

ESSAYS ON TRUE ORTHODOX
CHRISTIANITY
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1. APOCALYPSE NOW

The final warning bell for western civilization sounded on September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Twin Towers in New York were destroyed in a terrorist attack. It is still not known for certain who perpetrated the catastrophe. But that question is less important than the disaster's symbolical – indeed, eschatological – significance.

For New York today is the city that most closely symbolizes the Babylon of the Apocalypse, not only in its nature, but also in its final destruction. Not only is it the true capital of modern Jewish-Masonic civilization: as Denis Geoffroy points out, it "so resembles the description of Babylon in the Apocalypse of St. John that it is hard to believe that this is a simple coincidence." As for its destruction, the destruction of New York's twin towers both looks back to God's destruction of the Towers of Babel and forward to the coming destruction of the whole of contemporary western civilization.

The date of this tragedy, September 11 – August 29, according to the Orthodox calendar – is highly significant. It is the feast/fastday of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner. St. John is the prophet of repentance, and his beheading, as St. Theodore the Studite pointed out, signifies the attempt by Herod to cut off his preaching of repentance. And so the time of repentance for the apostate Herodian West is near to being cut off...

*

In his magisterial work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*¹, Samuel P. Huntington showed that since the end of the Cold War the underlying structure of World Order has changed from being bipolar and ideological to being multipolar and civilizational. In his view, which he backs up with a very impressive array of data and argumentation, the ideological liberalism vs. communism struggle was a comparatively superficial "blip" in the tide of history. After all, both liberalism and communism are products of western civilization, and the Cold War can be seen as a civil war between two outcomes or stages of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Both systems offer a utopian vision for mankind based on rationalism, science and education, in which religious belief has no place. Liberalism is relatively more individualistic than Communism, gives more place to individual initiative in economic and social life, and is more tolerant of individual differences and idiosyncracies, such as religion. But the similarities between them are more striking than their differences. And from the point of view of traditional Christianity, the main difference is that while the one destroys faith slowly, the other does it relatively quickly. Thus Stuart Reed writes: "In the Cold War, an unworkable revolutionary creed, communism, yielded to a workable revolutionary creed, liberal capitalism. Now liberal capitalism has replaced communism as the chief threat to the customs, traditions and decencies of

¹ London: Touchstone Books, 1996.

Christendom..."² World politics, argued Huntington, has now reverted to the more traditional, long-term pattern of struggles between civilizational blocs based on profound differences in values and religion.

Huntington identified the following main contemporary civilizations: Western, Orthodox (Russian), Islamic, Sinic (Chinese), Japanese, Buddhist, Hindu, Latin American and African. Of these the most powerful were, in his opinion, the Western, Islamic and Sinic civilizations.

Accepting the thesis on the clash of civilizations in principle, and agreeing that the ultimate aim of the western globalists is evil, we may ask: to what extent are they succeeding in coming close to their goal? Or are they in fact being thwarted by the revival of older, clashing civilizations? And the surprising answer is: since the end of the Cold War, in spite of some tactical successes, the goal of the globalists appears to be receding away from them; three rival centres of power that explicitly reject western ideology and the West's NWO are rapidly growing in power and influence: China, the Islamic world and Russia. Like the horsemen of the Apocalypse, these four civilizations are set to clash and set the world ablaze...

1. The West

Let us begin with the West, the common "bogey" of the other three... As the world turned into the third millennium AD, it was clear that to speak of "the End of History" in the shape of the complete, global triumph of democracy and free trade was premature to say the least, and that opposite tendencies were developing fast. True, there were more nominally democratic countries than ever before, - "by 2000, 60 per cent of the world's population lived in democracies, a far higher share than in 1974,"³ - and the Chicago-school-style liberalization of the financial and commodity markets had proceeded apace. But on the horizon, like clouds that gradually draw nearer, becoming larger and darker all the time, several distinct threats to the New World Order, some old and some relatively new, were emerging. America's emphatic but pyrrhic and costly victory over Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2003 was a turning point; thereafter, her prestige has plummeted...

Moreover, the western way of life as a whole does not seem to be making people significantly happier; it is no longer something that people from other countries strive for - if we exclude the higher income levels and security, which are still envied. Thus "one well publicized finding," writes Peter Watson, "is that although the developed Western nations have become better off in a financial and material sense, they are not any happier than they were decades ago. In fact, in *The Age of Absurdity: Why Modern Life Makes It Hard to Be Happy* (2010), Michael Foley argues that modern life has made things worse, 'deepening our cravings and at the same time heightening our delusions of

² Reed, "Confessions of a Fellow-Traveller", *The Spectator*, 23 September, 2000, p. 45.

³ Brendan Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 505.

importance as individuals Not only are we rabid in our unsustainable demands for gourmet living, eternal youth, fame and a hundred varieties of sex, we have been encouraged – by a post-1970s “rights” culture that has created a zero-tolerance sensitivity to any perceived inequality, slight or grievance – into believing that to want something is to deserve it.’ Moreover, ‘the things we have are devalued by the things we want next’...⁴ Of course, this begs the question whether “happiness” should be the aim of life. The right to happiness is enshrined in the American Constitution, but western civilization before the Masonic eighteenth century had a far higher ideal: *eternal life in Christ*, which is as much higher than “happiness” as heaven is higher than the earth. But even if we judge the West by its present, base and purely secular ideals, it has obviously failed.

The sins of the West in relation to the peoples it once colonized are generally recognized – which is not to say, forgiven. Among the most serious death-tolls were those of the Indians of North America at the hands of the White Americans, and the Mayans and Incas of Central and South America at the hands of the Spaniards. Several western nations had a hand in the slave trade from Africa to America. In Africa itself, the Congolese suffered horrific genocide at the hands of the Belgians, and the Hereros of South-West Africa at the hands of the Germans. Later slaughters in Africa included the Ethiopians at the hands of the Italians, the Mau-Mau of Kenya at the hands of the British and the Algerians at the hands of the French. The British killed millions indirectly: through neglect of the Irish famine, through the destruction of the native Indian textile industry, and through the imposition of the opium trade on China at the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. The Europeans were supposed to bring Christianity to the pagans. But the reality was that the non-European civilizations were sacrificed on the altar of European profit. It was not so much Christianity as revolutionary teachings such as socialism and nationalism that the West instilled into its colonies – which, by the Justice of God, would later be turned against them.

The West reached its peak just before the First World War; Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* was published in 1918. Though disguised and to some extent reversed by the dominance of America from 1945 to 1991, this decline is now a fact that cannot be denied. The tired, aging and debt-ridden populations of North America and Europe still retain a lead over the rest of the world in military and economic terms. But the gap is narrowing very fast, especially in relation to China, but also in relation to Russia. Thus “NATO defence spending is falling fast, but Russia’s military budget rose by 26% this year [2013]”.⁵ Just recently President Trump has raised American military spending, but the Europeans, with the partial exception of the British, remain

⁴ Watson, *The Age of Atheists*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2014, p. 20.

