

ORTHODOX ENGLAND

In this issue:

*Does the Story of King Arthur
have any Orthodox Significance?*

*From the Fathers:
St Bede the Venerable
on Matthew 9, 9–13*

*Orthodoxy Shines Through Western
Myths: The Discovery of the Individual
John Masefield's Kingdom of Beauty
St Birinus*

and much more . . .

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Editor: Fr Andrew Phillips.

Art Work: Edmund (Osgin).

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

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Editorial: DOES THE STORY OF KING ARTHUR HAVE ANY ORTHODOX SIGNIFICANCE?

Introduction: The Myth

IN such a journal, occupied with Orthodox views of the history of England and, from there, with such views of the history of all these islands and of the Europe to which we geographically belong, it is perhaps surprising that we have never broached the Arthurian theme. This is no doubt because of sobriety. We have always been wary of dealing with topics like Glastonbury or 'King' Arthur, which invite fantasy.

Let us be clear from the outset: 'King' Arthur did not exist. Neither did Camelot, Excalibur, Merlin, Guinevere, Uther Pendragon (inventions of the 12th century Norman mythmaker Geoffrey of Monmouth), nor did the Knights of the Round Table, Lancelot or the Holy Grail as a source of magic power (inventions of the 12th century French mythmaker Chretien de Troyes).

These 'Arthurian legends' were invented as propaganda to justify 12th century warfare, what we could nowadays call 'imperialism', conducted by knights, then based in northern France and, through the Norman conquest, also in the south of Britain. From northern France this self-glorifying mythology of self-justification also spread to the south of Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, Eastern Europe and, above all, to the Middle East, in the Crusades. This is in much the same way as modern myths like Superman, Batman and Spiderman, built to justify 20th and 21st century 'imperialism', now based in the USA, have also spread globally.

The one theme which above all is of Orthodox significance, is that of the 'Holy Grail', from the French '*le sang reel*' – the true blood. It is significant that this theme first appears in the twelfth century, by which time the laity of Western Europe had everywhere been deprived of partaking of the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. The quest for the True Blood could only begin when the Papacy had forbidden it. Those who can partake of the Blood of Christ do not quest for it: the Holy Grail is any chalice in any Orthodox church anywhere in the world.

The Story

The historical background of Arthur can chiefly be found in the writings of St Gildas in the sixth century, in the *Historia Brittonum* attributed to

Nennius in the ninth century, and in the later Welsh *Annales Cambriæ* and *Y Gododdin*.

St Gildas' *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* (On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain) was written in about 548. This was within living memory of the Battle of Mount Badon (the site of which was perhaps near Silchester), which had taken place in about 500. Although according to later myths a 'King Arthur' is supposed to have won this battle, which is mentioned by St Gildas, nowhere does he mention any 'Arthur'. Indeed, the British leader is recorded not as Arthur, but as 'Ambrosius Aurelianus'.

It has been suggested that Aurelianus was a military man and rich villa-owner in Wiltshire and that Amesbury still bears his name. In Welsh folklore and place-names his Christian name is recorded as Emrys. The sixth-century Welsh St Paul Aurelianus could well have been a descendant. It was after the British victory at Mount Badon that the still pagan English made no further advance into Britain for nearly fifty years. Indeed, there was even an English emigration back from England to northern France, Thuringia and Lower Saxony at this time, as was recorded by the historian Procopius in New Christian Rome. The latter set down the New Roman regret that outlying Britain had become a province of the Orthodox Christian Empire lost to invading barbarians.

In fact no 'Arthur' is mentioned in any writings up until 800, neither for example in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, nor in St Bede's historical writings – which do however mention the Battle of Mount Badon. The first datable mention of 'Arthur' is found in a much later ninth century Latin record, compiled by a Welsh monk called Nennius and called *Historia Brittonum*.

This lists twelve battles in which 'Arthur fought'. These culminate in the Battle of Mount Badon in about 500. Here Arthur is mentioned as '*dux bellorum*' ('leader of wars') and '*miles*' (soldier). The word '*dux*', although the origin of the English word 'duke' definitely does not mean a king – or even a duke. '*Dux*' meant 'military leader' (the Italian '*duce*'). In other words, 'Arthur' was simply a military leader, a senior officer, a sort of commander or general, but still one among others.

The other text that seems to support the case for Arthur's historical existence is the still later 10th-century *Annales Cambriæ*, 'Chronicles of Wales', which link 'Arthur' with the Battle of Mount Badon. These arguably date the battle to 516, and also mention the Battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut (Mordred) were both killed and which is dated to 537–539.

The History

As to whether any of these sources can absolutely be trusted, academic debates rage. Nevertheless, we cannot help thinking that there was a real Arthur and that he was, for a time anyway, a successful defender of some of the heirs of Roman, and in part Christian, Britain. The very name Arthur seems to be the late Roman 'Artorius', like the names of other Roman-British heroes – for example, Sts Alban, Patrick, Dubricius, Justinian of Ramsey and Paul Aurelian. Less likely, the name Arthur could come from *Arcturus* (which gives us the name 'Arctic'), the brightest star in the Bootes constellation near the Great Bear. Thus, it would mean 'bear', a good name for a military man, rather like 'lion', 'fox' or 'wolf'.

It is a fact that in the fifth and sixth centuries the former Roman province of *Britannia* was subject to invasion and settlement by pagans. From the north came pagan Celtic Picts, from the west pagan Celtic Irish and from the east pagan Germanic tribes, often called 'Saxons', as many of their leaders were Saxons and these were the first Germanic people the native British Celts had first met (hence the Scottish name for the English – 'Sassenachs'). The Saxons were certainly leaders of the majority in much of what is now the south of England, as names like Essex (East Saxons), Middlesex (Middle Saxons), Sussex (South Saxons) and Wessex (West Saxons) prove. However, there was no 'Nossex' (North Saxons), for, apart from in Essex, only 'Anglians' settled north of London and from that word we have 'Anglia' – 'Angle-land' and today 'England'. However, it is doubtful if there was ever much real difference between 'Saxons' and 'Angles' or the 'Jutes', who settled in Kent, the Isle of Wight and parts of southern Hampshire.

The fact is that after the Roman administration had left Britain in 410, it left behind it some sort of Christian Faith. Above all, archaeology has proved that this faith was practised among *élite* minorities in towns like London, York, Colchester, Lincoln, Gloucester and Silchester and in Roman villas, notably in what is now East Anglia, all over the

south and west of England and in south Wales. However, even this only lasted until about 450.

If, idealistically speaking, the native peoples of 'Britannia' were fighting against pagan settlers, they were fighting for Christ under Christian leaders, then they can be seen as Christian heroes. And the military officer and strategist Arthur could have been one of these. However, the reality is that most of the British who remained here and did not leave with Roman forces or emigrate to what is now Brittany were themselves not Christians, except perhaps in name. They intermarried freely with the settlers from across the sea. This is clear from the writings of fifth and sixth century saints like St Patrick and St Gildas, who both condemn the nominal, half-barbarous Christianity but actual paganism of 'British' leaders.

In what became the south of England it is certain that Christianity completely died out. St Gildas actually mentions a 'massacre of Christian clergy'. However, St Gildas' vituperative work is chiefly aimed precisely at British nominalism. It is a call to them for repentance. This is reinforced by the lives of other saints like St Ninian, St Illtud, St David and St Columba, who had to set about converting the pagan natives of Britain, quite unable to rely on natives who would supposedly have been Christian.

Conclusion: The Reality

Some recent authors of fiction like Mary Stewart and Rosemary Sutcliffe of whose book *Sword at Sunset* we shall be publishing a review in due course, have tried to take some of the tinsel away from the Arthur myth. They want to restore it to its time, away from French chateaux and technicolour Hollywood troubadour romanticism. However, as far as we know, the only real attempt, albeit still fictitious, to put the story of Arthur into its historic context is in the Badon Parchments written by the then Poet Laureate John Masefield in 1947. Here, we read of an envoy sent from Christian Rome (Constantinople) to help the Roman-Britons against both 'native barbarism' and the heathenism of invaders, against both 'Black Heathen' and 'Red Heathen'. As a matter of fact, this is a literary reflection of the actual British appeal for help to the Emperor Honorius (395–423), as it was recorded by the sixth-century historian Zosimas.

In this work the envoy writes to the Emperor Justinian and the Empress Theodora, who were indeed so keen to win back the lost Western provinces of the Roman Empire for Christ and did

much to do so – at least as far as southern Spain. This is not entirely fiction for we know that a small group of Englishmen also visited the Emperor and Empress as part of a Frankish delegation in the sixth century. This envoy, called 'John of Cos', wrote of the British, led by Arthur, in terms which are strangely relevant to the missionary situation of Orthodox Christianity in these islands today. The envoy concludes

'I would urge that the power wielded by you be turned to the keeping of this Province within your Empire. No people are more steadfast friends, none can be more valiant in a cause, more hopeful in a time of despair, more generous to an enemy. Lest your Majesties should think that men so fond of freedom might rebel against your rule, let me add, that they themselves say, that they are incapable of governing themselves, that all of them tried it, that

all have failed, and that they flounder from one mess to another, with a kind of dumb anger and stupid hope, that have to be seen to be believed.

At first I thought they cared only for dogs, then, perhaps, for horses or a dreadful liquor ... then only for their insane quarrels among themselves. It is not so. Those things are only their amusements or, perhaps, I should say, their makeshifts. They only really live, only truly show themselves, in religion, or in some high cause that can be died for like religion. This, as a rule, they are without. If the Empire could be that to them, or if it could restore a faith and hope to them, they would have charity enough in them to move the world'.

Fr Andrew

From the Holy Fathers: ST BEDE THE VENERABLE on Matthew 9, 9–13

WE have read, as the Apostle says, that 'all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace'. And again, explaining the greatness of the inestimable grace of God, he says, 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound'. When the Lord heals the more serious illnesses of the sinners among His chosen ones, so He shows all the more fully the power of His healing grace.

In the Gospel we have heard how Christ felt compassion for Matthew as he sat at the tax-collector's place, intent on worldly concerns, and how He suddenly called him. He made a righteous man out of a publican, a disciple out of a tax-collector. And as the latter gradually grew in grace, Christ raised him up from the ordinary group of disciples to the rank of apostle, not only entrusting him with the ministry of preaching, but also with that of writing a Gospel, so that he who had ceased to be an administrator of earthly business matters might begin to be an administrator of heavenly currency.

Doubtless, the reason why heavenly providence arranged for this to happen is so that neither the enormity of our wicked deeds nor their great number should discourage anyone from hoping for forgiveness. For we can look at Matthew, who had been freed from such bonds of the world and made heavenly, in order to become, in fact and in name,

an Evangelist, sharing this name with the angelic spirits.

'Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting in the tax-collector's place, and he said to him, "Follow me".' He saw him not so much with His physical eyes as with inner compassion. In this way He also deigned to turn his gaze on Peter, who had denied him, so that he would be able to acknowledge his crime and weep over it. This was also how He saw His people when they had been brought low by slavery in Egypt, so that He might deliver them, as He said to Moses, 'I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them'. Jesus saw the man and felt compassion for him because he was devoted only to human concerns and was not yet worthy of an angelic name.

