise can be established on Earth through materialism, is not only still with us but is ever more alive. Western Europe has refused to learn from the collapse of Eastern Europe. Fetishistic, idolatrous ideas of economism, productivism, stock-exchangism and consumerism are still the order of the day. Witness the spiritual starvation of the millions, the restless and rootless confusion in the Western world. Witness the breakdown of family life and basic morality, the chaos of a world that has abandoned old, trusted and familiar values for first mechanical and then electronic serfdom. Witness the foolish confidence of a planet which is directed to the production of trivia rather than the cultivation of human well-being.

In all this disordered anarchy does England still have a message for today’s world? Is there still, beneath the generations that have lost their way, another England? Does this England, whose epithets from centuries past are ‘Old’ and ‘Merry’, still exist? And how and why can those epithets be applied when today’s England seems rather to be ‘New’ and ‘Sad?’

England obtained the epithet ‘Old’ because She is founded on Tradition, that sacred Tradition that was brought here even before the Apostle of England and First Archbishop of Canterbury, whom English people affectionately call St Austin, set foot on these shores. Old England is reverent of Tradition, because Her Tradition comes from the earliest times, from Christ. This is why England identifies Her Tradition with eternal and sacred values. Old England takes pride in quality of work, craftsmanship, quality of life, and ancient traditions of rural and domestic life. All these traditions represent faithfulness to something greater and holier than the here and now. That is why in recent times dark forces have tried to destroy them all. England deserts her Tradition at her peril, as a ship that throws away its anchor and leaves port in a storm-tossed ocean.

In Old English the word ‘Merry’ signifies ‘Blessed’, and therefore sweet and pleasant. And England was called ‘Merry’ on account of Her faithfulness to Tradition. Merry

England is the England of a life of blessing, a happy and pleasant life; blessed by and with an ordered and stable way of living with freedom and honour and fairness. England's mirth is founded on beauty and peace, calm and kind ways, on wise husbandry, simplicity and moderation and gentleness of manners and morals. Blessed is England, for Her ideal is one of gentlemen and gentlewomen, of gentlefolk.

Our patriotism is founded precisely on these values of Old and Merry England, which put human happiness above economism and growth rates and GNP. These values, home-grown, can alone save England from the contemporary world and its squalor and ugliness, both physical and moral, and teach us how to live aright.

On farmstead and in Cathedral city, the Industrial Revolution was once seen as an aberration, a deviation, an unfortunate accident, an un-Christian and un-English act taken from barbarian nations. Our more recent history has not been true to our Tradition. In the Divine Mind our green and pleasant land, our Old and Merry land, was not destined to become a wasteland of dirty brick, or dark, satanic mill, or 'the workshop of the world'.

Although we have lost an overseas Empire, we have yet to come home spiritually. If we had, then England could lead the way out of industrialism, we could learn that true progress is about the cultivation of nobility in men's, women's and children's hearts, about the art of subordinating the material to the spiritual, and our wants to our needs. If we came home spiritually, we could learn that we cannot live on borrowed money and on borrowed time, that quality counts for more than quantity, that happiness is greater than wealth, peace of mind more than power.

It is our heartfelt wish that the Jerusalem Cross, the flag of England, might yet guide us from folly to wisdom, from false values to spiritual values, to kind hearts and simple faith, which, as Tennyson once wrote, are more than coronets and Norman blood, that thus we might learn to gather round the Cross of Our Lord and so save ourselves and the world about us.

February 1993

43. The Disintegration of the Church of England

‘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.’

(T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 1939)

Every 500 years or so it would seem that English history reaches a turning-point. Thus, in the first century, these islands received the Christian Faith, then in 597 Christianity was brought to the pagan English. In 1066 the Norman Invasion took place and the feudal system was introduced with all that went with it. Some nineteen generations later, in 1535, the Act of Supremacy was passed and Henry VIII became the Head of the Church of England, bringing the country out of Roman Catholicism and the Medieval system into the Protestant and ultimately Modern Age. And now today, a similar period of time afterwards, the country seems to have come to a similar time of trouble, with a crisis that is national and economic, moral and spiritual. Three dates, 597, 1066 and 1535, which are all separated by the same length of time, 469 years, seem to be suggesting that great changes lie ahead. The present crisis in the Church of England would appear to indicate what exactly those changes might be.

In the last thirty years Orthodox have looked on in bewilderment at the affairs of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. Churches which until recently had valued many of the essential vestiges of Orthodox Christianity, inherited from the first millennium, seem to have abandoned the very fundamentals of the Christian Faith: the belief in Christ as the Son of God, the Holy Trinity, the Resurrection, the Virgin-Birth, the Communion of the Saints, the sacramental life, the belief in the efficacy of prayer and fasting, the sanctity of marriage, the twin pillars of monasticism and family life ... And since the Church of England Synod of November last and its decision to ordain women to the priesthood, Orthodox have looked on in pain at the self-imposed suffering of the Church of England.

Orthodox, perhaps especially Russian Orthodox, have had a particular affection for the Church of England, with its refusal to commit itself either to the Protestant side or to the Roman Catholic side of post-1054 Christianity in England. An affection more particularly for those in the Church of England who talk of the Fathers and the first millennium of Christendom. All this even inspired some old Russians to imagine that one day the Church of England would come to join the Orthodox Church wholesale. These were of course the utopian illusions of those who lived far from the daily realities of the Church of England and understood little of the political, social and historical factors undermining movements in the Church of England towards Orthodoxy. Historically speaking, indeed, it appears to the present writer that the dissolution of the Church of England has always been inevitable. Why?

When in the 16th century Henry VIII split from Rome, he was motivated not only by lust and greed. Of course there was lust, goaded by the desire to produce a male heir. And of course there was greed on the part of this Renaissance tyrant and on the part of many an aristocratic crony to lay hands on the property of the monks and nuns, many of whom, it is true, were living far from an ascetic or even socially useful life. Overall Henry, with the blood of his wives on his hands, was not unlike many a Machiavellian despot, finely educated but brutal and amoral, whether in Italy or even Russia under Ivan the Terrible and his Italian retinue. Nevertheless, the fact is that the Reformation was not only the work of Henry, it could not have taken place without popular support, popular discontent with Rome. A people that loves its faith does not change it. Tens of thousands of Orthodox clergy and millions of lay people have been martyred in Russia since 1917 because Russia refused to change its faith.

The fact is that most people in England at the time, as in other Northern European countries, accepted the new religion enthusiastically, sometimes more than their rulers had bargained for. Like their King, English people were tired of being ruled by a Superstate from abroad, exploited and taxed by corrupt Italian Papal legates and cardinals. Moreover people wanted to understand their faith in their own language, more and more possible thanks to printing. And they wanted to rid themselves of parasitical clergy and the clergy themselves were only too pleased at the opportunity to legalize their concubines. It is no surprise to learn that this movement became known as Protestantism. In the years that followed 1535 some 600 individuals (about 300 on each side) were to die for their beliefs as reaction followed counter-reaction which followed reaction. Ultimately, however, as always on an island where peace is needed to live together, political expediency ruled the day and the great Anglican compromise was established.

This, it must be said, probably avoided the tens of thousands of deaths which occurred in the 'Wars of Religion' which then took place in Europe. The great Anglican compromise between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism was to accommodate the majority of English people until Cromwell. And it remained even in the face of the Romanising Charles I and Charles II, even in the face of the fanatical and violent Puritanism of Cromwell. The compromise had to last for as long as the State required a State-Church to bolster its ideology, to manipulate the religious feelings of its people. This compromise would survive the splintering effects of Non-Conformism and Methodism, Roman Catholic Emancipation, Irish immigration and the High Church movement of Oxford tractarians and others.

Still today it is possible to meet two Church of England vicars, one perhaps a product of St Stephen's House in Oxford (High Church) and the other of Wycliffe Hall (Low Church), a stone's throw away in the same city, who appear to have absolutely nothing in common, except for the fact that they both belong to the Church of England. Today, however, the situation has changed. The Church of England is no longer of any importance to the State. Most politicians, at best, are indifferent to religion. The Prime Minister, we are told, is that typically British thing, an agnostic.

Official Church attendance statistics tell us that the majority religion in England is not even the Church of England, but Roman Catholicism. Politically Britain is no longer allied with a Protestant majority White Commonwealth, but a Roman Catholic majority European Community. The question that begs to be asked is why today continue with the Anglican compromise? The State no longer needs it. There will be no civil war if it is discontinued. And the situation has come to a head with the issue of 'women-priests'.

Those in the High Church wing of the Church of England consider that their clergy are ordained sacramentally to the priesthood. A majority of the Anglican Communion would disagree; in other words they are Protestant and consider their clergymen to be no more than pastors or ministers. Moreover both Roman Catholics and Orthodox reject the possible 'validity' of Anglican orders; any Church of England vicar who wishes to become either a Roman Catholic or Orthodox priest must first be ordained, their Anglican 'ordination' being considered invalid. There are also Protestant fundamentalists in the Low Church wing of the Church of England who disagree with female vicars, but for different reasons. For all those who do not agree, however, the question to be faced is one and the same: Do we remain in the Church of England or do we leave, and if we leave, then where?

For the High Church wing there are various options. One would be to join the 'Anglican Catholic Church', part of the Continuing Church movement, a group formed after the split in the Episcopalian Church after it introduced female ministers. To many, however, that would seem to be sectarian. Others have individually taken the road to Rome. According to 'The Economist' (19 February 1993) the ex-Bishop of London, Dr. Graham Leonard, is trying to negotiate a mass 'defection' to Rome, obtaining a special deal admitting even married priests. Numbers of clergy leaving could run into four figures. (From an Orthodox standpoint it would seem unlikely that Rome would want to repeat its Uniat experiment on the Church of England. Uniatism with Orthodox has been a disastrous embarrassment with its married clergy and ultra-nationalism, ruining relations with the Orthodox Church).

The whole situation is yet further complicated by a completely different question, that of the separation of Prince Charles and Lady Diana. Were Charles to become King, he would become the Head of the Church of England. Could it accept a separated, and perhaps by that time, divorced and remarried, Head? Cynics might say that the founder of the Church of England had no fewer than six wives. George I was divorced, George IV separated and the personal morality of many other monarchs, for example Charles II, abysmally lacking. Furthermore the monarch since the 19th century at least has appointed bishops in consultation with Prime Ministers. And the Prime Ministers of today and the future are likely to be a mixed bag of agnostics and atheists. Disestablishment is already on the agenda – and that would lead to further break-up and subdivision.

From an Orthodox point of view, Prince Charles' separation merely serves to highlight the absurd situation of having a monarch as Head of a Church. It is no more logical than having a Bishop (of Rome) as the Head of a Church. All men are men, each will have some personal, political or financial axe to grind; some Popes, in times past, were notorious for their depravity and bloodthirstiness. Some would object to this, pointing out that the Orthodox Churches are no better off, with secular governments constantly interfering and appointing their protégés as bishops. In Soviet Russia, these protégés were often nominated on account of their zeal in persecuting zealous priests and closing churches. In Romania, Greece and in the Greek Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria, bishops are well-known for their bureaucratic subservience to the State and willingness to carry out almost anything the State requests them to do, including the persecution of dissident Orthodox.

Many so-called Orthodox rulers, from Peter 'the Great' to Catherine 'the Great' (who closed down two-thirds of Russian monasteries), from Lenin to Ceaucescu, have always done their best to decapitate the Church. As the English proverb says, 'A fish always stinks from the head'. Nevertheless the Orthodox Church has always survived, has always been free, sooner or later, to commemorate Her martyrs. Faithful lay people, monastics and clergy and a sufficient number of good and holy bishops have always been present in the Church to fight off the State and defend Orthodoxy. A glance at the Lives of the Saints, especially those of the 20th century, will confirm this. And above all, the interference of rulers has never been justified or institutionalised in dogma in the Orthodox Churches, but has always been seen as what it is, a devilish abuse, an attempt to subvert the Church and misuse Her Faith for worldly ends.

For Orthodox there is and can only ever be one Head of the Church – Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The proof of this is that in order to abuse the Church, the State has always had to persecute most bloodily. And even then there have always been voices in other parts of the Orthodox world who have been courageous and free enough to tell the Truth, as has been the case most recently with the Russian Church, almost completely silenced in Russia, but free to speak out in the emigration. Historically speaking the fact is that the Church has always come out triumphant, however bloody the persecution, however much the ecclesiastical 'nomenklatura' has been manipulated by atheist or secular governments. 'The Truth will out'.

The Church of England, however, finds itself in a different situation. First of all, it is institutionally bound to the State, its Head is the Monarch, guided by the Prime Minister. It has very weak monastic traditions. It has no saints or martyrs, and generally does not believe in saints. It is hamstrung by a feeble, politically motivated leadership: its flock does not know what to believe because the essence of the faith of the Church of England is compromise on everything. This spirit of compromise is nowhere more apparent than in the 39 Articles of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, where it is apparent that such compromise leads directly to contradiction. Among several of the 39 Articles which are contrary to the Orthodox Christian Faith

(Articles XIX, XXII in part, XXV and XXXI), Article V, which confesses the *filioque* contradicts Article VIII which confesses the Nicene Creed – which of course does not contain the *filioque*. Article V is supported by the Preface and the Litany which also contain the *filioque*. It is therefore at heart divided on doctrine.

The State appears to be indifferent. Even the Royal Family seems to be divided. Her Majesty continues in Her Low Church, Protestant faith. HRH Prince Philip, according to many (for instance the article *A Prince among Priests* in *The Spectator* of 14 March 1992) is returning to the Orthodox Church, in which he was baptized and in which his widowed mother reposed a devout nun. In a Russian journal (*Den*, September 1992) Prince Charles has been quoted as saying: ‘We are hurtling into an abyss of depravity, profligacy, plunder, theft, complete immorality. The only place I see where there may be the beginning of some sort of regeneration is in Russia’. Of the views of the other children of the Queen, we know nothing. As regards the majority of English people, the attitude to religion is profoundly deChristianized; the results are spiralling crime, abortion, divorce and despair. The disintegration of the Church of England, which for years has talked of unity, seems to be on the cards – and it will not be an edifying spectacle. Instead of unity there will be disunity. A whole series of questions are now being posed.

Will the majority Protestant part of the Church of England subdivide into numerous fundamentalist sects and liberal-modernist groupings? Will the High Church occupy church buildings in order to keep them to form a new ‘Anglo-Catholic Church?’ Will two bishops have to be appointed for each diocese, one for ‘women-priests’, the other against? Will tens of thousands of Anglicans depart for Rome? Will they succeed in adapting to what is often a transplanted Irish Catholic Church, influenced by Italianate and French culture, divided between traditionalists and modernists? Can English people really accept Papal Infallibility, statues, indulgences and clerical celibacy? Will numbers of Anglicans becoming Roman Catholic protestantize the English Roman Catholic Church, as has happened in Holland with the Dutch Catholic Church? Will the dissolution and disintegration of the Church of England really serve any purpose? Finally, will there be an Archbishop of Canterbury to crown the next monarch? – And if there is, whom exactly will he represent?

Like the majority of English people, I have never been a member of the Church of England, but I would like to express my great sadness at the drama unfolding within the Church of England. Remembering the words of Churchill, ‘the longer you look back, the further you can look forward’, as an English Orthodox priest, I cannot but take this opportunity to recall that the first sight that our English forefathers and mothers caught of Our Saviour all those years ago, was when they saw His Orthodox icon carried by the monks of Abbot Augustine, ‘the likeness of Our Saviour painted on a board’, as is related by the Venerable Bede. And perhaps also I should add, for those in the Church of England who seek Christ, that the flag that flies from many a church-tower in England, the blood-red cross on the white background, the English national flag, is none other than the standard of the Orthodox Patriarchate of

Jerusalem – that very banner which the Risen Lord triumphantly holds in icons of the Resurrection. Would to God that these signs, providentially given, might guide us all into righteousness and truth, bringing us to the salvation that Holy Church grants to Her spiritual flock, for they betoken the very birth and final goal of our Faith. And whatever may happen to ‘the Church of England’, the Church in England will go on in this faith, and ‘the gates of hell’ shall not prevail.

March 1993

44. Women and the Priesthood

‘Do not begin with the thought, either, that the minds of the man and woman are of the same east, or that one is higher than the other; neither is the higher, but they differ that each may be the best for its mission, and each has that which the other lacks and both make together the one full mind of mankind.’

William Barnes

Advocates of ‘women-priests’ often ask Orthodox the question: ‘But why don’t you accept women in the priesthood? My instinctive reaction, as an Orthodox, is to answer with a question: ‘But why should we accept women in the priesthood? I realize that this is not an answer, but I have never yet received an answer to my question. In fact the very concept of a woman-priest would not occur to the Orthodox mind. The idea is as shockingly blasphemous as an icon showing the Mother of God dressed in jeans or an icon showing a saint lighting a cigarette. To the Orthodox mind in other words, the very notion of women-priests is profoundly iconoclastic, it is a perversion of something deeply true, something God-given, a law in Creation which we tamper with at our peril.

Indeed the notion of a female priesthood has arisen outside the Church, outside the tradition of the Orthodox Faith. And for Orthodoxy this Tradition is not some set of changeable human customs, but the Revelation of the Holy Spirit to the Saints, a Revelation that is therefore dynamic but not self-contradictory; new outpourings of the Holy Spirit do not contradict previous ones but complement them in continuity. Female priesthood, however, is an idea of a tradition (tradition with a small ‘t’), which arose only in the 16th century, which delineated itself quite sharply from a great deal that preceded it. These new practices dating from the 16th century can be listed as follows.

Firstly Protestantism does not admit of the priesthood as a sacrament. The various Protestant denominations have only limited notions of the sacraments. Anglicans do not agree about how many there are, some Protestants altogether deny the existence of sacraments, and most Protestants would never use the word ‘priest’ for one of their ‘vicars’, ‘ministers’ or ‘pastors’. As we shall see later, it seems quite likely that if Protestants recognized the priesthood as a sacrament, then they would also reject a female priesthood.

Secondly Protestants do not venerate the Mother of God, and many do not confess that She was a Virgin and remained so. In the Orthodox Church the position of women is particularly linked and even privileged by the veneration of the Mother of God. For us the first ‘man’ in the Kingdom of Heaven is female – the Mother of God. It seems most probable that Protestant women, unable to identify with the Mother of

God, Who stands first in Heaven, are forced to identify with clergy and seek a role there to solace an emotional, mental and spiritual deprivation.

This deprivation is further reinforced by the absence of veneration of the saints in the Protestant religion. The Orthodox Church venerates thousands of saints, both individually and collectively. Moreover, a great many of these are female. A particular role is played by the Myrrh-Bearers, to whom the Resurrection was first revealed, and also by a group of women known as 'Equal-to-the-Apostles', who include great missionary-saints. The Church also has collections of 'Sayings of the Spiritual Mothers', containing the wisdom of female ascetics. One instance of the veneration of the Church for women is the way in which Orthodoxy venerates St Monica as a saint, but reveres her son as 'Blessed' Augustine, thus recognising a greater degree of saintliness in the modest humility and silence of the mother than in the son, who yet wrote many tomes of learned theology, much of it spiritually inspired, but a small amount of it sadly erroneous. It is almost to confirm the popular proverb: 'Behind every great man stands a great woman'. Indeed this is confirmed in Church history. Every great male saint has somehow been linked to a mother or grandmother or sister or daughter, or else spiritual mother or spiritual sister or daughter, or simply in the case of married laymen and clergy, a humble and pious spouse. The foremost example of a spiritual relationship is of course that between Our Lord and His Most Holy Mother.

It seems to us that the desire of women to become priests is also linked to the clericalism inherited by Protestantism from the Roman Catholic Church. This clericalism is not only a question of possessing power over the laity, an abuse in itself, but also stems from the fact that Roman Catholic clergy are not allowed to marry. They therefore often had a superior and generally unhealthy attitude to the opposite sex. In a Church where there is a married priesthood, as in the Orthodox Church, abnormal attitudes to women are extremely rare, and clericalism is also a rare phenomenon.

As regards the historical and sociological context in which the desire to see a female priesthood has arisen, it might also be added that even in Protestant societies, this desire has only appeared in the 20th century, i.e. at a time of mass apostasy and deChristianization. It would seem that the supporters of female priesthood are conditioned by sociology rather than theology. The most common argument is: If women can be lawyers, engineers, pilots or politicians, then why can't they be priests? This argument, which we shall answer below, is conditioned by Western feminism, by a worldly movement. It is not the result of a spiritual revelation, but of the reasoning of this world, 'fleshly wisdom', which compares the Church with this world. And yet we should know that although the Church is in the world, it is not of the world; the world must conform to the Church, not the Church to the world.

So far we have given reasons why the desire to see a female priesthood has arisen, reasons which are sociological, cultural and historical, but we have said little of spiritual, theological factors. Let us now speak of these.

Christ, the Divine Word, the Son of God, the Creator, 'by Whom all things were made', created man first, then woman as his 'helpmeet'. When He Himself took on human nature, He appeared as a man, not as a woman. He spoke of God the Father precisely as 'Father'. He chose Twelve male Apostles. These are all facts. If we really believe in God, then we believe in these facts and that as God Almighty, God could have chosen otherwise in each case. He did not. The Apostle of the Gentiles, St Paul, wrote: 'Woman shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety'. (1 Tim. 2, 15). Elsewhere he says that woman should not speak in church. It serves no purpose to deride the authority of St Paul, to whom Christ appeared on the road to Damascus and to say that he was simply a product of social and cultural conditioning. We are all products of social and cultural conditioning. It is precisely this that we try to overcome in the Church, and to attain to ultimate or absolute truths to guide us in our salvation. And it was this, no more and no less, that St Paul experienced – he had a revelation of the Absolute.

In the Orthodox Church we know that the priest is an image or icon of Christ. Out of respect for Christ he wears a beard, as Christ, he wears a cassock, resembling the clothing that Christ wore. If he has the possibility not to cut his hair or trim his beard, he lets them grow – all in order to physically resemble Christ. Resemblance is necessary because the priest, by virtue of his ordination by a bishop with Apostolic Succession, represents sacramental life. And the source of all sacramental life, of all the sacraments is Christ, Christ the High-Priest. Without Christ there can be no priesthood, and without the priesthood, there can be no sacramental life. We believe that Christ instituted the sacraments and the priesthood, and that the priesthood He instituted was male, just as He was male in His human nature.

We are obliged to accept all this, including the fact that Christ Himself appointed man to be priest. If we reject it, then we are obliged to reject nearly 2,000 years of universal ecclesiastical Tradition. And this would ultimately lead us to the thought that God must hate woman, or that therefore He is not the God of Love since He allowed His Church to err for 2,000 years. From here it is only a short step to outright atheism. Feminist ideas of sociological conditioning cannot be applied to the Absolute or to the Church, the Body of Christ. If they are, then you imply that God is not Absolute, that He is merely a human projection, a device, an invention, in no way the God of Revelation, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We may not always understand why God has appointed different roles to men and women, but if we have faith, then we accept it as a fact, that we shall perhaps only understand later, with time. We believe quite firmly that God loves us, that everything has a meaning. The roles that He gives us must therefore correspond to some very profound emotional, mental, psychic, spiritual characteristics in our make-ups, of

which we ourselves may not be conscious. Simply because we may not understand or be conscious, we are not entitled to affirm that the Church as the Body of Christ has been wrong for 2,000 years, or that Christ the Maker was wrong to create man before woman, or to call His Father 'Father', or to appear as a man, or to choose male Apostles, or to allow St Paul to write as he did.

Indeed I would go so far as to suggest that the idea of a female priesthood, engendered and conditioned in a world of apostasy, contains pagan elements. Such was the view of St Epiphanius of Salamina in Cyprus, the Church Father. In the 4th century he compiled a list of heresies or errors, one of which was priestesses, which he linked with paganism. How curious it is that the first time the idea of a female priesthood arose was a time when the world was coming out of paganism; the second time is a time when the world seems to be moving back into it. Could it be that, in fifty years time, if we were to re-enter a golden age of faith once more, then the whole idea of a female priesthood would seem as absurd and blasphemous as it would have to any of our forebears between at least the fifth and nineteenth centuries? At a time of profound desacralization, even 'desacramentalization', should we really be thinking of doing something that tens of generations of Christians in all countries would never even have dreamt of – creating a female priesthood?

Of course in history, in societies where 'might' has been 'right', many women and other groups have been downtrodden and exploited. Misogyny and contempt for women have existed alongside a multitude of other sins. In pagan societies in particular, women have been and still are exploited by religious ideologies, which in fact are only projections of human sinfulness. Such projections cannot, however, be applied to revealed theological truth, which has an absolute nature. Similarly a sociologically conditioned feminist ideology cannot be applied to the Ultimate Revelation of God become man, Christ Incarnate. The Christian Revelation, unique in history, is not a human projection but a Divino-human reality and dynamic. Orthodox Christian theological truth does not deal with socio-economic or socio-political conditions but with spiritual realities and the ultimate destinies of mankind. If God our Maker has given different roles to men and women, then we should take great care before rejecting those roles and duties. Our Maker knows us better than we ourselves do.

We are not talking now of the equality of man and woman. Of course they are equal in the sense that both have bodies and minds and souls, both are equally capable of salvation and both should have equal human rights and legal status. Both men and women are capable of being dentists and doctors, social workers and Prime Ministers. But the function of the priest is something other, it is not a 'job' in the sense that any other human activity can be a job, precisely it was instituted not by men, but by God. Equality in the sense of the world is a universally recognized fact – but the difference between men and women is also a fact. I speak not only of the external physiological differences, but above all of emotional, psychic, psychological differences. Men and women have different temperaments, different abilities, different strengths, different

weaknesses, different traits – God has given us different gifts. Should women in this case wish to imitate men, always to do exactly the same as men? We suggest not. We suggest that both men and women should seek to know themselves and to heed their deepest voices, to obey the deepest laws of their beings, implicit in their masculinity and femininity. Orthodox feminism is based on this, and only this brings man to respect and revere woman.

We should suggest that to go against what the Maker has implanted in us leads to psychic illness, splits in the personality, diseases of the soul, which all represent spiritual enfeeblement, spiritual deprivation and impoverishment, spiritual danger. We meddle with what our Maker has created within us at our peril.

March 1993

45. An English Dream

A winter's afternoon. Dusk. The fire is burning low. I fell asleep and dreamt that I was in England.

I walked along a narrow lane with grassy banks, looking out over wide views of rolling countryside. Below me in the late afternoon sunshine nestled a small village of weatherworn red roofs and a church tower, a village of delight asleep in the still.

A lovely stream wound its way between high trees and on the other side of the lane stood an ancient inn, its quaint sign overhanging the footpath. Climbing up from the hollow between old homes towards the churchyard, I looked at a black and white timbered house with a delightful garden, all sweetly laundered and the foxgloves swaying softly in an early evening breeze. Bees were humming in the quiet and I sensed peace beyond measure amid the scented flowers of the cottage gardens that had greened under England's gentle rain.

Hid in a ring of stately yews that had been young when Alfred was yet King, stood the Saxon church sure and strong. Within it, beyond the arched doorway with vine-carving around it, the cool stone walls guarded well their treasure. There the faith of our fathers had made an oak screen, with lovely carved and gilded panels and ancient paintings faded in the light of centuries.

And I wondered to myself: what kind and fair and wise and homely people dwell in this land?

And it was then that I awoke and in the flickering firelight I read on the pages of the book in front of me:

‘Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.’

(Shakespeare, King John)

March 1993

46. The Orthodox Bishop

‘A bishop then must be blameless ... vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre...’

(1 Tim. 3, 2–3)

‘For a bishop must be ... sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers.’

(Titus 1, 7–9)

‘If any clergyman should insult the Bishop, let him be deposed from office. For ‘thou shalt not speak ill of the people’s ruler.’

(Canon LV of the Holy Apostles)

The Church on Earth is founded on two earthly pillars – monasticism and the family. This may sound paradoxical but in fact there is no contradiction between these two institutions. Monasteries are but large families and monastics are recruited from families. And, as for families, they are brought up in the ways of the Church through monastic example. When monasticism is strong, so are families, and vice versa. When families are under attack, so is monasticism, and vice versa. It may be said that both are barometers of the Church’s health. In the words of a Russian proverb: ‘The family is our primary school, the parish – our secondary school, and the monastery – our university’. Thus in former times it was not uncommon for whole families to take up the monastic life. Alas, such piety is today becoming rare.

Apart from these earthly pillars of monasticism and the family, the Church is also supported by a heavenly pillar – that which connects Her to Heaven. These three pillars together form a virtuous circle, or rather, a ‘virtuous trinity’. The Church in Heaven, the Church Triumphant, is composed of those who are with the Father. Those in family life strive to lead a life inspired by the Incarnate Christ. And those in monastic life strive to acquire the Holy Spirit. In the middle of these three points stand those who are central to the Church – the bishops.

They are destined to be icons of Christ in the world, inspired from on high, monks, they spend much of their time in parishes with families. Without monasteries there can be no bishops, but without family life, where will the monasteries recruit the bishops of the future? And without bishops, how can there be any monasteries or parishes? Without bishops, how can there be any Church life at all? Indeed when there are no more Orthodox Bishops left in the world, the Second Coming will take place. Given this fundamental importance of the Bishop, his centrality in Orthodoxy, what can we hope of the Orthodox Bishop today?

In our times, when many of the canons regarding the appointment, functions and duties of the Bishop are openly flouted in several of the Local Orthodox Churches, we should first expect the confession of the *Faith*. Faith not only in a ‘superior Being’, which is common to most of mankind, but Faith deepened in Christ. And Faith not only in Christ, which is common to Roman Catholics and Protestants, but Faith deepened in the Holy Spirit, as is confessed only by the Orthodox Church. This expectation may seem so obvious that its expression appears superfluous, but we live at a time when in many parts of the Orthodox world, bishops are appointed for payment of sums of money, or appointed as State functionaries. It has even come to our ears that in the Soviet Union there are ‘atheist bishops’.

A Bishop with faith in the Holy Trinity as it is confessed in the Creed of the Orthodox Church should possess not only a right spiritual vision. As a result of this vision he should also have integrity, honesty, morality, chastity and the psychological balance that goes with these virtues, as is expressed in the quotations of the Apostle above. The basic honesty of telling the truth comes directly from a sincere confession of the Faith, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, many of the canons, against simony, immorality and State nominations are today no longer observed. (For example, Canons XXIX and XXX of the Holy Apostles, Canon II of the Fourth Council, Canon XXII of the Sixth Council, Canons IV, V and XIX of the Seventh Council). It is with great sadness that we have to admit that cases of self-interest, amorality, simony and homosexuality among the episcopate of several local Churches have been publicly exposed and documented.

The Holy Apostle Paul writes that bishops must be of sound doctrine, in other words, in ascetic language, they must veer neither to left, nor to right. In Orthodox ascetic teaching, a deviation to the left is that spiritual disease which results from the neglect of the *Truth*. This leads to depression and undue pessimism. Those who suffer from this are those who ‘swim with the tide’, do as they are told and make compromises with their weakly developed consciences. They are the easy prey of material temptations, offered by the Enemy, – a large, black limousine, free air travel, a new bishop’s palace, a luxurious lifestyle, an easily obtained doctorate. This is generally in exchange for a compromise with the powers that be – the State, the Vatican or the Freemasons’ Lodge.

Such compromises reduce Orthodoxy, the worship of Christ, to mere flag-worship, erastianism, which by definition is merely worldliness. We are ourselves witnesses to one Divine Liturgy where the Metropolitan stopped the service when the Ambassador entered the Cathedral (late). In a more sinister way deviation to the left leads directly to ecumenism and modernism which is what the Apostle calls ‘fleshly wisdom’, conformity to the world. Thus the Patriarchate of Constantinople refused under Vatican pressure to receive any Catholics in Portugal, Spain or Italy into the Orthodox Church. The result was that tens of thousands of spiritually thirsty Catholics in these countries were forced to become ‘Orthodox’ in various sectarian and uncanonical

ecclesiastical groupings. Other Orthodox bishops simply refuse to accept converts, since converts are of a different nationality.

This spiritual disease or temptation 'to the left', stemming from neglect of the Truth, and so an Orthodoxy dominated and conditioned by Non-Orthodoxy, has led to semi-secret accords with the Vatican. We have been assured by a reliable source that two of the best-known and most active bishops of the Russian Patriarchal Church, both disciples of the late Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad, are both secretly Catholic, waiting for the time when they will be able to reveal their true nature in Russia and Lithuania. Other cases of this temptation have led bishops to espouse freemasonry or to use hypnotism to exert guru-like power over weak 'spiritual', or rather, 'psychic' children.

To this temptation or spiritual disease, there corresponds the temptation 'to the right'. In ascetic language this signifies not the neglect of the Truth, but the neglect of *Mercy*. This neglect of Mercy is a lack of love; it leads to self-exaltation, self-admiration, self-righteousness. It often affects neophytes who would like to use their new-found faith as a kind of arm to condemn others. Such people often quote the holy canons, interpreting them only according to the letter, and not also according to the spirit. Those suffering from this disease may develop a 'martyr complex', 'I've suffered, therefore I'm right'. True martyrs do not have complexes, because they are simple and not complex. ('Let your yea be yea, your nay be nay'). And true martyrs do not seek martyrdom by provocation. (Canon IX of St Peter actually forbids the seeking of martyrdom). In the Apostle we read that our zeal must be 'according unto knowledge'.

The spirit of triumphalist zeal is opposed to humility and love. That of self-justification is opposed to that of self-reproach. This spiritual illness of the right leads to nationalism or phyletism (condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 1872). It introduces nationalist politics i.e. worldliness into church life. This nationalism can lead to 'autocephalism', the idea that the existence of a national church is of greater importance than its spiritual content and the confession of the Orthodox Faith. This politicisation of the Faith leads to the most absurd situations. Thus from ex-Soviet Russia we have seen documents written by lay-people bearing the Cross and the swastika, whereas a few years ago one could see documents bearing the Cross and the hammer and sickle! However, the Cross conquered both the swastika and the hammer and sickle. The disease of the right is that of the Pharisee, that of formalism and ritualism, fanaticism and national bigotry. It leads to sectarianism, groups centred on personalities, not on the Son of God, 'isms' with which church history is filled – Arianism, Nestorianism, Apollinarianism, Sabellianism, Papism, Calvinism or Branch Davidianism.

At times of great difficulty it is easy to blame others for our own shortcomings. This sin is most common in secular life ('it's all the Government's fault') and it often extends to Church life ('it's all the bishop's fault'). The Church, however, is the Body

of Christ, it exists in a sphere in which no government exists. And in the Church we do not reach salvation alone, but together and in this Body of Christ, of which we are living members, we have a responsibility for one another. Indeed, many of the failings mentioned above are just as much, and usually more, the failings of lay-people and deacons and priests, as of the episcopate. We all suffer from lack of Faith and therefore lack of Truth and Mercy. We are all subject to temptations, to the spiritual illnesses of the left and the right of the path of salvation, forgetting that 'strait is the gate'. For we must all 'approve ourselves as the ministers of God ... by the armour of righteousness *on the right hand and on the left*' (2 Cor. 6, 4–7).

It has been said that a people deserves the government it gets. Perhaps this is also true in Church life. It is useless and unworthy to complain that bishops are not saints when we are not saints. Nevertheless, we must uphold the ideal of the Bishop. And perhaps we can conclude that ideal in the following way.

A Bishop should have *Faith*, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, the Orthodox Faith, 'holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught'. In this confession of the Faith, he should veer neither to left nor to right. In other words, his Faith should be accompanied by *Truth* and *Mercy*, which are the signs of a real, living, burning Faith. If the Bishop lacks Faith, there will be no spiritual leadership; the Church will be spiritually paralysed. For Faith and Truth and Mercy are the virtues attained by those who confess the Faith from the Cross, and the Resurrection is the spiritual dynamism that results from this confession from the Cross. 'Mercy and Truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other' (Psalm 84, 10). And this is why we who are not bishops, but are steeped in sin, must not only repent for ourselves, but must also pray with renewed vigour and fervour for our bishops. For their task, in the centre of Church life, to 'rightly divide the Word of Thy Truth' is so hard and so great.

May the Lord God have mercy on us all.

Trinity Sunday 1993

47. Aids – the Seeds of Life become the Seeds of Death

Some might question why so much has been said and written about AIDS. After all, relatively speaking, it is not such a deadly illness. Far more people die throughout the world from malnutrition than the results of AIDS. And in Western countries cancer kills far more than the consequences of AIDS. But AIDS is different.

First of all it appears to be a new disease. Secondly, it has no cure. Cancer has no cure but death from cancer can be postponed for ten, twenty, even thirty years. Death from the consequences of AIDS, a whole range of debilitating and painful illnesses, can only be postponed for a few years at most. Moreover, researchers are worried that new and more rapidly-acting forms of the virus may appear. Thirdly, there is the manner of infection. AIDS, with the tragic exceptions of children born with it and victims transfused with contaminated blood, is largely self-inflicted.

In this sense, of course, there is a cure to AIDS – remain a virgin until marriage with a virgin, do not take drugs and do not become involved in a homosexual relationship. But this simplicity is of little comfort to those already infected and the relatives of the millions who have already died of it worldwide. Prevention for them is too late. In the United States AIDS has killed more than the Korean and Vietnam Wars combined. In France someone dies of AIDS every two hours. In Africa and South America horrifying statistics reveal that in the next 25 years millions of young and often educated people will die. Swathes of Africa will be decimated, leaving orphans and the old. There appear to be two reactions to this phenomenon.

The first is the secular one. This is a humanistic attitude, attempting to remove any stigma or sense of shame or guilt. It strives to make the last months or years of victims' lives as comfortable as possible. This approach is unsatisfying for two reasons. Firstly it does not resolve the question of death and life after death. AIDS is a terminal illness, affecting mainly young people. A humanistic approach does not and cannot answer the question 'why?' It is by definition superficial, unable to console spiritually. The second reason why a humanistic approach is unsatisfying is because AIDS explodes the myth that science can 'save'. Science has never 'saved' a single life, all it can do is postpone inevitable death, and in the case of AIDS it is not even very good at doing this. Humanism certainly offers emotional and physical comfort, but it is quite unable to go further, to do any more than this.

The second attitude to AIDS is that often expressed by fundamentalists (Protestant or Muslim) and traditionalist Catholics. This is generally a condemnatory view (sometimes hypocritical), like that of those in the Gospel who wished to stone the woman caught in adultery: 'Let us stone the sinner', to which the Lord replied, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone'. One often finds the same attitude with regard to abortion. It is one thing to condemn abortion as murder, but quite another, and far more helpful and positive, to set up a home for unmarried, pregnant women

and look after them to make sure that they do not abort. The fundamentalist view is based on the Old Testament ‘anthropomorphism’ of God as ‘the God of punishment’.

This is a crude, human misunderstanding of God which attributes human failings to Him, such as we find in pagan mythological systems, where the gods marry, lie, rob, cheat, steal and kill. It is not surprising, therefore, that Islam and fundamentalist Protestantism share this view, since both are basically Old Testament religions, which have either not received or else actually rejected the New Testament. The New Testament revealed God for the first time in human history as the God of Love Who forgives sins, for God does not punish man, man punishes himself. That is to say that there are natural laws in our beings and we disobey them at our peril.

This is clear in a physical sense – if I throw myself under a train, I will die, if I put my hand in the fire, I will burn myself. But most do not realize that it is also true in a spiritual sense – if I murder, I will suffer remorse, which will be lesser or greater according to my spiritual sensitivity, or lack of it. More subtly, if I commit fornication or adultery or a homosexual act, I will also suffer psychologically and spiritually, again to a lesser or greater degree according to my spiritual sensitivity, according to my hard-heartedness or soft-heartedness. This is because God did not create me to commit such acts. In doing them, I disobey laws implanted in me by my Maker, which I have neglected or quite ignored from the hardness of my heart. The source of sorrow is always in the disobedience of those laws.

Adam and Eve were the first to disobey these laws and thus they introduced sin and mortality into the world. This is ‘the Sin of Adam’, ‘Ancestral Sin’, which Roman Catholics, with an incorrect understanding of it, call ‘Original Sin’. When God revealed Himself to the saints through history, He revealed – and still today reveals – these laws. We often fail to understand their workings scientifically, but we must accept them, if not out of faith, then simply from the practical, empirical observation that whenever we disobey them, we suffer – which is exactly what the Devil wants, because the Devil is the source of suffering and our suffering gives him pleasure. God does not punish us. When a mother forbids her child to touch a flame and the child disobeys and burns itself, it cannot be said that the mother has punished the child. No, we are punishing or rather harming ourselves through our disobedience.

The whole value of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers and the Saints is precisely this – that we can learn how to live through the discovery of these laws which are contained in these writings. These laws were lost when Adam and Eve sinned and they contain the Paradise that Adam and Eve lost. Through the rediscovery of this lost knowledge and our resolve to live in accordance with it, we can glimpse anew this lost Paradise and be inspired by its vision. If, on the other hand, we choose to reject the knowledge of these laws and refuse to attempt to live in accordance with them, we shall bring ourselves suffering and ultimately a cruel death. One of the laws that God gave us is immunity. We can destroy this law by not living in accordance with the ordinances that will maintain it, in other words, we can, sin. But if we do this,

then we shall have to bear the consequences of sin, i.e. suffering by losing this immunity, and then falling ill. And illness is the sign of our mortality, and illness thus borne is the consequence of losing the barrier to mortality, immunity, prematurely.

Some might say that God is unjust, for in implanting laws inside us, which we disobey at our peril, He prevents us from doing what we wish. But firstly, He does not prevent us from doing what we wish. He gives us freedom; it is our choice whether to use that freedom to 'glimpse Paradise' or to destroy ourselves. As the Apostle Paul writes: 'Everything is possible, but not everything is expedient'. And secondly we should also consider the possibility that not everything we wish to do may be right. It may be that our will is also diseased; it may also suffer from a false perception of reality, from illusions. If we saw reality aright, perhaps then we would not wish to do what is contrary to the divine laws implanted in us, which, if obeyed, will lead to human happiness, even here and now, let alone in the life to come. And this is what we believe, that God is the God of Love, and that therefore what He most desires is precisely our happiness.

Orthodox Christianity states very clearly that we are to 'hate the sin but love the sinner'. I would suggest that the Orthodox approach to AIDS is exactly this. 'Go and sin no more', as the Saviour says in the Gospels. To any dying person the Orthodox pastor says that the task in hand is to repent of past sins, whatever they may have been, in order to prepare for the moment when the soul will leave the body to meet the bright but burning Love of God. This is particularly the case with terminal illnesses when the time of death is more or less known. In a sense, terminal illnesses are a special, providential gift of God. Spiritually such a death is far preferable to a sudden death when we are ill-prepared for the separation of soul from body. Indeed in the litanies of the Church we pray for protection from such death. ('A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful and a good defence before the dread judgement-seat of Christ, let us ask.') Terminal illness helps us to prepare for what we often forget is the only certain and inevitable event in our life – our death. And AIDS is a terminal illness.

The contemporary world often seems to resemble an ill person who refuses to take the medicine that his doctor has prescribed for him. And it often appears that the media egg on the patient in his will not to take the medicine. Not only do the media goad the sexual instinct in man, but they have also given this terrible name of AIDS to a horrific infection that aids not. The main cause of AIDS is a deviation which has changed the seeds of life into the seeds of death. It is time to recover the Orthodox Christian understanding that the sexual instinct is in us to be channelled or transfigured into pro-creative and creative love and happiness. This is the law of our being: we ignore it at our peril.

June 1993

48. The Unity of the Orthodox Church

‘Through the Holy Spirit every soul is quickened and exalted in purity, and enlightened by the Threefold Unity in mystic holiness.’

Antiphon of the Degrees, Tone VI

‘Through the coming of the Holy Spirit, human beings were made gods.’

Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham, Sermon on the Holy Day of Pentecost.

Who is the Head of the Orthodox Church? This is a question which we often hear and is often asked, especially by Roman Catholics. No doubt they expect to find in the Orthodox Church an equivalent to the Pope, and they have difficulty in finding landmarks in a Faith so radically different from their own as Orthodox Christianity.

Indeed, although Roman Catholics may not realize it, for Orthodox the very existence of a visible Head of the Roman Catholic Church is a sure sign that, whatever its merits, Roman Catholicism is structurally a secular institution. Visible heads are the symbols of secular corporations, companies and governments. Orthodox would argue that ultimately the Pope is the descendant of the pagan Roman Emperors. Historically, when the Imperial Power disappeared from Rome, its authority and prestige were transferred, mainly by the Carolingians and their descendants, to the Papacy. Many Orthodox would also assert that the only original distinctive Roman Catholic doctrine, the *filioque*, is but the theology, or rather philosophy, of Papism.

For Roman Catholicism, the Pope of Rome has been known as ‘the Vicar of Christ’ only since the Hildebrandine Reform of the 11th century. (Until that time he had been known in Orthodox fashion as ‘the Vicar of St Peter’, and as the Old English Archbishop Wulstan of York preached his homilies at the beginning of the 11th century, every bishop is the Vicar of St Peter.’¹) And since, according to the *filioque*, the Holy Spirit proceeds from Christ as from God the Father, so the Holy Spirit must also proceed from ‘the Vicar of Christ’, i.e. the Pope. And is this not precisely the affirmation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility? Is this not precisely the everyday reality of Roman Catholicism where everything depends on a centralized system in which diocesan bishops have been deprived of decision-making, where all must go through Rome?

The centralising Roman Catholic idea has also been kept, though to a much lesser extent, by the Anglican Communion, ‘headed’ by the Archbishop of Canterbury. And even secular people, taking other religions as their models or else thinking of secular organizations, expect the Orthodox Church to have a ‘Head’. For their own convenience journalists quite often appoint a ‘Head’ of the Orthodox Church. This is always the Patriarch of Constantinople – who has one of the smallest flocks in the Orthodox world (even, with inflated figures, probably not more than six million!).

But the truth is that the Orthodox Church has no visible Head. And indeed anyone who said that he was, would probably be excommunicated until he had repented of his towering pride.

Of course it is true in history that various figures have played an important role in the Orthodox Church, for example, certain Emperors of Constantinople², or after the Fall of the City in the year 1453, certain Russian Tsars and Moldavian rulers. They worked to protect the Church from heathen invasions and the violence of heretics, made generous donations to monasteries and church-building programmes, sponsored missions and issued laws in defence of the Church. But they were never 'Heads' of the Church, and even when certain tried to meddle in Church affairs, they were always fiercely opposed by the faithful. The proof that they were never 'Heads' of the Church can be seen in the fact that since 1917 the Orthodox Church has had no secular protector, but the Church continues regardless.

It is no less true that in Church history, other great and universal figures have stood up to defend Church Truth at vital turning-points, for example:

St Antony the Great, Founder of Monasticism.

St Athanasius the Great, Defender of the Teaching on the Incarnation of Christ.

St Basil the Great, Defender of the Orthodox Teaching on the Holy Trinity.

St Ambrose of Milan, Defender of the Church against a wicked Emperor.

St John Chrysostom, Pastor, Preacher and Confessor for the Faith.

St John Cassian, Father of Western Monasticism and Theologian.

St Leo the Great, Defender of the Orthodox Teaching on the Two Natures of Christ.

St Gregory the Great, Pastor, Missionary and Theologian.

St Martin the Confessor, Defender of the Person of Christ with St Maximus the Confessor.

St Theodore the Studite, Defender of the Teaching on the Incarnation and Icons. St Photius the Great, Defender of the Orthodox Teaching on the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity.

St Simeon the New Theologian, Defender of the Spirituality of the Church.

St Gregory Palamas, Defender of Orthodox Spirituality against humanistic and atheistic rationalism.

St Mark of Ephesus, Defender of the Church from scholastic rationalism.

St Paisius (Velichkovsky), Defender of Monasticism and the prayer of Orthodox Enlightenment from impious rulers and the decadence of the secular 'Enlightenment'.

St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, Canonist, Pastor, Theologian.

Blessed John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Preacher of Repentance and Return to Orthodoxy on five continents. (Reposed 1966, to be canonized in 1994).

Blessed Justin (Popovich), Confessor and Defender of the Theology of the Church. (Reposed 1979, his canonization is now being prepared).

None of these figures, however, ever claimed to be 'Head' of the Church. Indeed several of them denounced the very concept, especially St Gregory the Great, himself Pope of Rome in the early seventh century.

For the Orthodox there can only ever be one 'Head' of the Church – Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, as is affirmed constantly in the New Testament, for instance, Ephesians 1, 22 and 5, 23 or Colossians 1, 18, and also in the Psalms of the Old Testament.

Some might ask – what then is the purpose of bishops? Of course a bishop represents Christ, he is an icon of Christ, but he is only the 'head' of his diocese, not of the Church. True, every bishop belongs to a local Church which is 'headed' by a Patriarch, a Pope (as in Alexandria), a Metropolitan or an Archbishop. But these latter are 'heads' of local Churches, not of the whole Church of Christ. And moreover they are only 'heads' in an administrative and liturgical sense. They can be deposed by any Council of bishops of their local Churches, they are not infallible, their authority is limited – they are icons of Christ, as are all bishops, and no more than this.

How then is the Church governed if She has no visible Head? A company would dissolve into chaos without a chairman, a State without a Monarch or President, the Roman Catholic Church would cease to have any sense without a Pope. How is it that the Orthodox Church can exist without a visible Head? Why does it not break up? Where is Her principle of unity and authority?

The answer to the above question is given by Christ in the Gospels. Knowing that He would ascend to His Father in Heaven, He promised to send down the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the Giver of Life and asked the Apostles to gather in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit (John 14, 16 and 14, 26). The Holy Spirit, he said, would guide us into all Truth (John 16, 13). In this way, though the Church has no visible Head, and has no need of a visible Head, She has an Invisible Head, Christ our God and King, present through the Holy Spirit, sent by Him from God the Father (John 15, 26). This sense and inner knowledge of Christ's presence as Head of the Church has always prevented Orthodoxy from appointing a human-being as Head of the Church.

True, it would often be more 'convenient' to have a human Head of the Church. Decisions could be taken more quickly, the Church would seem to be better organized, co-operation and co-ordination would be easier. 'Jurisdictions', in other words dioceses of local Orthodox Churches superposed on one another on the same Non-Orthodox territory, could be organized into branches of a new Local Church.

(Just as, for example Polish and Italian Roman Catholics in Great Britain have been absorbed into one Roman Catholic Church). A visible Head would be able to centralize a global Church. Local states would perhaps think twice before meddling in local Church matters. Perhaps, for instance, the Greek, Romanian and Bulgarian States would not have forced the local Churches into abandoning the Orthodox calendar. Administration, communications, human resources and management would be enormously facilitated in general.

And yet for Orthodox such language is sinister, it smacks of the corporate world. Such a view of the Church is nightmarish; it is not a view of the Church, but a view of Babylon. This 'solution' of secularisation would reduce the Church to a mere State with the values of a State. It is papocæsarism. Such a 'Church' would be little more than a joint-stock company, at best a welfare organization. The essential business of the Church is not efficiency, but holiness, and efficiency, however desirable, is vastly inferior to holiness.

All of this explains why, to the outsider, Orthodoxy presents such a paradoxical, even chaotic, face. The human face of the Orthodox Church is indeed chaotic – because the Church lives in the world. Internally, however, the unity and the authority of the Church are present by the Holy Spirit in Christ. The Church is the Body of Christ. The unity of the Church is apparent to the extent that we are 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1, 4), to the extent that we partake in the Holy Spirit. The outsider fails to see the unity and the authority of the Church, but only human drama because he, being outside the Church, cannot be a partaker of this divine life, the actions and the movements of the Holy Spirit.

The unity of the Orthodox Church is therefore by definition a spiritual unity, not a secular one. The Church is the Church and not a Church-State. The unity of the Church is apparent wherever there are those who strive to live in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Unity becomes visible and tangible in our lives by the Holy Spirit. Where there are those who refuse the Church, where there are schisms and heresies, for whatever doctrinal, political or nationalistic reasons penetrating into Church life from the world, there unity becomes invisible because it no longer exists. It is for this reason that the unity of the Church is most apparent in the lives of the Saints, where there is no difference between 'Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free' (Col. 3, 11); 'for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ... and have all been made to drink into one Spirit' (1 Cor. 12, 13). This spiritual unity given by the Head of the Orthodox Church, Christ the Lord, is stronger than time or space, for the Saints are united regardless of century and nationality, education or background and those in communion of prayer with the Saints are similarly united.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oprest,
By schisms rent asunder,

By heresies distrest,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, 'How long?'
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song!

S. J. Stone, 1839–1900

This unity of prayer through the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ, this unity of the Church, is at one and the same time Her Orthodoxy and Her Catholicity. It is Orthodox for it confesses the Orthodox Teachings but it is also Catholic since it is universal, beyond time and space. Indeed, the two are inseparable, for Orthodoxy which is not Catholic would be but a local opinion or custom, and Catholicity which is not Orthodox would be a form of monolithic totalitarianism. This is why the term 'Roman Catholic' sounds so strange to Orthodox ears – to be 'Catholic' and yet 'Roman' at the same time seems to be a contradiction in terms.

The Catholicity and the Orthodoxy of the Church is best seen at Councils, whether Ecumenical or local. It is here, at gatherings of bishops and often saints, that the Holy Spirit may descend to inspire understanding of the nature of the Christian God and reveal spiritual realities that may then be expressed in canons and dogmas. Here the authority and teaching of the Church are expounded by the inspiration of Christ come to men through the Holy Spirit. In this divino-human action, spiritual truth, previously unrevealed or not understood, may be disclosed in order to strengthen the bonds of Unity, Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Church. In the case of local councils, sometimes truths have been expressed which have then been universally accepted by the Church. The best example of this must be the first Council at Jerusalem. As St James, the Brother of the Lord, who presided it, said: 'For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us ... ' (Acts 15, 28), when speaking of the decision of the Council concerning the question of circumcision.

In other cases there have been meetings of bishops and others which were sometimes prematurely termed 'councils', but whose decisions were then rejected by the Church as wrong, because they were inspired not by the Holy Spirit, but by the lusts, weaknesses, passions and cowardice of the uninspired. A good example is that of the 'Council' of Florence in the 15th century. Such 'councils' are no more than mere conferences or political arenas, where power and money loom large. Characteristically, such meetings bring not unity, but disunity, they weaken the Church's authority, not strengthen it. They are not Divino-human events, but merely human ones. They deny that Christ is the Head of the Church, that God's Will must be done. They attempt to substitute human and secular authority for divine authority. The most flagrant example of this outside the Church is that of the First Vatican Council where the Pope of Rome was proclaimed infallible. For Orthodox only the Church is infallible, for only the Church is headed by Christ, Who speaks through the Holy Spirit: 'The King's daughter is all glorious within', (Psalm 44, 4).

At periods in Her history, centrifugal forces, schismatic or nationalistic, have threatened to undermine Church unity. Such is the case of the 'Macedonian Orthodox Church' which with Communist and Vatican aid was separated from the Serbian Orthodox Church. In times past whole local Churches have actually left the Orthodox Church. Such was the case with the Nestorians, the Monophysites and later the Western Church.

At other times the unity of the Church has been menaced by centripetal (centralising) forces which threatened to enforce unity at the cost of diversity. Such was the case with certain Emperors who wished to Hellenise or Russify local populations for political reasons. This was the case with the Bulgarian Church which, under Constantinople jurisdiction, was not allowed to celebrate in Church Slavonic.

In spite of these two anti-ecclesial tendencies, the Church has survived, for 'the gates of Hell shall not prevail'. Groups may leave the Church for one reason or another, but the Church can never be divided – She always remains One despite centrifugal and centripetal forces.

The Orthodox Church is then a Commonwealth of Local Churches, a Community of unity in diversity which is founded on the Orthodox Christian theology of the Holy Trinity. The unity of the Church is the expression of the common Orthodox faith, which is itself the expression of the experience of the Holy Spirit common to Her members. The principle of unity and authority in the Church is the Son of God, the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ, present through the Holy Spirit. This can best be seen among Her Saints, those who have acquired the Holy Spirit, especially when they are gathered together, for instance, in a Council. 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18, 20). But where bishops gather together not in the name of Christ, but in the name, for example, of some odious tyrant, there the unity and the authority of the Church is mocked, the Holy Spirit is absent, men commit mistakes, their decisions will not be received, and the 'Council' will be condemned as a 'Robber Council', a meeting of spiritual thieves.

For the very nature of the Church is spiritual, not secular, ascetic, not organizational. The unity of the Church is rendered apparent when each one of us, individually and collectively, roots out from within himself all that is contrary to the free and untrammelled workings and movements of the Holy Spirit in himself and through himself, through repentance, prayer, fasting, confession and communion with the Body and Blood of Christ. If we fail to do this, our unity with the Body of Christ, the Church, is weakened. The clearest sign that the Orthodox Church is not a secular institution, but a Divino-human one is the fact that She has no visible Head, but the invisible Head of the God-Man, Christ, present in the Church through the Holy Spirit, 'Who art everywhere present and fillest all things'.

We pray Thee, O Lord, that Thou increase in us Thy faith, and ever kindle the light of the Holy Spirit within us.

Prayer of Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham, c. 996.

Day of the Holy Spirit, 1993.

1 Bethurum: Homilies XV and XVII.

2 Usually wrongly called 'Byzantium'. Byzantium was a port on the site of which St Constantine the Great built a capital for the Christian Roman Empire. He chose this site to unite East and West, Asia and Europe, as symbolized by the double-headed eagle. Similarly Orthodox Christian Art is often called 'Byzantine' Art. As far as we know Byzantium never had any Art. In Western Europe this Orthodox Art in its various provincial and somewhat primitive forms is known as Celtic, Visigothic, Lombard, Merovingian, Carolingian, Ottonian or Anglo-Saxon according to the period and the region. Collectively it is known as Pre-Romanesque. Romanesque Art is that of Papal supremacy and therefore not Orthodox. Gothic Art is that of Medieval Roman Catholicism.

49. St Edward the Martyr and the Destiny of England

‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.’

(Matt. 6, 33)

‘Since first they came to the land of Britain
No worse deed was ever done among the English than this.
Men murdered him, but God exalted him;
In life – an earthly king,
But in death – a heavenly saint.’

(The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 979)

‘The Church in the British Isles will only begin to grow when She begins to venerate Her own saints.’

