

## EDITORIAL

"In all thy keeping, keep thy heart, for out of it are the issues of life and death."

*Thomas Traherne, The Fourth Century, 41*

**O**N this, the first issue of Volume 2 of 'Orthodox England', we wish all our readers a Happy New Church Year.

We are particularly pleased to welcome to our contributors, John Allitt, who is writing this quarter on Thomas Traherne. We are always pleased to welcome contributions from others, whatever their jurisdictional (which is often a result of geography) or denominational background, whatever their nationality. We ask only for relevance to our subject, sincerity, integrity and an English independence of foreign political aims. We hope that others will follow John in contributing.

For those of our readers who do not know Thomas Traherne, poet and mystic, we include the following background information.

The son of a Hereford shoemaker, he was born in about 1634 and, showing unusual ability, went on to study at Oxford. After studies, in 1657 he became an Anglican clergyman. In 1673 there appeared his first work, the anti-Papist – and very Orthodox – '*Roman Forgeries*'. (We very much hope that John will be able to write on this work for us). '*Roman Forgeries*' was followed by '*Christian Ethicks*', better known as '*The Way to Blessedness*', in 1675, and published one year after Traherne's death. However, most of Traherne's works only became known to the general public much later. Indeed his best known work, '*Centuries of Religious Meditations*', was discovered over two hundred years later, being published in 1908, at about the same time as his poetry.

The importance of Traherne in that stream of English religious thought that is strongly inclined towards Orthodoxy is very great. Although, obviously, Traherne was not Orthodox, he lived at a time when there had appeared a movement which rejected both the excesses of Roman Catholicism and of Protestantism. This movement was not, however, a mere mixing of the two tendencies, but was also mystically inspired. It placed great importance upon the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. And it is the Holy Spirit Who has been so neglected in Western Europe since the spread of the '*filioque*'. We believe therefore that there is much to admire in

the work of one who, despite being outside the Church, nevertheless expressed so much of Orthodoxy.

Of course, some would object that this is all very well, but Traherne was not Orthodox. Moreover, this can be seen in his almost humanistic neglect of stressing the unseen warfare against sin and his optimism that mankind is closer to salvation than is actually true. Of course it is true that whatever Traherne's virtues, as a Non-Orthodox he cannot in any sense be compared to the Church Fathers. Nevertheless, one of the main aims of this journal is to put English culture and history into an Orthodox perspective, rejecting what is not Orthodox and saving the best of English culture, so that it can be reintegrated into Orthodoxy. And this is why we welcome this learned work on Thomas Traherne.

In this second volume of our journal, it is also our intention to speak of Orthodoxy in other lands, lest some who have not read the Editorial of the first issue of Volume One, should think that our mission from France be chauvinistic! Thus Thomas Traherne himself, as may be guessed from his very name, was not only born in the Marches, but was clearly of Welsh descent. Indeed, perhaps some of our readers might well feel the Celtic blood mingling with the English in Traherne's visionary understanding of the world. Similarly, in further issues of Volume Two we shall be exploring other lands, their approaches to Orthodoxy as well as their falling away from it and the relevance of their histories to us. Of this we shall say no more now, but we hope to surprise our readers by the scope of our intent and purpose.

Finally, this number includes a longer '*Questions and Answers*' section. Judging by the correspondence that we have received in the past year, there is a great pastoral need for such a section. Indeed, for lack of space, we have once more been obliged to hold over very many letters until the December issue.

May the might of the Holy Cross guard all our readers.

*Fr. Andrew*

## From the Holy Fathers THE HOLY ROOD

Let all the trees of the forest dance and sing,  
as they behold their fellow-tree, the cross,  
today receiving veneration: for Christ, as  
holy David prophesied, has exalted it on  
high.

*Matins of the Sunday of the Cross, Canticle Nine.*

THERE is no doubt that the veneration of the Holy Cross was very strong in Orthodox times in the history of these islands. Thus we are told that in 597 St. Augustine came to Canterbury with icon and cross. But we can be sure that those missionaries who worked in the other parts of these islands were no less awed by the saving Cross of Christ. Indeed it was they who introduced the veneration of the Holy Cross to the court of the great St. Oswald. And it was St. Oswald's deed in setting up a wooden cross before his successful battle against the pagan King Cadwallon in 633 that seems to have greatly encouraged the veneration of the Holy Cross.

Later this veneration was boosted by St. Theodore of Canterbury who mentions standing stone crosses in his canons. The pious nun Huneberg, biographer of St. Willibald (c. 700–786), mentions how 'on the estates of nobles and good men it is the custom to have a Cross, dedicated to Our Lord and held in great reverence, put up in some prominent point for the convenience of those who wish to pray before it'. The monk Felix (not St. Felix of Dunwich, but one named after him), biographer of St. Guthlac, mentions how that Saint's parents had a cross outside their home. That would have been in 674.

In former times in England, everywhere monks built stone crosses, beneath which they preached, before going on to baptise the crowds that gathered by them and then build churches. The remains of these crosses can still be seen, especially in the North of England. (It is they that provided the inspiration for the cover of this journal). Another custom which also began at that time was to put crosses over the graves of the deceased. How depressing the sight of today's Protestant British cemeteries, with hardly a cross visible! How far have we fallen!

Another aspect of historic English Orthodoxy, to be revived by the Holy Spirit, is the miraculous

crosses, so frequently recorded in the 'Silver Age' of English Orthodox culture in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Certain stone crosses at this time were said to have the gift of speech. Thus the chronicler Osbern records that King Edgar heard such crucifixes speak both at Winchester and at Glastonbury. The most famous example is that of the Waltham Cross (hence the name of the town), which bowed its head before the prayers of King Harold on the eve of the Battle of Hastings. Found miraculously in Somerset, this was 'an incomparably beautiful figure of the Saviour, carved on black stone, which by the wondrous and unheard-of craftsmanship of the sculptor, attained such harmony in the extension of the arms and the arrangement of all the parts of the body you might think it had been fashioned by the hands of the Supreme Craftsman Himself.'

How few the vestiges of Orthodox English culture left today!

One of those few, however, is that there is hardly a village or town in this land that does not



*St Oswald at Heavenfield*

have at its centre a medieval cross or a modern one that stands atop a war memorial.

Thus 14 September, Holy Cross or Holy Rood Day, called more exactly the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, has long been a great feast in this land. But at no time has the Cross been so celebrated as in one of the greatest gems of English literature, *'The Dream of the Rood'*. Probably composed by the little-known Northumbrian or Mercian church writer, Cynewulf, in the late eighth century, it is from this that we now quote:

'It seemed to me that I beheld a wondrous tree rising up, surrounded with light, the brightest of crosses ... All the angels of God, created in beauty, looked on ... holy spirits gazed on, men on earth and the whole universe of glory ... Lying there a long while, I beheld in sorrow the Saviour's Cross, until I heard it speak.

'Long ago I became the hardest of torments, most hateful to men, before I opened to mankind the path of true life. Behold, the Prince of Glory, the Lord of Heaven, honoured me beyond all the trees of the forest, even as Almighty God honoured His Mother Mary Herself above all womankind ... God tasted death; yet God rose up again with His mighty power to help men ...'

Nobody need be afeared who bears in his breast the best of signs, but each soul who wishes to dwell with the Lord must through the Cross seek the Kingdom ... To the Cross I

turn for help ... each day I look for the time when the Lord's Cross, Which once I saw here on earth, will fetch me from this fleeting life and take me where there is great gladness, rejoicing in heaven, where God's people feast, where there is unending bliss, and set me where I may after dwell in glory, enjoying the fullness of bliss with the Saints. May the Lord, Who here on earth once suffered on the Cross for the sins of men, be my friend. He has redeemed us and given us life, a heavenly home ...

Although written some twelve hundred years ago, these brief extracts from *'The Dream of the Rood'*, may help us to live today. For just as the Cross brought salvation, so our personal crosses, assumed in humility, can bring us salvation.

'The Cross is the abyss of wonders, the centre of desires, the school of virtues, the house of wisdom, the throne of love, the theatre of joys and the place of sorrows, it is the root of happiness and the gate of Heaven.'

*Thomas Traherne, the First Century, 58.*

Let us learn to cross ourselves more frequently, before every deed, at sunrise and at sunset. Let us cross ourselves correctly, in the Orthodox manner, and let us also learn to take the blessings of priests, when we meet them and say farewell to them, for the blessing of the sign of the cross will protect us and bring us great benefit in our daily lives.

O Lord preserve Thy commonwealth  
by Thy cross!

## A SERMON ON THE SUNDAY OF THE CROSS AND ST FELIX DAY, 22 MARCH 1998

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

**W**E all have a cross to bear. There is no man who has not a cross, for all of us are sinners and the cross is the fruit of sin. Had there never been any sin, there would never have been any cross. The cross that each of us bears is only allowed to us because it is our size. By the loving Providence of God, our cross is never too great for us, never beyond our powers. The only cross that is too great for us is that which we take on ourselves in our pride, imagining that we are strong, instead of knowing that we are weak.

The cross that the Lord allows us to bear must be accepted by us. Sadly, there are some who spend their lives fleeing their cross. But they can never escape it, for we carry our cross with us like a suitcase, it is part of us. Indeed it is only once we have accepted our cross that we are able to make it into something positive and we are able to allow it to transform and transfigure our lives.

This is the first difference between ourselves and Christ. For in general we refuse our cross, making it impossible for that cross to be transfigured into something positive. He did not refuse the cross and therefore transfigured the

instrument of Death into the instrument of Resurrection.

The second difference between ourselves and Our Lord is that He did not take on Himself His own cross, for being sinless He had no cross of His own. Instead in His sinless compassion and lovingkindness He took upon Himself our Cross, the Cross of all mankind. Only thus did He transfigure Death into Life, Death into Resurrection.

Like unto Our Lord, the Saints also transfigured their crosses into Life and Resurrection. And today we commemorate our Patron Saint who, following the Lord, did precisely this.

In about the year 330 the Emperor St. Constantine ordered that a series of shore forts be built on the southern and eastern coasts of this land. Not more than one mile from this very church, there was built just such a fort, with massive walls some 130 yards wide by 180 yards long. Now under the sea, parts of its ruins can be seen at very low tides.

300 years after the building of this shore fort, there came to this historic peninsula a missionary from Burgundy in Gaul. A young priest-monk, his name was Felix. Why did he come here? Was this just the zeal of the young monk, drawn to the missionary enlightenment of a pagan kingdom, just as in our own day some have been drawn to missionary work in Africa and Asia? No, there were probably three concrete reasons for his coming here apart from his own zeal.