Jesus saw him sitting in the tax-collector's place, with his stubborn mind greedy for temporal gain. His name was Matthew, says the Gospel. Matthew in Hebrew means 'granted', a name fitting for him who received such a favour of heavenly grace. But we must not pass over the fact that Matthew had two names. He was also called Levi and that name also testifies to the grace granted him. Levi means 'added' or 'taken up', signifying that he was 'taken

up' through being chosen by the Lord, and 'added' to the number of the group of the apostles.

In this reading Mark and Luke chose to use this name instead, so as to not make their colleague stand out by his former way of life in the work of the Gospel. When they come to give the list of the twelve apostles, they are silent about the name Levi and clearly call him by the name Matthew. On the other hand, Mathew himself (in accordance with what is written, 'The righteous man is the first accuser of himself; his neighbour comes and searches him out'), calls himself by his ordinary name when he tells how he was called from his tax-collector's place. However, in his list of apostles, he names himself with the addition 'publican', 'Thomas', he says, and 'Matthew the publican'.

In this way he offers publicans and sinners greater certainty about obtaining salvation. Paul too, following this teaching formula, says that 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. But for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all longsuffering, as an example to those who will believe in Him unto life everlasting'.

Jesus saw a publican, and because He felt compassion for him and chose him when he saw him, He said to him, 'Follow me'. By 'follow' He meant imitate; by 'follow' He meant not so much the movement of feet as living a way of life. For 'he who says that he abides in Christ ought himself to walk, even as He walked', that is, not to aim at earthly things, not to be eager to pursue perishable gains, but to flee base honours, to be willing to embrace all contempt of the world for the sake of heavenly glory, to do good to all, to inflict injuries in bitterness on no-one to patiently suffer the injuries brought on ourselves, and to implore forgiveness from the Lord for those causing these injuries, never to seek our own glory but always that of our Maker, and to uphold whatever helps us in the love of heavenly things. To do these and other similar things is to follow in Christ's footsteps.

'And he arose and followed Him'. We should not marvel that, as soon as he heard the Lord's voice ordering him, a publican left the earthly gains that he cared about. Disregarding his property, he joined the group of disciples of Him, Whom he saw had no riches. For the Lord Himself, Who outwardly called him by a word, taught him inwardly with an invisible impulse so that he followed Him. He poured into his mind the light of spiritual grace, by which he could understand that He Who was calling him from temporal things on

earth was able to give him incorruptible treasures in heaven.

'He arose and followed Him'. He arose in order to follow. He dismissed the perishable things in which he was involved in order to obtain the eternal things to which Truth was inviting him, as in the saying of the Apostle, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light'.

'And it came to pass as he was at table in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples'. The conversion of one publican gave many publicans and sinners an example of repentance and forgiveness. For we must not doubt that those who were at table with Jesus and his disciples had ceased to be publicans and sinners; if they had determined to persevere in their sins, they would not have dared take food with Him, Who was without sin.

Publicans are those who are either publicly tainted by wicked deeds or else involved in public business matters, which can scarcely, if at all, be done without sin. And in a beautiful and true prefiguration, he who was to be an apostle and the teacher of the nations draws after him a company of sinners from his earlier way of life, bringing them to salvation and the ministry of proclaiming the good news. Through the growing strength of his virtues, he was to perfect what he had already begun in the first stage of his faith. For it is not only he who instructs a brother by word who carries out the ministry of teaching, but also he who by his example turns him to better things. Thus, these publicans were glad to follow Him, in imitation of Matthew, not only at that time when they were at table with the Lord, but also from then on, by casting off worldly business concerns, as the Evangelist Mark testifies, saying, 'Many publicans and sinners were at table with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many and they followed Him'.

We must note, however, that when he refers to this, he says that the Lord was at table with publicans at Matthew's house and that Matthew himself prepared a great feast for Him. And it was Matthew who made such a fitting reward for heavenly benefits, as far as the general judgement is concerned. This was because he hoped for everlasting goods from Him, for Whom he provided his temporal goods. So he restored with an earthly meal Him, from Whom, as he was giving the meal, he had received a taste of spiritual sweetness.

On the other hand, if we long to find out the significance of these events at a deeper level of understanding, it was not only in his earthly house that he produced a physical feast for the Lord, but it was with deep gratitude in the house of his breast that he prepared a feast for Him through faith and love, as Christ Himself attests saying, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me'.

The Lord stands at the door and knocks when He pours the memory of His will into our hearts, either through the mouth of those who teach us or else through their own inner inspiration. When His voice is heard, we open the door to receive Him, by willingly giving our consent to His counsels, whether secret or open, and devoting ourselves to doing those things which we recognise must be done. He comes in order to sup with us and us with Him, for He dwells in the hearts of His elect through the grace of His love. This is to restore them constantly by the light of His presence, so that they may advance more and more towards heavenly desires and so that He Himself may feed their zeal for heaven, as it were, with a most pleasing banquet.

There follows 'And when they saw it, the Pharisees said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners?' The Pharisees were bound by a double error when they found fault with the Master of truth for receiving sinners: they thought of themselves as righteous, though they had long ago departed from righteousness by their arrogant pride and they denounced as unrighteous those who by repenting of their sins were already drawing near to righteousness.

Blinded by envy of their brothers' salvation, they recalled that Matthew was a publican and that many others who were at table with the Lord were publicans and sinners. However, they were unwilling to recall that, as Luke writes, this same Matthew had left everything that he was doing and followed Jesus. Likewise the disposition that led the other publicans and sinners to table with Him readied them to join Him from then on. The Pharisees were mistaken because they did not know the hearts of the others, or even their own hearts.

He who knew the hidden things of the heart is He Who 'is come to seek and to save that which was lost'. He both further strengthened in faith those whom He had already accepted as they

repented and He stirred to the grace of humility and piety those whom He had tolerated when they were still proud and wicked, for there follows: 'But Jesus hearing it said, 'The healthy need no physician, but those who are ill'. Inasmuch as He testified that He came as a physician for those who were ill, He increased the hope of obtaining healing and life of those who, awoken from the illness of their sins, had already begun to follow the instructions of the Saviour and Life-giver. In that he said that the healthy need no physician, he confounded the rashness of those who, counting on their own righteousness, were scornful of seeking the help of heavenly grace. Who could be so righteous as not to need Divine help, since he than whom none born of women was greater, John, said most clearly about himself, 'A man can receive nothing, unless it be given to him from heaven'.

By adding, 'Go and learn what this means: I want mercy and not sacrifice', Christ also gave advice for improvement to the Pharisees who were puffed up with their false righteousness. He advised them that through works of mercy they could obtain for themselves the rewards of heavenly mercy, and that by not despising the needs of the poor, they could be sure of pleasing the Lord, offering themselves as sacrifices. He put the testimony of the prophet before them and ordered them to learn it as they went – as they went from the rashness of their foolish condemnation to thinking more diligently about the Holy Scriptures. He did this so that they who were accusing Him of going against the commands of the Scriptures by receiving sinners, could instead understand that they themselves did not know what God's commands were and had not made them known.

It is obvious that, as they devote themselves to daily offerings in the temple, people who are not moved by any compassion for transgressors, seek sacrifice rather than mercy, contrary to the saying of the prophet. But the Lord, as it is written, 'went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil', and as often as He went to the temple, rather than offer sacrifices there, He strove to heal the sick, to guide the ignorant and convict the insolent or even drive them out. And it is clear that He carried out the commands of the Divine will as the prophet advised, by performing works of mercy and not by offering sacrifices ...

THE CROSS

By Eadmund

'May Almighty God in His mercy defend us from an arrogant and savage enemy: for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation'

St Oswald.

THE prayer quoted above is the earliest Englisc prayer offered in front of a cross that has come down to us. It was the prayer of Oswald, King of Northumbria, before a battle against a vicious tyrant, Cadwallon who, though professing Christianity, had invaded and ravaged the country, driving out the missionary Bishop Paulinus. This cross was crudely made, the hole in which it was to stand feverishly dug, and Oswald had held it upright while his soldiers heaped the earth around it until it was firmly fixed in the ground.



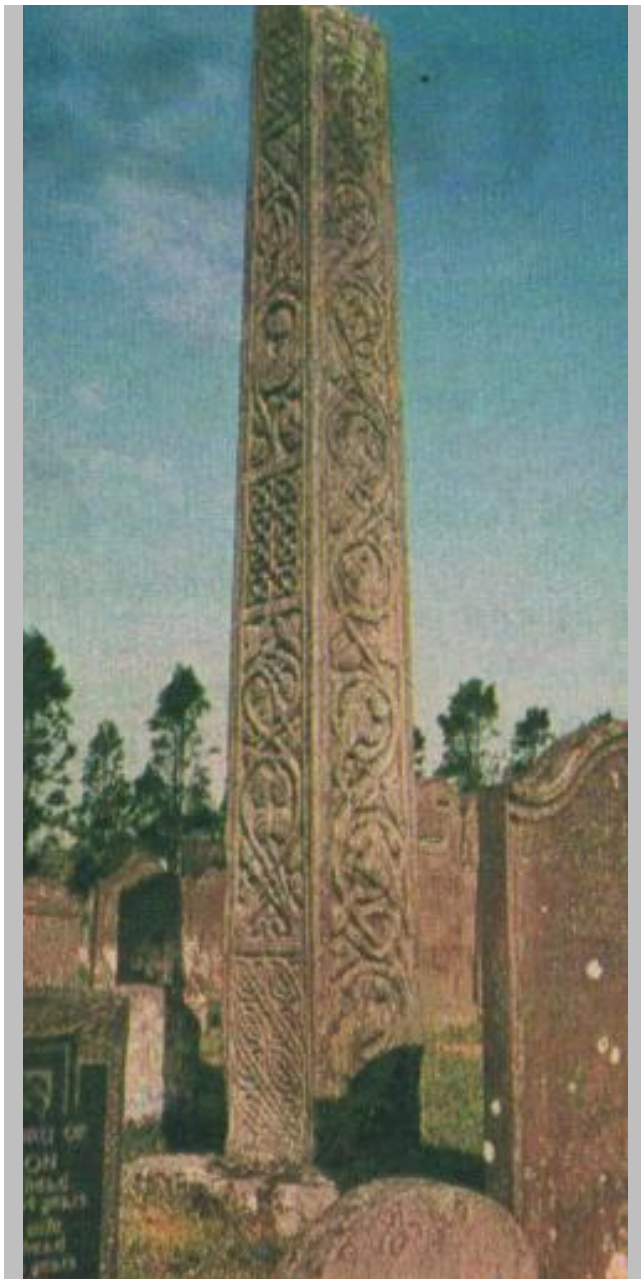
Oswald's prayer was answered, and the hordes of Cadwallon broke against that little hillock, and were utterly routed by the outnumbered defenders of the faith. King Oswald's reign was then dated from the day before Cadwallon's invasion, and any mention of the tyrant was expunged from the records of Northumbria. The simple wooden cross that marked the place of the battlefield, called Heofonfeld (Heavenfield) by the Englisc was

eventually completely worn away by folk taking shavings off it as holy relics, and when it had gone, even the dust of the ground that it had stood in was taken in the same way, morsel by morsel, until a great hollow occupied the place where it had once stood.