(Attributed variously to St Arsenios of Paros and St Arsenios of Cappadocia)

The Orthodox Christian Faith is founded on two essential teachings, that of the Holy Trinity – One God in Three Persons – and that of the Incarnation of the Son of God – True God become True Man. The sign of the cross expresses both these teachings. The two fingers on the palm represent the Two Natures of Christ in One Person, the thumb and two fingers placed together represent the Holy Trinity, Three Persons Consubstantial. With this sign the Christian blesses his mental powers (the head), his spiritual strength (the heart) and his physical strength (the shoulders). All three sources of strength are to be blessed for man’s use and his balance. In Old English times much attention was paid to the sign of the cross: ‘A man may wave about wonderfully with his hands without creating any blessing unless he makes the sign of the cross. But if he does, the enemy will soon be frightened on account of the victorious sign. With three fingers one must bless oneself for the Holy Trinity.’ (Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham, Thorpe I, p. 462)

The three aspects of man, spiritual, mental and physical, are also reflected in society. In every human grouping, Christian or not, there are those who dedicate themselves to spiritual work (monks, nuns, priests), to mental work (teachers, writers, administrators) and physical work (farmers, artisans, craftsmen). Society needs all these activities for its own balance. Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham wrote in detail about it in his *‘Beadsmen, Labourers and Soldiers’*. (Skeat, Vol II, pp. 12 1–122) and Archbishop Wulfstan of York speaks of the three orders in *‘The Institutes of Polity’*. (See G Duby: *‘The Three Orders’*, London 1980) Similarly the nations also contain spiritual institutions (in Christianity, the Church) and human institutions (the State). These represent the divine and human realms, the Two Natures of Christ, and both are necessary for a balanced society. This balance of spiritual, mental and physical forces

and this balance of the divine and the human represent a collective sign of the cross made over a whole people, a whole nation, a whole kingdom. 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people' (I Peter 2, 9).

In contemporary Western society this balance has been quite lost. Today hardly any importance is attached to the realm of the spirit and most live in total ignorance of even the existence of the spiritual world which runs parallel to the material one. Instead much heed is paid to mental work (education, higher studies, technology) or physical development (sport, leisure, recreation). The divine and the human are thus unbalanced. We live in an age of 'totalitarian' States when the 'totality' of our lives is ruled by the criteria of the State. This is obviously true in non-democracies, but it is also true in democracies where in fact the main concern of most is 'economism', the rule of money, interest in the economy, what in the Gospel is simply called 'Mammon'. This leaves no room for spiritual life ('I haven't got time to go to church'). In former times men and women developed their spiritual lives, they believed in and practised a Faith, they tired their bodies through physical work, thus taming the baser passions and so calming their minds. Today spiritual capacities are undeveloped, even unknown, whereas the body and its senses are constantly stimulated and excited, and the mind is stressed by continual flows of information. The results are societies in which millions of people are physically or mentally sick.

In such a context it seems natural to ask the question how society became so unbalanced, when we stopped 'seeking first the kingdom of God', when, in other words, we ceased making the sign of the cross over our land. It is to this question that we wish to address ourselves now. It is evening-time of an early spring day. A young King is returning from hunting on the royal estate in the Purbeck Hills in the south-west. He rides together with a few companions towards his stepmother's manor. The King, 19 or 20 years of age, is called Edward. He is the great-great-grandson of Alfred the Great and son of St Edgar the Peaceful, King of All England. His stepmother is Ælfthryth, mother of Ethelred, known to history as Ethelred the Unready, meaning in the Old English tongue 'Noble Counsel the No-Counsel'. We are on a hill to the west of the village of Corfe in Dorset and it is 18 March in the year 979. Queen Ælfthryth's men ride out to meet the young King with a stirrup cup. One draws up on his right as though to embrace him, but then seizes his hand violently. Another, on the left, takes his left hand, breaks the bones in it and stabs the King in the region of the lung. The King is thrown back across the saddle as the horse panics and moves forward. The King's left foot is stuck in its stirrup and his body is forced across the saddle so violently that his femur is cracked. With his body hanging down to the right and his left foot still stuck in its stirrup, the horse bolts in flight; blood pours from the stab-wound, the horse gallops until the King falls lifeless, all broken, into the small stream at the bottom of the hill where today stand the ruins of Corfe Castle. The very stream in which to this day pilgrims come to bathe their eyes, for the waters of it are said to have healing powers.

‘His earthly kinsmen would not avenge him,
Yet his Heavenly Father has avenged him in full.
Those earthly slayers would have wiped his memory from the Earth;
But his Father in Heaven has noised his fame abroad,
In the Heavens and on Earth.
Those who once would not kneel before his living body
Now humbly kneel before his bones.’

(The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)

The wonders that followed were to make this royal assassination into a martyrdom. The dread sin of regicide, the murder of the Lord’s Anointed, by traitors from the royal household, had been committed not for political reasons but for spiritual ones. Like his father before him, who had reposed suddenly in 976, Edward had been anointed and crowned by the holy Archbishop of All England, ‘the First Abbot of the English Nation’, St Dunstan. Like his father before him, Edward had been generous with alms in times of poor harvest and had supported monasticism, protecting monasteries and their lands from the rapacious appetites of jealous magnates. King Edward wanted the English Kingdom to be founded on prayer, for he knew that this was the only guarantee of his rule. Others thought differently.

One, Ælfhere of Mercia, had taken advantage of Edward’s youth. He destroyed monasteries, expelled the monks, gave their lands to kinsmen and cronies. The monastery of Evesham had been looted, Deerhurst in Gloucestershire had suffered likewise. ‘Widows were robbed many a time and oft, and many injustices and crimes flourished thereafter. He drove monks from many churches, casting out sheep and shepherds with shouts of applause from the mob, a most wicked lord, great in tyranny’. Ælfhere was opposed not only by the reformers of the Church who led the struggle for spiritual revival, Sts Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald, the Three Holy Hierarchs of the English Nation, but also by the nobles of East Anglia. Ethelwin, champion of monastic life, was supported by his brother Alfwold, and also one of the greatest heroes of Old England, Byrhtnoth of Maldon. And at the head of this noble company was the young King. And so it was that Ælfhere of Mercia or his supporters organized this regicide, probably with the support of Ælfthryth, anxious to wield power with her own son, Ethelred, then in his early teens, the successor to Edward on the throne of the Kingdom.

This would give the plotters a free hand in the affairs of the land, the opportunity to oppose monastic revival, spiritual rebirth, manipulating Ethelred as they pleased. So it was that St Edward the Martyr was the *last* English King to put monasticism *first*. In him was martyred not just a young King, but also England’s hope of remaining a nation in which the Church and spiritual needs of the nation would be on an equal footing with the State and the material needs of the nation. This was the beginning of the end. The balance of Church and State was to be for ever lost in the English land. We need look no further than the reign of Ethelred to see that this is so.

From the very beginning the omens had been bad. At his baptism Ethelred, like an impious Emperor of Constantinople before him, had defiled the font. The year 979, the year of Edward's martyrdom and Ethelred's coronation was marked by a heavenly sign: 'At midnight a blood-red cloud appeared in the sky, shot with fire'. According to Eadmer, the Canterbury chronicler: 'Ethelred was sternly denounced by St Dunstan, since he had seized the throne by shedding his brother's blood. The Saint proclaimed that Ethelred himself would live in blood, that he would suffer invasions and the dread oppression of foreign foes and that the Kingdom would be worn down again and again by bloody devastation'. In fact the incompetence and spinelessness of Ethelred with his attempts to buy off the pagan Danes would lead to the glorious but humiliating martyrdom of St Alphege, the Archpastor of the English Nation, and finally a generation of Danish Kings who held England more or less as a colony. In 1014 Archbishop Wulfstan of York declared: 'All must go from bad to worse on account of the people's sins before the coming of Antichrist'.

But the worst mistake of Ethelred was to marry Emma of Normandy, thus triggering off that fateful chain of events that would lead to the Invasion of William and the destruction of the Old English Kingdom and its rich civilization. According to the death-bed vision of Edward the Confessor, himself half-Norman: 'The English land will be delivered into the hands of the Enemy, so that devils will come all through the land with fire, sword and the havoc of war'. It is difficult not to see in the tragic martyrdom of King Edward not only the crown of spiritual glory but also the beginning of England's decadence and ultimate spiritual fall from grace.

With the severe setback of King Edward's martyrdom, the movement for monastic renewal after the Viking attacks of the 9th century was slowed and English society was destabilized, caught off balance. Thus it would become receptive to the new Papal ideology which would develop on the Continent with the first Germanic Popes and would lead by the middle of the 11th century to the departure of most of Western Europe from the Faith of the Church of the first millennium. This would be the betrayal of that millennium of Western holiness, that period of Western history which historians so revealingly call 'the Age of the Saints'. There is not a single problem in the life of the British Isles which did not begin with this period. The martyrdom of St Edward was not the murder of an individual, but a murderous attack on the spiritual integrity of the whole of the British Isles.

The Norman Invasion was in fact the invasion of the descendants of the Vikings who had invaded Northern France. The semi-pagan Norman warrior-bands with their military aristocracy and feudal castles would attack the authentic Christian world from Sicily to Ireland, and later would be largely responsible for the sack of the Capital of the Christian Roman Empire, Constantinople, in 1204. (Some of the defending troops were the descendants of the Old English who had fled there after 1066, according to the chronicler Villehardouin.) In England they introduced feudalism and altogether enslaved the people. They reduced the Church to a Department of State, built church-fortresses and made its bishops into warriors. This 'Church' became part of a system

of feudal oppression which the people were only too glad to throw off at the Reformation. The loss of freedom in the Church, its feudalisation, compromised it for centuries.

The Normans oppressed the Celtic peoples in a way in which the Old English had not done since their Christianisation. The castles of the Normans are still plentiful in Wales and the dislike of many Celts, especially the Irish, for 'the English' is only too visible in the sad reports of our daily newspapers. What the Celts fail to understand is the fact that the English themselves were the first victims of what they call 'the English', who are in fact the Norman usurpers of Christian English legitimacy and culture. These 'English' are scarcely the English of inner England, they are the ruling class, the 'British', those who crushed first the true English and then the Celts. Indeed the Norman Invasion of Ireland in the 12th century was carried out with the same Papal blessing as the Norman invasion of England had been carried out in 1066. It would lead to the virtual destruction of Irish holiness, leading to the loss of the traditions of Celtic monasticism, which had been inspired from Egypt, and the turning of the Lives of the Irish Saints into little more than legendary folklore. In this way they would strive to destroy the traditions of 'the Isle of Saints', just as they had tried to discredit English and Welsh and Scottish Christian Tradition.

The first millennium in the British Isles brought forth thousands of saints. The second millennium, including in Ireland, has brought forth a mere handful, even by Roman Catholic reckonings. And in the 12th century, dynastic struggle led to Civil War under Stephen, then in the 13th and 14th centuries the 100 Years War with France and in the 15th century the descendants of the Normans started the Wars of the Roses with all their horror and bloodshed. We can almost certainly suppose that none of this would ever have occurred without the Norman Invasion. Indeed since 1066, there has never been an English king or queen. As Maurice Hewlett wrote in 1916 in his epic, 'The Song of the Plow':

'There was a year, I understand,
A thousand odd since Christ was King,
There reigned three kings in England
Ere Christmas bells were due to ring;
And after them came never a one
Of English blood for song to sing.'

When the Middle Ages ended, England's and indeed the British Isles' sufferings did not end. The consequence of the murder of the *last* English King to put monasticism and prayer *first* was the appearance of the *first* English King to put monasticism and prayer not second or third, but *last*. I am speaking of course of that plunderer of English monasticism, spiritual descendant of Ælfhere of Mercia, the syphilitic tyrant and murderer, Henry VIII. His reign would see a land which would not contain a single monastery within it for three centuries, a situation which even Bolshevism never achieved. Moreover, Henry and those who followed, Elizabeth and later

Cromwell, were to aggravate the position in Scotland and Ireland to such an extent that the consequences are there for all to see today. Having burnt their fingers in Europe, the Kings of this period turned away to build an Empire in the New Worlds.

But the Empire initiated in the 16th century, especially by Elizabeth, faced by a hostile and Roman Catholic Continent, was one based on plunder and commerce, not on God. Indeed the colonists from the British Isles made little effort to convert the peoples they met in Asia, the Americas and Africa until the 19th century, for their Empire was not founded on Faith. And even in the 19th century the missionaries made converts only among the most primitive peoples of Africa and Polynesia. Where they met established and more sophisticated religions, as in India and among the Muslims, they made no converts. When they met another wisdom, albeit less wise because Christless, but more sincerely held, there they met but resistance. As the poet-priest William Barnes wrote in 1857 of the India Mutiny:

‘Missionary work will never be done by the sword, nor by the sceptre, nor the civil power. They may make thousands of hypocrites, but no conversions’.

And since then there have even been many who have altogether forsaken their deformed and compromised Christianity in favour of pagan and heathen faiths. Once more, is this not the ultimate consequence of the actions of those who refused spiritual life, who refused monastic renewal, who refused the presence of a strong Church beside a strong State? Without a strong Church, the State can never be strong: ‘Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it’ (Psalm 126, 1). And all that time the simple people of England were crushed or downtrodden. As that Poet of England, John Masefield, wrote of the nineteenth century in his poem ‘Wonderings’:

Two different races trod the English turf,
The (so-called) Norman, and the (not called) serf.
I saw the rich, like tree-twigs in the light,
The poor, like tree-roots buried in the night.
Uncouthly, uncomplainingly, they mined
To send up sap until the twigs had dined.
The twigs in comfort in the sun and air
Proclaimed that things were perfect as they were
That if the roots were muddy, that must be ...
Roots must be under mud to grow the tree;
Let roots be muddy and in darkness dig
Let singing-birds and sunlight come to twig ...

Often I marvel at those folk of old,
Those upright English poor, those hearts of gold,
Who, through the hardship between birth and dying
Held a true course and kept their colours flying.
In all their work, so honest and so good,
So full of kindness, thought, and hardihood,

So seldom praised, and yet so often glad,
So proud, to keep their children clean and clad,
And somehow fed, for England still to be.
Below, lay hell, above, stupidity,
And in their hearts a star of the divine,
That no cloud dims, that cannot cease to shine.
Not shipping, cotton, iron, wools and coals
Can make a nation's wealth, but splendid souls.

Today, forty generations on, we are taking part in the building of another Empire, the Empire of Europe. But this too is doomed to fail, because it too is a house built on sand, built without God. We bow down today before the new (but actually old) god of the ECU. But already this Europe is crumbling at the edges, in Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia and among the millions who find themselves rejected economically and therefore useless ... 'Perhaps success cannot be measured in economic terms. Perhaps national recovery is not just a product of economic growth ... economic growth is valuable only if it contributes to the stability of a community ... Money ... solves no fundamental problems. It deals with symptoms not causes ... Britain ... has reached the end of an era'. So speaks the Anglo-French billionaire financier, Sir James Goldsmith (The Times, 15 March 1993). Our modern rulers have yet to learn the simple Gospel Faith, St Edward's Faith, the Faith that puts the spirit first in order to find an equilibrium in human life.

'Those who would not kneel before his living body
Now humbly kneel before his bones.
Now do we see that the wisdom of men,
Their scheming and their plots,
Are as nought before God's purpose.'

(The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 979)

The words of the chronicler-monk of a thousand years ago sound strangely prophetic to our ears today. The *last* English King to put monasticism and prayer *first* may yet enlighten the financiers and politicians of today, for 'hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?' (I Cor. 1, 20).

It can come as no surprise to learn that folklore and popular tales relate that the heroes of the Old English did not die but still live. Thus it is said that Harold Godwinsson was not slain at Hastings but went to the Holy Land as a pilgrim, returned to live as a hermit near Dover and ended his days an anchorite in Chester. But according to others Harold 'shall even yet return to lead his countrymen against the Normans'. In the fen country a similar tale is told of Hereward called '*the Last of the English*'. In the North-West others sought refuge from the Normans in 'Christes Croft':

When all England is aloft
Where shall men be but in Christes Croft?

And where does Christes Croft be?
But twixt the Ribble and the Mersey.

Can these heroes still be seen there? In Shropshire until of late it was believed that the Old English hero Wild Edric, known as Edric the Forester, is still alive deep in the mines under the hills. According to 'The Folklore of the Welsh Border' by Jacqueline Simpson, a 19th century folklorist was given the following information about him: 'He is condemned to inhabit the lead mines as punishment for having allowed himself to be deceived by the Conqueror's fair words into submitting to him. There he lives with his Lady and his whole train. The miners call them 'the Old Men', and sometimes hear them knocking and wherever they knock the best lodes are to be found. Now and then they show themselves. Whenever war is going to break out, they ride out over the hills in the direction of the enemy's land ... One day we saw Edric and his Lady Godda and their companions riding northwards at Minsterley ... They were dressed in clothes of times past, all green and white, with gold ornaments; Edric was dark-skinned; he carried a sword and a hunting-horn, and rode a white horse; Godda had wavy golden hair reaching to her waist ... It was in 1853, shortly before the Crimean War ... My father had seen them once before, riding southwards, and then Napoleon Bonaparte came ... He cannot die, they say, till all the wrong has been made right, and England has returned to the same state in which she was before the troubles of his days'. As recently as 1969 another folklorist recorded that Edric had been seen both before the Boer War and in 1914, though she recorded no sighting in 1939.

It is our belief that these tales, handed down from generation to generation, represent deeper truths. It is our belief that England is haunted by her past, and the misdeed of regicide lies like a curse across the English land. Since England lost her Orthodox Faith, she has been in a nightmare, a nightmare from which she will awake only when she hearkens to the Voices of those who haunt her, the voices of the Saints of old, who are calling for 'all the wrong to be made right, for England to return to the same state in which she was before the troubles'. And it is in this connection that we understand the return of the holy relics of St Edward the Martyr, King of England, to a shrine 'among a Communion whose doctrine is far closer to that which he knew in his lifetime than either that of the present Church of Rome, or the reformed Church of England', as the finder of the relics, Mr. J. Wilson-Claridge, a Non-Orthodox, has written:

'It is our earnest prayer that England, and thus the whole of the British Isles, may yet awake to spiritual resurrection and some restoration of the Orthodox way of life within her. England's destiny and that of all the British Isles, is kept by her nightmare, until such time as she heeds the voices that haunt her, and more especially that of her martyred King, the last to put the realm of the spirit first. And when England heeds his voice, then there will be national repentance for that dread sin of regicide, and then all her ghosts will be laid'.

That fateful evening-time in spring all those years ago has sealed our destiny to this day, but:

‘At evening-time, it shall be light.’

(Zechariah 14, 7)

Stand fair, O England, make ready, O land of kings!
And all ye that do dwell therein, make glad and sing
For the love of England, the blessed martyr-king,
He who has been glorified by the King of Kings,
And cry ye all: pray unceasing to Christ the Lord
That to the Orthodox Faith England be restored!

(Ikos from the Matins of St Edward the Martyr, King of England.)

June 1993

50. In an Old English Church

I have sought Thee on waking after dawn,
Down grassy track by softly spreading corn.
I have thought on Thee resting at midday,
By moated farmhouse where they cut the hay.

I have sensed Thee in the quiet evening hour,
Where skyward prays the thousand-year-old tower.
I have dreamed of Thee in the still of night,
Garden-hollyhocked, cottage shining white.

I have heard Thy voice calling lost souls home
To Thy England, forgotten or unknown,
To a life peaceful, faithful, sweet and slow
Haunted yet by the saints of long ago.

Though others fall to vice and evil lore,
Thy England shall stand true for evermore,
Her calling is to let this age go past,
This time ungodly, faithless, shall not last.

Thy voice in England shall be heard anew,
When, meekness learnt, men shall come their sins to rue,
And humbly shall for Thee no longer search –
For Thou art here, in this Old English Church.

August 1993

51. In Deepest England

Through the cottage windows flung open wide,
From distant wheatfield where the swallows glide,
Rises the old church tower four-square and quaint,
Where lies the standard of the Martyr-Saint.

Modest, unassuming, sweet and lowly,
Haunted by those that long since were holy,
This land's gentle beauty blinds the sighted,
But speaks of God to the inner-sighted.

Long passed by, sunk in peace, this hidden spot,
Which centuries ago the world forgot,
Fades and merges with that fraternity,
The England that lives in eternity.

August 1993

52. Church, State and the Position of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

One of the most difficult dilemmas that has always faced the Church is Her relations with the State, the paradox of being in the world, but not of it. The Church, the Body of Christ, has a human nature through the Incarnation but She also has a divine nature, a spiritual ethos, for 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18, 36). The delicate and fine balance between being in the world but not of it, of rendering unto Caesar the things of Caesar and unto God the things of God (Matt. 22, 21) has rarely been achieved.

Indeed, outside the Orthodox Church, systems of thought and practice have actually been invented to avoid achieving this balance. For example the foundation of Roman Catholicism in the 11th century came about through the desire to rule the world, to dominate through a Church-State, a Papocæsarist system, whereby the Roman Church would become a State and so rule the vassal nations around it. Hence papally-blessed invasions, crusades and inquisitions, the drama of Latin America and the Reformation. In its secularised form, this system gave birth to totalitarian States, such as the Fascist Catholic dictatorships of the inter-war and wartime periods in all the European Catholic countries – Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Ireland.

On the other hand Protestant sectarianism also avoids trying to achieve this balance by letting the State control everyday life through secularisation, desecralization, reserving for itself a 'God-slot' on Sundays. Although this may give Protestants a good conscience ('I've done my duty'), this attitude is disincarnated and allows the State to take over whole sectors of life which once belonged to the Church. In its ultimate, secularised form, it has given rise to the individualism of modern, post-Protestant societies, a secularized sectarianism.

In Orthodox theology these two extremes are unknown. And indeed there have been periods of harmony or symphony between Church and State. They occurred when the State limited itself to the material well-being and safety of its citizens and the Church was free to look to their Spiritual well-being and safety. Thus the period of St Constantine the Great or Sts Justinian and Theodora, or in Kievan Russia, or Muscovite Russia before the deposition of the holy Patriarch Nikon in the 17th century, or in 8th century England or in the 10th century before the martyrdom of St Edward, or in Ireland after its conversion and for several centuries afterwards. And there are many other examples from Church history.

Unfortunately, although Roman Catholic and Protestant practices are unknown to Orthodox theology, they are known to the history of the Orthodox Church. We have only to think of the heretical Patriarchs of Constantinople who signed anything the Emperor or the powers that be asked of them. We have only to think of Russian rulers and nobles who interfered in the spiritual realm – Ivan the Terrible, Peter I ('the

Great'), the German Princess Sophia von Anhalt-Zerbst, known to Russian history as Catherine II ('the Great'), who made monastic life virtually impossible in Russia. Or we may think of the Romanian Church in the inter-war and post-war periods with its State-appointed bishops and vicious persecutions of those who had a spiritual vision of the Church. In all these cases, as in many others from Church history, practice was guided not by Orthodox theology, the Gospel belief that the Church is in the world but not of it, the theology of the Fathers concerning the Two Natures of Christ. It was shaped either by the Roman Catholic practice of turning the Church into a Department of State and its clergy into the functionaries of the Ministry of Cults, or else by a Protestant-style sectarian mentality.

This latter we can see at work in North Africa in the 4th and 5th centuries with the Donatists, or in Russia in the 17th century with the extreme Old Ritualists. These sectarians, 'holy huddlers', like the New England Puritans, believed in a 'light-switch' theology, that as soon as someone had left their sect, they would be deprived of grace and would end up consumed by hellfire, the light of God's grace switched off. This presupposes that God is not the God of Love but a god of hate, who takes pleasure in depriving Christians of grace, in other words he is not the God of Orthodox Christianity and the Church. State-Church, Church-State, Cæsaropapism, Papocæsarism, the results are the same.

What can be said of the contemporary, post-Constantinian situation? Unfortunately, in this century, the Orthodox Church seems to find itself dominated not by practices stemming from Her own theology of Church-State relations, but by the two extremes of either totalitarian State interference or else sectarianism. In one sense, the outcome has been glorious – never have there been so many martyrs and confessors for the Orthodox Faith, the Church calendar is full of their names, the heavens are full of their spirits. But in another sense the outcome has been shameful; Churches refusing their own martyrs. In the 20th century we have seen the century of Apostasy. In Eastern Europe, we see State-Churches in atheist States (Russia Romania, Bulgaria) and a State-Church in an agnostic State (Greece). 'Church leaders' play the nationalist card, turning the Orthodox Faith into a nationalist cult in order to keep in with a hostile or indifferent State ('I'll scratch your back, you scratch mine'), thus catering to the unchurched masses ('safety in numbers') who, though indifferent or even hostile to religion, will still come along for an ethnic fiesta.

On the other hand we also have modern Donatists (the words of the Ever-Memorable Metropolitan Philaret), the extreme (not the moderate) Old Calendarists in Greece, who now number no fewer than twelve synods, most of whom deny the sacraments of all Orthodox except themselves as 'without grace'. According to a recent study by a Russian hierodeacon in 'The Herald of the Russian Student Christian Movement', the situation in Russia among the eight or nine different 'Catacomb' churches is not much better. Thus, on the one hand, contemporary Orthodoxy seems to be dominated by Churches that are 'official' i.e. involved in all manner of quite uncanonical compromises with the State or other obscure forces. On the other hand, the Faith is

championed by groupings that sincerely claim to be Orthodox, seem admirably pious and have been persecuted, but seem never to have heard the words of St Simeon the Theologian: 'Theology without love is the theology of the demons'.

It is our view, however, that this description of the Orthodox Church today and Her polarization is much too extreme. There are, for instance, a great many in the 'official churches', laity and clergy, who are sincere and pious and wish to adhere to the canons, whatever their bishops and 'theologians' may declare at ecumenical meetings and the masonic lodges. Similarly there are moderate Old Calendarists in Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, and those in the Russian catacombs who simply want to be Orthodox as their forebears, who obey the canons, not condemning others with censorious pride, allowing only a Council the right to judge. And more than this, there are Churches which know that strait is the gate and strive to keep to the Orthodox way: the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Church of Serbia and our own Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR).

In such a situation what can the role of the ROCOR be? These are the observations of a parish priest of the ROCOR, they may be right, they may be wrong – we express them here with hesitation, sure and reassured that our bishops see more clearly and more deeply than ourselves:

1. Conserve the Orthodox Faith among the Russian Emigration.

This difficult task is complicated by the secular nature of modern life, with Orthodox of Russian origin being assimilated into the countries where they live. The result is that in Protestant countries there is a tendency for the Orthodoxy of parts of the emigration to resemble an 'Eastern-rite' Protestantism or Anglicanism, and in Catholic countries, Uniatism. At the other extreme there is the temptation to form ethnic ghettos which simply die out after a generation or two with the memory of 'the old country'. We must *conserve* the Faith, not *preserve* it, and be sure that first and foremost we conserve *the Faith*, and not something else, and this in whatever language is necessary.

2. Continue the Missionary Work of the Russian Church.

This work started before the Revolution and such holy men as St Tikhon the Patriarch of Moscow were involved in it. Here, too, there are temptations, for example, to refuse to use the local language to attract converts, unlike Sts Cyril and Methodius, or to refuse to ordain non-Russians, for fear of derussification. Such a refusal cannot be justified on racial grounds, only on dogmatic ones, for fear of losing Orthodoxy. Indeed the Faith has to be guarded zealously, whatever the attractions of 'the easy way out' i.e. the new calendar, cremation, weddings during the fasts or other conveniences and opportunist compromises sadly favoured by many other jurisdictions. Above all we must realize that our Church exists here and now, whatever nostalgia we may feel for pre-Revolutionary Russia, pre-1925 Greece,

Anglo-Saxon England or Christian Gaul. The Church as the Body of Christ is Incarnate, here and now.

3. Help to Restore Orthodoxy in Russia

In Russia we must witness that, although in the world, the Church is not of it. This knowledge and this mentality has been largely lost in Russia today. If we are to help bring the Patriarchal Church in Russia back, or rather forward, to this knowledge and spirit, we must in no wise compromise ourselves through possible political temptations, the seductions of power, glory, pride or money. Our witness there must be *spiritual*, only thus is our help *positive and therefore canonical*.

These threefold tasks, carried out in humility, avoiding extremes, are Trinitarian in their inner meaning. To conserve the Faith is to be faithful to *the Father*. To continue our missionary tasks is to be faithful to the Incarnation of *the Son*. And a spiritual witness in Russia that the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world is to be faithful to *the Holy Spirit*. Our threefold task is indeed Trinitarian.

And should we seek a living icon of one who did his utmost to carry out these three tasks, I can think of none so clear as a contemporary saint, soon to be canonized by the Synod of our Church, Blessed John of Shanghai/Western Europe/San Francisco. He, I would suggest, embodies the very vocation of our Church, to bring all who wish to follow Her to life and salvation in Christ, the Crucified and Risen Lord of All Creation.

‘Tell the people: although I have died, I live.’

Blessed John

September 1993

53. The Body and the Material World – an Orthodox View of Spiritual Piracy

‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.’

(1 Cor.3, 16–17)

‘Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?’

(1 Cor. 6, 19)

‘If you examine all the errors of the West, whether in its doctrines or in its moral values, then you will see that they are all rooted in the failure to grasp that Christianity is the ascetic feat of man’s gradual self-perfection.’

(Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky)

From childhood I have always associated men wearing earrings with pirates – perhaps through long ago reading ‘Treasure Island’. And I can well remember some years ago seeing for the first time a young man wearing an earring and making the association, although he was obviously not a professional pirate. Recently in Britain I have been struck by the numbers of young men wearing not only one but several earrings, and seeing for the first time girls wearing nose-rings. And I thought, what is happening here?

Of course the abuse of the body is nothing new. People in Western Europe have been abusing it with alcohol since time immemorial, with tobacco since the 16th century, with drugs since the 19th century. But what has been happening in recent years? The abuse of all these substances has generally increased enormously and quite new forms of abuse of the body have appeared or else become quite normal, for instance: cremation, the mass disposal of human bodies by incineration; the legalized and open incineration in hospitals of millions of aborted children; the abuse of the body through sexual perversions or excesses, resulting in the appearance of AIDS; film and singing ‘stars’ who no longer even outwardly appear decent or moral, but more resemble harlots – and actually make a fortune out of pornography and self-debauchery; or simply the modern fashion of deliberately being ill-dressed and scruffy, or wearing eccentric jewellery or giving jewellery and make-up to children. What is happening here?

At this point there are perhaps some who are surprised. Are Christians not supposed to be opposed to the body, to the ‘flesh?’ Why should Christians be concerned with what happens to the body?

In this common fallacy we see concealed a fundamental confusion among many between the body and 'the flesh'. The 'flesh', as used by St Paul in the epistles does not mean the body in itself, but fallen human nature in general, of which the body is only a part. The flesh in this theological sense also means our reasoning powers and our wills which control our bodies, which command our bodies. One ascetic, St Dorotheus of Gaza, wrote: 'I torment my body, so that it will not torment me'. What he is saying is that Christian asceticism is not against the body as such, but against the powers which torment us through abusing the body. One Russian thinker said: 'We fight against the flesh in order to save the body'.

The traditional Christian (i.e. Orthodox) attitude to the body, including fasting, prostrations, standing in vigils etc. is founded not on a hatred of the body, but on a hatred of the flesh, that is, our sinful, fallen nature. Orthodoxy is about the saving of the soul and this includes the resurrection of the body. This is why cremation, common in pagan religions, and adopted by Protestantism first in 19th century Protestant Wales, and later by Soviet Communism, is simply unthinkable for Orthodox – it is a denial of the Resurrection. The bodies of the deceased, often called the relics, are venerated by the faithful, are given a last farewell kiss at the funeral service, are hymned as the image of the beauty of God, since made in the image and the likeness of God. The respect for the body is also enhanced by the firm belief (less and less shared by Non-Orthodox Christians) in the Incarnation, the belief that Christ Himself took on human nature, including a human body. This body rose from the dead and we have the promise that ours will also.

I would suggest that one of the origins of this negative attitude to the body may well be in the Manicheanism underlying the misinterpretation of some of the immature and non-Orthodox philosophical writings of Blessed Augustine of Hippo. By Manicheanism I mean the belief that only the spiritual part of man is capable of being good, while the material part (the body) is intrinsically evil. If this is the case, and many believe it to be so, then the consequences are far-reaching indeed.

It would explain, for example, the Western obsession with clerical celibacy, and hence the contempt for women in Western society. It explains the weakness or even absence of faith among Non-Orthodox in the bodily Resurrection of Christ and of humanity. As Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky put it in his *How does the Orthodox Faith differ from Heterodox Beliefs*: 'The Orthodox Faith is an ascetic faith ... but Catholics and Protestants do not wish to reconcile themselves with this for the simple reason that, to be quite frank, they only weakly believe in the Resurrection, but strongly believe in prosperity in the present life which, on the contrary, the Apostles call 'a vapour that vanisheth away' (James 4, 14)'. Orthodoxy believes in all the ramifications and implications of faith in the Incarnation, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ to Heaven, with our human nature, including our body. If our bodies are potentially holy, capable of being transfigured as was Our Lord's on Mount Thabor, capable of rising from the dead, being reconstituted as prophesied by the

Holy Prophet Ezekiel in his vision of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37, 1–14) and ascending into Heaven, then:

We do not incinerate the bodies of the departed.

We do not abuse our bodies through drugs and sex.

We do not engage in ‘body-building’.

We do not cover our bodies with tattoos or pierce them to wear jewellery.

Our attitudes to make-up, jewellery and clothing are modest. (‘Let the adorning be not that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart ... the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit’, 1 Peter 3, 3–4). I do not mean that we come to church in sackcloth and ashes, but that we come simply dressed, without sophistication, because we intend to pray.

Our attitudes to ‘facelifts’ and other forms of cosmetic surgery should be reserved – with the exception of plastic surgery whose aim is not to alter, but to restore. Our attitudes to organ transplants should also be reserved. In such cases, we should first seek pastoral advice and consult our consciences in prayer to find out what God’s Will for us is. Some may say that this is very strict, yet it is only the consequence of the belief that potentially our bodies, restored through prayer and ascetic struggle from their fallen state are sacred. Or do we not believe in the Gospels?

This is why we cannot accept the beliefs of Jansenism and Calvinism or Augustinianism, which say that the body and therefore the whole material world are fundamentally bad. God created us and ‘He saw that it was good’ (Genesis 1, 12). Our bodies have been redeemed by Christ. ‘For ye are bought (= redeemed) with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s’ (1 Cor. 6, 20). And again: ‘Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body’ (2 Cor. 4, 10).

As long ago as 1691 a neighbour of mine in Essex, the ‘excellent’ John Ray the botanist, who had studied under the Cambridge Platonists, close to Orthodoxy, wrote:

‘Have a care thou dost not by any vicious practice deface, mar or destroy the workmanship of God. There are no better cosmetics than a severe temperance and purity, a real and unaffected modesty and humility, a gracious temper and calmness of spirit, a sincere and universal charity. There is no true beauty without the signatures of these graces in the very countenance. They therefore who through the contrary vices do deface and blot out this natural character and impress and do violence to their own inclinations, that sacrifice this jewel to their lusts, that reject this gift of God, and undervalue the favour of man, aggravate their sin and misery, and purchase hell at somewhat a dearer price than others do.’

So wrote this great scientist in his *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation*, the first theological work to reconcile the Science of Man with the Science of God.

The implications of real belief in the Incarnation and the bodily Resurrection of the Lord go much further than respect for our 'own' bodies and those of others (already implicit in the Old Testament in the sixth and seventh commandments).

Firstly, there is our attitude to the Church Herself, which we call the 'Body of Christ'. This also means that we must respect the church building, by making the sign of the cross when we go past it, by entering it reverently, by cleaning it and decorating it.

Secondly, we venerate Her Who gave birth to Christ, Who gave Him blood, bones, a body and nourishment, the Most Holy Mother of God.

Thirdly, we venerate the saints, those who 'entered' into the Body of Christ far more deeply than ever we shall weakly manage, and in turn we venerate their bodies – in the form of their *holy* relics.

Fourthly, we approach with ever greater awe and trembling Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And fifthly there is yet another dimension which has huge importance today:

Many years ago I remember speaking to an eighty-year old Suffolk ploughman, a patriarchal, almost medieval figure, a shy and a meek man, who was proud that all his life he had ploughed with horses and never used a tractor. He said to me: 'What will become of the earth? All my life I have tended and *husbanded* the earth, but now with these here machines and modern conjures, there are fewer and fewer to look after the earth, but *the earth is God's Body*'. For long I did not understand these words, but in the light of the Orthodox Faith, so much of which that old Suffolk man, God rest his soul, must have inherited from his distant forefathers, I understood it. He meant that not only is the world God's Creation, issued from the hands of the Holy and Life-Giving Trinity through the Word of God, but also it has been hallowed by the presence of Christ Who walked the earth when He was incarnate here, and today still walks the earth through His Body, the Church, and the saints who belong to the Body of Christ. In other words, the whole material world is also to be respected, for it too is potentially sacred, it, too, like human bodies, has since Pentecost become 'the Temple of the Holy Spirit'. The Descent of the Holy Spirit into the world, the hallowing of the material world, and its most basic element, water, through prayer and blessing, are realities of the Orthodox Faith. What does this mean?

It means that the present-day ecological catastrophe is the direct result of an attitude to the material world which has come from outside Orthodox Christianity. Even before the Industrial Revolution, man was ceasing to 'husband' the Earth and starting to sully it and exploit it, destroying the God-ordained balance of nature. Ultimately man of late has even split the fundamental building-block of matter, the atom, and thus unleashed terrifying and elemental forces.

Just as Christ is mysteriously wed to His Church, so is mankind to the world that God gave Adam in Eden. And indeed it was man's task, after his Fall, to repent and so

restore the world to its former paradisiac state. This was why in Ancient Russia the peasant who was preparing himself for Holy Communion would not only ask forgiveness of God and his fellow-man, but also of the Earth. This was no leftover of pagan Earth-worship (as with the neo-pagan ecologists of the 'New Age' – which in fact is a very old age), but a knowledge of the Scriptures being put into practice by those who were close to the earth. The modern attitude of exploitation of the Earth's resources is no more sophisticated than that of the pagan nomads who centuries ago so exploited North Africa, once the granary of the Roman Empire, that they created the Sahara Desert.

Indeed the contemporary consequences of pollution, visible to all, have but confirmed Book of the Apocalypse, the inevitability of St John the Divine's Prophecy that the ultimate destiny of the Earth is its destruction and then 'a new heaven and a new earth'. 'And the third part of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up (acid rain?) ... And the third part of the creatures that were in the sea, and had life, died (the Aral Sea?) ... And the name of the star is called Wormwood (in Ukrainian – Chernobyl) ... (Rev. 8, 7–11).

I began my thoughts by recalling a childhood association, that between a young man wearing an earring and a pirate. But I wonder if this childhood recollection does not have a deeper meaning. According to the dictionary a Pirate is: 'one who takes by theft or without lawful authority'. And is this not exactly what modern man, with his pollution, has done to the Earth? Are these not acts of 'spiritual piracy?' 'Know ye not that ye are not your Own?' Have we not stolen the spiritual beauty of Creation, the spiritual beauty of the Earth and of Man, stolen what is the Father's, and deflowered it and deformed it? Where was our lawful authority for what we have done to the earth, to 'God's Body?' 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' (Romans 12, 1)

I shall not forget that old Suffolk ploughman who had conserved through the long centuries the light of Orthodoxy in his heart, nor shall I forget some of his last words before death drawing nigh. They should sound like an apocalyptic warning to us all: 'When our Father in heaven see we're nuisances, He'll come – and take us home.'

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

October 1993

54. In Memoriam

On Saturday 2 October (n.s.) while the choir in the Cathedral were singing the Matins of the Resurrection, Archbishop Antony of Geneva and Western Europe reposed in Christ.

Born in St Petersburg in 1910, then moving to Kiev, Andrei Bartoshevich left Russia after the Civil War for Serbia, where under the influence of Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, he was to embark on theological studies in Belgrade. He became priest 52 years ago in 1941, bishop in 1957 and in 1963 became the ruling Bishop of the Western European diocese of the ROCOR, the Russian Orthodox Church in the emigration.

Known and loved for his wisdom and openness to others, he played a key role in preparing the glorification of the New Martyrs and Confessors. When, after the repose of Metropolitan Philaret, he received a majority of votes in the election to find a new Metropolitan, he asked that lots be drawn to choose between himself and the second candidate. To his great relief he lost, and Metropolitan Vitaly was elected.

Archbishop Antony had an extraordinary sense of humour and forthrightness. When I once asked how it was that a Russian could have an English sense of humour, he looked at me in rather a puzzled way, but gave a broad smile when informed by a French priest that this was the greatest compliment an Englishman could pay!

All four ROCOR bishops of the two dioceses in Western Europe concelebrated at the funeral; Archbishop Mark, Bishop Seraphim of Lesna, Bishop Barnabas of Cannes and Bishop Ambrose of Vevey. They were aided by 22 priests and 9 deacons. Present but not concelebrating were Metropolitan Damaskinos (Patriarchate of Constantinople in Switzerland) and Bishop Gury (Moscow Patriarchate in Paris). At the end of the six-hour-long funeral liturgy and service, the very heavy, zinc-lined coffin was carried along the streets around the Cathedral three times under the Geneva rain by 'shifts' of eight priests and deacons. Traffic was stopped but nobody seemed surprised since the Archbishop was a well-known personality in Geneva and the local press had carried articles about his repose. The Mayor of Geneva was present at the funeral service. The Archbishop was laid to rest inside the Cathedral next to his brother, Bishop Leonty, who had reposed very young in 1956. Now the two brother-Bishops rest together in their Cathedral.

Almost exactly one year before his repose, the Archbishop had said that he had only one year to live. Although weak since April, only two weeks before the Archbishop had consecrated two vicar-bishops for the diocese, knowing that his soul would soon part from his body. A few days before, he had asked Archbishop Mark to reprint the booklet that he had written, *Life after Death* for distribution in Russia. The Archbishop will be remembered for his faithfulness to the end to his diocese, his

wisdom, his love for the young, his personal generosity, warmth of character, humour, pastorship, his love of his homeland and his efforts to rekindle the fire of uncompromised Orthodoxy there, where he was never able to return, though he often spoke of visiting Russia, especially Kiev where he had relations.

Perhaps Archbishop Antony will be especially remembered in our prayers for his missionary efforts in Western Europe. In spite of his limited linguistic abilities, he had many Swiss converts whom he attracted by his piety and his personal warmth. Perhaps his missionary consciousness was due to the fact that he himself came from a 'convert' family – his grandfather was Roman Catholic. But the greatest witness to his missionary efforts was the presence of ten different nationalities among the 22 priests who bore at various moments his coffin: Russian, French, Swiss, Austrian, Serb, Romanian, Dutch, English, Spanish and Slovak, many of whom he had himself ordained since becoming diocesan bishop in 1963.

To the Most Reverend and Ever-Memorable Antony, Archbishop of Geneva and
Western Europe, Eternal Memory!

October 1993

55. Hastings – 1066–1993

‘King Harold was slain, and Leofwine and Gyrth, his brothers, and many good men. This battle took place on the feast of St Callistus.’

(The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)

Before us a field full of dread,
Bodies in hundreds lying dead,
Steeds riderless wandered at will,
Swords, armour, gnashing, groaning shrill.

Death it was that flew above this field,
Over the fallen and swords steeled.
Death I see, as it drifts and flies,
The souls it seems, yearn to rise
But dare not yet their bodies leave –
Yea, souls these are, not shades of eve.

(Translated from ‘Vladimir Monomach and Gytha,
Harold’s Daughter’, by I. Avtamonov)

Accompanied by Malcolm Dunstall, I made a private visit to the site of the Battle of Hastings on 27 October this year. Malcolm Dunstall is the founder of ‘The English Companions’, a 300-strong society whose aim is to promote interest in and the values of Anglo-Saxon England. I was thus able to realize a childhood ambition, to go and pray for those who were slain at Hastings by the Invader of 1066 and died calling on the Holy Cross.

Having requested and received permission from English Heritage, I was able to serve the Orthodox memorial service with the Canon for Slain Orthodox Warriors. This took place at the Harold-stone, the very site where 927 years ago the fate of the English nation, and so the British Isles and the whole future English-speaking world, was to be sealed.

It is our earnest hope and prayer that by the grace of God this historic anniversary commemoration, taking place on the very site and day of the fateful battle, 14 October according to the Orthodox/Julian/Old English calendar might yet become a regular and public event.

Despite the individual excommunication of Pope Leo IX twelve years before the battle, in 1054, we should not forget that the England of the period was still in communion with those who had not fallen away from the Orthodox Church, in the East. This is proved by the fact that the Norman Invasion was blessed by the Papacy

and witnessed to by the many contacts after 1066 between Saxon England and Constantinople, where many thousands of Old English fled with their priests to escape the oppression of the Norman tyrant.

To the Orthodox mind, there is an even more direct link with Hastings. Harold's daughter (born 1056) was to flee England after the Invasion for friendly Denmark and thence Russia. Here she married the future Grand-Prince of Kiev, Vladimir Monomach, in the Cathedral of Our Saviour in Chernigov in April 1074. Vladimir, himself half-Greek, was the grandson of St Anne of Novgorod, who had been baptized by the Glastonbury monk and missionary, St Sigfrid of Sweden. Among the children of Vladimir and Gytha was St Mstislav-Harold (in holy baptism, Theodore, feasted on 15 April), who bore a Slav name as well as that of his maternal grandfather. According to chroniclers, 'no woman in all the world was ever happier than her', Gytha had twelve children, another of whom, George (Yuri), founded Moscow.

In his 200-page epic on Vladimir and Gytha (printed with the blessing of Bishop Hilarion), the Russian poet Igor Avtamonov writes the following:

From sundry lands, like weeds lost root,
With promises of power and loot,
William scraped the scum of the earth,
To steal our homes, land of our birth,
Our wives and kinfolk and cots dear,
To rule as lords and despots here.

The poet concludes Part II, Chapter III, entitled 'At Hastings', with these words:

Harold the King died without fear,
But told us before the slaughter
That if he were to perish here,
We should save Gytha his daughter,
And give to her Old England's crown
That we might cast the Normans down!

May the Lord look down upon us sinners and grant us, who have followed Gytha spiritually and sought to cast the demons down, eternal crowns in the unfading light of His Heavenly Kingdom.

In the sleep of the blessed grant, O Lord, eternal repose to the souls of Thy servants departed this life, Harold, last King of the Old English, his brothers Leofwine and Gyrrh, his thegns, and all those who laid down their lives upon this field of battle for the Faith and England and grant them – ETERNAL MEMORY!

October 1993

56. In the Wreckage of the Soviet Union

After 40 years of Fascist rule in Portugal a pro-Communist Revolution took place in 1974. Seeing its opportunity, the Soviet Union at once sent off its dignitaries (including the late Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad, a known KGB agent, now revealed, as was long suspected, to be a Catholic bishop as well¹). Portugal immediately started its decolonisation of Angola and Mozambique, resulting in bloody Civil Wars between American- and Soviet-backed forces. The Soviet Union sent ‘technicians’ and logistical help and also offered Portuguese Communist youth opportunities to study free at its universities. Since Portugal is the poorest country in Western Europe (e.g. Lisbon with its third-world shanty towns without running water, sanitation or electricity), young people, sincerely Communist or not, flocked to the Soviet educational system.

In 1991, after the outward collapse of Communism, the euphoria of the 70’s and 80’s left some 500 Russians and Ukrainians in Portugal, as refugees from Africa, others who had married Portuguese students to escape the Soviet nightmare and others who simply saw an opportunity to work and earn a decent living. At the end of 1991 a very small group contacted the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Antony of Geneva asking his blessing to found a community of the ROCOR, there being no Russian Church presence of any kind. The Archbishop gave his blessing and also sent some 700 dollars (knowing him I suspect that this was his own money) to help them. In February 1992 one of the Russians gave birth to a baby who died after three days, during which time she managed to baptize him. The Archbishop asked for a priest who could go for the funeral. This fell to me since, despite my work, I happened to be free. This was the first contact for virtually all the interested Russians with a ROCOR priest or indeed with any kind of representative of the Orthodox Church. At the end of this visit I had buried, baptized five Russians, confessed a dozen people for the first time in their lives, served the liturgy in catacomb-like conditions, given communion and married a couple.

Since these days another twelve people have been baptized and the community has expanded to about forty, although at an average service there are no more than thirty present. We now use a chapel for services which take place every two or three months. The diocese pays for my tickets from Paris – which cost about 400 dollars each, and I have so far made ten visits. I must emphasize that the community is above all very small and modest. We have enormous problems, no proper Orthodox chapel, no choir, little knowledge. We have only one thing – a handful of people who believe and want to believe more. We exist by the grace of God and the prayers of the Church. Since the first visit, I have brought icons, books, crosses, blessed houses, travelled to the north of Portugal and to the south, talked to sailors from Russian ships, distributed New Testaments, spent nights in the homes of the faithful, taken

communion to the sick, served memorial and intercessory services, talked and preached.

Of the 500 Russians in Portugal, it is true that most are atheists or indifferent. Then there are those who most certainly would not come for the time being out of fear, which is still very real in spite of recent changes. It must also be remembered that many of the Russian women married Portuguese Communists, and although the women are not Communists, their husbands still very much are. Some Russians do not come because they were disgusted by the fawning attitudes of some priests to the Communist regime in the Soviet Union, which is understandable. Such people do not understand subtleties like the distinction between the Patriarchal Church inside Russia and the free Church of the Russian emigration, the ROCOR.

But, perhaps above all, people are simply ignorant – through no fault of their own – but because of three generations of militant atheism. So many Soviet citizens, baptized in childhood or not (it makes no difference in terms of knowledge) do not know what the Gospels, or confession or communion are. He does not know how to take a blessing, does not know that abortion is a grave sin, or that marriage is for a lifetime. He has never seen a prayer-book, has difficulty understanding Church Slavonic, does not know what the liturgy is, is superstitious to the Point of fetishism. Trained in the Soviet system, he may think that he has no effort to make, that everything will be given to him ‘on a plate’, he may lack the ability to get on harmoniously with others, for he has been told since birth that everything is permissible, including untruths, and that to look after ‘No.1’ can be his only concern.

I would not want to leave the reader with a negative impression, however. In spite of the immense pastoral difficulties, the fact of starting from nothing, there are brighter sides. I shall not forget the words of one young woman, now baptized, who told me that: ‘Our generation could never be happy because our relative material prosperity was founded on the blood of millions and millions of people who had been murdered in the name of the Soviet system’. And I do not forget either the faces of those who have come out of an atheist nightmare, and today shine with the light of Christ at the moment of Communion. The Red Army men and Soviet fighter-pilots and persecutors and apparatchiks of yesterday, those who made the New Martyrs and Confessors, today have children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren who partake of the Body and Blood of Christ and kiss with faith the icons of the selfsame New Martyrs and Confessors. In the deathbed words of the fourth century Emperor Julian the Apostate: ‘Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!’

Brothers and sisters, wherever you are, remember in your prayers the unworthy priest Andrew and the Community of the Protecting Veil in Lisbon, that the Orthodox Faith may everywhere be restored in the hearts and lives of all. God bless you.

October 1993

1 This was finally confirmed in the official journal of the Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain, *The Tablet* (20/3/93).

57. Towards an Orthodox Church of the British Isles?

‘You can have any kind of England you like, if you will it.’

John Masefield, *I Want! I Want!*

Nearly twenty years ago now I can remember overhearing a conversation, rather heady even for those days, about a future foundation of ‘English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish Orthodox Churches’ or at the very least a ‘Britannic Orthodox Church’, whose territory would cover all the British Isles. And I remember thinking that those conversing were living in the realm of fantasy. At that time one could count the number of English or even British Orthodox priests on the fingers of one hand. And yet here we are today, less than a generation on, with no fewer than three English Orthodox bishops (Bp. Kallistos Ware, Bp. Paul Alderson and Bp. Ambrose Baird), nearly thirty British Orthodox priests and numbers of deacons, monks and nuns. What now, some may ask, bars the way to the foundation of a self-governing (autocephalous or at least autonomous) Orthodox Church in the British Isles? In spite of the extraordinary changes in less than a generation (all the more extraordinary from the point of view of those who became Orthodox in the truly heroic days of forty years ago and more), I would suggest that three basic ingredients are missing. What are they?

1. Unity.

Had anyone told me twenty years ago that today there would be three English Orthodox bishops, I would probably not have believed him. On the other hand, if he had told me that they would all depend on different jurisdictions and would be living in different countries, then perhaps I would have believed him. English or British Orthodox are scattered among the various Eastern European jurisdictions that exist in the British Isles and abroad as far afield as Vancouver and New Zealand. Some would say that this is irrelevant, it does not matter which jurisdiction you are in, Russian or Greek disputes are best left to Russians and Greeks, they are not for us.

This is quite understandable. A family from Saffron Walden, or for that matter from Aberystwyth or Inverness, will almost automatically attend their nearest Orthodox parish, regardless of the jurisdictional tag – unless of course they are able and willing to spend a small fortune every week on petrol, train fares and hotel bills. And all the more so if in their geographically closest parish there is an English-speaking priest and services in English or if the priest is a man of prayer. In cases like this it seems to matter very little if in far away Istanbul a bishop gives communion to Roman Catholics or joins a Freemasons’ Lodge, or if in exotic Moscow the KGB has just released a list of bishop-employees together with their code-names. And all the more so in island Britain where Orthodox bishops seem to behave like gentlemen and one

can separate oneself from funny goings-on in foreign parts. And yet surely the lack of unity does concern us.

If ever a self-governing local Church were to be founded, who would grant it autonomy? What would become of all those immigrant populations, Greeks, Serbs or others, who would not wish to become part of it, remaining attached to their ethnic identity? Given the enormous problems of 'The Orthodox Church in America', which the Greek Churches refuse to recognize, this problem would seem to be insurmountable. Some might object that this is an external, political problem and that if ethnic minorities do not want to be part of a local Church, then they can be left to one side. But what about internal problems? Any self-governing church should have some kind of unified approach to such divisive questions as ecumenism, the calendar or 'liturgical reform' (should we serve with the abbreviations now common in the Greek Churches or should we serve more traditionally, like the Russians?). It is no coincidence that of the three English Orthodox bishops, two serve on the Julian calendar, one on the Gregorian.

And then there are other questions, such as our attitude to our own history (the veneration of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Saints – adopted firmly so far only in the British diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia), the question of English Orthodox Church music and architecture – presumably without 'foreign-looking' domes and onion-domes; on the basis of Anglo-Saxon models?), the questions of style of vestments and; iconography and of liturgical translations. So far, unfortunately, nobody has even been able to bring together British Orthodox clergy of all, jurisdictions to discuss fundamental issues like these, and the gulf between traditional Orthodoxy and modernising variants seems to be growing as the years pass. (Here is a task for some enterprising spirit – to bring together all British Orthodox clergy in some association or conference; many British Orthodox clergy simply do not know one another, they have never met). Can we imagine a local Church of the British Isles without unity on basic matters such as these? Perhaps I am being overly pessimistic, but it seems to me that until we have answers to such questions, the idea or ideal of a local Church in the British Isles will have to remain just that – an idea or an ideal.

2. The People.

If we look at the smallest Orthodox groups, the Japanese and the Finnish, they both have over 30,000 members, according to official statistics. Although there are no statistics for the British Isles, I think we can say that there are certainly not more than 2,000 British Orthodox. In numerical terms we are therefore a very long way from the numbers required to support a Local Church. Indeed if we look at the disproportionate numbers of British clergy, we notice that many of them serve in reality as missionaries to Russians and. Greeks, in other words they serve in foreign languages. It is not a coincidence if two out of the three bishops in fact live abroad, or for that matter that this very article is being written overseas. If there were large numbers of

Orthodox in Britain needing native clergy, then no doubt the seven or eight members of the clergy living overseas would be serving in their native land. If we ask ourselves why there are relatively speaking so few converts to the Orthodox faith in the British Isles, then we shall probably discover the third ingredient missing in order for there to be a local Orthodox Church in Great Britain and Ireland.

3. Time.

‘That they may see the sons of their sons like olive plants around their table’. This petition, from a litany in the Orthodox wedding-service, is perhaps the third factor in this question. It seems somehow almost a natural law that to do anything in Church life three generations are required we need to see ‘our children’s children’. Such was the case with the smallest of the Orthodox Churches, the Japanese, which took over three generations to receive its (disputed) autonomy. A local Orthodox Church must have Orthodox roots. Thus those who were received into the Orthodox Faith in the 60’s, 70’s or 80’s are converts, but their children and their children’s children most certainly are not. But there are some who ‘convert’ to Orthodoxy for perhaps rather dubious reasons. Those who come for negative reasons, the disgruntled Anglican or Roman Catholic, those who want to join a foreign culture, because out of some psychological distortion they enjoy being what they are not. These people, even if they are received into the Church, do not generally stay the course. In these cases their children, if they have any, generally do not remain in the Church.

For spiritual life can never be built on illusions (the results are disastrous) only on realities. Christian culture is always incarnate, rooted in native earth. Thus there is a certain wastage, which is all the greater inasmuch as we live in totally secular societies where religious faith is without importance and consequently the divorce-rate extraordinarily high. Who of us can be sure that our children and their children will all remain in the Church? Of course we hope and pray so but we cannot be sure. The Orthodox Faith must be rooted in the British Isles over at least three generations and in a sufficient number of local people, before we can realistically contemplate the concept of a ‘Britannic Orthodox Church’. Only when this rootedness in the Faith is apparent, will there be the structures for a local Church to support itself. By structures I mean the presence in the British Isles of at least three bishops, 50–100 priests, 30,000 people, a seminary, a monastery, a convent, a diocesan, deanery and parish network, a printing press, perhaps an old people’s home or other charitable foundation, translations of all the liturgical texts and, last but not least, finance. These structures, at present distant dreams, can be born only when the Faith is firmly rooted in these islands i.e. with time.

Some perhaps will object to this: but you have omitted the most important thing of all – spirituality! I would say in answer that everything that I have mentioned has in fact a spiritual meaning. Church unity is a spiritual concern, disunity in matters of the Faith is a spiritual disease which arises whenever and wherever Church leaders and people put secular concerns above spiritual concerns. Unity, the people and time are

closely interlinked, for their spiritual meaning is Trinitarian. When we have faith in the Father, the source of unity, then the Faith will be incarnate in the people. And the Incarnation is the principle of the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. And when there is unity of Faith, and the Faith is incarnate in numbers of people, then the Faith is transmitted from generation to generation by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, and then the Faith will root itself in national life. If we do not have unity, then we shall not have the people, and if there are not people, time will be lost and nothing will be passed on to future generations. Without one, we do not have the other. This virtuous circle of Faith is Trinitarian. For Orthodox Christianity practical concerns are always spiritual and vice versa. In Church life nothing can be put into practice without spirituality – this is the essential difference between Church life and secular life and explains why everything is so much more slower and more difficult in the Orthodox Church than in secular institutions.