Firstly, Fr. Felix had certainly been connected in some way, directly or indirectly to a Saint of these islands, St. Columban, who had established a great monastery at Luxueil in Burgundy.

Secondly, as a Burgundian whose ancestors had originally come from Denmark, Fr. Felix probably spoke a language not unlike that of our forefathers who lived here in his day.

Thirdly, and above all, in Burgundy Fr. Felix had met the exiled heir to the East Anglian throne, Sigebert. Indeed it may be that Felix himself catechised and baptised the young prince Sigebert, the future King and Saint of East Anglia.

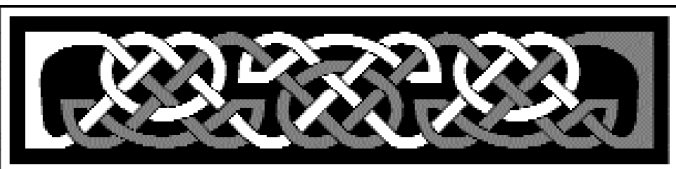
However it may be, we know that by 631 Felix had already been consecrated Bishop of East Anglia by St. Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury and His See had been fixed at a place called Dommoch. Most historians think this to be Dunwich, a few miles further up the Suffolk coast from here. However, there are some who think Dommoch to be Felixstowe and that Bishop Felix' base was none other than the Roman fort here. For after all, a few miles down this coast St. Cedd, Apostle of Essex, founded his church at Bradwell in another Roman fort there. And in Norfolk, St. Fursey, founded his monastery on the Celtic plan at Burgh Castle, yet another Roman fort. And local tradition says that Felix landed at the Roman shore fort here. Finally, it is argued, surely if Dommoc is Dunwich, then why was Dunwich not named after St. Felix, why did it not receive the name of 'Felixstowe', the holy place of Felix?

Whatever the truth, it is certain that St. Felix trod these shores and worked in this peninsula for the conversion of the local people. He sailed around the coasts and built churches and set up a seminary-school. He went north and met and loved St. Aidan. He established a monastery at Soham in Cambridgeshire where he baptised the future St. Audrey of Ely. It was this monastery that ultimately was the spiritual foundation-stone of the University of Cambridge. It was here later that St. Felix' relics were venerated and that his Gospel-book, known as '*The Red Book of Eye*', was piously conserved.

What can we say of that immense cross that St. Felix took on? A missionary in a foreign land, at first alone, a land with no Orthodox Christian tradition, with no roads, no printing, no photocopiers. And yet after seventeen years, that cross had become a triumph of the Gospel and the young priest-monk is still today remembered as 'The Apostle of East Anglia'.

St. Felix too had made a cross into success, spiritual death into the spiritual resurrection of a whole kingdom. For such a feat of the spirit there is only one word: holiness.

Holy Father Felix, pray to God for us!



# THOMAS TRAHERNE AND THE WONDER OF CHILDHOOD

by John Stewart Allitt

In our talks over the months we are striving to bring alive the buried Orthodoxy in our own land. Some of you may well say, 'but why Thomas Traherne, he was an Anglican? But so was I once and I know many of you were too.

Father Andrew Phillips in his book *Orthodox Christianity and the English Tradition* writes somewhere, the exact page and words now elude me, that there has been always a faithful remnant in England preserving the essence of the Faith from generation to generation. I believe this to be fact. I can speak from my own experience, for in those difficult student days when academics do their best to puff up the mind and stiffen one's neck, an Anglican, a monk of genuine holiness, said a few poignant things to me which eventually helped to lead me to seek out the way to Holy Orthodoxy. Only recently I found an old, battered copy of a book on the early church councils written by this reverend father. I soon realised that here was hidden between the covers of a book a true 'orthodox' soul. A great sense of gratitude and joy came over me.

The Western Church in our land over the centuries has undergone many trials and vicissitudes. If you or I had lived during the seventeenth century and survived the Commonwealth and Restoration, as did Thomas Traherne, none of us would have heard of Orthodoxy as it is possible to do so today. Neither could one have become an Orthodox in a formal way, however one could have been as 'orthodox' as possible through a right intention in the life of the Spirit. Consider how we had by those desperate years torn our tradition to shreds by the follies of a ruthless monarch, men of evil intent, iconoclasts, the pride of individualism and a pervading corruption going from class to class, a decay that was eventually to degrade our land through an alliance with a soulless empiricism, a narrow, heretical puritanism, atheism, commercial ruthlessness and bad education. Imagine ourselves born into such times, the struggle towards a faith which was just a little orthodox must have meant a deep genuineness of intent, a guardian angel working overtime, and the overflowing gift of the Holy Spirit.

Traherne was born in Hereford in 1637 and died in Teddington in 1674 at the age of 37 years. Immediately on the collapse of the Commonwealth

he was ordained deacon and then priest in the Church of England, insisting throughout his ministry that conformity was essential for the health of a nation. By conformity he no doubt meant the acceptance of the Tradition of the Church as found in the Church Fathers and the early Councils. Furthermore it is clear that at this time an oral tradition was still alive amongst people. Like the saintly Bishop Ken, another Anglican Divine, Traherne would have maintained that he had lived and died in the faith of the early, *undivided* Church.

Here then was a young priest of obvious spirituality who did not look back happily to his education at Brasenose College, Oxford. Though it had opened for him various worlds of learning, at the same time it failed him. Listen to his own words

'There was never a teacher that did professely teach Felicity, though that be the mistress of all the other sciences.'

In the wake of the Commonwealth, the temptation may have been:

- to become even more non-conformist, zealous and puritanical:
- to go to the other extreme and emulate the life-style of a dissolute monarch:
- to embrace the new emphasis on empirical science:
- to become cynical of religion and its ways.

Felicity, as understood by Traherne, had nothing to do with the baubles and tinsels of fashion but the deep joy given through the abiding grace of the Holy Spirit and our ever-increasing partaking of the divine nature. In his reaction to puritanism, Traherne could not imagine a sorrowful God as expressed in those agonising, bleeding and misguided representations of the Crucifixion in the west. He was no puritan.

'God is happy in Himself, and Happy in us. Happy in Eternity, Happy in time, Happy in Heaven, Happy in Earth, and so shall we. Happy in the creation, in the Redemption, in the day of Judgement, and so Shall we. Happy in His works, Happy in his Laws, Happy in His wayes, Happy in his councils,

Happy in the Glory of his Eternal Kingdom;  
and so Shall we, who must of necessity be  
Transformed unto his Divine Image, that we  
may becom(e) one with Him.'

[SM IV 29]

We have quoted twice so far from Traherne's writings, once from his *Centuries of Meditations* and then from the *Select Meditations*. It is a miraculous fact that we have rediscovered Traherne in our own century as if he were a prophet for our time. His work had been long forgotten and the first manuscripts only began to come to light in 1896. Since then various other manuscripts have been traced either in libraries or literally saved from destruction on bonfires. We are still attempting to piece together the writings so far discovered in order to gain a better understanding of the man and his thought. A major problem is that only a few works have been to date published; as for the other writings one is dependent on micro-films of the manuscripts or extracts quoted in essays and learned articles.

Recently I attended a conference in Oxford which aimed to bring notice the latest state of research and rediscovery. You can imagine my surprise when Dr Julia Smith, who is at present writing a book on Traherne's life, read out from an unpublished manuscript titled *The Ceremonial Law* the following:

'His Name must be the darling of our tongue  
Our Hallelujah and our Daily song  
Never profaned with our vulgar tongue  
But whether we sit or stand, lie down or walk  
Be used with reverence and fear and joy.'

That confirmed an insight granted when reading the *Centuries of Meditations*. I became convinced that Traherne had been devoted to the Sacred Name and prayed it within the silence of his heart.

But we must move on.

Disappointed with the education he had received, Traherne resolved to live on £10 a year and become a priest at the small church of Credenhill near to Hereford. His aim, in the quietness of the countryside, was to ask the Holy Spirit to instruct him as to the nature of Felicity. Like St Seraphim on his rock the young priest had to fight the demons that welled up in his being.

'As in the house I sate  
Alone and desolate,  
No creature but the fire and I,  
The chimney and the stool, I lift mine eye  
Up to the wall,  
And in the silent hall  
saw nothing mine  
But some few cups and dishes shine;  
The table and the wooden stools  
Where people us'd to dine.  
A painted cloth there was  
Wherein some ancient story wrought  
A little entertain'd my thought  
Which light discover'd through the glass.

I wonder'd much to see  
That all my wealth should be  
Confin'd in such a little room,  
Yet hope for more I scarcely durst presume.  
It grieve'd me sore  
That such a scanty store  
Should be my all:  
For I forgot my ease and health,  
Nor did I think of hands or eyes,  
Nor soul or body prize;  
I neither thought the sun,  
Nor moon, nor stars, nor people, mine  
Tho they did round about me shine;  
And therefore I was quite undone.'

[Poverty]

'I do believe,  
The evening being shady and obscure,  
The very silence did me grieve,  
And sorrow more procure:  
A secret want  
Did make me think my fortune scant  
I was so blind, I could not find my health,  
No joy mine eye could there espy, nor wealth.

Nor could I guess  
What kind of thing I long'd for: but that I  
Did somewhat lack of blessedness,  
Beside the earth and sky,  
I plainly found;  
It griev'd me much, I felt a wound  
Perplexed me sore; yet what my store  
should be  
I did not know, nothing would show to me.

Ye sullen things!  
Ye dumb, ye silent creatures, and unkind!  
How can I call you pleasant springs  
Unless ye ease my mind!

Will ye not speak  
What 'tis I want, nor silence break?  
O pity me, at least point out my joy:  
Some kindness show to me, altho a boy.

They silent stood;  
Nor earth, nor woods, nor hills, nor brooks,  
nor skies,  
Would tell me where the hidden good,  
Which I did long for, lies:  
The shady trees,  
The evening dark, the humming bees,  
The chirping birds, mute springs and fords,  
conspire,  
To give no answer unto my desire.'

[Solitude]

Then something remarkable happened, in God's good time the Spirit brought back to the young priest memories of his childhood's innocent happiness. He wrote a poem entitled *The Rapture*:

'Sweet infancy!  
 O fire of Heaven! O sacred light!  
 How fair and bright!  
 How great am I  
 Whom all the world doth magnify!  
 O heavenly joy!  
 O great and sacred blessedness,  
 Which I possess!  
 So great a joy  
 Who did into my arms convey!