⁵ Drawsko Pomorskie, “Back to Basics”, *The Economist*, November 16-22, 2013, p. 65. However, for a pessimistic assessment of Russia’s military potential, see <http://vasiliy-smirnof.livejournal.com/3831.html>.

mired in apathy and appeasement, preferring to blame the Americans – while relying on American blood and money – rather than defend themselves...

Let us look more closely at the figure of the whore of Babylon in the Book of Revelation: “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast... The ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire” (17.12-13, 16). In the next, eighteenth chapter there follows a detailed description of the fall of Babylon, hailed by the inhabitants of heaven but bewailed by the merchants of the earth because the enormous possibilities for enrichment that she had provided have now vanished...

One vivid detail immediately strikes us: “Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What is like this great city?” (Revelation 18.17-18). Evidently, insofar as Babylon can be identified with a geographical place or city, it is situated *on the sea*. The hypothesis, therefore, is that Babylon is *western civilization as a whole*, and that what we see here described in the Sacred Scripture is the destruction of its most potent symbol, the Twin Towers of New York, which, of course, is situated on the sea... That the West in general and New York in particular should be identified with Babylon is confirmed by several facts. First, New York’s street-plan is modeled on that of ancient Babylon.⁶ Secondly, it is in New York that the United Nations is situated with its declared purpose of uniting all nations in one world government, a cardinal aim of which is a reduction and “leveling” down of all religions to a lowest common denominator. And thirdly, New York, together with other great cities of the West – Amsterdam, Paris, Geneva, London and Chicago – has taken the lead in hosting and promoting the ecumenical movement in such institutions as the World Council of Parliaments (first meeting: Chicago in 1893) and the World Council of Churches (first meeting: Amsterdam in 1948).

St. John Maximovich said that America was a great nation, but was threatened by the sins of greed and sensuality. These are the “Babylonian” sins of a society that permits every kind of abomination. Of course, America is not alone in this: her parent-civilization of Western Europe is no less debauched. However, the popular imagination – and especially the imagination of non-western peoples – has seized on America in particular because of her size, wealth, and military and technological superiority over every other nation. America for many around the world *is* the Antichrist.

⁶ Werner Keller writes that “the town plan of Babylon is reminiscent of the blueprints for large American cities”, especially New York (*The Bible as History*, New York: Bantam Books, 1982, p. 316).

The effect of 9/11 was electrifying. On the one hand, it reinforced the trend of American governments to intervene pre-emptively in any region of the world where democracy was under threat – President Bush’s scepticism about overseas interventions changed overnight into a “global war on Terror”. But on the other hand, those interventions became increasingly pyrrhic and counter-productive. Thus the Second Iraq war in 2003, while overthrowing a real tyrant, brought to the surface Sunni/Shiite divisions that the tyrant had suppressed. Again, the intervention in Libya to overthrow Gaddafi’s regime exposed divisions in NATO and does not appear to have united Libya itself. Again, while the “Arab Spring” appeared to promise a new wave of pro-western democratization, it also produced an Islamist president in Egypt, the biggest country in the Arab world, and instability in America’s monarchical allies in the Persian Gulf, while the governments of America’s main enemies in the region, Iran and Syria, remain in power in spite of the pressure of sanctions and war...

As for “soft power”, the West’s lead here is also declining. Even in the field of Human Rights, in which it always took the lead, it has surrendered influence to the most illiberal of countries. Thus the Human Rights Council of the United Nations is chaired by a Saudi Arab, and has representatives from China, Cuba and Russia – none of them countries noted for their championship of Human Rights! “The ‘Washington consensus’ of democracy and free markets has given way to the Beijing consensus of authoritarian modernisation. America’s self-confidence has been battered first by George Bush’s clumsy war on terror, which gave democracy a bad name, then by the economic crisis of 2008, which did the same for Western finance, and finally by the dysfunctionality of Congress, which shut down the American government in 2013 [and 2018]. China become bolder about asserting its rights in Asia, Russia began rearming and reconquering parts of the former Soviet Union, while Barack Obama has seemed a defensive president, retreating from Iraq and Afghanistan, unwilling to guide the Arab awakening and keen to ‘outsource’ responsibility in other regions to local powers.”⁷

Although a resurgence of the West cannot be ruled out, it looks increasingly unlikely that it can survive the next global financial crisis, let alone a war with either Russia or China. Moreover, when the fall comes it is likely to be rapid.⁸ Japanese philosopher Takeshi Umehara might well be right when he says: “The total failure of Marxism... and the dramatic break-up of the Soviet Union are only the precursors to the collapse of Western liberalism, the main current of modernity. Far from being the alternative to Marxism and the reigning ideology at the end of history, liberalism will be the next domino to fall...”⁹

2. China

⁷ “Your chance, Mr. Obama”, *The Economist*, October 30, 2013, p. 19.

⁸ Niall Ferguson, “Complexity and Collapse”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2010, pp. 18-32.

⁹ Ushemara, in Huntingdon, *op. cit.* p. 306.

Huntingdon believed that China was the country most likely to challenge the West in the role of global hegemon...¹⁰ China acquired both cultural and political unity at about the same time as Rome – in the late third century BC. In spite of changes of dynasty, Chinese despotism lasted for another 2100 years and more!

However, between the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 and Tiananmen Square in 1989, it looked as if western civilization in one or another of its forms might overcome the older Chinese civilization. First came the Opium Wars of the 1840s. Then the Taiping rebellion led by a man claiming to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ, which caused between 20 and 40 million deaths and ended with the fall of the Taiping capital of Nanking in 1864. Then the long period of western capitalist dominance, beginning with the sack of Peking by an Anglo-French force in 1860 and punctuated by failed rebellions such as that of the Boxers in 1900 and the intervention of other civilizations such as that of the Japanese in the 1930s and 1940s. Finally, from 1949 China adopted another variant of western civilization, communism, which after the death of Mao in 1976 began to liberalize and seemed on the verge of falling to a worldwide wave of democratization.

But in 1989 the Chinese communist leaders, unlike their colleagues in Russia, held their nerve and held on to power. The result was not a return to old-style Marxist communism, nor liberalization except partially in the economic sphere. Rather, China seems to be returning in essence to the old empire-civilization, the Confucian Middle Kingdom, an intensely nationalist and despotic civilization that extends its power over neighbouring lands not so much by war as by sheer demographic and economic dominance.

Thus the Far Eastern province of Russia is already overrun by Chinese, with little resistance from Putin (in fact he has given huge concessions and grants of territory to the Chinese), while Chinese entrepreneurs are outshining their Russian colleagues. In almost every other economy in the Far East, with the exception of South Korea and Japan, a small Chinese elite seems to hold the economic cards. Chinese investment in Africa is already huge. As for the West, large chunks of western industry, commerce and real estate are being taken over by the Chinese, and European governments go cap in hand to the Chinese asking for loans and investment.

This increasing influence of China abroad sometimes causes resentment among the indigenous populations (for example, in Indonesia). But the Chinese overseas have always stressed their dutiful obedience to their adopted countries. The Chinese are extending their influence by “soft” rather than “hard” power – for the time being, at any rate...