The very word 'rood', meaning a crucifix, derives from 'rod' in the Englisc tongue. In the early days it often had to serve as the only church that they knew. It was the first symbol of Christianity that they saw, as St Augustine had a silver cross borne before him when he landed on the south coast of Kent. Before churches were built, crosses were set up and little congregations would gather at a pre-ordained time and wait for the peripatetic priest, who would come to chant mæsse (the Englisc word for the Divine Liturgy), and give them communion with their Lord and God and Saviour.

Unlike the simple cross of Heavenfield, these crosses were beautifully adorned, as the many that have survived up and down the country bear witness².

Bewcastle cross, in Cumberland, is one of these: its four sides decorated with human figures, animals or birds, or vine scrolls with grapes and foliage. Puritan fanatics in the seventeenth century are alleged to have been responsible for the loss of its cross piece, so that now only the upright shaft remains. Over the years antiquarians have damaged it, by trying to clean and examine the carvings and runes engraved on it, and even by trying to make a plaster cast of it. It has never been moved, and so the violent storms of wind and rain have beaten upon it as they have swept across the bleak moorlands. However on its western face is still to be seen a carved figure of Christ harrowing hell, trampling with his feet on the beasts of the underworld, and holding in one hand a scroll representing the Book of Life, and raising his other hand in blessing.



The Bewcastle Cross

In the market place at Sandbach in Cheshire stand the two extremely weathered crosses, on an imposing plinth of two steps with stone posts at the corners. The scenes carved on them are as difficult to make out as those on the Bewcastle cross, but one of the faces on each cross clearly shows a representation of Pentecost. It is thought that they were set here as a memorial of the first preaching of the word of God in Mercia, a kingdom previously pagan under the rule of King Penda. Penda, however, was a fair and honest man, and insisted that just as pagans lived according to their beliefs, Christians should live according to theirs. He would not tolerate hypocrisy from either.



The cross at Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, like the one at Bewcastle, is also a preaching cross, set up to mark the place where Divine Service would be accorded to God. It dates from the last quarter of the seventh century, about AD 680. It has also undergone the vicissitudes of weather and of fanatical hatred, but in this case it owes its survival to the Reverend Gavin Young, the incumbent minister of Ruthwell in 1640. In that year the General Assembly had decreed that 'in divers parts of this Kingdome, and specially in the north parts of the same, many Idolatrous Monuments, erected and made for Religious Worship, are yet extant – such as crucifixes, Images of Christ, Mary, and saints departed – ordaines the said monuments to be taken down, demolished, and destroyed, and that with all convenient diligence; and that the care of this work shall be incumbent to the Presbyteries and Provinciaall Assemblies within this Kingdome, and their Comissioners to report their diligence herein to the next Generall Assembly.'

Mr Young 'kept the word of promise to the ear and broke it to the hope' by digging a trench in the earthen floor of the church, and having chipped away a less important figural panel, carefully lowered it into the trench, thus saving the bulk of the carvings for future generations, and preserving those on the western face so well that they are still almost as crisp as when the sculptor left them. The supposedly irretrievably broken and defaced cross was now covered over with a paving slabs and left until a replacement of the floor necessitated it being dug up and thrown into the churchyard, where it was found by Dr Henry Duncan in the early years of the C19. The Act that had resulted in its destruction was still in force, and Dr Duncan could not re-erect it in the churchyard, but the General Assembly had no jurisdiction over his private garden, and he had it set up in the grounds of the manse in 1823. The fame of the monument, now visible to all including scholars, quickly spread, and as the century drew towards its close, the contemporary incumbent, Mr McFarlan, seeing

that its exposure to the weather was causing marked deterioration, decided to have it moved under cover into the church, which was eventually done in 1887, when it was declared an ancient monument under the terms of the Ancient Monuments Act

The figural panels on the Ruthwell cross are as follow:

South side, from the top:

St John the Evangelist and an Eagle, with an inscription 'IN PRINCIPIO ERAT VERBUM'.³

An Archer.

The Visitation of the Mother of God to Elizabeth.

The Washing of the Saviour's feet, with an inscription 'ATTULIT ALABASTRUM UNGUENTI ET STANS RETRO SECUS PEDES EJUS LACRIMIS COEPIT RIGARE PEDES EJUS ET CAPILLIS CAPITS SUI TERGEBAT': the longest Latin inscription on the cross.⁴ This is also the most perfectly preserved and dramatic of the relief carvings



The Washing of our Saviour's feet

The Healing of the Man Born Blind, with the inscription 'ET PRÆTERIENS VIDIT HOMINEM CÆCUM A NATIVITATE ET SANAVIT EUM AB INFIRMITATE'.⁵

The Annunciation with an inscription of which one word: 'INGRESSUS' remains. There is, however, plenty of room for the complete inscription from the Vulgate 'ET INGRESSUS ANGELUS AD EAM DIXIT; AVE, GRATIA PLENA; DOMINUS TE-CUM; BENEDICTA TU IN MULIERIBUS', which once undoubtedly occupied the space.

The Crucifixion, now alas considerably abraded.

North side, from the top:

Bird on Topmost Twig of Vine.

Two Evangelists: there is evidence that the other two evangelists were also included.

John the Baptist with the *Agnus Dei*. Only one word of the inscription survives – ADORAMUS.

Christ standing on the heads of beasts, with the inscription 'JHS XPS JDEX AEQVITATIS. / BESTIAE ET DRACONES / COGNOVERVNT IN DESERTO / SALVATOREM MVNDI'.⁶

Meeting of Paul and Anthony in the Desert with the inscription, partly missing, 'SCS PAVLVS ET ANTONIVS / EREMITAE / FREGERVNT PANEM / IN DESERTO'.⁷

The Flight into Egypt. There has been an inscription around this panel, but it is too degraded to be read. The remains of it read 'MARIA.ET.IO.'

A Seventh Figural Panel. This has been totally destroyed – the price paid for the preservation of the rest – but it has been conjectured that this would have represented the Nativity.

The following translation of the Runic text, to be seen on the narrow edges of the cross, is from Michael Alexander's *The Earliest English Poems*. Michael is one of the few authors to have attempted a translation of the Englisc alliterative metre, and this is the closest that one can get to understanding the poetry without learning Englisc.

Almighty God ungirded Him,
eager to mount the gallows,
unafraid in the sight of many;
He would set free mankind.
I was reared up, a rood. I raised the great King,
liege lord of the heavens,
dared not lean from the true.
I was all moist with blood



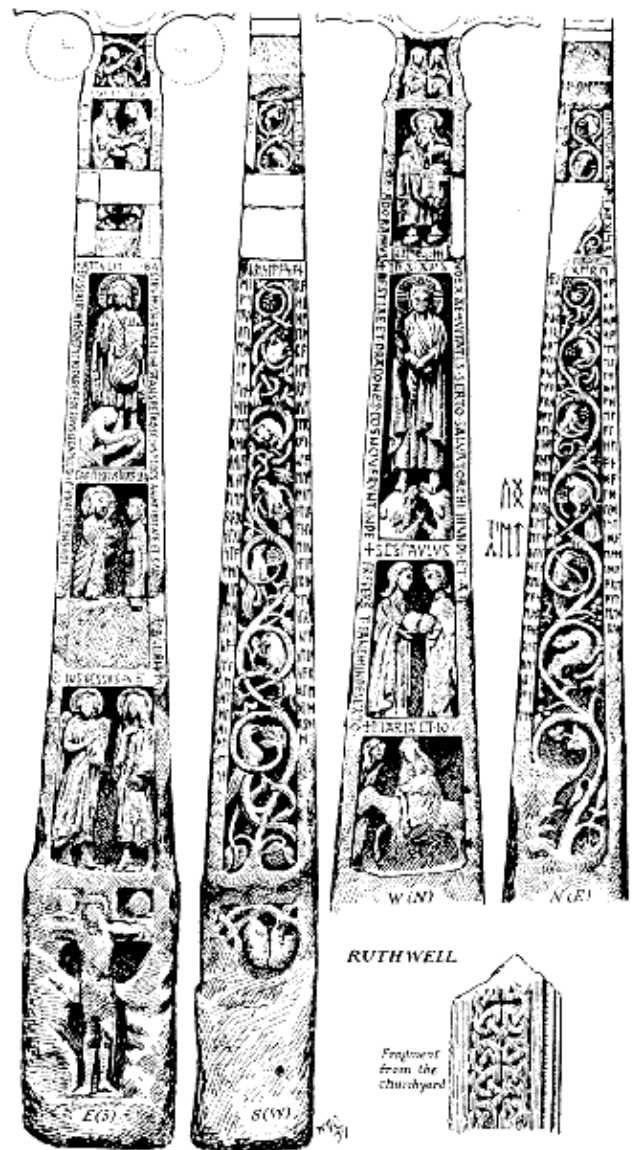
General View of the Ruthwell Cross

sprung from the Man's side
after He sent forth His soul.

But there came quickly from far
earls to the One there. All that I beheld
had grown weak with grief,
yet with glad will bent then
meek to those men's hands,
yielded Almighty God.

I was all wounded with shafts
They straightened out His strained limbs,
stood at His body's head,
looked down upon the Lord of Heaven ...

The rune-stave was the ancient, pagan, magic writing of the northlands, invented by a shaman somewhere in central Europe and ascribed to the pagan god Woden or Odinn. However when Christianity came to England, these letters were secret no longer and, as we can see, were then,



Diagrammatic View showing the vine tracery on the narrow sides and the runic text

like other pagan things, impressed into the service of God.

I have described this cross in some detail because it is the most intricately carved one that has been preserved, and also because of this inscription, which leads me on the next part of the story – that of Englisc poetry.

The story of Cædmon, the first Englisc hymnographer, is well known, but I will rehearse it briefly again here, as it is of vital importance to the story of the development of Englisc Christianity. Cædmon was an illiterate swineherd at the monastery of Streoneshalch (later called Whitby) under Abbess St Hild. He could not sing to the harp, and when he saw the harp coming his way after feasts he would rapidly make his escape to the stables or the byre, where he would sleep. One

night he had a vision of an angel, who told him to sing. He said that he was unable, but when the angel persisted asked what he should sing about. The angel said that he should sing about the wonderful works of God, and he then composed his first song, and was always afterwards miraculously able to compose vernacular songs on religious subjects.