From God above  
Being sent, the heavens me inflame,  
To praise His name.  
The stars do move!  
The burning sun doth show His love.

O how divine  
Am I! To all this sacred wealth,  
This life and health,  
Who rais'd? Who mine  
Did make the same? What hand divine!

He remembered that as a child he had beheld the creation as his own, set before him by the Divine Mercy from which to learn. The natural world, once transfigured before one in this way, maintains Traherne, is somewhat like standing before an icon of St Elijah with a multitude of happy thoughts welling up in one's heart

'Thoughts are the wings on which the soul  
doth fly,  
The messengers which soar above the sky,  
Elijah's fiery chariot, that conveys  
The soul, even here, to those eternal joys'

*[Thoughts IV]*

The gift of remembering childhood had returned to the devout priest:

'I saw all in the peace of Eden ... All Time was Eternity, and a perpetual Sabbath. Is it not strange, that an infant should be heir of the whole World, and see those mysteries which the books of the learned never unfold?'

William Law, another Anglican Divine, said that the purpose of education is to lead children back to paradise. In this age of perversity of images and profane indoctrination, if only parents, teachers and educationalists could remember and gain insight into this profound thought I rather behold the paradise of the created world than understand the workings of nuclear energy. I am sure that it is the same for you.

Traherne wrote his *Centuries of Meditations* for the good of a young lady seeking Christ and the joy of His Kingdom. It is a private book which we are privileged to read, as if we were eavesdropping. Word for word, line for line, chapter for chapter, we have in our hands a treasury of instruction fit for any soul seeking freedom from the world's dark dreams.

The key to Traherne's teaching for the young lady's soul in his care is strictly according to the Gospel; that is, we all have to become as little children in order to see the Kingdom.

'The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees when I first saw them through one of the gates transported and ravished me, their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures the aged seem! Immortal Cherubims! And young men glittering and sparkling Angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls

tumbling in the street, and moving, were moving jewels... Eternity was manifest in the Light of the Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared: which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. [But] I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world. Which now I unlearn, and become, as it were, a little child that I may enter into the Kingdom of God.'

Thus to be born anew through Christ for Traherne meant participating once more in the *wonder* of childhood; wonder on a new, mature octave through which we recognise and see the Kingdom all about us.

As Christians we know that God created through His LOGOS. The beginning of St John's Gospel rings in our minds. The glory of the Creation is all about us from a grain of sand to the most splendid landscape. It is our task to come to know the logoi concealed in the multiplicity of the Creation and so apprehend the fullness of life about us and flowing within us. God's creative words are scattered all about us to teach us, to support us.

Traherne is explicit in his writings. It is not given us to contemplate the Divine Essence simply because God in his Essence is inaccessible to the human mind, rather we must seek Him in His Acts which sustain the created world. The Church Fathers make a similar distinction. This is the Hebraic understanding of the Lord God of Israel, the God who reveals Himself through History and the life-force of the Creation (Psalm 103 [104]). The Hebraic understanding of the Word (*dabhar*) is energetic and dynamic force; whereas for the Greek philosophers the Word (*Logos*) is archetypal, contemplative, formal. St John in the first chapter of his Gospel combines both concepts. The world, therefore, is sacrament, communion, participation.

'He [God] is Himself in everything.'

(Traherne)

Through knowing the world aright we confirm the image in which we have been created and discover that we are called to grow into His likeness.

Traherne writes:

'Your enjoyment of the World is never right, till you so esteem it, that everything in it, is more your treasure than a King's exchequer full of gold and silver.'

'You never enjoy the world aright, till you see a sand exhibiteth the wisdom and power of God: and prize in everything the service they do to you, by manifesting His glory and goodness to your Soul, far more than the visible beauty on their surface, or the material services they can do your body.'

'Your enjoyment of the world is never right, till every morning you awake in Heaven; see yourself in your Father's Palace; and look upon the skies, the earth, and the air as Celestial Joys: having such a reverend esteem of all, as if you were among the Angels. The bride of a monarch, in her husband's chamber, hath no such causes of delight as you.'

'You never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heir as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and sceptres, you never enjoy the world.'

'Till your spirit filleth the whole world ... till you are as familiar with the ways of God in all Ages as with your walk and table ... till you love men so as to desire their happiness ... you never enjoy the world.'

'Your enjoyment is never aright, till you esteem every Soul so great a treasure as our Saviour doth: and that the laws of God are sweeter than the honey and honey-comb because they command you to love them all in such perfect manner.'

'The world is a mirror of infinite beauty, yet no man sees it. It is a Temple of Majesty, yet no man regards it. It is a region of Light and Peace, did men not disquiet it. It is the Paradise of God. It is more to man since he is fallen than it was before. It is a place of Angels and the Gate of Heaven. When Jacob waked out of his dream, he said *God is here, and I wist it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and the Gate of Heaven.*'

[CM I]

The way according to Traherne to this enjoyment of the Creation is by love alone.



'God is present by Love alone.'

'Love is the true means by which the world is enjoyed.'

Our body was

'given thee to be a lantern only to the candle of Love that shineth in thy Soul; by it thou dost see and feel and eat and drink: but the end of all is that thou mightest be as God is ...'

'By Loving a Soul does propagate and beget itself, because before it loved it lived only in itself: after it loved, and while it loveth it liveth in its object ... the Soul without extending, and living in its object, is dead within itself.'

'[The Soul] gaineth Three Susistences in itself by the Act of Loving: A glorious Spirit that abideth within, a glorious Spirit that floweth in the stream: a glorious Spirit that resideth in the object'

You can see here how Traherne sees our lesser loves as being called into the Love of the Most Holy Trinity in order to be sanctified. He was devoted to the Trinity. I can do no better than to quote to you one of his prayers:

'O infinite God, centre of my soul, convert me powerfully unto Thee, that in Thee I may take rest, for Thou didst make me for Thee, and my heart is unquiet till it be united to Thee.

And seeing, O Eternal Father, Thou didst create me that I might love Thee as a son, give me grace that I may love Thee as my Father.'

O only begotten Son of God, redeemer of the world, seeing Thou didst create and redeem me that I might obey and imitate Thee, make me to obey and imitate Thee in all the imitable perfections.

O Holy Ghost, seeing Thou didst create me to sanctify me, do it, O do it for Thine Own Glory; that I may acceptably praise and serve the Holy and Undivided Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity.

O give Thyself unto me, for without Thee no gift at all can satisfy. And because Thou Thyself art the gift, O give me what Thou art, that I may give Thee what I am, and be made a partaker of the divine nature.'

Though filled with wonder Traherne was widely read in the learning of his age. However, Traherne was impatient with theories for he was thirsty for God. He filtered all that he read through his ardent faith and his reading of the Church Fathers. He considered that it was his vocation to communicate to others the enlightenment that had been granted him.

Benjamin Whichcote, the patriarchal figure of the Cambridge Platonists, wrote: 'Truth lies in a narrow room, and a little compass'. He is here thinking of the difficulty in finding wisdom – that it is to be sought with awe and true intention of heart. Note how the image of the small room in Traherne's mind becomes dynamic. Why? because he places love, agapé, at the core of his experience. However his reading aided him to find a suitable vocabulary for his thought

'Infinite Love cannot be expressed in a finite room: but must have infinite places wherein to utter and shew itself. It must therefore fill all Eternity and the Omnipresence of God with joys and treasures for my fruition. And yet it must be expressed in a finite room by making me able to enjoy them. It must be infinitely exprest in the smallest room by making me able in every moment to see them all. It is both ways infinite, for my Soul is an infinite sphere in a centre. By this may you know that you are infinitely beloved: God hath made your spirit a center in eternity comprehending all, and filled all about you in an endless manner with infinite riches: which shine before you and surround you with Divine and Heavenly enjoyments.'

[CM II 80]

In his *Christian Ethiks* [X] Traherne is more restrained but still more poignant than the Cambridge Platonists:

'The spiritual room of the mind is transcendent to time and space, because all time and space are contained therein. There is a room in the knowledge for all intelligible objects, a room in our esteem for all that is of our care and desire. I confess this room is strange and mysterious. It is the greatest miracle perhaps in nature; for it is an infinite sphere in a point, an immensity in a centre, an eternity in a moment. We feel it, though we cannot understand it.'

Those of you who know George MacDonald's story for children, *At the back of the North Wind*, will be able to observe how a wise writer of genius worked out this deep mystery of the soul and its relationship to the mind in the simple, evocative, haunting terms of a tale for children.

Traherne's 'orthodoxy' is evident in his argument with another Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, who may be described in the light of his writings as a theosophist. Like William Blake nearly two centuries later, Traherne saw through More's thought for it presupposed infinite labyrinths of space held together by an impersonal power. In the spiritual sense such a concept is lifeless, a mental trap to delude our rational faculties. He writes

'I do not see it [that is, More's endless worlds or galaxies as we would say today] to be a Living Substance, endured with Knowledge and Wisdom, Love and Goodness, Power and Dominion, as God is.'

He goes on to see space in More's sense as physical and as imaginary extension, a sort of ultimate void or 'black hole':

'... a desolate vacuity, or dark imaginary place.'

God's omnipresence, writes Traherne, is much more subtle and sublime. He was not one to fall for the arrogant Cartesian trap that tells us that we only are when we *think*:

'But that the Eternal Capacity or Space is God, or that all Spirits are parts of that Capacity, or Capacities distinct from it, and extended like it, I shall not be hasty to believ[e].'

Thus the 'scientific' view of the Universe favoured by More Traherne sees as potentially depriving us of God, even of our own souls.

'Life and Knowledge, choise [choice] and Freedom, Will and Power, Joy and Glory' are 'things of another order'.

'Suppose the substance of God to be this infinit[e]. Extended Space, is it not too mean a conception of God? This Power is a Being far more Noble and Divine then [sic] Extended space.'

'... a Being far above time and place, including all, contained in none, upholding all, depending on None, as far above infinite space, as space above nothing - Bare

Extended Space cannot Think, illuminate or desire.'

'Bare Power [as opposed to goodness and love] is neither Wise nor Good, nor Holy, nor Blessed and Glorious ... simple power without a Will is dead and idle ... but the fountain and the End of all Things, ordering all, and enjoying all, that is God, who is a voluntary Being unbegotten from all Eternity, yet begotten of Himself, and proceeding by that Generation to all his Creatures, the father and the first born, the virtu[e] and the beauty of ev[er]y Creature.'