“China’s soft power,” predicted Jonathan Friedland in 2014, “will make itself felt in every aspect of Western lives. Business may slow during late

¹⁰ Huntingdon, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

January, thanks to the Chinese new year. The seasonal habit of hanging lanterns from the trees may cross the Pacific, the way Halloween masks travelled back to Europe across the Atlantic. The Olympic games and football World Cup will have to adjust their timetables to accommodate the world's largest television audience.

“The classiest hotels will have signs in English and Mandarin, welcoming the new rich. Western politicians will all but beg for Chinese investment. And American Lord Granthams, eminent men without money, will marry Chinese Cobras, women without lineage but with plenty of spare cash.

“American and European elites will pride themselves on knowing the names of the rising stars of Chinese politics, the way they used to know the early field for Iowa and New Hampshire. They will follow China for the same reason Willie Sutton said he robbed banks: ‘Because that’s where the money is’.”¹¹

And if this seems very superficial and short-term, we must remember that fashions in important ideas, too, tend to follow the money. Societies that are perceived to be powerful and successful in material terms are usually imitated in more profound matters. So the growth in Chinese soft power, backed up as it is by increasing hard power, will most likely continue to erode the prestige of western democracy and humanrightism throughout the world. The greater emphasis of the Chinese on the collective as opposed to the individual appeals to many who see the absurdities of the selfish, individualistic western obsession with human rights. And if Chinese civilization seems at first too China-centred to have a truly universal appeal, we could have said that with even greater conviction of western civilization in the nineteenth century with its barely-concealed racism.

In view of the rapid growth of its economy, China is sometimes seen as a modern state that must eventually become a member of the NWO. But only a fantasist could think that the globalists control China as they control the West! Moreover, while modernizing its economy, China has not modernized its political system: while jettisoning Marxism, it is still despotic and therefore part of the *Old World Order* (OWO) of antichristian despotism. Nor has this changed under China’s new leader, Xi Jinping. As Jonathan Fenby writes, “there is no doubting his complete attachment to the party state he heads. This year [2013] has seen a toughening of the clampdown on dissent and an insistence by Mr. Xi on the need for absolute loyalty to the regime. He has resurrected Maoist ideology on party power. Western ideas of plurality and democracy have no place in his people’s republic...”¹²

¹¹ Friedland, “The China Question”, *The Economist*, October 30, 2013, p. 58.

¹² Fenby, “Princeling tightens his hold over China”, *Sunday Telegraph*, November 17, 2013, p. 40.

This strengthening of the despotic power of the Great Leader was reinforced at the Party Congress in 2017... Now, while overt repression is far less than in Mao's time, covert surveillance and the control of all forms of information (especially about Mao's time) has reached record heights.¹³ Unlike the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, glasnost has been decoupled from perestroika in China. The authorities retain a formidable power over the people, and China remains one of the few major countries that have made determined efforts to control even the internet. But western media and politicians, usually so quick to seize on human rights violations in weaker countries, turn a blind eye to the far greater threat from still-Communist China.

China's main weaknesses are the instability and corruption inevitably created by rapid economic growth and the monopoly power of the party over that growth. The party's corruption and the increasing gap between rich and poor are causing increasing tension. Thus "the show trial of Mr. Xi's erstwhile rival, Bo Xilai, opened many Chinese eyes to the opulence of the country's princelings. Americans may moan about money politics, but the wealth of the richest 50 members of Congress is \$1.6 billion, compared with \$95 billion for the richest 50 members of China's People's Congress. More such revelations will surely come."¹⁴

Riots and strikes are common in China today – contrary to the common opinion, there *is* a tradition of protest in Chinese history. Thus "in the last five years," wrote Misha Glenny in 2009, "the number of peasant riots has risen spectacularly to roughly 80,000 per year and they continue to proliferate. These outbursts of discontent can be serious, involving the wrecking of local government offices and the lynching of officials."¹⁵ Thus a "Chinese Maidan" remains a real possibility.

Another weakness of China is the possibility that events in neighbouring North Korea, with its megalomaniac nuclear ambitions, could get out of control. By July, 2017, North Korea had developed nuclear missiles capable of reaching the United States. And President Kim Il-Jun had repeatedly threatened to use them against America, thereby bringing the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. In September, the country exploded a hydrogen bomb 17 times as powerful as the one dropped on Hiroshima.¹⁶ This is the price of the failure finally to defeat communism in the twentieth century – never-ending and ever-escalating evil in the twenty-first...

Paradoxically, China may be in greater danger from North Korea than the United States. Even without nuclear war, the collapse of the regime there for whatever reason could lead to a major exodus of refugees over the border into China – with serious destabilizing consequences. "In the event of an

¹³ Orville Schell, "China's Cover-Up", *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2018.

¹⁴ "Your chance, Mr. Obama", *The Economist*, October 30, 2013, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

¹⁶ Oriana Skylar Mastro, "Why China Won't Rescue North Korea", *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2018, p. 59.

escalation," writes Oriana Skylar Mastro, "China will likely attempt to seize control of key terrain, including North Korea's nuclear sites. The large-scale presence of both American and Chinese troops on the Korean peninsula would raise the risk of a full-blown war between China and the United States."¹⁷ As for Russia, North Korea's main ally and provider of technology, she could hardly keep out of the conflict...

Another weakness of China is her aging population, which was caused by the communist government's one-child policy. This is now in the process of being abandoned, but it still leaves a disastrous legacy: a vast excess of males over females. Now masculine energy that cannot be directed towards employment or the building of families can easily be redirected towards another traditional occupation of young males - war.

This brings us to the question of China's "hard" power, her military, into which very large resources have been poured of late. How is China likely to use her enormous military power, second only to that of the United States?

In Revelation the army of "the kings of the East" numbers 200 million (9.12-19, 16.12), and marches to the River Euphrates. By "coincidence", the Chinese military is reported to be able to put 200 million men into the field...¹⁸ Their heading for the River Euphrates, the heart of the Islamic world, points to a phenomenon that is already clearly evident: the *aggiornamento* of China and Islam, especially Pakistan and Iran, which, though not a natural partnership since they constitute different civilizations, nevertheless makes sense as an alliance against American hegemony. Such an alliance can also count on two other resources that could bring America to her knees even without a shot being fired: Arab oil and Chinese purchases of American bonds.¹⁹ And although America's "fracking" revolution has lessened her dependence on Arabic oil, and the symbiosis between the Chinese and American economies - Niall Ferguson has called it "Chimerica"²⁰ - means that the Chinese would suffer almost as much as the Americans if they sold American bonds, the fact remains that western civilization is uniquely vulnerable to these two threats.

A third threat related to the first two is that oil and gas will begin to be paid for in euros or some other currency rather than the dollar - which might well bring down the dollar. Iran, with the support of Russia and China, has suggested creating a petroeuro market. It has been suggested that this threat, rather than that of the building of a nuclear bomb, is the real reason why

¹⁷ Mastro, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

¹⁸ "Ekspert: veroiatnost' aggressii Kitaia protiv Rossii 95%" (Expert: probability of aggression of China against Russia is 95%), <http://newsland.com/news/detail/id/1256448/>, October 3, 2013; "China's Military Rise", *The Economist*, April 7-April 13, 2012, pp. 25-30.