This also explains why a Local Orthodox Church, however desirable, serves no or little purpose if born ‘prematurely’ i.e. immaturity. Like premature babies, a prematurely born autocephalous Orthodox Church would have to be put into a spiritual incubator, or onto a spiritual life-support machine, or else be born handicapped. It is a fine thought that one day there might be a ‘Britannic Orthodox Church’, with a Metropolitan Augustine of London and All England, an Archbishop Andrew of Edinburgh and All Scotland, an Archbishop David of Cardiff and All Wales and an Archbishop Patrick of Dublin and All Ireland. But let us suppose that in this local Church there was no monastic life? Suppose no priest ever served a vigil-service or knew how to serve the Lenten services? Suppose nobody ever kept the fasts? – Nobody has ever been saved without fasting; nobody has ever become a saint without prayer. Would not such a Church, however impressive its statistics might be, be simply an ‘Eastern-rite Anglicanism?’

In the last generation the Moscow Patriarchate gave autocephaly to a group of Russian immigrants and converts in North America, who had no monastic life and a weak spiritual foundation. Recently a representative of that Patriarchate declared that this autocephaly had been ‘premature’. Indeed many Americans, in search of an authentic Orthodoxy seek it in jurisdictions other than ‘The Orthodox Church in America’, supposedly their own local Church. A blind faith in the virtues of autocephaly, the existence of a local Church, is therefore not in itself the answer to spiritual thirst. Some would say that the Polish and Czechoslovak Orthodox Churches, which also all obtained their autocephalies in highly politicized circumstances, lack a certain ‘authenticity’ too. But this term of ‘authenticity’ is very vague and non-theological, one might well ask what exactly it means. And to answer this question, we shall have to look at the processes whereby local Churches have traditionally been born.

The Slav Churches were born as the fruit of a mission, that of Sts Cyril and Methodius and their holy disciples. No Orthodox, however, has ever come to the British Isles in the last one hundred years with a missionary purpose. Those who have come are political and economic refugees. If we take the example of a local Church, perhaps

similar to a future ‘Britannic Orthodox Church’, also situated on an island archipelago off a Continent, the Japanese Orthodox Church, it too was founded by a missionary-saint, St Nicholas of Tokyo. Another saint, martyred by the Nazis, St Gorazd, also played an important role in the Orthodox mission in the Czech Lands and Slovakia. And this is the Local Church which is geographically situated closest to us.

What I am saying, in other words, is that what many vaguely call ‘authenticity’ is in fact holiness, saintliness. A Church cannot come into being without saints and holiness, otherwise it will be stillborn. And I would suggest that our lack of unity, people and time can wholly be put down to the fact that there have been no twentieth-century native-born saints in the British Isles. This surely is the real reason why there is no local Church in these islands. We have to be worthy of a local Church, and we are not. If there were a saint among us, thousands would gather around him (in the words of St Seraphim of Sarov). They would be united, numerous and would pass on their faith to succeeding generations, giving rise to the necessary structures. A local Orthodox Church is born with a saint and this has always been so, whether we take the example of St Thomas in India or St Patrick in Ireland, and all points in-between:

‘Verily, a gathering of righteous is called the Kingdom of Heaven!’

(Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham in *Catholic Homilies I*, 521)

At this point I can hear English voices saying that England does have a founding-saint, Augustine of Canterbury, Apostle of the English. And Scottish, Welsh and Irish voices will speak similarly – and quite rightly too. Spiritually, the peoples of the British Isles already have their own Church, that of the Roman, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon saints, hundreds in number. And this is the very sense of what a Greek saint, St Arsenios, said over 120 years ago: ‘Only when the Church in the British Isles begins to venerate her own saints will she start to grow’. In other words there can never be a local and not imported Orthodox Church in the British Isles, if we do not venerate our ‘own’ saints, the saints of God who hallowed these islands of old. This may seem obvious, but I can assure my readers that there are many who do not wish to venerate non-Eastern European saints, indeed refuse to recognize them, not only among the episcopate but also among the laity, and of all nationalities, including strangely, even British converts. It has always been a struggle to be able to venerate the saints. Indeed in the Russian Patriarchal Church, to the astonishment of men and angels alike, there is an episcopate which refuses to acknowledge its millions of New Martyrs and Confessors, to give but one example.

Apart from the pre-Schism saints of these islands, since the 11th century there have actually been three English Orthodox saints, to whom, I suggest we should also address our prayers if we are ‘to start to grow’. The first is St Mstislav-Harold (in baptism Theodore – perhaps after St Theodore of Canterbury?). He was half-English (by his mother Gytha, the daughter of Harold, the last King of the Old English who was killed at Hastings), a quarter-Russian and a quarter-Greek (by his father Vladimir Monomach, Grand-Prince of Kiev). His racial origins ought really to be symbolic for

us, as also his generosity, courage, love of peace and encouragement of church-building ought to be an inspiration for all Orthodox in these islands. He reposed in Kiev in 1132 or 1133 and his memory is kept on 15/28 April. (Here is a patron for a future Association of Orthodox of island ancestry). The second is the martyr Sir Henry Abbot slaughtered by the Turks in Salonica in 1876, feasted on 30 April/13 May. And the third is another martyr, Nicholas Johnson, slaughtered by the Bolsheviks in Siberia in 1918. Feast: 4/17 July. (For the last two saints see my article *Two English Orthodox New Martyrs*).

How many of us ask daily for the prayers of those who brought the Light of Christ to these islands in the first centuries? How many of us ask daily for the prayers of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon saints? How many of us ask for the prayers of Sts Theodore, Henry and Nicholas? If we do not, then we have the explanation why, in the words of St Arsenios, the Church in the British Isles does not grow, let alone why there is no self-governing local Orthodox Church of the British Isles.

There are those who, having read to this point, might be of the view that there will never be a local Church in the British Isles, that the world will have come to its end before. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps, in other words, it is not the Will of God for a local Church to be restored here. Perhaps the closest we shall come to the restoration of Orthodoxy is the return of the relics of saints like St Edward the Martyr. (Perhaps we could consider him, as King of England and Martyr for the Faith, as the Patron of any move to restore a local Church in these islands). Perhaps, indeed, the end-time is approaching. Perhaps even, in the coming generation, the path of the New Martyrs and Confessors is to be ours. But perhaps this may be the only way to the refoundation of an Orthodox Church in these islands. Let us not forget that the Church is founded on precisely this, the blood of the martyrs; the blood of the martyrs is spiritual maturity and only when we have spiritual maturity will God, and not man, raise up an authentic local Orthodox Church in these islands. May Thy Will be done, O Lord.

October 1993

58. The Saints of Russia and the Universality of Orthodoxy

‘And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.’

(Luke 13, 29)

In the heart of the Russian capital there stands the magnificent Church of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God, known to many, mistakenly, as the Church of St Basil. Standing on Red Square with its cupolas, it has become to the modern world a kind of symbol of Russia, the Eternal Russia of tradition. And this, providentially, is as it should be, for this church is not, as many think, a monument to fantastic or exotic decoration. On the contrary, its architecture is symbolically and sacramentally significant of Russia's very calling – to gather the peoples of the Earth to the saving fold of Orthodox Christianity.

As Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) pointed out in his sermon of 1909, *The Temple of Glory and the Temple of Sorrow*, each cupola of this church is artfully designed to represent a different culture. One cupola is Mauretanian (African), another Indian, another Roman-Byzantine, another Chinese, and in the centre towers the Orthodox cupola of Russia. The symbolism is clear. All the great cultures of the world on all the continents are united around Orthodoxy. Russia's inner meaning and calling, the very purpose of her existence, her God-given destiny, is to gather the peoples of the world together, each with its own personality and particularity and culture, into the Church of Christ. The diversity and the unity of the Church are the mirror-image of the Holy Trinity, Three Persons in One Essence, a multitude of peoples and cultures united in One Faith, One Church.

Indeed, historically Russia was called upon to implement the dream and the Vision of St Constantine the Great. When he transferred his capital to New Rome, the future Constantinople, his purpose was not only to escape the old capital, so thoroughly corrupted by paganism. (Although hindsight tells us that this would have been reason enough; St Constantine's foresight seems providential, given that eventually the Local Church of Rome would itself succumb to the imperialism of pagan Rome and in the 11th century fall away from Orthodoxy). St Constantine's move from Rome was also prompted by something else – the desire to unite the ‘oikumene’ or inhabited world, which according to the knowledge of that time, consisted of Europe and Asia. Hence the site of the village of Byzantium, on the Bosphorus, between Europe and Asia, was perfect. Hence the banner of the double-headed eagle, one eagle looking west, the other east. In this Apostolic vision the peoples of the Earth would be united into One Church. When, over a millennium later, New Rome fell and the Greek Churches for the most part lost this vision of the universality of Orthodoxy, falling into decadent compromises with the Vatican and the provincial worldliness of internecine Balkan squabbling, this vision of the universality of Orthodoxy spread to Russia. Indeed it

had already been carried there by the first Orthodox missionaries in the 10th century. After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, however, it was much strengthened.

The first Russian mission, as such, was that of St Stephen of Perm, who in the 14th century preached to the peoples of Siberia and translated the Word of God for them. Then in the 16th century St Triphon of Kola preached in the Far North in Lapland. In the centuries thereafter missionaries went out into Siberia, Alaska, China and Japan, each mission bringing forth its saint or saints. But, in reality, from the very beginning, with St Olga, the Russian territory itself, a melting-pot of peoples, brought forth saints of many races. Of some 400 saints from before 1917, about a tenth are in fact non-Russian. Russia gave a non-Russian tithe to God. In bringing forth saints from the north and from the south and from the east and from the west, Russia made the sign of the cross over herself, implementing the Gospel and Apostolic vision of the universality of the Church. From the North came:

St Theodore the Varangian (Viking) and his son, John, Russia's proto-martyrs (984), commemorated on 12 July.

St Olga (969), whose name is the Russianised form of the Scandinavian Helga, thus betraying her origins. Feast: 11 July.

St Vladimir (1015) who bears the Russianised form of the name Waldemar, which can be met with in Scandinavia today. Feast: 15 July.

St Anne of Novgorod (1051), a Swedish princess, who was baptized by the English missionary-bishop St Sigfrid. Her name in the world was Ingegerd and then Irene. Feasts: 10 February and 4 October.

St Igor (1147), whose name is the Swedish Ingvar. Feast: 5 June.

St Oleg (1289) who bore the masculine form of the Scandinavian Helga. Feast: 20 September.

That so many members of Russia's early nobility and royal family, all of Scandinavian origin, became Orthodox saints, particularly makes us regret how after the 11th century Schism the Scandinavians became enemies of Orthodoxy. From the South came:

St Michael, first Metropolitan of Kiev (992), a Greek according to some, others say a Syrian or a Bulgarian. Feast: 30 September.

Sts Boris and Gleb (1015) were half-Bulgarian. Feast: 24 July.

St Theodore, Bishop of Rostov (1023), a Greek. Feast: 8 June.

St Joachim of Osogov (c. 1100), Bulgarian hermit. Feast: 16 August.

St Constantine, Metropolitan of Kiev (1159), Greek. Feast: 5 June.

St Maximus, Metropolitan of Kiev (1305), Greek. Feast: 6 December.

St Lazarus of Murman (1391), a Greek from the south who laboured in the Far North to convert Lapps and Finnish tribes to the Light of Christ. Feast: 21 January.

St Photius, Metropolitan of Kiev (1431), Greek. Feast: 2 July.

Sts Eleazar and Nazarius (15c.), Greek wonder-workers in Olonets. Feast: 4 June.

St Sabbas of Krypets (1495), a Serb. Feast: 28 August.

St Cassian of Uglich (1504), a Greek wonder-worker. Feast: 21 May.

St Maximus the Greek (1556). Having studied in Italy and seen the corruption of the Roman Church there and the efforts of Savonarola to reform it (for which he was burnt at the stake), he came to Russia to lead an ascetic life. He did much to bring theological enlightenment to Russia, for which he was cruelly persecuted. Feast: 21 January.

St Athanasius of Lubensk (16c.). Patriarch of Constantinople, he came to Russia seeking support for his Patriarchate. He reposed in Russia and was venerated as a saint. Feast: 2 May.

As we can see above, Russia rapidly became a destination for churchmen from Southern Europe, as the Roman Empire centred in Constantinople declined under pressure from the West, whose troops sacked it in 1204, and then from the Turks. Russia served not only as a refuge but also as a land of mission. Many Orthodox from the south brought theological knowledge and understanding to a newly-converted land, whose rulers, especially in later years, frequently attempted to interfere in Church life. From the West came:

St Moses the Hungarian (1043). Feast: 26 July.

St Ephraim of Novotorzhok (1053). Brother of St Moses and also from the eastern borderlands of Hungary, he was a wonderworker. Feasts: 28 January and 11 June.

St Mstislav-Harold (in baptism Theodore), reposed in 1132 or 1133. He was half-English by his mother Gytha, the daughter of King Harold, the last King of the Old English, who was defeated at Hastings by William of Normandy. It was natural for the daughter of the defeated King to seek refuge in an Orthodox land, following the success of the papally-sponsored Invasion of England. Feast: 15 April.

St Antony the Roman (1147). Another spiritual refugee, this time from Italy, he lived a holy life in Novgorod. Feast: 3 August.

St Charitina (13c.), Lithuanian. Feast: 5 October.

St Dovmont (in baptism Timothy), reposed in 1299, Lithuanian. Feast: 20 May.

St Procopy of Ustiug (1303). A German merchant, he became an Orthodox monk and then fool-for-Christ. Feast: 8 July.

Sts Antony, John and Eustathius (1347). Lithuanian Orthodox, they were martyred by their pagan compatriots. Feast: 14 April.

St Isidore of Rostov (1474). Born in Brandenburg, Prussia, he became Orthodox and a fool-for-Christ and wonder-worker. Feast: 14 May.

St John the Fool-for-Christ (1580). A wonder-worker, he was buried holding his only possession, a Latin Psalter. It is thought that he was a Pole or a German.

Russia acted then as a place of refuge for those from the West who sought to continue in the Orthodox Faith, as it became increasingly clear that the 11th century changes in the Western Church were leading it away from the universal Tradition of the first millennium of Christendom. In the 17th century under the great and holy Patriarch Nikon, Russia came for a time out of the temptations of isolationism and xenophobia. This Patriarch attracted monks of many nationalities, including Western converts, to the monastic complex he built near Moscow, which was called 'the New Jerusalem'. Here it was his intention to recreate the sites of the Holy Land connected with Our Lord and people it with monks of all nationalities. The Patriarch sought not purity of race, but purity of faith. All were equal in the faith, whatever their origins. This great project was never to develop fully, for the Patriarch was deposed by slanderers (not without the connivance of the Vatican) and those in the Russian State who wanted to subjugate the Church to the State. They were to triumph with the abolition of the Patriarchate and the attempt to reduce the Church to a State Department on the Protestant model, and the clergy to mere hired public servants from spirit-bearing revealers of the Kingdom of God. But before we turn to the present situation, we must not forget those who came from the east 'to sit down in the Kingdom of God'. From the East came:

St Abraham (1229). A Kama Bulgarian and therefore Muslim, he was martyred by his compatriots for becoming Orthodox. Feast 1 April.

St Peter of Rostov (1290). A Tartar prince and nephew of the Khan, he became Orthodox wonder-worker. Feast: 29 June.

St Paphnutius of Borovsk (1478), an ascetic of Tartar origin. Feast 1 May.

St Solomonia (in monasticism Sophia) reposed in 1542. Of Tartar origin and an actual descendant of Genghis Khan, she suffered much in her life. Feast: 16 December.

Sts Stephen and Peter of Kazan (1552). Muslim Tartars, they became Orthodox and were martyred by their compatriots for so doing. Feast: 24 March.

St Serapion of Kozhezersk (1611). A Kazan Tartar, he became a monk and ascetic. Feast: 27 June.

Russian missionaries took the Gospel to Tartars, Muslims, through Siberia with its shamanism and to the Far East and across the Bering Straits. Had Russia remained faithful to Christ and her vocation, would there not be today large local churches in China and India, which, with their two billion population, contain a third of humanity, and which non-Orthodox Christianity has never been able to convert? It is not without significance that China does have a small Orthodox community remaining from the Russian mission of the past. Nor without significance that in India, Orthodox Christianity still survives among the 'St Thomas Christians', who are attached to the Patriarchate of Antioch. How much more these communities would have benefited, had the catastrophe of the Revolution not occurred, we can only imagine.

The Soviet State exported its faith to the four corners of the Earth. We might suppose that had Russia remained faithful to Christ, she would have exported another faith to those four corners. Instead of sending kalashnikovs to Africa and India, to China and Central America, to Afghanistan and Vietnam, to Cuba and Korea, she would have sent Orthodox missionaries. She would not have translated the works of Lenin, into a hundred tongues, but the service-books of the Church of Christ.

Today the official Church in Russia is compromised by her links with an atheist and imperialist State. Pagan shamanism returns to Siberia, the Caucasus explodes in hatred, Central Asia is tempted by Islam and Eastern Europe looks with doubt at a Church which has not even the courage to canonize her own martyrs. Russia today is not only missing her vocation to gather the peoples of the world into the saving fold of Orthodoxy, but Russia and the Patriarchal Church are themselves divided. Divided between those who want to return to the age-old values of Russian Orthodoxy that we have described above, and those who want to create of the Patriarchal Church a nationalist ghetto or, alternatively, a mere provincial branch of Roman Catholicism.

How can the vision of the universality of the Orthodox Faith be recovered from those who would balkanise it into a simple Eastern European State ideology?

The Russian land made the sign of the cross over herself, from north to south, from west to east, from head to heart, from right shoulder to left when men and women came to her from all sides and became saints. In contemporary Russia these saints are largely unknown and their relics, like those of St Olga, often lost. It is our suggestion that Russia will not be saved until she returns to her saints, thus signing herself with the Cross of Christ once more. But for this to happen, Russia must first reject the false Orthodoxy of nationalist ideology or ecumenical and modernist compromise, and return to true Orthodoxy, a Christian way of life. Russia must accept anew the Fatherland of God and in so doing she will find the Brotherhood of Man. And that surely is the only way. Russia has been to the left and to the right, and to the bottom of the abyss; the only way to go now is up, to where her saints are calling her. For it was in the Tomb that the Resurrection came, as it must come now, if the dead is to rise. May it be so, O Lord.

November 1993

59. Why I am an Old English Christian

‘The Norman Conquest, that successful raid made a conquest, ... was when foreigners acquired an ascendancy, which they have never yet dropped. Not only so, but they have never yet ceased to be foreign to the race which they rule.’

Maurice Hewlett, *The Song of the Plow*

1. Introduction

The Anglo-Saxon, or rather Old English,¹ Church is virtually unknown today. It is the well-guarded secret of English history, which is nevertheless there for all those who seek it. What were and are its values? In what sense can we today say that we are Old English Christians, that we belong to the Old English Church?

2. The Old English Church, an Integral Part of the Early Church.

Firstly, the Old English Church existed before the divisions of the 11th century, when the Papacy cut itself off from the majority of Christians who then lived in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and of the 16th century, the further subdivision of Western Europe into Roman Catholic South and Protestant North. In other words in Old English times there was no need for ecumenism, because there were no denominations – Church people were basically one. Old English Christians were in full communion with the rest of Christendom, from Ireland to North Africa, from Norway to Constantinople, from Kiev to Jerusalem, from Rome to Damascus. And this unity of Christendom existed basically because the Church in the West had not yet moved away from its roots, the Early Church. The Gospel tradition, the lives of the Apostles and the Martyrs and the Fathers, the life of the Early, sincere, Church, were all living realities. The Church was without institutional distortions and institutions.

In other words, the Old English Church was pre-Scholastic, just as it was pre-Romanesque, because it was pre-Schism. It did not know of the excesses of the Middle Ages – indulgences, inquisitions, burnings at the stake, Crusades, legalism and hair-splitting. And for this reason it did not know either of the excesses of those who were later to protest at medieval abuses, the puritanical Protestants of the 16th century with their iconoclasm and rejection of the Saints and the whole Church Tradition of the first millennium. Because the Old English Church was both pre-Reformation and pre-Medieval, the mutual slaughter of ‘Christians’ by ‘Christians’, such as that of the 16th century, was simply unknown and unthinkable for it. The Old English Church has then a twofold attraction – it is One and Apostolic.

3. Old English Church Life – a Living and Mystical Reality.

Old English Church life was not the abstract, dusty philosophy of the Medieval Schoolmen, it was a reality in the daily lives of all. God was known not from

speculative booklore, but from a direct, straightforward, immediate contact. The saints had not been reduced to folklore and fable by forgers of fictional legends, they were real. People could say, 'I have met a saint'. The 'Englisc' period has over 300 saints, who were close to the people because they were the people. They were the friends of the people who consoled them by helping and healing them. People knew what the saints looked like from the frescoes covering the church walls – no cold, white walls here. Relics had not been faked as they would be later, and the relics of the saints helped people in their daily needs. The Virgin Mary had not been distorted into a distant goddess as in the Medieval Church, She was still the Mother of all, the Mother of the Church. The church building and worship were mystical. Before the Gothic style ('Scholasticism in stone') with its spires pointing skywards to the lost God, people worshipped in half-dark churches with small, round-headed Windows, where God's presence was felt.

They used a mystical, sacred language, with sacraments. Theology was not out of dry books, but out of living hearts, theology was life, contained in the services and prayerful experience. Church teachings, explained in the vernacular (into which the Gospels had been translated) were not hurtful or categorical statements made by people in ivory-towers. Teachings were spiritual revelations made to help people live. Theology and life, piety and experience, theory and practice, teachings and mysticism were all one. Old English Christianity, not in spite of being mystical, but because it was mystical, was a way of life, it patterned daily life. The rhythms of daily life were based on a liturgical pattern of fast and feast. Fasting, what today we call 'dieting' or 'healthy eating', came naturally. But I emphasize fast and feast. Christianity was joyful, there was none of that killjoy 'pious' and 'religious' attitude of mournful, 'constipated' Christianity that we owe to the deformations of the Middle Ages and Puritanism, especially the Victorian sort. There was fast and feast, the sorrow of the Crucifixion was followed directly by the joy of the Resurrection. There was no 'pie in the sky' of the Protestant moralizers. Heaven began on Earth for all those who wanted to live according to the rhythms of Church life – and for most of the Old English period, most Old English did.

4. The People of God: Clergy and People United in a Commonwealth of Faith.

Since the Old English Church was pre-Medieval, it was also pre-'Papist'. I do not mean to say that the 'Englisc' Church had no respect for Rome and the Papacy. On the contrary, the Old English had enormous veneration for St Peter – judging by Church dedications, the most popular saint. Moreover they had great respect for the Holy Father in Rome. It was largely thanks to the saintly Pope Gregory the Great that the Old English had become Christians. They respected the Popes because they were representatives or 'vicars' of St Peter. (The term 'Vicar of Christ' was an invention of Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085, the founder of the Medieval Papacy and practice of Papal primacy and hegemony, of 'Papism'). Rome was respected because it was a city of saints, a treasure-house of holy relics, not because it was a centre of legal, political, economic or military power. The Old English flocked to Rome, that

City of Martyrs, on pilgrimage. Here they founded a centre for English pilgrims, the *Schola Saxonum*, where there was a miraculous icon of the Mother of God (see V. Ortenburg, 'England and the Continent in the 10th and 11th centuries, p. 136). The Old English respected the Papacy' precisely because it was not Papism.

The Popes did not generally interfere in the lives of the local Metropolitan Churches of Western Europe which were in their jurisdiction. True, the Archbishops of Canterbury had to go to Rome to receive the *pallium*, but this was little more than a symbolic ritual. And if Popes did try and interfere, they generally did not get their way, as was the case during the reigns of St Theodore and St Dunstan. The Popes were respected not because they were Popes (of which some might be saints, but others decidedly not), but because they sat on the Apostolic throne of St Peter. The Churches of Western Europe at this time resembled more sovereign States joined together in a confederation or family of Faith. No violence was done to local Churches by distant, meddling absolutists in Rome or elsewhere. Interference and intervention would only begin with the new, reformed Papacy, which in 1054 separated itself from the rest of the Church, and then in 1066 under Alexander II, blessed the Norman Invasion of England. Thus it manipulated Norman lust for power, greed and stupidity in the hope of later being able to interfere in English life – which was indeed the case. The same blessing was to be given to the 'Anglo-Normans' (as historians like to call the later Normans) in 1171 under Henry II to invade Ireland, thus beginning centuries of oppression there too.

The Churches of Western Europe in Old English times resembled then more a family than a pyramid. Of course there was a hierarchy in the Church, just as there was in secular life, just as there is in every human society. But there was no clericalism; the average parish priest was a villager who was married, he was a family man, often his sons would become priests in their turn and his daughters priests' wives. And no doubt most people were very happy with this arrangement – 'the priest is one of us'. A married priesthood had a most natural attitude to women. The English Church was pre-Puritan. Some historians have suggested that the Old English Church, like the Orthodox Church today, allowed divorce and remarriage, under the influence of St Theodore of Canterbury.

5. Conclusion: The Old English Church – Part of a Family of Churches. Uniting Clergy and People, the Living and the Departed.

Thus everybody belonged to the Church, a Church that was homely, because it was part of everyday life, of family life. Rich and poor belonged King and peasant worshipped there. Even physically, people stood united in church (pews and seats were the innovation of a much later period). There was no real division between priest and people, the priest and the other clergy. The deacons, who played an important role, were of the people and the people belonged to the royal priesthood. The whole family belonged to the Church. Shortly after birth, babies were baptized and as soon as possible confirmed and given communion. (Confirmation in childhood was

unthinkable, it would be the result of later medieval rationalism). Everybody received communion in both kinds – the reservation of the Blood of Christ for the clergy against the words of Christ Himself, was a later result of clericalism.

Since the parish clergy were married, there was no condescension towards women – another result of clericalism and then of Puritanism with its dualistic contempt for the body and material world. (The important role of women in Old English life has been made clear in many learned studies, starting with Doris Stenton's 1956, 'The English Woman in History'). The Communion Service or 'Mæsse' (a lovely word we have still kept in Christmas, Michaelmas, Martinmas, Candlemas, Childermas and the rarer Johnmas, Crouchmas and All-Hallowmas) was something that all could participate in. But the Church was not only homely, it was also other-worldly. This may sound paradoxical, but the combination of these two aspects is simply due to the English belief that the Son of God had become man, that Heaven had come down to Earth, the spiritual world had met the material one. And this was so that the material world could rise up to the spiritual one, the earthly to the heavenly, that men could become divine. Homely, family – but also mystical, other-worldly. For the Old English Church was a family which united the living and the departed, bringing rich spiritual comfort and warmth to both.

And this is the just spiritual foundation that England lost in 1066, that ever since she has been seeking, but will not find until she goes through a long and profound process of *denormanization*, of casting off all that has overlaid the beauty and the goodness and the truth of Old England and the Old English. 'If any man have ears to hear, let him hear'.

December 1993

1 The term 'Anglo-Saxon' is an artificial one invented by academics to distinguish the 'Anglo-Saxons' from the Continental Saxons in what is now Germany. The 'Anglo-Saxons' never called themselves thus, naming themselves 'Englisc'. To avoid confusion the present author prefers the term 'Old English', even though, strictly speaking, this is a linguistic term.

60. Europe: Whither Goest Thou?

‘Still falls the Rain –
Then – O Ile leape up to my God: who pulls me doune –
See, see when Christ’s blood streams in the firmamente:
It flows from the Brow we nailed upon the tree.’

(Edith Sitwell, *Still Falls the Rain. The Raids, 1940, Night and Dawn*)

Europe is a mystery. Of all civilizations it is the European one that dominates the world. All modern movements have their sources in European history and work either to promote European values or else to resist them. True, the 20th century has been dominated economically, politically militarily and even scientifically by the United States – but ultimately the United States is only an extension of the Old World into the New, of the West into the Far West. And if we look at 20th century history, has it not, for good or ill, been dominated by Europe? Europe was the ill-fated birthplace of both World Wars, of Communism and Fascism. And although today, as we move into the third millennium, it seems that economically the future lies with East Asia, since 1989 and the Fall of the Berlin Wall, world attention has once again been focused on Europe. As recent events in both Western Europe and Eastern Europe show, when Europe sneezes, the world catches cold. Can we not attempt then, by looking over the panorama of European history, to look for clues as to Europe’s inner meaning, its sense and its destiny?

Europe and the Pre-Christian Age.

The long millennia of the dark night of heathen Europe reached their summit in the pagan Roman Empire, the greatest Empire ever known to the Pre-Christian world. The Roman Empire was the sum total of human knowledge and organizational ability. It built up an infrastructure for its military and economic predominance. It developed the principles and practices of a legal system. Its philosophy was that of rationalism. Its monolithic structure was held together by a syncretistic, ecumenical religion of worship of all the pagan gods of all the peoples of the vast Empire. It collected a pantheon of pagan deities and absurd myths with total freedom to worship those of one’s choice – but on one condition, that of accepting the Emperor as a god. The Roman Empire thus contained within it the ultimate worldliness, the principle of worshipping a fallen man as a god. Neither medieval nor modern Europe can be understood without this background of 2,000 years ago, because Europe is haunted by this one, primitive idea of unity, of a centralized, monolithic Empire, which it has tried and tries to implement in almost every generation.

The Age of the Incarnation.

This monolithic system with its slavery, unspeakable cruelty and tyranny was challenged not by another such rival system, but by a young girl who gave birth to a

son in a tiny village in a distant province from the back of beyond, a village called 'Bethlehem', meaning 'the House of Bread'. Thus began the Age of the Incarnation and calendars would later be adjusted to start from this lowly but momentous date.

The first millennium was one of spiritual greatness, of spiritual heroism and triumph, but of worldly humility. Anti-Christian historians call it 'the Dark Ages', but Christians call it 'the Age of Saints' or 'the Bright Ages'. The quest for true religion was to lead men and women to the heights of holiness. Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Bishops, Fathers and Ascetics were to create a Christian culture. They did this by their refusal to worship Caesar and cense the pagan gods. Their worship was the antithesis of pagan Rome and all pagan Empires, consisting of the refusal to worship a mere man as god, and instead worshipping God, the God-Man. They worshipped God Crucified, not a bloodthirsty man deified. This faith came to Europe from the deserts of Palestine and Syria and from Egypt and was confirmed by the martyrs of the Greek-speaking world and Rome itself. Ascetics settled in Italy and Gaul and in 'the Island of the Saints', Ireland.

The monolithic nature of pagan Rome could not withstand the invasions of barbarian tribes from the East and the pagan Empire of Old Rome collapsed. However, the Faith survived the passing glory of a temporal, worldly Empire, for 'my Kingdom is not of this world'. And in the West Christians began the long task of converting the barbarians to Christ. In this way Europe passed from a monolithic, totalitarian system, held together by military terrorism, to Christendom. The building of Christendom was a long and gradual process which was marked by two phenomena which from a modern standpoint are quite remarkable.

First of all, the Age of the Incarnation is one where, although national identities were being established, there was no nationalism. Certainly there were struggles for power and influence, but once the barbarian tribes had accepted the principle of Christianity, Europe did not descend into a blood-bath of warring nationalisms. Indeed there was a remarkable international harmony and co-operation aided by intermarriage between the ruling families of the various peoples of Europe. The second phenomenon is that of the spirit of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations. In other words each people formed a sovereign State in a union of sovereign States. International harmony was guaranteed by the common Faith which in turn guaranteed the sovereignty of the nations which were then beginning to assume their national identities. Of course there were exceptions to this, but virtually all of them occurred either before Christianisation or else towards the end of the first millennium, when this unity of diversity began to come to an end. Let us take as an example of this harmony of national and international interests the Christian England of the period.

By the end of the sixth century the island of Britain had been invaded by a number of pagan tribes, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, Swedes and even Franks. They pushed back the British tribes towards the West, enslaving those who remained. They then set up various tribal kingdoms and began warring for territory among themselves. And

then in 597, there came missionaries from Rome. They were followed by Irish missionaries coming from Iona and the North, by Lombard and Frank (St Birinus, Apostle of the West, St Agilbert, Bishop of Dorchester). Very quickly these different strands of Christianity fused together. There are many examples of this. For instance the name of the English town of Malmesbury is formed from the names of Maeldub, an Irish teacher, and St Aldhelm his Saxon disciple.

The fusion of Celt and Saxon was actively encouraged by a saint of broad vision, possibly the greatest of all the Archbishops of Canterbury, St Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek, sent by Pope Vitalian in the company of the African Abbot, Adrian, who well knew the local customs of the Roman Church. It was this Greek who Ordained the great Old English bishop, St Erkenwald, 'the Light of London', and also St Cuthbert, the Celtic-trained Anglian, who became known as 'the Wonderworker of Britain'. St Cuthbert had absorbed the Celtic Christian way of life, itself inspired from Gaul, Spain, and ultimately, Egypt and Syria. And he, an Anglian, was thus ordained by the Greek Archbishop Theodore, their common language being Latin. When his tomb was opened in the 19th century, they found his holy relics with their 'Byzantine' vestments and his bishop's cross, and its central adornment – a seashell from the Indian Ocean. This was Christendom.

This dynamic fusion gave rise to a new consciousness of national identity and thus self-confidence to go out and bring the Light of Christ to others. Such was the case of the English missionaries, setting out on their great national enterprise of the eighth century – the conversion of Europe to Christ. Such was the case of St Clement who brought the Frisians to Christ, and then St Boniface in the first half of the eighth century. From the little West-country village of Crediton he went out with the blessing of the Greek Pope Zacharias, to become the Apostle of Germany, organising a new local Church and bringing reform to other Churches in Northern Europe. Of many other examples we might mention the great King Alfred who brought not the sword but the Gospel to his mortal enemies, the Danes, and sent alms to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and even to India. Or that of the English missionaries who around the year 1000 went out to Norway, Sweden, and probably further, or those who baptized St Olaf of Norway in the Scilly Isles, or St Sigfrid, the Glastonbury monk, who baptized St Anne of Novgorod.

At the end of this first millennium, England, thanks to the unifying influence of the Christian faith, had become a nation. The first King of All England, St Edgar the Peaceful, who lived in the middle of the 10th century, summed up the work of the Church for 'the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy Churches of God and the unity of all people'. Under his ancestor, Athelstan, England had been united and her borders with Wales and Scotland fixed and good relations established with the peoples of the Continent.

The triumph of the Age of the Incarnation was to incarnate Christianity, to form Christendom. The Old English Church brought forth some 300 individual saints and a

host of martyrs. England was united as a sovereign, independent State with the Church and yet was on excellent terms with her neighbours (with the sole exception of the pagan Vikings, who were not really neighbours, but invaders). Canterbury was the Metropolitan Church of the English. The Irish, Scottish and Welsh had theirs. On the Continent other Metropolitan Churches were being formed. The Iberian Peninsula had Santiago with its Apostolic origin as its centre and its distinctive Mozarabic rite. A Gallican Church was formed on the territory of Ancient Gaul, with Lyons as a Metropolitan centre. In Italy one centre was in the North with Milan and its Ambrosian rite and distinctive customs, the other Rome with its Patriarchal traditions. To the North not all was clear, but there were centres of churchmanship along the Rhine and to the East in Hamburg, Magdeburg and Salzburg. Had this age continued, one can see the formation of Metropolitan Churches in different linguistic areas, a pattern of unity in diversity within the Patriarchal See of Rome, a harmony of unity of Faith and autonomy of local Metropolitans.

Such unity in diversity was possible because this was the Age of Saints. Europe was colonized by monasteries and ascetics. Europe was guided not by legalism or military dictatorship or rationalist philosophy, as it had been under Pagan Rome. Now Europe was guided by theology, the knowledge of God, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Men and women learnt in monasteries, this was the age of primacy of Faith; they believed because they knew God and they were not too concerned with understanding their belief. In other words; their theology was mystical theology, the fruit of prayer. But those who had a secular education and then experienced the presence of God were able to put their experience into words; these people are called the Fathers.

The two most vital teachings of the Fathers are the Incarnation and the Holy Trinity. The Incarnation says that God became man – in the Person of Christ there are two evenly balanced natures, the divine and the human. In this way we all have a heavenly homeland, we all belong ultimately to the Kingdom of Heaven. But we also have an earthly homeland to which we are also responsible, a homeland where we were born by the Will of God, in one earthly homeland and not another. We are called to love our earthly homeland (though not to the exclusion of others), since the Earth is God's Creation. Perhaps the best example of this is the so-called 'green martyrdom' of the Irish missionary saints who went out to other lands, making the sacrifice of exile from their homes which they would never see again. Thus they loved the Creation where they were born, Ireland, but were ready to sacrifice this for the sake of the Gospel, to bring the Light of Christ to others. They kept their roots, but were no 'nationalists', if we may use a modern term.

The second great teaching of the Fathers, these saints who possessed a secular education, was that of the Holy Trinity. This says that God is Three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in One Essence. This is the teaching of Love, that different persons can be united by Love, it is the teaching of unity in diversity. Put into practice by thousands of European ascetics, this teaching softened the heathen ways of Pagan Rome and the heathen Germanic, Slavic and Turkish barbarians who invaded

Northern and Eastern Europe. This was the teaching that formed Christendom, which shaped the Christian Commonwealth, which extended like St Cuthbert's pectoral cross, from Ireland to India. This was the teaching which shaped the European peoples, enabling them to live in unity and diversity, as sovereign kingdoms without tribal warfare, as an international Commonwealth, without a monolithic, totalitarian superstructure, as, quite simply, Christendom.

The Age of the Disincarnation.

Contrary to the first millennium, the second millennium is the age of worldly greatness, but spiritual enfeeblement. If it can be said that in the first millennium Europe rose from the depths of paganism to the heights of holiness, then in the second millennium, Europe fell from the heights of holiness to the depths of paganism. The first half of the second millennium saw a gradual fall, but the second half has seen an acceleration of that fall, reaching breakneck speed in the 20th century. Despite attempts to slow down the process of Apostasy from the Age of the Incarnation and its traditions of holiness, traditions which were continued in the Eastern half of Europe right into the 20th century, the second millennium resembles a Second Fall. Ultimately, especially in recent times, it has been the age of triumph of pagan values, because of the Disincarnation, the rejection of Christian values. The quest for worldliness of the second millennium leads man to the depths of Apostasy, the loss of Faith, to the statement which resounds in the spiritual emptiness and hollowness of the contemporary European mind – 'God is Dead'.

The Origins of a New Age.

Before the first millennium was out, there were already undeniable tensions between the North of Continental Europe and the rest of Christendom. The tensions between 'Frankland', the Franco-German heartland of Western Europe, and the rest of the Christian Commonwealth, were signs that the Age of the Saints was coming to an end. It signified the attempt to govern the Church not by the Holy Spirit but by the human mind, in spite of the Gospel injunction: 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?'

At the end of the 8th century the semi-Christian Franks led by Charlemagne conceived the idea of 'renewing' or restoring Ancient Rome. This would have been unthinkable to the tens of thousands of Christians who had been martyred in the arenas of Rome and mercilessly persecuted all over the Roman Empire. However, the Franks, the most powerful people in Western Europe, desired to be 'great'. They wished to restore the cult of reason and law, to read once more the pagan, so-called 'classical' writers whom the saints (like the Venerable Bede only fifty years before) had refused to read. Could God perhaps be reduced to the size of the human reason? Could the unity of the pagan Roman Empire be recovered?

The Carolingians, as the elite of Charlemagne are called, took as their model not Christian Rome, but pagan Rome and its philosophy. They took their knowledge from

classical writers and ideas that had been carried from pagan Greece by Muslims to Spain, then transferred to Spanish Jews who transmitted the same philosophy to Christians, like Theodulf, the Spanish bishop of Orleans, and other Spaniards at the Court of Charlemagne and after: Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, Claud, Bishop of Turin and Felix, Bishop of Urgel, all in some way or other associated with heresies. In the year 800 Charlemagne was crowned in Rome by the Pope. This was the beginning of 'the Holy Roman Empire', which was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire.

The motives of Pope Leo III are not clear, but in crowning Charlemagne 'Emperor of the Romans', he seems to have been trying to bring the Frankish ruler to heel. Although Charles had the supranational idea of the pagan Romans, a policy of centralization, he was unable to implement it. Even with his barbarian violence of bringing pagans to the Faith by the sword, he failed to intimidate. Thus the British Isles remained outside his 'Empire'; King Offa of Mercia considered himself to be Charlemagne's equal. Iberia also remained outside his grasp. The Basques and the Bretons resisted him. Many in the South of the former territory of Gaul preferred Arab rule to his. The South of Italy never came under his control, nor did Scandinavia. And the Roman Capital in Constantinople looked on him as what he was – an upstart barbarian kinglet who through his ignorant ambition had even fallen into the grave error of changing the text of the Christian Creed, the Symbol of Faith drawn up by the Œcumenical Councils of the 4th century.

Providentially, after Charles' death, his 'Empire' collapsed. And towards the end of the 9th century the unity of Christendom was restored by the saintly Pope John VIII and St Photius the Great, Patriarch of the Imperial Capital. In 879, at what the Greek-speaking Orthodox Churches generally call the Eighth Œcumenical Council, all those who dared to alter the Creed were condemned and excommunicated. Peace was restored. In the 10th century a dynastic marriage was arranged between Otto II, a successor to Charlemagne, and Theophano, a 'Byzantine' noblewoman. Artisans and monks from Constantinople went to Germany in numbers and played a considerable role in maintaining the Frankish world inside the Christian Commonwealth, thus reinforcing the conciliar decisions of the previous century. However, this would not be enough. The temptations of worldly greatness remained as an undercurrent among the Franks. The concept of 'the Holy Roman Empire' remained to burst forth again in the 11th century (and last until Napoleon). This time the desire to be 'great' without God would be stronger than the influence of the Faith which had restrained until then the ambition and the arrogance of those in the Franco-German heart of Western Europe.

The Eleventh-Century 'Renaissance'.

In the year 983 Peter of Pavia was appointed the first Germanic Pope. He was to be followed by others – Bruno of Carinthia (996–999) and then Gerbert of Aurillac, who reigned as Sylvester II from 999 to 1003. This latter was one who preferred Cicero and Boethius to prayer. When Gerbert reproached the Romans for their ignorance of

the 'classics', the papal legate upbraided him as a true Christian should: 'Since the beginning of the world, God has chosen not orators and philosophers, but the illiterate and peasants'. Gerbert wished to combine faith and reason. He had studied in Spain with Muslims and Jews; he was a scientist, an astronomer, one who dreamed of restoring the glory of the Ancient Roman Empire. As William of Malmesbury wrote of him in the 12th century: 'Gerbert discovered what the pagans had buried in Rome'. According to chroniclers of the time, he had sold his soul to the Devil for the sake of knowledge.

This was the inauspicious but profoundly symbolic start of the 11th century. It marked a return to the pagan thought-world of Aristotle, Plato, the Roman and Greek pagan philosophies, confused with Christianity. It was the beginning of what we now call 'Scholasticism', a new age where learning was no longer obtained in the monastery through prayer, but in the university through the human mind and logical analysis. It was the beginning of the Papal totalitarian Empire of the Middle Ages, the beginning of the period of the domination of the world by Western 'Judeo-Christian' civilization. The great Catholic historian, Christopher Dawson, has written thus of this age in his book 'Religion and the Rise of Western Culture': 'The West is different from all other civilizations because its religious ideal has not been the worship of timeless and changeless perfection but a spirit that strives to incorporate itself in humanity and change the world'. 'The other great cultures realized their synthesis between religion and life and then maintained their sacred order. But in the West the changing of the world became an integral part of its cultural ideal'.

The failed '*renovatio*' or rebirth of pagan Rome under Charlemagne was to succeed in the 11th century and to blossom fully in the 12th. The second attempt to revive and restore the power and the glory of Ancient Rome was to be successful. But the true power and the true glory and the true kingdom sit on the back of an ass.

The first result of this 'renaissance' is Scholasticism, the abandon of the only real theology, the mystical theology of practical experience, for a rationalistic philosophy. This is the reconciliation of Christianity with Pagan thought, the effort to conform faith to the fallen human reason. But reason is darkened by the absence of God's grace, if it is not first Purified by prayer and ascetic work, by all that is not learnt at university. Anselm, the Father of Scholasticism, writing at the end of the 11th century, said that he believed 'in order to understand'. The Age of the Saints, the Age of the Incarnation, would have replied that it believed because it was natural to believe, God was everywhere, belief was a recognition of reality, the facts spoke for themselves; understanding was secondary and it was not understanding, but faith that brought salvation. Scholasticism was the triumph of the pagan mind, of pagan logic, of Aristotle over Christ.

There was, however, a second consequence of this rebirth of paganism. This was the rebirth of the Imperial idea. This time it would be implemented not by a bloodthirsty layman, Charlemagne, but by the Papacy. The new, reformed Papacy of the second

half of the 11th century assumed the powers of the ancient Roman Emperors. In order to do this it first had to divorce itself from the actual Roman Emperors who still ruled in the East and the south of Italy from Constantinople. For the Frankish Pope, Bruno of Toul, from the family of the Counts of Egisheim-Dagsburg, known to history as Pope Leo IX, this occurred in 1054 when he had the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated.

From this point on the Papacy stopped at nothing to enforce its pretensions. Gradually it extended its power to the margins of Western Europe. This it did by using the military prowess of the Normans, first in Sicily, then in England, Wales and Ireland. These mercenaries were to be used against recalcitrant everywhere. Other Teuton warriors were to be used against Russia and non-Catholics in so-called 'Crusades'. Finally in 1204 the 'knights' were used to destroy Christian Constantinople, New Rome, itself. With New Rome crushed, Old Rome was now supreme, and the pagan Roman Empire all but restored. By the beginning of the 13th century the Papacy had reached its apogee, it was the centre of a complex legal system, a monolithic Empire which made kings shudder at the threat excommunication. It was the inspiration of thinkers who were attempting to seize Nature's secrets through alchemy and astrology, algebra and Aristotle, Plato and Ptolemy. Rome was the apex of a pyramid call Feudalism. The remains of the system can still be seen in Sicily Southern Italy to this day in the Mafia. For Feudalism is little more than a protection racket legitimised by ritual restraints.

Let us not, however, paint too dark a picture. The first half of the second millennium was still tempered by the heritage of the Age of the Saints, the Age of the Incarnation, which had preceded it. The rebirth of pagan, 'classical' Antiquity took place among the elite of Western European society only. Among the people there was still piety. There was a divorce between the people and the elite, between heart and head, between faith and philosophy, between 'town and gown', between the legacy of the Age of Saints and the pagan intellect, between the Age of the Incarnation and that of the Disincarnation.

Moreover in Eastern Europe this divorce had not yet occurred. In the areas not yet subject to Rome, in the Orthodox Christian Patriarchates, Christendom continued. The Age of the Saints, the Patristic Age, the Age of the Incarnation continued. Indeed there was even a blossoming of this Age in Constantinople in the 11th century (St Simeon the New Theologian), in Russia with the development of monasticism and also in the Balkans. This would continue throughout the second millennium with the appearance of new Church Fathers, St Dositheus of Jerusalem in the 17th century, St Paisius in Moldavia, St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, St Seraphim and the Optina Elders in Russia (all of the 18th and 19th centuries), and in our own times, St John of Kronstadt, Blessed Nicholas (Velimirovich), Blessed John (Maximovich), Blessed Justin (Popovich), together with a host of other martyrs and confessors in Greece, in Anatolia, in the Balkans and in Russia, persecuted by the enemies of Christ. This Commonwealth (to use the term of Sir Dimitri Obolensky), was the inheritance and

continuation of the first millennium. It not only survived into the 20th century but defended itself against the intellectual paganization of Christendom which had so moved ahead in Western Europe.

Possibly the greatest Christian apologist for the Age of the Saints against the Western abandonment of Christian values was St Gregory Palamas, the 14th century Church Father. He defended the theology of the Fathers against rationalism and thus defended the whole Spirit-based civilization of Christendom. He developed the theology of the Holy Spirit, denying that man was separated from God, asserting that man could know God through the Holy Spirit. To the growing cult of humanism he opposed 'theosis', divination. The cult of fallen man, humanism was ultimately the cult of sin. Man could partake of the divine nature, partake in the life of God through the Divine Energies, Communicated to repentant and purified mankind through the Holy Spirit. To rationalistic thought he opposed 'noetic' thought, the thought that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. To speculation he opposed 'noetic' knowledge, that which enters the soul through the Holy Spirit. This was not speculation but the spiritual experience of a saint written down in theology. Theology outside the territory of Papal Rome thus continued, as in the first millennium, to be mystical, experiential, empirical, non-philosophical.

The Sixteenth-Century 'Renaissance'.

We have already said that the second millennium, the Age of the Disincarnation, can roughly be divided into two halves. The second half begins in Italy in the 14th century, but blossoms in the 15th and comes to fruition in the 16th. It is the period that modern historians call 'the Renaissance'. In fact, as we have seen it is the third renaissance or rebirth of pagan Roman and Greek values since the Carolingians first '*renovatio*' and then the 11th century Renaissance.

It is the third attempt to destroy the heritage of the Age of the Saints, to disincarnate Christian values from the Western part of Europe, and ultimately the rest of the Christian world. It can most dramatically be seen in the Art of the period with its sensual pagan, erotic style. Although this Renaissance with its basically anti-Christian ethos began in Italy, it was to come to its fruition in Germany, in the very cities, towns and villages where the Carolingian renaissance had taken place among a small and fragile elite. This was the unintended consequence of the Renaissance – it is called the Reformation. The first result of the protests of the Catholic monk, Martin Luther, was a religious division in Western Europe between the Germanic North and the mainly Latin South. This was aided by the German invention of printing. In the North was born a new, practical, pragmatic rationalism, which was strongly opposed to the old, theoretical, speculative rationalism of the South. It opposed a divisive, nationalistic North to the old monolithism in the South.

Nevertheless, the result of the Renaissance and the Reformation and then the Counter-Reformation with their Wars of 'Religion' was not the total paganization of Western Europe. The process of paganization was still tempered by the stubborn and vital

heritage of the Age of the Saints Christian values, implanted by the Saints of the 'Bright Ages', could not be removed so easily. Both the Catholic South and the Protestant North went on believing in God. There was still a certain zeal, even if shaken, distorted and deformed. Faith would remain in Western Europe for as long as Western Europe refused wholly to renounce the heritage of the first millennium and the basic Christian teachings it had given the West. Yet another, fourth, renaissance or pagan revival would be necessary to shake Christianity further and uproot its deep roots.

This was to take place in the 18th century, the Age of the 'Enlightenment', the Age of 'Classicism', the Age of 'Reason', with the beginning of 'Modern' Science and Philosophy. This was the age of the cult of the Reason, the Enlightenment of the Reason, but in fact it was opposed to the spiritual Enlightenment, as taught by Christianity. For the first time we see individuals openly declaring their atheism, proclaiming it in pride. The cult of Science and Reason was to lead to two Revolutions. The first was the Industrial Revolution in Protestant Britain, the second the French Revolution with its genocide and two million victims in Catholic France. The French Revolution was preached by the Freemason Encyclopædists, Diderot and Voltaire, although they did not imagine that the excesses of Reason would lead directly to the excesses of Unreason. The cries of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' were to lead directly to the tyranny of Bonaparte.

Almost exactly 1,000 years after Charlemagne, Napoleon had himself crowned by the Pope. The new Charlemagne, he too attempted to restore the Roman Empire and unify Europe under his totalitarian rule. Conquering even more territory than Charlemagne and massacring hundreds of thousands in the process, Napoleon caused Europe to live through almost a generation of bloodshed. That he failed in his task was due to the obstinacy of Great Britain and Russia, who both refused the tyranny of this new 'Holy Roman Emperor', who was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Emperor. When he invaded Russia, he was said to be Antichrist, and in England he was called the Devil Incarnate.

The Imperialism of Bonaparte brought about a nationalist reaction in Europe. This nationalist reaction spread freely into Eastern Europe, to Countries that had never really until Napoleon felt the influence of the Western European mentality, to Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania (In the 20th century, it would spread even beyond Europe). And in these lands, this nationalist influence would begin to dissolve what remained of the Christian Commonwealth, the remains of the Age of the Saints of the first millennium. This became crystal clear in the fratricidal Balkan Wars between Bulgarians and Serbs in 1912–13. In Germany, which did not then exist, Bonaparte's influence in founding 'the Confederation of the Rhine' had a particularly pernicious effect, since this Confederation laid the foundation for the united Germany of Bismarck. This in turn would rebound on France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 and ultimately would launch the whole German question which has so cast its shadow on 20th century Europe and cost tens of millions of lives. Similarly,

Napoleon's work had pernicious effects in Italy, which did not exist either at the time. Italian unification under Garibaldi would have disastrous consequences in the 20th century – as we shall see later.

Moreover, the Imperialism of Napoleon, the idea of restoring the Roman Empire, was not the only Imperialism of the 19th century. Many countries, seeing that they could not have an Empire in Europe, created ones in Africa and Asia. Thus the British, the Dutch, the French, the Belgians and the Germans all formed colonial empires, just as the Spanish and the Portuguese before them. All were obsessed with the Imperial idea, the pagan, Roman idea. Austro-Hungary continued to maintain theirs in Central and Eastern Europe. In the 20th century Soviet Russia and Italy attempted to develop theirs. But Imperialism is always followed by nationalism, as pride is always followed by the fall. This is the spiritual law.

The Twentieth Century.

1914 marked the end of peace. Europe exploded in hatred and nine million dead. The Kaiser (Cæsar) wanted an unholy, German Empire. And he was slowed by Russia and then stopped by the English-speaking world; basically the same forces that had stopped Napoleon, only on a world scale this time, not just European. But after the four years of blood-bath, there was no repentance. After a spate of short-term, nationalist revenge, Europe fell under the spell of American commercialism and Russia fell under that of mass self-destruction with the Communist regime. European minds turned not to repentance, but to the rhythms of jazz, arousing immoral thoughts among the masses. Thoughts for so long buried in the European subconscious, which Freud exhumed, surfaced anew.

Exactly 25 years after the First War a new German Charlemagne-Napoleon arose in Europe and a new 'Roman' Emperor in Italy. The same old story, the same obsession with uniting Europe under a totalitarian regime. 'Germany will only truly be Germany, when it is Europe. As long as we do not dominate Europe, we shall only vegetate. We must have Europe and its colonies. Europe is our total living-space'. (Hermann Rauschning, *What Hitler told me*). And the same mistakes: once again Hitler made the mistakes of Napoleon. Once again the pagan Roman idea was defeated by those on the periphery of Europe, Russia and the English-speaking world, those who refused the tyranny of Europe. Leaving over fifty million dead, this war, truly a global conflict, brought no repentance. Within years of its ending, Europe was involved in a moral war which culminated in the 1960's in a wave of 'liberalization', releasing hysterical and deregulated forces, whose direct consequences were the murders of tens of millions of children by abortion, and this continues today.

Economically, another war also began. In 1957 a Franco-German project, involving precisely the territories of the Carolingian Empire, was agreed upon and confirmed in Rome – 1157 years after Charlemagne's confirmation in the same city. Six countries with a population 80% Catholic formed a customs union, promising economic excommunication or exclusion to the European countries which did not wish to join.

Just recently, now with twelve members, this Treaty has been strengthened by another Treaty drawn up, just a few miles away from Charlemagne's Palace in Aachen, in the city of Maastricht. Intent on Union, these countries seem not to have noticed that at the other end of Europe, another Union, the Soviet one, has broken up in chaos, hunger and war.

Once again Europe is divided between the monolithic totalitarianism of the Superstate of Maastricht, and, on the other hand, the nationalistic fratricide of Sarajevo, fruit of the nationalism of the 19th century. Western Europe is promised bread and circuses, if it will worship on the altar of the new Baal, the Mammon of economism, productivism and its human sacrifices Eastern Europe, having followed false gods, is tempted to do the same but wishes to conserve its new-found freedom – but the temptation of bread and circuses is great, and lands which reject the corporatist Eurostate are threatened with provincial status through economic excommunication.

The Inner Meaning of the Age of the Disincarnation.

How was this age possible?

The second millennium gradually put history into reverse, returning Christendom by the 20th century into the pre-Constantinian age of martyrdom. The Age of the Disincarnation is that of rationalist philosophy, of the distancing of man from God.

The fundamental Christian teaching of the Incarnation and its implications were progressively lost in this Age. Firstly, there was a loss of faith in the divinity of Christ and a focusing only on His humanity. Christ was seen as a poor, abandoned, suffering man. With the loss of, faith in His divinity, there went the loss of faith in a heavenly homeland. The result of this was the attachment to the world and its institutions. Christ was distanced from man. He became a distant God locked up in an unknowable Heaven. He was replaced with a 'Vicar' and man was left to run his own life with reason and law, rationalist philosophy and legalism exactly as before Christ's Coming. Christ became the Unknown God of the philosophers. The idea of a god as Superior Being survived, but this divine nature did not merge with the human nature in One Person. On Earth a man, Jesus, had died crucified. In Heaven there was a distant God, the Lord Christ, from Whom, they said, 'proceeded' the Holy Spirit. But this Holy Spirit and this God, this 'Superior Being' were unknowable because they could not descend to man.

The divinization of man was impossible, the whole material world could never be hallowed – therefore it could be exploited without misgiving. The separation of the divine nature of Christ from His human nature in Western European religious thought and piety had many consequences. The admiration for the sacrifice of Christ the man, developed into humanism, at first Christian humanism, but then atheistic humanism. The distancing of divinity brought a new worldliness to Western attitudes, a lack of respect for Creation, the desacralization of Nature which before in the Age of the Incarnation had been seen as a pattern or code of signs and symbols of God's

Presence among men on Earth. This worldliness gave rise to an excessive attachment to earthly homelands, that today we call nationalism. On the other hand, paradoxically, since the principle of the Incarnation was denied – God had not really become man – mankind also felt uprooted, able to devote itself to rootless, monolithic, totalitarian structures – the very ones that pagan Rome had so cultivated.

Similarly the teaching of the Holy Trinity was turned into an abstract, dry, dead formula. The Living God was replaced by the god of rationalising philosophers, the abstract god of booklore, syllogism and speculative, scholastic hypothesis. This god was not the God experienced, known and lived by the Age of the Incarnation, this was a god of imagination. And when imagination would no longer need him to justify its hypotheses, then he would be cast aside as a dead god. The ignorance of the Living God meant that the knowledge of God as Three Persons in a Unity of Love was lost. And with it was lost the reality of unity in diversity, the whole vision of Christendom-Commonwealth of the Age of the Incarnation, the Age of the Saints.