Today we have all about us the consequences of science's 'Bare Power'.

Traherne goes on to develop his thought on God's *essence* and His *energies*, which he call His Acts. The problem, he maintains, is that people confuse 'essence' with 'energy'. As already stressed, we know nothing of God's essence, we are only able to learn from His Acts, or 'energies'.

'Matter is the dreg of nature, and dead without power. Power is the abyss, but void without Act. Act is the top and perfection of Nature, it is the fulness of power, the fountain and means of all that is, for power by transforming itself into act becometh an act, and by that act produceth and perfecteth all its works both outward and inward.'

Do we not have here an insight into St Paul's thought that 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together'? [*Romans VIII 22*]

'We must take heed of conceiving GOD to be one Thing, and his Act another, for all his Wisdom and Goodness, all his blessedness, and life, and Glory are in the Act, by which He became the Fountain and the End of all Things. He became so freely, and yet was so by his Essence from everlasting ... Act is the Top and Perfection of Nature, it is the fulness of Power ... it is the Cause, and Means and End of it self, as well as of other Things, which for its own sake, are produced by it. For idle power can do nothing.'

[CE IX]

'Perfect life is the exertion of perfect power' [CE II], for contrariety itself is part of the variety of things in the unity of the whole, thus 'practice and exercise is the life of all.' [CE IX]

He admonishes us that 'Idleness is rust'. The soul is made for action and cannot rest until it is employed. It must 'will up, think, taste, see' otherwise all is in vain. We must be wary that its avarice, ambitions, etc. are infinite and only a full knowledge of God can quench its innate thirst for happiness. Once reconciled to Christ the soul finds its way, its life and its truth.

'Since therefore ev[er]y Wise Soul is stir'd up with a Natural Desire and Inclination to search of this Sovereign Good, and hath a General Bent to its first Cause, the soul is always working and moving towards God. And in all that it Desires is seeking Him. For in its own Nature it is scorcht with such an Honest Flame, that it is always in Motion towards Him, and is Dissatisfied with all things else ...'

[CYB]

The deep mystery is, therefore, our life in Christ of which we may not speak, for the profane quickly render it folly or a stumbling block, regarding it as madness. For example, how can we explain that to a profane world that

'God's Wisdom is the art, His Goodness the will, His Word the pencil, His Beauty and Power the colours, His Pictures are all His Works and Creatures.'

[CM V 5]

Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and thanked the Father that these matters were hidden from the worldly-wise but revealed unto babes. [Luke X 21]

And this brings us back to the *wonder of childhood*, that precious foretaste of the Kingdom. It is now, even now, in our midst

'We should remember that Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of the Father, and since our life is hid in Christ with God, we should spend our days in studying Wisdom, that we might be like unto Him: that the treasures of Heaven are the treasures of Wisdom, and they are hid in Christ'

[CM IV 4]

Above all, councils Traherne, 'keep thy heart, for out of it are the issues of life and death.' [CM IV 41] He adds that St Gregory Nazianzen observed, 'That a man by retiring from all externals and withdrawing into himself in the centre of his own unity becometh most like unto God'. [CM IV 81]

Therefore, let us read and learn from this blest soul of our Land and pray with him:

'O Eternal Wisdom instruct me,  
O Eternal Light illuminate me,  
O Eternal Purity cleanse me,  
O Thou Omnipresent Power strengthen me,  
O Infinite Holiness sanctify me,  
Immutable Love establish me,  
Eternal Mercy have mercy on me'

[CYB]

## LAST WORDS

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. – *Oscar Wilde*

Bishop Ken,

lover of the Church Fathers, † 1711.

God's will be done.

Sir Isaac Newton, philosopher and

mathematician, † 1727.

The great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered  
before me.

Captain Marryat, writer, † 1848.

The basis of Christianity is love; God is love. To attempt to establish any other creed will only, in the end, be folly.

Robert Hawker, priest and poet,  
† 1875.

His banner over me was love.

J. E. Flecker, poet, † 1915.  
Lord, have mercy on my soul.

*To be continued*

## THE TRAGEDY OF ENGLISH HISTORY

'It is beyond doubt that the latter half of the eleventh century witnessed a turning-point in the history of Western Christendom, and beyond doubt Normandy and the Normans played a dominant part in the transformations which then occurred ... They assisted the papacy to rise to a new political dominance, and they became closely associated with the reforming movement in the Church which the papacy came to direct. They contributed also to a radical modification of the relations between Eastern and Western Europe with results that still survive. The Norman Conquest of England may thus in one sense be regarded as but part of a far-flung endeavour, the implications of which were to stretch even into the sphere of culture'.

*David C. Douglas, William the Conqueror, Pp.6-7*

'The Conquest does mark, in essentials, such a clean sweep with the past'.

*Z.N. Brooke, The English Church and the Papacy, P.23*

**N**INE hundred and thirty years have passed since the English land was invaded by the Normans and although the land and all this island archipelago still suffer from that Conquest of 1066, the ultimate tragedy of English history does not in fact begin with their ignoble feat, but in the events which led up to it. For as history tells us, the Norman invaders, that rabble of vagabonds and plunderers, were descended from the mainly Danish Viking Northmen whom King Alfred the Great had repulsed from England some generations before. They had gone on to sack Paris and settle on the Northern coasts of France, giving them their name, the Northmen's land, Normanland, Normandy. And though these Normans had come to speak French and reckoned themselves Christians, they had never forgotten their so recent heathen ancestry, nor the far richer prize of England which they still sought after. Thus the tragedy of English history begins with the first opportunity these Normans had to wreak their revenge for their expulsion by Alfred the Great.

In 978 a line of gifted and devout English kings ended with the noble sacrifice of Alfred the Great's great-great-grandson, St. Edward the Martyr. And

with the slaying of King Edward, the long-awaited opportunity of the Normans would come and England's fate sealed by a series of events. For after the premeditated murder of his half-brother Edward, there came to the throne Ethelred the Unready, 'a treacherous coward, vain, incompetent, vicious and cruel: not only the worst king, but one of the worst men in English history'. (*'History of England'*, W. McElwee). In 1002 this ill-starred Ethelred married Emma, daughter of the ruler of Normandy. And in 1042 it was Ethelred's and Emma's son, brought up at the Court of Normandy, who was crowned as the half-Norman King of England, becoming known to history as Edward the Confessor.

It was during this Edward's reign that French and Norman nobles flocked to the English Court and the King gave them estates. As the famous historian of the Norman Conquest, Freeman, wrote in the last century:

'Normandy was ever the land of Edward's affection ... his heart was French. His delight was to surround himself with companions who came from the beloved land, and who spoke the beloved tongue, to enrich them with English estates, to invest them with the highest offices of the English kingdom ... These strangers ... were set to rule as Earls and Bishops over the already half conquered soil of England. They were only the first instalment of the larger gang ... it is now that the Conquest actually begins. The reign of Edward is a period of struggle between natives and foreigners for dominion in England'

*(The Norman Conquest, Vol II, Pp.29-30).*

Edward's Norman guests showed themselves as rapacious as the Vikings had ever been, occupying the key positions in both Church and State. They built the first alien castles and their first alien-style church at Westminster. In 1050 the Norman Robert was even appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1051 the foolish King even invited his cousin, the covetous eighteen-year-old Duke William of Normandy, 'with a great retinue of Frenchmen', to come to England on a state visit. Here he may have promised William the Kingdom on his death. With the country near to Civil War on account of the conduct of the Norman usurpers, in 1051 a popular rising took place to chase the Normans out

of the land. Eventually, in 1052, the Normans Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William, Bishop of London, and many others were forced to flee with their spoils and retainers. According, again, to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'Robert forsook his pallium and all Christendom here in this land, which was God's purpose since he had gained this dignity against His will'. And despite Edward's views, the Witenagemot, the Wise Men of the Council of England, 'outlawed all the Frenchmen who had promoted injustice and made unfair judgements and counselled evil within this kingdom'.

Edward's cousin, this Duke William of Normandy, was the illegitimate son of a tanner's daughter, one Harlotta, from whom is said to stem the word 'harlot'. Before ever he came to England, he had been accused of the poisoning of Conan, Duke of Brittany. In 1066, on Edward's death, William resolved to invade England. In this he was supported by his nobles, soldiers and so-called churchmen, seeking both spoils and revenge for their expulsion in 1052. Failing to obtain the support of peasants and merchants whom he had called together in the French town of Lillebonne, he found support from soldiers of fortune from Flanders and Brittany, from Burgundy and Poitou, from Aquitaine and Maine, from Piedmont beyond the Alps and from beyond the Rhine. 'Adventurers by profession, the idle, the dissipated, the profligate, the lost children of Europe hastened to his summons' (*Chronique de Normandie*). Some demanded gold at once, others land or booty once they had arrived in England, others the hand of some wealthy English lady. To sanction this warband, made up of all the sweepings and refuse of Europe, William sent Robert, the expelled Archbishop of Canterbury, and his Italian Abbot Lanfranc, to Rome to obtain the blessing for invasion from a new, reformed, arrogant and imperialistic papacy. This he received on condition that England would after invasion be held as a fief of the Pope. On William's agreement, Rome sent the band of thieves a relic of St. Peter and a consecrated banner. A banner which would play a significant part in demoralising the English at Hastings.

William the invader was convinced that he was avenging his Danish Viking kinsmen whom Alfred had defeated and who had then returned to plague England at the beginning of the eleventh century. The old chroniclers put the following words into his mouth at Hastings: 'Decide to fight bravely and

kill your enemies. A great booty is before us, if we win, we shall all be rich. What I gain, you will gain; if I take this land, you will have it in lots among you. Know that I have not come here merely to take what is my due, but also to avenge our whole nation for the felonies, perjuries and treacheries of these English. They massacred our kinsmen, the Danes'. The Norman Conquest was then a new Viking Conquest, Hastings, the last but successful Viking battle, the Apocalypse of Old England. As G. K. Chesterton wrote in his '*Ballad of the White Horse*':

For the end of the world was long ago –  
And all we dwell today  
As children of some second birth,  
Like a strange people left on earth  
After a judgement day.