¹⁹ Oil has, of course, made parts of the Arab world fabulously rich. But some parts, such as Dubai, have prospered independently of oil. See Daniel Pipes, "The Dubai Miracle has Become Real", *Washington Times*, December 7, 2017, <http://www.danielpipes.org/18081/dubai-miracle>.

²⁰ Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money*, London: Penguin Press, 2008, chapter 6.

America has been trying to bring about regime change in Iran and in its close ally, Syria...²¹ Be that as it may, a Eurasian bloc consisting of Russia, China and Iran – among others – would be a huge threat to NATO and the West. Russia supplies Iran with nuclear technology and S-300 surface-to-air missiles. At the time of writing, Aleppo has just fallen to Russian, Syrian and Iranian forces; this may not be the last victory of the bloc.

All political and economic analysts predict that China will overtake America as the world's most powerful nation in the near future. This is the country that combines the cruelty and atheism of communism with the luxuriousness and immorality of capitalism.²² In spite of that, most political and business leaders appear to contemplate this prediction with equanimity, having resolved to appease the new Führer, come what may...

3. The Islamic World

If the main difference between the western and Chinese civilizations is that China places the rights of the collective over the rights of the individual, thereby giving the state a despotic power and discouraging freedom of thought, whereas the West gives the individual the right to rebel against both the collective and against Christian civilized norms, the main difference between the Islamic civilization and the other two is that it places religion above the state, and religious (*sharia*) law above state law. Having this essentially negative attitude to politics, the Muslims have had difficulty in establishing stable, loyal attitudes to political authorities, whether Islamic or western. Since the fall of the Ottoman empire in 1918, no political regime, whether nationalist or secularist (Baathist or Kemalist), has arisen in the Middle East that commands the loyalty of all the Islamic peoples. And yet there is no doubt that the Muslims long for a Caliph that will unite them and crush the infidel...

The Islamic religious resurgence can be said to have started with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979. But in accordance with its religious nature, the revolution in Iran did not remain like Stalin's "socialism in one country", with its cruel, but cool-headed political calculation. It was much closer to Trotsky's wildly fanatical concept of world revolution. Thus in December, 1984 Ayatollah Khomeini said in a speech: "If one allows the infidels to continue playing their role of corrupters on Earth, their eventual moral punishment will be all the stronger. Thus, if we kill the infidels in order to put a stop to their [corrupting] activities, we have indeed done them a service. For their eventual punishment will be less. To allow the infidels to stay alive means to let them do more corrupting. [To kill them] is a surgical operation commanded by Allah the Creator... Those who follow the rules of

²¹ <http://www.dailypaul.com/297562/stormcloudsgathering-could-be-the-most-important-video-you-will-ever-watch>

²² For a grotesque yet eloquent photographic symbol of the demonic evil of Chinese communism, see <http://www.metro.co.uk/weird/820684-devil-horns-grandmother-now-quite-enjoying-her-horns>.

the Koran are aware that we have to apply the laws of *qissas* [retribution] and that we have to kill... War is a blessing for the world and for every nation. It is Allah himself who commands men to wage war and kill."

After citing these words, Roger Scruton writes: "The element of insanity in these words should not blind us to the fact that they adequately convey a mood, a legacy, and a goal that inspire young people all over the Islamic world. Moreover,... there is no doubt that Khomeini's interpretation of the Prophet's message is capable of textual support, and that it reflects the very confiscation of the political that has been the principal feature of Islamic revolutions in the modern world..."

"... Even while enjoying the peace, prosperity, and freedom that issue from a secular rule of law, a person who regards the *shari'a* as the unique path to salvation may see these things only as the signs of a spiritual emptiness or corruption. For someone like Khomeini, human rights and secular governments display the decadence of Western civilization, which has failed to arm itself against those who intend to destroy it and hopes to appease them instead. The message is that there can be no compromise, and systems that make compromise and conciliation into their ruling principles are merely aspects of the Devil's work.

"Khomeini is a figure of great historic importance for three reasons. First, he showed that Islamic government is a viable option in the modern world, so destroying the belief that Westernization and secularization are inevitable. Second, through the activities of the Hizbullah (Party of Allah) in Lebanon, he made the exportation of the Islamic Revolution the cornerstone of his foreign policy. Third, he endowed the Islamic revival with a Shi'ite physiognomy, so making martyrdom a central part of its strategy."²³

The Islamic Revolution gathered strength during the successful war to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan in 1979-89. Many of the Mujaheddin who fought against the Russians in Afghanistan then went on to fight the Croats and the Serbs in Bosnia in the early 1990s. And then NATO in Afghanistan...

The Revolution suffered an apparent setback in the First Iraq War of 1990. However, the result of that war in military terms proved to be less important than its effect in galvanizing Muslim opinion throughout the world against the western "crusaders", who had once again intervened on sacred Muslim soil for purely selfish reasons (oil).

These feelings were greatly exacerbated by the Second Iraq War, and by the NATO intervention in Afghanistan. It was not that most Muslims could not see the evil of Saddam Hussein or the Taliban. But such notions as political freedom and human rights mean little to the Muslim mind. Much more

²³ Scruton, *The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat*, London: Continuum, 2002, pp. 118-120.

important to them is the principle that the followers of the true faith should be able to sort out their own problems by themselves without the help of the corrupt infidels. True, in the Kosovan war of 1998-99 the West overcame its internal differences and hesitations to intervene decisively on the side of the Albanian Muslims against the Serbs. But this also annoyed the Muslims, who would have preferred that Muslim interests should have been defended by Muslims...

The Islamist threat was brought into vivid and terrifying relief by 9/11. However, the essential failure of the West's military response in Iraq and Afghanistan has reinforced its traditional (in recent times) defeatist attitude towards the threat. Thus so frightened was Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, by Islamism in Britain that he suggested the introduction of *sharia* law in parallel with British common law...

The chaos created by the Syrian war pushed millions of Muslim refugees towards "Christian" Europe. However, while many of these are like the traditional kind of cowed and grateful refugees Europeans have been familiar since the post-1945 period, many others were quite different. Overwhelmingly young and male, infiltrated by ISIS terror cells and egged on by the KGB, they were aggressive and contemptuous of the civilization giving them shelter, ready to defecate in public and rape white women. Large parts of urban Scandinavia are now no-go areas for white women, while honest reporting on this evil is more or less banned.

Meanwhile, Turkey threatens to invade a fellow NATO member, Greece – but receives no fitting rebuke or counter-threat from the West...²⁴ In fact, Turkey is increasingly turning into a liability, rather than an asset for the West. Just recently, it has sent troops into Northern Syria to attack the Kurds – the West's most effective ally in the struggle against ISIS.