We have termed the second millennium ‘the Age of the Disincarnation’, because it was the age when Christian values were lost, disincarnated, uprooted from daily life. As we come now to the third millennium, we may attempt to answer that question which we posed in the title of this essay: Europe: *Quo Vadis?* Whither Goest Thou?

The Third Millennium: Apocalypse or History?

We are now only six years away from the third millennium, from that excitement and no doubt hysteria of the night of 31 December 1999.

After the end of the Second World War, there were those who said that Europe had been saved for a purpose. The purpose does not seem to be clear. For since 1945 Europe has declined spiritually. For centuries Europe has opposed mere men to Christ. They asked: Christ or the Pope? Christ or Aristotle? Christ or Luther? Christ or Darwin? Christ or Marx? Christ or Freud? And now as we move ‘forward’ through an age of ultimate vice and disincarnation – abortion (what could be more disincarnate than abortion?), perversion, incest, witchcraft – practices that were unspeakable only a few years ago – it seems that Europe is opposing Christ to the ultimate. They ask: Christ or Antichrist? Antichrist is the ultimate disincarnation, for Antichrist is the moment when mankind falls at the feet of Lucifer, a fallen, bodiless, disincarnate angel.

Is Europe then to re-enter the age of history, or to fall out of history into the age of the Apocalypse? Is it to return to Christendom, the Incarnation of values, the Age of the Saints – or to disincarnate itself into the worship of disincarnate Satan? Is it to return to the reconstitution, the re-embodiment of the Christendom of the first millennium – or its disembodiment?

Will Europe be saved by the Incarnation of Christ, and the Holy Trinity – or disembodied by its old demons who have so long waited to return since they were first cast out by the Saints of the former age?

Will Pagan Rome triumph with its Caesar-Antichrist worship and pantheon of demons – or will there be a True Renaissance, the True Rebirth of the Age of the Incarnation, the Age of the Saints?

The Cross and the Resurrection – or Spiritual Death?

A Spiritual Commonwealth or an Economic Union?

Jerusalem or Babylon?

Unity in Christ or Unity in Antichrist?

We are unable to answer any of these questions, but as Orthodox Christians we go on fearless, knowing that the last word in human history, belongs to God.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

December 1993

[Expanded from a paper given before U.N.E.C. (The Union of European Christian Nations) in Paris on 1 January 1993.]

61. Orthodoxy and the Destiny of Russia

‘And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.’

(Matt. 24, 14)

Orthodox Fathers, not least among them Blessed John (Maximovich), have interpreted the above verse in the following way: before the end of the world, Orthodoxy has to be preached to all the peoples of the Earth. The fact that the Gospel has been translated, mainly through the efforts of Protestant missionary societies, into over a thousand tongues is not enough. The fact that many peoples and tribes in the Americas and Africa have heard of the Gospel, mostly through the efforts of Roman Catholic colonists and administrators, is not enough. No, – the peoples of the world must understand the Gospel in spirit and truth, in other words, in the light of the fullness of the Christian Faith, in the light of Orthodoxy.

Even a hundred years ago, many, even Orthodox, would perhaps have doubted the validity of this interpretation. It must be added that few at that time were thinking that the end of the world might come soon. Many still naively bathed in the optimism and material ‘progress’ of the nineteenth century. Moreover, much of the Orthodox world seemed too paralysed to think of preaching to Peruvians or Papuans, to West Indians or West Africans – or for that matter to West Europeans. Balkan and Arab Orthodox were at that time still confronted with the dying Ottoman Empire and Islam. True, the Russian Empire had its missions in China, Japan and North America – but most of the world seemed ‘immune’ to Orthodox Christianity. The Russian Revolution changed all that.

It is difficult today to think of a single country where there are not at least a few native Orthodox. I have met both Papuan and Peruvian Orthodox, both West Indian and West African Orthodox, come to Orthodoxy through acquaintance with the Russian emigration or missionaries from Greek-speaking Churches. Having said this, however, it is also clear that billions of people do not know the fullness of Christianity, Orthodoxy. And many of those, ironically, are in countries like Russia, formerly Orthodox, but only now painfully returning to the Faith of their forebears, with the baptism of millions in the last decade.

There are many who are now ‘searching the Scriptures’ and praying over the prophecies of the Saints, inspired from the Bible and spiritual revelations, such as the one above. Some of these prophecies are dark and sobering. According to the pre-revolutionary Russian writer, S. A. Nilus in his work *On the Bank of the River of God*, St Seraphim of Sarov predicted thus: ‘At that time Russian bishops will become so ungodly that their impiety will exceed that of the Greek bishops who lived in the reign of Theodosius the Younger. They will not even believe in the most important dogma

of the Christian Faith – the Resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection'.¹ Other saints spoke darkly of an 'Eighth Œcumenical Council': 'The last times are approaching. Soon there will be an Œcumenical Council which will be called 'holy'. But it will be that very 'eighth council which will be a synagogue of the godless'. All faiths will be united into one during it. Then all fasts will be abolished, monasticism will be completely destroyed, bishops will be married. The new calendar will be introduced'.² St Nectarius of Optina altogether denied the possibility of a genuine Eighth Council – 'Only individuals will be united to our Church'.³ However, lest we should grow disheartened, let us turn to another prophecy, most ancient but only recently discovered, which gives us hope in an ever-darkening world.

These are the little-known words of the Ever-Memorable Seraphim Archbishop of Chicago and Detroit, writing in 1959 in *The Destinies of Russia*:

“Recently during my first pilgrimage to Palestine, the Lord made me, sinner, worthy to discover new and hitherto unknown prophecies which cast new light on the destiny of Russia. These prophecies were revealed 'by chance' to the learned Russian monk Fr. Antony of St Sabbas monastery, near Jerusalem. He discovered them in ancient Greek manuscripts. They are by unknown Fathers of the eighth and ninth centuries i.e. contemporaries of St John Damascene, and these prophecies are couched in the following terms:

'After the chosen people of the Jews gave up their Messiah and Redeemer to torment and a shameful death, they were no longer counted a chosen people and this honour passed to the Greeks, a second chosen people.

The searching and inquisitive mind of the Ancient Greeks was enlightened by Christianity and penetrated to the very depths of knowledge. The great Eastern Church Fathers defined the Christian dogmas and created the harmonious system of Christian teaching. This is the great merit of the Greek people. However, the Roman State (Byzantium) is not creative or strong enough to build up a harmonious political and social life on a solid Christian foundation. The sceptre of the Orthodox Empire will fall from the weak hands of the Emperors of Constantinople who are unable to achieve symphony and concord between Church and State.

For this reason the Lord through His Providence shall send a third chosen people to succeed the spiritually weakened Greeks. This people will appear in the North within 100–200 years (these prophecies were set down in Palestine 150–200 years before the Baptism of the Russian people), and will become Christian wholeheartedly. They will strive to live according to the commandments of Christ and will seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, as Christ Our Saviour showed us. The Lord God will love this people for their zeal and will add unto them all other things – huge territories, riches, a mighty and glorious State.

At various times this great people will fall into sin and for this will be chastised through considerable trials. In about a thousand years this people, chosen by God, will falter in its Faith and its standing for the Truth of Christ. It will become proud of its

earthly might and glory, will cease to seek the Kingdom and will want paradise not in Heaven but on this sinful Earth.

However not all this people will tread this broad and pernicious path, though a substantial majority will, especially its governing class. On account of this great fall, a terrible fiery trial will be sent from on high to this people which will despise the ways of God. Rivers of blood shall flow across their land, brother shall slay brother, more than once famine shall visit the land and gather its dread harvest, nearly all the churches and other holy places shall be destroyed or suffer sacrilege, many shall perish.

A part of this people, rejecting iniquity and untruth, will pass over the borders of their homeland and will be dispersed like unto the people of the Jews all over the world.⁴ Nevertheless the Lord will not show His wrath on them to the uttermost. The blood of thousands of martyrs will cry to the heavens for mercy. A spirit of sobriety will grow among this chosen people and they will return to God. At last this period of cleansing trial, appointed by the Righteous Judge, will come to an end, and once more Holy Orthodoxy will shine forth and those northern lands will be resplendent with the brightness of a faith reborn.

This wonderful light of Christ will shine forth from there and enlighten all the peoples of the earth. This will be helped by that part of the people providentially sent ahead into the diaspora, who will create centres of Orthodoxy – churches of God all over the world.

Christianity will then be revealed in all its heavenly beauty and fullness. Most of the peoples of the world will become Christian. And for a time a period of peace, prosperity and Christian living will come to the whole world...

And then? Then, when the fullness of time has come, a great decline in faith will begin and everything foretold in the Holy Scriptures will occur, Antichrist will appear and the world will end.'

These prophecies are set forth in various manuscripts with variants, but basically they all agree.

I would remind readers that these prophecies were found in authentic Greek manuscripts of the eighth and ninth centuries when nobody had ever heard of Russia as a State and the Russian plains were settled by more or less savage, warring Slavic tribes and other peoples.

What more can I add? I believe that these prophecies relate to the Russian people and that it is the third chosen people. I believe that these astonishing prophecies disclose the coming destiny of the Russian people and that all will come to pass as was foretold over a thousand years ago.”

It is perhaps difficult to add to the words of Archbishop Seraphim, who revealed the contents of these manuscripts to the Russian world 35 years ago. True, in the light of recent events in Russia and the collapse of the Soviet Empire, these prophecies may seem less unlikely to doubting human reason. But for them to come true a number of events would still have to occur inside Russia:

- The 130 or so bishops of the Patriarchal Church would have to reject the Erastian ideology of Sergianism – Church co-operation with an anti-Church State. They would have to stop swimming with the political tides in Russia and stand firmly for Christ and Orthodox Christianity.
- The glorification of the hundreds of thousands of New Martyrs and Confessors would have to take place very rapidly in Russia. This work has begun, but at the present rate it would take millennia to complete. Some in the Moscow Patriarchate have spoken of canonizing the Royal Martyrs, but actions must be confirmed by words. More hearteningly, material on the lives of some New Martyrs is now being collected and published.⁵
- Patriarchal bishops inside and outside Russia would have to return to governing the Church through the holy canons. This would mean an end to married bishops (if there are still any), an end to the second marriage of priests, an end to deformed liturgical practices, an end to the new calendar and Paschalia (used in parishes outside Russia at present), and above all an end to Ecumenism and all the compromises with Heterodoxy, which the ordinary Orthodox believer finds so profoundly disturbing.

On this basis of a return to Orthodoxy one could hope for unity between this renewed and canonical Patriarchal Church and the parishes of the Russian emigration, ‘that part of the people providentially sent ahead into the diaspora, who will create centres of Orthodoxy – churches of God, all over the world’. And then would begin the final mission of the Body of Christ – ‘that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem’ (Luke 24, 47).

However, should our hopes be raised too high, we must remember in all sobriety that for any of this to happen, there must first be collective repentance. Repentance in Russia, which like Pushkin, its greatest writer is either to duel with death or else to return to its sources; Russia where today crime, vice, corruption and abortion hold sway. But repentance also among ourselves, for we are so steeped in sin that we have not through personal witness and mission been able to bring more than a few to the light of Orthodoxy, we who were ‘providentially sent ahead’. The task of, repentance must begin with ourselves and our daily struggle ‘to quench not the Spirit’. Lord, give us strength.

January 1994

1 This is quoted at length in a new Russian book, which gathers many quotations from sources of varying authority, regarding the end of the world. See *Russia Before the*

Second Coming, compiled by Sergei Fomin, Trinity-Sergius Lavra, 1993. 100,000 copies of the book, which relies heavily on quotations from the righteous of the Russian diaspora, have so far been printed.

2 Hieroschemamonk Kuksha (Velichko), 1875–1964, monk of the Patriarchal Church in Russia. Printed in *The Orthodox Word*, 1991, No. 158, Pp.138–141.

3 Fomin, p. 286.

4 This recalls the words of Blessed John at the 1938 Church Council in Belgrade: ‘In chastising the Russian people ... the Lord has made of them preachers of Orthodoxy all over the world. The Russian diaspora has made Orthodoxy known to the ends of the Earth ... Russians in exile have been granted the mission to shine forth the light of Orthodoxy all over the world...’

5 See *Martyrs, Confessors and Pious Ascetics of the Russian Orthodox Church of the 20th Century* compiled by Hieromonk Damaskin Orlovsky, Book 1, Tver, 1992. (100,000 copies printed). A work of variable quality, with many unexplained gaps – but nevertheless it has been published, which would have been impossible just a few years ago.

62. The England to Come

I know Old England shall for ever stand,
Her beauty from beyond shines through this land.
The inward stream of Her forechosen way
Runs in these woods and fields and church towers grey,
And in kind hearts or song by village green,
In homely country lane or meek souls clean,
In farm and hamlet or ancient inn;
Behold Old English life soft flows therein;
Life that springs from spirits by faith made bold,
Who haunt this English land from times of old,
Saints of God fleeting glimpsed by seeming heart.
One I well know he, Godwin, dwells apart;
A thousand years he had prayed by this brook,
His story all untold in learned book,
By eyes of man his hallowed life unseen,
But his voice speaks to me in waking dream,
Foreshowing clear that England's history
Shall come aright and tell its mystery,
This thread that unwinds, this tale that unfolds,
The sacred truth that England guards and holds,
The faith and knowledge within Her burning,
Of Christ the Lord at the end returning,
For true and faithful to bring salvation
And fulfil Old England's restoration.

March 1994

63. Another England

Over these acres now ploughed brown,
On the moss-green roofs looking down,
And men's dull and empty chatter
And their machines' senseless clatter,
Over puffed-up pride, all vain things,
England's Guardian Angel sings
About another England, freed
From a thousand years of false creed,
An England returned to her home,
And become as a living poem,
Written by mystic inner sight,
For the believing heart's delight,
When the faithful go up to Thee
To bring down this England to be,
And things hidden now are unsealed
And saints, in their beauty revealed,
Ensoul dry bones and bright upstand
To dwell for ever in this land.

March 1994

64. St Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, Maker of England

O Faith of England, taught of old
By faithful shepherds of the fold,
The hallowing of our nation ...
Our fathers heard the trumpet call
Through lowly cot and kingly ball
From oversea resounding ...
Our fathers held the faith received,
By saints declared, by saints believed,
By saints in death defended.

(T. A. Lacey, 1853–1931)

For Orthodox Christianity a bishop is an icon of Christ, an intercessor between God and man. The heavy cross that he bears requires great abilities and sacrifices. On the one hand, he must have the love of prayer and the ascetic life needed to cultivate prayer. On the other hand he must also possess instruction, learning, the ability to express his spiritual experience, the Orthodox Faith, applying it with the tactful love of the pastor, and he must also have organizational and administrative abilities.

In other words, he should love God with all his heart (prayer), with all his soul (the application of the Faith), and with all his mind (organization) (See Matt. 22, 37). The perfection required of the ideal bishop explains why, for example, good and saintly monks do not always make good bishops, for they often lack administrative abilities or pastoral experience. Equally one with instruction may lack both organization and spiritual life. And the bishop-bureaucrat, State-nominated, sadly so common in so many local Orthodox Churches at present, may be able to run his diocese like a joint-stock company, but he will be organising a spiritual vacuum, a withered fig-tree.

Those bishops who possess all the gifts necessary, who are men of prayer as well as pastors and organizers, who combine the spiritual and the practical without contradiction, are mostly saints and many, Church Fathers. One only need think of St Ambrose of Milan, Blessed Augustine of Hippo,¹ St Gregory the Great, or in the East, St Athanasius the Great, the Three Great Hierarchs, St Basil the Great, St John Chrysostom and St Gregory the Theologian. In the Church history of England, the See of Canterbury has also produced Three Great Hierarchs and Metropolitans of the English Church: St Augustine, Apostle of the English (+c.604), St Theodore of Tarsus (602–690) and St Dunstan of Canterbury (909–988).

All played key roles at key moments in English Church and national history. Augustine, a shy monk, established the Church among the English, but did not live long enough to break out of the south-east corner of the island and overcome paganism among the other English or break down the ethnic hostility of the isolated

Celts. St Dunstan, mystic but also statesman, rebuilt monasticism and learning after the Viking attacks, fostered the flowering of Church art and architecture, and crowned the first King of All-England, St Edgar the Peaceful, who made peace with the Celtic peoples of these islands. We shall look here, however, at the even more remarkable life and achievements of St Theodore, a Greek, who in a Latin Church, established unity between Saxon and Celt, thus ensuring the later conversion of the whole of north-western Europe to the Light of Christ.

Despite their common Christian faith, contacts between the Eastern and Western halves of Christendom were not common after about 600 – excepting in Italy. Chroniclers mention visits to England of only four Greek clerics, although there may have been more, and it is almost certain that Greek artists worked in England, adorning churches. A Greek monk, Constantine, is recorded at Malmesbury. A Greek bishop lived in Ely and was close to the Court of St Edgar, according to the *Liber Eliensis*. A little later, in about 983, a hermit from Antioch, St Simeon, preached in England.² The fourth Greek figure is therefore all the more outstanding, for he was the Metropolitan of Britain, Theodore of Canterbury. Who was he and what were his achievements?

Theodore was born in Tarsus, birthplace of St Paul, in the south of modern Turkey, a little over 100 miles from the north-eastern tip of Cyprus. Probably born in 602, before he was thirty he was to learn that the city of Antioch had been taken by the Arabs. His own home-town was to fall before 661 and be ruled by the Ummayyad caliphs. We know that Theodore studied in Athens, was versed in the divine and secular arts and knew mathematics and astronomy, and of course, Latin. When exactly he moved to Rome, we do not know, but he was not alone. Thousands of Greeks settled in Italy and Rome at the time, fleeing Muslim invaders and also the persecutions of the heretical Monothelites who were encouraged by the Emperor Heraclius for political reasons.

Meanwhile the See of Canterbury was vacant and Pope Vitalian was searching for a suitable candidate. The Pope knew that he needed a monk of learning, who would be able to reconcile the different strands of Christianity in Britain. His choice fell first on Adrian, a monk from Byzantine Africa, Abbot of a monastery near Greek-speaking Naples. But Adrian refused. The Pope then thought of a certain priest-monk, Andrew – but his health was poor. Then he turned to a most unlikely candidate, the elderly Greek monk, Theodore – who accepted. However, the Pope asked the first candidate, Adrian, to accompany Theodore, for Adrian knew Gaul well. It may be that Theodore himself asked for Adrian to accompany him. After all, it seems that Adrian was bilingual – and possibly bicultural as well – and would be able to advise Theodore, should he inadvertently introduce any Greek customs, which might perturb the neophyte English.

Thus it was that this elderly monk from Tarsus in Cilicia was ordained subdeacon, waited four months for his hair to grow in order to receive the Roman form of

tonsure,³ and, after ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood, was consecrated bishop by the Pope. This took place on Sunday 26 March 668, the day following the Annunciation. Theodore and Adrian set out the very next day in the company of an English monk, Benedict Biscop, who had founded a monastery in Wearmouth in distant Northumbria, and happened to be in Rome on pilgrimage. No doubt Benedict gave instruction to both in Old English and gave them precious information on the situation of the Church in England. They travelled via Marseilles, Arles and Paris, where they met Bishop Agilbert, formerly Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames. Theodore must certainly have profited from this meeting to extract further information about Christianity in England. The travellers reached Canterbury over a year after their departure on 27 May 669. The new Metropolitan was at least 66 years old and the See of Canterbury had effectively been vacant for five years. In all England there were, it seems, only four bishops. Within twenty years Theodore was to transform this apparently hopeless situation beyond all expectations.

One of his first acts was to appoint the English Benedict Abbot of St Peter's Monastery in Canterbury until 671 when Adrian was ready to take over. In the meantime this elderly monk, Theodore, accompanied by Adrian, made a general visitation of all the English kingdoms and dioceses on horseback, getting on good terms with their rulers, establishing his authority, learning the problems, teaching and gaining the recognition of all. Not being Angle or Saxon or Celt, and not having been born the subject of any of the English kings, Theodore was the first to be able to gain the obedience of all the English. He attracted young people to come and study at Canterbury with him and Abbot Adrian. He made the acquaintance of those few bishops under him, for example, Wilfrid of York, of Gaulish training, Chad of Lichfield, of Celtic training, so humble that he went everywhere on foot until Theodore insisted that he use a horse.

And Theodore acted. In 669 he consecrated his first bishop, the unworldly Putta, for the See of Rochester, vacant ever since the death of Bishop Damian. The holy monk Bisi became Bishop of the East Angles with his See in Dunwich. Within about four years, Bisi fell ill and Theodore consecrated two bishops to replace him, Æcc of Dunwich for the south folk (Suffolk), the other Bedwin at Elmham for the north folk (Norfolk). In 670 he consecrated Eleutherius, nephew of Bishop Agilbert, Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames. On the death of the saintly Chad he consecrated Wynfrid, Chad's deacon, Bishop of the Mercians at Lichfield. By 673, the Archbishop felt well enough acquainted with the situation, both ecclesiastical and secular, to hold the first Synod of the English Church in Hertford.

Thus only four years after his arrival Theodore was to summon this historic if modest meeting. Historic because it was the first national assembly of any sort, bringing together bishops from an England then divided into separate and sometimes hostile kingdoms. St Theodore may not have realized it, but he was in fact laying the foundations of national unity. On 24 September 673 the Archbishop assembled the English bishops and their retinues, asking them to deliberate in harmony 'for the

preservation of the Church's unity'. Apart from the Archbishop, present were Bishops Bisi, Putta, Eleutherius, Wynfrid and delegates of Bishop Wilfrid. Ten canons were drawn up which the Venerable Bede has preserved for us. One concerns the common celebration of Easter, the point of contention which had been settled at the Synod of Whitby some ten years before, a second monastic obedience, a third marriage and divorce, but all the others concern episcopal discipline. In particular, Theodore decreed that a Synod be held once a year on 1 August at an unidentified place, 'Clovesho'.

This may have been near London like Hertford, but some have strongly suggested an identification with Brixworth in Northamptonshire, where the remains of the fine seventh-century basilican church still stand. It is clear that the Archbishop wished to instil a sense of catholicity and episcopal solidarity and unity among the bishops of England. These decisions were written down by Theodore's notary, Titillus, and end with the words: 'May the grace of God keep us, who dwell in the unity of His Church, in all safety'. It is clear that Theodore was well aware of the tensions in the English Church, that dioceses corresponded to kingdoms and tribes, from which came the bishops themselves. He knew of the heroic, but difficult character of Wilfrid (who did not attend the Synod but sent delegates), he knew of the Simoniac Bishop Wini of the West Saxons (who did not attend the Synod either), he had known the humble Chad whom he had reconsecrated, fearing irregularity in his original consecration, and who had then died in 672. He knew Bishop Wynfrid, he knew the mild Putta, he knew the piety of Bisi; he knew Eleutherius, whom he most probably had met in Paris with Bishop Agilbert.

From such mixed characters only Theodore could create unity and promote it on a national scale. St Augustine himself had been too narrowly Roman, too inexperienced to create unity with such different races and mentalities, and notably not broad enough to create unity with the Celtic bishops and overcome their racial hostility.⁴ But Theodore, himself a Greek, pious, elderly, experienced in the ways of the world, was flexible as regards customs, if strict in his Orthodoxy. The very fact that at the age of 65 or 66 he had himself agreed to change the form of his tonsure for the sake of the good estate of the Church proves this. But Theodore accepted all, from the lowly ascetic Chad to the ambitious Wilfrid with his sense of episcopal dignity with the powers that be.

After the Synod of Hertford, with the institution of regular Synods at 'Clovesho', St Theodore continued to consecrate new bishops, thus creating the first real diocesan system in England. We have already mentioned the filling of the vacant Sees of Rochester and East Anglia, then how he consecrated Eleutherius for Dorchester and reconsecrated Chad for the Mercians and how he created two dioceses in East Anglia and consecrated Wynfrid to replace Chad. In time he consecrated another bishop for the Mercians, Abbot Saxwulf. In 676 on Wini's death, he consecrated Haeddi as Bishop of Winchester. When Kent was ravaged by the Mercians, the church of Rochester looted and Bishop Putta forced to flee. Bishop Putta was transferred to

Hereford, a new diocese, and was replaced first by Bishop Cuichelm, then Bishop Gebmund. After Bishop Eleutherius' death Ætla was consecrated Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames. And at long last the East Saxons received a bishop, only their second, for the vacant See of London.⁵ The candidate was the holy Erkenwald, with his See in the City, a great saint who would become known to history as 'the light of London'.

Towards the close of the decade when Bishop Wilfrid was driven out of his huge diocese by King Egfrid, Archbishop Theodore took advantage to create smaller dioceses. Bosa became Bishop of York⁶ and Eata alternately Bishop of Hexham and Lindisfarne. Both were monks. Eadhæd became Bishop of Lindsey (Lincoln). All three of these bishops were consecrated in York. Later he consecrated two more, Tunbert for Hexham – Eata going to Lindisfarne – and Trumwine to be Bishop of Abercorn. Later the Primate would return to York and on Easter Day 685 in the company of no fewer than six bishops he consecrated England's best loved saint, Cuthbert, the Wonder-worker of Britain, first as Bishop of Hexham and then later becoming Bishop of Lindisfarne. Bishop Eata returned to Hexham, when St Cuthbert was transferred to Lindisfarne. After Bishop Eata's death in 687, another saint, John of Beverley, became Bishop of Hexham.

The Synod of Hertford had been attended by only five bishops, including Theodore. Two bishops, Wilfrid and the simoniac Wini had not attended. By the end of the 670's there were, amazingly, twelve bishops in England. And even more remarkably, many of these bishops are in the calendar. Apart from Sts Cuthbert, Erkenwald and John, Bishops Eata, Bosa and Trumwine are all listed in the calendar, as is Theodore's Companion and helper, Adrian of Canterbury. This is a most extraordinary achievement. All these bishops had to be prepared, trained and educated. The monastery-seminary at St Peter's in Canterbury has already been mentioned. But the Archbishop also encouraged other centres of spiritual education. No doubt he encouraged St Benedict in Wearmouth, who collected books and icons from Italy. He spurred on St Hilda in Whitby, whose double monastery produced five bishops, including the three saints, Bosa, John and Wilfrid.⁷

The episcopal heritage of Theodore is even greater after his repose. Of the very many student-monks in Canterbury, some would come to the episcopate in the eighth century, for example St Aldhelm. His pupils still spoke Greek well into the century, for example, Bishop Tobias of Rochester. Monks came even from Ireland to Canterbury. Ultimately Bede the Venerable himself owed his education to the enlightenment fostered by St Theodore in the North. Much the same can be said for the learned Archbishop of Canterbury, St Tatwin (731–35), and those who took part, like Sts Clement and Boniface, in the missions to bring Christ to Europe. What is also remarkable is that the bishops consecrated by their Metropolitan were monks. This tradition generally lasted in England right up to 1066, whereas in Europe bishops were still married both before and, less easily, after the 11th century.⁸

The Primate of England was also a peacemaker. After the Battle of Trent in 679, Theodore reconciled Kings Egfrid and Ethelred, persuading them to avoid a war of vengeance, which would have ruined the North. Once more we see how the saint was working towards the creation of national unity. And towards the end of his life in 686, Theodore made a personal peace with Wilfrid in London. Both he and Wilfrid were to be recognised as saints of God by the Church.

St Theodore was to continue synodal activity. Not only was there the Synod of Hertford and the yearly synod at Clovesho, but we also hear of local diocesan synods, for instance in Bufford in 679, and in 684 at Twyford near the River Alne in the north. Outstanding, however, is the Synod of Hatfield in 679, over halfway through the Primate's episcopate. It took place on 17 September of that year and was held to condemn the heresy of Monothelism, which Theodore knew only too well. According to the Venerable Bede, 'the bishops of the island of Britain united to proclaim the true and Orthodox faith'. The Fathers of this Council confirmed the first Five Œcumenical Councils (the Sixth was yet to be held), affirming 'the Trinity Consubstantial, and Unity in Trinity, that is One God subsisting in three consubstantial Persons of equal glory and honour'.⁹ In Rome Pope Agatho was reassured that the faith of the distant Britannic Church remained in harmony with that of the whole Orthodox, Catholic Church of Christ.

Apart from St Theodore's activities as teacher, peacemaker, organizer, builder of diocesan structures and encourager of monastic life and vocations, there is one other essential aspect of his work that we must not overlook. This is Theodore's pastoral work as seen in the collection of canons, known as 'Theodore's Penitential'. Though not actually written by the saint, but some years after his repose, this work contains decisions of the Primate regarding penance. It is in fact a kind of pastor's reference book as to what he should do in pastoral situations, whether the strict teaching (in Greek, *akrivia*) should be applied or dispensation (in Greek, *oikonomia*) be granted. In it we see the decisions of a monk of experience, who knew different practices, both Greek and Latin. Their influence would outlast the Norman invasion of England and would be most influential in the following centuries in the English Christian missions to pagan Europe, especially in heathen Germany. Indeed the practice of private confession throughout Western Europe can ultimately be attributed to St Theodore.

In particular we may notice the saint's merciful attitude to marital problems. Already at the Council of Hertford, the Ten Canons of which in fact re-expressed Canons of the Fourth Œcumenical Council of Chalcedon and other councils, St Theodore stated in Gospel-like fashion, that: 'no man may leave his lawful wife except on account of fornication'. In the Penitential, Theodore was compelled to admit of a variety of other causes which could lead to the dissolution of marriage and the possibility of remarriage.¹⁰ These included cases of captivity, penal slavery and permanent abandonment. It is clear that the saint, in characteristic contemporary Orthodox fashion, in no wise wanted to make a moral life impossible for those whose lives had been broken through no fault of their own.

What was also new is that Theodore did not simply give a list of penalties for sins, but that he gave advice for salvation. He saw sin as a sickness of the soul, to which we are all subject. We are a long way from the legalism of the Middle Ages. Theodore was influenced not only by Greek practice but also that of the Celts. (The source is the same – that of the Desert Fathers). For Irish and Celtic monastics, as for Theodore, the confessor is the doctor of the soul and penances are medicine. According to Archbishop Egbert of York:¹¹ ‘It is since the times of St Theodore that not only the clergy in the monasteries, but also the laity with their wives and families, would resort to their confessors, and would wash themselves of sin through tears, community life, fasts, vigils, prayers and alms during the full twelve days before Christmas, and so purified, would receive the Lord’s Communion on His Nativity’. How much we have lost!

Throughout the Penitential, with all its wise counsels, we see a confessor whose concern was above all the salvation of his fellow-man, mingling strictness in Orthodox teaching with loving, pastoral dispensations to the weak. And although St Theodore is not the author – he never had time to write anything with his constant teaching and pastoral and organizational travels – scholars recognize in the Penitential the voice of St Theodore – hence its title. Let us quote from another Penitential, that of Cummian, of the same period, in which we surely recognize the style of St Theodore: ‘But what is carefully to be considered in all penance is this: the length of time anyone remains in his faults: with what learning he is instructed: with what passion he is assailed: with what courage he stands: with what tearfulness he is seen to be afflicted’. In these words we recognize the voice of the true pastor, confessor and spiritual father, true today just as it was in the seventh century. Is this not the voice of the wise old monastic Archpastor, who had seen so many peoples, customs and climes?

The holy ‘Archbishop of the island of Britain and the city of Canterbury’ reposed in Christ at the age of 87 or 88 on 19 September 690. The Venerable Bede calls him ‘Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory’. Those who had known him venerated him as a saint. His memory is surrounded by the names of saints, the many he consecrated bishops, who met in Synod presided over by him, abbots, abbesses and monastics he encouraged, a host of names. It is not surprising that St Bede looked back on ‘the Theodoran Age’ as a golden one, in which the English Church prospered more than ever before, obeying in unity its Archbishop. St Theodore is indeed the founder of English Church unity and therefore, ultimately, of the national unity fully achieved under St Edgar and St Dunstan in the tenth century.

St Theodore made peace between warring kingdoms into which England was then divided. He made peace between Roman traditions and Celtic ones, using Roman scholarship and organization but Celtic pastorship and spirituality. He appreciated the holiness and humility of St Chad but he also knew how to use the organizational zeal of St Wilfrid. It was Theodore who consecrated Cuthbert, that marvellous fusion of Anglo-Saxon and Celt. He taught Latin and Greek to a high level to English and Irish

alike. He encouraged the Anglo-Saxon Benedict Biscop, bearing a Romano-British name, to collect manuscripts and icons, creating possibly the richest library in Western Europe outside Rome.

Ultimately, Theodore is behind the great Northern Renaissance, of which the most magnificent symbol is the Lindisfarne Gospels, adorned by Anglo-Saxons with Irish decoration and the names of the Evangelists written in Greek but with Latin letters. Providentially, Theodore was responsible for St Wilfrid's conversion of the South Saxons; Theodore made him into the Apostle of Sussex and Theodore led Wilfrid indirectly to missionary work in Frisia – which in turn was to lead to the English missions to pagan Europe in the eighth century. Theodore established smaller dioceses, (it has even been suggested that the Greek word 'diocese' was first introduced into the English language by St Theodore), regular synods and the spirit of catholicity and conciliarity among England's bishops under his Metropolitan authority.

Indeed, in the case of Wilfrid, he actually refused to implement the Pope's decisions regarding him and the diocesan organization of the North, for St Theodore deemed that the local Metropolitan knew the situation better than the Pope in distant Rome. Is there another saint in the long history of these islands whose contribution in the fields of organization, scholarship and pastorship has been so great? And all this at such an advanced age. St Theodore of Tarsus was a uniter, a reconciler, an administrator, a teacher, a pastor, a true monk, a man of wisdom, combining strict adherence to the true faith with the condescension of the man of love to the weak. St Theodore of Canterbury was on the side of the angels.

St Theodore, Archpastor of the English Nation, born in the city of the Apostle of the Gentiles, his name signifying 'the gift of God', set out for England in the days following the Annunciation in 668. His incorrupt body was translated in the 11th century. He had given everything of which the Church always has most need – unity, organization, learning, the firm confession of the Faith, true pastorship and above all prayer – proved by his life's work and the incorruption of his holy relics. His Age was called a 'Golden Age'. He found a nation divided and left it united. He was indeed a gift of God, a second Paul, Announcer of the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.

Holy Archbishop Theodore, pray to God for us!

Feast of St Edward the Martyr, 18/31 March 1994.

1 'Blessed', as opposed to 'Saint' in Orthodox usage is often applied to saints who expressed theoretical opinions or speculations later recognized by the Church to be incorrect. Such is the case of Blessed Augustine of Hippo, Blessed Jerome of Stridon and Blessed Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus. (See the Encyclopaedia 'Christianity', Vol.1, p. 679 Moscow 1993).

2 See *The English Church and the Continent in the 10th and 11th Centuries*, p. 200, by V. Ortenburg, Oxford 1992.

3 We see just how important ritual details were at this time. The question of the difference between the Roman and Celtic tonsures had been one of the contentious issues at the Council of Whitby. Theodore's change from the Greek 'tonsure of St Paul' to the Roman shows his cultural sensitivity and adaptability. As late as c. 1040 Peter Damian wrote to the monks of the Latin monastery in Constantinople: 'Though in a foreign country, you are in the bosom of Holy Church ... and when there is one rule of faith and a good life, slight differences of forms and customs and a diversity of tongues are of no account'. (P. L. 144, 201 D, *Liber Sextus*, Epist. 13)

4 Since the 19th century Protestant writers, with little historical sense, have portrayed St Augustine as a faithless Papist stooge. The fact is that the Apostle of the English overcame much of his natural timidity and narrow Roman training to bring Christ to the English. Had he lived longer, no doubt his missions would have extended further west and north. (Such Protestant writers also liked to describe St Augustine as anti-Celtic, adopting the 'Celtic Church' as a proto-Protestant Church, which is historically absurd. For some reason today the 'Celtic Church' has been adopted by the 'New Age' as its flagship – which is just as unhistorical). St Augustine is a remarkably underestimated saint, without whom St Theodore, for instance, could have achieved nothing of what he actually did achieve.

5 Apart from the traditions from the Orthodox Menaia that Sts Peter and Paul preached in London (which is why the Capital's two main churches, St Paul's, the East Minster, and St Peter's, Westminster, are dedicated to these saints). London has three sainted bishops of its own. The first St Mellitus (+ 624), the second St Erkenwald (+693) and the third St Dunstan, who was briefly Bishop of London from 959–960. St Erkenwald is considered to be London's patron. To this day the motto of the City of London, where St Erkenwald had his Cathedral on the site of the present St Paul's, remains '*Domine, dirige nos*' – 'O Lord, guide us'. If only this were the daily prayer of all those who live and work in the nation's Capital...

6 Bishops of York received the title of Archbishops only in 735.

7 Although St Wilfrid had an overbearing character in his youth, he softened towards the end. We must remember that all saints start as sinners. They become saints not as a result of their sins but as a result of their repentance for their sins. In the case of St Wilfrid his deeds – the organization of the Church in the North, the conversion of Sussex, his mission to the pagan Frisians were the results of his repentance for the misguided zeal of his younger days.

8 Pope Adrian II (867–872) was married before becoming Pope.

9 A History of the English Church and People, Book IV, 17. Some readers are confused by the words 'and the Holy Spirit ineffably proceeding from the Father and

the Son' which appear later in the declaration of Faith of the Council of Hatfield. The Orthodox scholar Adam Zernikav of Chernigov examined the original manuscripts of the Venerable Bede's text and found the words 'ex Filii' and 'inerrabiliter' ('from the Son ineffably') to have been interpolated at a later date into the manuscripts. This he revealed in his learned work *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father Alone*, written in Latin in 1682. (Russian edition, 1902–6). The Orthodox theologian, Fr. John Romanidis, explained in his works that the appearance of the '*filioque*' in other early Western manuscripts should be understood as 'an Orthodox *filioque*' as St Maximos the Confessor explained, i.e. not as the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Son, but as a temporal mission. The *filioque* as we now know it was a much later addition of the Middle Ages. In the case of seventh-century England, this is clear from the above-quoted profession of Faith, 'One God subsisting in three consubstantial Persons of 'equal glory and honour'. This is not *filioque* theology. See the excellent article by Archim. Ambrose Pogodin in *Pravoslavny Put*, 1989. pp. 111–183.

10 So heavy is the Puritan imprint on the contemporary Church of England that it seems to be liberal in almost everything except divorce. On the other hand the seventh century Archbishop of Canterbury, though strict in terms of the Faith, was merciful in the matter of divorce and remarriage in certain cases.

11 *The Dialogue of Archbishop Egbert of York* is in Haddan and Stubbs, Vol. 3, pp. 412–3. Oxford, 1881.

65. English Church Architecture: an Orthodox Perspective

‘The native English style derived from Byzantium through Italy and Germany.’

(William Morris, in ‘Gothic Architecture’, p. 30)

‘Society owes a debt to these poets and artists who make a nation conscious of its better self, and set before it, as the ministers of God, the ideal of excellence which is within its grasp as part of this Creation.’

(The Bishop of Salisbury, 1886)

In the first centuries Church Architecture in Britain was developed from Roman models, as elsewhere in the Roman Empire. The great basilicas found, for example, in Italy are purely Roman buildings adapted to Christian worship. In Britain there are two well-constructed examples of ‘primitive’ Roman churches. One is at Silchester whose plan consists of a central nave with an apse at the west end, aisles and a narthex or porch, the whole being some 36 feet long and 20 feet wide. The second is the recently discovered Roman church in Colchester, which consists of a long rectangle with an apse. The church was in use throughout the 4th century. No doubt further Roman church sites will be discovered, but perhaps none as well-reconstructed as these.

With the mission of St Augustine in 597, there began a further phase of Roman influence, notable examples of which are at Reculver in Kent, of which the ruins are still visible, and at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex, most of which still stands. Both had a two-cell plan, that is, with nave and apse and also two *porticus* used as sacristy and area for the gifts brought by the people. Other churches in this group had a similar plan, for instance, the church of St Peter and St Paul in Canterbury. What we see here is a development of the early Roman style – *porticus* being added, and at Bradwell a porch. The arrangement corresponds to liturgical development and Eastern Roman (Byzantine) influence.

This two-cell plan continues well after St Augustine, indeed well after the Norman Conquest and the Reformation, as we shall see. A particularly impressive 7th century example may be at Cockley Cley in Norfolk. Here we appear to have a two-cell chapel, nave and circular apse, discovered only in the 1950s. It may have been built by St Fursey or St Felix who both worked to evangelise this area in the 7th century. In the North of England St Benedict Biscop, founder of Monkwearmouth, imported builders, masons and glaziers from Gaul to construct churches. A simple two-cell plan has been suggested for the monastery at Jarrow by archaeologists. At Escomb (County Durham), there survives a remarkable two-cell church dating from the 7th century. It is tall and narrow, a most remarkable survival. Its chancel (chancel in Latin means a screen) or altar, however, is square and not semi-circular.

Some historians have suggested that square chancels are due to Celtic influence. This seems unlikely because Celtic monasteries appear to have consisted of circular, 'beehive' buildings. It may simply be due to the fact, that it is easier to build square chancels than circular apses. In any case it was the square chancel that overwhelmingly predominates in English Church Architecture. The two-cell plan can be seen in many other churches of later periods, with or without *porticus* and porch, and almost always with a square-ended chancel. An outstanding later example is that of Bradford-on-Avon, built c. 1000. Another that might be mentioned is Odda's chapel at Deerhurst in Gloucestershire, dedicated in 1056.

Of course there must be many hundreds of examples of two-cell churches built in the Anglo-Saxon period which have been destroyed. Many were demolished by the Normans. Many, however, must have been lost by fire, being built of wood. Of wooden churches the only one that partially survives is at Greenstead in Essex, but the split tree-trunk walls (9th century) give us no idea what the original church looked like. In Norway there are remarkable stave-churches, which hint at what might have been the glory of Anglo-Saxon carpentry. Indeed in Old English the word for 'to build' is *timbrian*. The Norwegian stave-churches resemble greatly the wooden Orthodox churches of Northern Russia.

As early as the 7th century more sophisticated churches were being built. We may mention Brixworth in Northamptonshire, an imposing basilica, with aisled *porticus*. Crypts were built at Repton and Wing (Bucks.). It is said that St Wilfrid built very complex churches with many *porticus* and galleries in York and Hexham in the 8th century. These were all developments of the two-cell plan. In the 9th century a very long, aisled church was built in Cirencester. In Sussex at Worth the Saxon church still stands. It is huge, but still basically two-cell; however the *porticus* here more resemble transepts. It has been speculated that it was intended to build a central tower at Worth, as at Breamore in Hampshire, an early 11th century church which still stands. Its central tower has a typically Saxon roof (Fig. 1), which is thought to represent the appearance of the original one. Another church with a central tower is at Stow in Lincolnshire, however it has been much rebuilt. It has been said that Alfred the Great also built a centrally-planned church in Athelney.

[Please insert picture, Figure 1, with the following caption "Figure 1 reconstruction of 11th century church at Breamore notice the tower roof"]

It can be said then that during the Saxon period many variations on the two-cell plan of nave and chancel or altar can be found. Some have *porticus* or a porch, some galleries or aisles, some crypts and, even in later periods central towers. However, another development gradually began to take place and was to become the 'mainstream' style of English Church Architecture, a style that has lasted until recent years. This was the change of the two-cell plan to a three-cell plan through the addition of a western tower. Indeed, when we think of a 'typical' English church, it is of this that we think. And this development occurred during the Anglo-Saxon period

When England was part and parcel of the 'Catholic' Church, in full communion with what we now call 'the Orthodox East'. There are many examples of this plan, dating from Anglo-Saxon times. Perhaps two of the finest survivals are at Little Bardfield (Essex) and Kirk Hammerton (Yorks.). Although later structures have been added to both, it is easy to distinguish between the original and the accretions. For example at Little Bardfield, they have added a short spire and battlements on the tower, a vestry, porch and 19th century organ chamber, but one can clearly identify the original 11th century church. The same is true of Kirk Hammerton.

Under the influence of the Italian 'campanili' or bell-towers, towers were added to the original two-cell plan from the 9th century on; there are scores of surviving Saxon towers. All of them, except in East Anglia are square. The reason for this is probably a lack of building-stone in East Anglia and the cost and difficulty of transporting it. It is very hard to make the corners for square towers with the local flint. It therefore became the custom for Anglo-Saxons to add towers to their naves and chancels as soon as they could afford it. Sometimes, of course, this was never, as we can see at Bradwell-on-Sea, at Bradford-on-Avon and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the three-cell plan was to predominate over all other plans and become the model of English Church Architecture. And this plan remains obvious despite all the medieval accretions of aisles, porches, vestries and extensions

One of the questions about towers is what they originally looked like. Battlements, for example, come from medieval castle architecture, on churches they represent a certain worldliness; a church is not a castle. It seems that only one original tower-roof survives from Saxon times. This is at Sompting in Sussex (Fig. 2). This type is known as the Sompting cap or 'Rhenish helm', on account of its Rhineland origin. There were examples of it, possibly at St Benet's in Cambridge and at Flixton and possibly Dunwich (both in Suffolk). Apart from this type and the Breamore type (see Fig. 1 above), we may also suggest other roof forms:

A low-hipped roof or cap, as at Kirk Hammerton – though the present cap there is later, but may represent the original (Fig. 3).

A saddleback roof (Fig. 4).

A flat roof, but with a small, pyramidal cap in the centre for drainage and aesthetic reasons (Fig. 5).

A 'Sussex cap' or broach spire or steeple (Fig. 6). Some, however, suggest that this cap, so common in Sussex, is 12th century in origin.

[Please insert picture, Fig 2, taking up the whole of the facing page – no caption.]

In the 10th and 11th centuries some enormous churches were built by the Old English. These were built under the influence of Carolingian (9th century) and Ottoman (10th century) Germany. Examples are Winchester, the then English Capital, and Sherborne

Abbey. Other large churches include Hadstock in Essex and North Elmham in Norfolk.

Other characteristics of Saxon churches are round-headed windows and doorways, although there are examples of triangular-headed ones at Deerhurst (Glos.) and at Holy Trinity in Colchester. Windows were small, high and narrow, letting in little light; some were glazed, some were covered with horn. Many of these most elegant windows survive. To get an idea of how dark these churches were, a visit to Ovingdean in Sussex is worthwhile. Here many Saxon or at least Saxon-style windows survive and the interior is very dark. Bradford-on-Avon also helps to give the impression of an authentic pre-Conquest church with its dark and mysterious atmosphere.

‘Anglo-Saxon’ churches were adorned with icons, friezes, frescoes, hanging embroideries, tapestries and sculpture (very rarely free-standing). The cold, white plaster of the Reformation did not exist. As William Morris later wrote: ‘Decoration should remind you of something beyond itself, of something of which it is but a visible symbol’. The Old English held implicitly this sacramental vision, common to all Christendom in the first millennium. Similarly in more recent times the Poet of England, John Masefield, wrote in his *I want! I want!:* ‘Men and women in remote villages could paint walls with stories and designs in the fourteenth century; surely we could improve on whitewash’. The altar or chancel was separated from the nave by a low screen, as churches in Constantinople were at the time. This screen would have been decorated with paintings of the saints, especially the patron of the church. It would have been surmounted by a cross or rood – like an iconostasis. These rood-screens, as we now call them, would surely have been beautifully carved.

Often the outside of churches would have been rendered and limewashed, as is shown by place-names such as Whitechapel, Whitechurch, Whiteparish, White Roding, White Notley etc. Archaeological finds in Winchester suggest that the plaster may have been colourwashes, perhaps in pink. Certainly one can still find today country churches plastered and whitewashed on the outside. It seems to have been more common before the Victorians started a fashion of removing the plaster to reveal stone or flint walls. Some exteriors, as can still be seen at Bradford-On-Avon and at the remarkable example of Earls Barton in Northamptonshire were decorated with pilaster strips. The origin of these strips is in Italy, especially Lombardy, although sometimes it came via Germany.

As regards the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or Pre-Romanesque – or rather Pre-Schism – period of English Church Architecture, we have mentioned only a few surviving instances of its beauty. The definitive work on the subject by H. M. and J. Taylor lists some 400 churches with Anglo-Saxon survivals. More are being recorded thanks to archaeologists. In such a brief article we have only mentioned the most outstanding examples. And these we must speak of because they represent the architectural heritage, the crumbs and fragments of a nation which was still in communion with the

whole Church of Christ. The Church Architecture which followed the break of Rome and the West from the Orthodox Church was of a very different sort.

Post-Schism Church architecture in England is Norman. It is a massive, military-style Romanesque, prefigured only by Edward the Confessor's Westminster Abbey, begun and completed by Normans but before their Invasion.¹ M. and N. Kerr remark that: 'The wholesale demolition of Saxon buildings and the throwing down of their sculpture indicate a systematic attempt to erase the 'English' style ... Most major buildings were rebuilt in new and foreign styles'.² J. Gloag comments: 'The fortress-like Cathedrals and Abbey Churches show the extensive support the Church could and did give to the secular power'.³ The best example of this style is no doubt Durham Cathedral. There is a clear break between Norman, Post-Schism, Architecture and Anglo-Saxon, Pre-Schism, Architecture. If Architecture expresses the beliefs of an epoch, then it is clear that the beliefs of the Normans differed radically from those of the Anglo-Saxons. A detailed study and interpretation of Norman Architecture and its comparison with the Anglo-Saxon might in itself alone reveal what exactly those differences in belief are.

In a recent article, 'England and the Resistance to Romanesque Architecture',⁴ the scholar R. Gem has suggested what one of those differences might be. He points out that Romanesque is a Continental development, something foreign to the British Isles. One of the main features of this novel style is its monumental size. This he links with the 11th century reform of the Papacy (which also produced the split with all the Churches of the East). In the West this reform was justified by the desire to fight an unacceptable secularisation of the Church, by taking the power to nominate bishops and clergy away from lay-rulers. The strategy used, however, was 'converting the Church into a centralized super-State that could command the obedience of the kings of the world'. Romanesque, says the author, expresses 'not an ideology of the renunciation of the world through simplicity, but a domination of the world through magnificence'.

In other words, Romanesque is the Architecture of worldly power and prestige, of totalitarian absolutism, of Papism. What the academic writer of these lines calls 'an ideology of the renunciation of the world through simplicity' is a most adequate definition of Pre-Romanesque or Pre-Schism Architecture throughout Western Europe; it is also an excellent definition of Orthodox Christianity. And the last representative of Pre-Schism Architecture in Western Europe is precisely in Anglo-Saxon England. The only Anglo-Saxon bishop to survive the Norman Conquest, the ethnarch of Old England, Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, was forced in the 1080s to demolish his own Cathedral; the Normans wished to build a new one.

According to William of Malmesbury, the saintly prelate remarked with regret: 'We wretched people have destroyed the work of saints so that we may provide praise for ourselves. The age of most blessed men did not know how to build pretentious buildings, but they did know how to offer themselves up to God under any sort of roof

and how to bring those under them to God by their example. We, on the other hand, neglect our souls and strive to pile up stones'. It would seem impossible to write a more telling definition of the difference between 'Anglo-Saxon' Architecture and that which followed it. Or to move away from the secular language of scholars with their 'Pre-Romanesque' and 'Romanesque', it is difficult to sum up in fewer words the difference between Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Architecture in 'Anglo-Saxon' and Norman England.

By the middle of the 12th century Romanesque began to move into Gothic. Gothic differs from what went before. Arches are pointed, no longer round-headed, everywhere there are windows and light, expressing the rationalism and anti-mystical spirit of Scholastic philosophy.⁵ Battlemented church walls became common. Spires were added to church towers. Naves become even longer than in Norman Romanesque. For Orthodox it is hard to pray in such churches, whatever the technical genius and logic of their construction, just as one may admire the technical ability of the Scholastics but not their spirituality.

After the 14th century, although churches remain very 'Gothic', there is perhaps a revival of more human values. Some of the small village churches do have a certain simplicity. The three-cell plan becomes clearer. There are magnificent towers, especially in the West Country, from Wiltshire on. Perhaps popular piety makes itself felt here more than in the churches, Romanesque or Gothic, built by the Norman feudal establishment in the preceding centuries.

The popular revolt of the Reformation brought more destruction than construction and after it, in the 17th and 18th centuries, architectural styles are more 'classical' (i.e. inspired from pagan Greece and Rome) than English. The 19th century produced some curious results. True, most Victorian building was pseudo-Gothic, with spires, battlements and pointed windows – a kind of pseudo-castle style – but from an Orthodox standpoint there are some interesting churches.

Firstly, many Baptist, Methodist and other Non-Conformist chapels were built. Often with round-headed windows, they represent a return to the primitive two-cell plan. Such chapels can often be easily converted into Orthodox churches. Secondly, the High Church movement built a number of churches, rather Italianate it is true, which adapt fairly easily to Orthodox worship. One thinks of the Russian Patriarchal Cathedral in Ennismore Gardens in London, or even St Barnabas in Oxford. Thirdly, the 19th century saw the building of Roman Catholic churches. Although most of them are Gothic, a few are in a rather subdued Romanesque style, which lends them potentially to Orthodox worship. Here I am thinking of Clacton, Ely and Beccles – all in the Eastern counties.

On the other hand some of the Roman Catholic churches, built in a 'pseudo-Byzantine' style, seem quite out of place. This, to our mind, includes Westminster Cathedral, Princes Risborough (Bucks.) and Droitwich, with its magnificent frescoes. 'Byzantine' architecture as such, with domes, seems quite out of place in the English

landscape or townscape. While not denying the right of immigrant communities to build in their native styles, these unfortunate Roman Catholic examples suggest that in general domes and cupolas have no place in England. (The exception to prove the rule is St Paul's Cathedral which has somehow merged into the London cityscape). Apart from this domes and cupolas look foreign in the English context. They suggest that once the immigrant groups have disappeared, assimilated into the local population, these buildings will no longer be frequented. As William Morris, quoted above, pointed out: 'Duke William's intrusive monks used Romanesque everywhere and it drove out the native English style derived from Byzantium through Germany'. In other words the native English style was not 'Byzantine' but was derived from it. And that, surely, was its very genius; it was culturally adapted to the people it served, while remaining faithful to the essential features of its source.

Of late 20th century Architecture the present author has nothing good to say. The octagons, triangles and deltas of the 60's and thereafter do not even look like churches and therefore give no inclination to go inside, where often other ferro-concrete outrages await one. The wigwam Cathedral in Liverpool is but a prime example. Here are buildings which have no historical roots, they could be anywhere in the world, they have no tradition, they are as anonymous and impersonal as the ignoble materials of which they are built. Often one passes by without realising that they are churches. A Sainsbury's superstore may well have more style.

In conclusion we must agree that the historical roots of English Church Architecture are Roman, with a clear East Roman ('Byzantine') origin. The intuition of William Morris seems to us to be absolutely right. But it must be emphasized that this idiom is thoroughly Englished, adapted to the native people. When in the English countryside we see a square, solid tower pointing heavenwards and a nave and a chancel, Orthodox could believe that they are in an Orthodox country. Here is a church that leads to God, encapsulating within it the incarnate God of Christians, God on Earth, but also the God from Heaven.

At the same time as feeling as if he were in an Orthodox land, however, the Englishman or woman also knows that he is at home, in England. This seems to be an English Orthodox style, theology in stone. His disappointment comes as he approaches the building. He sees details that disfigure the building from near. It has huge, pointed, Gothic windows, a vestry has been built on, a repair has been carried out in brick, windows have been blocked up because an aisle has been built on in another style, battlements and a spire have been added to the tower and nave walls. The stones are there, but they are in the wrong place. Inside disappointment turns to horror. We are faced with blank, empty walls, a spiritually gutted and vandalized building. It is empty.

In other words, we stand before a distorted image – it is like an icon that has been badly overpainted into a religious picture of very poor taste. The original faith is there, but we have difficulty identifying it. We have to restore the picture, uncovering,

discovering, recovering in order to find the original icon once more. The image is there, but the likeness has gone. We know that it is a church – but it is not ours. And all these physical additions are not chance ones – they all represent additions, accretions and changes to the original faith. This disappointment, sad to say, is also true of the disappointment we feel when we look at the differences between Orthodoxy and other faiths. They are simply not the same, whatever the superficial resemblances.

Perhaps we should leave the next words to professionals. Firstly, to the author of the study 'The Church in Anglo-Saxon England', Rev. J. Godfrey: 'Especially in the closing decades of the 10th century ... the strongly marked Byzantinism of English Art was largely due to Anglo-Saxon contacts with Germany' (p. 368). The art historian and specialist on Anglo-Saxon Art, Professor D. Talbot-Rice, comments: 'The elements that played the most important role in late Saxon art are ultimately to be traced to Byzantine Art ... St Cuthbert's stole is a striking case ... close to some Byzantine original, yet its spirit is clearly English'.⁶ Although we speak here of art, sculpture, embroidery, the same is true, as William Morris indicates, of 'the native English style' as a whole.

It may be said that in the early centuries the influences on English Art and Architecture came to us through Italy, but later, from the 9th century onwards, from Germany, where the 10th century Ottonian period was dominated by the Greek Empress of Otto II, Theophano. The roots of our Art and Architecture, like so much else, are in the Christian Faith which came to us in the first millennium from the Roman Empire and its artistic, cultural and religious capital, Constantinople, whose influence spread first to Italy, then to Germany and so to us. The English idiom is specific, insular, provincial, but its roots are clear.

The two-cell church is most ancient and universal; in some countries it developed one way, in England it developed in another, into the three-cell plan with a western tower in a specific style. The roots of the style are clear but the specific development is English – and by no means inferior. The Art of the 10th century English Renaissance, of the 'Winchester School' was of the highest standards, for example. Veronica Ortenburg calls the 10th and 11th centuries 'England's cultural apogee'.⁷ Speaking of manuscript illustration, Talbot-Rice comments: 'The illustrations stand out by virtue of their quality; it might even be said that nothing on the Continent at the same time, except perhaps in the Byzantine area, was quite so good'. And he adds, most significantly: 'The essential character of late Anglo-Saxon Art was above anything else its Englishness'.⁸

It is our final conclusion that he who moves away from these roots of the first millennium, moves away not only from the Christian Faith of the first millennium and the Apostolic and Patristic heritage of the Gospel, 'the renunciation of the world through simplicity', but also from his own original English culture and 'Englishness'.

And thus he disfigures both his faith and his culture. And it is from these thoughts that we must draw our own conclusions...

March 1994

Anglo-Saxon Architecture:

Of more recent books on the subject the author has referred especially to:

Fernie E., *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons*, London 1983.