Poetry in Englisc times was a very different thing to the elevated and often obscure poetry that we know now. Although it was even then highly stylised and, owing to its alliterative character, involved the use of numerous 'kennings', or synonymous alliterative phrases, it was nevertheless widely appreciated and understood. Whilst only the skilled 'scops' or minstrels, whose 'heads were storehouses of the storied verse' could make the best poetry, everyone – including Cædmon as we have seen – was expected to be able to make poetry, and the passing of the harp was an intrinsic part of any feast. The fact that Cædmon was given the ability to make readily understandable and popular verses from the themes of the bible stories, hitherto locked up in the Latin language and therefore not comprehensible to the average Engliscman, gave the missionaries a wonderful opening into a hitherto un-entered world. This new voice must have been made use of by many, including St Aldhelm who, as bishop of Sherborne, used to go out onto the town bridge after mæsse and sing such songs to the folk passing by.

It was this acceptance of Christianity into a living and popular vernacular art (as dramatic as a modern missionary suddenly using 'rap') that gave rise to one of the greatest poems in the Englisc language, now known as *The Dream of the Rood*, which I have quoted above. In this anonymous poem, the cross is the narrator, and describes how it felt to bear the body of Christ. It also shows how the Englisc viewed Christ. Brought up on the Heroic Code, they saw Him as a hero, who mounted the Cross of His own free will, to defeat death, and thus bring salvation to mankind. The poem is found in manuscript form, as well as in this carved inscription on the Ruthwell Cross, and indeed the manuscript has been used to fill out the inscription where it has become illegible owing to the degradations of time and the depredations of men.

So many fragments of carved crosses have been found in the fabric of later churches that one authority has suggested that most Englisc parish churches carry hidden within them the remnants of

such a cross. However the cross was not abandoned. It continued its life inside the churches, as the splendid Englisc carved roods and the manuscript icons that survive bear witness.

The two roods at Romsey in Hampshire and the one at Daglingworth in Gloucestershire are just three examples of the many that must have decorated the inside of Englisc churches. Langford in Oxfordshire is another church that bears two roods, both of them on the outside of the south porch, one over the door and the other on the east side. These are particularly interesting as they show the two different types: the Syrian, showing Christ suffering as a man, and the Byzantine, showing Him triumphant. Unfortunately the one above the church door has had its arms restored on the wrong sides and upside down, resulting in a peculiarly tortured figure (see illustration).

The icons are very moving, and one of the most striking is the simple line drawing from the Ramsey Psalter, Harl. Ms. 2904 f.3v. This tenth-century Psalter once belonged to the Abbey of Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, at that time one of the greatest in England, but now only a solitary gatehouse is left. Unfortunately the lines have faded in the thousand



Romsey, Hampshire: Rood



Romsey, Hampshire: Crucifixion



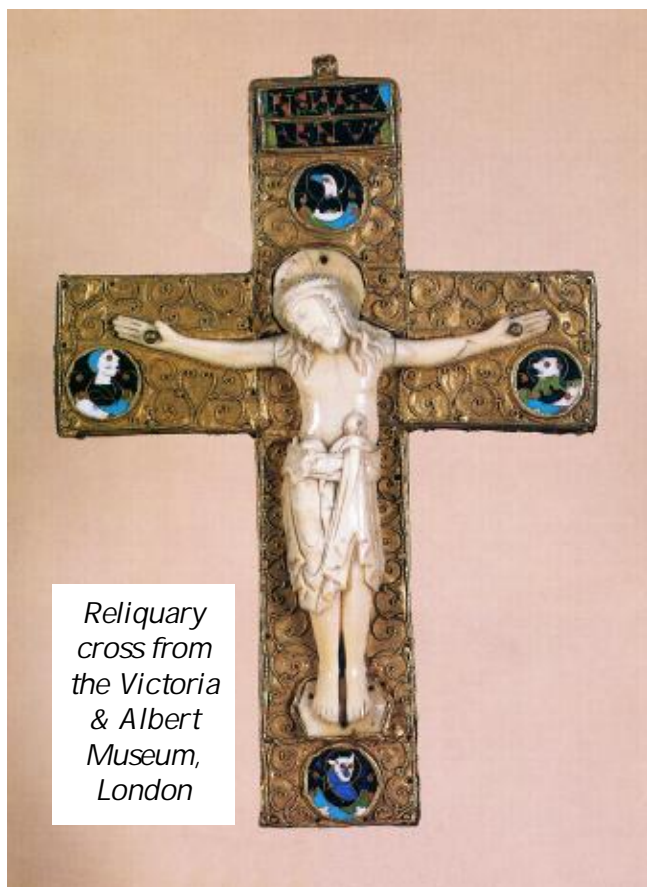
Langford, Oxfordshire: Crucifixion

years that have passed since it was first drawn, and it is difficult to reproduce; but one is nonetheless able to appreciate the simple figure of Christ, His head bowed towards his mother, who waits patiently, her own head bowed on her arms. On the other side the figure of St John bears a scroll on which is written in Latin his own testimony: 'This is the disciple who bears witness'.



Harl Ms. 2904 f.3v.

Very similar in many ways is the figure of Christ carved in morse, or walrus ivory, on a reliquary, now to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. This shows how images could be transferred to different media in English art. Often an ivory carver would take his inspiration from a manuscript drawing, or a manuscript artist would copy a piece of relief sculpture. The ivory is mounted on gold, with gold filigree and cloisonné enamels around a cedar-wood core. The enamel roundels show the symbolic figures of the four evangelists. Beneath the ivory figure of Christ is a large cavity for relics, and an inscription on the cross, although now existing only in part, lists the relics formerly contained within it, beginning with a relic of the True Cross. It can be dated to the late C10, and was probably made at Winchester.



When the great and holy Cuthbert died on the Fame Islands on 20 March 687, having retired from the bishopric that he only undertook with great reluctance, to live in an isolated, roofless hermitage; his holy body was reverently gathered up by the brothers and transported to Lindisfarne, where it was wrapped in precious vestments and enshrined in a decorated wooden coffin. When Viking raiders desecrated Lindisfarne in 883, the monks placed the Lindisfarne Gospels and the other treasures associated with Cuthbert in his coffin, and set off on a long pilgrimage to find somewhere else to lay him in peace and security. In 995 they stopped at Chester-le-Street, but eventually found their way to Durham, where the coffin still rests. A beautiful pectoral cross was discovered deep under the clothing when Canon Raine opened the coffin on 17 May 1827. It had once been broken and repaired and must be the very cross that St Cuthbert wore during his ministry.



The Pectoral Cross of St Cuthbert

The first cross that the Englisc saw was the silver one carried before St Augustine onto the shores of Kent. Since then, as we have seen, the cross penetrated deep into Englisc culture. Each day, almost without thinking, they made the sacred sign on their own bodies, and when they prayed they stood, not with their hands clasped together in front of them, as has been the popular stance since the sixteenth century, but in the form of a cross, with their hands outstretched, their palms raised up to God.

The last Englisc cross of note was that discovered by Tofig the Proud, who was a rich and powerful C11th Danish thegn. He held a number of estates in various parts of southern England and was staller (a placeman or court office-holder) to King Cnut. According to the Waltham Chronicle, it was on his manor at Montacute in Somerset that a black crucifix or Holy Rood was unearthed following a dream in 1030. Tofig loaded the life-sized cross onto a cart, but the oxen refused to move until he mentioned another of his estates at Waltham in Essex where he already had a hunting lodge. Tofig rebuilt the church at Waltham to house the cross, on which he bestowed his own sword. His devout second wife Gytha, the daughter of Osgod Clapa, adorned the figure with a crown, bands of gold and precious stones.

After Tofig's death around 1045, Waltham reverted to the then King Edward (later to be known as 'the Confessor'), who gave it to Earl Harold Godwinsson, who later became king himself. Harold rebuilt Tofig's church in stone

around 1060, in gratitude it is said for his cure from a paralysis, received through praying before the miraculous cross.

So the cross was an enduring symbol and source of healing and power throughout the years that the English held England, and although after Harold Godwinsson's death at Sandlake the throne passed to foreign tyrants, the Orthodox church was replaced by Roman Catholicism, and was later to be completely overturned by Protestants in the so-called Reformation, a remnant of the English folk still believed in it. A few of us still wait patiently for freedom and enlightenment to come again.

May God bless us and reveal Himself again to us through the Precious and Life-giving Cross.

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- 1 Pronounced with a long [o] as 'road'.
- 2 The cover design of this magazine is derived from the work of the anonymous sculptors of the surviving cross-shafts at Jarrow and Jedburgh.
- 3 'In the beginning was the Word', the opening words of St John's gospel.
- 4 In the Revised Standard translation 'She brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head'.
- 5 'And passing, He saw a man blind from his birth, and He healed him from his infirmity.'
- 6 'Jesus Christ, the Judge of Equity. Beasts and Dragons knew, in the desert, the Saviour of the world.'
- 7 'Saints Paul and Anthony, hermits, broke their bread in the desert'

ORTHODOXY SHINES THROUGH WESTERN MYTHS (5)

The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200

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

It is different today, when the near-millennial crimes of the West are visible to all and nobody any longer listens to the voices of ecclesiastical institutions which moulded the last thousand years of Western history – they are clearly compromised. Interestingly, contemporary secular scholarship, which in its ignorance of Orthodoxy cannot in any way be accused of being pro-Orthodox, is an excellent source for Orthodox to understand what went wrong with the West. We can

understand how, by renouncing the Orthodox Christian Faith in its anti-Trinitarian and anti-Christic *filioque* heresy, its former Church became a series of -isms, Catholicism, Protestantism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism etc, which have bred modern-day secularism and will eventually lead to the end of the world.

In the following article, the fifth in a series taken from various works of secular scholarship, we have selected extracts from *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* by Professor Colin Morris, University of Toronto Press, 1972, 1987 and 1991 (See also 'Orthodoxy Shines Through' from June 2011). These abundantly illustrate the post-Orthodox deformations of Western culture which began with the spread of the new *filioque* culture behind the Papacy.

Although ominously threatened for nearly three centuries before, under Charlemagne, these deformations were not definitively implemented until the eleventh century. The

date of 1054 is thus seen to be symbolic of the very real spiritual fall which took place in Western Europe in the eleventh century. In the year 1000, the fall had by no means been certain. In 1054 it was. And it is that fall which has defined the subsequent history of not just Western Europe, but the whole world. But let the learned author speak:

P. xiii. 'Modern' began with 'the great changes' of over 900 years ago.

The distinction between the 'medieval' and the 'modern' world is a fixed part of the historian's terminology, but it probably obscures the truth rather than clarifies it. Many 'modern' attitudes and institutions may be traced back to the great cultural changes which took place in western Europe in the decades around 1100. This book is an attempt to examine one of these, and to consider what signs may be discovered at that time of the respect for, and interest in, the individual, which was to be so marked a feature of later Western culture.

Pp. 1-2-3-4. Western individualism is unique.

Nevertheless, it is true that Western culture, and the Western type of education, has developed this sense of individuality to an extent exceptional among the civilizations of the world ... Western individualism is therefore far from expressing the common experience of humanity. Taking a world view, one might almost regard it as an eccentricity among cultures ... The 'classical' Western political philosophers ... assumed that the individual person and his rights pre-existed any form of society ... Humanism may not be the same thing as individualism ... but they are at least first cousins ... Kant's famous dictum ... has recently been argued to be the corner-stone of European ethics 'The idea of the individual person as of supreme worth is fundamental to the moral, political and religious ideas of our society'.