The ravages that followed Hastings, pillaging, burning and destroying, were little different from those of the Vikings before, reducing the English to new Danish slaves. First William killed the inhabitants of Romney and burned their homes, then he set fire to Dover, laid siege to London, burned Southwark, laid waste to Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire, plundering, burning, slaughtering and ransacking the churches. Even William's coronation was the scene of carnage and blood, when his soldiers panicked and set fire to the houses around. And once crowned, William lost no time in taking prisoner the surviving English leaders. He parcelled out the spoils of war to his plunderers whom he honoured as aristocrats and, with his half-brother Bishop Odo, 'built castles far and wide throughout the land, oppressing the unhappy people, and things went ever from bad to worse' (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*).

William's soldiers were allowed to carry out the most atrocious outrages. They stole from rich and poor alike and when revolt broke out, William allowed himself the most terrible vengeance in seven years of ruthless genocide. It was a war of extermination to make himself and his followers into the Conquerors of every square yard of English land, as later recalled in 'the Book of the Day of Judgement', the Domesday Book. He marched his army to every quarter of England and wherever he went, he made a wilderness. On the Welsh Marches against Edric the Forester, in Exeter against the men of Devonshire, in Northamptonshire against Waltheof, in East Anglia against Hereward, lord of Born, 'the last of the English', William left lasting traces of his slaughter. But it

was above all in the North, in Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland, that he wreaked his worst vengeance together with Bishop Odo. Three times an army of human fiends destroyed all before them in Northumberland, churches, towns, villages, crops, cattle, men, women and children. To this day in Yorkshire there are said to be found heaths and woods never yet brought back into cultivation, marking the lands that William wasted in 1069–70. Monasteries and churches were laid in ashes, including Jarrow, where the Venerable Bede had once toiled in prayer. The clergy and monks of Durham fled to Holy Island, beseeching St. Cuthbert's intercessions, renewing their litany of old: 'From the fury of the Northmen, Good Lord, deliver us'. From Durham to York, a space of sixty miles, not a single inhabited village remained. The minds of men were stunned with what had been done. From Durham north to Hexham a 'dismal slaughter' took place, in the words of the Norman chronicler, Orderic Vitalis, and here alone a hundred thousand perished. Roger Hovedon was to write: 'It was a horrible spectacle to see on the high roads and public places, and at the doors of houses, human bodies eaten by the worms, for there remained no one to cover them with a little earth'. The soldiers carried off the corn from the barns and burned the standing crops. According to Florence of Worcester, survivors in Yorkshire and Northumberland were reduced to cannibalism. Pestilence followed famine, those who survived sold themselves and their wives and children to the Normans as slaves.

In the south, for his amusement, William created the 'New Forest' or wasteland, so that he and his Court could go hunting. A whole county was depopulated, an area 90 miles in circumference. No fewer than 108 villages, manors and farms were burned down, 36 parish churches were destroyed and the people driven out. The latter were to attribute to a judgement of Heaven the deaths of three of William's family in this artificial wasteland, including William's second son and successor, the effeminate William Rufus.

The land was shared out among William's followers, the future aristocracy of England. To the most barbarian he gave most. Thus in the wasted North, William de Percy received 80 manors and William de Garenne 28. Symbolically, these 'nobles' took as their heraldic emblems the tokens of savage barbarism, brute force and plunder. Dogs' heads, lions' heads, bulls' heads, boars' heads, daggers, swords and clubs figured on their

shields. Their crests depicted lascivious goats, fiery dragons, crazed griffons and vultures tearing up helpless birds. The supporters of their shields, the supporters of their power, were bloodthirsty and bestial: infuriated lions, wild boars, raging bulls, evil hyenas, drunken bears, snarling dogs, mad rams, cunning foxes, ruthless wolves, sly panthers, fiendish griffons and dragons, all that was sneaking and thieving, monsters from hellish fires, eagles, vultures, cormorants, beasts and birds of prey. So much for the superior civilisation and the 'noble blood' of the Normans. And yet even today there are those who are so foolish that they proudly boast that their ancestors 'came over with the Conqueror'. In our view they should not boast of it, but be ashamed, as Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote:

True hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

The English nobles not murdered were despoiled. Others, as we have told elsewhere, exiled themselves to distant lands and cities, to Scandinavia and Russia, to Constantinople and the warm watered coasts of the Black Sea. Others were taken off to Normandy to be shown off as trophies of war. The historian Holinshed wrote how English nobles were forced to shave their beards and cut their hair, to dress and live like the Normans and their retinues, drawn all from the dross of Europe. Others, like Edric in Shropshire and Hereward in the fens, turned to the greenwood and the wild lands and became, in Norman parlance, outlaws. As a recent writer, Susan Reynolds (in *'The Bulletin of The Institute of Historical Research'*, May 1981), has put it 'The most famous outlaws of the greenwood before Robin Hood were probably the Old English nobility on their way down and out'. So did the English people lose its cultural élite, replaced by a foreign élite with a foreign language and culture.

In the same way William gave over the Church to Norman monks and bishops. He made his warrior-bishop half-brother, Odo of Bayeux, his viceroy during absences in Normandy. Lanfranc became Archbishop of Canterbury. William normanised the whole English episcopate. Bishops Athelmar of Elmham, Athelric of Selsey and Leofwine of Lichfield all went and by 1080 the only English bishop left was the gentle Wulfstan of Worcester. The Normanisation of the episcopate was accompanied by the Normanisation of the monasteries. In 1066 there were 35 independent monastic houses in England. They were headed by Abbots and Abbesses who saw that William would

destroy authentic monastic life, replacing it either with his warrior-monks or else with the schoolmen. Abbot Alfwig of Winchester, King Harold's uncle, and Abbot Leofric of Peterborough both died of wounds received at the hands of Norman soldiers. Leofric's successor, Abbot Brand, 'a very good and wise man', was uncle of the famous Hereward of Born. Abbot Athelsige of Canterbury helped organise resistance in Kent, others such as Abbots Athelnoth of Glastonbury, Godric of Winchcombe, Sihtric of Tavistock and Wulfic in Winchester were all ardent patriots. Within six years of William's coronation they had all been removed. By the time of the Conqueror's death, there were only three English Abbots in the whole country, the rest were the Invader's men. Eventually the descendants of these 'churchmen' would canonise William's cousin, the spineless Edward, who had made their ecclesiastical pillage of England possible, and call him 'The Confessor'. Wrote the historian David Douglas: 'The Normanisation of the prelacy in England was a cardinal feature of the Conqueror's rule. Between 1070 and 1087 the Church in England was made to conform to the continental pattern and subjected to the reforming ideas which were permeating Western Europe (Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, Pp. 325, 343). After Hastings William had even sent spoil to the Pope, together with Harold's banner, captured at Hastings. No wonder that Douglas wrote: 'The feudalisation of the Church in England was in the future to produce unhappy consequences' (P.344). They were indeed unhappy – they led directly to yet another historical tragedy, the violence of the Reformation and the English Civil War.

The fate of English culture was little better. Splendid churches had been built before the Conquest, but by 1200 almost every major Anglo-Saxon church building had been destroyed and replaced with the Norman, military-style architecture, 'recording an unholy alliance between Church and State', as J. Gloag put it in his *'The Architectural Interpretation of History'*. For another architectural historian, A. W. Clapham, as regards the minor arts the Norman Conquest was 'little short of a catastrophe' (*'English Romanesque Architecture before the Norman Conquest'*, P.117). The metal-work, coinage, embroidery and book production of Pre-Conquest England had all been the finest in Western Europe. Above all, however, there had existed in England and in England alone a remarkable vernacular culture based on the spirituality of the Church through the translations of the Gospels, Old English homilies and lives of

saints. This culture received a mortal blow at Hastings. Douglas in his work on the Conqueror speaks of 'the irreparable damage ... inflicted upon the earlier indigenous endeavour'. England was thus dragged into the spiritual impoverishment and dark sterility of the alien Latin Scholastic culture of the Middle Ages.

Once the Normans had had their spoil, many of them returned to Normandy, weary of the slaughter. They included William's own brother-in-law, Hugh de Grantmesnil, Humphrey Tilleuil, warden of Hastings Castle, and many others. Some had been disgusted at William's barbarity. According to chroniclers such as William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis, at the Norwich wedding of the half-English Ralph, Earl of Norfolk and Suffolk, to the sister of FitzOsbern, the Earl of Hereford, all parties joined in cursing the Conqueror and conspiring against him. The Normans condemned him as a bastard, a man of base extraction', the Bretons as the murderer of their Duke Conan, and the English as the invader who had massacred and exiled the heirs to the Kingdom. They shouted that 'William was detested by all men, and that his death would gladden the hearts of thousands'. When he found out, William denounced them as cowards, blinded them or banished them and confiscated their estates. In their place he invited swarms of other rogues and adventurers from France, Germany, Italy and Spain, offering them honour and plunder.

The rest of William's life was cursed by constant war and revolt against his rule. 'Earls who resisted his will he held in bondage. Bishops he deprived of their sees and abbots of their abbacies, while rebellious thanes he cast into prison', wrote the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. William was obliged to arrest his bloodthirsty half-brother, Bishop Odo, and imprison him until his death. His 'nobles' revolted against his tyranny. His eldest son, the dissolute Robert, was continually in rebellion against his father for possession of Normandy. His latter days were embittered by the wranglings of his second son William Rufus and his third son Henry Beauclerc. At his death in 1087 he was deserted by all, including his sons. His servants rifled the royal apartments, stripping William's body of its royal clothes, leaving it almost naked for a whole day. And at his funeral William's putrefied body burst open with such an abysmal stink that the funeral service had to be cut short and the corpse virtually dumped. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* concluded of him:

'Wales was in his domain, in which country he built castles and so kept its people under. Scotland also he reduced to subjection by his great strength ... If he had lived only two years more he would have conquered Ireland ... Assuredly in his time men suffered grievous oppression and manifold injuries. A hard man was the king. He was sunk in greed and utterly given up to avarice ... he was too relentless to care though all might hate him ... Alas! that any man should bear himself so proudly. And how was William's unrepented injustice carried on from generation to generation? What was to be the fate of this foreign monarch and his cursed heritage?

Tragically, the Conqueror passed on his bestial curse to his children. His son and successor William II, called Rufus, was renowned for his debauchery. In his reign many Normans, such as Robert Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland (with 280 manors), William, Count of Eu, William of Alderic, Hugh of Shrewsbury, Odo of Holderness and Walter de Lacy, quit England. After Rufus' death or murder in the New Forest, his brother and successor, Henry I, drove many of Rufus' rakehell followers out, until most of the Normans who had come over with the Conqueror, including the Earls of Surrey, Shrewsbury and Lancaster, had gone from England. Orderic Vitalis and the other chroniclers wrote: 'One by one nearly all the great nobles, the sons of the men who had achieved the conquest of England, were driven out of the land as traitors and outlaws, and their estates and honours were given to new men'.