Fisher E. A., *Anglo-Saxon Towers*, Newton Abbot 1969.

Kerr M. and N., *Anglo-Saxon Sites*, 1982, and, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, Princes Risborough, 1983.

Taylor H. M. and J., *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, Cambridge 1965–1978, Vols. 1–3.

1. The half-Norman Edward is a tragic figure. It was he who invited Normans into the country years before the Invasion and he who promised the kingdom to William after his own death – without consulting the nobles, bishops and people of England about whom they wanted to be ruled by. Although no doubt a gentle and likeable man (the Pope canonized him some 100 years after his death), his spinelessness led to the Conquest of England and Norman oppression. Through his unconscious treachery in Promising William England, his people and the other peoples of these islands were to suffer for centuries. One error through weakness, ‘swimming with the tide’, and the Whole history of the British Isles took a different course. Edward seems to have been an 11th century John Major. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish.’ (Proverbs 29, 18)

2. *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, N. and M. Kerr, p. 8.

3. *The Architectural Interpretation of History*, J. Gloag, London 1970, p. 157.

4. See *Studies in Medieval History*, ed. C. Harper-Bill et al., Woodbridge 1989, pp. 162–169.

5. *Scholasticism and Technology*, Christos Yannaras, in *Eastern Churches Review* 1973, pp. 129–139.

6. See *England and the Continent in the 10th and 11th Centuries*, V. Ortenburg, Oxford 1992, p. 266.

7. op. cit.

8. *English Art 871–1100*, pp. 249–251.

66. Orthodoxy and Ecumenism – Two Different Worlds

‘Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil.’

English Proverb

The title of this brief essay may well surprise many. They will perhaps object that they have attended ecumenical meetings with Orthodox participants or that they have seen on television meetings between Orthodox bishops, perhaps Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, and non-Orthodox bishops, for example, Pope John-Paul II. Of course this is a reality.

There are probably several scores of ‘representatives’ of the Orthodox Churches who ‘do the circuits’ of ecumenical conferences etc. They include bishops, academic theologians and other administrators and, intellectuals. Some perhaps take part because they believe in the ecumenical movement. Others because they feel that they must witness to the truths of Orthodoxy that would otherwise be overlooked in what is at heart a Protestant / Roman Catholic dialogue. Yet others participate for purely political reasons, having been delegated by the Secret Services of the Foreign Ministries of their countries.¹ Alternatively some may be seeking Vatican or World Council of Churches’ support and finance against external enemies. Thus it has been widely rumoured for years that, if the Patriarchate of Constantinople breaks off ecumenical contacts with the Vatican, the Turkish government will at once exile it and its pathetically small flock from Istanbul.

Little matter, however, what the motivations of these various bureaucrats and academics maybe, the fact is that they represent a minute minority in Orthodox Christendom – numerically perhaps literally one in a million. Some may say that although it is true that they are a tiny minority, they nevertheless include Patriarchs and senior figures. This view reveals a clericalist understanding of the Church. The Church for Orthodox is the whole people of God, everybody. It matters little that individuals have opinions, what matters is what the people of God think. A bishop may think one thing, but if his diocese does not follow him, his opinion is irrelevant – a mere speculation that can never be put into practice.² What has to be taken into account is that the overwhelming majority of Orthodox, many senior hierarchs included (the ones who never take part in ecumenical encounters), are either indifferent or hostile to ecumenism. Why?

There are first a number of historical and sociological reasons for this. Firstly, it must be said that in countries where the vast majority is Orthodox, the ecumenical movement is irrelevant. There is no need for it since all the local people belong to their own Church. For them ecumenism is alien, foreign, they are simply not concerned by it. Secondly, there are areas of Orthodox Christendom which have suffered enormously from non-Orthodox (especially Roman Catholic) aggression. We

refer not only to the bloodbaths perpetrated in the Middle Ages in Russia, the Balkans and the Middle East by various Western peoples in the name of the Vatican, but also to much more recent atrocities; those in the Balkans in the last fifty years or so or the aggressions of Uniatism in the Ukraine, Slovakia or the Holy Land at the present time. Such attitudes may seem incomprehensible in the polite world of English Roman Catholicism and the Church of England, but they would not be among Roman Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The facts of history cannot be altered.

There is, however, a third reason why Orthodoxy feels unconcerned by ecumenism. This is because many of the most articulate Orthodox in the diaspora are converts. A convert is one who by definition has left one belief for another. In many cases this may mean having left Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. Such people are clearly uninterested in ecumenism, since they have no desire to return to something they know so well that they consciously and deliberately left it. This does not mean that they consider that the denomination they have left has nothing; what it means is, that they have found something more in the Orthodox Church. Indeed they may have discovered the Orthodox Faith precisely because they have been practising Christians previously. (Though it is also true that others who have never been Roman Catholic or Protestant, so never conditioned by them, may embrace Orthodoxy more swiftly and more wholeheartedly than those who have been in one of these denominations).

These three reasons for not being interested in the ecumenical movement, national indifference, historical and current aggression, and conscious choice by converts are in most cases all, however important, ultimately sociological more than theological. What then is the real reason why Orthodox Christendom does not take part in the ecumenical movement in any popular sense? Why ultimately does ecumenism only concern Roman Catholicism and all those blocks that have broken away from it since the 16th century?

In order to answer these questions we must first ask ourselves what the purpose of religion is anyway. For Orthodox this purpose is preparation to meet God at the inevitable meeting that will take place the Last Judgement and then last for all eternity. This preparation variously called the saving of the soul, the conquering of sin and death, acquiring of the Holy Spirit, the cultivation of the heart, the renunciation of self, the obedience to the Gospel commandments of Love. It involves overcoming within us all that is opposed to Love, for God is Love. And all that is opposed to Love, what we call sin, will cause us pain when we stand at the Last Judgement before Love in Person, before God.

It should so be the aim of any religion, non-Christian included, to prepare man through some type of purification. It would therefore seem logical to state that the 'best' religion is by no means necessarily the most popular one that with the most members, the wealthiest, the most organized, the most powerful. No, it is the one which prepares for this meeting in the most efficient way. In other words it is the religion which has the greatest knowledge of God and therefore knows best how to

prepare for this inevitable meeting, knows best how to help man purify himself in the combat with sin, to make him into Love.

Some might say that the aim of religion is about being kind to one's neighbour, doing others good turns. Orthodox would not altogether agree with this Protestant vision of religion, because for Orthodox the relation of being good neighbours is not the aim of religion, but the result. For Orthodox there can be no contradiction between faith and works; charitable works are simply the result of a living faith. If there is no real faith, there will be no works of love (though there may be works carried out for self-serving purposes – to relieve a guilty conscience or in accordance with some political ideology, for instance). It is true that sincere works of love or charity help foster our faith, but it is always faith that comes first and love of God that fuels love of our neighbour. The fact that Orthodoxy sees the aim of religion in preparing us for the meeting with God also explains why Orthodox refuse to say who will be saved at the Last Judgement.

We cannot believe that the Lord will grant the Kingdom of Heaven to one nationality or grouping. We do not believe in some 'label' theory, that salvation depends on the 'label' of nationality or religion that we profess. Externals have no importance in this meeting with God. Our 'performance' before God will depend on what we have in our hearts, evil or love. We do not consider that some Christians are 'superior' to other Christians. A devout Roman Catholic or Anglican is a better Christian than a lapsed Orthodox who has fallen into bad ways. As regards the judgement of God, we can have no opinion since we do not even know God's judgement of ourselves. 'Judge not that ye be not judged'. Nevertheless God's judgement about the saints has been revealed to us – and we know for sure that through Orthodoxy, men and women have been brought to holiness, have been saved, have cultivated the heart, have conquered sin and death, have acquired the Holy Spirit, have loved God and their neighbour – have met God, Love, and not been found Wanting. In a word, what more do we need to know? Orthodox prize Orthodoxy, which we so badly follow, because Orthodoxy works, it does prepare for the meeting with God. And if we want, can prepare us as well, generating love in our hearts, overcoming evil. How?

First of all, the Orthodox Church has Tradition. Tradition is not a set of human customs, rigidly and statically observed in ritual. Tradition is the totality of inspirations of the Holy Spirit since the beginning. And since the Holy Spirit has not ceased inspiring the faithful, Tradition is therefore living, dynamic, unending. But since the Holy Spirit is also the same Holy Spirit, new revelations or outpourings of the Spirit do not and cannot contradict the old ones. This is the reason why Orthodoxy is so ancient and has conserved so much that has been lost in Roman Catholicism, for instance. Thus the Orthodox Church alone keeps the Creed as it was established in the 4th century. The Divine Liturgy is that of the same period, though its roots are older still. Thus the teachings of the Church, expressed in the Bible and the services are the same as they were centuries before Roman Catholicism and Protestantism were even thought of.

Orthodox Tradition goes back even before the New Testament. Old Testament names are common, especially among monastics. Indeed, according to the Creed of the Church, the Holy Spirit 'spoke by the Prophets'. The practices of the Church are those of the primitive Church. Communion is in both kinds. Chrismation (confirmation) takes place straight after Baptism, thus babies can take communion. The importance of Tradition is that it confers on us the grace which helps us to make ready for the meeting with God. This we know because this Tradition is the same as that which made saints. If they became saints, then potentially it can make saints of us. Tradition for Orthodox is fidelity to the Saints of God. This is even true in details. For example the clergy wear a beard because they represent Christ (Who was bearded), the clergy still dress as the early Christian clergy. The Orthodox use not only the four-pointed cross but also the eight-pointed cross – since the latter is deemed to be more faithful to the very form of the cross on which the Saviour was crucified. Such faithfulness to even outward details may be felt by some to be excessive; after all we are saved not by outward details but by inward content. But this brings us to our second point about Orthodox Christianity.

Apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, called Tradition, that which God has revealed to us, Orthodoxy has another aspect. In order to be worthy to acquire the Holy Spirit, to partake of Tradition, Orthodox must work on themselves for self-improvement. This is the Asceticism of Orthodoxy. The Church fasts for half the year, abstaining from all animal products, not only meat. The Church services are monastic, quite long, and we stand during them. We should confess regularly, the sacraments are of great importance, for through them we receive the Holy Spirit, grace, just as we receive grace through heartfelt prayer and the preparation for prayer, fasting. The Orthodox Church is not a Sunday Church – every day has its spiritual sense, every day is a feast. In other words, the aim of Orthodoxy is ascetic; it exists to fight sin and the ultimate consequence of sin – Death. This is why in the Orthodox Church the Resurrection of Christ, Easter, is central. The Church resists Death and all that is tainted with Death. Without the Resurrection, the Victory over Death, the Church would have no sense.

The Church's goal is to bring all mankind to partake of this victory through fidelity to Christ by means of the Knowledge of God i.e. the Tradition. And the Tradition, the Revelation of Christ and the Holy Trinity to the human heart by the Holy Spirit, is opened to us by this Ascetic Science of the Church, prayer, fasting, repentance, vigils. Some may object that this seems severe – but it is not. It is not because the Church does not impose any of this on us, it is all voluntary, we undertake it gradually, as we are ready for it. And the Church understands this. It is why the Church is condescending to our weaknesses. The Church wants to make salvation possible for all, including those who have made grave mistakes in their lives. Thus, for example, divorce is permitted in certain conditions, repentance for any sin is always possible; Orthodoxy has never had some puritanical moralism. The Church is free, decentralized, local – and this is because Her goal is precisely spiritual, the acquiring

of the Holy Spirit in preparation for the meeting with God, through the ascetic techniques established by the Saints of Tradition.

We are now at last able to answer the questions which we asked at the beginning of this essay. If we are to compare the goal of Orthodoxy with the goal of ecumenism, we shall indeed see that these are two different worlds. The aim of ecumenism is to unite all religions, even Non-Christian Ones, into a single organization. In order to do this, however, all religions must be levelled down, reduced to a lowest common denominator. And this means reducing each religion to a human group, conditioned and determined culturally, historically and sociologically, by removing its Spiritual values. In the case of Orthodox Christianity, this would mean taking away Tradition and Asceticism and reducing it to mere folklore and ritual. It means taking away Tradition, the revelations of the Holy Spirit to the Church Over two thousand years, and also man's ascetic efforts to acquire the Holy Spirit, to prepare for the meeting with God.

In a word, the Orthodox Church would be destroyed, having no more sense. If Tradition is destroyed, then Orthodox would abandon their calendar, adopted in the 4th century, their teachings, sacramental practices, services, grace-giving icons – their whole fidelity to Christ and His Saints. If Asceticism is abandoned, then services can be shortened, we can introduce seating and musical instruments for our pleasure. We can abandon fasts and feasts, services outside Sundays, confession, the sacraments, prayer and vigil. In such a way Orthodoxy would be reduced to the only thing that it has in common with other religions – belief in a Supreme Being. Through abandoning Tradition, the Revelations of the Gospel, of the Prophets, of the teachings of the Holy Trinity and the Person of Christ, all the disclosures made through all the ages by the Holy Spirit to the Church, we would know nothing more of God than the ancient pagans. As a Non-Orthodox but certainly orthodox writer put it some years ago: 'I am not suggesting that a Christian society must lead to a superficial union of Churches under an official exterior, a union in which theological differences would be so belittled that its Christianity might become wholly bogus' (T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*).

Moreover, by abandoning the science and techniques of Asceticism, the knowledge of how to conquer sin and Death through acquiring the Holy Spirit and so preparing to meet God, we would be unable to find out any more about God than the same ancient pagans. True, we would be united with all other religions. But what would the purpose of this be? We would simply have become pagans. And man would be subject, as before, to the amount of sin and hatred and war that stalked the planet before the Revelation of Christ. Death would walk abroad once more. For without spiritual knowledge, man's sinfulness and his fear of Death would increase immeasurably.

Some might agree with this to a point, but object that division in religion is such a sin that something must be done about it. We agree that division is a sin, but in a world of sin, division is also inevitable, because sin is inevitable. Indeed division started

already among the Apostles with Judas. And Christ never promised us unity, but Truth. What Orthodox look to is the Church Triumphant in Heaven – where there is no sin and therefore no division. This, reaching Heaven, is what must be done. And to do it we need precisely the Tradition and the Ascetic practices which ecumenism would deprive us of. Is it not much better to continue on friendly terms, as good neighbours, with those of other faiths, but at the same time remain loyal to the Revelations of the Holy Spirit, the Tradition, of the Orthodox Church, and its Ascetic Science of how to acquire the Holy Spirit and meet God?

In the light of all this the Orthodox Church and the ecumenical movement are indeed two different worlds. True, ecumenism may have some role to play between Roman Catholics, Protestants and Anglicans. And this because all these denominations are issued from the same medieval mindset. The Orthodox Church, however, precedes the Middle Ages, goes beyond it. And this is why for Orthodox Christians ecumenism seems so irrelevant or even pernicious. The very notion of destroying or abandoning the Tradition and Asceticism to level down to other religions seems like an assault on Christ and His Saints, an assault on the Holy Spirit and His presence in the world through the Church. For Orthodox, ecumenism signifies spiritual impoverishment and deprivation.

Two different worlds; and so they will remain until it is understood that the Holy Spirit cannot be acquired at ecumenical conferences, but is acquired through the Revelations of God to the hearts and minds of those who live in accordance with Church Tradition and the Ascetic Science of the Saints of the Church of God...

St John of the Ladder, March 28 / April 10, 1994

1. For example an article by V. Polosin in the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* (22/1/92) revealed that at the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver no fewer than 47 members of the USSR delegation were KGB agents. Several other articles (Interview with Fr. Gleb Yakunin in *Argumenty i Fakty* No. 1 1992, / *Enigmas of the Holy Synod* by M. Frankov in *Moscow News*, 9/2/92, / *The Only Way for the Church, to Tell the Whole Truth* by V. Senderov in *Russian Thought*, 28/2/92) confirm the same.

2. ‘Among us neither Patriarchs nor Councils could ever introduce new teaching, for the guardian of the faith is the very body of the Church, that is the people itself’. (Reply of the Orthodox Patriarchs to Pope Pius IX in 1848). For the Orthodox Church, no bishop is infallible or above the Church, he simply holds an office in the Church, which he may fulfil more or less well. If he fulfils it very well, he will be remembered as a saint, if he fulfils it badly, he will be forgotten to history. The criterion of how well he fulfils it is his holiness, not his intellectual abilities, capacity to organize conferences, speculate, or fly around the world.

67. 'Our Help is in the Name of the Lord'

'England stands at the crossroads of destiny ... What kind of people do we mean to be? Along what road do we intend to travel? Christian civilization has been given one more chance, and we shall be judged before God and man by the way we use it. Are we to remain a Christian people or are we going to follow the false road of uncreative and sterile materialism?'

(The Bishop of Southwell, as reported in the *Sunday Times*, 22 July 1945)

On the afternoon of 8 May 1945 the members of the House of Commons retired to St Margaret's Church in Westminster for a service of thanksgiving for deliverance from German domination. Churchill is said to have smiled with pleasure at the words of Psalm 124 (123 in the Septuagint):

'If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say;
If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
When man rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick,
When their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
The stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers.
Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

In London, Washington and Moscow everyone was celebrating Victory. Although the unconditional surrender of the Germans would not come officially into force until one minute after midnight on 9 May, it was and is 8 May that is celebrated in the West as the Day of Victory. In actual fact, however, it would be more appropriate to celebrate on 6 May. Why?

After Hitler committed suicide on 30 April, Walpurgis Night, the most celebrated event in the pagan calendar, the high feast of the Powers of Darkness, he was succeeded by Admiral Doenitz who became the German leader. And it was he who requested the German General Jodl to surrender. Thus it was that Jodl, representing the German High Command and what was left of the German State, came on 6 May to the Interallied Headquarters in Rheims in Northern France. And here, in the former school which served as General Eisenhower's Headquarters, on 6 May, General Jodl offered unconditional capitulation on all fronts. The document of surrender, simultaneously to the Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command, of all German land, sea and air forces in Europe, was thus signed in the presence of the Allied Generals at 2.41 a.m. on 7 May. It would be confirmed on 8 May in Berlin by another ceremony involving the German Field-Marshal Keitel. The surrender itself has thus actually taken place on 6 May, with the documents being signed in the early morning of the 7 May and then on the 8 May in Berlin.

Victory had come on 6 May – the day when Orthodox Christians in so many lands were feasting that rare coincidence which occurs twice every century – the Feasts of Easter and St George – the Feasts of Resurrection and Victory.

Glory to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

April 1994

68. 'A Great Mystery'

'Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it'.

(Ephesians 5, 24–25)

There are many who are surprised and even shocked on hearing this epistle read at weddings. The idea of obedience of the wife to her husband seems to disturb modern ears. On hearing these words, many probably think of the feminist stereotype of the tyrannical husband exploiting, abusing, stifling and frustrating a submissive wife, who is bound to him in obedience whatever his unreasonable demands. This stereotype has, however, nothing at all to do with what the Apostle Paul means. Let us look more closely.

The ascetic purpose of marriage is to reconstitute in some small degree that paradisiac life of Adam and Eve in Eden before the Fall. Therefore to understand this purpose, we must first of all bear in mind what caused them to fall from grace. Eve's sin was disobedience, disobedience to God caused through the flattery of the serpent which provoked her vanity and pride. But Adam also sinned through selfishness and pride. Firstly he did not look after his wife, he allowed her to fall into sin through the serpent. Secondly he fell into sin through Eve's suggestion that he too partake of the forbidden fruit. And thirdly when God spoke to him, he blamed everything on Eve.

In other words, Adam's sin consisted of not sacrificing himself for Eve. First he failed to fight off the serpent's temptation, failing to protect Eve, then he himself went along with the temptation and finally, instead of protecting Eve and assuming blame in humility for the one for whom he was responsible, he blamed the fault on her. Therefore the punishment that both received, ascetically speaking, 'fitted the crime'. Adam was to toil 'by the sweat of his brow', to sacrifice himself in order to live, thus humbling him into repentance for his selfishness through which he allowed Eve to fall. And Eve was to suffer in childbirth, thus humbling her into repentance for her vanity through which the serpent flattered her.

Adam and Eve's state in Eden can therefore be restored if both repent of their sins, cultivating the virtues opposed to the sins into which they originally fell. To combat her disobedience, woman must see obedience. And to combat his lack of care and self-sacrifice for woman, his lack of responsibility, man must sacrifice himself for her. This is the attempt to reconstitute that first paradisiac state. Moreover St Paul compares the relationship between man and woman with that between Christ, the New Adam, and the Church our Mother. The Church owes obedience to Christ, Her Head, but Christ sacrifices Himself for the Church, even unto death – 'this is a great mystery' (Ephesians 5, 32).

Is there a woman who would not obey a husband who was willing to sacrifice everything for her, being prepared even to die for her, as Christ on the Cross? 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15, 13). Woman will not obey man if she is not loved, and a man who expects obedience by gives no love deserves no obedience. For obedience to one who loves is not tyranny, but freedom. Love exists only where there is freedom, but freedom without voluntary obedience becomes anarchy and licence.

Thus through woman's obedience to man and man's loving self-sacrifice for woman, some small part of that blessed state of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden can be restored. And this is the ascetic struggle which gives meaning to marriage. And when man overcomes his selfishness and woman her vanity, then we shall glimpse that Eden once more.

June 1994

69. 8 September 994: My Fair Lady

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down,
London Bridge is falling down,
My Fair Lady.
Build it up with wood and clay ...
Wood and clay will wash away ...
Build it up with bricks and mortar ...
Bricks and mortar will not stay ...
Built it up with iron and steel ...
Iron and steel will bend and bow ...
Build it up with silver and gold ...
Silver and gold will be stolen away

On the Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God, exactly 1,000 years ago London was under siege. Olaf Tryggvason of Norway and Swein of Denmark had sailed up the Thames with a fleet of 94 ships. They kept up an unceasing attack on the city, intending to set fire to it. Having protected their ships sufficiently, they tied ropes around the supporting piles of London Bridge. The Vikings rowed their ships downstream as hard as they could and tore the timbers of the Bridge from their foundations, thus destroying it completely. The event is recorded in the Norse saga, the *Heimskringla*:

London Bridge is broken down,
Gold is won and bright renown,
Shields resounding,
War-horns sounding,
Arrows singing,
Mailcoats ringing,
Hildur shouting in the din,
Odin makes our Olaf win.

Bishop Ælfstan of London called the people to prayer before the Viking threat. We can imagine how in his Cathedral of St Paul the people prayed fervently before the holy image of the Mother of God, crying on ‘the Fair Lady’, to whom the Old English so ardently directed their godliness: ‘The redness of the rose glitters in Thee and the whiteness of the lily shines in Thee: let Christ’s bride-bower be adorned with every kind of flower’. (*The Blickling Homilies*, Morris p. 6). By the intercessions of Her whose feast it was, the pagans, ‘God be thanked, suffered greater loss and injury than they ever thought possible that any garrison would inflict on them. On this day the Holy Mother of God showed her mercy on the garrison and delivered them from their foes’. So writes the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year of Our Lord 994. And the

story of how London Bridge fell down but 'the Fair Lady' saved London then passed into folk-history and nursery-rhyme.

On this historic day a thousand years ago, London and perhaps the whole English nation were saved from pagan Norsemen and their god of war, Odin, who did not 'make Olaf win'. For the God of the Christians was mightier than their myth. Prayer to England's 'Fair Lady' saved the kingdom, when wood and clay, bricks and mortar, iron and steel and silver and gold could not.

O Lord, rising to thank Thee on this millennium anniversary of Thy deliverance of the City of London from pagan onslaught, by the prayers of the Most Holy Mother of God, deliver us and the English land once again from new pagan onslaught and save our souls from the new Odins, bringing us safely to the home and haven of the White Christ, for Thou art Good and lovest Mankind. Amen.

June 1994

70. Conversion

O give me the comfort of thy help again:
And stablish me with thy free spirit.
Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked:
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.

(Psalm 50)

All believers are constantly being converted to Christ; conversion to Him is a continuous process. We are not converted suddenly, we change gradually, almost imperceptibly, and this is the very definition of conversion, a turning to Christ. We often hear that some call themselves 'born Orthodox'. This is quite untrue; nobody is born Orthodox, we are all baptized Orthodox, whatever our background and at whatever age our baptism takes place.

Of course, those who become Orthodox at an adult age from Roman Catholicism or Protestantism face particular difficulties, but most who convert to Orthodoxy at a mature age may well be doing so from agnosticism or even atheism. Moreover there are many who become Orthodox Christians with the feeling that they have always been Orthodox. They experience a sense of homecoming, the feeling that 'this is where I have always been in my heart and this is what I have always thought'. Orthodoxy is in their nature. In a sense these people are not so much converts, but more 'returners' to Orthodox Christianity.

Conversion at an adult age may be sought for a number of reasons, some positive, some negative. It is our view that those who come to Orthodoxy for negative reasons, because they are disappointed with something else, are best left for a very long time to seek. Those who are disgruntled with something else really only want something with which to attack what has disappointed them. Orthodoxy will not directly cure psychological distress, only theological distress. Others come seeking security and start pretending to be what they are not, for example by eating Greek food or dressing as 'Russians'. This is not Orthodoxy either. The only valid conversion is that which comes about because someone is seeking spiritual food, is seeking spiritual survival, in other words, someone who comes in humility.

One of the great problems of the neophyte is his zeal. This zeal must be 'churched' or channelled properly. It must be encouraged, and not discouraged as so often happens, to become in the words of St Paul a zeal 'according unto knowledge'. As the proverb says: 'Zeal without knowledge is fire without light'. If zeal is not channelled, it may become an aggressive, proud, sectarian zeal which will eventually lead to isolation and bitterness. If on the other hand, it is channelled, it will be for the glory of God and the benefit of man.

One thing is certain, and that is that the Devil hates conversion. All that is possible must be done to protect converts from the wiles of the Evil One, 'then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness' ...

June 1994

71. Names

With the progressive deChristianization of society, the use of the expression 'Christian name' is becoming less and less common and is being replaced by 'first name' or 'forename'. Not so long ago Roman Catholics always gave their children saints' names. And Protestants used to give their children names only if they appeared in the Bible, Old Testament or New. Thus Jonathan, David, Jeremy, Judith, Esther, Rebecca, Ruth, Rachel, Deborah, Abigail and Sarah have all become popular names in Protestant-based societies. In Orthodox and Catholic societies they sound rather Jewish and although they are saints' names, they are rare, even in monasticism. However, it does seem as if, once more, Orthodox are now the only ones to keep a tradition, that of giving their children saints' names. But many questions are posed as to what exactly a Christian name is and what names those entering the Orthodox Church should take.

First of all it is necessary to point out that someone entering Orthodoxy should not take a new name if he has one which is already borne by a saint in the calendar. We have come across two cases where men with perfectly good Christian names changed them to exotic-sounding Vladimir and Auxentius. Both were cases where in fact the persons concerned were going through an identity crisis. Psychologically unstable, neither in fact wanted to take a saint's name, but in fact wanted to assume another identity. Both, unsurprisingly, have since lapsed from the Orthodox Church. It would seem that the pastor should discourage uncalled-for changes of name.

Another question which sometimes arises is whether a person with a female form of a male saint's name, for example, Nicole, should be able to keep it. In Russian practice this is only allowed in monasticism, whereas in modern Greek practice it is quite common among lay-people. Other differences between Russian and Greek practice also occur. For instance Greek women and girls called Maria or Panaghia celebrate their names-days on Feasts of the Mother of God. In Russian practice it is held that the name Maria is too holy to be given in honour of the Virgin, for we are unworthy to bear her name. Russian Marias therefore celebrate names-days in honour of other Marias, for example, St Mary of Egypt or St Mary, Sister of St Lazarus.

In Greece and the Balkans, names like Christos (accented on the first syllable), Sotiris (Saviour) and Kyriakos are also common. Russians tend to find such names unacceptable, for the same reason that Russian Marias are not named in honour of the Virgin. Another custom, unknown to both Russians and Greeks is that of the Serb Slava, whereby individuals may not have individual saints' names at all, but do have a common family feast-day in honour of a particular saint. As regards saints' days there are some which fall on different days in the Greek and Russian calendars. The best-known example of this is St Catherine whose feast falls on 25 November in the Greek Church, but on 24 November in the Russian.

Some converts to Orthodoxy change names when it is not necessary, not through some identity-crisis, but simply through ignorance. The following are names which seem to be perfectly valid Orthodox names, many of them being those of pre-Schism Western saints:

Alan, Albert, Alphonse (St Ildefonse), Angus, Audrey, Aylwin, Barry, Bernard, Bertrand, Brigid, Claire (St Photini or Svetlana), Dominic (equivalent to Kyriakos, Kyriaki in Greek), Duncan (St Dunchadh), Edgar, Edith, Edmund, Edward, Erasmus, Faith (Vera), Frederic (translation of Irenei), Geoffrey (St Ceolfrid), Gerald, Gilbert, Giles, Guy, Harvey, Helga (St Olga), Herbert, Hugh, Humphrey, Kenneth, Kevin, Leonard, Mildred, Otilia, Owen, Richard, Robert, Ursula.

Other names, not sounding Orthodox, are often diminutives of perfectly good Orthodox saints' names. For instance:

Alexander gives Alistair

Alexander gives Alice and Alison

Catherine gives Karen, Kathleen, Kay and Kittie.

Cecilia gives Sheila.

Columba gives Malcolm.

Dorothy gives Dora, Doreen and Doris.

Emiliana gives Amelia, Emily and Milly.

Elizabeth gives Bella, Bess, Beth, Betty, Elsa, Elsie, Isabelle.

Helen gives Eileen, Elaine, Eleanor and Norah.

John gives Evan, Ian and Sean.

Joanna gives Jacqueline, Jane, Janet, Janice, Jenny, Jessie.

Juliana gives Gillian and Jill.

Mary gives Marian, Marilyn, Maureen, May, Miriam, Moira, Molly, Morag, Polly and Rosemary.

Margaret (Marina) gives Greta, Maisie, Marjorie, Meg, Pearl, Peggy and Rita.

Nicola gives Colin.

Sarah gives Sally.

The lists above in no way claim to be complete, but they may be useful.

Ultimately, however, there are names which do have to be changed since they are simply not saints' names at all. What approaches are there to this question?

Some change to a name which is similar to their own. An obvious example is that of those who change from Neil to Nil. Similarly Lee can easily be changed to Leo or Leon. There are many other examples.

Some people have second Christian names. Thus someone called Pamela Mary could simply use her second Christian name as her Orthodox name.

Some people simply have a favourite saint and have always wanted to be called by that name. This is the simplest of all.

Others may wish to take the name of someone in their family. Thus we know of one little Russian boy who was not baptized and did not have a Christian name. On baptism he took the name of his grandfather, who did have a Christian name. The result was that not only was the little boy baptized, but also that his grandfather started going to church, so bringing happiness to three generations.

There is also the question of how parents should name their children. The tradition was to look in the calendar either on the day of birth, or on the eighth day at the naming ceremony, or else on the fortieth day on the day of baptism. These are pious customs which future parents should bear in mind.

If parents choose a name simply because they like it, rather than for the saint, there is another aspect of names which is also often overlooked. This is where there are several saints of the same name. For example there are several St Nicholases in the calendar, but in general only one is honoured – this seems most unfortunate. The Church calls us to honour all the saints, not only our favourite few.

Of Anglo-Saxon Saints in the English Tradition of Orthodoxy, there are a number whose names could be used, although unfortunately some of them are now out of fashion. For boys these are:

Adamnan, Adrian, Aidan, Ailred, Alban, Albert, Aylwin, Bede, Benedict, Bernard, Bertrand, Cedd, Chad, Clement, Cuthbert, Dunstan, Edmund, Edward, Edwin, Felix, Geoffrey, Gilbert, Herbert, James, John, Kenelm, Laurence, Ninian, Oswald, Owen, Peter, Philip, Richard, Sigfrid, Theodore, Wilfrid.

For girls:

Agatha, Alfreda, Audrey, Eanswytha, Edith, Elfreda, Elgiva, Ethel, Hilda, Mildred, Thecla. (Also from male-saints: Adriana, Alberta, Augustina (Tina), Benedicta, Clementine, Edwina and Theodora).

Finally we come to one other question, and that is how we should remember Non-Orthodox in prayer. It seems to be a good custom to write down the names of all those we are to pray for in our commemorative books, but to put Non-Orthodox separately in a clearly indicated manner. In this way the priest will be able to pray for all at the Proskomidia, but he will take particles out of the prosphora or blessed bread only for the Orthodox.

We hope that these considerations will be useful for all parents and those wishing to enter the Orthodox Church. May they receive the blessings of the saints through their holy names.

June 1994

72. John Ballard (1934–1953)

The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone born of the Spirit ...

(John 3, 8)

My dream was a glimpse of the world beyond sense,
All beauty and wisdom are messages thence.

(John Masefield, *Right Royal*)

A few miles from the little town where I lived as a child, there was a boy called John. Born in the 30s, he had grown up through the war years. And then tragedy struck – he developed poliomyelitis, that disease which caused so much havoc until scientists led by Enders discovered the vaccine which would put an end to it by the late 50s. I can still remember my mother taking me to vaccination and hearing the story of how only a few years before a neighbour's child had been paralysed and then had died from 'polio'.

John was such a child. Aged 17, he had to lie in a plaster 'boat' when not having physiotherapy. Many young people in such a situation would have felt angry and frustrated, their minds darkened by bitter thoughts. Not so John. As his illness progressed he was gradually illumined by grace and he saw the whole world as it really is, transfigured by the love of God and filled with the signs of His presence to comfort man and recall him to his eternal destinies. Those last years John must have lain awake for long hours at night. He had seen the inner meaning of things, hidden to the healthy, and he wrote several poems. This one is entitled *God's Love*:

The little lanes that wind and twist
Were made by God above.
He our little world has kissed,
To help us find His love.

He made the tiny snowdrops white
That peep up from the snow:
Such comforts gave us in our plight
That we His love might know.

The apple-blossom overhead,
Bluebells 'neath our feet
That we the right path may tread,
And so His love may keep.

The cowslips in the meadows green,
A sky of bluest blue,

Weeping willows by the stream,
Prove that His love is true.

The golden leaves fall to the ground
And drop amongst the heather;
Their thread of life had been unwound,
But His love lasts for ever.

The birds, the trees, the clouds, the sky,
The sheep and fishes too,
Are yours to have until you die –
Given by His love to you.

This was written in June 1951. I can imagine him in that hospital, where a few years later my grandmother was to pass away, God rest her. As the seasons passed, he would look out of the window and see or recall first the snowdrops, then the apple-trees with their 'blossom overhead', followed by the cowslips and then the golden leaves, knowing that his own 'thread of life' would soon be unwound, but knowing also that all the beauty that he saw was 'his to have' until he died and that beyond death God's love 'lasts for ever'. Later these words would be set to music and be sung as a hymn to the Creator by thousands of local children who had never known their author.

In the spring of 1953, John caught a cold, and died, mourned by his friends at Black Notley Hospital, to whom he had endeared himself: his thread of life was unwound, but his memory lasts for ever.

July 1994

73. The Quest for the Holy Grail

Lo, all my heart's field red and torn,
And thou wilt bring the young green corn,
The young green corn divinely springing,
The young green corn forever singing;
And when the field is fresh and fair
Thy blessed feet shall glitter there,
And we will walk the weeded field,
And tell the golden harvest's yield,
The corn that makes the holy bread
By which the soul of man is fed,
The holy bread, the food unpriced,
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.

John Masefield, *The Everlasting Mercy*

Orthodoxy is the Womb of Christianity. And from this Womb has come forth the sweet fragrance of Christ's Faith – which men down the ages have done their utmost to disfigure and destroy through sin. For the confession of Orthodoxy is the confession of the Holy Spirit, without Whom man is in sin, man believes and lives wrongly. As the Church writer, St Isidore of Seville, wrote: 'An Orthodox is one who believes rightly and in accordance with that belief, lives rightly'. Now the consequence of sin, of rejecting the Holy Spirit, the Faith of Christ, is a spiritual blindness so great that man can no longer see the Truth of Orthodoxy. This spiritual blindness is of three kinds, which are defined already in the acts of three men in the Gospels. These are the three men who refused to change the world by conforming themselves to Christ. And so instead of changing the world, they are changed by the world, and their fate was suicide.

The first suicide is that of Judas. At the Last Supper he partook not of the Body and Blood of Christ, but of a sop (John 13, 26–27). He rejected Christ, betrayed Him, then went and hanged himself in despair, and the rope breaking, 'falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out' (Acts 1, 18).

The second suicide is that of Pilate. He did not partake of Christ's Truth either. Though 'finding no fault in Him at all' (John 18, 38), betrayed Him. Tradition records how he too, in distant Gaul, later committed suicide in despair.

The third suicide is that of the Thief on the right-hand side, who refused to partake of Christ's Victory over Death, mocking Him, 'If thou be Christ, save thyself and us' (Luke 23, 39), and so rejected his salvation, thus committing spiritual suicide.

The suicide of Judas is that of those who in the spiritual blindness of sin have in history reckoned themselves greater than Christ, and set up their own '-isms', so

rejecting Him and His Church. The suicide of Pilate is that of those who in history have shown their indifference to Christ, standing by, spiritually blinded, while Christ-like innocence and righteousness were trampled down before them. And the suicide of the Thief on the right-hand side is the spiritual blindness of contemporary cynics and scoffers (There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts', 2 Peter 3, 3). They have their chance to repent, to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, but are too proud to accept the lowliness of the holy bread and precious blood of His Mercy.

Yet all today's Judases and Pilates and Unrepentant Thieves would claim to be seeking Truth. They would all claim to be taking part in that Quest for the Holy Grail, which has so obsessed Western history ever since the Chalice with the Blood of Christ was withdrawn from the people in the Middle Ages in defiance of the Gospel command: 'Drink ye all of it' (Matt. 26, 27). This Quest for the Chalice of Christ, the Quest for the Holy Grail, has continued ever since. But the Judases and Pilates and Thieves who do not repent shall never find it, for in fact they do not seek it, but like Pilate who asked 'What is Truth?' (John 18, 38), as he stood staring at the Face of the Truth, they seek not the Grail of the Faith of Christ, but another and false and unholy Grail of their own imagining and making.

Who will save us and our land, and who will grant us the Cup of Salvation, the Holy Grail of His Everlasting Mercy?

Christ will save us and our land, but only if we wish to be saved, only if we wish to partake of Him in His Holy Church, where the Holy Grail is offered. In the words of Blessed Augustine: 'He who made us without our help will not save us without our consent'.

The English land and all these islands, of whom we are so physical and spiritual children, seek the One Cup that feeds the soul 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4, 23), the Holy Grail of Christ. The believing peoples of these islands look to a Campaign for Real Faith, look for spiritual values and not compromises and half-measures, which can never be spiritual but only opportunistic. These compromises are offered by those who, the world over, 'walk after their own ungodly lusts', scoffing at and distorting and watering down the Holy Orthodox Mother-Faith, this very Womb of Christendom, making it into what it is not, taking away its transfiguring power. They are those who 'having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof' and 'ever learning, are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth' (2 Timothy 3, 5-7).

But for those who sincerely seek the Holy Grail and 'the food unpriced', here in this land still stand the homely, little Saxon churches that from ancient times whisper to our hearts the old truths which our heads so long ago forsook. In their still small voices they speak to our hearts of those old truths of that other Church of England which was born from the Womb of Christendom in the confession of the Holy Spirit. These churches are those where once the Holy Grail was offered and not quested for. And in Minsters and Chesters and Canterburies of the heart resounds the still-living

Gospel of how Christ was crucified between Two Thieves, and of how the Thief on the left-hand side repenting of his railing, said, 'Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom', and received the answer, 'Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise'. And this is the promise and mystery and everlasting mercy that is offered to all who find the Holy Grail of Orthodoxy and keep it: 'I will receive the cup of salvation: and call upon the name of the Lord' (Psalm 115, 4 in the Septuagint).

By mercy, and by martyrdom,
And many ways, God leads us home ...

(John Masefield, *The Coming of Christ*)

July 1994

74. The Bardfield Oxlip

In many country areas the cowslip (*Primula veris*) is known as ‘a paigle’ and in childhood in Essex we used to ‘go paigling’. However, there also exists another wild flower with which it is often confused, the oxlip. Further confusion results from the fact that there are two types of oxlip; the false oxlip, which is a hybrid between the cowslip and the common primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), and the very rare true oxlip (*Primula elatior*), which is much larger and paler than the cowslip and the cowslip.

The true oxlip is often called ‘the Bardfield oxlip’. It is so called because in these islands it grows in Little Bardfield in Essex and other places a few miles away, such as Hales Wood between Ashdon and Saffron Walden and in Eastey Wood, adjoining Peverells Manor near Glemsford just across the border in ‘furrin’ Suffolk. The question is why it should be confined to this area – and here I come to a pleasing if quite unprovable thought, linked with the lovely old Saxon church of St Katharine in Little Bardfield.

After the Norman Conquest the Manor of Little Bardfield was held by Count Eustace of Boulogne. His agent was one Ingleric, who ten years before the Norman Invasion had been the first Dean of St Martins Church in London, which had land-holdings in Essex with which he dealt. Ingleric, quite naturally for clergy of that time, was married and had a daughter, Inglerica. Now their country seat was none other than Little Bardfield Hall, the beautiful Elizabethan version of which still stands a few yards from Little Bardfield church to this day. In time this daughter, the Saxon Lady Inglerica, came to marry a Norman, Ranulf Peverell, and William of Normandy gave them several manors in the Bardfield area, one of which we know was a small manor at Glemsford – now named ‘Peverells’.

Is it just possible that the ‘Bardfield oxlip’ was Inglerica’s favourite wild flower during her childhood days in Little Bardfield and that she transplanted roots from her home there and established them on her manors, notably at Peverells in Glemsford, when she married? Of course this speculation can never be proved, but if it were true it would be another very little but delightful example of continuity between Saxon and modern England. If it were so, then the picture of oxlips growing in the Essex woodlands after all those years might lead us to wonder what other hidden and perhaps far more important spiritual threads of continuity bind together the Old England of the past and the England which we have inherited today.

August 1994

75. The Saints With Us

A house, a glebe, a pound a day,
A pleasant place to watch and pray,
Be true to church, be kind to poor,
O minister, for evermore.

R. S. Hawker

Under the leadership of St Antony the Great, the desert of 4th century Egypt turned into a monastic 'city'. Its influence would rapidly spread to the north-east, to Palestine and Syria, where other great monastic leaders, such as St Theodosius the Great and St Sabbas the Sanctified were to develop monastic life in the sixth century. But before that, in the second half of the fourth century, monasticism spread to the north-west, to Tours in Gaul under the great St Martin. From Britain a certain Ninian heard of him and perhaps even visited him, and later he became St Ninian, Apostle of the Picts in what we now call south-west Scotland.

Shortly after him this monastic movement spread to Southern Gaul, from where in the first half of the fifth century, St John Cassian the Roman came to learn from the monastic elders. He then took monasticism to the south of Gaul, creating a great monastery on the island of Lerins near Cannes, whose influence would radiate out all over Gaul, forming a Gallic 'Thebaid' of Saints, as is recorded by St Gregory of Tours. In Lerins St John Cassian wrote his 'Conferences' and St Vincent of Lerins wrote his theological works, opposing the erroneous speculations of Blessed Augustine of Hippo.

This centre at Lerins in its turn influenced another young man from the north, who may have visited it and stayed for a time. He was a Romano-British of Christian ancestry, his grandfather a priest and his father a deacon. He probably came from what we now call north-west England and he too learnt monastic life. He bore the Roman name of Patricius, Patrick. It was his destiny to return to the British Isles, specifically to Ireland and evangelize the Irish. He founded a movement of Irish monasticism which resulted in what we can only call 'the Irish Thebaid'.¹ This movement spilled over from Ireland to Iona, to Scotland, to northern England, to Wales, to Brittany and the west and south-west of England, reinvigorating the ethnocentric and backward Christianity that some of the Romano-British had preserved in the West after the incursions of the pagan Anglo-Saxons.

Thus, after St Augustine brought the Gospel to the south-east of England, his Roman followers and their English neophytes were to be much aided in the work of conversion of England by Celtic monastic missionaries from the north and the west. Eventually frictions between them were overcome under the great Theodore of Tarsus, the Greek Archbishop of Canterbury, and the administrative and

organizational abilities of the Romans would be combined with the austere, monastic spirituality of the Celts to form the English Church. One of the best examples of this is St Boniface of Crediton, the Devonshire saint, Saxon by his father and Celtic by his mother, who went out with the blessings of Popes, including the Greek Pope Zacharias, to convert heathen Europe in the first half of the eighth century.²

St Boniface came from the south of Devon, which was predominantly English. However, the north of Devon and Somerset, like Cornwall, or West Wales as it was then called, was predominantly Celtic. This is witnessed to by the number of Celtic saints venerated in the north of Devon. Thus on the Somerset coast, St Decuman of St Decumans and Dunster is the patron-saint of Watchet, and the Saxon church at Culbone is named after and dedicated to the Welsh St Beuno.

In north Devon there are St Brannock of Braunton, St Urith at East Slowford and Chittlehampton, St Kea and Landkey, St Nectan at Hartland and Welcombe, and the church at Porlock is dedicated to St Dubricius, one of the great Welsh saints. The greatest Cornish saint, St Petroc, is commemorated at Petrockstow, St Rumon is recalled at Romansleight and also further south near the Cornish border at Tavistock. St Budoc is commemorated in the south-west near the Cornish border at St Budeaux. In the south-east of Devon the only Celtic saint is St Sidwell at Exeter.

However, once we cross the border between England and Cornwall,³ we meet the Cornish Thebaid of Saints, many of whom have bequeathed their names to the towns and villages of Cornwall. Through them Cornwall became known as 'the Land of Saints'. One of them concerns us in particular.

On the rocky and stormy Atlantic coast of North Cornwall, there stands the hamlet of Morwenstow, the holy place of Morwenna. Of St Morwenna we know very little, but she probably lived in the sixth century and was famed for her miracles. She is commemorated here and nearby Marhamchurch, anciently called Marwchurch, is probably also named after her. The parish church of Morwenstow was originally built in Saxon times, from which there remains a font. For forty years in the mid-nineteenth century it was served by a poet and immensely kind-hearted pastor, Robert Stephen Hawker.

He was considered to be a man of great integrity and sincerity, something of a genius, albeit an eccentric one. He dressed in Armenian vestments, naively believing that the Armenians were Orthodox.⁴ He was also responsible for introducing the Harvest Festival service into English churches. Originally he had wanted to revive the ancient Lammas-service, but according to the new calendar this would have fallen on 1 August, which was too early for a feast of the first-fruits.⁵ Whatever his eccentricities, Hawker, if not an Orthodox Christian, which at that time he could probably not have become, was an orthodox Christian, a righteous man of prayer and also a visionary. He had knowledge of the demons and struggled with them. He held that Satan's autograph was to be found in the Library of All Souls' College in Oxford. But our interest in him concerns St Morwenna.

The story is told of how one day a doubter expressed his scepticism about the existence of the saint. Hawker replied to him without hesitation: 'But I know St Morwenna existed, and what is more she is still here, for I have seen her here in this church'. And indeed it seems that Hawker often spoke to the saint, the patroness and foundress of the church. It would seem that her relics, like those of many other saints in other churches, are concealed somewhere under the very floor of the church. Hawker's words are profoundly important and we have no reason to doubt them. They confirm what Orthodoxy has always taught; that however little we know about the saints, and this is particularly true of the Celtic saints, most of whose written lives were corrupted during the Middle Ages, they are still with us. They are with us in the places where they lived and elsewhere and we can call on them for help and they will come to our aid.⁶

Hawker of Morwenstow was to become a famous figure and poet. Of his church he was to write the following:

My Saxon shrine, the only ground
Wherein this weary heart has rest ...
Window and wall have lips to tell
The mighty faith of days unknown

Who knows how many other saints still dwell in the churches of these islands and secretly comfort those who turn to them in prayer?

Holy Mother Morwenna and all the Saints, pray to God for us.

August 1994

1. The tragedy of Ireland, 'the Island of the Saints', is that this Thebaid of monastic holiness was destroyed. In 1172 Pope Alexander III declared the intemperate Henry of Anjou, Henry II of England, to be the rightful sovereign of Ireland, wishing to 'eradicate Irish customs that conflicted with the teachings of the Catholic Church'. This led to the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland and the eradication of those 'Irish customs' – Irish holiness (there have been no Irish saints since) – and ultimately, the present Civil War in Northern Ireland. If only the knowledge of the Orthodoxy of Irish Saints could be revived in Ireland, it might prove to be the divine glue with which to join the two warring extremes of Catholicism and Protestantism together, thus creating a new Anglo-Celtic Union as was achieved in England by St Theodore of Canterbury in the seventh century.

2. It is interesting to note that according to the church calendar the feast-day of this English Apostle to heathen Europe coincides with the date of the Battle of Waterloo, 5 / 18 June.

3. It is not an exaggeration to refer to the border between England and Cornwall. To this day many Cornish people refer to going to Devon as 'going to England'.

4. Still today the word 'Orthodox' is much abused by all kinds of 'churches', leading the naïve into considerable confusion. On meeting one who claims to be an Orthodox clergyman, it is sometimes necessary to ask who his bishop is to ascertain whether he is in fact Orthodox.

5. Lammas (from the Old English, 'loaf-mass') is a feast of the first-fruits. Hawker's error was in using the new calendar. Had he used the old calendar, 19th century Lammas would have occurred on 13 August. In current Orthodox practice Lammas, the blessing of the first-fruits, 'harvest-festival', falls on 19 August, the Feast of the Transfiguration.

6. Scarcely thirty years ago a Saint and Archbishop walked the streets of London – the newly glorified St John, whose diocese spread to these islands. How strong his prayer must be, when we call on him in prayer! It is our hope that the story of his works and wonders in London will one day be collected for the uplifting of all our hearts.

76. England's Three Holy Hierarchs

It is characteristic of Orthodox Christianity to envision all human activities in threes, in other words, to see human life through the vision of the Holy and Life-Giving Trinity. Thus, following St Paul, St Dionysius the Areopagite spoke of 9 (3 x 3) angelic orders and on 30 January we celebrate the Feast of the Three Hierarchs (St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian and St John Chrysostom). In the Russian Church there used to be another feast of Three Russian Hierarchs – Metropolitans of Moscow, Sts Peter, Alexis and Jonah. This feast on 5 October is at present extended to no fewer than 6 (2 x 3) Hierarchs with the additions of Sts Philip, Hermogenes and Tikhon.

On 23 March the Portuguese Orthodox also celebrate the Feast of Three Portuguese Hierarchs – St Peter, Metropolitan of Braga (the Portuguese Canterbury), St Gens, Bishop of Lisbon and St Mansos, Bishop of Evora. And so too the English Church may also hold feast in honour of her Three Hierarchs: St Dunstan of Canterbury, St Ethelwold of Winchester and St Oswald of Worcester, who together brought England to her ecclesiastical, political and cultural apogee in the tenth century. Who exactly were they and what exactly were those feats which would make them worthy of such a title?

St Dunstan was born in 909 at Baltonsborough near Glastonbury of a noble family. His father was called Heorstan, his mother Cynethryth and he also had a brother, Wulfric. All were devout Christians and kept feast and fast at the ancient monastery of Glastonbury. According to legend even before his birth, there was a heavenly sign. On the Feast of Presentation in the Temple, Dunstan's parents were in Glastonbury. Suddenly all the tapers went out but that held by Dunstan's mother relit of its own accord, and she was able to rekindle those of others. As a child he was given to dreams, one of which concerned a venerable old man in a gleaming white alb showing Dunstan a new monastery at Glastonbury, beautiful in its church and cells. On one occasion he was found sleep-walking. He loved reading and also played the harp, a sign of culture among the Old English.

Dunstan's uncle, Athelm, was Bishop of Wells. In 923 the Archbishop of Canterbury, St Plegmund, reposed and was succeeded by Bishop Athelm. Dunstan, a promising scholar, went to stay at Canterbury in the Archbishop's household and was probably present on 4 September 925 when the Archbishop anointed Athelstan as King at Kingston-on-Thames. In this way Dunstan soon became familiar with the Court and its visitors from Europe, with which the King maintained good relations. Here Dunstan became interested in many arts, tapestry-making, metalwork, music, painting and poetry. But his talented personality provoked jealousy and slander and he was dismissed from the Court. He sought refuge in prayer, returning to Glastonbury and also going to Winchester where he was well acquainted with his kinsman, the saintly Bishop Alphege.

Following these events, in the year 936 he decided against marriage and for the monastic life. Dunstan became a monk at Glastonbury. Here he lived as a hermit in a tiny cell and practised painting, embroidery and metalwork. But the young hermit was afflicted by visions and the Tempter himself appeared to him in bodily form. In 939 Edmund became King and recalled Dunstan to the Court. Again Dunstan was slandered and exiled but soon recalled after the young King, repenting of his anger and injustice, was saved from certain death at Cheddar Gorge, near where he had a manor. Not only was Dunstan recalled but he was also made Abbot of Glastonbury, which the King generously endowed.

Thus, in 940, Dunstan set to work to restore monastic life, which had fallen into decadence after the Viking invasions of the previous century. This work of restoring monasticism was to earn him the title of 'First Abbot of the English Nation'. Over the next thirteen years at Glastonbury Dunstan rebuilt, bought books, taught, but also kept in close contact with the Court. Indeed he was entrusted with part of the King's treasury at Glastonbury. In 951 Dunstan was offered the See of Winchester and in 953 Crediton – both times Dunstan refused these honours. In 956 Dunstan left England. Some have speculated that this was connected with the accession to the throne of Edwy, a decadent King, or else with the jealousy of magnates and others who feared a revival of monasticism.

Dunstan was to spend well over a year at a monastery in Ghent in Flanders, where he experienced the revival of monasticism on the Continent. Here he was comforted by a vision where he saw that he would soon return to England and that his enemies would never finish what they purposed. And in England the short reign of Edwy came to an end, to be followed by that of Edgar. Thus Dunstan was recalled and in 957 he became a bishop, and constantly available to advise the King. Bishop of Worcester for two years, in 959 Dunstan was named Bishop of London and from here he revived monastic life at St Peter's in Westminster with twelve monks. Reminders of this period are the two city churches, surviving to this day, St Dunstan-in-the-East and St Dunstan-in-the-West. But on 21 October 960 he was to become Metropolitan of the English Nation at Canterbury.

Here Dunstan kept the monastic offices strictly. Celebrating the liturgy his face would be tense in rapt absorption, 'as one speaking face to face with God Himself. Here he would preach against deviations from the Faith and come secretly at night to add to his prayers. He was most devoted to the saints of Canterbury, especially to his predecessor, St Oda whom he called 'the Good', who had consecrated him Bishop of Worcester. It is said that one night he heard the victory-song of those whose relics rested near him. The song was in praise of Christ and Dunstan wept for the beauty of the music.

Dunstan studied the history and the teaching of the Church, correcting manuscripts, reviving monastic life in Canterbury, as he had already done at Glastonbury and Westminster. And from here he worked hard to restore monastic life throughout the

south of England, not forgetting his first love, Glastonbury, from which was coming a stream of saintly Abbots and Bishops. Other monasteries he personally restored included Athelney, Muchelney, Malmesbury and Bath. In 970 Dunstan helped draw up a document called *Regularis Concordia*, a Concordance of Monastic Rules for all the restored monasteries. In all, some thirty monasteries were to be revived and restored, directly or indirectly through Dunstan. But even with all this Dunstan did not forget his royal duties.

Although, or rather because, he was a visionary, Dunstan was also a statesman. He constantly advised the young King Edgar, come to the throne when only fourteen, and sought royal patronage for the new monasteries. This co-operation between Archbishop and King led to a new golden age in English church life. Edgar himself, after a turbulent youth, turned out not only to be a great King, but also a Saint, St Edgar the Peaceful. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that: 'God gave it him that he dwelt in peace ... He lifted up God's glory wide, he loved God's law and furthered the people's peace'.

After the disastrous ninth century, Edgar, by showing great tolerance, also integrated the Danish settlers of northern and eastern England into English life. And much of that was due to Dunstan's influence and wisdom. He also inspired other of Edgar's laws. He was a zealous bishop, insisting on the observance of the fasts and marriage laws; he built and repaired churches and encouraged the practice of handicraft by every priest. He modified the coronation-rite according to 'Byzantine' ritual, much of it still in use today, and at Pentecost on 11 May 973 in Bath crowned Edgar King, purposely waiting till he was thirty years of age, the canonical age for conferring priesthood. The coronation-rite expressed Dunstan's mind and thought. The Christian King was to be an icon of the Lord Incarnate, the Anointed of God, mediator between the clergy and the laity.

By supporting the central royal power against local magnates, Dunstan not only created English Unity (Edgar was the first King of All England), but also ensured that there would be none of the local, feudal wars that the Norman barons of the twelfth century were to engage in. One 'noble', excommunicated by Dunstan for marriage within the forbidden degrees of kinship, complained to the Pope, obtaining a written order to allow the marriage. Dunstan, however, would have no truck with this and in characteristically Orthodox fashion said that he 'would rather be slain than be unfaithful to Christ'. Eventually the earl was brought to public penance. At the end of the tenth century Ælfric, monk of Cerne in Dorset, wrote the following of Edgar's reign: 'And we say truly that the time was happy and pleasant among the English when King Edgar furthered Christianity and raised up many monasteries. And his kingdom dwelt in peace'.

In 975 King Edgar died and was succeeded by his son, Dunstan's pupil, Edward. So began the period of England's troubles. After the firm, pro-monastic rule of St Edgar, several magnates began taking back lands from the monasteries. At a meeting in

Winchester in 975, when married clergy expressed their wish to reoccupy monasteries from which they had been rightly expelled, a voice was heard from a crucifix on the wall: 'Let it not be so, let it not be so'. In 977 at a similar heated meeting in Caine in Wiltshire, the upper floor of the building where they were collapsed, several died, but Archbishop Dunstan was unharmed, remaining standing on a beam.

Although King Edward was pro-monastic like his father, he was still very young and was betrayed by members of his own household, including his stepmother. In history he became known as St Edward the Martyr, for in 978, not yet out of his teens, he was murdered in a plot involving anti-monastic magnates, set against Dunstan and the Church. He was succeeded by his half-brother Ethelred the Unready or Uncounselled, who may in part have connived against his martyred brother. It is said that Dunstan, who crowned Ethelred foretold the calamitous events which would befall royal house and nation from this moment on as punishment for Edward's murder. From this time onwards the Primate of England, now aged 70, began to withdraw from national life, coming out from Canterbury only for national solemnities. These included the translation of St Edward's relics to Shaftesbury and the consecration of the new Cathedral in the royal capital at Winchester in 980, or the transfer of the relics of St Aldhelm from Malmesbury in May 986 for fear of the ravages of the Danes who had returned to England.