Pp. 7-8 and 10. The beginnings of modern humanism after about 1080 in the generation born after 1054.

There is a rapid rise in individualism and humanism in the years from about 1080 to 1150 ... It is in this sense that Bolgar discerns in it 'for the first time the lineaments of modern man' ... The meditations of Anselm or Aelred of Rievaulx ... would have been literally unthinkable a century before ... It is significant that the word *humanitas*, which since about AD 600 had been used almost without exception in a pejorative sense to indicate human frailty, now recovered its former dignity.

Bishop Ivo of Chartres at the beginning of the twelfth century employed it in its classical sense of philanthropy or kindness, and *humanus* once more came to carry a favourable connotation.

Pp. 12-13. The loss of the sense of catholicity and of the Church and the influence of individualism from paganism ('classicism') after 1050.

The Church is the body of Christ, each member a limb in it. All believers share in the one Spirit, all are stones in the living Temple. This element in early Christian thinking severely modifies the strong individualism which we have also seen to be present, but it has received relatively little attention in the Western Church. The reasons are not far to seek. With the revival of learning and personal devotion in the years after 1050, men seized eagerly upon the message of individual salvation in ways which will be examined later, but the language of community meant less to them because it had arisen within a social situation so foreign to their experience ... For the Church in general the period from 1050 to 1150 was one of great and far-reaching reconstruction and reform, but scarcely any of these reforms increased the sense of community within the local churches. Indeed, the whole tendency was to diminish the sense of community. Two examples, of quite different kinds, will illustrate this point. The Eucharist had been, for the early Church, the supreme expression of its unity. By 1050 regular communion by the people had become rare, but there was no systematic attempt to restore it. The new practices which arose in the celebration of the Mass, such as the elevation of the host, were directed, not towards the restoration of community, but towards the kindling of personal devotion. Again, under the older canon law, the position of a bishop was safeguarded by the rule that he could be deposed only by a synod of his colleagues. He was thus protected from injustice by recourse to the community of the local church. The canon lawyers of the twelfth century, however, turned to a quite different way of providing protection: appeal to Rome. The Church of the twelfth century thus saw a revival of personal piety, expressed in a variety of ways which we shall have to examine; but it failed to recover a sense of community for the faithful as a whole. The individual for the future was to be restricted, not by the mind of the local church, but by the authority of the hierarchy.

The second source of respect for the individual is probably to be found in the classical past

Pp. 23–24. The Cross was seen as Resurrection before the Western Schism, but after it as Crucifixion.

The depiction of the crucifix in art expressed this vision of the triumphant Christ. The crucifix of the time was very different from those to which we (*sic*) have become accustomed ... It is a remarkable fact that in the first thousand years of the Church's history, years in which death was often close and threatening to most men, the figure of the dead Christ was almost never depicted. The crucifix was conceived as an expression of the triumph of Christ, the Lord of all things. Moreover, as we shall see in a later chapter, Christian tradition was uneasy about considering Christ as a suffering man, and preferred to see in him the expression of divine power ... It is true that at the end of the tenth century we find the first instances of a revolutionary type of crucifix which portrayed the Lord as dead, and which stressed his suffering and his mortality. Yet by 1050 the living-Christ tradition was still important, and in some places completely dominant ... The cross, then, was a divine victory. On this point, the Church of the Dark Ages (*sic*) stood solidly in the footsteps of earlier centuries.

P. 31. Man's Divine destiny changes after 1100 to the fallen humanist view.

... in the view, generally accepted until about 1100, that man had been created in order to make up the number of the fallen angels... it contains the assumption that man's purpose is not human, but angelic; not to realize his true (*sic*) self, but to become something quite different.

Pp. 40 and 42. Social change and the castle – the triumph of feudalism after 1050, especially in northern France, the land of 'the Franks'.

We must not work the cities too hard as an explanation for the changes which were taking place from 1050 onwards. The aristocracy itself was being transformed in its structure and its patterns of behaviour, although it is necessary to be cautious in describing this development because of the limited evidence available from the preceding period. Fundamentally two processes were at work. On the one hand, the lords were securing more effective control of their local areas. The obvious symbol of the new order was the castle. Wooden castles were widespread in eleventh-century France, and in the twelfth century those who could afford it replaced them with stone. Whoever held the castle enjoyed military control of the region. Meanwhile, the general breakdown

of royal authority which had taken place in France in the tenth century had left local lords free to develop their own pattern of exploitation.

In the long run the upper nobility enjoyed the benefit, for the development of the stone castle and of more effective and costly military equipment gave the initiative to those families who controlled resources sufficient to afford them. These developments took place at various times in different countries. They usually began in France, perhaps because the old order there had collapsed more completely than in England and Germany. Castles, for example, were common in eleventh-century France, were introduced into England after the Norman Conquest, and appeared in Germany on a large scale from the 1070s onwards. A similar pattern may be observed in most of the social changes which we have been considering. For this reason the new aristocracy is found in its most vigorous and self-confident form in France and Normandy. The names French or Frankish were increasingly used for the inhabitants of that area, covering what is now the northern half of France, who were French-speaking, and the Normans, at least between 1050 and 1150, usually counted themselves as French. The international power of this aristocracy was founded upon its great military effectiveness ... The First Crusade was largely a Franco-Norman enterprise, and the men of the duchy of Normandy overran England, southern Italy and Sicily, and Antioch.

P. 59. The new and individualistic 'theology' of the atonement – based on ignorance of the ancient Orthodox teaching by the educated elite.

There is something of a mystery why the twelfth century saw such a new start in atonement theology (*sic*). It was for a long time supposed that the Fathers had no atonement doctrine; Gustav Aulen went far to correct this view in his stimulating book *Christus Victor*, but without fully explaining the radical break with the past which took place about 1100. The explanation may be that the best thought on the subject was that of Greek (*sic*) Fathers unknown to Anselm and Abelard. Latin tradition was decidedly weak on this point, and, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, the theory of the atonement raises issues crucial to twelfth-century thought about the individual.

P. 90 The move away from the undeveloped remains of Orthodox iconography of the tenth-century West to humanistic individualism and naturalism or realism, that is, to the fashion for portraying fallen nature.

The twelfth century saw a distinct shift in the visual arts towards sensitivity to nature, and a more characteristically modern way of seeing the human form. Ottonian art had made its impact through insignia, symbols, posture, and colour. While these devices were by no means abandoned, more stress came to be placed upon the human form and features. The idea of kingliness was conveyed through the nobility, benevolence, or severity of the figure's expression, as in some of the sculptures of the new Gothic cathedrals. The figure of Eve, carved at Autun before the middle of the century by its great sculptor Gislebert, has been called the first seductive female in Western art since the fall of Rome, and if the claim is a large one, it contains a good deal of truth. This movement towards naturalism was sometimes accompanied by a delight in personal gestures and in private idiosyncrasies...

The best field in which to look for formal portraits in the twelfth century is in memorial- or tomb-sculpture. Such pictures are virtually unknown before 1050, but from that time they become progressively more common.

Pp. 139-43. The new religion after 1050 and the new awareness as a fallen spiritual delusion.

... It is true that if we turn to the writings of the Fathers we are usually struck by the objective social content given to the Cross and the Last Day. Much more than in the theology with which we are familiar the weight fell upon the assertion that God's action has changed, or will change, the status of humanity; while its importance for each believer, although not ignored, was usually given a subsidiary place. A marked change in this interpretation can be discerned with the emergence, during the period 1050-1200, of medieval or scholastic theology.

THE PASSION

With regard to the first of these two points of reference, the passion, the stress during the first thousand years fell upon the victory which God had won in the cross, a victory which overcame the devil's hold upon men, opened all mankind to the action of God's grace, and established Christ's lordship over the world...

A later age thought more readily of other things: the nature of Christ's sufferings, the love which he showed in them, and the pains he endured for the sinner's redemption. While one could not say that such thoughts were wholly foreign to the early Church (*sic*), they played little part in comparison with the vision of the cross as a divine victory. Even during the Carolingian period, when there was a tendency in some writers to insist on the details of the sufferings which the Lord endured, the element of objective thanksgiving remained predominant. The movement towards a more inward and compassionate devotion, in which the individual strove imaginatively to share in the pain of his Lord, became really strong in the eleventh century, and in the twelfth it governed much of the thought about the passion.

An early and important manifestation of the new spirit was a change in the form of the crucifix. Instead of the former figure of the living Christ, sometimes radiant with vitality, we find Christ dead on the cross. The first surviving example is probably the great wooden cross made for Archbishop Gero of Cologne (969-76), which is a moving study of majesty in death. The head is slumped on the right shoulder, the eyes closed, the face twisted, the jaw hanging open. Between 1000 and 1200 artists working within this tradition strove to combine in their sculpture the agony and the majesty of Christ. The fact of death was clearly shown, and the attitudes of the watchers, Mary and John, became much more expressive of personal grief. On the other hand, the wounds of Christ did not receive anything like the exaggerated treatment which became usual later in the Middle Ages, the crown of thorns was rarely shown, and a kingly crown often appeared on Christ's head...

The change in the appearance of the crucifix corresponded with a growing devotional emphasis on the pains of Christ, which can be observed in the eleventh century, especially among the monastic reformers, whose contribution to the growth of a more inward, and less formal, spirit we have already noticed. One way of illustrating this change is to compare a Carolingian work and a twelfth-century one: the *Short Treatise on the Passion of the Lord* by Candidus Bruno (c. 825) and the meditation on the passion in the *Rule for Contemplatives (de Institutione Inclusarum)* by Ælred of Rievaulx (c. 1150). With an interval of three centuries, we should expect large differences; but the purpose of the two meditations is broadly similar, and it is instructive to see in what ways the

new spirituality has diverged from the old. The structure of the works is alike in that each follows step by step the events of the passion, or, in Ælred's case, of Christ's life as a whole. We are at once struck by the much more practised air of Ælred's treatment, whereas Candidus moves jerkily from text to text, the meditation of Ælred flows with an ease which indicates, not only literary excellence, but long experience of a flexible mode of meditation. The substance, too, is different. The ninth-century author does not dwell at length on the sufferings of Christ, but is interested rather in interpreting the story symbolically. Some of his comments are bound to appear to us, in the context of a crucifixion, strangely cold-blooded: 'The crown of thorns placed on the head of Christ can also signify the sin of idolatry, by which the peoples ignorant of his true divinity imposed the divine name on various figments of idols.' It is consonant with this treatment that Candidus shows distinct reservations about the humanity of Christ: 'The Lord, being made man, allowed into himself human affections when he willed, and used them as he willed. He said he was thirsty, and he said true: therefore he thirsted when he willed, and as much as he willed.' Ælred's spirit is very different. We find a new stress on compassionate participation in the Lord's passion. The only visual aid which Ælred would allow for use on an altar was 'an image of the Saviour hanging on the cross, which will represent to you his passion, which you are imitating' The importance of the individual's suffering with Christ is now paramount: 'I know that pity now fills your heart, anguish inflames your inward parts. Allow him to suffer, I beg, for he suffers for you.' There are no reservations about the humanity of Jesus – on the contrary, it was the divinity which was veiled: 'Why so, my God? So filled with compassion for me you show yourself a man, and almost seem to be unaware that you are God'.