In spite of this, and her own previous assertion that multiculturalism was not working, German Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the floodgates to them in 2015, causing great ructions among other European governments and providing a major stimulus to Britain's decision to leave the European Union. Now there is a clear schism between the "old" Europe of France and Germany and the "new" Europe of Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and even Austria on how to deal with the Muslim migrant. Not only is there no real resistance to the Islamist threat from most western governments: the liberals' fear of offending Islamists has become so strong that open platforms are given to the preaching of the most illiberal Islamism. Thus "Islamic Studies professor Jonathan Brown recently lectured at the International Institute of Islamic Thought, where he shared his alarming beliefs with students in attendance in his lecture, 'Islam and the Problem of Slavery.' Freelance writer Umar Lee expressed his shock over the 90-minute lecture, which included explicit

²⁴ Philip Chrysopoulos, "Turkish FM: We'll Take Back Aegean Islands through Diplomacy or War", *Greek Reporter*, December 20, 2017.

endorsements of rape and slavery.”²⁵

Whether the liberal elite will ever be able to solve the ideological challenge posed by the Islamic Revolution seems unlikely – liberalism is powerless in the face of real religious zeal, whether true or false. At the time of writing a reaction to the Islamic threat appears to be developing in Europe, not from the liberals, but from grass-roots anti-liberal forces, as is witnessed by the rapid rise of anti-immigrant parties such as UKIP in Britain. So the near civil war that we see between Islamists and secularists in Egypt in the midst of an officially Muslim culture may be reflected in similar civil war conditions in several countries of the officially secularist West. Western leaders, while offering no solutions to the largely justified Muslim condemnation of western decadence and its devastating effects on family life and social solidarity, have similarly offered no solutions to the no less justified complaints against Muslim migrant aggression against the native population. They speciously argue that the “real” Islam is peaceful, and that it is only contemporary Islamic “fundamentalists” who commit terrorist acts. However, a reading of the Koran and of early Islamic history proves the opposite. As Huntingdon showed, *most* inter-civilizational conflicts today involve Islamists on one side.

The greatest weakness of Islamism lies in the bitter division at its centre between the Sunnis (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt) and the Shiites (Iran). Proxy wars between the Sunnis and Shias are taking place in Syria and Yemen. Russia and China appear to have lined up on the side of the Shias, while the West supports the Sunnis.

4. Russia

Traditional Russian civilization stands equidistant from European civilization to the west, Chinese civilization to the east and Islamic civilization to the south. Russia inherited her Orthodox Christianity and Romanity from Byzantium in the tenth century after St. Vladimir quite consciously rejected the western, Jewish and Islamic religions. In spite of two hundred years under the Mongol yoke (the same Mongols who conquered China), Russia remained relatively uncontaminated by foreign civilizational influences until towards the end of the seventeenth century. In this period she retained the classically Byzantine “symphony of powers” between Church and State that distinguished her both from the engulfment of religion by politics that was common in the West and China, and from the engulfment of politics by religion that was common in the Islamic world.

But then Peter the Great adopted western-style absolutism, opened “a window to the West”, and a century later the governing elite was only superficially Orthodox... At the same time the first peaceful contacts were being made with the Chinese empire, and the first warlike encounters with the

²⁵ “Georgetown Islamic Studies Professor: Slavery OK, so is Non-Consensual Sex”, *Government Slaves*, February 11, 2017.

Ottoman empire, as the Russians strove to liberate their fellow-Orthodox in the Balkans and the Middle East from the Muslim yoke and replace the crescent with the Cross on Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

This noble aim came very close to being achieved in 1916 as Russian Orthodox armies defeated the Ottomans in the east and the Austrians in the south. But then came the revolution, and Russia fell under a yoke that was western in its ideological inspiration but thoroughly Asiatic in its despotic cruelty. Hardly less cruel, however, was the disappointment felt by all True Orthodox after the fall of communism in 1991, when True Orthodoxy was not restored to Russia. Instead, we witnessed a decade of anarchical democratism in the 1990s under Yeltsin, and then, from January 1, 2000, the “sovereign democracy” of the KGB under Putin.

In accordance with his anti-Americanism, and his fondness for the Eurasian ideology, Putin is seeking an alliance with China and selected Muslim countries in order to counter America’s hegemony. But this alliance is even more unnatural than one with the West, for Russia’s traditional enemies have included invaders from across the Eurasian steppe no less than from the Central European plain. Moreover, Russia has major problems with its large and growing Muslim minorities, which have already led to wars in Chechnya and Tadjikistan and may cause further conflicts if, for example, the Tatars seek independence. Putin recently congratulated the authorities in Tatarstan for the vast increase in the building of mosques – a strange thing for a supposed champion of Orthodoxy to do, but not strange at all from a purely political point of view. Again, Russia could easily get involved in war with Islamic countries just beyond her boundaries, particularly the traditional enemy of Turkey, with which she came into conflict over Armenia in 1992-93 and again just recently over Syria.²⁶

Putin is now quite openly preparing his country for war. His airforce is getting good target practice in Syria, where a major naval base has also been constructed. The civilian population is being prepared for the coming of war on the public media, while factories manufacturing civilian goods are being warned that they must be ready to convert to wartime production. In 1917 there was huge war game in Western Russia and Belorus’ which was clearly aimed at the far smaller NATO forces in Eastern Europe. Called “Zapad” (the West), its aim was clearly to threaten the West.²⁷ But it seems more likely that Putin’s first target will be in the Middle East.

As for China, we have seen that whatever pious words of friendship the two former communist allies may mouth, the Chinese already have vast demographic and commercial power in Siberia, over parts of which they have territorial claims. The Chinese see Siberia as a critical part of their worldwide

²⁶ The KGB has been suspected of manipulating the abortive coup against Erdogan in July, 1916.

²⁷ Owen Matthews, “War is Peace. Ignorance is Strength”, *Newsweek*, December 22, 2017.

drive for reliable energy supplies. In view of this, Russia's cheap sale of military technology and energy to the Chinese²⁸ must be regarded as very short-sighted, ignoring as it does the fact that China's very rapid military build-up is directed as much against Russia as against anyone else...

To all Orthodox peoples, the spiritual and physical health of Russia is a matter of the most vital concern. The Balkan countries are too wrapped up in their nationalist egoisms to take up the banner of Universal Orthodoxy, and are in any case too weak to have a wide influence – except insofar as a conflict in, say, Bosnia-Herzegovina, could start another world war... Only Russia, with her relatively recent imperial past and her hundreds of thousands of new martyrs, has the spiritual potential to unite the Orthodox and revive the Orthodox faith worldwide.

The root cause of the failure of Orthodox civilization to revive since 1991 has been the failure to repent of the sins of the Soviet period – ecumenism and sergianism. In Russia there has been no desovietization process, no renunciation of ecumenism, no trials of communist leaders, and no true repentance in any but a few individuals. Moreover, the organ that might have been expected to lead the process of national repentance, the official church of the Moscow Patriarchate, has been adept only at justifying the crimes of the past.²⁹

As a direct result, on almost every index of social health, from the level of material inequality (higher in Russia than in any other major nation) to child mortality, drug abuse, organized crime and corruption, Russia figures among the most wretched countries in the world. The lack of repentance has led to a deeply depressing picture of moral and social degradation. And the picture is not dissimilar in the other "Orthodox", formerly communist countries of Eastern Europe.