These last years are filled with premonitions, visions, and dark prophecies concerning the future of the nation which seem to have become more frequent with age. Dunstan had struggled with physical manifestations of the Devil all his life, and these were to pass into folklore. In these years Dunstan was inspired, especially by his patron St Andrew, he composed music and did metalwork (his metalworker's tools are conserved at the Convent of Mayfield in Sussex); he saw a dove descending from heaven, he foresaw the deaths of others; Dunstan was gifted with inner sight, he had a mystic awareness of God and possessed the gift of tears, being always absorbed in prayer, 'his conversation was in heaven'.

On Ascension Day, May 17 988, nearly eighty years of age, he preached three times, lunched and then lay down to a rest, from which he was not to rise. On Friday he lay in his cell, his mind far away. After Matins on Saturday 19, he called the priests of Canterbury Cathedral to his side. One of them served there in the cell and Dunstan took communion. With the words of Psalm CX on his lips, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him', the Archbishop of England's spiritual capital gave up the ghost.

The loss of the Archpastor had effects that few could then imagine. A letter of those times called him 'a very Daniel of the Israelites, to the English people amid so many dangers of these quaking times'. No sooner had he reposed than people began to honour him as a Saint of their Church and Land. At the beginning of the eleventh century, the following appeal was addressed to him:

O faithful Shepherd, thy flock
Is everywhere sore oppressed,
O lover of Christ,

We perish at the hand of heathen.

O priest, offer that sacrifice,
Those prayers dear to Christ,
By which our sins are forgiven
And we are freed from the shackles of vice.

That the faithless and the wicked
Might cease their evil
In the lands of the English
And among the sons of the Church.

Dunstan was known as 'the Resolute', was much admired as a true shepherd, for his conciliatory character, for his befriending of the weak and needy, his loving disposition and his ability as a teacher of the Faith. Of him it was written: 'The whole of England was filled with his light'. Eadmer the Chronicler wrote: 'When St Dunstan was translated to heaven, immediately England was laid open to the incursion of foreign foes'.

Ethelwold was born in Winchester in a wealthy but devout family in about 912. He served at the Court of King Athelstan where he made the acquaintance of Dunstan, and was ordained to the priesthood on the same day as Dunstan by the future St Alphege of Winchester. He joined his friend at Glastonbury but then, perhaps dissatisfied with the caution with which Dunstan introduced reform, went on to revitalize and rebuild the monastery at Abingdon with monks from Glastonbury and elsewhere. Here he laboured in the monastery garden and it is said that on one occasion he miraculously multiplied mead. Like Dunstan he kept an important place at the Court, becoming tutor to the future King Edgar.

On 29 November 963 he was consecrated Bishop of Winchester by Archbishop Dunstan. With his characteristic purposefulness he swept into action, turning out false monks from the Old Minster of Winchester who lived in incontinence and gluttony. When they complained to King Edgar in the royal palace at Winchester, they were referred to St Dunstan who confirmed the action of his friend. In the place of these false monks Ethelwold put Abingdon monks in the Cathedral, thus establishing the English tradition of monastic Cathedrals, which was to last until the Reformation. Ethelwold was all energy, receiving the nickname of 'Boanerges', the Son of Thunder.

It was said of him that he was 'terrible as a lion' to the rebellious, but 'gentle as a dove' to the meek. He spent his personal fortune on the Church and alms-giving, he fasted strictly and kept vigil, working incessantly in a way which would have

destroyed the health of lesser men. At a time of famine he ordered that Church treasures and silver vessels be melted down to make money for the starving poor. What was lifeless metal compared to bodies and souls created and redeemed by God? Ethelwold's ideals were high, he was demanding especially in matters of obedience. On one occasion it is said that one of his enemies tried to poison him.

After his first reform, he went on to reform the monastery at Milton in Dorset in 964, then Chertsey in Surrey, then the New Minster and the Nunnaminster or Convent in Winchester in 965. In 966 he refounded the ruined monastery in Peterborough, then Ely in 970 and Thorney in 972. Here Ethelwold would retire during Lent to live the hermit's life that he yearned for. Through this unceasing activity, Ethelwold came to be called 'the Father of Monks'. However, like Dunstan, Ethelwold's activities were not only of the spirit, but also of the body. He was a builder, intensely practical. Just as the patron of Winchester in the century before him, St Swithin, who had built a bridge there, Ethelwold built an aqueduct for a supply of water to monasteries and private homes alike. His life's work in Winchester was the rebuilding of the Cathedral into a Church worthy of the Kings of England and the Royal Capital.

Ethelwold was counsellor to King Edgar, teacher to his monks, lover of books and manuscripts, translator of Latin texts. At Glastonbury he had been cook, at Abingdon he had worked at building, even falling from scaffolding and breaking his ribs, he founded bells, he was a metalworker, making chalices, candle-holders, censers with silver and gold, and at Winchester he built an organ for royal festivals. Many of his pupils became Abbots and Bishops, some were later to go abroad as missionaries to Scandinavia. To this day Stavanger Cathedral in Norway is dedicated to St Swithin, a reminder of Winchester-trained missionaries. At Winchester he founded scriptoria, where the 'Winchester School' of illumination produced illuminations unrivalled for their magnificence outside Constantinople. He encouraged the school of vernacular writing, famed for its translations and Winchester produced the first English polyphony in the 'Winchester Troper'.

Three great occasions mark the last years of Ethelwold's rule. The first was in 970 when with St Dunstan and others he produced the *Regularis Concordia* for the thirty reformed monasteries of England that we have already mentioned. The second was the translation of the relics of St Swithin in 971, and the third the consecration of the new Cathedral in October 980 with nine bishops, led by St Dunstan, 'venerable with his snow-white hair, like an angel to look upon'. The magnificence and vastness of this Cathedral has only lately come to be appreciated by the works of archaeologists. An outstanding royal counsellor, a benevolent bishop and father of monks, Bishop Ethelwold, called 'the Venerable', reposed on 1 August 984 at Beddington in Surrey. He was 72 years old and had been ailing for some time. His relics were soon glorified by miracles.

Oswald, of Danish origin, was born to a wealthy but Christian convert family in about 920. His uncle was St Oda 'the Good', Archbishop of Canterbury till 958, and another

member of the family was Oskytel, Archbishop of York. Oswald became a priest and then went to live in Winchester. However he was dissatisfied with the secular life he led here and went to live the monastic life in the reformed monastery at Fleury in France. Here he learnt the monastic offices by heart and it is said that on one occasion an angel was seen assisting him as he served the liturgy. He returned to England in 959, where in 961 he was consecrated Bishop of Worcester. Here he first built a new and bigger Cathedral to replace the old one which was too small. This he dedicated to the Mother of God and introduced the monastic life as he had learnt it abroad.

In 962 he refounded St Albans, then founded a monastery at Westbury-on-Trym. In 971 he founded his favourite monastery outside his diocese at Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, and then founded two monasteries in the Severn Valley at Evesham and Pershore, as well as reviving Deerhurst and restoring Winchcombe in Gloucestershire. At Ramsey building continued for years, but eventually a magnificent cruciform church rose up, with a large central tower and a smaller western one. The work here may also have led to the revival of monastic life at Crowland in the fens. There is no doubt that Oswald also took some part in drawing up the 'Monastic Concord' with Sts Dunstan and Ethelwold in 970.

In 971 Oswald also became Archbishop of York, an irregular situation justified by the fragility of church life in the North after the Danish invasions and Oswald's Danish origins. Here in York Oswald did his best to revive monasticism, especially at Ripon, but it was too early yet. Like Sts Dunstan and Ethelwold, Oswald was also of a very practical turn of mind and through close collaboration with the King he obtained lands to endow his monasteries. Until the end of his life, Oswald was an active bishop, building churches and visiting his monasteries.

In 991 he visited his favourite monastery at Ramsey for the last time. Here, with tears in his eyes, he blessed his monks, gave them the kiss of peace and left them with the words: 'May the Lord bring us together in Paradise!' The winter he spent in Worcester and then on the last day of February, celebrated the office and washed the feet of twelve poor men as was his custom throughout Lent, chanting the fifteen Gradual Psalms. He reposed as he was kneeling at the words, 'Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost'. His body was clothed by the brethren in new vestments. The word of his repose spread to the townsfolk: 'Merchants left their markets, women their looms, all hurried to his door; orphans and widows, strangers, monks, peasants, and clerics, all wept in their grief'. As his relics were borne to burial in Worcester, a white dove was seen to hover over them. He was remembered for his holiness and learning, his hospitality and diligence, his fairness and gentle generosity. Venerated as a saint of God, in 1002 his relics were magnificently enshrined. 'They loved him in life and honoured him in death'. As his body was borne to burial at Worcester, a white dove was seen hovering over it.

Here then is the story of England's Three Holy Hierarchs, who in their threefold light led England to her cultural apogee in the tenth century. All three were both practical

and also visionaries. St Dunstan with his sober wisdom and caution, the Archpastor and statesman, prophet and seer, Father of the English People. St Ethelwold, turning away the corrupt, as did Christ the money-changers from the Temple, building an aqueduct for his people, wisely counselling the King. St Oswald, warm and genial, with his beautiful singing voice, lover of the poor, sharer of the holy and loving spirit of St Cuthbert and St Swithin. Each in his own way made a contribution to the restoration of England, ecclesiastically, culturally, politically, socially and economically. Together they formed an icon of the Holy and Life-Giving Trinity: St Dunstan the Father, St Ethelwold the Son, St Oswald the Holy Spirit. And this is the mystery of England's Three Holy Hierarchs.

Holy Fathers Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald, pray to God for us!

August 1994

77. The Dark Ages

‘... But if we fail (to stand up to Hitler), then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age, made more sinister and perhaps more protracted by the lights of perverted science ...’

Sir Winston Churchill

‘The Orthodox Church is old-fashioned, like something out of the Dark Ages’. How many times have we heard this or similar statements! And yet, strangely enough, those who affirm such things are in a sense correct. In Western Europe the age of Orthodoxy does correspond to those difficult times between about 450 and 1050 when barbarians invaded Europe and the Church began her gradual Christianisation of their primitive ways. It is indeed this period that secular historians call ‘The Dark Ages’, though we would prefer the term ‘The Age of Saints’ or ‘The Age of Faith’, as used by Christian historians. Orthodoxy is Patristic, and in Western Europe there have been no Church Fathers or writers of originality since St Isidore of Seville in the 7th century or Bede the Venerable in the 8th (although in Eastern Europe there have recently been and perhaps still are Church Fathers). But even if we limit ourselves to Western Europe and the Western world, can we really imagine that the first millennium above all the 20th century, has been ‘light’?

As is generally known, Western Europe distanced itself from Orthodox Christianity during the 11th century, as is symbolized by the events of 1054. This occurred at a time when, if not because, Western Europe was reviving the knowledge of what is politely called Ancient Greece and Rome, classical knowledge and learning. In Orthodox language this is called Paganism. By the 16th century the revival of this knowledge of ancient Paganism actually led to the active imitation of Paganism in the so-called Renaissance. It was from this period on that many of the most awful events of Western history occurred: the revival of slavery, which had been condemned and outlawed during the Middle Ages under the pressure of the Church: genocide in the Americas, later in the United States and Canada, Australia and Tasmania; witch-hunts mainly during the 17th and 18th centuries; the rejection of scientific knowledge with the imprisonment of Galileo in 1633 for saying what the Church Fathers knew and openly said about the Earth, the blood-thirsty Inquisition of the 16th century which is quite without parallel even with the Inquisition of the 13th century.

Of course, some would object that although all this is so, even before the coming of the ‘obscure’ Middle Ages from about 1050 to 1500 there were persecutions of freethinkers and Jews, there were the Crusades, the systematic confusion of the temporal and the spiritual in the Papacy and the Black Death. But of all these, we would reply, occurred outside the period in which the West professed the Orthodox, as opposed to the Roman Catholic, Faith. All of this occurred during the period when

the West was slowly reviving Aristotle and the knowledge of the 'classical' or pagan world which led up to the 'Renaissance'. And moreover how do the persecutions of even the Middle Ages compare to the mass-arrests, Inquisitions and brain-washings of millions in the 20th century? Let us consider some statistics regarding the Western or Westernised world of the last hundred years or so, taken from the Guinness Book of Records:

During the war of 1864 to 1870 between Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay some 1,180,000 people lost their lives.

The First World War caused the deaths of 9,700,000 people.

Between April and November 1918 21,640,000 people died worldwide of the Spanish 'flu.

The Second World War cost the lives of 54,800,000 people.

Between 1969 and 1971 20,000,000 people died of famine in China.

The Walker Report published by the Judicial Commission of the American Senate in July 1971 estimated that since 1949 between 32.5 and 61.7 million Chinese had been killed by the Communist regime.

According to Khmer Rouge Foreign Minister, Ien Sang, 8,000,000 Cambodians were massacred in genocide between April 1975 and January 1979.

According to the detailed statistics collected by Alexander Solzhenitsyn no fewer than 66,000,000 Russians perished between 1917 and the end of the Communist regime in the Soviet Union.

None of these figures takes into account the American Civil War of 1861–5 (approx. 620,000 dead) the estimated 10,000,000 who have died in Africa in tribal wars and resulting famines since decolonisation, the Vietnam War (3,400,000 dead) or in the AIDS epidemic with its tens of millions of victims, already dead or infected. Neither that since the first car accident at the end of the 19th century, it is estimated that between 10 and 20 million people have been killed and countless more maimed by the 'infernal combustion engine' worldwide. Nor do they take into account the even more horrifying thought of the number of abortions in the 20th century (over 8,000,000 a year in the ex-Soviet Union, at least 6,000,000 a year in India, over 2,000,000 a year in the United States and Western Europe; millions annually in China, and Pakistan).

So when exactly were the Dark Ages?

“What will later ages call this time? ‘A barbarism with superior plumbing?’ ‘Savagery, properly done?’ ‘The Electric Light Age, with the black-out?’ or will they simply adapt Voltaire’s words, and say: ‘They must have been men because they killed each other, and they must have been civilized because they did it frightfully.’”

(John Masefield, *'I want! I want!'*)

78. St Alphege of Canterbury, Martyr and Patriot

As a result of two World Wars, nationalism and nationalist values have in recent decades, and in our view quite rightly, fallen into disrepute. But unfortunately by a process of contamination, patriotism and patriotic values have also fallen into disrepute. And with this we would disagree. Nationalism in our understanding is connected to jingoism and chauvinism; it consists of hatred or at least negative feelings towards other countries and peoples.

Patriotism, on the other hand, is love of one's country, the love of that part of God's Creation which one knows best, the love of the land where one has learnt spiritual values. And this is not to the exclusion of other countries. It is our experience that he who does not love his own country is incapable of love for other countries; there are few so egoistic as cosmopolitan internationalists. Only those who are patriots can be 'interpatriots', only those who love their own land can love those of others. An example of one who was a patriot but also loved another people, a people that finally killed him, taken from that period of history when England was part and parcel of the Orthodox Commonwealth of nations is that of the only Old English Archbishop of Canterbury to be a martyr – St Alphege.

Alphege, more correctly Ælfheah, was born in 953 of a noble family and his is linked with the name 'Godwin', 'God's friend'. A serious youth, at an early age he left his home and his widowed mother to take up the monastic life at the monastery of Deerhurst in Gloucestershire, parts of which still survive a thousand years on. Here he stayed for some years, managing to raise the standard of monasticism and gathering disciples. However, the young monk sought a stricter life as a hermit and moved to the reformed monastery at Bath, where he already had disciples. Here he built himself a rough hut and lived as a hermit. No strictness was too severe for him and his piety, charity to the poor and bodily asceticism called forth the admiration of all. It was not long before the youthful hermit was made Abbot of the monastery by the Archbishop of Canterbury, St Dunstan, who had refounded the monastery. Here Abbot Alphege used to say that it was better for a man to remain in the world than become an imperfect monk. But the strict Abbot was not to remain here for long. Following the repose of St Ethelwold of Winchester in 984 and after a dream of St Andrew, St Dunstan appointed Alphege Bishop of the See. Alphege, aged only 31, was to become the second Bishop of Winchester of that name, following St Alphege 'the Bald' of Winchester (+951), who had ordained St Dunstan to the priesthood.

In this royal city of Winchester, the new Bishop's generosity was so great that during his episcopate there were no beggars in his diocese. Adhering to his monastic austerity he became so thin that it was said that men could see through his hands as he raised the chalice at divine service. But one of Alphege's main duties was to give advice to the feeble King Ethelred who was at a loss as to what he should do in the face of massive Danish raiding. In 994 the Danes bore down on Hampshire itself,

threatening Winchester, and the King was forced in his terror to think of doing something more than following his usual short-term policy of paying them off with 'Danegeld'. It was Alphege who had a policy and a strategy. It consisted of breaking up the alliance of the Danish and Norwegian kings, thus weakening the force of their attacks. This it was that Olaf Tryggvason, newly baptized in the Scilly Isles, was contacted by Alphege, the King's envoy, and terms were agreed. Alphege conducted Olaf to Andover in Hampshire to meet Ethelred who received him with great honour and gifts, where Olaf received confirmation or chrismation from Alphege and he promised never again to attack the English land. Alphege thus showed not only his statesmanship but also his missionary spirit, his care to bring another people to the Faith of Christ.

After twenty-one years in Winchester, Bishop Alphege was nominated to succeed his friend St Ælfric as Archpastor of the English nation in Canterbury. The Metropolitan bishop travelled to Rome to receive the *pallium* from his Patriarch in Rome but when he returned he found the situation even worse than when he had left. The country seemed to be paralysed with terror and Ethelred hopelessly ineffectual and wrong-footed. Moreover the Danes were settling in some areas, bringing their heathenism with them. A brief two-year peace was concluded by bribes and in this time Alphege advised and, indirectly, helped organize the defence of the country. Especially at the Council of Enham he helped to set reforms on foot: the navy was expanded; land-forces reorganized; forts and bridges repaired; slavery, which was reappearing, held in check.

In the Witan, the Parliament of wise men and advisors to the King, the day's work began with prayer, services were held and every day sermons were preached on faith, love, prudence and justice. The statutes of the Witan are filled with exhortations to amendment of life and the stricter observance of the Faith. The 19th century historian Freeman wrote of these statutes: 'The whole reads like an act of penitence on the part of a repentant nation awakened by misfortune to a sense of national sins ... They show a real desire to amend the ways of the nation, to repent before God and man for the past, and for the future to work manfully for national reformation and defence. The whole tone is pious and patriotic ... In all this we can hardly fail to trace the hand of good Archbishop Alphege'.

Unfortunately the rot had gone too far; when the Danes attacked again, resistance was marred by treachery and civil dissent; no shire would help another, without national leadership there was no sense of national unity. Once more the Danes were bought off at a great price. When Canterbury itself was attacked, it too paid tribute. Of course the Danes returned. In 1011 the marauders were again before the gates under the leadership of Thorkell the Dane. There was no money left, many nobles fled, advising the Archbishop to do the same – which he stoutly refused to do. During the siege that ensued, Alphege gave all his encouragement to the defenders, daily serving the office at the Cathedral and giving communion to each fresh detachment of soldiers before they mounted guard. The city held out from 8 September, the Nativity of the Mother

of God, for three weeks – only to fall on account of the treason of a clergyman, a certain Alfmar, his crime all the darker for his life had previously been saved by the Archbishop himself.

Alfmar set fire to the ramparts and the enemy forced an entrance. The Archbishop and the monks in the Cathedral had buried the church plate, and were in the middle of a service when the Danes burst in. They killed every single monk and, having taken Alphege prisoner, set fire to the Cathedral. They sacked the city and took countless other men and women prisoners for ransom or slavery. Among the captives to be held to ransom apart from the Primate of All England, were Bishop Godwin of Rochester, Abbess Leofrun of St Mildred's, and all those in holy orders – except Alfmar, whom they set free. This was England's greatest humiliation, her very heart, her spiritual capital had been pillaged at the hands of the heathen. What picture of desolation and despair can we summon up, as flames leapt through the roof of the very Mother-Cathedral of England? The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle describes the scene for us:

He who once was head of the English nation
And Christendom was then led captive.
In that unhappy city, whence first came to us
Christendom and before men often saw joy
And both heavenly and earthly bliss, grief was seen.

The Danes demanded a ransom for the Archbishop of three thousand pieces of silver – on hundred times that which Judas had demanded for Christ. This was on top of the £48,000 of general tribute demanded. (A modern approximation might be, at the very least, to multiply this sum by 1,000). The Archbishop forbade that any money should be paid out for him. For seven months the Archbishop was held on Danish ships; here he preached to them with missionary zeal, predisposing Thorkell and some of his warriors to the Christian Faith and to himself.

On April 19 1012, the Saturday following Easter, the Danish ships with their hostage were lying off Greenwich. On shore the Danes feasted with wine 'brought from the south'. In the late evening when the drinking was at its height the Archbishop was brought before them and the drunkards called for ransom. The Archbishop replied that no one should give anything for his life; they could do what they wanted with his body, but his soul was not in their power but that of Almighty God. At these words their fury increased, but Thorkell interceded for the captive, promising gold and silver and all that he had, save his ship, if they would spare Alphege's life. This served no purpose and the Danes began pelting their prisoner, as it seems was their custom with those who displeased them, with the bones and heads of the oxen that they had been eating, as well as with stones and pieces of wood. The Archbishop, 59 years of age, fell injured to the ground and one of the Danes struck him a blow on the head with a battle-axe. As the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records: 'With the blow he sank down and his holy blood fell upon the earth, and his holy soul was sent forth to the Kingdom of God'.

In the morning the body was taken to London, where the Bishops of London and Dorchester received it with reverence due to a martyr and enshrined it in St Paul's, the Cathedral of London. Horrified at the drunken madness of his compatriots, in an act of what can only be called repentance for the killing of one who had endeared himself to him, Thorkell the Dane with forty-five of his ships transferred his allegiance to the English. Soon he became a Christian. This alone is a telling witness to and reward for the missionary work of the Archbishop-Patriot in his seven months as hostage of the Danes. For ten years his body lay at St Paul's, venerated as the holy relics of a martyr and national hero and miracles were made manifest.

In 1023, with Ethelred gone, came divine justice and the reward for St Alphege's missionary work. England was then ruled by none other than a Dane, King Canute, but a Dane who had become a devout Christian. In a gesture both of Christian repentance and national reconciliation, the King gave leave for St Alphege's relics to be translated to Canterbury. In other words to that same city, the very spiritual capital of the English land and people which a few years before his compatriots had sacked and left burning. Thus, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, on 8 June that year the holy relics were placed in a royal barge, painted and decked. Then with the King and the holy Archbishop Ethelnoth, called in history 'the Good', and bishops and earls and many others for guard of honour, the relics were taken across the Thames first to Southwark and then to Rochester. Here, on the third day, the company was joined by the Queen and her son and 'with much state and rejoicing and hymns of praise' the relics were conveyed to Canterbury. On the eighth day, 15 June, the relics were enshrined by the bishops and clergy 'to the honour of the holy Archbishop, and to the eternal salvation of all those who daily resort to his holy body with devout heart and in all humility. May God Almighty have mercy on all us Christians by the prayers of the holy Alphege'. In 1105 the relics were still incorrupt.

Today surviving churches dedicated to St Alphege still record his martyrdom. Thus there is one at Greenwich, another known as St Alphege, London Wall near St Paul's, a third at Southwark, one at Canterbury and another at Seasalter in Kent. No doubt in Old English times there were many more, whose traces have now been erased from the map. However, his memory as Hermit and Archbishop, Abbot and Royal Counsellor, Martyr and Patriot who loved another people, can never be erased from the spiritual and national history of this land.

Holy Father Alphege of Canterbury, pray to God for us!

September 1994

79. St Paulinus of York

It is by no means clear when the first Christian church was founded in York, but we can suppose that it was during the Roman occupation of the first three centuries. The Roman York, *Eboracum*, was an important city. Indeed traditions hand down to us the names of three bishops – Samson, Pyramus and Thadiocus, but these are shadowy figures and we can say little more about them or the fate of Christianity in York until the 7th century.

After St Augustine's initial success in the south-east of England, he sent word to Pope Gregory in Rome that he needed further helpers. According to Bede the first and most outstanding of these were 'Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus and Rufianus', who were sent out in the year 601 from St Gregory's monastery of St Andrew on the Caelian Hill in Rome. Paulinus was a Roman citizen and is described by Bede as 'tall, dark-haired with a slender aquiline nose'. His first say, apparently, to last for twenty-four years, was in Canterbury, to which were brought vestments, sacred vessels, relics, altar-coverings, church ornaments and 'many books'.

It was only when the saintly King of Kent, Ethelbert, wished to marry his daughter, Ethelburgh, to the still pagan King of Northumbria, Edwin, that the monk or possibly priest-monk Paulinus was called on for other work. Having obtained from Edwin the assurance that no obstacles would be placed in the way of the Christian Faith, on 21 July 625 Paulinus, 'a man beloved of God', was consecrated bishop by Archbishop Justus of Canterbury. He was entrusted with the mission of accompanying Ethelburgh and her companions northwards. He was to be her personal chaplain, celebrate the heavenly mysteries every day and give instruction. Moreover since Edwin had already shown a willingness to live and worship in accordance with the Faith, Paulinus hoped that he would play a missionary role and his initial title was 'Bishop of the Northumbrians'. This was the long-awaited and prayed for chance of Augustine's mission to break out of the south of England.

Paulinus' clear intention was not only 'to maintain the faith of his wards unimpaired but also if possible to bring some of the heathen to grace and faith', 'to bring the nation to which he was sent to the knowledge of the Christian truth'. And for this he toiled unceasingly. In the following year the Queen gave birth to a daughter, Enfleda or Eanfled, who was baptized at Pentecost with twelve Northumbrians. So important was this moment that even Pope Boniface wrote to the King and then the Queen, urging Edwin to accept baptism. And Edwin did so in 627, a year already marked by the destruction of the pagan temple and idols of Northumbria at Goodmanham in Yorkshire by their own high priest. This was the breakthrough which Paulinus had laboured for. The King was baptized with all the nobility and many humbler folk on Easter Day, 12 April. The King was baptized in York in the wooden church of St Peter that he had raised up, which was then later built into a square, stone church.

We can suppose that the people were baptized elsewhere, in the River Derwent, by which stood the royal residence. Indeed a stretch of this river, near the Roman ford at Malton, is to this day known as 'the Jordan' in remembrance of these momentous events. Over the next six years Paulinus preached all over the North, baptising the King's four sons, a second daughter, a grandson and a great-niece, who was to become St Hilda. On one occasion at the country-seat of the royal couple at Yeavinger in Glendale Paulinus spent thirty-six days catechising and baptising in the nearby River Glen, now called the Bowent. At Holystone, in Coquetdale in Northumbria, at 'the Lady's Well', a spring that bubbled up into a bath, Paulinus baptized 3,000 in 627. Elsewhere he baptized in the Swale near Catterick where he was ably assisted by the saintly James the Deacon. It seems he preached in Cumberland and built a stone church at '*Campodunum*', probably Tanfield in Yorkshire.

From Northumberland the Faith was to spread. So great was Edwin's zeal for the Faith the he personally persuaded Earpwald, King of East Anglia, to accept the faith with the whole of his people. Moreover Paulinus himself also preached south of the Humber in Lindsey. At Lincoln he baptized a certain Blæcca the reeve and his family. There he built a stone church 'of beautiful workmanship', where in 628 he was to consecrate Honorius, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, to the episcopate. He also baptized in the Trent at Littleborough and Southwell in Nottinghamshire with his deacon James. From this time there rests a description of Paulinus, 'a tall man with a slight stoop, black hair, an ascetic face, a thin hooked nose and a venerable and awe-inspiring presence'.

These successes were not to last, however. On the 12 October 633 Edwin was killed in battle by the pagan Penda of Mercia and his ally the Welsh Cadwallon who was formally Christian but in fact a barbarian. Amid the slaughter that followed, King Edwin's head was taken to the church in York and Edwin was venerated as a martyr for the Christian Faith. Bishop Paulinus took Queen Ethelburgh and returned by sea to Kent with Enfleda, Edwin's first daughter. About that time Bishop Romanus of Rochester had died and his See thus vacant. Paulinus, now aged about sixty, took up this See in Kent where he was to remain for the next eleven years. It was only here in 634 that he finally received the *pallium* as Bishop of York from Rome, where they had not yet heard the news of King Edwin's death. We know little of his activity in Rochester; tradition records a visit to Glastonbury where he rebuilt the old church dedicated to St Mary and covered its roof with Mendip lead.

In Kent we may presume that he helped the widow Ethelburgh to found her convent in Lyminge. Here she became Abbess, reposing on the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, 8 September, in 647. Her daughter, Enfleda, would also be widowed and would become a nun at Whitby under her kinswoman St Hilda whom she later succeeded as Abbess. She reposed on 10 February, probably in 704 and was also venerated as a saint. Paulinus himself reposed on 10 October 644, having toiled for forty-three years. St Paulinus was remembered in the North. In Glendale in Northumberland the church of Branxton is dedicated to him, though under the name

of Paul (as we shall see Paulinus is often contracted to Paul) and a nearby stream is called 'Pallinsburn', the burn of Paulinus, where no doubt he used to baptize.

At Dewsbury in Yorkshire there used to be a stone cross inscribed '*Paulinus hic prædicavit et celebravit*' (Here preached and served Paulinus). Similar crosses stood at Easingwold and further west at Whalley in Lancashire. At Lincoln the church of St Paul or Paulinus on the cathedral hill stands on the actual site of the stone church that the saint originally built. St Paul's church in Stamford may recall a missionary journey in Lincolnshire. Southwell Minster is also said to be built on the site of one of Paulinus' churches. In Kent two church dedications near Rochester recall Paulinus' episcopate there. One is at Crayford, the other at St Paul's Cray, a village named after the church and the saint to whom it is dedicated. As regards his holy relics, they were much venerated in Rochester and York. So is remembered Paulinus, Bishop of York and Rochester.

Holy Father Paulinus, pray to God for us!

September 1994

80. St Felix, Apostle of East Anglia

The story of the Christianization of East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire east of the River Cam) begins not with success but with a double failure. The first East Anglian to accept the Christian Faith in the early seventh century was King Redwald who, unfortunately, swiftly forsook his Faith. The second case was that of his son and successor, King Earpwald in 627. But he was killed soon after by a pagan and East Anglia relapsed for the second time into paganism. Three years after this, in 630, Redwald was succeeded to the East Anglian throne by his brother Sigebert. Sigebert had spent many long years in exile in Gaul to escape the hostility of his apostate father and there he had been baptized and become a devout and learned Christian. As a result he was to labour for the rest of his short life to establish the Faith in the whole of his East Anglian kingdom. In this he was to be much aided by a certain Felix.

Felix was from Burgundy in Gaul and, after his arrival in England in 631, was consecrated Bishop of East Anglia by the saintly Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury. His See was fixed at the then important seaport of Dunwich, near the Norfolk-Suffolk border. In addition to direct missionary-work, Bishop Felix sought to educate. Probably at Saham Toney in Norfolk or perhaps in Dunwich itself, he founded a seminary-school on the Gaulish model to educate the young and he furnished it with 'teachers and masters according to the practice at Canterbury'. Felix was helped in all this by Sigebert who himself was to renounce the throne and become a monk in the monastery founded in the town we now call Bury St Edmunds. However, his life was cut short by the invasion of the pagan King Penda of Mercia in 635, as a result of which Sigebert was venerated as a saint.

Bishop Felix was also particularly helped by the appearance of an Irish holy man, Fursey, who with companions founded a monastery at Burgh Castle in Norfolk. Probably the church at Cockley Cley in Norfolk was also founded at this time. Felix also established a monastery at Soham near the Cambridgeshire / Suffolk border and his name has been linked with the first church at Ely too, as also elsewhere. As a result of this support and his own zealous toils, in the punning words of Bede, Bishop Felix 'reaped a good harvest of believers. He delivered the whole province from its age-old wickedness and *infelicity*, brought it to the Christian Faith and works of righteousness – in full accord with the sacrament of his own name – guided it towards eternal *felicity*'. His success was to earn him the epithet of 'Apostle of East Anglia'. His episcopate ended after seventeen years with his repose on 8 March 647, after which the deacon of Archbishop Honorius, Thomas, was appointed to succeed Felix. Veneration for Felix grew at once, his relics being enshrined at his monastery in Soham.

Today the memory of St Felix remains in his own diocese and outside it. The church of Babingley is said to be the oldest in Norfolk, founded by the saint and,

significantly, it is dedicated to St Felix. The surrounding low hills were known locally as 'Christian hills'. Local legends say that he sailed up the nearby stream, which was then much larger and navigable, and that the saint was close to the animal world, especially beavers and badgers. Nearby Shernborne is said to be the second oldest church of Norfolk and also founded by Felix and the same is true at Loddon and Reedham, also in Norfolk.

In Yorkshire both Felixkirk (the church of St Felix) and nearby Kirkby Ravensworth have churches dedicated to the saint. We may wonder if these dedications do not recall some unrecorded mission of Bishop Felix. But perhaps the clearest witness to the presence of Bishop Felix is at Felixstowe. This seaport, as bustling today as nearby Dunwich must have been in the time of the bishop, is named after the saint, meaning 'the holy place of Felix'. Tradition says that Felix made his first landing here. The little peninsula in which Felixstowe is situated was long dominated by the memory of the saint. The churches in the local villages of Walton and now lost Hallowtree were both dedicated to him, probably indicating that he founded them. It was also traditionally said that the local Suffolk village of Flixton and Flixham in Norfolk took their names from Felix.

What is certain is that Dunwich itself, once one of the largest and busiest and largest cities in all England, must have contained, with its nine churches, many memorials of the saint. No more, alas. From the Middle Ages on, Dunwich has been slowly swept into the sea under the force of North Sea tides: the remains of the last medieval church collapsed over the eroded clay cliffs at the beginning of the twentieth century. But local folklore maintains that on calm nights one can still hear the bells of the churches ringing and calling the ghostly people of Dunwich to prayer. Symbolically perhaps, England's faithful past, submerged beneath the sea floods of disbelief, is still calling her to prayer from under the waves

Holy Father Felix, Apostle of East Anglia, pray to God for us!

September 1994

81. St John of Beverley

There are certain Old English saints whose warm, loving and humble spirits are particularly attractive to us. We think firstly no doubt of St Cuthbert, but also of St Swithin of Winchester, St Oswald of Worcester and perhaps other lesser known hermit-saints such as St Ethilwald of Lindisfarne, St Herbert of Derwentwater, St Alnoth of Stowe and St Cuthman of Steyning. But in thinking of these saints, our minds cannot fail to turn to St John of Beverley. Who was he?

He was born at Harpham in Yorkshire in about the middle of the seventh century of a noble family. From here he went to study in Canterbury at the famous school of St Adrian the Abbot and St Theodore. Here he learnt Latin and Greek, mathematics, astronomy, sacred music, church poetry and medicine, knowledge of which was to prove most useful to John in future acts of healing. Here he studied with many other young people from all over the British Isles and it was here too that Archbishop Theodore bestowed the name of John upon him. After this initial period of his life he returned to Yorkshire to become a monk in the double monastery of St Hilda at Whitby.¹ This monastery was a centre of church culture, contemplation, crafts and learning for all Yorkshire and Northumbria. It produced no fewer than five bishops, three of them to be sainted by the Church. The foundation of studies at Whitby where Abbess Hilda had collected a large library was the Holy Scriptures and John was to become famous for his ability to explain them. It was on 25 August 687 that a new chapter in the life of the monk John opened when he was consecrated as Bishop of Hexham in succession to the saintly Bishop Eata.²

Like St Cuthbert, Bishop John worked tirelessly for his diocese but it is clear even from this point that his own leanings were to the life of the hermit. On the bank of the Tyne, almost opposite Hexham, sheltered by a green wooded mound, lay a peaceful cemetery dedicated to the Archangel Michael. Year after year the holy bishop used to come with a few companions for prayer and solitude. Here he delighted to spend Lent which was always marked by some act of charity. He would bid his disciples to seek out some poor or unfortunate person whom he could care for. According to our authority, the Venerable Bede, one such unfortunate was a physically afflicted dumb boy, whom Bishop John healed with the sign of the cross and taught to speak. It is said that Bede himself may have been one of John's pupils; in any case John ordained him both to the diaconate and then eleven years later at the canonical age of thirty to priesthood and Bede had a great veneration for Bishop John.

In 705, after eighteen years at Hexham, John became Bishop of York, succeeding another Whitby saint, Bosa of York. Here he was to stay for the following thirteen years, maintaining peace and love in the difficult situation with St Wilfrid who laid claim to the See of York, but who was unable to exercise his claim because of his dispute with the kings of Northumbria. Bishop John was present at the Synod on the Nidd in 705 which dealt with this issue. John was a most active bishop, consecrating churches, visiting monasteries and everywhere endearing himself to his flock by his

many miracles of healing, acts of kindness to the sick and sorrowing and by his inexhaustible sympathy for all.

According to a young disciple and later Abbot, Herebald, John managed to combine travelling about his huge diocese with teaching. Always accompanied by others, from horseback he would teach church singing and the other arts. On one occasion Herebald fell from his horse and was seriously injured but was healed by the prayers of St John. In York John once more sought out a place of retirement. At first he found this at another little church dedicated to St Michael, probably on the site of the present church of St Michael-le-Belfry next to York Minster. But then during his journeyings he came across another spot that wholly captivated him. It was 'a land of wild forests and waters, in the midst of which stood a church dedicated to St John the Divine'. From the nearby stream which abounded in beavers this place came to be known as Beverley, 'beaver stream'.

Here Bishop John bought some land, enlarged and beautified the church, making it into a double monastery which he richly endowed. When, eventually in old age after thirty-one years in the episcopate, Bishop John 'retired', it was to this place that he loved so much that he came to spend the remaining three years of his life. The lowly Bishop, having first consecrated his deacon, Wilfrid, Bishop in his place, was to end his busy life in humble contemplation in this monastery. He who had consorted with so many of the great of his age, St Theodore, St Adrian, St Hilda and others departed this life here. He reposed on 7 May 721, not by coincidence the eve of the Feast of St John the Divine according to the Orthodox calendar, and was at once revered as a saint of God. His many miracles were reliably recorded both by St Bede and later in the eighth century by Alcuin.

So dearly did Bishop John love Beverley that it was his destiny to become known not as John of York, as befitted him, but John of Beverley, and he is patron of the town of Beverley to this day. A large stretch of common-land there, known as Westwood, is said to have been presented to the town by the Bishop. Other churches are also dedicated to him. First the church of his birthplace, Harpham, where there is also a holy well bearing his name and on the bank of the Tyne nearly opposite Hexham too. Here the church of St John of 'Lee', short for St John of Beverley, recalls that very chapel of St Michael where the Bishop came to refresh his soul, thus hallowing this spot. Other churches were or are dedicated to him in Yorkshire at Salton and Wressle, and in Nottinghamshire, at Scarrington and also Watton, where there was a convent in St John's time. It is quite probable that all these represent churches founded by St John in his many travels around his diocese.

His relics were venerated in York Minster and to our knowledge they are buried there under the floor of the nave to this day. No doubt in these and other places the sayings and doings of the saint were treasured up long after his repose in the memories of his pupils and flock. As the author of a work on England's patron saints, F. Arnold-Forster, wrote in the last century: 'And in these places St John is still remembered,

and his spirit seems to haunt the places where once he dwelt in bodily presence – the places where his numberless deeds of kindness were wrought, his prayers poured forth, his disciples trained for this world and that which is to come’.

Holy Father John of Beverley, pray to God for us!

September 1994

1. Double monasteries of monks and nuns were a phenomenon of the early centuries of Christianity in both East and West, especially in Spain, Gaul and from there England. They seem to have developed as a result of the scarcity of spiritual teachers, Abbots and Abbesses of holy life. Nowhere however, including in England, did they last for long, for all too predictable temptations soon arose. Within little over a century after St Hilda, in 783, Canon XX of the Seventh Œcumenical Council specifically forbade such monasteries. The Canon begins: ‘As from now on we decree that no double monastery is to be made, because this becomes a scandal and offence to many persons ...’.

2. The See of Hexham, like that of Lindisfarne, is extraordinary in that no fewer than eight of its bishops are counted as saints.

82. Two Children of a Family of Saints: St Werburgh and St Milburgh

‘Families that pray together stay together.’

The canonization thirteen years ago of the martyred Russian Royal Family once again awoke many to family values in the context of holiness. Not only contemporary but also ancient Church history tells us of several holy families; St Sophia and her children, Sts Hope, Faith and Charity; Sts Terence, Neonilla and their seven children, recently declared by the Church of Greece to be the patron-saints of families; St Basil the Great, his grandmother St Macrina, his mother St Emilia, his brothers St Gregory of Nyssa and St Peter of Sebaste, his sisters St Macrina and St Theosevia. However Church history gives us a still greater example of family holiness: that of the Old English Royal Family.

Pre-Conquest or Pre-Schism England lived through two periods of greatness, a golden age in the seventh and eighth centuries and a silver age in the tenth century. The silver age was dominated by outstanding Kings and Hierarchs. The Kings begin with the venerable King Alfred the Great, his wife St Etheldwitha of Winchester, their daughter St Ethelgiva, Abbess of Shaftesbury, a granddaughter St Edburgh of Winchester and their grandson’s wife St Elgiva. This latter was mother of St Edgar, King of England, who was father of St Edward the Martyr and St Edith of Wilton. Thus a family, or perhaps rather a dynasty, of seven saints. The story of the golden age of English piety is, however, even more extraordinary.

In the year 597, when the Christian Faith was first brought to England, one of the greatest difficulties faced by the missionaries was the division of the land into seven often warring kingdoms. The most effective way of overcoming this disunity was dynastic marriage between members of the royal families, families which once Christianised were able to spread the Faith with immense zeal. In this undertaking the main and vital role was played by Queens and princesses, the women of the royal families, who, as ever, showed far greater sensitivity to the Truth of Christ than the men. Many of them, as widows, together with unmarried sisters or daughters turned to the monastic life, which in turn helped weld together the Seven Kingdoms into national unity. Indeed Old England has no fewer than thirty-seven holy Abbesses, many of them of royal origin. The family-tree of this golden age of holiness starts in 597 with the first convert.

[PLEASE INSERT FIG 3 TO TAKE UP THE WHOLE FACING PAGE]

This was Ethelbert who, as King of Kent, brought his kingdom to the Faith, although without any sort of coercion, and was influential in encouraging the adoption of the Faith in other kingdoms. He himself, venerated as a saint, had a son and a daughter. The latter is St Ethelburgh, who married and helped convert the King of Northumbria, St Edwin. Widowed, she founded and became Abbess of Lyminge in Kent. Her

daughter was St Enfleda, also widowed after a dynastic marriage, who became Abbess of Whitby, where she was succeeded as Abbess by her own daughter St Elfleda.

St Ethelbert's son had a daughter and two sons. The daughter is St Eanswyth, Foundress and Abbess of Folkestone. The first son had four children: Sts Ethelred and Ethelbert, martyrs, St Ermengyth a nun and St Ermenburgh. This St Ermenburgh married a prince of Mercia (the Midlands) and, widowed became Foundress and Abbess of Minster-in-Thanet. She was mother to three saints, Milburgh, Abbess of Wenlock, Mildred, nun, and Mildgyth Abbess of Eastry in Kent. The second son married into the royal family of the Kingdom of East Anglia. His wife, St Saxburgh, founded a convent at Minster-in-Sheppey in Kent and when widowed became Abbess first there and then at Ely in her native East Anglia. This St Saxburgh had a brother, St Jurmin, a first sister, St Withburgh, Foundress and Abbess of East Dereham in Norfolk, a second sister St Ethelburgh and a half-sister, St Sethrida, who were both Abbesses in Gaul.

However, there was a sixth child of this holy family, the most famous of all: St Audrey, Foundress and Abbess of Ely. The remarkable piety of St Saxburgh's family was continued in the next generation, for before she was widowed she had had two children: St Erkengota a nun, and St Ermenhild. This Ermenhild also married into the royal family of Mercia like her cousin St Ermenburgh (see above). She gave birth to three children who are saints, St Wulfhad and Rufin, martyrs, and St Werburgh, Foundress and Abbess of several convents. When Ermenhild was widowed she became a nun and then followed her mother as Abbess of Minster-in-Sheppey and then Ely. St Ermenhild's husband was never counted as a saint, but her brother-in-law is St Ethelred, Abbot of Bardney, her sister-in-law St Ostrythe and another sister-in-law, St Edburgh of Bicester, and two other sisters-in-law, St Cyneburgh and St Cyneswith, both Abbesses of Caistor.

The above extraordinary catalogue includes no fewer than twenty-seven saints. Through them the kingdoms of England, particularly the principal kingdoms of Kent, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria, became interlinked and a pattern of national unity established for the future. Moreover this pattern was much strengthened by the Gospel preached and lived in the remarkable monastic framework set up by the very Queens and princesses who had joined together the kingdoms. What is remarkable is that the five generations of holiness all stemmed from one person – St Ethelbert, King of Kent, himself the convert of St Augustine. Let us look now at two representatives of this family holiness, both cousins from the fifth generation, St Werburgh and St Milburgh.

As we have seen above, on her mother's side St Werburgh was descended from a long line of saints from the kingdom of Kent. Her father, however, was Wulfhere, prince of the newly-converted Mercia, and her father's father was none other than Penda, the warlike pagan King Mercia, responsible for the deaths of Christian kings from

neighbouring kingdoms, St Oswald, King of Northumbria and St Sigebert, King of East Anglia. Her father died when she was young and so she was brought up with her great-aunt, St Audrey, at Ely, later going to Minster-in Sheppey in Kent with her mother St Ermenhild and her grandmother St Saxburgh.

No doubt here she made the acquaintance of her cousins Milburgh, Mildred and Mildgyth, and the Kentish and East Anglian traditions of family and monastic piety banded down through the generations, as well as the advice of spiritual fathers and mothers whom the family had known, going right back to St Augustine himself. She was destined to take back these traditions with her to her native Mercia. A late tradition says that Werburgh had a suitor whom she rejected, and it was he who was responsible for martyring her two brothers, Wulfhad and Rufin who were protecting her. However this may be, it is clear that when still young she had already chosen the monastic life. She was to become nun and then Abbess at Minster-in-Sheppey and then at Ely itself. But this was not to last. On account of both her spiritual and practical experience in the great convents of England, she was invited by her father's brother, King, and later St, Ethelred of Mercia to take charge of convents in Mercia, at Weedon (Northants.), Hanbury (Staffs.) and Threckingham (Lincs.).

Stories about her from this period particularly concern her links with the animal world. A picturesque legend describes the control she had over wild geese which were devastating crops at Weedon. Abbess Werburgh ordered them into a stable and such was their obedience that the next morning they asked her to be released. Another story, which shows her humility, is that of how at Weedon she protected a cowherd, Alnoth, a man of simplicity and holiness, from a cruel steward. She threw herself at the steward's feet and asked him to spare Alnoth, whom she said was more acceptable to God than any of themselves. Later the same cowherd was to become a hermit in nearby woods at Stowe and then was murdered. He was venerated locally as a saint on 27 February. Abbess Werburgh reposed at Threckingham on 3 February in about the year 700, certainly not later than 710. Apparently at her own request, the relics were taken from Threckingham to Hanbury, where they remained until 875, much venerated.

In this year, for fear of the Danish invasions, the holy remains were transferred to Chester to the church which became known as St Werburgh's. This is the beginning of her long connection with that city and she is often called 'St Werburga (sic) of Chester'. The site of St Werburgh's church is today that of Chester Cathedral, where part of the stone base of her shrine still survives. In 1540 Henry VIII made the abbey church of St Werburgh into a Cathedral and as Protestants often did, like the Normans before them, rededicated it. However, even today it still keeps its link with the saint through the name of the street leading to the Cathedral – St Werburgh Street. St Werburgh's prayers were much sought by the young, especially children and young women.

The church at Hanbury is still dedicated to St Werburgh and this may mean that she actually founded the convent whereas she only reformed Weedon and Threckingham. Near Hanbury another dedication is at Kingsley. Churches at Derby and nearby Spondon and Blackwell are also dedicated to her and these too are probably her foundations, for it is known that she laboured here and also in nearby Repton. Although Chester was rededicated at the Reformation, in Cheshire the village of Warburton is named after the saint (Werbungton) and the church there is also dedicated to her, apparently on the site of a monastery. In the Midlands there used to be another village, now lost, called Werburgewic.

Werburgh's presence is also remembered in Kent in the present-day village of Hoo St Werburgh near the convent at Minster-in-Sheppey and previously in another lost village of Thanet, Werburghingland. Other dedications to her are in Bristol, Wembury in Devon and at Treneglos and Warbstow (the stow or holy place of Werburgh) in Cornwall. These dedications may represent a distribution of relics of the saint in the West.

St Werburgh's cousin, Milburgh, was older than her sisters, Mildred and Mildgyth. Their names mean respectively, mild or gentle protection, gentle strength and gentle gift. In Kent the youngest sister St Mildgyth is remembered as nun and probably Abbess of Eastry, her relics later being translated to Canterbury. St Mildred was also much revered in Kent as Abbess of Minster-in-Thanet, where relics are still venerated to this day. The name of Mildred was borne by countrywomen in Kent up until the nineteenth century. What then can be said of the eldest sister, St Milburgh?

Unlike her sisters, she did not return to her mother's Kent but remained in her father's kingdom of Mercia. Unfortunately, we have few reliable details about her from the Old English period, but the romanced tales of the unreliable post-Conquest writers. According to them she too, like her cousin Werburgh, was sought in marriage. However she managed to escape her suitor at the village now named after her, Stoke St Milborough in Shropshire, where today there is a holy well dedicated to her. Milburgh then was destined for the monastic life and she was consecrated as a virgin by St Theodore of Canterbury. She went to live at the monastery, possibly a double one, founded by her most zealous converted father at Much Wenlock in Shropshire in c.670 under the direction of St Botolph. It is with this monastery that she has always been linked and it was here that she became the second Abbess.

It is said that the monastery flourished 'like a paradise' under her rule. She was favoured with grace and through her spiritual abilities brought many to repentance. One of the stories relating her miraculous healing powers tells how a grieving mother brought her dead child to the convent and besought Milburgh to restore her to life. The Abbess told her that such a miracle was quite beyond her powers, but when the mother insisted, clinging to her faith that Milburgh could work this marvel if only she were willing, the holy Abbess fell to her knees in ardent prayer and the child was brought back to life. It was during her abbacy that took place the famous vision of

heaven and hell of the Monk of Wenlock, related by St Boniface in the early eighth century.

Folklore records how Milburgh protected the crops and was close to the natural world. A rhyme collected in Shropshire in the last century runs thus:

If old dame Mil will our fields look over
Safe will be corn and grass and clover;
But if the old dame is gone fast to sleep
Woe to our corn, grass, clover and sheep.

Like her cousin Werburgh, Milburgh too was connected with protecting the fields from wild geese – a great pest in those days – and little pewter geese were sold at her shrine to faithful pilgrims. Another special link with the saint among country people is the apricot, said to be her favourite fruit, which she especially protects.

After a long and painful illness Milburgh calmly bade her nuns farewell and gently passed away on 23 February 715. Her last words were: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: blessed are the peacemakers’. In the ninth century the monastery was ravaged by the Danes and her relics lost. However they were recovered at the end of the eleventh century when children playing found the tomb. Found together with various documents, including the holy Abbess’ will with an authentic list of lands belonging to the monastery, the relics were enclosed in a silver casket. Miracles occurred, including the healing of lepers and the blind.

Today very little remains of St Milburgh’s monastery at Much Wenlock. But she is remembered locally, at Stoke St Milborough, as already mentioned, and by nearby church dedications at Beckbury in Shropshire, Wixford in Warwickshire, Offenham in Worcestershire and at Llanvillo across the border in Wales. The stories linked with the Abbess give us an image of a gentle, homely, unambitious nature which concord very well with her name, ‘gentle protection’. She travelled little, but showed conscientious attention to the important domestic duties of monastic life, and was the friend and helper of all who sought her aid. As we have seen, it was for these kindly, homely qualities that she was remembered in Shropshire. A nineteenth-century writer, F. Arnold-Forster wrote touchingly of her: ‘She is worthy to be held in remembrance, for she is one of those typically English saints, living tranquilly among her own people, who, by frequent acts of unpretentious kindness, made themselves beloved by those amidst whom they dwelt’.

And so we come to the end of the lives of these two saints and cousins, royal Abbesses, who inherited a legacy of holiness from their great great grandfather St Ethelbert of Kent, down through their mothers St Ermenhild and St Ermenburgh. Their examples and the thought that one saint in a family can save generations should surely inspire us to act of repentance for our own salvation and that of our families. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: blessed are the peacemakers’.

Holy Mothers Werburgh and Milburgh, pray to God for us!

September 1994

83. Blessed by Christ

There is an English kingdom not to all revealed,
Another England whose mystery may by unsealed;
Souls undulled, undimmed, though yet scoffed and scorned and mocked,
May this kingdom enter; no door to them is locked:

Within, the world unseen, where angels fair tread soft,
Within the England blessed by Christ, forgotten oft,
And long thought lost. There dwell the saints who went before:

There Alban, Austin, Paulin, Oswald, Theodore,
Mothers Eanswyth, Audrey, Hilda, Werburgh, Mildred,
Fathers Clement, Bede, Boniface, Guthlac, Wilfred,
Aidan, Chad and Cedd, Light of London Erkenwald,
King Edgar, Dunstan, Oswald, Alphege, Ethelwold,
Benet, Aldhelm, Holy Cuthbert and then Plegmund,
Swithin, Edith, Martyrs Edward and then Edmund.

All who call us back to that faithfulness of old
And bring us home to Paradise as is foretold,
To Minsters, Chesters, Canterburies of the heart,
That Bright and Everlasting Whitsun set apart,
That Eden where the little, Saxon churches stand,
And we who hold the old truths dear call together:
O all ye loved and hallowed of the English land,
Pray ye to God for us, always, now and ever!

September 1994

84. St Swithin of Winchester, Wonderworker

‘To Thee, O God of Creation, Son Almighty, Spirit of Comfort, Glory of the Trinity, I pray for Thy mercy in my need ... Grant me, O Lord of Heaven, Victory and True Faith ... ’

From ‘Judith’

There are Saints of God so humble that their greatness is only revealed long after their earthly lives. The mighty of this world did not see them and did not hear their ‘still small voice’ and so they were passed over. The great example of this meekness and lowliness is that of the Most Holy Mother of God, about Whom the Gospel speaks so little. Yet Her role the continuing Revelation down the centuries since has been that of Her Who is ‘more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim’, or as the Old English writer, Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham, put it, of Her Who ‘is raised and exalted above the host of angels’,¹ and Whose intercessions are daily requested by the faithful the world over.

In 1959 another excellent example of this humility was disclosed on the Greek island of Mytilene, to whose people were revealed through dream the holy relics and lives of Sts Raphael, Nicholas and Irene, who had been martyred for Christ by the Turks in 1463, nearly 500 years before. God discloses His Saints to us in His own good time, at the moment when we most need them. Who knows what Saints are yet to be revealed to the Orthodox world, who knows what marvels of Faith are yet to be uncovered for our edification? We know only that with the Eternal God, ‘one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, (2 Peter 3, 8). And this is all the more significant for us since it means that only yesterday the English land was united with the Orthodox Commonwealth of Nations. And it is from that time that we draw another example of a Saint whose greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven was revealed by God over one hundred years after he departed this life – St Swithin of Winchester.

In the year 793, after the golden age of English Christendom in the seventh and then eighth centuries, the monastery of Lindisfarne was sacked and destroyed by the Vikings. So began a dark century for the English Church and people, during which from the length and breadth of the land a prayer went up to heaven, ‘From the fury of the Northmen, deliver us, O Lord’. This dark age of the ninth century was to see hundreds of martyrs, King Edmund of East Anglia in 869, St Ebbe and all her convent in Coldingham, St Theodore and 79 others at Crowland, St Hedda and 84 companions at Peterborough, St Beocca and 89 companions at Chertsey and many others at Ely, Thorney, Bardney, Reculver, Northampton and in Dorset and Yorkshire, all in 870. It was into this dark age in c.800 to a noble family in Winchester that was born a child called Swithin (correctly Swithun, but we shall use the more usual form).

Under the rising star of the House of Wessex, Winchester was in fact the English capital, and the south-west the seat of English resistance to the heathen Northmen. Of Swithin's early life we know nothing, but according to a charter from 838 he was deacon to Bishop Helmstan of Winchester and served in the royal household. And we know that as the raids and destruction of the Northmen worsened, when he was about forty years old he was advising King Ethelwulf of Wessex on affairs of Church and State. On 30 October 852 he was consecrated the 19th Bishop of Winchester by the Archbishop of Canterbury. His diocese which spread from the Isle of Wight to the Thames was at the heart of the English struggle. Swithin himself witnessed the slaughter when the Danish fleet arrived at Southampton and in 860 when a naval force unsuccessfully stormed Winchester itself. We can only guess at the ardent prayers of St Swithin, Bishop of the Royal Capital, for his King, his homeland, his diocese and the flock entrusted to his care, for the true nature of those prayers, as we shall see, was only to be revealed later.

What we can say is that Swithin was a practical man: he built the first bridge over the river Itchen at the East Gate of the City of Winchester. It was on this bridge that he performed the only miracle that we know of during his lifetime. A poor old woman who was crossing the bridge to sell a basket of eggs at the market stumbled and fell. Swithin, taking pity on her, made the sign of the cross over the eggs² and they were made whole. We know that he travelled around his diocese a great deal on foot, building and repairing churches. He would not ride on horseback and walked at night lest men should mock and taunt him. Solitude and simple living were dear to his heart. We know that his signature is on several charters of the period, still conserved, and that he played an essential role in establishing tithes, encouraging King Ethelwulf himself to give one tenth of his kingdom to the Church.