Henry himself was renowned for his sadistic cruelty. It was he who instituted drawing and quartering. He put out the eyes of his brother Robert by pouring a basin of red-hot metal into them and then imprisoned him for life. He tried to murder Robert's son. His only legitimate son, William, drowned. He had the eyes of two of his grand-daughters put out and their noses cut off, for which their mother, Henry's own daughter, tried to murder him. This daughter, Matilda, the mother of the blood-soaked French Plantagenet dynasty, was notorious for her cruelty and perfidiousness. In the twelfth century she and her feeble French cousin Stephen reduced England to nineteen long winters of civil war. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle wrote that such was the crime and cruelty of this war that men said that 'Christ and his saints slept'. Such were the immediate family of the Conqueror.

Shall we go on to recount the needless occupation of Ireland by Matilda's son, the French Henry II, Henri d'Anjou, with his blasphemous temper which eventually killed him and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, the futile massacres in Wales and Scotland and later Ireland, the bitter One Hundred Years War with France? Shall we speak of that long line of tyrants, all those who, following the curse of William, occupied the English throne down the centuries?

For after Henry II came the ruthless Richard I, the so-called Lion Heart, that feckless lover of war who bankrupted his country to finance his long years of bloodletting in the Middle East, and his diabolical brother the notorious glutton John, who murdered his own nephew, the heir to the crown. Then came the incompetent Henry III with his civil war, the ruthless Edward I who squandered the country's wealth in wars with Wales and Scotland, the misgoverning and murdered Edward II, the ruthless Edward III who plunged France into a hundred years of misery and war for nothing, the murdered tyrant Richard II, then the usurper Henry IV and the murderer Henry V, wasting the country in wars and the mad, assassinated Henry VI. Came Edward IV and Richard III, child-killers and drowners of their brother, who were followed by the miserly, power-mongering Welshmen Henry VII and the lecherous wife-murderer Henry VIII. Then his son, Edward VI, the bankrupt burner of martyrs, then bloody Mary, Elizabeth the murderess, the cowardly fool James of Scotland who occupied Ireland. The beheaded Charles I, the Republican dictator and bloodied tyrant of Ireland Cromwell, no better than any king, then the lewd Charles II and the tyrannical James II. Then a series of utterly stupid and mediocre Dutch and German princes, whose summits were the insane George III and his son the debauched drunkard George IV, the Caligula of modern times, who brought the monarchy into total disrepute, and was followed by the universally hated William IV. Not a single one of these monarchs was English, which fact alone explains why they did not have the interests of the English land and people at heart. As Maurice Hewlett wrote of 1066 in his epic, *'The Song of the Plow'*:

There was a year, I understand,  
A thousand odd since Christ the King,  
There reigned three kings in England  
Ere Christmas bells were due to ring;  
And after them came never a one  
Of English blood of song to sing.



In reality the monarchy only began to regain popular esteem over 750 years after the Conquest with the conscientiousness of Victoria. She was the first to understand that if constitutional monarchs are to survive, let alone keep their privileges, they have first to love their people through self-sacrifice and so become loved by the people. They have to become people's monarchs. This seems to have been clear to all monarchs, until recently when some members of the Royal Family appear to have forgotten it again.

Perhaps Victoria, looking back to the roots of her nation, had understood this lesson from the Pre-Conquest kings, like St. Edward the Martyr, who had sacrificed himself totally for his people, even unto that death from which begins the long tragedy of English history. Or perhaps she had understood it from the only monarch in all the history of England to be raised up by Providence to become worthy of the title 'Great'. He by whom we started this examination of our history, he who before William had saved England from other Williams – Alfred the Great.

After all it was Alfred, that soul of virtue and light, who had gone out from Wessex, from Athelney in Somerset with only his faith. As Chesterton wrote in his *'The Ballad of the White Horse'*:

There was not English armour left,  
Nor any English thing,  
When Alfred came to Athelney  
To be an English king.

It was Alfred who had founded the Navy, built fortresses, fought and defeated the Danish invaders, those who had murdered his royal friend the Martyr Edmund. And when he had defeated them, he did not wreak bloody vengeance on those who remained, but stood as godfather to them, bringing them from the barbarity of Odin to the mild-hearted teaching of the White Christ. He reconquered England not only physically but also spiritually. He translated the Fathers, making Christian the pagan philosophy of Rome, and taught the Ten Commandments in his laws, writing: 'The law of England is the law of God as written in the Bible and both the king and the courts are subject to it and cannot change it'. He set out to restore the Old English civilisation whose great cathedral schools had of old taught Latin and Greek, music and astronomy, and had sent out missionaries to reclaim Europe from heathenism. Alfred was Great because he was fired by the spiritual vision of England renewed in Christ, an

England restored to the piety and learning of before. And his children and his children's children and their children, Edward, Athelstan, Edmund and Edgar, finished his work that led to the great spiritual and cultural flowering and apogee of England in the tenth century that culminated in the fateful sainthood and martyr's sacrifice of Edward in 978. Alfred the Truth-teller, Alfred the Lawgiver, England's Shepherd, England's Comforter, England's Darling, Father of English Spiritual Literature:

Oh, where is the spirit of old?  
The spirit of Alfred the Great?  
Ere the throne was debased by corruption  
and gold,  
When the people were one with the state?

William Hick,  
*The Northern Star*, 5 June 1841

Little wonder that Chesterton wrote that 'Alfred born in Wantage Rules England till the doom'.

And as we come to the end of this survey of the tragedy of English history and to the present-day unwinding of that history, we may ask ourselves: What hope is there now for another Alfred? What hope is there in these times of doubt for at last a restoration of a true monarchy, as that which was in the times of Wessex? What hope is there now for the Return of England to before William, to before her Tragedy began, and to her historic paths of destiny. What hope for England to recover her soul? What hope and when? And when, O when, O when?

Only when the visible England enshrines the invisible England:

'When our last bow is broken, Queen,  
And our last javelin cast,  
Under some sad, green evening sky,  
Holding a ruined cross on high,  
Under warm westland grass to lie,  
Shall we come home at last?

'I tell you naught for your comfort,  
Yea, naught for your desire,  
Save that the sky grows darker yet  
And the sea rises higher.  
Night shall be thrice night over you,  
And heaven an iron cope.  
Do you have joy without a cause,  
Yea, faith without a hope?

*The Ballad of the White Horse*

May 1996

# THE ÆTHELWOLD BENEDICTIONAL

by Eadmund (Malcolm) Dunstall

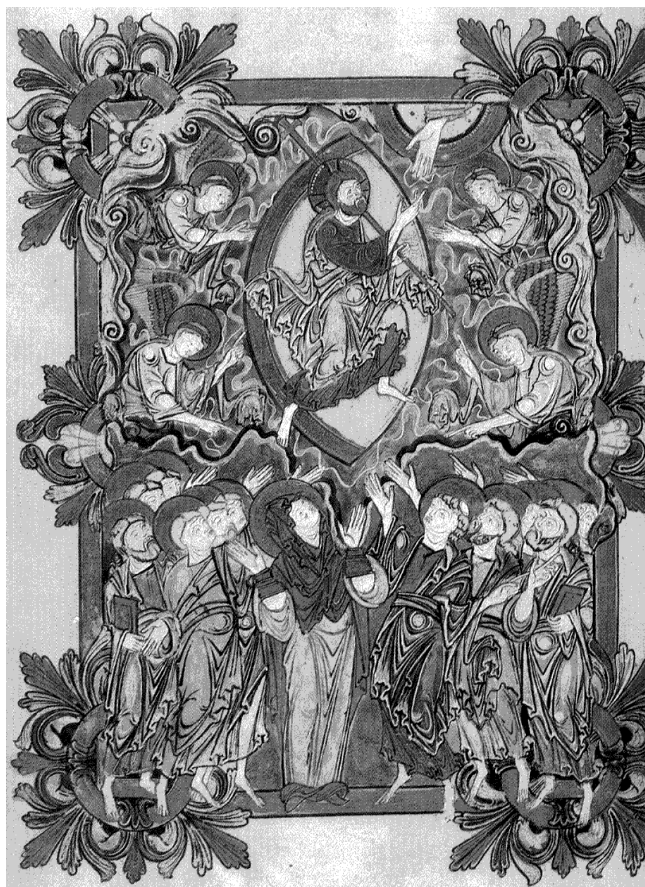
THE second apotheosis of English manuscript art, not eclipsing the previous style, for it still contained elements of it, but reaching the same level in a different way, occurred in the late tenth and early eleventh century with the Winchester and Canterbury schools.

The most famous product of these schools was the manuscript now known as The Æthelwold Benedictional (British Library additional manuscript 49598 – 295mm × 220mm), a collection of solemn blessings compiled for St Æthelwold, who was Bishop of Winchester from 29 November 963 until his death on 1 August 984 in the twenty-second year of his episcopate. The Benedictional was actually written by the monk Godeman who later became the abbot of Thorney, in the beautiful rounded minuscule of the period, on which Edward Johnston was to base his foundational hand in the great revival of English Calligraphy at the beginning of this century.

The blessings were to be pronounced on feast days, and no fewer than twenty-eight of them are



*The Baptism of Christ from The Æthelwold Benedictional*



*The Resurrection of Christ from The Æthelwold Benedictional*

accompanied by lavish illustrations of which, unfortunately, we can only reproduce four here. The unfortunate necessity of using monochrome obscures Godeman's superb use and balance of colours. These are mostly blues, purples, greens and earth colours such as burnt umber, yellow and red ochre, whilst the haloes and the main structure of the frames are rendered in shell gold. They are all varied in tone to harmonize with the flickering, swirling patterns of the forms, but also are in carefully balanced harmony over the whole picture. In this way they help to preserve the stillness and formality of the pictures, whilst at the same time animating them with movement.

It is my proposition that these pictures although not necessarily better than the Russian and Greek icons, and essentially different in certain ways, are nevertheless more appropriate to our particular culture, and have a vibrant power that can still strike an answering chord in the hearts of the English, for whose forefathers they were made.