It is possible to believe in a special messianic role for Russia only if she completely rejects the accursed Putin regime and all its works, both within and outside the country. Indeed, the complete rejection of the Russian revolution in all its phases and incarnations, including the present one, is an absolute condition of the resurrection of Russia as a truly Orthodox state. For in no other way can the curse of 1613 and the anathema of 1918 be lifted from the Russian people.

Before the revolution, St. John of Kronstadt said that Russia without a tsar would be "a stinking corpse". His prophecy has proved accurate, not only for the Soviet period, but also for the post-Soviet period, which should more precisely be called the neo-Soviet period. St. John's opinion was echoed by the

²⁸ Stephen Kotkin, "The \$20-a-barrel price borders on the shocking", *Foreign Affairs*, September-October, 2009, p. 133.

²⁹ See V. Moss, "1945 and the Moscow Patriarchate's 'Theology of Victory'", www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/321/1945-moscow-patriarchate-s-.

last true elder of the Russian Church Abroad, Archimandrite Nektary of Eleon (+2000): "Everywhere and at all time he remained devoted to Tsarist Russia. The Russian autocracy was for him the only lawful and God-established power. All later governments in Russia after the overthrow of the Tsar on March 2, 1917 – whether the February-democratic government, the Bolshevik, or another – were enemies of God. He used to say that every republic and even every constitutional monarchy was clearing the path to the coming of the Antichrist. By contrast with certain Russian emigres, he was not deceived when, in the expression of Fr. Konstantin (Zaitsev), 'the communists put church gloves on their nails'. Later, Fr. Nektary 'did not swallow the bait' of the perestroika NEP. 'No,' said Fr. Nektary, "'perestroika" is a great trap of the dark powers. They are preparing something new, something more terrible. Russia is on the threshold of the Antichrist.' But in the last few years he more and more often began to say that, in spite of the clear signs of the end, and in spite of the fact that the rulers of Russia have already entered into the world government, the regeneration of Russia, according to the forecasts of St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. John of Kronstadt and Bishop Theophan of Poltava, is still possible, albeit for a short time..."³⁰

Is it too much to hope that the stinking corpse of Lenin (which Putin has shockingly compared to the relics of the saints!) may finally be cast out of its mausoleum on Red Square, as that of the false Dmitri was cast out (through the barrel of a gun) in 1612? Could a real regeneration then take place, as it did in 1613, so that the renewed and reinvigorated body of Orthodox Russia will shine forth again in all its splendour, as the holy elders of Russia said that it would? Could we be on the eve of that radical searching and repentance of Russian minds that, as the holy elders said, is the essential prerequisite of the resurrection of Holy Rus' – and through her of the whole world?

It is indeed possible, but only if we remember that cancer remains dangerous and life-threatening even when only a few cancerous cells remain in the body; it has to be thoroughly extirpated even at the cost of the thorough exhaustion of the rest of the body. In the same way, the present recomunization led by Putin has to be extirpated completely. "Do you now know," asks the Apostle Paul, "that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you are truly unleavened" (I Corinthians 5.6-7). For, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky), first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, wrote in 1938: "There is nothing more dangerous than if Russia were to want to assimilate anything from the sad inheritance left by degenerate Bolshevism: everything that its corrupting atheist hand has touched threatens to infect us again with the old leprosy."

Conclusion

³⁰ Isaak Gindis, in Archimandrite Nektary (Chernobyl'), *Vospominania*, Jordanville, 2002, p. 7.

Military experts, they say, are too often obsessed with reliving the battles of the last great war, as a result of which they fail to predict the new strategies and new technologies that will be decisive in the future great war. Thus in the 1930s some were still thinking about cavalry attacks and trenches, when they should have been thinking about blitzkrieg tank offensives and carpet bombing... The opposite is the case in the spiritual war that is being waged today: we Orthodox are obsessed with fighting what we think is the war of the future without having drawn the lessons of the past. Worse than that: we have not even finished fighting the last war, but live under the wholly mistaken illusion that we were then the victors, when in fact the old enemy is alive and well and laughing at us for our naivety! Thus on innumerable forums and websites we talk a great deal and with great fervour about the New World Order, the evil of America and the Jews, globalization, 666, etc., while the Old World Order is preparing to deliver us a final, knock-out blow!

So what are the old unfinished wars? First of all, the war against Soviet communism. The old foe has changed his appearance and strategy so successfully that many Orthodox now think of Putin as a new St. Constantine or St. George come to deliver Orthodox civilization from the American dragon!

Putinist propaganda appears to have penetrated even into the most traditionalist corners of the Orthodox world, such as Mount Athos. An example is the DVD distributed by Esphigmenou monastery's journal, *Boanerges*, but made by the Moscow Patriarchate and presented by Fr. (now Bishop) Tikhon Shevkunov, Putin's reputed spiritual father. The subject is an analysis of the Fall of Constantinople in which much emphasis is laid on the roles of evil aristocrats within and western barbarians without. However, the real purpose of the DVD is not historical analysis, but contemporary political allegory: for "the Fall of Constantinople, the Second Rome", read "the possible Fall of Moscow, the Third Rome"; for evil Greek aristocrats then, read evil Jewish oligarchs now; for western barbarism then, read NATO expansion now; for the absolute need for a powerful and independent autocrat then, read the same need in Russia now...

The grim fact that almost the whole of the Orthodox world appears to ignore is that Soviet communism was not destroyed in 1991: it suffered a defeat which allowed it to *reculer pour mieux sauter* – that is, change form in order to deceive its adversaries and successfully re-establish its grip over the heartland of Orthodoxy. The final defeat of communism is still in the future. According to the prophecies of the Russian elders, this will take place, not through some kind of peaceful evolution, but *in war*, and the final knock-out blow will be administered, paradoxically, by – China...

Secondly, there is the war against Islam. Many hundreds of years, and many millions of martyrs later, some Orthodox appear ready to forgive or at least condone the sins of the Islamic world simply because it opposes Israel, America and the West! As if the martyrs of Islam hate the Christianity of the East any less than that of the West! But Islam is still a formidable enemy, and its final

defeat is also still in the future. Again, this will take place *in war*, a “general [world] war”, according to St. Cosmas of Aitolia, after which “the Hagarenes [Muslims] will learn the mysteries [of the faith] three times faster than the Christians”.

Thirdly, there is the war against paganism. Paganism was, after Judaism, the earliest enemy of the Church, and we see it today in three forms. First, the traditional old-style paganism of Hinduism, which is still dominant in the increasingly powerful state of India. Secondly, the new-style paganism evident in the West’s evolutionism and the LGBT revolution. And thirdly, Chinese paganism, which is present in both ancient and modern forms. The Chinese empire represents the latest and by far the most powerful representative of pagan culture to survive in the modern world, even if western technology and to some extent western ideology have disguised its pagan essence. Some Orthodox seem prepared to respect China if only for its opposition to America. But the Chinese, too, will be finally defeated *in war*. They will be destroyed, according to the elders, during the same war in which the Chinese conquer Siberia and destroy the old power structures in Russia...