It has been suggested that Swithin was also a writer and it was he who in 856 composed the poem 'Judith' which we have quoted above. In this poem the story of Judith's victory over Holofernes, based on the Biblical Book of Judith, is retold in such a way that it may well symbolize the deliverance of Wessex and the free English from the Northmen at Ockley in Surrey and at Sandwich in Kent in 851. It is most significant that King Ethelwulf's wife was called Queen Judith and in the poem, one of the noblest and most brilliant in Old English, the Assyrians represent the Northmen, the Jews the English and Judith her namesake, the Queen of Free England. It is no less significant that St Swithin is also associated with the King's son, Prince Alfred, who was to become the greatest of English Kings, Alfred the Great, to whom are attributed 'The Proverbs of Alfred', and who is known as 'Alfred the Lawgiver', 'Alfred the Truth-teller', 'England's Comforter', 'England's Shepherd' and 'England's Darling'.³

An old tradition relates that Swithin was his tutor and that it was he who accompanied the young prince to Rome on one or perhaps two occasions, where Pope Leo IV invested the prince with the honour of a Roman consul. Swithin's role here is paramount because, as we know, it was Alfred the Great who was to restore England;

winning battles, Christianising the Danes, restoring Church culture, translating from Latin, thus paving the way on his death in 899 for the renaissance of the silver age of English Christianity in the tenth century. As the historian J. R. Green wrote: 'this capacity for inspiring trust and affection drew the hearts of Englishmen to a common centre (the Church), and began the upbuilding of a new England'.

Swithin reposed on 2 July 862. In his humility, the Bishop had asked to be buried in a simple grave, 'beneath the feet of passers-by and the rain dripping from the eaves', outside the west door of the Cathedral. So Swithin remained for over one hundred years, waiting for the God-appointed time to be revealed. According to the detailed account of Abbot Ælfric, writing soon after in c.996, it was in the year 968, 'in the days of noble King Edgar, when, by God's grace, Christendom was thriving well in the English land', that the grace won by St Swithin was revealed. The saint appeared on three different occasions in a vision to a devout blacksmith with the request that the Bishop of Winchester, Ethelwold 'the Venerable' open Swithin's grave and move the relics inside the church. 'Tell all men that as soon as they open my grave, there they shall find so precious a treasure that their gold shall be as nothing in comparison'. As a sign, the smith was told to remove one of the iron rings on Swithin's tomb. When the smith pulled it out, it came away easily, but when replaced, it became immovable.

Other miracles followed. A hunchback was told in a dream by two angelic youths to lie near St Swithin's grave. On awaking in the morning, he was healed and went to tell the monks that it was the Saint who had worked this wonder. Another miracle happened when a drowned man was restored to health. Another man, who could hardly see or speak, was also healed. In all eight miracles took place. Given the popular acclaim it was therefore decided both by the holy Bishop Ethelwold and King Edgar that the relics should be translated. This took place in the rain of 15 July 971. Bishop Ethelwold himself took up a spade to open the grave and reveal 'the precious treasure'. The relics were placed in a special shrine and transferred, 'with Abbot and monks and solemn chanting'. In the ten days that followed 200 people were healed and in the first twelve months an innumerable multitude. The cemetery around the church lay filled with cripples, virtually all of whom were healed.

Abbot Ælfric's life of St Swithin tells us in detail of many miracles, which had all happened only 25 years before he wrote them down, and were probably taken down from the accounts of the healed themselves or from eyewitnesses. Thus three blind women from the Isle of Wight were cured together with a dumb boy. A servant-woman was freed from undeserved punishment, a noble was healed from paralysis, 25 others, halt, deaf and dumb were cured in one day: 'The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear...' (Matt. 11, 5). A blind noble who had lived in Rome for four years in the hope of being healed on the relics of the saints there returned to England and was granted 'perfect sight' through St Swithin. Another blind man cried out: 'O Thou mighty Lord of men and angels, look down upon my misery; I cannot see; have mercy on me, Lord, through the great

Swithin ... O thou mild bishop, from whom often come many miracles through the living God, I pray thee, master, to intercede for me with the mighty Saviour, I believe that He will grant thee my petition'. He too was healed.

The monks were obliged to sing so many services of thanksgiving, rising three or four times a night, that they stopped the services. St Swithin himself appeared in a bright light in a vision to a devout man, saying, 'If they will not sing, straightway the miracles shall cease'. The monks began the services again. So many were the healings that on 22 October in the same year the holy relics were transferred to a new shrine, adorned with silver, jewels and three hundred pounds of gold, depicting the Sufferings, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. There followed a procession of some three miles around the city back to the Cathedral. The miracles continued, a blind and deaf man was healed; within three weeks 120 people, afflicted with all manner of diseases, were cured. A servant, fallen from his horse, was healed after his master prayed thus: 'O thou holy Swithin, pray to the Saviour that He may grant life to this sick servant, and I will be all the more faithful for this the rest of my days'. Abbot Ælfric wrote: 'Nevertheless it must be said that we must not pray to God's saints as to God Himself, because He alone is God, and above all things; but we should truly pray the saints to intercede for us with God Almighty, Who is their Lord, that He may help us'.

A noble from the Isle of Wight, bedridden for years, had a dream in which he was taken through the air by 'two shining saints, until they came to a lonely meadow, brightly flowered, and there was a church, of shining gold and precious stones; a bishop, in shining eucharistic vestments, stood before the altar'. The noble was called to repentance, and 'to do no harm to any man'. The noble asked the bishop who he was and was answered, 'I am he now newly come', and, 'When thou comest to Winchester, thou shalt know my name'. Here he was taken and healed 'forthwith by Almighty God for St Swithin'. Other miracles involved those unjustly punished who were freed from their fetters and bonds. Abbot Ælfric concluded his life: 'We cannot write, nor tell in words, all the miracles that the holy man Swithin wrought by the power of God in the sight of the people, both among captives and among the sick'. 'Swithin shines through his miracles'. 'The old church was hung around with crutches, and with the stools of cripples, (from one end to the other on both walls) who had been healed there, and even so they could not hang the half of them up'. 'We say of a truth that that time was blessed and winsome in England, when King Edgar furthered the Christian Faith, and built many monasteries, and his kingdom dwelt in peace'.

St Swithin's miracles continued as long as men prayed to him. On becoming Archbishop in 1006 St Alphege, Bishop of Winchester, transferred relics of St Swithin to Canterbury. In the eleventh century the Saint interceded for Queen Emma, unjustly accused of adultery. To the Christian people of this time, Swithin was a very real and ever present person, endowed with singular spiritual gifts. Even after the Normans and the building of their massive six hundred foot long new Cathedral,

consecrated in 1093, the veneration of St Swithin continued. In the thirteenth century a new silver shrine (the Saxon gold and jewels were probably looted) was made and this remained until its destruction in 1538. And even today St Swithin is reckoned as the Patron Saint of Winchester.

St Swithin is of course known to virtually all English people on account of the old weather saw, 'St Swithin's day if it do rain, for forty days it will remain'. Other sayings are, 'When it rains on St Swithin's day, the Saint is christening his apples' and 'Till St Swithin's day be past, apples be not fit to taste'. The origin of the first (quite untrue) saying may be connected with the fact that originally the Saint asked to be buried 'beneath the rain dripping from the eaves' or that it rained on the day of his translation, 15 July 971. More likely, however, all these sayings go back to the pagan past, for in other countries the same sayings exist about other saints and other days in June or July. Although the Saint is still remembered over a thousand years on through such sayings, it is our belief that in Old English times he was remembered quite differently, as a Saint of God and friend of the people, working miracles for the unfortunate. Devotion to the Saint was great as we have seen from the many healings performed, all faithfully recorded within a few years of his translation. Many ancient churches, fifty-eight in all, were dedicated to the Saint in well over twenty different counties, from Cornwall to Kent, Hampshire to Lincolnshire and Cheshire to Yorkshire. His veneration, in other words, was nationwide.

What can be said of St Swithin today? As we look over the historical panorama of Old English times, we may be inspired to understand why St Swithin was revealed only some one hundred years after his repose: Old English Christianity begins with a golden age in the seventh and eighth centuries. Towards the end of the eighth, a decline sets in, heralding the dark ninth century of the Northmen. Then comes the silver age of the tenth, the flowering of English monasticism, a spiritual, political and cultural renaissance symbolized by the 'Winchester School' of manuscript illumination. This was to be followed by decline in the eleventh, a decline which was not to be halted by great kings or hierarchs as in the ninth century. This eleventh century was marked by the successes of the renewed attacks of heathen Northmen, the Danes at the beginning of the century, and then their cousins, the semi-heathen Normans (Northmen) of 1066. The manifestation of the grace won by St Swithin, tutor to the King who saved England, 'England's Darling', Alfred the Great, was for the tenth century. In the eleventh it would have been too late: there could be no salvation from the new Vikings, the Normans, for England was not worthy of a new Swithin or a new Alfred and the reason why England was unworthy is, we believe, closely linked with the martyrdom of the King of England, St Edward, in 978, just seven years after the miraculous revelation of St Swithin in 971. The manifestation of St Swithin was 'a flowering before the end'.

Since then 1,000 years have passed. Today a plain marble slab on the green outside the Cathedral marks St Swithin's original resting place under the open sky, but his relics are believed to be buried unworthily under the flagstones of Winchester

Cathedral, where once they were honoured in their Saxon shrine. For those who have faith in the Saint and believe that with God 1,000 years is as one day, we pray that this day St Swithin's miracles will once more be manifested among us, and that by the prayers of such saints and the grace of God we may yet be led into a bronze age of English godliness and churchmanship, succeeding the golden and silver ages of Old England. And we believe that he will intercede with the Lord of Heaven and grant us 'Victory and True Faith', speaking to us anew, as the Saint of God seems to be speaking to us prophetically in the poem 'Judith':

'When God the Creator, the King of Mercy, shall send the shining light from the East, bear forth shields and mail-coats and gleaming helms before your breasts into the thick of the foe; lay low their leaders, their fated chief men; your enemies are doomed, and you shall gain glory and fame in the fight, as the mighty Lord has shown you by my hand ... Therefore glory be for ever to the dear Lord Who in his mercy made the wind and the airs, the skies and the heavens, the fast-running streams and the joys of Paradise'.

'Judith'

'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear'.

Holy Father Swithin, pray to God for us!

September 1994

1. See '*On the Dormition of the Holy Virgin Mary*' in '*Homilies of Ælfric*', Vol. II, p. 445.

2 The sign of the cross, made with three fingers, was a great token of piety among the Old English. According to the ninth century Blickling Homily for the Third Sunday in Lent: 'The sign of the cross is a greater terror to the Devil than the sword may be to any man ... all Christian folk should bless their entire bodies seven times with the sign of Christ's cross. First in the early morning, then at nine, at midday, at three, in the evening, before he go to rest and at dawn'. ('The Blickling Homilies', Morris, p. 46).

3 Alfred, the only English king to be called 'the Great', was venerated as a saint by many. The Proverbs attributed to him contain great wisdom: 'Wit (knowledge) without wisdom is but little worth'; 'Each day thou art useless if thou thankest not God for thy life'; 'Our Lord Christ is Lord over life and He is good above all goodness'.

85. St Cedd, Apostle of Essex

My house is in the plains beyond the mouth of Thames,
And built by the rushing wind and the tongued flames
Where the coast of Heaven borders the English coast,
And the byres of Essex are the shires of the Holy Ghost,
I am as old as the whole church in Britain,
Cedd raised the first rough fold of my sheep ...

From '*Judgement at Chelmsford*' by Charles Williams

'My happiest days were spent in the lost Aprils and lost Mays, there where
Blackwater widens to the sea.'

S. L. Bensusan

In the year 653, St Finan of Lindisfarne, successor to St Aidan, baptized Peada, the King of the Middle Angles at the King's village of Wallbottle ('the palace on the Wall') at Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. The King returned home 'full of joy' with four Northumbrian priests, one of them called Cedd. So reads the first reference in the Chronicle of Bede the venerable to Cedd. The mission to the Middle Angles was successful but for Cedd very brief, for it was not to be his final mission.

At this time the East Saxons, whose kingdom corresponds to Essex and much of what we now call London and south and east Hertfordshire, were ruled over by King Sigebert. This kingdom had become Christian under King Sabert at the beginning of the century, but after Sabert's death in 616, their bishop St Mellitus had been expelled and the kingdom reverted to paganism. King Sigebert, however, was converted to the Faith by the same King Oswy of Northumbria who had already converted King Peada, and was likewise baptized at Wallbottle in 653. Thus it was that St Finan sent Cedd and another priest to the East Saxon kingdom as missionaries. After re-establishing Christianity here after a lapse of some forty years, Cedd returned to Lindisfarne to be consecrated Bishop of the East Saxons.

Unfortunately we know very little of Cedd's activities and life from here on, but we can piece together the following events. As Bishop, Cedd built churches in several places, baptising, ordaining priests and deacons,¹ and establishing monasteries at Bradwell-on-Sea and Tilbury in Essex. Bishop Cedd's success was not even to be interrupted by the murder, foretold by Cedd, of King Sigebert, who is known to history as Sigebert the Good. We are told that Cedd baptized his successor, Swithelm, at the royal palace of the Christian kings of East Anglia at Rendlesham in Suffolk. We are told that Cedd often returned to his native Northumbria to preach and it was in 658 that he was granted land by King Oswald to found a monastery. This came about through the mediation of Cedd's brother Cælin, priest and royal chaplain, 'a man equally devoted to God'. Bishop Cedd chose a site 'among some high and lonely hills' and fasted.

This site came to be that of the monastery of Lastingham, built by a third brother of Cedd, St Cynibil, a priest. Cedd, himself an Anglian but of Celtic training at Lindisfarne, also acted as interpreter in 663/4 at the Synod of Whitby nearby. It was in Lastingham on 26 October 664 that Cedd departed this life, having caught the plague. On hearing of their founder's death, some thirty monks (a measure of Cedd's success and spirituality) came from Bradwell-on-Sea to live near the relics of Cedd. At first he was buried outside the monastery, but then a stone church dedicated to the 'Blessed Mother of God' was built and his body placed on the right of the altar. The Abbot of the monastery at this time was the fourth of the holy brothers, St Chad, later first Bishop of Lichfield. Bede the Venerable records how when St Chad reposed in 672, a monk saw 'the soul of his brother Cedd come down from heaven accompanied by angels and carried away Chad's soul to the Kingdom of God'. In the eleventh century the holy relics of both saints rested together in Lichfield, much venerated.²

Despite his little-recorded stay of only eleven years and his many activities in Northumbria, today St Cedd is remembered as the Apostle of Essex. A number of sites are connected with him. Firstly there is that of Bradwell-on-Sea, with the substantial and impressive remains of the monastic church of St Peter-on-the-Wall built by St Cedd and his helpers from the rubble of the Roman fort in which it stood. Its site, on a Roman road by the 'Brad Well', the Broad Stream, now called the River Blackwater or Pant, and looking across the North Sea, suggests that St Cedd sailed down to Essex from Lindisfarne and landed here on the quay of the Roman fort of Othona to found this monastery. Some of Cedd's helpers may have come from Kent, for the church was built in the Roman style of Kent with an apse, two *porticus* and a porch, not at all in the Celtic style of the North. The nave of the church measures approximately 60 feet in length, 30 feet in width and 20 in height.

Cedd's second monastery at Tilbury, traditionally East Tilbury, was situated on another Roman road, leading to an ancient Thames crossing, opposite Higham on the Kent coast. In the Middle Ages a hospital of St Mary stood here, possibly on the site of Cedd's monastery. In West Tilbury an early Saxon immersion font, three feet in diameter, has been found.³ Formerly it stood in the entrance of St James' church in West Tilbury. It is remarkable to think that this may have been the very font in which St Cedd himself baptized the people of Essex. Both Tilbury and Bradwell were strategic sites to found monasteries. But in Essex other foundations were also linked with St Cedd.

Firstly, quite nearby there is the village of Chadwell St Mary where local tradition firmly maintains that St Cedd and his many followers baptized in the 'Chad well' or cold spring. Secondly, lying on the old road north from Tilbury, that of Great Burstead (Burstead meaning 'the fortified place'), where the local church, founded in the seventh century and dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, may have been established by the Saint. Local tradition says that Cedd passed through and preached here, hallowing the well and erecting a cross. Local people speak of a lost monastery at Little Burstead nearby, but it is not clear whether this is connected with St Cedd.

Thirdly, at Prittlewell near Southend, whose name means ‘babbling or prattling stream’, tradition says that St Cedd baptized and founded the church, dedicated to the Mother of God. This tradition has been confirmed by archaeologists who have found a Saxon arch and established that the original plan of the church closely resembles that of Bradwell. Fourthly, there is the case of St Peter’s church in West Mersea on the Essex coast, directly opposite Bradwell, and also dedicated to St Peter. This church traditionally dates back to the saintly bishop. There are Saxon remains inside the church and the tower is largely Saxon. The road to the island where West Mersea is situated is built on a causeway of oak piles scientifically dated to the late seventh century. It has been suggested that this was the place of retreat of Sebbe, King of the East Saxons.⁴

So we come to the end of this brief life of the Apostle of Essex. St Cedd’s pioneering work, probably limited to the Essex coast, was to bear fruit after him. Missionary work was continued by Bishop Jaruman and then St Erkenwald, Bishop of London (+693) and his sister St Ethelburgh, Abbess of Barking (+675) and all the saints who laboured there such as the holy Abbess Hildelith (+ c.712) and the nun St Thordgyth (+ c.700). The pious King Sebbe, whom we have mentioned above, was also to be recognized as a saint after his repose in 694. He had first become a monk, and according to tradition founded St Peter’s monastery in the East Saxon capital, London, the monastery that we now call Westminster. His nephew was married to St Osyth (+ c.700) and an Essex village where she founded a convent is named after her to this day. Her son was Offa, King of Essex, who in 709 abdicated and departed this life a monk in Rome. Such is the story of how Essex, ‘God’s own county’ in the words of S. L. Bensusan, became Christian.

Holy Father Cedd and all the Saints of Essex, pray to God for us!

September 1994

1. The diaconate was a service in itself throughout the first millennium, and many remained deacons their whole lives. Only the Orthodox Church keeps this tradition today. Roman Catholicism lost it in the eleventh century, though it has recently, and rather artificially, restored the office.
2. Of the four brothers two became bishops, two priests and three saints. St Cedd is feasted on 26 October, St Chad and, locally, St Cynibil both on 2 March. The fourth brother, Cælin, though devout, was never venerated as a saint.
3. Baptism by immersion was standard practice throughout Christendom in the first millennium.
4. See ‘*East Saxon Heritage*’ by S. Pewsey and A. Brooks, 1993.

86. The Mystery of the Three Crowns: England's Three Eastern Kings

In childhood I can well remember being told a legend about how in Old English times three crowns were buried on the Suffolk coast. One was found many years ago, but then disappeared, a second was lost to the sea, but the third still lies concealed. Many have tried to find it, but without success. And that is all to the good, for it is said that as long as at least one of the crowns is still hidden, England cannot be invaded, and it is these crowns which protected England from invasion from the Armada, by Napoleon and again in the Second World War.

Of course, this is only a legend, and many believe it was actually invented only at the beginning of this century. However this may be, three golden crowns on a background of azure blue form the ancient heraldic emblem of East Anglia and it appears on a number of medieval Suffolk churches and again on the coat of arms of the Suffolk capital, Bury St Edmunds. Could the true significance of this ancient coat of arms be linked with something else, with the three holy kings who anciently reigned in East Anglia, that is to say, Suffolk, Norfolk and eastern Cambridgeshire? But who then are these three kings?

The first king is St Sigebert. We know little of him, but he must have been born at the beginning of the seventh century and according to Bede he was 'a devout and learned man' who had been baptized in exile in Gaul. After his stepbrother's death in 631 he returned to become King of East Anglia, inviting a priest from Gaul, Felix, to come and bring Christ to his kingdom. This Felix was made bishop in Canterbury and given a see in Suffolk at Dunwich, the main East Anglian port of the time, not far from a palace of the East Anglian kings at Rendlesham. A school was founded for the instruction of the newly baptized and Sigebert himself founded a monastery at 'Bedricsworth', now called Bury St Edmunds.

Other monasteries were founded at Soham in Cambridgeshire and, with the aid of an Irish missionary St Fursey, at Burgh Castle in Norfolk. Churches were founded and as the Faith made headway, the King himself decided to retire to his monastery of Bedricsworth, to win for himself an eternal kingdom. But soon after in 635, East Anglia was again attacked by its old enemy, the pagan Penda of Mercia, he who had previously killed Sigebert's step-brother, Earpwald. The still pagan Kingdom of Mercia, corresponding to what we now call the Midlands, wished to become the strongest of the English kingdoms, stronger even than Christian Northumbria, which then reigned supreme. The small Kingdom of East Anglia looked easy prey. The East Anglians forced Sigebert from his monastery and battle took place. The king, however, as a monk refused to fight, and carried only a stick. Sigebert was killed, the battle was lost, but the kingdom of heaven was won, for ever since he has been venerated as a martyr, his feast being fixed on 25 January. For Sigebert, whose name means 'bright victory' had as his model Our Lord Himself at Gethsemane, who also refused to defend himself. Such is the 'bright victory' of the first East Anglian saint.

Sigebert was succeeded by his cousin King Anna, a pious man and father of the holy family of Sts Saxburgh, Withburgh, Ethelburgh, Audrey, Sethrid and Jurmin, this latter much venerated at Bedricsworth. So it was that the East Anglian Kingdom went from strength to strength, exerting strong influence over the northern part of Essex, the East Saxon Kingdom to the south, as it lost strength and territory to Mercia.

And so we come to the second holy King of East Anglia, Ethelbert, often known as Albert or Albright. Born towards the end of the eighth century when the whole of England was directly or indirectly subject to the power of Offa, King of Mercia, Ethelbert ruled as King of East Anglia. We are told that he had been brought up religiously by his parents at the monastery and East Anglian capital of Bedricsworth. He was 'dear to God and beloved of men'. In an innocent, if perhaps naive, search for peace and good relations he went to King Offa, hoping to marry his third daughter, Alfreda. Offa, only nominally Christian, had a very high opinion of himself, styling himself on the 'Emperor' Charlemagne and building the great earthwork of Offa's Dyke, which still survives today.

On 20 May 794 at the Mercian royal palace of Sutton Walls, just outside Hereford, Ethelbert was treacherously murdered and beheaded by servants of Offa and his queen and buried by the River Lugg at Marden nearby. Guided by a light, searchers found the body. A spring gushed up on the site, now inside Marden church. More and more miracles occurred, the first of which was the healing of a blind man, and the relics were translated to Hereford, where to this day the Cathedral is dedicated to the saint – the only English Cathedral to be dedicated to an English saint.

As for Alfreda, heartbroken, she became an anchoress at Crowland on the borders of her fiancé's Kingdom. Here she remained for over forty years, making good a tragedy. Famed for her prophecies, on her repose she was venerated locally as a saint. The miracles of Ethelbert, the blessed peacemaker, continued, his renown grew, churches were dedicated to him in Mercia and, above all, no fewer than twelve churches in East Anglia and North Essex. The head relics were translated to Westminster and Hereford itself became a place of pilgrimage second only to Canterbury, though today only fragments of his shrine remain. In the tenth century he was much revered by St Dunstan. Ethelbert's name, which means 'noble and bright', was thus remembered with reverence, but Offa, in spite of acts of repentance, is remembered as a bloodthirsty tyrant. Such is the tragic, if glorious story of East Anglia's second king to win the Kingdom of Heaven.

After Ethelbert's murder, East Anglia fell into chaos, with Suffolk especially being dominated first by Mercia and then by Wessex; the East Anglian royal family was in danger of dying out. However, Mercia, Wessex and East Anglia all went into decline under the impact of the invasions and raids of the heathen Danes. In this desperate situation a Norfolk noble on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land met and invited a young cousin of the East Anglian royal family from Saxony to become king. His name was Edmund. In 854 Edmund landed on the Norfolk coast at Hunstanton at a place still

known as St Edmund's Point, and prayed that God's blessing might be on him and his people. It was here that later the King built a palace and the ruins of St Edmund's chapel can still be seen there to this day.

He first spent a year at the royal palace at Attleborough in Norfolk under the supervision of the Bishop of Elmham, where we are told he learnt the Old English Psalter by heart. (This Psalter was, it is said, piously conserved at Bury St Edmunds until the destruction of Henry VIII). In this way the young man was prepared for his royal duties and gradually came to be accepted by all as the future King of East Anglia. The various factions involved finally realized that he was the only hope for the survival of an East Anglia, independent of both the Danes and other English kingdoms. Thus all was staked on the young prince and on Christmas Day 855 he was anointed and crowned King, probably in St Stephen's Chapel on a hill above Bures on the Essex-Suffolk border. In the following decade it seemed that the East Anglian House had made the right choice. King Edmund proved to be a firm ruler, organising successful defences against the Danes who were raiding the Kingdom. In his tenth century life, taken down from an eyewitness account, it is said: 'Edmund the blessed was wise and honourable, humble and devout, always mindful of the true teaching, bountiful to the poor and to widows even like a father'.

However, ten years into his reign, in 865, the Danes launched a full-scale invasion under Ingvar and Ubba their chieftains, 'associated by the devil', and an army 20,000 strong. Ubba invaded to the North, but Ingvar came into East Anglia, 'stalked over the land and slew the people, and shamefully tormented the innocent Christians'. In 868 Edmund fought against the Danes side by side with Alfred the Great at the siege of Nottingham. In East Anglia itself he had organized a resistance movement, and it may be that the defence system known as 'Edmund's dyke' near Newmarket dates from this time. Resistance was so effective that the Danes started to hunt down the King. Twice, it is said, he escaped the Danes. Ingvar offered peace and a place to Edmund as under-king, but Edmund refused, saying: 'It was never my custom to take to flight, I would rather die, if I must, for my own land; and Almighty God knows that I shall never turn aside from His worship, nor from His true love ... Edmund the King will never bow in life to Ingvar the heathen leader, unless he will first bow to the Saviour Christ with faith'.

In 869, after the Battle of Thetford, Edmund was pursued to Hoxne in Suffolk and there, on 20 November, cornered. Edmund threw away his weapons, 'wishing to follow Christ's example', thinking that his death might save his people. The king was bound in chains, mocked, beaten, tied to an oak-tree, scourged and then shot through with arrows. Having refused to renounce Christ, and indeed constantly calling on His name, he was then, like St Ethelbert before him, beheaded, the head being hidden in thick brambles nearby. The legend tells that when the body was found, the people were sore at heart at not finding the head. But it is said that the head, guarded by a wolf, heard their cries of 'Where art thou?', and either it, or perhaps the wolf, seemed

to call out to them, 'Here, here, here'. The people soon found the head, untouched between the wolf's paws.

Edmund was buried and a wooden church was built over the relics. A column of light, 'like a flame', was seen over the burial-place. Then, since miracles were occurring more and more frequently, a second more worthy church was built. Edmund was more and more venerated both by the English under Alfred the Great, who was much inspired by his former companion's martyrdom, and also by many Danes who were coming to accept the Faith, largely through the shock of St Edmund's sacrifice. This was perhaps Edmund's greatest miracle – he had created a sense of national unity through his martyrdom; as he had thought, his death saved his own people, but what he had not foreseen was that it was also saving the Danes. And when the relics were opened to be carried to the new church, it was seen that the head of him who had died with the name of Christ on his lips had miraculously been joined again to the body, leaving only a red line, even the arrow-wounds were healed and the body incorrupt, 'awaiting the resurrection and everlasting glory', the hair and nails growing so much that they had to be trimmed regularly.

The destiny of the holy relics of the last King of East Anglia was not to be straightforward. First, at the beginning of the tenth century, the still incorrupt relics were transferred to a splendid, bejewelled shrine in a magnificent new wooden church in Bedricsworth – that very town where St Sigebert had founded a monastery and where St Ethelbert had been brought up. Then in 1010, when another Danish army landed, they were taken to London for safeguard. Here Edmund became recognized as a national saint, receiving the veneration of all. In 1013, however, the relics were taken back to Bedricsworth, resting on their return at the little wooden church at Greensted in Essex. In 1014 Sven or Swein, the leader of the Danish invasion, a nominal Christian, saw St Edmund in a vision and it is said that Sven then died in torment for his apostasy.

A new stone church was built at Bedricsworth which now changed its name to Bury St Edmunds. The saint was more and more revered, particularly after Sven's son, Canute (Knut), now King of England, came in pilgrimage to Bury St Edmunds, placing his crown on St Edmund's shrine in an act of atonement for his father's misdeeds.¹ Once again St Edmund had worked the miracle of national unity by Christianising the Danes. Eventually, over sixty churches, twenty of them in East Anglia, in twenty-one different counties were dedicated to St Edmund and right up until the fourteenth century Edmund was looked on as England's Patron-Saint. In the Middle Ages, it appears that the incorrupt relics were stolen by French soldiers and taken to Toulouse in France where they remained for centuries.

In 1848 an oak-tree in Hoxne, said locally to be the very one to which St Edmund had been bound, was struck by lightning and when it was sawn up three arrow-heads were found embedded in it. Some of the wood from the oak was used to make an altar, other wood was used to make the wooden covers of a Bible and a prayer-book now in

the little church at Greensted, associated with St Edmund since 1013, and which still survives. In 1901 the supposed relics were returned from Toulouse and they now lie in the private chapel of the Duke of Norfolk in Arundel, Sussex, although there is also a small relic in the Roman Catholic church in Bury St Edmunds. And in the last few years the site of the original chapel has been found at Hoxne in Suffolk, supporting the tradition that the capture and martyrdom of the last King of East Anglia all took place there. And, moreover, the miraculous column of light has been seen in recent years at this very spot where the chapel has been found.

This then is the story of the three kings of East Anglia. The first, martyr and monk, is responsible for its evangelisation, the second, a peacemaker, and so as the Beatitudes say, a child of God, sowed the seed of his blood there for Christ, and the third, the last King of East Anglia, sowed Christ-like the seed of his blood there to bring national unity. Is it not possible that in fact the East Anglian emblem of the Three Crowns is theirs? Did not each of them exchange an earthly crown for a heavenly one? Do they not resemble one other inasmuch as each of them, like Christ in Gethsemane, chose not to defend himself with earthly weapons, but to entrust himself to heavenly protection? Indeed the very name 'Edmund' actually means 'blessèd protection', well explaining why he was taken as England's Patron-Saint for so long. Perhaps then this is the sense of the three crowns which appear as the emblem of the East Anglians: the three crowns are the heavenly crowns won by the martyred Kings of East Anglia, whose 'blessed protection', cannot be taken away for as long as England is true to Christ...

Holy Fathers Edmund, Ethelbert and Sigebert, pray to God for us!

September 1994

1. The well-known story of King Canute trying to stop the incoming tide is little understood. This event was in fact an act of piety – he was demonstrating by it that an earthly king is as nothing beside the Heavenly King and Maker, Who masters the tides and all Creation.

87. The Essence of Orthodox Christianity

‘An Orthodox is one who believes rightly and, in accordance with that belief, lives rightly.’

St Isidore of Seville

When asked to describe their Faith, in their simplicity some old Russian émigrés used to reply that Orthodoxy is a mixture of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. On the one hand, they would explain, there are bishops, priests and monks, sacraments, vestments, icons and incense with the veneration of the Mother of God and the Saints, as in Roman Catholicism. On the other hand, Orthodox Christianity has a great respect for the Gospel and a resulting moral code, a certain simplicity and a local community-spirit with a married priesthood that makes parish life resemble in much family life, as in Protestantism.

Such a simple explanation of Orthodox Christianity seems superficially to be not only attractive but also true. Indeed, the best of Orthodoxy (and not the abuses of Orthodoxy, as they exist owing to all manner of historical, cultural and political conditioning) does seem to profess much of that which is professed by the best of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Nevertheless, the above description of Orthodoxy is ultimately unsatisfying. There is, for example, a certain type of Anglicanism which also appears to be a mixture of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism – and yet it is by no means Orthodox.

Whatever the parallels between the Catholic / Protestant world and Orthodoxy, it must be admitted that Orthodox Christianity also contains something else which cannot be found in either of the Western denominations. And we are not thinking here of some kind of cultural exoticism, ‘Byzantine’ chant or onion-domes.¹ We are thinking of that atmosphere of ‘otherness’, ‘warmth’ or ‘presence’ which so typifies Orthodox Christianity, which the average visitor to an Orthodox church generally senses very quickly. And it is precisely this otherness which quite literally separates Orthodoxy from the Western denominations. Relative to Orthodoxy, in both Protestantism and its ancestor Catholicism there is something missing, something that has been lost by both of them. What is it?

This question leads ineluctably to the consideration of the sole dogmatic difference which initially separated, and still in any discussion today separates, the Western denominations from the Orthodox Church – the teaching regarding the Holy Spirit. If the greatest authority for Roman Catholicism is the Pope, and for Protestantism the Bible interpreted according to the individual conscience, then for Orthodox Christianity it is the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit Who is the maker of saints, the authority and the unity of the Church, the acquisition of Whom, in the words of St Seraphim of Sarov, is the sole aim of the Christian life. Indeed this alone explains

why visitors to Orthodox churches feel a different spirit; it is, we would assert, due to the relative immediacy or presence of the Holy Spirit. This is why in Orthodoxy everything is seen in a different 'spiritual' light, compared to the Western denominations. For instance:

Dogmas are not the speculations of desiccated scholars, but revelations of spiritual life; the canons are not legalistic, killjoy rules, but guidelines on how to avoid losing the Holy Spirit; theology is not an academic exercise, but a disclosing of the mysteries of Divine Life. The teachings of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation are not foggy scholastic theories, but a knowledge of and communion with God, which teach us how to live, politically, socially and economically.² The Gospels are not some literary text to be pored over, but the revelation of the Holy Spirit, kissed and venerated. Icons are not decorations, but living, spirit-bearing presences. The Mother of God and the Saints and their holy relics are not dim, forged legends, but our immediate family who help us and our departed ones, and are present with us. Tradition is not a dusty collection of human customs, but the whole body of spiritual revelation made to the Church down the centuries.

The Church is not the medieval trick of hypocrites, but the very receptacle of the Holy Spirit on Earth. The use of vestments and incense is not ritualism, but respect for God and man. Monasticism, fasting, standing in church, vigils, are not painful and boring burdens imposed by obscurantist clergy, but methods of being gradually transfigured by the Holy Spirit. A bearded male priesthood and episcopate are not a form of misogyny, but respect for the human nature and historical reality of Christ, by Whom all things were made. A moral code is not the result of frigid puritanism, but an awareness of spiritual realities and the inner spiritual workings of the laws governing human nature. The primacy of prayer is not empty ranting and repetition, but conversation with the Living God. As an English hymn-writer, P. Dearmer, put it:

For many learn the doctrine,
And lose it in their rules,
And many drown Thy Gospel
In clamour of the schools;
But Thy true Saints have found Thee
In all things as Thou art;
These followed Thine example,
The Orthodox in heart.

In the light of all this, it could almost seem that Orthodox Christianity at its best is not only not a mixture of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, but also that it has little in common with either of them. The Orthodox Christian Faith sees all in a spiritual light, in the light of the Holy Spirit; it is literally another spirit. It is that spirit which has slowly been whittled away over the centuries in the West and in many cases has actually been replaced by the spirit of man, first in Medieval Scholasticism and then in Reformation Rationalism. However, this is not to say that the Orthodox Faith is

some vague spirit, in the mould of certain Oriental religions. Orthodox Christianity is always incarnate, as Christ was Incarnate; moreover it was only through His Incarnation that we were able to receive the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox Faith is like some plant or flower which grows only when it is rooted in earth and receives sunlight and water. If it is disincarnate, uprooted and if it is not fed by our willingness to make ascetic efforts to nourish it, then it inevitably dies.

And now we come to our conclusion, to what to us seems to be the essence of Orthodox Christianity, its very definition:

The Orthodox Christian Faith is nothing other than the Holy Spirit incarnated and rooted in human life and culture down the ages through ascetic efforts, leading to our 'theosis', our transfiguration. And anything less than this would be but a cultural reduction, a human adaptation of this Saving Orthodox Faith of Christ.

September 1994

1. The strange notion that all orthodox churches must possess domes or cupolas is simply not supported by the thousands of Orthodox churches in Romania, Northern Yugoslavia and Slovakia which have neither.
2. One of the latest slogans of Californian business gurus, 'Think global, act local', is derived from both the teaching of the Holy Trinity, – 'unity in diversity' – and the Incarnation – 'act' local.

88. The Healing of Civilizations: Orthodox Christianity, Western Capitalism and Islam

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of Capitalism's only competitor, Communism, various thinkers have spoken of 'The Triumph of the West' or, as one writer, Francis Fukuyama, put it in a best-selling book, 'The End of History and the Last Man'. History, he said, has always been marked by the clash and conflict of civilizations, values and ideologies: with only one system, Capitalism, left, history had ended. Indeed, at first sight, the only ideologies or systems which seem to be left in the world are variants of Capitalism in different stages of evolution to maturity following a historical pattern.

On the one hand, in East Asia there are countries with booming economies which have recently freed themselves from more or less feudal systems and won economic, though not political, freedom. Where until recently agriculture was virtually the only activity, manufacturing has taken over. These countries are similar in their work-ethic, puritanical moralism, lack of political freedom and their criminal underworlds, to the Capitalist economies of the West in the period of the Industrial Revolution. These values of East Asia have been called Confucian and some talk of 'The Asian Way', emphasising economic freedom together with semi-religious values of individual responsibility, morality, honesty, family life, mothers who stay at home, respect for the old and the authority of the State.

But in fact these are the former values of Western industrial societies, which imposed them to keep their proletarian masses under control before the First World War. From a modern Western viewpoint these Asian countries resemble sweatshops and their governments profess the repressive political and moral hypocrisy of their own Victorian Age. On the other hand, there are the post-industrial economies of the contemporary West which have in recent years turned away from manufacturing to the services. They profess faith not only in economic freedom but also in political freedom. They have rejected the puritanical moralism as well as the worker exploitation of the recent past in favour of humanist values, political and personal freedom and democratic pluralism. From an Asian viewpoint they are lands of decline, unemployment, crime, drugs, AIDS, debauchery, family breakdown and suicide.

Until recently it seemed then that there were no alternatives to these two variants of Capitalism, the old-fashioned 'Confucian' or Asian form and the modern Western one. In 1993, however, in the 'Foreign Affairs' journal, a Harvard Professor, Samuel Huntington, wrote an article called 'The Clash of Civilizations'. In this he recognized seven other civilizations or ideologies, including the Orthodox Christian one, competing with the modern Western one. According to him, the major one, the opponent of the West, is now Islam. Islam is the only ideology in the world, which in opposition to modern Western values, is based on a transcendental certainty, that of

Allah as expressed in the Koran and interpreted by Islam. And in fact the opposition between the two is very sharp, nowhere more so than in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which calls the United States 'the Great Satan'. This opposition between the religious and the secular, between Capitalism based on interest and usury and anti-usury Islamic banking, does seem real. And Islam would appear to be the only ideological system in the world which is winning not only individual recruits but also whole countries to its cause. What are the aims of these two systems?

The aim of Western Capitalism is economic growth. This is its be-all and end-all, for economic growth brings money and Capitalism is the ideology of capital, of, in other words, money. But in the Gospel, this is called Mammon, which is opposed to God. From an Orthodox Christian standpoint what is missing in Western Capitalism and its humanist free-market economics is the concept of man as a spiritual being and the contentment or inner happiness that spiritual life brings. The Market Economy unquestioningly presumes that economic growth means human contentment, inner happiness, because it sees man only as a material being with material needs. Given the record of Capitalism, family breakdown, abortion, crime, worker exploitation, drugs and pollution, it is clear that Capitalism does not bring man contentment, suggesting that man is not only a material being but also a spiritual being. Indeed Capitalism is dedicated to creating new material wants, making contentment impossible. Neither in the modern West, nor in East Asia, are the values of Capitalism conducive to the spiritual life of man and his inner happiness (though it could easily be argued that they are much more conducive to human happiness than Communism). But on the other hand, can it be argued that the values of Islam bring human happiness?

Historically Islam grew out of a Christian sect, which believed that Christ was not God, only a man. But Islam took the teaching of this sect a stage further, becoming a sect of a sect. It not only refused Christ, relegating Him to the level of a mere prophet, it simplified and reduced the New Testament Revelation and replaced it with the Jewish Old Testament and, above all, added the tribal and cultural customs of the nomads of the Arabian peninsula. All this it bound together and made absolute in 'The Book', in Arabic, 'The Koran'. Later Muslims adopted pagan Greek philosophy and knowledge, being especially influenced by Aristotle, and were able to develop a civilization. Nevertheless Muslims believe that the Koran is word for word inspired by Allah: there are no textual variants, it is an absolute record, binding on all and Muslims must submit to it. Indeed the word 'Islam' means 'submission'. From an Orthodox Christian standpoint, Islam represents a return to the Old Testament and its anthropomorphisms, or attribution to God of human and sinful values. It is entirely unacceptable because it rejects Christ as True God and True Man and thus also rejects the Holy Spirit. Like Judaism it too fails to understand the Old Testament, which can only be understood in the light of the New Testament, as Christ Himself showed in His own quotations from the Old Testament during His life.

The Capitalist Market Economy with its humanist values promises man earthly riches and prosperity with economic and sometimes political freedom. Some it makes rich,

others remain relatively poor. Islam promises man faith in and submission to a transcendental god above all things in a once and for all Revelation, the Koran. Is there really not some alternative to these two extremes, both linked to special forms of civilization, the Western and the Arabic?

It is our belief that alone of the eight civilizations mentioned by this Harvard Professor, the Orthodox Christian one is capable of overcoming or healing the present and coming clash between Islam and the West. This is because only Orthodox Christianity tells of the Transcendental God Who became Incarnate Man and 'dwelt among us', unlike both Islam, Which accepts only a transcendental god, and the West, which accepts only fallen man. Only Orthodox Christianity speaks of the continuing Revelation of the Holy Spirit, Who makes Christ present among us, and not the finished revelation of the Koran, or the revelationless West. Only Orthodoxy possesses the Ascetic Science of Spiritual Fathers and Mothers, of the Philokalia, to meet man's inner needs and bring him spiritual contentment here and now and in the world to come. And more than this, only Orthodoxy speaks of the Resurrection-Victory of Christ over Death, Death whose sting is taken away neither by the free market, nor by Mohammed who failed to rise from the dead.

It is our conviction that the humanist values of the West cannot meet man's spiritual needs, cannot answer any of the ultimate questions regarding man's destiny, precisely because it is humanist, seeing man as an intelligent biological species, a clever animal, and no more. Modern Western values may create greater or lesser material wealth, greater or lesser political freedom, but no more – and no doubt they would not claim to be able to do any more. But what can Islam do? Can it bring down its god to be among us? Does it inspire through the Holy Spirit? Can it bring the inner contentment of Orthodox Christian Ascetic Science? Can it reassure that its founder rose from the dead? Can it bring Love or Peace or Forgiveness? Or does it bring oppression both to men and to women and 'holy' war?

Islam may object, referring to the Crusades or Western Imperialism: but this is none of the work of Orthodox Christianity, but of Medieval Catholicism and post-Medieval Capitalism. Orthodox Christendom has never attacked Islam, it has only defended itself against it. Westernisers may object that the history of the Orthodox Church is full of examples of Erastian bishops kow-towing to the wishes of corrupt Emperors, Kings and Dictators, as Western bishops similarly kow-towed, and that therefore its arguments are as redundant as those of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. But to this we answer that the 'Orthodox' bishops who behave thus do so precisely because they are not Orthodox, they suffer from a lack of Orthodoxy and a surfeit of worldliness, they neither know nor practise the Ascetic Science of the Orthodox Faith, inspired by Christ and the Holy Spirit. Moreover, unlike in the West, the abuses of 'Orthodox' bishops have never been erected into a this-worldly system or dogma whereby a mere man, be he Pope of Rome or King of a Western country, is acknowledged as Head of the Church. Although individual Orthodox have compromised themselves, the Orthodox Faith itself has never been compromised,

unlike either Roman Catholicism or Protestantism. The abuses of 'Orthodox' bishops have always been seen as what they are, abuses, and therefore consistently challenged and condemned down the ages by countless Martyrs and Saints and Church Councils, by the collective conscience of the whole People of God

It is our conviction that the clash of Islam with the West, the clash of the absolute transcendental god of the Koran with the humanist 'economism' or Mammon of the modern West is not inevitable. Both Western Europe and also the Islamic lands of Arabia, the Middle East, Turkey, Iran and North Africa were once Orthodox Christian lands. It is for these lands which fell away from the Church for the mess of pottage of worldly values to recover their historical roots and heritage in the Church of Christ. In so doing they will find not clash but healing. And this task is made no less great and momentous by the need for Orthodox Christians themselves to also become closer to what we are called to be, Orthodox Christians, internally and not only externally. If not, then we shall perhaps in our own lifetime see the words of Christ in the Gospel come true: 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'

September 1994

89. The Ghosts of Reincarnation

‘The bishop and the priest, if they rightly serve God, must minister daily to God’s people, or at least once a week serve the liturgy for all Christian people who have ever been born from the beginning of the world ... And this work is the greatest source of annoyance to devils, because they have many souls in their power to whom God will yet show mercy on account of these ardent prayers, the prayers of all earthly men, of all the saints and of His great mercy’.

(Old English Homily on the Third Sunday in Lent; from *The Blickling Homilies* written c. 970 but probably dating from the late 9th century).

It is not rare to hear people saying that they feel that they have been born at the wrong time or even in the wrong place, saying for example that they were born ‘before their time’ or that they have a ‘spiritual home’ elsewhere. This sympathy for another time or another place may simply be an expression of unhappiness. Sometimes, however, it expresses a sympathy with a ‘kindred spirit’ who lived at another time or in another place.

For instance, most of us in the Church probably have favourite saints from another age or even land and we may express regret that we did not know that saint physically rather than just spiritually. However, it has become increasingly common to meet people who go a stage further and are actually convinced that they have lived before in another life; they believe in reincarnation. For example in a recent well-publicized case a young Frenchwoman explained to the mass media how she had ‘lived’ in 18th century England. Her knowledge of the period was quite astonishing. Not only this, but she was actually able to identify with a specific place and character of the period, all of which she could describe in great detail. The woman in question spoke little English and had never been to England. Academics were consulted and they were amazed that every detail of the woman’s description tallied with the description of a particular person who lived in the 18th century in a provincial English town and whose life could be known only from most obscure local archives which nobody had consulted for years. Such cases seem to be relatively common. What can be an Orthodox Christian reaction to them?

Some might react to this by affirming that these are merely cases of fraud. Others might suggest that such individuals with such knowledge are acting under the influence of demons who give details of captive souls to their gullible victims. We would not wish to reject either of these hypotheses, but we would like to put forward another explanation for those with strong feelings that they have lived a previous life or lives.

It is our suggestion that many such cases are those of people who are being contacted by the restless souls of other ages. Tens of billions of human-beings have lived in

countless generations before us. There are many who have never been prayed for, above all, strangely enough, in Protestant countries in more recent times. The souls of the departed and the long ago departed, especially those of family ancestors, whose names we do not even know, may be calling to us from history for our prayers. This is why Protestant countries in particular seem to have so many ghosts – they are the souls of those who have no-one to pray for their rest. Distant kinsfolk from other countries, or simply ‘kindred spirits’, may very well be searching for our prayers. If this is so, then the idea that we have lived in a previous life and now been ‘reincarnated’ is most harmful. Firstly because, in such a case, we fail to pray for those very souls who are calling to us from down the centuries to pray for them – we fail to do the very thing that we are being called upon to do. Secondly it is harmful because we are deluding ourselves as to the value of human life, its uniqueness and its unrepeatability – and therefore its sacredness.

As Christians we have an obligation not only to pray for our own salvation and that of all the living who love us or hate us. We must also pray for the departed, and not only for the recent departed, our parents or grandparents, our obligation must stretch back into history, to forefathers and foremothers, however distant. Whatever their beliefs may have been, in private prayer we must pray for the rest of their souls. It is our obligation to pray for the whole world, past present and future, ‘now and forever and unto the ages of ages’. Only in this way can the past (and even the future) be exorcized from the ghosts that haunt it. Only thus can ghosts be laid to rest, only thus can the ghosts of Reincarnation be laid to rest. In the words of the homily quoted above:

‘And it is God’s will that they should pray for the departed ... And those that are in heaven shall intercede for those who pray for the departed and they shall be in the prayers of all earthly folk, who have been Christians, or yet may be, and they shall never die in their sins, and God’s mercy and that of all the saints shall be upon them.’

September 1994

90. Risen with Christ

Visitors to Orthodox churches often ask why Orthodox stand in church, just as they ask why Orthodox have no organs, statues, women-priests and why they have icons, icon-screens, deacons, bearded and married clergy, a different sign of the cross, a different calendar, baptism by immersion, infant communion and communion under both kinds. But one wonders if these are the right questions to ask. Perhaps they should really be asking why Non-Orthodox sit in church and why they have organs, statues, women-priests and why they do not have icons, icon-screens, deacons, a bearded and married clergy, a different sign of the cross, a different calendar, baptism by immersion, infant communion and communion under both kinds. To ask the question in this way is much more logical, since it is in fact Non-Orthodox who have changed the Faith and Orthodox who have kept it the same. Orthodoxy is the past of Non-Orthodoxy.

All the differences of Non-Orthodox Christianity with Orthodox Christianity have arisen over the last thousand years or so, some of them quite recently. The further one goes back in the past of Western Christianity, the greater its identity with Orthodox Christianity as we know it today. As can be seen from any Catholic Encyclopædia, if one goes back far enough, the practices of Western Christendom used to be those of the Orthodox Church today, plus or minus some local customs. To ask why Orthodox stand in church is paramount to asking why Orthodox do not confess the *filioque*: the real question is why Non-Orthodox have not remained faithful to the traditions and practices of the first centuries of Christendom, and why Orthodox have. Orthodox Christianity is the Universal Tradition of all Christendom. To illustrate this point, we need only examine the question that we posed at the beginning – Why do Non-Orthodox sit in church?

Like the majority of what we would call ‘lapses from Orthodoxy’, the Non-Orthodox custom of sitting in church began in the Middle Ages. Let us take the position in Medieval England. Cut off from participation in church services both by clericalism and the unknown Latin language, people were bored in church. Indeed from this Period survive two expressions still used in the English language. The first is, ‘the weakest go to the wall’, meaning that the infirm standing in church went to lean against the wall for support. The second expression is ‘hocus-pocus’, derived from the Latin ‘*hoc est*’ in the words of consecration in the Eucharistic Canon, meaning ‘this is’ (my body...). Given that people did not understand what was happening, these words ‘*hoc est*’ were deformed into ‘hocus-pocus’, meaning as we might say today ‘mumbo-jumbo’. Thus in the thirteenth century richer people started taking stools with them to church and in the fourteenth century churches started installing benches or pews, this becoming common in the fifteenth century and universal in the sixteenth.

All of this flies in the face of the universal Church Tradition of Orthodoxy which holds that we stand in church because Christ raised us from the dead. Indeed in many

languages the word for 'standing up' is identical to that for 'resurrection'. In church we are 'risen' with Christ Who is 'risen' on the Third Day. Moreover the very purpose of the liturgy is to make Him Who rose from the dead present among us: how can we possibly sit before the Saviour? When someone important enters a room, it is only courtesy to stand up. How much more then should we stand at the liturgy in church! Of course I do not wish to deny that in Orthodox monasteries wall-seats (stasidia) have always existed. Their use was for the long monastic services, outside the eucharistic liturgy, especially during readings from the Psalter (kathismata) when sitting was actually appointed. Nor do I wish to deny that in Orthodox churches one often finds seats near the wall for the very young, the very old, infirm or expectant mothers. What we reject is the systematic provision of seating in churches,¹ and this for a much deeper reason than that which we have so far mentioned.

In our historical description of how seating was introduced in Catholic churches, we have until now only spoken of circumstances in England. For in many Catholic countries in Europe, seating was not introduced until much later periods and indeed in Italy and France, for example, seating in some churches has never been introduced. Why? Firstly in Southern Europe where Latin-based languages were spoken, Latin could to quite a large extent be understood – services were therefore more accessible to the ordinary churchgoer. But secondly, the introduction of seating was closely linked with social change in Northern Europe. Here feudalism broke up and the old communal life of the Middle Ages dissolved in the movement towards towns, trade, mercantilism. The notions of private property and enclosure of common land were widespread. What more logical move than to introduce these notions into the church? With the introduction of seating or pews, private property and enclosure could be introduced into the church itself. The Orthodox idea of humanity as one family under God, inherited from the first millennium was eroded and the church was divided as the land.

With the Protestant Reformation, taking place in the non-Latin speaking countries of Northern Europe, came individualism and the idea of private property was carried to the threshold of heaven – the church nave. Thus by the seventeenth century most English church naves were cluttered with all kinds of furniture. In the centre of the church the most magnificent pew was that of the local lord or squire, often with its own fireplace (and a poker he could rattle if he thought the sermon too long), while the poor would sit on hard benches at the back and around the sides of the church. The church was then no more than a sociological reflection of society, of the rich and the poor, suggesting that in heaven too the poor would remain 'at the back and around the sides' and the rich would be 'in the centre'. The church was then no different from the economic determinism of the world, thus standing in utter contradiction to the Gospel. The scandal of this situation led directly to puritan revolt, which was not really doctrinal, but above all concerned social and class groups, and a situation where in the nineteenth century scarcely half of the English population even nominally belonged to the Established Church of England. Only a few years ago that Church of England was

still called 'the Tory party at prayer', and no doubt by many it still is. To this day many members of the Opposition political parties in Great Britain come from the many dissenting groups which arose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in opposition to the Established Church. We cannot fail to think at least some of these conflicts could have been avoided if seating had not been introduced in churches.

As I think we can see from this one small example, Orthodox Christianity is indeed the past of Non-Orthodox Christianity: the far more important question as to what extent Orthodox Christianity may one day become the future of Non-Orthodox Christianity we must leave here unanswered in the hope that the reader may yet be able to reply to it.

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1. In the United States and elsewhere seating has been introduced in some Orthodox churches in imitation of Protestant or Catholic churches. Similarly in one Russian Cathedral in Europe there is a system whereby individuals rent (!) named chairs. We have actually seen a man force a heavily pregnant woman to get up from 'his' chair, almost as though he were at the theatre. Sadly, we have on many occasions concluded, not only from the history of Western Christianity but also from contemporary pseudo-Orthodox practice, how disrespect for Orthodox tradition through inferiority complex conformism or mere decadence of practice, invariably leads to demeaning and even squalid human relations. It would seem that either we are risen with Christ or seated without Him.

91. My Name

Before the dawn of life was made,
I shaped the earth and formed the sky,
And breathed the truths that would not fade
To all the centuries drawing nigh.

Before man sang his oldest song,
I made the ways of Wisdom clear
For all that were to love me long
And all that were to hold me dear.

Upon the daybreak of the world,
I showed mysteries till then untold,
To you that were to love the Word
When He His Gospel would unfold.

Then from beyond the stars of night,
I called you Christly souls to learn
That you are ever in My sight
And unto Me shall yet return.

And when you lost the Faith of yore
To fall from Truth and sin enframe
All those many years long before,
Then you prayed: 'Hallowed by Thy Name'.

For from My Name you cannot part
And in It you find protection;
For My Name, written in your heart,
Is Glory and Resurrection.

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92. St Chad, Bishop of Lichfield

We have already spoken elsewhere of the family character of much of Old English Christianity. Another illustration of it is without doubt that of the four brothers, St Cedd, Apostle of Essex, St Chad of Lichfield, St Cynibil and the priest Caelin. Of these four the best known and most loved is certainly St Chad who has thirty-three ancient churches dedicated to him and whose Christian name is still in use as a baptismal name today. Who was he?

Chad came from the North of England and he is linked with St Aidan of Lindisfarne, who sent him to Ireland to learn the monastic life. On his return, he became Abbot of the monastery of Lastingham (in Yorkshire) which his brother St Cedd had founded. In 664 he was chosen against his will by Oswy, King of Northumbria, to be bishop and Chad obediently received consecration as Bishop of York. The Venerable Bede says he was, 'a holy man, modest in all ways, learned in the Scriptures and careful to practise all that he found in them. When he became bishop, he devoted himself to keeping the truth and purity of the Church, practising humility. After the example of the Apostles he travelled on foot when he preached the Gospel in towns of country, cottages, villages or strongholds'.

In 669 St Theodore of Canterbury appointed Wilfrid, who had at long last returned from Gaul, as Bishop of York and Chad humbly retired to his monastery of Lastingham. When Theodore found Chad's consecration by a simoniac and two dubious Celtic bishops unsure, Chad merely answered 'If you find that I have not duly been consecrated, I willingly resign the office, for I never thought myself worthy of it, but though unworthy, in obedience submitted to it'. Given such humility and 'outstanding holiness', Chad was not allowed to stay and Lastingham for long and Theodore soon named him Bishop of Mercia. Theodore told Chad that on long journeys he should ride on horseback and since his huge diocese covered seventeen counties from the Severn to the North Sea, this was most practical advice. Bede tells us that Chad administered the diocese 'in great holiness of life after the example of the early Fathers'.

In Lincolnshire, also part of Chad's diocese, he founded a monastery at Barrow. He established his See in Lichfield and in a house nearby lived the monastic life 'with seven or eight brethren for prayer and study as often as he had spare time from the labour and ministry of the Word'. Chad ruled his diocese with great success but unfortunately his rule was not to be long. One day at the end of February 673 we are told that a monk Owen, or Owini, heard 'sweet and joyful singing coming down from heaven to earth' over the roof of the church at Lastingham, where Bishop Chad was praying. Chad asked Owen to assemble the brethren to whom he then foretold his death, saying: 'The welcome guest has come to me today and deigned to call me out of this world'. Chad asked the monks for their prayers and advised all of them to prepare for their deaths 'with vigils, prayers and good deeds'. When Owen asked

about the singing, Chad told him that angelic spirits had come to him and they had promised to return within seven days to take him with them. And so it was that after only two and a half years of governing the diocese, Chad caught the plague and having received communion, on 2 March 672, 'his holy soul was released from the prison of the body ... he regarded death with joy as the Day of the Lord'.

The Venerable Bede lists Chad's virtues – continence, right preaching, humility, voluntary poverty (non-possession) – and says that Chad was filled with the fear of God. So sensitive was he that even a high wind would remind him of the mortality of man and the judgement to come and he would at once call on God to have mercy on mankind. During a storm he would enter church and pray ardently with psalms until it was over. Such was Chad's spiritual sensitivity and awareness of the closeness of God and the righteousness of His judgement. Bede later recorded how one monk saw St Cedd, who had died earlier than his brother, come down from heaven with angels to take Chad's soul back with them. Chad was buried at Lavington and his relics worked many miracles, including the healing of a madman. Later his relics were translated to Lichfield and the veneration of St Chad continued right until the Reformation – for nearly 900 years. Then his relics were dispersed and many of them lost or destroyed, although some survive and are now kept in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Birmingham – situated in Chad's diocese of Mercia. And to this day in the Cathedral library of Lichfield is conserved a very early Gospel called 'the Gospels of St Chad'; it may perhaps have been used by St Chad himself.