Each of our examples is bordered by a rigid, geometrical frame, filled with acanthus leaf ornament which owes more to the Englisc imagination than to botanical accuracy. These frames anchor the picture firmly to the page, and provide a suitably solemn and formal surround. Within this border, the figures are also solemn and formal. They are not lifelike, in the representational sense, even though the folk stoning St. Stephen are dressed in the contemporary costume of well-to-do, Englisc thegns.

In the Baptism of Christ, the river Jordan flows from a pitcher held by Moses, identifiable by his horns. The method of representing the water will be familiar to anyone who has seen eastern icons, such as the eleventh century mosaic in the monastery church of Hosios Lukas near Levadeia in Greece.

However, all the figures seem to be filled with movement and barely suppressed ebullience. They find it impossible to remain within their appointed borders, but spill out exuberantly, like the foliage at the corners of the borders themselves.

The angel supporters of the mandorla of the Risen Christ, appearing in clouds of glory above St. Stephen's martyrdom, seem to be gripping it with



*The Martyrdom of St. Stephen from The Ælfric Benedictional*



*The Incredulity of St. Thomas from The Ælfric Benedictional*

ill-restrained excitement. The drapery of the similar angels in the Ascension, and the cloud which is about to roll its concealing blanket over the scene, seem to take on a life of their own. (Indeed the background features of all the illustrations seem, to a greater or lesser degree, to be animated by a swirling, flickering life that adds to the tension of the compositions. This is a feature of the Englisc style to which I hope to be able to return on a future occasion.) Our Lord Himself seems to be leaping out of His mandorla, as though out of a celestial lift, to grasp the hand of His Father in the top right hand corner.

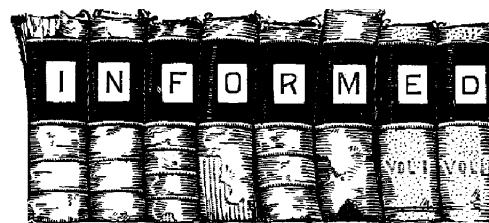
It is the conflict between the solemn stillness of the pictures and their spiritual enthusiasm that gives them their special quality and sets them apart from the icons of the East. The eastern icons have, as part of their cultural heritage, the perfect, essentially static forms of classical sculpture. The Englisc ones have as part of their cultural heritage the swirling pagan knotwork of the Sutton Hoo belt buckle. It is as if the quiet, ethereal world inspired by ancient Greece has been enlivened by the North wind from Valhalla; but it is a refined, wholly spiritual wind. The figures seem to be animated and alive; but alive in their own world, a

spiritual world, only co-incidentally like the world that we apprehend through our physical senses. This, surely, is the primary requirement of the icon.

The tragedy is that the school that produced these wonderful works was to be swallowed up in the pan-European, Romanesque style that followed behind the mailed fist of the Norman Conquest. Although here and there a trace of it may still be

found, it is nevertheless relentlessly rigidified, and its Northern spirit snuffed out by the influence of the South. Maybe it would have died in any case, but it might have survived and gone on to scale even greater heights. We shall never know. Certainly the works that survive still thrill me with their magic, and inspire me with spiritual awe. I hope that they have the same effect on others.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Is there a 'right' jurisdiction?

*E. P., London*

What a question! It is similar to 'Where is the True Church or the True Faith?' Fortunately I do not have to answer that question, since it is answered in the Liturgy, when after Holy Communion we sing, 'We have seen the True Light; we have received the heavenly Spirit; we have found the True Faith. We worship the undivided Trinity, for the same hath saved us'. Although your question is personal, let me attempt to reply to you in a non-polemical and nonpartisan way.

Most people belong to a particular jurisdiction for one of two reasons. 1. Geographical. 2. Linguistic. For example the average English person will not attend a foreign-language parish two hundred miles away when there is an English-language one five minutes away, whatever his formal jurisdictional attachment. I say the average person, because there are cases where people are so mistreated and their intimate faith so insulted by their own kind, that they will go elsewhere. Generally, however, the facts of geography and language mean that any pastor in any English parish has to be open and tolerant to others and sensitive to their particular needs and approach. A priest and a parish have by definition to gather people together, not to separate and divide them, as some do. English parishes are, and surely should be, regional, rather than jurisdictional. Of course, a priest has to be with a bishop of a particular jurisdiction to whom he owes canonical obedience.

Ultimately the fact is that in the long term, the right jurisdiction is that which provides *spiritual food* to English people and this will become the largest

English jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in this country. Quality not quantity. Depth not superficiality. Spirituality not childish triumphalist statistics. Any jurisdiction which behaves like a bigoted political party dependent on a foreign power, or an empire-builder, or a masonic hall, or a guru cult, or an ethnic ghetto, or a museum of quaint customs from the old country, will simply die out. Our business is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit and that alone. Any jurisdiction worth its salt must have as its mission statement 'Feed my sheep' (John 21, 16), and that is an affair of the Spirit of God, not of man.



Fr. Andrew, I know that you spent many years serving in Orthodox churches in Europe and that you have lived both in Russia and Greece. Is there anything negative that has struck you about Orthodoxy in this country?

*R. L., Devon*

I think that above all there are many negative things that strike me about Orthodoxy, or rather the lack of Orthodoxy, in myself! You know me well enough to know that I do not wish to be polemical, but since you ask the question there are two 'small' things.

Firstly, I am struck by the many English Orthodox people who do not take, or know how to take, the blessings of priests (and bishops). They deprive themselves of the grace of God.

Secondly, I am struck by how few such people light candles on entering church. A candle lit in prayer brings good to our souls and to those whom we pray for (as well as essential financial aid to the parish).



As an Orthodox priest, do you have a view on whether fox-hunting should be banned or not?

*M. T., Essex*

I expect there are as many views on this question as there are readers of this journal! Frankly, I am not sure whether the Orthodox Church has a view on this question, and I can only speak for myself. Personally I have no strong opinions either way. But there are two things that disturb me about the anti-hunting lobby.

Firstly, it seems to be very intolerant and rather dictatorial. It appears to want to interfere in what is ultimately a purely personal affair. Secondly, although I have a lot of sympathy with the main argument of the anti-hunting lobby that hunting is 'cruel and barbaric', I find the genocide of abortion that has been going on in this country for over twenty years, with nearly three million little victims, unspeakably crueler and more barbaric. Lord have mercy on our souls



What is to be thought about the decision to allow first-born daughters to succeed to the British throne?

*J. S. Connecticut*

The fact that until now only a male (if there was one available) could succeed to the throne in this country is an interesting vestige of the all-male priesthood. Originally the ministry of kings was seen as a parallel to that of priests. A queen could only by definition be the wife of a king. Clearly this concept goes back to the Old Testament and to Melchizedek himself. It was taken into the Roman Empire centred in Constantinople and then spread to those countries which absorbed the heritage of Christian Romanity. Thus in this country the coronation ceremony is essentially that of the Emperors of Constantinople, as adapted by St. Dunstan, the tenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury. In this country the principle of kings as priests was shaken with the Reformation and the Protestant abolition of the priesthood. Characteristically the first true Protestant monarch of this country was a woman, Elizabeth I. However, right up till Queen Victoria, the Coronation ceremony in this country actually still included the donning of the 'sakkos', i.e. the

vestment worn by Orthodox bishops. With Victoria's advent to the throne, this millennial custom was lost. Given that the monarchy in this country has not been Orthodox since at least 1066, the concept of males only succeeding to the throne seems to me to be an anachronism. If, on the other hand, the monarchy of this country were Orthodox (but see below!) and had retained the notion of priestly service, then I would most definitely be against the present reform. This reform in our Non-Orthodox context is all the more overdue, in that the minority State Church now has women-pastors (misleadingly called 'women-priests' by the theologically misguided!).



According to the Web, when Prince Charles laid flowers on Princess Diana's coffin, he made the sign of the cross in the Orthodox way. Can you explain this?

*Archbishop Seraphim, France*

Your Grace,

We should remember that Prince Philip, Prince Charles' father, returned to Orthodoxy only at the beginning of the 90's after lapsing for a very long time. Also we should recall that Prince Charles' grand-mother was a pious Orthodox nun. As far as I know Prince Charles, sadly, has no other links with Orthodoxy. I would therefore suggest that his use of the Orthodox sign of the cross is merely a family memory and no more.

(Archbishop Seraphim adds in his letter: 'I can suppose that our sign of the cross is not exclusive to us! In his book, *'De Sacro Altaris Mysterio'* (Migne PL P. 217, Col. 825), Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) explains that the sign of the cross should be made with three fingers and always from right to left. He explains why it should be made this way and that to make it in any other way is a mistake!). And *'Orthodox England'* would add to this: the modern-day Roman Catholic inversion of the sign of the cross (faithfully copied by some Anglicans) is a very recent custom dating back to the seventeenth century at earliest. Indeed I have been assured by farmers in the most Catholic part of France, Brittany, that until their grandfathers' time, they both made the Orthodox sign of the cross and baptised by immersion. God bless their grandfathers!



This is one of the imponderable 'what-ifs' of history, but I cannot see how, if we had remained

Anglo-Saxon, we would have remained

Orthodox. What is the likelihood that Anglo-Saxon bishops would have resisted the growing power of the Papacy and of Scholastic theology?

English Christian culture, although no longer in communion with the churches of the East, nevertheless went on to produce many who lived lives of great sanctity. Can we not be Orthodox and yet recognise positively the spirituality of these people who have shaped our history for the good?

*J. B., Maidstone*

There are many questions here, but firstly there are two points of your terminology with which I would disagree. (Forgive me, if I sound a bit brutal, and bear with me to the end).

First of all 'the churches of the East' is a most misleading and meaningless term; there is only one Church, that is the Orthodox Church, wherever geographically it may be.

Secondly I do not see how, theologically, 'sanctity' is possible outside the Church; the filioque destroys the possibility of sanctity. Righteousness, yes, goodness, yes, sincerity, yes, piety, yes, but sanctity, no.

Now, to your two questions.

Had the Conquest not taken place, I think that the Old English Church (for which you use the historically inaccurate though academically correct term of 'Anglo-Saxon') would certainly have lapsed with the rest of Western Christendom into Heterodoxy, probably like the Scandinavian churches did in the twelfth century. Speaking a different language to the Normans and being 'Anglo-Saxon' by race is no guarantee of Orthodoxy! Indeed, the pernicious fruits of the Western Schism were creeping into England before 1066. It was just that England finally fell away from the Church in a particularly horrible, and violent manner through the barbaric aggression of another people.