The revival of old threats to Orthodox Christianity does not mean that the New World Order, Western civilization headed by America, is not an evil, soul-destroying reality that must be combatted. At the same time this evil must be combatted *intelligently*. Which means, first of all, that we must not attempt to combat the evil of the NWO by supporting the no less evil evil of the OWO – evil is not overcome by evil, but by good. Neither Putin nor Xi Jinping nor any sheikh or ayatollah is going to save Orthodoxy. Nor, unfortunately, will loyalty to any of the patriarchs of World Orthodoxy; for they are as much in thrall to the NWO or OWO as any politician.

We should follow the path of the early Christians, who, while living under a corrupt and anti-Christian despotism, engaged in no political activism or agitation of any sort (apart from occasional calls on the emperors to be merciful to the Christians), but obeyed the authorities to the limit that their conscience allowed them, sincerely praying for all their enemies. The reward of their patience and love was the final overthrow of the pagan Roman system through civil war and its replacement by Christian Romanity under St. Constantine. If we imitate their patience and faith, then we shall witness, first, the division of the whore of Babylon, western civilization, “into three parts” (Revelation 16.19) (America, Europe and Japan?), then her destruction by a coalition of ten states headed by the beast (Russia? China?) who “will burn her with fire... in one day” (Revelation 17.17, 18.8). But that will not be the end; for then the beast will be destroyed by the Word of God Himself (Revelation 19.20-21), making possible the resurrection of Orthodoxy (Revelation 20). For as the Lord Himself declared in a prophecy that, as St. John Maximovich pointed out, has not yet been fulfilled: “This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, *and then* the end will come...” (Matthew 24.14).

January 9/22, 2018; revised January 24 / February 6, 2018.

2. HOW THE RED TERROR SAVED THE RUSSIAN CHURCH FROM ECUMENISM

A little-known but very important fact of Church history took place in August-September, 1918, towards the end the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow.

On August 16, it was announced that a department for the reunification of the Christian Churches was being opened: "The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church, which has been gathered and is working in conditions that are so exceptionally difficult for the whole Christian Church, when the waves of unbelief and atheism threaten the very existence of the Christian Church, would take upon itself a great responsibility before history if it did not raise the question of the unification of the Christian Churches and did not give this question a fitting direction at the moment when not only one Christian confession, but the whole of Christianity is threatened by huge dangers on the part of unbelief and atheism.

"The task of the department is to prepare material for a decision of the present Council on this question and on the further development of the matter in the inter-Council period..."

On September 20, the last, 170th session of the Council, the project for a commission on the reunification of the Churches was reviewed and confirmed by the Council. The president of the department on the unification of the Churches, Archbishop Eudocimus (Meshchersky) of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, said: "I am very sad that the report has come at such a difficult time, when the hours of our sacred union in this chamber are coming to an end, and when at the end of work my thoughts are becoming confused and I cannot report to you everything that I could tell you. From our point of view, the Council should have directed its attention at this question long ago. If the Church is alive, then we cannot remain in the narrow limits she has existed in up to now. If we have no courage to preach beyond the bounds of our fatherland, then we must hear the voice coming from there to us. I have in mind the voice of the Anglo-American Episcopalian Churches, who sincerely and insistently seek union or rapprochement, and do not find any insurmountable obstacles on the path to the indicated end. Considering the union of the Christian Churches to be especially desirable in the period of intense struggle with unbelief, crude materialism and moral barbarism that we are experiencing now, the department suggests to the Sacred Council that it adopt the following resolution:

"1. The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church, joyfully beholding the sincere strivings of the Old Catholics and Anglicans for union with the Orthodox Church on the basis of the teaching and traditions of the Ancient-Catholic Church, blesses the labours and endeavours of the people who work to find paths towards union with the named friendly Churches.

“2. The Council directs the Holy Synod to organize a permanent Commission attached to the Holy Synod with branches in Russia and abroad for the further study of the Old Catholic and Anglican questions, to explicate by means of relations with the Old Catholics and Anglicans the difficulties that lie on the path to union, and possible aids to the speedy attainment of the final end.”

The decisions of the Council of a theological or dogmatic significance were subject to confirmation by a special assembly of bishops. At the last such assembly, on September 22, 1918, this decision was not reviewed. It is possible that for that reason the “Resolution regarding the unification of the Churches” did not enter the official “Collection of the Decrees and Resolutions of the Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church of 1917-1918”.³¹

In September, 1918 the Bolsheviks shut down the Local Council and initiate the “Red Terror”, probably the most intense and large-scale persecution of the Orthodox Church since the time of Diocletian. This was probably the reason why the Resolution was not reviewed and not put into practice. There may also have been a deeper, providential reason: that this Resolution was not pleasing to God, in that it threatened to open the doors of the Russian Church to the heresy of ecumenism, of which the Anglicans were the leaders, at precisely the moment of her greatest weakness...

This conclusion is supported by the fact that in the inter-war years, and right up to General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, the Russian Church - with the exception of the Paris Russian Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the American Metropolia - took no direct part in the ecumenical movement. The other Churches, on the other hand, and especially the Greek Churches, were deeply involved from the early 1920s, and recognized Anglican Orders at an early stage.³²

Paradoxically, therefore, the Red Terror saved Russia from ecumenism until the 1960s, when the communists decided to order the official Russian Church into the ecumenical movement for entirely political reasons.

January 13/26, 2018.

³¹ *Sviataia Rus' (Holy Rus')*, 2003.

³² See Archimandrite Kallistos Ware and Rev. Colin Davey (eds.), *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Moscow Agreed Statement, 1977*, chapter 2.

3. THE REVOLUTIONARY AS GOD: NAPOLEON

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French revolution appeared to have lost its way, consumed by poverty, corruption and mutual blood-letting. It was saved, as Edmund Burke had predicted, by a “popular general” - Napoleon Bonaparte. He was as sincerely faithful to the spirit of the French revolution as Cromwell had been to the English. Madame de Stael called him Robespierre on horseback. After all, he came from Corsica, which in 1755 had successfully rebelled from Genoa, and for which Rousseau had written one of his most seminal works, *Project de constitution pour la Corse*, in 1765. But, like Cromwell (and Caesar), Napoleon found that in order to “save” the republic he had to take control of it and rule it like the most despotic of kings.