Of the many ancient churches dedicated to the Saint, two are in his first diocese in Yorkshire and Middlesmoor and Saddleworth, but the others are to be found in the Midlands, in Cheshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire. In Lichfield he is remembered at the Cathedral of St Mary and St Chad and in an ancient parish church. Two villages are also named after him, Chadkirk in Cheshire and Chadwick in Lancashire. It would seem that many of these dedications actually represent churches founded by the Saint himself as he walked or rode from village to village all those years ago, preaching as he went. The number of churches dedicated to him in his all too brief episcopate in both Yorkshire and the Midlands shows just how much he was venerated after his righteous repose. Typically, most of the dedications to the saintly bishop are in quiet country villages, like a Bishop's Tachbrook in Warwickshire or at Tushingham in Cheshire; and so his quiet and humble spirit even today still takes us from the madding crowd of this present and troubled and noisome world.

Holy Father Chad, pray to God for us!

October 1994

93. Mother Mary Comes to Me: the Beatles and the Spiritual Tragedy of the Sixties

‘Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.’

(Matt. 15, 14)

‘The youth not killed has despaired; the old not heartbroken have become cynical.’

(John Masefield, *I Want!, I Want!*, 1944)

The twentieth century has been marked by the destinies of its different generations. The first generation, grown to maturity in 1914, was sacrificed in the blood-bath of the First World War. In 1939, exactly twenty-five years later, the second generation was sacrificed in the Second World War. The third generation, again twenty-five years later in 1964, fell victim to the social revolution of the sixties. The fourth generation, again twenty-five years later in 1989, witnessed the collapse of Communism and German reunification – but the spiritual meaning of this event is still being decided by History. Here we shall speak above all of the destiny of the third generation and of the spiritual tragedy of the sixties.

During the Second World War, Great Britain was damaged but not destroyed, but for a long time people little understood the long-term results of such damage. I am not thinking now of physical damage or even physical injury, but the damage caused to the nation’s soul. Among my own family and friends there are those who, though fifty years have passed and they are now going down the river of life, still suffer in their souls; he who was in the submarines but wakes up at night in a cold sweat, convinced that he is suffocating; he who saw his best friend starve to death as a Japanese P.O.W. and now eats for two; she whose son was a prisoner in Germany and waited for years after the War for news, convinced that a dead man would return; she whose fiancé was an American airman missing in action, remaining faithful to his memory, never marrying, as if still waiting for his Liberator to land; my father’s best friend, Paddy Cassidy, killed at Monte Cassino, the historic centre of Western monasticism become a place of carnage and destruction, these fifty years ago, where also one of the English Orthodox bishops was orphaned, never having known his father, and my eldest daughter’s godfather was wounded. However, beyond this damage, there was also other psychic damage – that done to the next generation, those born during the War and just after, whose souls were scarred in a different way by the tragic events lived by their parents.

Popular music in Britain both just before the War and during it were marked not only by a romantic sentimentalism but also by a certain Christian culture. Of many such songs we may mention: ‘It’s a Sin to Tell a Lie’, ‘I’ll Pray for You’, ‘We’ll Gather Lilacs’ or ‘The Land of Begin Again’, which is a song of Christian repentance. Even the sentimentalism of such popular songs as ‘Yours’ or ‘A Nightingale Sang in

Berkeley Square', 'My Sister and I' or 'When the Lights Go On Again' is strongly coloured by feelings of Christian virtues, patriotism, fidelity and hope. This situation was to change. Britain recovered only slowly after the War; there was much poverty, children went to school barefoot, food rationing continued into the fifties. Spiritually the Puritanism of the Victorian Age, rocked by the social upheavals of the War years and the illegitimacy that occurs when millions of young people are uprooted from their families, was dying out, though hypocritical lip-service was still paid to it, any scandals being meticulously concealed. The situation was ripe for change, receptive to a new ideology. Culturally speaking, this change was creeping in with the Rock and Roll music coming from the United States.

It is not our concern here to speak of this in detail, suffice it to say that this music, with its roots in pagan, hypnotic African beat,¹ was highly sexual in its undertones, indeed its very name comes from the embraces of a couple on the back seat of a car. This was the music that British teenagers absorbed in the fifties. Its influence was greatest in ports where sailors brought back American records, which had been censored by the BBC. The port with by far the most important trading links with the United States was also the second largest Irish, and therefore Catholic, city in the British Isles. It is not, however, in Ireland, but in England. It is Liverpool and some 75% of its population are of Irish ancestry. A dreary, provincial seaport, bombed during the War and declining after the War as its hinterland de-industrialized and the old Victorian culture of the Industrial Revolution decomposed, it gave birth to the musical and social phenomenon of the sixties, the Beatles.

John (ex-Winston) Lennon, born in 1940, 'lost' his father when, at the age of six, his parent 'disappeared' on a merchant ship. His mother seemed to care little and he was brought up by an aunt. He grew up, as so many fatherless children, an insolent troublemaker, he misbehaved at school, he was in revolt against the society around him. James Paul McCartney (another Irish name), born in 1942, lost his mother when young. His father bought him a guitar to console him. Lennon and McCartney met in 1957 at a church fete. Together with two other pop musicians, George Harrison and, from the early sixties, Richard Starkey, both also from modest backgrounds and born during the War, they were to spend the years between 1956 and 1962 in obscurity and relative poverty. They played in Liverpool and another seaport, Hamburg, which had a huge red-light district with many cabarets, clubs and brothels, the sleaze centre of Northern Europe. Here they played crude versions of Rock and Roll, versions which went down well enough with half-drunken sailors. But behind outward appearances, the Beatles as they had come to be known, and in particular Lennon and McCartney, were evolving a new creative style.

After years of obscurity they came to public attention in Britain in 1962, with a song called 'Love Me Do'. It sounded innocent enough and was followed in 1963 by hit songs, 'Please, Please Me', 'She Loves You', 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand' and 'Twist and Shout'. These songs established them as the British 'pop-stars' of the period. Their energetic almost hypnotic beat (hence, the name of the group) was becoming

more and more pronounced and the sexual undertones of the lyrics were becoming more and more explicit; the good taste and restraint of the romantic songs of the preceding generation had totally disappeared under a mass of clear sexual references – and they were being greeted by the hysterical screams of millions of teenagers born of the Baby Boom. By the end of 1963 their fame was catching on internationally and their tour of the United States brought unheard-of success and hysteria, ‘Beatlemania’ How had it become possible for society to produce popular music which encouraged sexual hysteria among pubescent teenagers, young people at that delicate age when everything should be done to channel and moderate sexual awakening, not to stimulate it?

It is significant that between 1963 and 1966, the years of the Beatles’ first great successes, their triumphs were above all in the Protestant world, the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Holland and Scandinavia, countries in other words which for generations had been dominated by puritanical, disciplined forms of Protestantism, encouraged by governments which wanted to suppress revolt among their exploited industrial proletariats – as, for example, in their native Liverpool. Shattered by the War, faced with the social decomposition resulting from industrial decline, undermined by the new youth culture and music from the United States in the fifties, in the sixties Puritan culture all but died. Moreover, within a few years of the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, the old restraining vestiges of Western Orthodoxy which Roman Catholicism had inherited were all but abandoned in Catholic countries.

In other words, there was in the West in the sixties a spiritual and therefore moral vacuum and, as is proverbially said, ‘Nature abhors a vacuum’. A spiritual vacuum cannot possibly last for long, since in ‘Nature’ there are always spiritual forces ready to come and fill any vacuum. Thus, to take but one of the many examples from history, fifty years before the Beatles, after the first Russian Revolution in March 1917, an agnostic Provisional Government with a programme no more than a spiritual vacuum lasted scarcely six months before being swept away by the atheist Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. Spiritual vacuums are always rapidly filled by spiritual forces, but what many do not realize is that those spiritual forces are not necessarily forces for good; the Prince of Darkness is also a spiritual force and he is always searching for vacuums which his Satanic hosts can fill. A concern for spirituality is by no means positive, we must know which spirituality is in question. The tragedy of the sixties is that, spiritually diseased and therefore spiritually blind, it did not know how to fill its spiritual and therefore moral vacuum. And this spiritual tragedy, that of a whole society and generation, can be seen through the songs of the Beatles, which both expressed and reflected the age they lived in.

In 1964 the Beatles made their first film, ‘A Hard Day’s Night’. The sexual connotations of the words of the title song were clear but in the title we can also sense that all was not well – in 1964 the Beatles were having hard days, having toured fifty different cities in the world in six months, living in hotels, being mobbed by the

hysterical and relatively affluent baby boom generation. Indeed in the same year, in their rather pessimistic LP, 'Beatles for Sale' (the title is an indication of how much they had been turned into a commercial operation), there appeared a song, 'I'm a Loser'.

It seems that success was not the gain that they had expected. Indeed an analysis of this song brings confirmation of the Gospel verse written down 1900 years before: 'Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it' (Luke 17, 33) and 'He that loveth his life, shall lose it' (John 12, 25). The second Beatles film was even more a direct S.O.S. – its very title was 'Help'. The words of the title song, 'Help, I need somebody; not just anybody ... When I was younger ... I never needed any help ... Help me if you can, I'm feeling down ... Help me to get my feet back on the ground', point to the spiritual disorientation of four provincial youths from very modest backgrounds suddenly finding wealth and world fame.

The same theme is found in another song of the time, 'Yesterday': 'Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away, Oh, I believe in yesterday. Now I need a place to hide away, Why she had to go, I don't know, she didn't say ... Something's wrong'. In our view this is not simply a love song, it is rather nostalgia for the world of stability and peace that they and Western society had known before the social revolution of the sixties, which brought fame to the Beatles but which they themselves had helped create. And as to the identity of 'she' who had to go, we shall speak later.

In December 1965 the Beatles brought out a new album, 'Rubber Soul', an indication of how they were having to twist their souls to do what they were doing. Their sense of disorientation is pointed to in the words of one of the main songs, 'He's a real nowhere man'. The rejection of the Christian culture into which they had been born and the proof that the Beatles were in fact part of a spiritual phenomenon, came with the notorious words of John Lennon in 1966: 'Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that, I'm right and will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus Christ now. I don't know which will go first, Rock 'n' Roll or Christianity'.²

Within months of saying this, the last live concert of the Beatles had taken place on August 29 1966 in mass hysteria in Candlestick Park in San Francisco – where a few weeks before on 2 July had reposed the holy Archbishop of the City, the only twentieth century Saint to repose in the United States, St John the Wonderworker of San Francisco. Fourteen years later, Lennon also died, assassinated in a New York street; whether he repented or not, we do not know, but there is a thought that God had taken someone away from the Earth before he could do any more harm to the souls of the young and impressionable, and that this was also for Lennon's own good. Now all know that Lennon was wrong: Lennon has gone, but Christ is still with us.

The next album of the Beatles, 'Revolver', included songs inspired by mind-altering drugs. This was the first substitute for the provincial, childhood faith that the Beatles had lost. We come now to what may be called the 'psychedelic period' of the Beatles,

including songs like 'Tomorrow Never Knows', 'She Said, She Said', 'Yellow Submarine' and later 'Strawberry Fields', 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, (LSD), A Day in the Life' and 'Magical Mystery Tour'. This period from 1966 on brought further fame but also tragedy and disillusion. In 1967, they released what was to become their 'masterpiece', 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'. We cannot but wonder if the lonely hearts were not those of the Beatles themselves, lost and disorientated and become hippies, like so many Western youths of the period. They had adopted a new style of dress and grown their hair long, a symbol of their revolt against the 'short back and sides' Protestant society, which they despised for its moral hypocrisy, which was the result of its materialism and lack of spirituality.

Their disorientation and spiritual disaffection was to lead them to the second substitute for the childhood faith that they had renounced. In 1967 they fell under the charismatic spell of a guru, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Quite unable and unequipped to distinguish between the psychic, the spiritual and the demonic, their minds 'bent' by fame and fortune, not to mention mind-bending drugs such as LSD, the Beatles were lost. Even more so when in August 1967 their manager, Brian Epstein, a homosexual, who had brought them to fame, died or committed suicide with an overdose. The man who had launched them and kept them together was gone, and they were now under the influence of a charlatan who spoke to them of developing their individuality. At the beginning of 1968, after a trip to India with other adulated stars of the time, a trip which should have lasted three months, they returned to the West, disenchanted. Lennon himself admitted that 'We were wrong' – the yogi had been nothing but a fraud, a charlatan, who had taken money from spiritually ignorant and naive Western youths and tried to seduce one of the female pop-singers who had accompanied the Beatles. The seekers had sought, but not found.

One of the Beatles' most popular songs dates from this period. 'All you Need is Love' was broadcast globally on one of the first satellite link-ups and was watched by 200 million people worldwide. What the Beatles did not explain, and could not explain in this song, was how to obtain and create Love – they had never heard of the Ascetic Science of Orthodox Christianity. Tragically the psychic and hypnotic charisma of an Indian fraud was as far as they were to get, and that stands at the opposite extreme from the genuine spirituality of the Philokalia. The Gospel agrees that 'All we need is Love', for God Himself is Love, but what the Gospel and the Apostles and the Fathers and the Saints and the whole of Church Tradition add is how to obtain Love – through invisible warfare – but the Beatles did not know of this. A little after this period Lennon wrote the song, 'My Sweet Lord'. Its saccharine, incantational simplicity makes us wonder who exactly was the Lord that John Lennon was singing of; spiritual illusion was still on him, but we know that the fruit of illusion is always disillusion.

One of the last songs of this period is 'Hey, Jude', which was the Beatles' most successful single. Its curious title was followed by the words: 'Don't make it bad, Take a sad song, and make it better, Remember to let her into your heart, then you can start to make it better'. It would make an epitaph to the career of the Beatles, which

was now nearing its end. Commercially speaking, they had good songs, with catchy tunes and simple words, as is confirmed by their phenomenal record sales, which had reached 1 billion by 1985. But we can only regret the impurity of lyric and rhythm, which so indulged and encouraged the moral decay, debauchery, drug-taking and hysteria of the sixties, making the Beatles' songs, spiritually and morally speaking, into 'sad songs'. For them two generations are now paying the price, a price which seems unpayable, so great the human suffering wrought by the sixties in terms of infidelity, adultery, divorce, abortion and broken youths and childhoods. As they asked elsewhere: 'All the lonely people, where do they all come from?' – They came from the broken youth of the sixties. If only the Beatles had taken their spiritually sad songs and made them spiritually better, if only they had let 'her' into their hearts, as they sang...

From 1968 on it was clear that the Beatles were breaking apart. Lennon, ever a weak character like many who are in revolt against society, had fallen totally under the influence of Yoko Ono, and was issuing incitements to fornication and adultery. During this period there would appear a song 'Devil in Her Heart' and 'The Devil's White Album', known to the general public as 'The White Album'. This latter album, appearing in 1968, included two songs by Lennon and Yoko Ono, 'Revolution Number One' and 'Revolution Number Nine', which contain for the first time subliminal messages. According to one writer, a backwards playing of the latter song, which is an incitement to debauchery, appears to contain the most terrible blasphemy against Christ.³ As for Harrison and Starkey, they were going their own ways. Only McCartney, perhaps motivated by money, tried to keep the Beatles together. In 1969 both Lennon and McCartney married, Harrison and Starkey had already married. To replace Epstein, the Apple Company was formed – but the Beatles were pop musicians and knew nothing about running a business. It was soon on the road to bankruptcy, 'the place of misplaced ideals and unfinished projects', as one commentator put it. Yet still they managed to release 'Abbey Road' before they broke up in 1970.

The Beatles had not been able to outlast the delusions of the sixties, of which they had been both shapers and shaped, leaders and victims. The last song that they released was 'Let It Be'. Its words seem to indicate some kind of realization that all was not yet spiritually lost: 'When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me, speaking words of Wisdom, Let it be ... There will be an answer, Let it be'. Is not Mother Mary the Mary they knew from a Christian Liverpool childhood? Was She not trying to utter words of Wisdom to the Beatles before it was too late? In an earlier song, 'Yesterday', they had sung, 'Why she had to go, she didn't say'. We would suggest that the 'she' here is also 'Mother Mary' and She 'went' because they had turned their backs on Her and all She represented, their provincial childhoods and the unconscious Christian (however defectively Christian) culture they had inherited from Liverpool. In this song She was coming back to them – or rather they were coming back to Her – since She had never left them, but they had left Her. Similarly, in 'Hey,

Jude', they had asked, 'Remember to let her into your hearts' – it seems that they had not let Her into their hearts. Indeed, their answer to 'Mother Mary', 'Let it be', shows that they had not taken Her into their hearts. The harm done through the Beatles to a generation and to themselves, cannot simply end with the words 'Let it be'. The damage done, there must now be some positive answer and act.

In the sixties a spiritually diseased Western world lost its bearings. An analysis of the period confirms that this crisis of the West was a spiritual one. Of course it would have happened anyway without the Beatles, for they were merely a phenomenon of the spirit of the times, spiritual agents in the historical process of the thousand-year Apostasy of the Western world. Today, of the three surviving Beatles, now aged over 50, Richard Starkey wanders, taking minor television roles. George Harrison, we are told, is still spiritually seeking, but if he has not yet found after over a generation, we can only conclude that it is either because he does not know what he is seeking, or else because he does not know that he can find it within himself, if only he will understand that he must first change his way of life. Paul McCartney, married to the very rich Linda Eastman of Eastman Kodak, is in his own right one of the richest people in Great Britain, with an income said to be over \$50 million per annum. There seems to be no regret among the Beatles for the part that they played in the moral decay and collapse of the West in the sixties. That they threw off the shallow and outworn facade of a tired ex-Protestant, ex-Catholic culture is understandable, but their tragedy, like that of the sixties as a whole, was that they did not first find something better with which to replace it or rather transfigure it before throwing it off. Instead, Western society merely went down to the next stage in its thousand-year long Apostasy. Surely, if 'Mother Mary comes, speaking words of Wisdom', would not Her words to the Beatles and to the sixties be those of St John the Baptist: 'Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand?'

The spiritual tragedy of the Beatles is clear, what remains to be seen is if, instead of encouraging corruption, the three who are still alive can yet bring forth the fruit of repentance for the part they played in the spiritual tragedy and shipwreck of a society and a generation. Yet not only the Beatles themselves, but also that whole generation and the one it engendered, has still to learn to ask for help, 'not just from anybody', but from 'Somebody', from the Only One Who can help them and all the John Lennons now. And only thus can a spiritual tragedy be redeemed, and 'misplaced ideals' be replaced, and 'unfinished projects' be finished. For we believe that if we let 'Mother Mary' into our hearts, She will come with words of Wisdom, and we can start to make it better – and then there will be an answer.

11 November 1994 (n.s.)
St Anastasia the Roman
Armistice Day

1. It is not that we oppose African music in itself. 'Gospel Music' shows how African music can be Christianised or at least Protestantized. What we object to is the pagan character of certain African music.

2. Maureen Cleve, London Evening Standard, 4 March 1966.

3. We do not wish to repeat this blasphemy here, but it can be found in 'Rock 'n' Roll, the Rape of the Conscience by Subliminal Messages' by J. P. Régimbal, Croisade Press, Geneva, 1983. (In French).

94. The English Way of Life

‘Conservatism proclaims the inability of purely materialist philosophies to read the riddle of life, and achieve the necessary subordination of scientific invention and economic progress to the needs of the human spirit ... Man is a spiritual creature adventuring on an immortal destiny, and science, politics and economics are good or bad so far as they help or hinder the individual soul on its eternal journey.’

‘The Right Road for Britain’, Conservative and Unionist Central Office (London, 1949), p. 65

What has gone wrong? How is it that less than fifty years ago an official Political Party document could have contained these words and yet today that same Party, now in government, preferring European lucre to national ideals, boasts Ministers notorious for corruption, cheating, lying (‘being economical with the truth’) and marital infidelity (the ‘Back to Basics’ farce)? In a much more important way the same question could be asked more generally about the nation as a whole – what has gone wrong with this country which, irrespective of left and right party politics, is beset by crime, violence, casual divorce, illegitimacy, mass abortion, dishonesty, broken homes and money grubbing sleaze? How have we lost the values which until the very beginning of the sixties were held to be an integral part of the English way of life?

It is our suggestion that those values which formed the English way of life were derived from the Bible, in particular from the Ten Commandments. They were once all observed in this country, but of late they have all consistently been broken. ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me’. Today all gods are permitted, all faiths are equal, each person has the right to his own god, be it a mythical being, a political ideology or Simply Mammon, money. ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven Image’. But today every sort of idol is served; sportsmen, pop-stars, Writers, artists, businessmen and all the values that they represent are idolized. ‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain’. The street, the football match, the cinema, the media and popular novels are awash with blasphemy and foul language. ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy’ The breaking of the Sabbath is now normal and the ‘English Sunday’ is all but dead. ‘Honour thy father and mother’. We daily witness disrespect for elders. ‘Thou shalt not kill’. Violent crime rises constantly and the use of firearms is more and more widespread. ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’. The media constantly incite the public to fornication and marital infidelity and to consider it natural. ‘Thou shalt not steal’. Crime doubles and quadruples in the space of a few years. ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour’. Lying, cheating, dishonesty, disloyalty and lack of integrity and fairness are now commonplace at even the highest levels. ‘Thou shalt not covet’. Covetousness, fostered by class hatreds and then the worship of money especially in the eighties and the spread of ‘game shows’ and lotteries has given birth to the contemporary get rich quick’ society.

The be-all and end-all of modern society is efficiency and productivity, another way of saying 'money'. Modern society bows before Mammon, the god of money, and all is permissible in his name. In rejecting the Ten Commandments, found near the beginning of the Bible, we have returned to Babylon, and in so doing we find ourselves opening the book at the end of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse. The English way of life was known for its fair play, justice, tolerance, correctness, common sense, good neighbourliness, morality, love of truth, honesty, loyalty, integrity, respect for one another and property, the gentleman and the gentlewoman were the model English people. Why were all these values thrown out in the sixties, why at that time were the boards with the Ten Commandments written on them taken down from the walls of churches to be hidden in vestries?

Until the very early sixties the moral values described above – dare I call them 'English' values? – were observed in our society. Unfortunately, however, they were being observed more and more in form only. Very often only hypocritical lip-service was being paid to them, they were becoming hollow. Thus, when in the early sixties the Profumo affair broke, ultimately bringing down the Macmillan Government, it was clear that these values had already secretly been rejected. For moral values always become hypocritical values when they do not have spiritual roots; the source of morality being in spirituality.

What has happened in England, as in many other lands, is that spiritual values, that is to say Faith in God, have been lost and replaced by materialism or material values. Without spirituality moral values become hypocritical. They turn into *moralism*, censoriousness, puritan excess, bigotry and cant, condemnation, hating the sin *and* the sinner. This is why the sixties rejected them. And some of the first people to reject them were so-called church 'leaders'. Their apostasy, their 'honest to God' and their 'God is dead' were in fact proclamations that they had themselves lost their Faith, and therefore the Way and the Truth and the Life. But instead of being honest and resigning, they began to preach a new, empty, faithless Faith. Thus the former moral values of society disappeared into the spiritual void which already lay behind them. However, the former values were not replaced with genuine spiritual and therefore moral values, but with amoral values, with materialistic, humanistic values. Humanism is merely a conditional amoralism. 'Do whatever you want on condition that you don't stop others from doing whatever they want'. And once the human-being is unbridled from all moral and spiritual values, it is not long before he begins acting as though everything were allowed, from adultery to theft, from casual divorce to murder, from sexual perversion to Satanism. For according to humanism, man is merely an intelligent animal, all is permissible; man has no spiritual or immortal destiny. Today this is what we have come to and this is why 'the English way of life' as we knew it, that which was the best, whether 'duke or dustman', as it used to be said, is dying out.

I do not think that any sincere Orthodox Christians or their heirs, orthodox Christians, would dispute the fundamental analysis of the facts as I have given them. And

moreover I rather think that any reasonably-minded non-believer would rather live in a society with values such as honesty, fairness, integrity, loyalty, common sense, truthfulness, good-neighbourliness and a basic moral code than in the society in which we live now. But having lost the rules to the English way of life, then we shall have to relearn them. And if we relearnt the rules, then we would return to that little Jerusalem, the English way of life, instead of living as now, in the ways of that great Babylon, the Apocalypse.

November 1994

95. England's Calling and the Twilight of Civilization

'Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.'

Wordsworth

'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 ... a good deal of our material progress is a progress for which succeeding generations may have to pay dearly.'

T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, pp. 61–2, London 1939

'The obsession by economic issues is as local and transitory as it is repulsive and disturbing. To future generations it will appear as pitiable as the obsession of the 17th century by religious quarrels appears today; indeed, it is less rational, since the object with which it is concerned is less important.'

R. H. Tawney, in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48 (London 1962), p. 461

Communism is fallen, Capitalism triumphs. Economically speaking, there is no gainsaying it. And yet in the light of history, it seems strange, for Communism and Capitalism are both children of the same materialist philosophy of the Industrial Revolution. Why should one triumph and the other fail? – Because Capitalism is more successful at materialism. But the Gospel says that man shall not live by bread alone. Human civilization and happiness cannot be based on the worship of productivity and economic efficiency, on wealth and power. In making economic life the aim of human life, since the 19th century the world has been confusing the means and the ends. Economic life can only be a means to human well-being, and no more.

The Industrial Revolution, a chance combination of natural resources, technical knowledge and the Protestant mentality, began in England. It was never planned, it was more an accident, some would say a mistake or aberration, of history. With its roots in Calvinism (from an Orthodox Christian viewpoint Calvinism, like Islam, is a heresy of a heresy), Capitalism was based on the creation of wealth, of capital. But from the very beginning there were those who realised that wealth is not necessarily well-being: 'The idea of possessive wealth first arose among barbaric nations', wrote the 19th century English thinker and critic Ruskin (*Works*, 17, 56). And in 'Unto This Last', he added: 'That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human-beings'.

Indeed, how can wealth necessarily mean well-being? Wealth can sometimes be 'illth', ill-being, material welfare spiritual 'ill-fare', as the economist J. A. Hobson wrote in 1914. If we place the spiritual realm first, as the Gospel bids us, then the material world with its creation of wealth must be subordinated to the spiritual.

Indeed, the very vocation and meaning of Orthodox Christianity is to transfer energies and interest from the material realm to the spiritual, to deflect the human-being from the things of the body to the things of the spirit. Man evolves only by evolving upwards; material 'progress' is often not evolution but spiritual regress. It is only spiritual values that raise mankind above the level of the beasts. Civilization therefore cannot be limited to the satisfaction of mere material needs. In that case civilization would be only be about a greedy and ungodly rush for ill-gotten gains.

Theologically, Capitalism is meaningless, for the gadgets it produces cannot bring us grace, the obtaining of which is the very goal of Christian life; we shall not be saved by a balance-sheet, even if it is in the black. Materialist 'civilization' is graceless, perhaps even grace-proof. Ultimately, human happiness resides not in material objects, but in the things of the spirit. And the quantity of those material objects often has to be paid for with the quality of our personal lives. There is more to the human spirit than GNP, Inflation, Exchange-Rates, the Stock Market and the Balance of Payments. In fact the increasing production and consumption of trivia, the concentration on material things, will only increase the despiritualising and spiritlessness of mankind, his loss of religious faith.

Material objects, which by definition cannot bring spiritual profit, therefore proclaim and bring man's own mortality; able to satisfy no inner need of man, they avail for death, not for life. They are neither heartfelt nor wholesome; they do not create love. Modern 'civilization' bears the curse of Midas, bringing wealth without well-being, for a system of production cannot bring contentment. In reality things can only have 'value' if they contain 'values', that is to say, if they have spiritual content or virtue. The world today, having given itself up to materialism, suffers from spiritual loss, even spiritual starvation, for it has lost its Faith in the Divine, and it does not know how to recover it, and that is why it has set itself on the illusory and suicidal course of technology in a vain attempt to solve its problems. As the poet John Masefield put it:

'Every country in the world has defiled its beauty with factories and factory towns as ugly as hells upon earth. What we see, when we look at them, is not mean, dirty, squalid building, but the image of a mind which we have put into authority.'

(In the Mill, p. 158)

Reading these words, it becomes clear whose devilish mind we have put into authority.

The Industrial Revolution took place in England, as we have said, by chance, there was never any central plan or government decree, it was an affair of individuals. Although it is termed a Revolution, compared to the processes of industrialization in, say, France or Germany or Soviet Russia, it was not such a brutal affair. As we have seen above, it was criticized almost from the beginning, especially from the 19th century on. In fact by about 1870 Britain had already reached its apogee of wealth and

power and was starting its decline as it was overtaken by the United States and then Germany.

The Industrial Revolution was criticized especially by those who were still witnesses to the ancient, rural, pre-industrial traditions which had not yet been swept away, thanks to the relative gradualism of that 'Revolution'. There still survived the awareness of another England, beyond the Industrial Revolution, a green and pleasant land beyond the dark, Satanic mills of the 'Black Country' where the Revolution had started. There was still the Old England of church and cottage, hall and hamlet, farmstead and cathedral town, an ordered, kindly and blessed land, with quiet and peaceful living, eternal values, gentility and gentleness, manners and morals, beauty and wisdom and the source of all this – Faith in God. And that God was the Christian God, mystical in His Transcendence and yet present in His Immanence, Who had made the land green and good, fair and fine with its valleys and its hills, its streams and woods and fields, its pure skies, sweeping clouds and island-coasts, Who had shaped England and Englishry and the English.

In the second half of the 19th century William Morris called England to become once more 'the fair green garden of Northern Europe' and 'dream of London, small, and white, and clean'. Why spoil half the beauty of the world for slums and shoddy goods, he asked. Later, others regretted the spiritual loss of the ancient piety of an older, pre-industrial England. By the twentieth century many Englishmen saw the Industrial Revolution as an unfortunate accident, an abnormal episode, something un-English in spirit and character. It had diverted England from her true nature, knocking her culture off course. For them pre-industrial England with its spiritual message and lofty ideals still shone through it.

Some called for a counter-revolution against the changeling industrial culture to reclaim lost values. Others, like the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, writing in the early 1930's, looked forward to a time when the Industrial Revolution with its factories and Empire would be a mere memory, and what had been seen before that Revolution would be seen once more. Then the spiritual dangers and economic chaos of the Industrial Age would be left behind and the brightness of the pre-industrial Age would shine forth as before. No longer a world power, England would be able to return to her roots and seek higher things, spiritual not material things, bringing England a sympathy from other countries, replacing that envy and hatred which she had earned in her age of 'greatness'. As the heavenly-minded priest and poet, linguist and teacher, and lover of Saxon England, William Barnes, wrote in the 19th century:

'The moneymaking mind looks on the work of God or the pursuits of man mainly, if not only, as sources of wealth. ... Such a mind may look on time only as a form of space for the doing of business ... on a newly reached people only as buyers of our wares; and on a war with a people who have never lifted a hand against us, other than meddlers with their own laws and towns, as a fine opening of trade.'

(Views of Labour and Gold)

England would have time to say her prayers. The Imperial hymns ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ and ‘Rule Britannia’ would disappear, replaced by the national songs, ‘Jerusalem’ and ‘Greensleeves’. England would seek a way of life inspired by grace and beauty, not the idolatry of materialism. England’s vocation would be upwards. Just as England had led the world into industrialism, so she should lead the world out of it. Since England had pioneered industrial society, she would therefore pioneer post-industrial society and learn that life and the human spirit is greater than consumerism and economic performance.

Such were the noble hopes of those idealists. Although today we cannot be optimistic, those ideals remain. And it is true that materialism is now at least in part discredited and we are now swiftly moving to a post-industrial society. With the fall of Communism, materialism has at least in part been challenged. And Western countries, perhaps especially England, the first industrial country, have been challenged by de-industrialization and the transfer of industry to East Asia in particular. We are entering, so we are told, the Pacific Age. According to the projections of the World Bank, within a generation even the Economy of the United States will be second to that of China, and Britain’s smaller than that of South Korea, Thailand or Taiwan. These realities should surely give us food for thought about the future of our country.

Indeed we cannot but believe that although the world has lost its direction, it can still be saved if it returns to its spiritual traditions. Only spiritual traditions will teach man how to live together on our small planet. Only a change of heart – the Coming of Faith through repentance – can make Utopia less Utopian. And this is the message that England, the pioneer of industrial society and therefore post-industrial society, could still give the world as the twilight of civilization draws near. England has a mission – to call for the restoration of humanity in the reign of Christ, which was altogether cast down and mocked by the Age of the Machine and the reign of Capital. This is a national vocation – to call for a society not directed to the creation of wealth, but to a righteous way of life, inspired by the beauty and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, Who has been chased away by the ugliness and ignorance of the Industrial Age.

We are to choose not Pluto, but God. England has not lacked commercial enterprise, but rather the wisdom to value what is beyond price. We English Orthodox, who are so radical or, as some might have it, so conservative, that we would have refused to change our faith at the First reformation in 1066, let alone at the Second in 1534, believe that it is time to turn the pages of the Chronicle of England to a new chapter and a new story, that of the Recovery of the Faith. We would express the most revolutionary wish of all – the wish to restore Tradition, the Revelation of the Holy Spirit. But at the dawning of a new millennium this is possible only insofar as we keep our souls and therefore the possibility of spiritual life and holiness, intact. For this is the only possibility that can raise men and women above the beasts. It is also the only possibility if the world is to recivilize itself at its twilight, before it is too late.

December 1994

96. Did Christ Walk in England?

‘Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our Teacher, and we never lost His teaching.’

Taliesin c.AD 550.

There are legends which say that Our Lord walked in England and link Him especially with the West Country, with the area around Glastonbury in Somerset and Cornwall. Some of these legends were written down long since, some have been recorded from folklore in recent times; probably the best-known is that which William Blake wrote down in his poem ‘Jerusalem’ which was then set to music:

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England’s mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England’s pleasant pastures seen?

Most people would probably see these legends and traditions as absurd, not worth taking seriously. What can we say of them?

All of these legends are connected with the fact that the south-west of England was for long one of the very few sources of tin in the ancient world. As early as 445BC Herodotus spoke of the British Isles as the Cassiterides or Tin Islands. Later Pytheas (352–323), Polybius (c. 160) and Diodorus Siculus (in the last years BC) all mention the same trade. This tin was mined in Cornwall (as it still is), beaten into squares and taken to an island called ‘Ictis’ (generally identified as St Michael’s Mount), shipped to Brittany, carried by pack-horse to Marseilles and then transported to Phoenicia (to the north and west of Galilee). This trade may well have existed as early as 1500BC; in his ‘History of England’ Sir Edward Creasy asserted that Solomon’s Temple was adorned with British tin. Nearby, in the Somerset Mendips, lead, copper and other metals were mined before the Romans and there are old trackways connecting this area and Cornwall.

Thus it is a clear fact, established from early sources, that there were in the time of Christ commercial and therefore cultural links between the south-west of what is now England and Phoenicia. Moreover, it is also a fact established by archæology that Glastonbury was at that time a port, the sea later receding. Any tin merchant might well therefore put in at Glastonbury. In the Middle Ages, in the reign of King John we know that the Jews worked the tin mines of Cornwall. Pits for smelting tin are called ‘Jews’ houses’ and old blocks of tin are called ‘Jews’ pieces’ or ‘Jews’ leavings’. Place-names are connected with them – ‘Trejewas’, the Jews’ village, ‘Bojewyan’, the abode of the Jews, though Marazion and the old name ‘Market Jew’ would seem to have nothing to do with ‘Zion’ or ‘Jew’. None of this however necessarily means that the Jews settled in Cornwall before the Middle Ages and, above all, none of this answers the question how Christ might have been connected with this trade.

Folklore supplies this link in the person of Joseph of Arimathea. Arimathea, also called Ramah, is a town eight miles north of Jerusalem on the road to Nazareth; its modern name is Ramallah. That Joseph was a rich and important person, 'a noble councillor', a member of the Sanhedrin, and a secret follower of Christ we can be sure. According to folklore the source of his wealth was tin:

Joseph was a tinman
Who dealt in dyes and ores
Trading from torrid Nazareth
To Somerset green shores.

In Cornwall when flashing tin, tin-miners used to call out 'Joseph was in the tin trade'. This is confirmed by traditions in Gloucestershire and also in the West of Ireland and Gaul. But we are already on uncertain ground. Folklore, recorded recently, can hardly be regarded as a serious source. And even if Joseph had gained his riches through the tin trade, and had even been in Britain, why should he have brought Christ with him? Here an uncertain tradition, that he was related either to Joseph, Mary's protector, or to Mary's father Joachim, provides the answer. This tradition is unsure and is probably based on the fact that in both Roman and Jewish law it was the duty of the nearest relatives to bury the deceased – and it was Joseph of Arimathea who saw to Christ's burial (Luke 23, 50–53). Others point out that between the ages of twelve and thirty, for eighteen years, the Gospels tell us nothing of Christ, and this is because Christ was absent. We must admit that this is surmise. Nevertheless, we cannot affirm that there is anything illogical or impossible in it.

The next stage in the legend of Christ and St Joseph is literary. In the sixth century, the Celtic monastic chronicler Gildas (516–570), wrote:

'Christ, the True Sun, afforded His Light, the knowledge of His commandments, to the island at the height of (or in the latter part of) the reign of Tiberius Caesar' (no later than AD37). In the same century, Taliesin the Bard writing in c.550 noted: 'Christ was from the beginning our Teacher'. In the eleventh century the Domesday Book refers to the old church in the monastery of Glastonbury as '*Domus Dei*', called 'the Secret of the Lord', having twelve hides of land which have never paid tax'. All of these statements, though mysterious, are also ambiguous and therefore not in any way conclusive of the presence of Our Lord in England. In about 1125, another mention, also referring to the sixth century, occurs in the works of the rather dubious historian, William of Malmesbury.

Unfortunately, about forty years after he wrote a disastrous fire destroyed Glastonbury Abbey and its library and so we are unable to check his sources. In this library William claimed to have discovered a letter of St Augustine to St Gregory the Great, in which he speaks of 'a certain royal island in the West, surrounded by water' where there was a church 'found constructed by no human art, but divinely constructed' or 'constructed by God', 'for the salvation of His people', 'sacred to Himself and to Mary the Mother of God'. William adds that in the seventh century St Paulinus had

covered this old wattle church with boards and reroofed it to protect it. And in c.700 he says that King Ina of Wessex mentioned it in a charter – ‘the ancient church, which the Great High Priest and Chiefest Minister formerly through His own ministry, and that of angels, hallowed by many an unheard-of miracle to Himself and the Ever-Virgin Mary’. This church was said to have been of the dimensions of the Tabernacle. But again can we really believe William of Malmesbury? We will not add here quotations from the well-known romances of later authors whose sources would appear to be still less reliable.

Folklore adds to all this a third element. In Cornwall at St Just in Roseland, Christ is said to have landed in St Just Creek; a stone with strange markings is pointed out as that on which Christ stepped. At Falmouth Christ is said to have landed at the Strand. At Marazion, opposite St Michael’s Mount, He is said to have come ashore accompanied by His Virgin Mother. Near Redruth it is said that He visited the ancient mines at Creeg Browse. Nearby at the mouth of the River Camel is an ancient holy well called the Jesus Well. In Somerset there is a firm tradition that Christ came with St Joseph ‘in a ship of Tarshish to the Summerland (Somerset) and sojourned in a place called Paradise’.

It is true that around Glastonbury there are several place-names with the word Paradise in them; Paradise Farm, Paradise House, Paradise Lane. However, such names are common all over England. It is true that not far from Glastonbury there are two ancient places called ‘Godney’ and ‘Christon’. But it would be false etymology to connect either of these spots with ‘God’ or ‘Christ’. Finally at Priddy, a hamlet at the top of the Mendips near Glastonbury, an old saying goes, ‘as sure as Our Lord was at Priddy’. Priddy lies at the centre of the ancient lead and copper mining area. A nineteenth century poem, from which we have already quoted, records the local tradition:

The Son of Man on Mendip
Walked among the fern
Against the blackness of the down
He saw the heather burn...

For Joseph was a tinman
Who sailed the western sea
And brought his young companion
Across the Egganly,
Where amid the golden orchards
Whose scent the silence trills
The Lamb of God in beauty trod
On Avalonian hills...

Now on an Easter morning
When clouds be rolled away
And climbing Masbury beacon

The young sun brings the day
They that be simple-hearted
That nothing ill have done
A wondrous sign may witness
The Lamb against the Sun.

What can we say of these curious traditions of the south-west and the ancient veneration for Glastonbury? First we are obliged to admit that in them we find no proof that either Christ or St Joseph of Arimathea ever came to these islands. But secondly we are also obliged to add that neither is there any proof against them. Furthermore, we find these traditions inspiring. For what we do know is that Christ has walked here in England as elsewhere, for He has walked here in the hearts of His Saints and walks here yet in all those who in Faith bear Him in their hearts.

December 1994

97. A Canterbury Tale: the Miracle at Dunkirk

Each felt a touching from beyond our ken,
From that bright kingdom where the souls who strove,
Live now for ever, helping living men.

John Masefield, *King Cole*

History is marked by a multitude of events, humanly improbable and even impossible, which yet took place and changed the course of world affairs. One such event is undoubtedly the greatest evacuation ever seen. This was the Dunkirk evacuation of May and June 1940, in which over 338,000 British and Allied troops were brought off the beaches of France from under the nose of a far superior enemy by an improvised fleet of some 1,200 vessels. Had this evacuation failed, then the whole course of the war would have been quite different.

Hitler could well have been successful in his attempt to invade the demoralized and armyless British Isles in his Operation Sealion. In this situation Mussolini would have been free to sweep across North Africa and through the Middle East, for there would have been no British Eighth Army to resist him. In turn Hitler's invasion of Russia would probably have been successful, for the Russians would not have received any Allied military supplies through Great Britain. Given this, the Japanese might never have attacked the United States at Pearl Harbour, being able instead to scythe through the British colonies in the Far East and through Northern India with impunity. The master-plan and dream of the Axis forces, the Japanese sweeping west, the Italians driving east and the Germans thrusting south through the Caucasus, would then have been accomplished as the forces of the Three Axis Powers linked up somewhere in Iraq – the ancient Babylon. And in such a situation the D-Day invasion of Europe in 1944 could never have taken place. The whole Eurasian land-mass, as well as Africa, would have become one huge Fascist colony. The whole course of the history of the world would have been changed. That none of this nightmare occurred is, in our view, due to the miracle at Dunkirk.

On 10th May 1940 Hitler unleashed his Blitzkrieg on Belgium and Holland; by the 15th his forces had broken through French lines; the Belgian Army on the left flank of the British Expeditionary Force was collapsing, the French Army on its right flank was dissolving; on 25th May the German High Command announced that 'the ring around the British, French and Belgian armies has been definitely closed'. The situation was grave. In London King George VI requested that Sunday 26th May be declared a National Day of Prayer. In a radio broadcast he called for the people of Britain and the Empire 'to commit their cause to God'. What happened after this was called by John Masefield, the then Poet Laureate, '*The Nine Days Wonder*'.

It was on 26th May that Operation Dynamo, the plan to evacuate British and Allied soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk, began. In spite of fierce enemy attacks, on this first day 1,312 troops were taken off the beaches. On the 27th, while King Leopold of Belgium capitulated and the Belgian Army ceased to resist, leaving the British left flank open and the never very strong morale of the French on the right flank faltering, 6,000 soldiers were rescued but at great cost on account of heavy enemy fire. The 28th was little better, but on the 29th 38,000 troops were lifted from the beaches. On the 30th, miraculously, the weather improved and some 46,000 men were freed and nearly 60,000 more the following day. On 1st June 62,000 men were evacuated. On Sunday 2nd over 31,000 were rescued; during it the congregation of an army chaplain, holding a Communion service on the beach, was scattered no fewer than five times by low-diving bombers.

Operation Dynamo ended on Monday 3rd; in all some 338,000 men had been evacuated from Dunkirk, 'out of the jaws of death and shame to their native land', as Mr. Churchill put it, 'a miracle of deliverance'. A whole army, ill-prepared, under-equipped, abandoned, virtually without food and water, bombed and machine-gunned by hundreds of enemy aircraft, had been delivered by a makeshift fleet of ships and boats through difficult and mined waters: Sunday 9th June was appointed as a Day of National Thanksgiving. The day before, a Daily Telegraph journalist, C. B. Mortlock, had written: 'Officers of high rank do not hesitate to put down the deliverance of the B.E.F. to the fact of the nation being at prayer on Sunday 26th May ... The consciousness of miraculous deliverance pervades the camps in which the troops are now housed in England ... One thing will be certain about tomorrow's thanksgiving in our churches. From none will the thanks ascend with greater sincerity or deeper fervour than from the officers and men who have seen the Hand of God, powerful to save, delivering them from the hands of a mighty foe, who, humanly speaking, had them utterly at his mercy'.

A little later in his account of the evacuation, '*The Nine Days Wonder*', John Masefield added: 'Our Army did not save Belgium; that is a little matter compared with the great matter, that it tried to. In the effort, it lost thirty thousand men, all its transport, all its guns, all its illusions; it never lost its heart ... It is hard to think of those dark formations on the sand, waiting in the rain of death, without the knowledge that Hope and Help are stronger things than death. Hope and Help came together in their power into the minds of thousands of simple men, who went out in Operation Dynamo and plucked them from ruin'.

It is difficult to find any parallel in history with the Dunkirk evacuation – unless it be the parting of the Red Sea and the escape of the Israelites out of Egypt. Against overwhelming enemy superiority, against all probability, the evacuation had been successful – David had conquered Goliath. On the 4th June, Churchill admitted: 'A week ago ... I feared it would be my hard lot to announce the greatest military disaster in our long history. I thought ... some 20,000 or 30,000 men might be re-embarked ... The whole root and core and brain of the British Army ... seemed about to perish

upon the field, or to be led into ignominious and starving captivity'. Who had saved the British Isles from the 'final solution', the slave-Empire which the devilry of Hitler had conjured out of the fallen Christendom of Europe? Whence had come 'Hope and Help?' Who had parted with Unseen Hand the waters of the English Channel? In order to answer these questions, it is enough to open a church calendar. For the 26th May, according to the calendar kept by the National Church of England, is the Feast of St Augustine, the Apostle of the English, First Archbishop of Canterbury, who came to these islands bearing the cross and image of Christ so many centuries ago. This 'Nine Days Wonder' was in fact a 'Canterbury Tale', the fruit of the intercessions of the National Saint and Apostle and Archpastor of England, St Augustine, with Our Lord.

To strengthen our case let us add a postscript to this Canterbury miracle – the story of another perhaps no lesser miracle which resulted from it. Four years after the military disaster of Dunkirk, the Allies went out on their victorious mission to set captive Europe free. The decision to launch the greatest invasion known to history was taken at 4 a.m. on 5th June 1944 and within hours 745 ships, 4,000 landing-craft, 13,000 aircraft and nearly 200,000 troops made ready to go out from the shores of southern England to arrive in Normandy in the early hours of the next morning. And just as many had forgotten how the Apostle of England had blessed the nation on 26 May 1940, so then too there were many who overlooked that 5th June is the Feast of St Boniface of Crediton, the English Apostle of Germany and Martyr. All those long years before, in the eighth century, it was this Saint of God who had gone out from his native Devon to take the Light of Christ to those very lands where Hitler was now altogether putting out that same Light. Just as St Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, ultimately owed his faith to St Augustine, Apostle of the English, so D-Day ultimately owed its success to Dunkirk. Without the one, the other could never have been.

It is our belief that nothing happens by coincidence. When in 1940 the National Day of Prayer was called on the Lord's Day, which also happened to be the very feast-day of St Augustine, the Apostle of England, the First Archbishop of Canterbury, bearing the title, 'Bishop of Britain', how can we not believe that the Saint interceded with Christ for his people? And when in 1944 the mission to set free Europe, fallen into a new heathendom, began on the very feast-day of St Boniface, the English Patron-Saint of Germany and redeemer by his own blood of all of north-western Europe from its old heathendom, how can we not believe in the might of his prayer too? Who can deny this faith, the faith of little Jerusalem against mighty Babylon? 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

December 1994

98. St Alban, Protomartyr of Britain

There was once a man called Alban. He lived many years ago but like us today he lived at a time of crisis. He lived in a world of decadence and immorality, or rather, amorality, for those were people who did not know what morality was. He lived in a world enslaved to falsehood, a world of much injustice and tyranny, tyranny that was yet freedom – but only freedom to worship everything except the Truth. Men worshipped all manner of false gods and above all they worshipped the Roman Emperor himself. But they were not free to worship the Christian God, for if they worshipped the Christian God, they would not be able to worship the false gods.

That was why Christians were persecuted, given over to wild beasts and slaughtered in their tens of thousands in the arenas and public places of the Roman world, for they challenged the whole basis of that corrupted and evil society. Alban saw that the gods of that world were false, were idols, he saw that they were diabolical. The society in which Alban lived was then a dead society, for it dwelt in Untruth and all that is untrue is spiritually dead, for it contains no inner reality, having no inner life. That society had lost its way, being based on false values, on falsehoods; it entrusted in itself, not in the Truth, nor yet in Life, Whose Author is Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Alban was arrested by the authorities of the time for sheltering the Christian priest he had taught him all these things, and also for passing himself off as that priest in a valiant attempt to save him. Before his judges and in his heart Alban said: 'No, I do not accept your gods, for they are false. I believe in the Living and True God Who created all things'. And in so confessing his Faith, Alban went against the conventional wisdom of the times, he refused to swim with that tide. He spoke the Truth and in so doing he made the sacrifice of his own life. Through this he converted both his executioner and his judge. And so persecution and torture and death ceased in the land. And thus there was a renewal in the society of Britain at that time, which began to shake off its spiritual and moral torpor, and thus become a New Britain. As for Alban himself, Christians believe that he stands in the Kingdom of Christ Who reigns in all Beauty and Wisdom. And on Earth Alban has been venerated all these years as the Protomartyr of Britain, the First Martyr of these Islands, thus bringing to us the spiritual fragrance of the Divine Man, the first Martyr of Jerusalem.

St Alban is in many ways significant for us who also seek a renewal in our society, a New Britain. For we too refuse to swim with the tide. We too reject the dead because it is false. We too reject the conventional wisdom around us, seeing in it idols that we should call diabolical. We too are oppressed by Rome, not by the Rome of Alban's time, but by those who, swimming with the tide, treacherously follow the Treaty of Rome and all its consequences. But we too are a minority, faced by apathy and despair. And the question is: Where do we go from here, how do we overcome apathy and despair? And St Alban brings us the answer to this question. We overcome, as he

overcame, by sacrifice, recalling that in Latin the word sacrifice means 'to make holy', so that by his sacrifice, society was renewed. If we wish to see our society renewed, then it will only be by sacrifice. Great societies always start with sacrifices, just as they always end because nobody seeks to make sacrifices any longer, for they have lost their faith in an ideal and fallen into cynicism and world-weariness.

For all these reasons then St Alban is our champion. And in thinking of this name Alban, meaning white, we may think how close it is to that ancient name of our land, Albion, so named from its white cliffs which long ago were all that were known of it by ancient peoples who looked out to it across the seas and beheld its whiteness and wondered at it. Thus the very name of Alban is a symbol of our land of Albion that we hold so dear. May the Saint of God Alban protect Albion by his holy prayers this day and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Martyr Alban, pray to God for us!

February 1995

99. Days of Grace

The shadows lengthen and the swallows wheel,
The cool of evening brings its gentle chimes,
The day is dying, keenly now I feel
The sudden dream of close by far-off times.

Blood has its memory and the heart its place;
Now do I sense those kindly, ancient men,
Who dwelt here then before the fall from grace,
And dwell here now in ways beyond our ken.

Centuries from now another here may climb,
Watch the swallows, the trees, the darkening green,
To grasp a dream across the span of time
And share with me the England now unseen.

February 1995

100. Epitaph for the English Faith

I thought of Thee one thousand years before,
When yet this holy minster stood here strong
And taught the truths of English Christian lore,
Till Norman came and did this England wrong.

Our native Faith has since been sorely tried
By tyrants proud and schoolmen called divines,
Who preach not Christ Who Rose though Crucified
And flaunt their soulless thoughts in empty lines.

This Eden-haunted land of Church and Crown
Full knows their Norman deformations vain,
And from on high the Saints of old look down
And see the Faith of Inner England reign.

And come the end, let men in awe this say:
We served our God and loved the land He made,
Partook of Christ, and on the Judgement Day,
That Angles might as Angels stand we prayed.

February 1995

Afterword: the Three Words

‘If we will not devise some greater, more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The trouble is basically theological and involves a spiritual improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all the material and cultural development of the past 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.’

So spoke General Douglas MacArthur at the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay almost fifty years ago on 2 September 1945. In recent times man has indeed become cleverer, but it is doubtful whether he has become happier, let alone better. Since the invention of the Atomic Bomb, man has had the destructive capacity to annihilate himself and every living creature on this planet several times over, but seems not to have the constructive capacity to restore any of what he has so far destroyed. The technical genius of his every invention seems to have brought a greater problem in its wake. His ever more sophisticated mental and technical capacities have far outstripped his primitive spiritual capacities, which have become pygmy-like.

The question is, how can man, before it is too late, learn to develop these spiritual capacities so that his technical capacities may be harnessed to them? How, in other words, can his unlimited wants be reined in to his real needs, how can man become content? Are there somewhere voices and knowledge and understanding which he has not heeded, which might yet tell him of other truths, another science and another art and another literature, those of the spirit, which he has for so long left aside? Can the ‘spiritual improvement of human character match the material and cultural development’ of modern times?

It is our belief that there are indeed other voices with another knowledge and another understanding, and that they have long been calling to us in England to return to other values. And those values are ‘basically theological’, ‘involving a spiritual improvement of human character’, placing the spirit above the body, and can thus match spiritual development with cultural and material development. They are the values of another time and another England, an England which seems to have been calling us back to our senses in recent years. They are the values and Faith of our native saints, bodily calling to us from across the centuries out of the North and the South and the East and the West.

Since the beginning of the last century, a whole series of saints has been bodily rediscovered in this country. In 1811 the relics of St Audrey (Etheldreda) were discovered in London. In 1828 in Durham the relics of one of England’s greatest saints, St Cuthbert, were opened and examined and found to be authentic. In 1882 relics of St Mildred were returned. In 1885 a Saxon coffer was found in a church wall in Folkestone – it contained the relics of St Eanswyth of Folkestone. In 1900 in the

little village of Whitchurch Canonicorum in Dorset the relics of St Wite were opened and also found to be authentic. In 1931 the relics of St Edward, the martyred King of England, were discovered in the ruins of the Abbey at Shaftesbury (formerly Edwardstow) and in 1979 they were presented to the English Orthodox Brotherhood of St Edward at their Church in Brookwood, Surrey for veneration by the faithful.

Similar stories can be told of others, St Alban, St Augustine, St Chad, St Bede, St Urith, St Swithin, St Birinus, St John of Beverley, St Boniface and St Walburgh, all of whose relics are now venerated. And just recently we have heard of one who was England's Patron Saint in times of old. In 1991 near the village of Hoxne in Suffolk, archaeologists uncovered what is believed to be the chapel built on the spot where St Edmund, King and Martyr, was martyred by the heathen on 20 November 869. A Mrs Margaret Evans, now aged 95, spent 20 years identifying this site after the following mysterious event: 'You know the way Edmund comes and goes in English history? Well, the first miracle associated with him is said to have been a white light from the sky. I've seen that light. It was years ago, my husband was still alive and we were driving down that road behind us. It was only there for a few minutes ... It came out of the sky and we could see where it landed. The light landed where in the end we found the chapel'. (Quoted from *The Sunday Telegraph Review*, 24 October 1993.)

'Follow the path the saints of old have trod
And Mother Church shall lead thee home to God.'

Could it be that from the green fastnesses of Saxon England these saints with their values and their Faith are once more calling to us to change our ways before it is altogether too late? Is the epitaph below, taken from a country graveyard, not appropriate to us, as we now approach a new century and a new millennium?

Time is short,
Death is sure,
Sin's the wound
And Christ's the cure.

It is our belief that every single problem in the modern world stems from a lack of spiritual understanding and a way of life that would result from that spiritual understanding. In theological language spiritual understanding is called Faith and that is exactly what our native saints, all from 'the Age of Faith', can teach us. Even the ultimate human problem, Death, cannot stand in the face of Faith, the spiritual understanding that God is Love and that therefore Christ is the Vanquisher of Death. But the modern world has been wounded by its own rejection of Faith, of spiritual understanding, a rejection which goes back to a period from beyond which our native saints are now calling us. And the tragedy of the modern world is that it chooses to ignore the calling of those saints, because it has buried its Faith beneath a mound of every humanly conceivable '-ism' and that mound is rotting and decomposing like so many autumn leaves.

Once Peter saw Christ walking on the waters and he too began to walk on them. But then he became afraid of the storm and began to sink. Is not this the very condition of the modern world? By the miracle of the presence of the saints amongst us, the world, walking on its sea of knowledge, has so far been saved from nuclear and ecological catastrophe. But how much longer can we survive before we too begin to sink beneath the sea? We hold that the answer is in the three words that Peter spoke as he began to sink beneath the waves: 'Lord, save me'. And if the world has sufficient faith left in it to say just those three words, then the Lord will stretch forth his hand to us too and catch us, saying: 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'

July 1995

About the Author

The author was born in 1956 into a family that has on his father's side lived for centuries on the Essex-Suffolk border. Following early experience confirmed by reading, he asked to be received into the Russian Orthodox Church in 1975. After studying Russian in Oxford and working in Greece, he went on to study Orthodox theology in Paris. He was ordained deacon in France in 1985 and priest in 1991. In 1988 he wrote a first book about the Old English Church. This was followed by five other books. This is a reprint of his third work, written between 1974 and 1995 and concerning the two main themes of his experience and thought: the Orthodox Christian Faith and his native land.

After many years spent serving the Church in Western Europe, the author has since 2008 been rector of the multinational St John's Orthodox Church in Colchester. Located in his native town, this is the centre of the East of England Orthodox Church under the Church Outside Russia. Married with six adult children, serving in one of the largest Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe and working to establish missions from it, he also teaches, translates, broadcasts and writes for the Orthodox England website www.orthodoxengland.org.uk. His work strives to reflect in English the traditional view of the world common to both parts of the Russian Church: the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and the resurgent Russian Orthodox Church inside Russia.