As regards your second question, apart from the above qualification concerning 'sanctity', I absolutely agree with you. Indeed, since some may not yet have understood, let me restate the aims of 'Orthodox England':

1) To promote the understanding of the historic Orthodoxy of the Old English Church

2) To put later English history and culture, especially its righteous, under the spotlight of Orthodoxy, for a critical appreciation. We shall be positive where the Orthodox Christian Faith allows us to be.

3) To spread the practices of authentic Orthodox piety and life more widely among English and English-speaking people.

4) To work as a forum for the birth, God willing, of a future local Orthodox Church in this country.



The subject of Western Rite liturgies has long been a hot potato among Orthodox. Some argue that we in the West can only hope to rediscover our Orthodox heritage when we revive the forms of worship used in the West before the Schism.

Others in the opposing camp, argue that the West forfeited the right to call its culture Orthodox when it broke from the Church.

For my own part I have not been impressed by the arguments offered against a Western rite. Most of those who oppose it seem to do so from an ignorance of what the Orthodox Church is (a misguided belief that she is 'the Eastern Church') or a form of nationalism, even among those converts who join the Orthodox Church because they find her 'exotic' or 'quaint'. You know, the sort of people who change their name from Joe Bloggs to Nectarios Chrysostom Bloggs, because St. Joseph just isn't Orthodox enough for them ...

*N.X., Bristol*

First of all, I ask your forgiveness. I received your letter over a year ago. Secondly, I have considerably shortened it, for you go on to mention in detail the attempts to create a Western Rite in Orthodoxy. On both accounts, my excuse is lack of space and the fact that the journal is prepared some four months ahead of distribution. Now to your question, which I shall try to answer, but of course what follows is a personal view.

As regards Western rite, I would say wonderful, in theory, but a failure in practice. My reasons for being against are practical and pastoral. I do not wish in any way to upset those very sincere people in the United States in the Patriarchate of Antioch and in my own Church in Australia, who think



otherwise and who find 'Western rite' a useful bridge from Heterodoxy to Orthodoxy. What follows is an expression of my own view.

1) The notion of 'Eastern' and 'Western' is a false one. All rites stem from Jerusalem. The Orthodox liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem (which the Editor has used) is a clear case. Those of St. John and St. Basil were both formed not a million miles from Jerusalem. And the Presanctified 'Liturgy' attributed to the very Western Pope of Rome St. Gregory the Great (known in the East as St. Gregory of the Dialogues) has the same origins. Indeed the old Western rites – and therefore the Roman Mass – originally issued from Jerusalem via Alexandria. I therefore find 'Western' and 'Eastern' very misleading, unhistorical, terms

2) If you wish to restore a 'Western' rite, how are you to do it? Liturgies are living and popular. The very word 'liturgy' means 'the work of the people', translated into English as 'common prayer'. The idea of doing abstract 'archaeological' digs into dead rituals in academic library records in an attempt to create something living and popular seems false to me. And what about the music?

3) All Orthodox theology is contained in our services (and not just in the eucharistic liturgies). How will we learn that theology if we are not familiar with those services? So many who want a Western rite seem not to want to know Orthodoxy in humility (and it can only be known in humility) but to impose their own views on others.

4) Our English Orthodox parishes are part of the whole Orthodox Commonwealth. To them we welcome those not only of island ancestry, but others also. We have a pastoral responsibility to them. 'Ritually' cutting ourselves off from the rest of the Orthodox world seems to me both unwise and possibly even dangerous.

5) Many converts, like myself, have no experience of a 'Western rite'. The only rites we have ever known are those used by the Orthodox Church today; a 'Western rite' to us is meaningless.

6) Finally, and for me this is the last nail in the coffin of the Western rite, I have seen a 'Western rite' at work in the so-called 'French Orthodox Church'. This was a group of French people, at one time claiming to represent ninety parishes, who used a 'Western' rite, who went through all the Orthodox jurisdictions, and are now vagantes. They were involved in freemasonry and the occult and led many astray. As other 'Orthodox' vagans groups (and there are many of them), they recruited

their clergy without training them. They then almost instantaneously granted them fancy titles of the sort gained by real Orthodox priests only after decades of faithful service to Mother Church. They also set up parishes well outside French territory, from Italy to Guatemala. Their activities included kickbacks on Romanian oil sales to gun-running. Please do not think that I am saying that all their members were up to no good. Many were very sincere and good people – but they were simply led astray by those whose responsibility was not to lead astray. This was a tragedy.

Finally, you make one point in your letter about those who are allowed to become Orthodox because they find it 'exotic' or 'quaint' or wish to change names and identities. Sadly, there are such people, often those who were very involved in a heterodox denomination before becoming Orthodox. Neophyte insecurity, 'convertitis', often leads them to some very strange positions, particularly if such people are prematurely ordained as Orthodox clergy before working their way through their complexes. Bishop Kallistos always used to say that a convert should wait for at least seven years before being ordained. I find that very wise, although there are surely many exceptions.



I have recently heard of a 'British Orthodox Church'. What is this?

*A.M., London*

This refers to a very small group of British converts to the Monophysite Church of Egypt, commonly called 'The Coptic Church'. Since they are Monophysites, they are not Orthodox. They are, however, in many ways much closer to Orthodoxy than both the Roman Catholics and the Protestants and many of them are perhaps seeking real Orthodoxy.



Single Orthodox lady, 26 y.o., loves spiritual reading, countryside, classical music, culture and children, would like to meet an Orthodox gentleman, a true believer, for friendship and, God willing, marriage.

Write to:- Box 21, Surrey Studios, Nork Way,  
Nork, Banstead, Surrey SM7 1PB

## Important Dates In The Calendar: September – November

(All dates are given according to the English style, and not the Roman style).

### September

- 1 Church New Year
- 8 The Birth of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God
- 14 The Universal Exaltation of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross
- 15 *The Battle of Britain (1940) \**
- 16 St. Edith of Wilton, Virgin
- 19 St. Theodore of Canterbury, Maker of England
- 26 St. John the Divine

### October

- 1 The Protecting Veil of Our Most Holy Lady
- 9 St. James, Son of Alphaeus
- 10 St. Paulinus, Bishop of York
- 14 *The Battle of Hastings (1066)*
- 18 St. Luke the Evangelist
- 21 *Trafalgar Day (1805)*
- 26 St. Cedd, Apostle of Essex

### November

- 7 St. Clement (Willibrord) of Northumbria, Apostle of Frisia

- 8 Michaelmas

11 *Armistice Day (1918)*

- 13 St. John Chrysostom

- 15 Beginning of the Advent Fast

- 16 St. Matthew the Evangelist

- 17 St. Hild (Hilda) of Whitby

- 20 St. Edmund, King of East Anglia, Martyr

- 21 The Entry of Our Most Holy Lady into the Temple

- 30 St. Andrew, the First-Called Apostle

\* Remember the prophecy

The time will come when thou shalt lift thine eyes  
To watch a long drawn out battle in the skies,  
While aged peasants, too amazed for words,  
Stare at the flying feet of wondrous birds  
England, so long the mistress of the sea  
Where winds and waves confess her sovereignty  
Her ancient triumphs yet on high shall bear  
And reign the sovereign of the conquered air.

*From Gray's Luna Habitabilis, Cambridge, 1737*

### ADVERTISEMENT

## ST HELEN ORTHODOX CALENDAR FOR YOUR COMPUTER

**Features:** • designed for New Calendar switches easily to Old Calendar • covers years 1976–2020 • Shows Sundays and Weekdays • Gives some 4–9 Saints per day, many British • Shows Tone for the Week, Fasts and relaxations • Displays Day/Week/Month • Buttons for Tomorrow / Yesterday / Next / Last Week / Next / Last Year • “Go To” specified date • “Find” particular Saint’s days.

Published with the Blessing of His Grace BISHOP GABRIEL, Patriarchal Vicar for Western Europe, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

Cost per disk £10 inc p & p. International orders add £5 – cheques in sterling with order made out to “St Helen’s Orthodox Parish”. Profits to be divided between the Parish Extension Fund and the Orthodox Order of Hospitallers for charitable work in Europe and the Middle East.

**Available only from**

St Helen’s Orthodox Parish, 66 Wimpole Road, Colchester CO1 2DN, United Kingdom.

Enquiries: 01206 795275. Please allow up to 3 weeks for delivery.

### ADVERTISEMENT

Panikhida; Service for the departed, Multicolour print, how to make the Kaliva, rubric notes, how done during Paschaltide, plastic cover protection, 16 pages. £6

Price includes post/packing in U.K. Cheque in sterling, made out to:– St. Felix and St. Sergius Mission, Kempford, 70, Jaywick Lane, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO16 8BB.



## County Corner: KENT

### Saying of the Quarter

"God will heal me in 'is own good toime; but whenever that may be,  
O'i'm sure the doctor'll take all the credit for it."

### Traditional Kentish Suet Pudding

*from my Grandmother's recipe book*

To be eaten with roast meat

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb suet

A pinch of salt (or to taste)

Mix the ingredients lightly with water to a soft dough. Make into a long roll. Tie the roll up in a cloth and boil for a good hour. When the roast is removed from the baking tin, cut the pudding up in slices and place them in the gravy and fat in the tin. Turn the slices over until both sides are coloured with the gravy, then serve with extra gravy as a separate course before the meat, or as an extra part of the main meat course.

### Kent Humour



### A true story of a bull in a china shop

Until the building of the ring-road, the cattle market in Canterbury used to be held in the somewhat wider space between the city walls and the road on the south side of the city. On one

occasion, late last century, so my Grandmother told me, a bull escaped and ran down the High Street in a rage, scattering carriages and pedestrians to right and left. He chased a couple of ladies into a china shop, and charged completely through the premises, leaving by the back door, where he was eventually cornered by a butcher and his assistant, and pole-axed. However, when the proprietor of the china shop came to clear up the mess, he found, to his amazement, that not one single item of his stock had been damaged! This incident gave a new meaning for Kentishmen to the phrase 'A bull in a china shop' for many years!



I was visiting a very remote church on the Romney Marsh, and was looking round when the churchwarden came in. Visitors to the building were so rare that he wanted to check up that I had a genuine reason for being there. We chatted for some time, and eventually the old fellow said he must be getting about his business. At the door he turned to me and delivered his parting shot

'Do be sure to latch the door be'ind you when you goes out, otherwise the sheep get in. It ain't what they leaves be'ind 'em: we can clear that up. But they eats the cushions'.