This deep personal bond with the crucified Saviour was characteristic of Ælred. On his death-bed, when no longer able to speak, he still wept at the Lord's suffering, and smiled at his love, as the passion story was read to him, and he recovered his voice to make a last act of hope while his friend Walter Daniel held a crucifix before his eyes. In all this he was at one with his generation, and we can observe the growth of a variety of practices which reflect devotion to the crucified Jesus and a more intimate sense of personal commitment. The elevation of the host, which first appeared in the Mass in the early twelfth century, was interpreted

as a reminder of the crucified humanity, and probably derived its popular appeal from that. The Crusades owed much of their support to this spirit – Bernard of Clairvaux' treatise *In Praise of the New Militia* was at once a handbook of crusading theory and a meditation on the holy places where Jesus lived and died. A new position of prayer was widely adopted, which subsequently became conventional: kneeling with the hands together. It was the position of homage, and its use expressed the personal loyalty which the believer felt for his Lord. Its general popularity was the work of the Franciscans, but it is highly probable that this rather startling transformation of a feudal ceremony into a devotional attitude had already taken place in the twelfth century.

An extreme representative of this tendency towards personal and individual commitment was Peter Abelard, who adopted this attitude so radically that he produced hymns that might have been written in 1400, and an atonement theory much admired by the liberals of 1900. The language of passion hymns generally remained traditional until the thirteenth century. The main occasion for such hymns was not, as we should expect, Lent and Good Friday, but Holy Cross day. There was something of a change in style in the twelfth century, the imagery becoming more complex, but they retained the objective and triumphant tone of the hymns from Carolingian and earlier days...

The stress on compassion here is enormous ... as if man was justified by compassion, by pity for suffering humanity.

P. 152. Man is cut off from heaven and Jerusalem, already in the Middle Ages heaven has become 'pie in the sky'.

Now in the meanwhile, with hearts raised on high,
We for that country must yearn and must sigh,
Seeking Jerusalem, dear native land,
Through our long exile on Babylon's strand.

Pp. 160–61. The great change after 1050, leading to the modern West.

In other areas the break with the past was still more violent. The years between 1050 and 1200 must be seen, for example, as a turning-point in the history of Christian devotion. There developed a new pattern of interior piety, with a growing sensitivity, marked by personal love for the crucified Lord and an easy and free-flowing meditation on the life and passion of Christ, marked also by the regular use of the confessional

and the growing popularity of the position of homage as a posture for prayer; and by the emergence of the 'dying Christ' style of crucifix. In doctrine the atonement theories of Anselm and Abelard represented a movement away from the received tradition at a point of major importance. From all this it will be evident that the changes which took place in the twelfth century went far beyond the simple recovery of the classical-Christian past...

It still remains to summarize our conclusions about the relationship of this discovery of the individual to the later culture of the West. By some writers it is suggested that there is little connection. Between us and them there is a great gulf fixed, so that it is false to say that in their writings we behold for the first time the lineaments of modern man. The great gulf is the Thomistic revolution of the thirteenth century. It was, according to this view, of the essence of twelfth-century thought that it was theologically orientated. The world had neither meaning nor intelligible pattern until it was related to God. Psychology, as the Cistercians understood it, was the study of the mind or soul in its ascent to God, friendship was the relationship of men in Christ, and autobiography was the confession of God's goodness and the writer's sin. The revolution of thought in the thirteenth century created, at least in principle, the possibility of a natural and secular outlook, by distinguishing between the realms of nature and supernature, of nature and grace, of reason and revelation. Thanks to the union of Aristotle and Christianity in the works of Aquinas, it was henceforth possible to look at man either as a natural being or as a being designed for fellowship with God, whereas before the former could not be conceived separately from the latter. From this time onwards, the objective study of the

natural order was possible, as was the idea of the secular State.

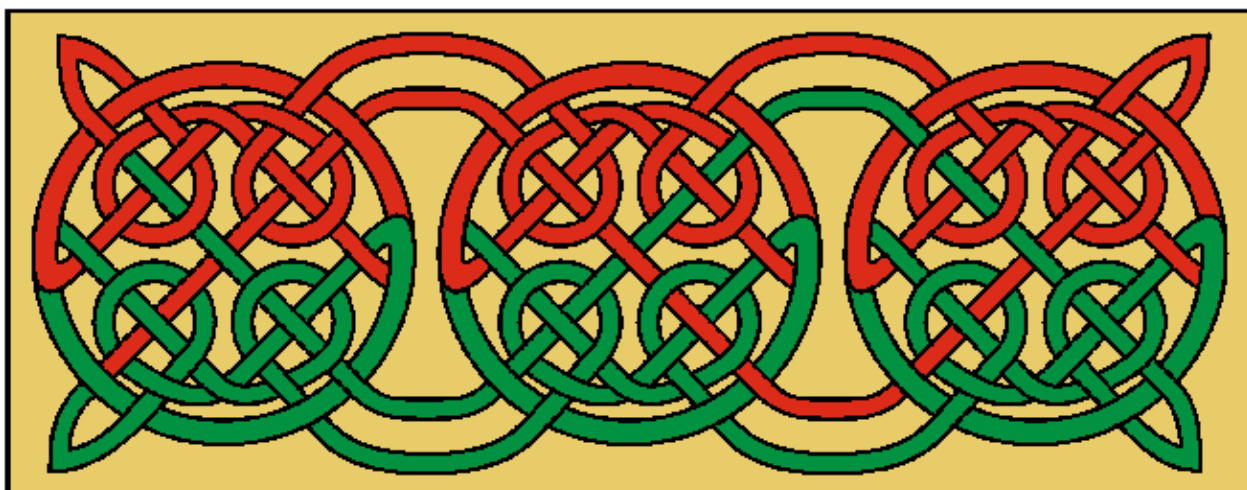
There is clearly a great deal of truth in this assessment of the situation, and the emergence of the idea of an autonomous order of nature is of the greatest importance in the development of Europe.

Pp. 164, 165 and 167. The End of 'Western Civilization'. Western Christendom was destroyed by itself, as it contained the seeds of its own destruction.

The liturgy and the Psalter slipped away from the centre of Christian piety, and 'to say one's prayers' came to mean praying privately in affective meditation. In claiming a continuity on these points between the twelfth and twentieth centuries, qualifications must be made at each end. Several of these attitudes, or literary forms, probably have an earlier history, which is very ill-recorded ... A more important qualification is that many of these attitudes are more obviously characteristic of Europe before 1914 than of the modern world ... It may be, therefore, that we are asserting a continuity between 1100 and 1900, rather than between 1100 and 1972, and that the dramatic and long chapter in human history entitled 'Western civilization' is coming to an end. This is not the main subject of this book, but the point is so important that it is worth noting ...

Abelard, the supreme example of the 'universal man' of the twelfth-century Renaissance, was a leading champion of the logical techniques which were to dehumanize theology.

Ælred and his older contemporaries stood at the beginning of a long history which is just ending, creators of that Western Christendom of whose dissolution we are the witnesses.



JOHN MASEFIELD'S KINGDOM OF BEAUTY

Implied throughout is his philosophy that beauty, glimpsed in moments of intense vision, is the revelation of something beyond itself.

Introduction: John Masefield the Seeker of Beauty

EVERY poet has a muse, a source of inspiration. We would suggest that John Masefield's muse is expressed by the word 'Beauty'.

He indicated the importance of Beauty to him in words he wrote to a friend, Audrey Napier-Smith, not long before he died: *Death ... is part of the eternity in which we move; an eternity of chance in the three divine progressions of Power, Order and Beauty, to which the stars are subject*. On p. 55 of his 1961 *The Bluebells*, JM had already written of this:

*The Order of the priests, the Power of Kings,
And Beauty undying, perfect, infinite ...
Here the stream runs, and Order, Beauty
and Power*

Power, Order and Beauty form the Masefieldian Trinity, although we shall see elsewhere that Order is often represented by Wisdom, that is, the Wisdom which provides just Order. But what exactly did Beauty mean for him? There is no better way of answering this question than by quoting from his own writings.

First of all, the concept of Beauty (the word is very often capitalised in JM's writings) is a constant, it can be found throughout his works. Thus, at the beginning, in *Roadways* from his 1903 *Ballads*, he wrote of his mission as being:

*In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find*

And in the same collection, in *The Seekers*, he similarly remarked that

*There is no solace on earth for us – for such
as we –
Who search for a hidden city that we shall
never see ...
We seek the City of God, and the haunt
where beauty dwells*

Nearly thirty years later, half-way through his sixty-year long career, on pp. 59 and 60 of his 1931 book *Poetry*, JM explained that *Invisibly, very near us, touching us all, is a real world, of divine order and beauty, inhabited by spirits,*

Gilbert Thomas, John Masefield, pp. 81–82

whose mission it is to bring order and beauty, where they can, to mortal souls who are struggling for such things... The greater poetry is a flowing in of light from the source of all light, from that king, ... in whose wisdom we advance ... and in whose beauty, if we have cared for beauty, we may come to dwell. These *spirits*, also called 'hope and help', marked a great deal of his work, especially *Right Royal* and *The Nine-Day Wonder*, which described the miracle of Dunkirk.

Another thirty years after *Poetry*, almost at the end of JM's poetic production, his mission apparently fulfilled, we find similar words on p. 68 of his 1964 *Old Raiger*, where he advises: *Seek Beauty, Brother, for it out-lives Death*. And on the first page of his final work, the 1966 *In Glad Thanksgiving*, he re-emphasised that same lifelong mission as: *To seek for beauty And to light the ways*. This longing for 'Beauty', source of light, was then constant with John Masefield.

Lollington Downs Beauty versus Death

It is above all in JM's brooding and sometimes dark 1917 *Lollington Downs* that we see the poet's formulation of his deep attachment to Beauty as the source of his inspiration. To give it its full title, *Lollington Downs and other Poems and Sonnets*, this work was the result of the poet's dreadful experiences in the First World War. Here he had seen carnage, both in northern France and in Gallipoli, and much of *Lollington Downs* consisted of his philosophical musings on those experiences and the question: What is stronger than Death?

Therefore, the themes of this collection are Life, Death, Beauty, human origins and human destiny, and the haunting presence of the past, outliving mortality. In this work we see Beauty presented as the opposite of Death (Sonnet IV), for Beauty is the source of Life and the spirit of immortality. Indeed, many of these poems and sonnets are directly about Beauty or begin with the word Beauty and others mention the word 'beautiful'. Indeed, on a quick count, its 70 poems and sonnets mention Beauty 65 times (capitalised 30 times) and the word Beautiful and beautiful nine times.

Thus in Sonnet II, the poet writes of Beauty as a source of inspiration:

*Beauty herself, within whose blossoming
Spring
Even wretched man shall clap his hands
and sing.*

In Sonnet IV, Beauty is *the ghost, the spirit's common speech* and in Sonnet VII Beauty is *but a looking on the face of Life*. In Poem VIII, he contrasts kings (power), merchants (money) and priests (institutionalised religion) with Beauty, which means being *not touched by King, merchant or priest*. Here Beauty is the source of knowledge: *O Beauty, let me know again...*

In Sonnet XII he sees the meaning of life as bringing Beauty to be. In Sonnet XXVI, his inspiration, Beauty, *lifted up my sleeping eyes and filled my heart with longing with a look*. In Sonnet XXVIII, he admits that he has sought Beauty *in women's hearts, in friends, in many a place*. Beauty is an ideal, *incarnate thought come face to face with me*.

But who is Beauty? In the somewhat Platonist Sonnet XXX, he identifies it as

*... the universal mind,
Eternal April wandering alone;
The God, the holy Ghost, the atoning Lord.*

Again, on a religious note in Sonnet XLII he speaks of *The God whose beauty quickened bread and wine*. This note of eternity is also caught in Sonnet XLIII where *Eternal beauty's everlasting rose ... casts this world as shadow as it goes*. In Sonnet LI *Beauty is that which death can never take away* and in Sonnet LII Beauty is

*... this grace, this spring, this given bread,
This life, this dawn, this waking from the
dead.*

In the words of Sonnet LIV, without Beauty *the blood out of the earth shrinks, the stalk dries*. And in Sonnet LVII Beauty:

*... tells futures in the falling sand,
And still, by signs, makes hidden meanings
clear.*

In Sonnet LXIII Beauty is called *the breath of the divine* and in Sonnet LIX Beauty is defined as *a wisdom piercing into brains*. Overall, Beauty is stronger than the horrible deaths and mutilations he had witnessed in the trenches

Beauty: The Finding of Wisdom

After the breakthrough formulations of *Lollingdon Downs*, the poet will speak more and more often of Beauty. In particular, Beauty is associated with Wisdom (usually capitalised). Thus, already in his 1916 *Good Friday*, having been told on p. 45 that *Wisdom comes from God*, on p. 48 we have these other words of the Madman, the figure of a seer:

*Touch Beauty's feet,
Know Truth, do as God bade,
Become God's son.*

And on p. 49, he states that the land of wisdom is inhabited by beauty:

*Beyond the pain, beyond the broken clay,
A glimmering country lies
Where life is being wise,
All of the beauty seen by truthful eyes
Are lilies there, growing beside the way.*

On p. 79, In the last words of the Madman, the 'heroic visionary' (see below), the poet writes of Wisdom, attained through suffering and communicated by Beauty:

*I cannot see what others see;
Wisdom alone is kind to me,
Wisdom that comes from Agony ...
Wisdom that lives in the pure skies,
The untouched star, the spirit's eyes
O Beauty, touch me, make me wise.*

In *The Passing Strange* in his 1920 *Enslaved*, we read:

*Brood upon beauty, till the grace
Of beauty with the holy face
Brings peace into the bitter place.*

And in *On Growing Old* from the same collection, we have these words of hope and consolation, which again explain that Beauty communicates wisdom:

*Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying ...
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and
passion,
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers
parch.*

*Give me but these, and, though the
darkness close,
Even the night will blossom as the rose.*

In his 1920 *Right Royal* we have these lines from page 81:

*My dream was a glimpse of the world
beyond sense,
All beauty and wisdom are messages
thence.*

In the poet's 1923 *King Cole*, a symbolic figure personifying all heroic visionaries dedicated to Beauty and Wisdom throughout the centuries² (like Dauber, the Madman in *Good Friday*, the Prophet in *A King's Daughter* and many others) we read of Beauty again. Thus, we have the *inner wisdom's beauty deep* (p. 25) and on p. 39 we discover how there came *The Bringers Down of Beauty from the stars* and how *They brought down Beauty and Wisdom from the sky*. The poet's voice is responding to an unknown voice calling, *Like April calling to the seed in earth* (p. 42). On p. 47 we read:

*We go to see
Life, not the daily coil, but as it is
Lived in its beauty in eternity,
Above base aims, beyond our miseries*

When King Cole comes, so, *Wisdom has come, and Beauty, Wisdom's bride*. This suggests that Beauty and Wisdom go hand in hand, Beauty is the bride and Wisdom the bridegroom. Through the presence of King Cole, in this epic poem:

*Each felt a touching from beyond our ken,
From that bright kingdom where the souls
who strove,
Live now for ever, helping living men.*
For:

*For out of love and seeing
Beauty herself has being,
Beauty our queen.*

Beauty is thus a feminine quality, a queen, whereas wisdom, presumably, is a masculine quality, a king. On p. 4 of his 1925 *The Trial of Jesus*, JM writes of *The beauty of God (that) has overflowed your heart and beauty undying that is God eternal*. And at the end of his essay on *Play-Writing*, first published in 1926, we read that a great playwright is one *who in this perishing world saw a beauty that cannot perish and that beyond this world beauty is a reality*.

Maturity: The Nostalgia for Beauty

As we enter the 1930s and the poet's serene maturity, we find a more nostalgic, yearning approach to Beauty. On p. 60 of his 1931 *Poetry*, from which we quoted in our Introduction, we read that *His (the poet's) ways are the ways of light*

... so that this world may know a little of the wisdom, beauty and power which are the daily bread in Paradise. Thus, on pp. 42 and 43 of his 1936 *A Letter from Pontus* we read that *You are still that, O Beauty, you are ours ... With word of Kingdoms never known before and how the poet went into the land where Beauty dwells*

In his 1939 *Some Verses to some Germans*, the poet pleads that we might *let in the beauty of the infinite before the midnight of our ruin blast*. He states that *Wisdom is beyond all seer's sight or poet's dream*, that *the thinking soul* is blinded by the beauty of Wisdom and he writes of the world where *there is no death, for all is beauty there*. In his 1940 novel of Constantinople, *Basilissa*, he writes that *beauty undying* is the source of *knowledge and joy* (p. 41) and in the following year in his sequel novel *Conquer*, he writes in the opening words that *There is no City on earth to compare with Byzantium, whether for beauty or power: she is the Queen of Cities ... I give thanks to God that my hand and soul are in the service of so much beauty, directed by so much wisdom*.

In his autobiographical 1941 *In the Mill* JM records on p. 98 his youthful discovery of a *new world where incredible beauty was daily bread and breath of life*. Again in autobiographical work, on p. 15 of his 1943 *Wonderings*, JM looks forward to a new England, *When beauty shines again through blood and bone* and on p. 60 speaks of man's soul that comes at birth *with beauty, wisdom and delight*

Looking forward to post-war reconstruction, in his 1944 address *I Want! I Want!* the poet asserts that *the only way precious in life is order, touched by beauty* (p. 10) and he speaks of his hopes that, *By hope, imagination and hard work, order can be made and beauty given it* (p. 31). After the War, in his 1946 *Thanks Before Going*, JM writes of *Hope achieved amid the Beauty sought and beauty hallowing the deaths they died* (p. 68). Once more we see that hope comes through the perception of beauty. Three years later in his collection *On the Hill* JM describes on p. 71 the *Spirit beyond all beauty bright, changing our darkness into light*

In his 1952 autobiography *So Long to Learn*, the poet states that beauty blesses and consoles (p. 201). After the quiet period of the 1950s and his wife's death in early 1960, the poet re-emerged in 1961 with his collection of new poetry *The Bluebells*. Here we see that he had at the end of his life in no wise lost his muse. On p. 56 he writes

*But, O, the beauty, the beauty never dying,
Waiting the seeing heart, the doing hand,
The eternities in every instant flying.*

On p. 58 he affirms once more that *Beauty makes men wise*, on p. 63 that *Beauty endures where wisdom has believed*, on p. 66 that *the cry of youth ... follows seeking beauty till he die* and on p. 121 that *the world's unwisdom brings Death*. In his 1964 *Old Raiger*, mentioned in the Introduction, the poet speaks of his revelation of Beauty and how:

*They opened doors of glory for me,
And now I think of nothing else.*

Conclusion: John Masefield the Metaphysical Poet

JM was no respecter of institutional religion, of Establishment rites. His attitude towards established religion and the State Church is reflected in *The Square Peg* (p. 93): *How can this old rigmarole, with its whine and its oiliness and its bad verse, and ancient prose and worn-out tunes and the tales one can't believe, help a chap like me ... ?* An anti-clericalist, JM had already expressed it all in the words of Saul Kane in his classic and now centennial *The Everlasting Mercy*:

*You hearts of snakes, and brains of pigeons,
You dead devout of dead religions ...
The English Church both is and was
A subsidy of Caiaphas ...*

*O, what you are, and what you preach,
And what you do, and what you teach
Is not God's Word, nor honest schism,
But Devil's cant and pauperism ...*

On the other hand, the same *The Everlasting Mercy* ends with the conversion to Christ of Saul Kane, the hardened sinner. And JM's other masterpiece *Reynard the Fox* is described by one reviewer as *sustained lyrical expressions of that spiritual vision which alone enables man to rise above the brute*³.

There is no paradox here. JM hated institutional religion, precisely because he was an adept of the *glittering moments*, of true religion. In the concluding words of *The Street of Today* (1911) he wrote that *God is ... something lovely and unshaken in the mind, in the minds about us, that burns like a star for us to march by, through all the night of the soul*. And as he noted on p. 87 of *The Square Peg*: *Unless religion is a mystical thing, it is not important to the soul*. JM's biographer,

Constance Babington-Smith, long ago noted that the poet was *by temperament a mystic*⁴ and the reviewer of the poet's swansong *In Glad Thanksgiving* confirmed that the poet's longer poems in that volume showed *the wisdom and mystical awareness which are the rich gifts of the Poet Laureate's old age*.

Before that, L.A.G. Strong had already noted the poet's *mysticism, his faith in the persistence of the spirit and its immanence in the world of things ... the breakers of a sea of mystical feeling*. For Masefield *the visible universe everywhere glimmers with eternal light*. It has been his great quality as a poet, the quality which entitles us... to use the word great in talking of him. He has a strong man's acknowledgement of the conditions into which he is born, made stronger by a belief that what he values most is beyond Time's reach⁵.

Since early childhood John Masefield had been haunted by *Beauty*, by his glimpses of the gleams and glimmers of the bright kingdom of the threefold, Truth (Order), Wisdom (Power) and Beauty (Spirit). As he had asked in 1910 *Tragedy of Pompey the Great*

*God make my brooding soul a rift,
Through which a meaning gleams*

John Masefield faithfully portrayed that greater realm and *glimmering country*, the metaphysical Kingdom of Beauty, bringer of Wisdom, emanation of Power, whence came 'hope and help'. His noble and sensitive soul was receptive to its brightness and gleaming presence. In his words he expressed this reality which inspired him and which perhaps should inspire us too.

How? We leave our closing words to the poet

*Light in your very soul shall tell you how;
All that is lost, yourself shall help to save*⁶

1 Constance Babington Smith, *John Masefield A Life*, p. 224, 1978

2 G. Wilson Knight, *John Masefield: an Appreciation*, p. 10 of John Masefield O.M., compiled by Geoffrey Handley-Taylor, 1960

3 Gilbert Thomas, *John Masefield*, p. 103, 1932

4 Constance Babington Smith, *John Masefield A Life*, p. 192

5 L. A. G. Strong, *John Masefield*, p. 33-34, 1952

6 From Pagan-Born in *In Glad Thanksgiving*, p. 81

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



When should the Divine Liturgy start, ideally?

M. M., Hampshire

9.00am. According to the canonist Matthew Vlastaris, this is because 9.00am is the time of the third hour, when the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples. Obviously this is an ideal, but the Liturgy must in any case always start before midday. The only exception is when the Divine Liturgy is preceded by Vespers and then it should take place in the early afternoon, for example on Christmas Eve, Theophany Eve, Great Thursday and Great Saturday. The same is true of the service of the Presanctified (not a liturgy) which should also take place in the early afternoon (not in the evening). In reality, in these latter cases it starts earlier, for convenience sake, but communion still takes place in the early afternoon, perhaps at 12.30.



Why is hot water added to communion in the Church and is this an ancient practice?

A. P., Colchester

This began in the fifth and sixth centuries. The hot, near boiling, water symbolises life, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, in the Church, that there is life after death, that Christ's Divinity was not crucified, that Christ is Risen in His Body and Blood.



What was the practice of the early Church in England regarding confession and communion?

W. M., Colchester

It is significant that in Old English the word for 'parish' (*'parochia'* in Latinised Greek) is 'shriftshire' – in other words the region for whose confessions the local priest is responsible.

Of confession the Greek St Theodore of Canterbury († 690) wrote in the *Penitential* attributed to him:

Those who wish to take communion should make confession first, and the priest ought to consider the age and education of the person and what is appropriate to them. Priestly authority is to

be moderated in proportion to infirmity, and this principle applies to all penance and confession: what will most enable God to help people, and what may be obeyed by them in all diligence?



I would like to get some advice regarding Lent. This is the first time I am fasting and the more I read about this important period, the more questions I have. I understand that this first week is the strictest. During this week you can't eat from Monday morning to Wednesday evening. What happens after that? No meat or dairy produce for 40 days? How many times a day it is allowed to eat? Is oil permitted? Could you explain the whole fasting period to me, please? I have not been in Church for many years, but I am aware that Lent is not only about food. I want to do it right. Are there important days or times when I can come to church? Please help me. Please guide me through everything I have to know.

T. P., Essex

There are many ways of living the Great Fast (Lent). The main thing is that we fast from (abstain from) bad thoughts, words and deeds and increase our prayer. The food fast comes second, but is important so that the first thing can happen. The one goes with the other, it is a virtuous circle. If we do not pray more – and this means going to church more often – then the food fast will just make us irritable and we will not be able to fast from bad thoughts, words and deeds. So you need to go to all the services that you can go to at your local church. If you are working full time, make sure at least that you go to church every Saturday evening and Sunday.

As for the food fast, if you live as a nun, then you will fast from food very strictly, according to the rules. In most monasteries they still eat two or three times a day, though the quantities are smaller. But you are not a nun.

If you are fasting for the first time, then it is actually physically and mentally dangerous to fast strictly for the whole fast. Some people make themselves ill, others make themselves depressed by being proud fasters (fasting too strictly). So be

Careful. Eating nothing from Monday to Wednesday in the first week is only done by the strictest and most experienced. Not even monks and nuns always do this and certainly they would only do this with the blessing of their spiritual fathers. Do you have such a blessing? Laypeople should certainly not attempt this. This is spiritually dangerous and can lead straight to spiritual delusion (prelest), with the condemnation of others and pride.

There are several levels of fasting:

1. No meat
2. No fish
3. No eggs
4. No dairy produce
5. No wine or oil (allowed on feasts and at weekends)

If you are a beginner, keep the fast strictly for the first week (Clean Week), for Holy Week, which is the week after Lent and of course for the usual Wednesdays and Fridays. In between, you can at least fast from meat (level 1). The rest (levels 2-5) depends on your state of health, marital status, family situation and job and how experienced you are. Ask for advice from your confessor.

As regards abstention from marital relations, you should only attempt this if it is by mutual consent and if you and your husband have the blessing of your confessor. Otherwise, that too can be dangerous and you can do more harm than good. And that has happened.

You should certainly try to have confession and communion on Forgiveness Sunday, the Triumph of Orthodoxy, Palm Sunday and Easter. Fasting is much easier if you have confession and communion.



Is it true that fasting is suspended if you are travelling?

T. L., Colchester

Absolutely not! This is a myth put about by modernists.



What would you answer those who mock us Orthodox saying that the *filioque* is not important?

A. L., London

If it is not important, then why don't they drop it, returning to the Faith of the Seven Councils? How interesting that indifference ('it does not

matter', 'it's not important') always masks actual hostility to the Truth.



Is there a St Celia?

M. R., Buckinghamshire

No. However, Celia is simply a short form for Cecilia, the well-known Roman martyr.



From when do we have the first ancient manuscripts of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom? I am asking because there is a controversy about if our liturgy really was compiled by St John Chrysostom.

S. J., New England

The first manuscripts date back to the eighth century.

As you rightly say, the Liturgy was not written by St John Chrysostom, but compiled by him. This compilation was on the basis of the Old Testament Jewish Passover meal (taken up at the Last Supper, as recorded by the Gospels) and then in the early liturgies like those of St James and St Mark. Both St Basil's and St John's Liturgies are shortenings of these. In other words, the actual structure of the Liturgy was well-established long before the fourth century.

Over a century ago the Western liturgist Brightman (*Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Oxford 1896) established more or less what the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom would have been like at the end of the fourth century. It is in fact very similar to what we have now, despite the following notable changes: the Proskomidia has been vastly changed and expanded, the Trisagion was introduced under Patriarch Proclus (434-447), the Creed was introduced in Constantinople in 511 by Patriarch Timothy, and the hymn 'The Only-begotten Son' (said to have been written by the Emperor Justinian himself), the Little and Great Entrances in their present forms and the Cherubic Hymn were all introduced under the Emperor Justinian († 565). Also some of the prayers read at the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom are actually from St Basil's Liturgy.

Over 35 years ago the then Fr Georg Wagner, guided by Brightman's technique, read through all of St John Chrysostom's works and published his doctoral thesis (University of Muenster), showing that parts of the text of the Liturgy, notably the Eucharistic canon, are actually repeated in St John's works.

ST BIRINUS

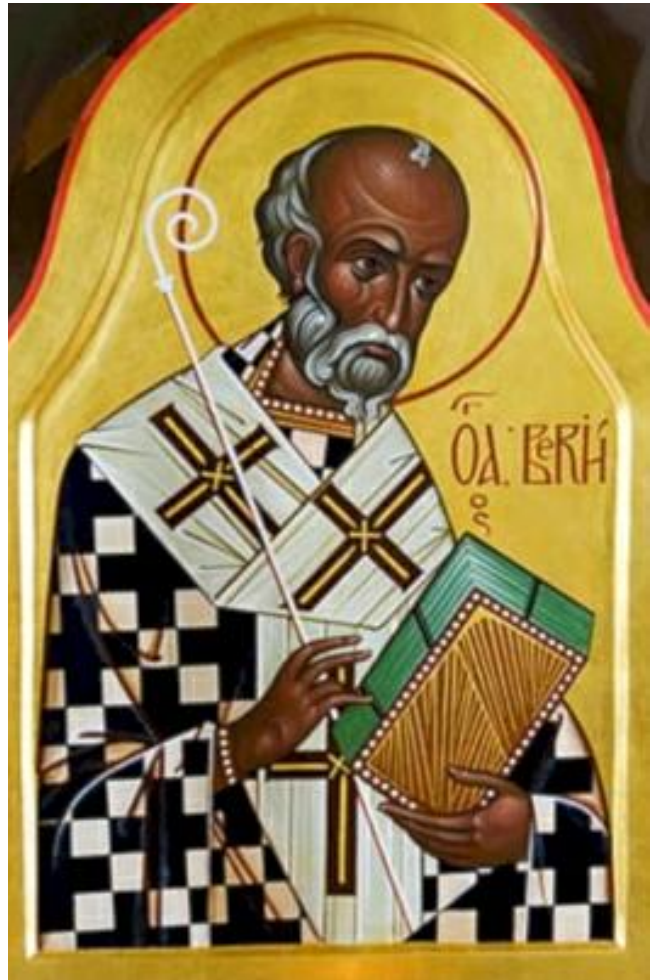
WHAT happens to the saints when we forget them?

What is forgotten by man is not forgotten by God. Thus, in Romania, some forgot their saints in the Communist period, but they were still here and they broke through to the consciousness of some when Communism fell. In Catholic countries too, where they have mainly forgotten the Orthodox saints and replaced them with their own models, Francis, Dominic, Bernard, Teresa etc., the Orthodox saints are still present. And even in Protestant countries, where they deny the saints, the saints are still present, still interceding for the descendants of those who in the distant past were in communion with the Universal Orthodox Church. Here is an example from England.

In the seventh century, England was pagan (not so very different from the twenty-first century). Then missionaries came. To the west of England in the Year 635 there came from the north of Italy Bishop Birinus. He came to an English city, which had once had a mighty Roman garrison. This town was and is called Dorchester-on-Thames, to the west of London: it is only a few miles from Oxford. Today faded into picturesque obscurity and no more than a village, in the seventh century it was the capital of all the west of England. Here Bishop Birinus preached, baptized and built churches for fifteen years, until he reposed in AD 650. Much venerated, he was called 'the Apostle of the West' and his feast day falls on 3 December.

Since his time, under Catholicism from the eleventh century on, England fell out of communion with the Orthodox world and then, from the sixteenth century on, fell even further away from Orthodoxy into Protestant Anglicanism. However, Dorchester still exists and an Anglican church stands on the site where St Birinus preached. So where is the Saint?

There where Anglican iconoclasts buried relics in the sixteenth century, some Dorchester people hear at night the footsteps of a man, walking up and down on the site of the original Cathedral. It is believed by the faithful that this is the Saint, who is still here in Dorchester, patrolling and guarding his people. He, after all, is their apostle and he will present them at the Last Judgement.



*An Icon of St Birinus, f.d. 3 December,
painted by Sergei Fyodoroff*

To those who go on pilgrimage to Dorchester, he is still present. Today the church built on the site of his Cathedral looks very different from the one that St Birinus founded. It is largely empty, but his presence there can still be sensed, as contemporary pilgrims, like myself, can witness.

It must be said that this is far from the only place in England where, despite the spiritual and cultural vandalism of recent centuries, the ancient saints are still present, still patrolling, still guarding the inheritance entrusted to them. We may reject the saints, but the saints never reject us, always waiting for us to turn back to them.

O God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance!

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorchester_on_Thames