He first showed his revolutionary mettle on October 5 1795 (13 Vendémiaire), when he mowed down hundreds of moderate anti-Jacobins who were trying to take over the city centre. In reward for this ruthless act, the revolution gave him command of the Army of Italy, where he first showed his military genius by comprehensively defeating the Austrians. For a time he rested on his laurels, while studying and cultivating the cultural leaders of Paris. Then, on 19 Brumaire (November 10), 1799, his chance came. He overthrew the Directory, describing parliamentarism as “hot air”, and frightened the two elective assemblies into submission. On December 13 a new constitution was proclaimed with Bonaparte as the first of three Consuls with full executive powers. And on December 15 the three Consuls declared: “Citizens, the Revolution is established upon its original principles: it is consummated...”³³

Paul Johnson writes: “The new First Consul was far more powerful than Louis XIV, since he dominated the armed forces directly in a country that was now organized as a military state. All the ancient restraints on divine-right kingship – the Church, the aristocracy and its resources, the courts, the cities and their charters, the universities and their privileges, the guilds and their immunities – all had been swept away by the Revolution, leaving France a legal blank on which Bonaparte could stamp the irresistible force of his personality.”³⁴

In 1804, he even declared himself emperor, after which Beethoven tore out the title-page of his *Eroica* symphony, which had been dedicated to him, and said: “So he too is nothing but a man. Now he also will trample all human rights underfoot, and only pander to his own ambition; he will place himself above everyone else and become a tyrant...”³⁵

³³ M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 530.

³⁴ Johnson, *Napoleon*, London: Phoenix, 2002, p. 46.

³⁵ Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 531.

As de Tocqueville wrote: "Absolute government found huge scope for its rebirth [in] that man who was to be both the consummator and the nemesis of the Revolution."³⁶

But, again like Caesar and Cromwell, he could never confess to being a king in the traditional sense. Under him, in Davies' phrase, "a pseudo-monarchy headed pseudo-democratic institutions."³⁷ The falseness and contradictoriness of it was illustrated by French coinage of the time that bore the phrase: *République Française – Napoléon empereur*.³⁸

So, as J.M. Roberts writes, while Napoleon reinstated monarchy, "it was in no sense a restoration. Indeed, he took care so to affront the exiled Bourbon family that any reconciliation with it was inconceivable. He sought popular approval for the empire in a plebiscite and got it."³⁹

"This was a monarchy Frenchmen had voted for; it rested on popular sovereignty, that is, the Revolution. It assumed the consolidation of the Revolution which the Consulate had already begun. All the great institutional reforms of the 1790s were confirmed or at least left intact; there was no disturbance of the land sales which had followed the confiscation of Church property, no resurrection of the old corporations, no questioning of the principle of equality before the law. Some measures were even taken further, notably when each department was given an administrative head, the prefect, who was in his powers something like one of the emergency emissaries of the Terror..."⁴⁰

Cromwell had eschewed the trappings of monarchy, but Napoleon embraced them avidly. The trend towards monarchy and hierarchy developed; and "earlier than is generally thought," writes Philip Mansel, "the First Consul Bonaparte aligned himself with this monarchical trend, acquiring in succession a guard (1799), a palace (1800), court receptions and costumes (1800-02), a household (1802-04), a dynasty (1804), finally a nobility (1808)... The proclamation of the empire in May 1804, the establishment of the households of the Emperor, the Empress and the Imperial Family in July, the coronation by the pope in December of that year, were confirmations of an existing monarchical reality."⁴¹

Moreover, Napoleon spread his kind of monarchy everywhere, replacing the Holy Roman Empire, which dissolved itself in 1806, as the "super-monarchy" of Europe. Thus the kingdoms and Grand Duchies of Italy, Venice,

³⁶ De Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (The Old Regime and the Revolution), 1856, book 3, chapter 8; in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 527.

³⁷ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 701.

³⁸ Bernard Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 161.

³⁹ The result of the plebiscite was 3,571,329 'yes' votes to 2,570 'noes'. As Johnson points out, "Bonaparte was the first dictator to produce faction figures." (*op. cit.*, pp. 49-50). (V.M.)

⁴⁰ Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1996, pp. 589-590.

⁴¹ Mansel, "Napoleon the Kingmaker", *History Today*, vol. 48 (3), March, 1998, pp. 40, 41.

Rome, Naples, Lucca, Dubrovnik, Holland, Mainz, Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Westphalia and Spain were all established or re-established - and all ruled by Napoleon's relations by blood or marriage. As Simon Winder writes, "many bishops, knights, dukes, abbesses and petty oligarchs lost out, but others cleverly adapted. There is a funny painting of the young Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian IV Joseph, all dolled up in his wig and jewels, the acme of rococo flummery, which can be contrasted with the surprisingly different painting of him as the brand new (from 1806) *King of Bavaria*. Maximilian I, thanks to Napoleon, sporting his own hair, cut short and severe, and dressed in a dark blue, almost undecorated uniform, faking the stern mien of the simple soldier. This sort of graceless rebranding was going on everywhere."⁴²

According to Stendhal, Napoleon's court "totally corrupted" him "and exalted his amour propre to the state of a disease... He was on the point of making Europe one vast monarchy."⁴³ "'The French empire shall become the metropolitan of all other sovereignties,' Napoleon once said to a friend. 'I want to force every king in Europe to build a large palace for his use in Paris. When an Emperor of the French is crowned, these kings shall come to Paris, and they shall adorn that imposing ceremony with their presence and salute it with their homage.'"⁴⁴

"As one of his secretaries Baron Meneval wrote, he saw himself as 'the pillar of royalty in Europe'. On January 18th, 1813, he wrote to his brother Jerome that his enemies, by appealing to popular feeling, represented 'upheavals and revolutions... pernicious doctrines.' In Napoleon's opinion his fellow monarchs were traitors to 'their own cause' when in 1813 they began to desert the French Empire, or in 1814 refused to accept his territorial terms for peace..."⁴⁵

Thus Napoleon represents in his own person the clearest demonstration of the inner relationship between democracy and despotism. He came to power as a sincere supporter of the revolution. But if the revolution means power to and from the people, it can just as well mean power to one man representing the people. The deification of the people naturally leads to the deification of one man from the people. What it cannot mean is power coming from God or the Church. This was symbolized above all by his coronation in 1804. Unlike Charlemagne one thousand years earlier, who allowed himself to be crowned by the Pope, Napoleon took the crown out of the Pope's hands and crowned himself. In other words, he did not know his power or legitimacy to anyone or anything except himself...

⁴² Winder, *Danubia*, London: Picador, 2013, p. 300.

⁴³ Stendhal, in Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.

⁴⁴ Adam Zamoyski, *1812: Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow*, London: Harper, 2004, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.

Jocelyn Hunt writes: “Kings before 1791 were said to be absolute but were limited by all kinds of constraints and controls. The Church had an almost autonomous status. Bonaparte ensured that the Church was merely a branch of the civil service. Kings were anointed by the Church, and thus owed their authority to God: Bonaparte took power through his own strength, camouflaged as ‘the General Will’ which, as Correlli Barnett acidly remarks, ‘became synonymous with General Bonaparte’...⁴⁶

“The First Consul’s choice of ministers was a far more personal one than had been possible for the kings of France. Bonaparte established a system of meeting his ministers individually, in order to give his instructions. In the same way, Bonaparte chose which ‘ordinary’ citizens he would consult; kings of France had mechanisms for consulting ‘the people’ but these had fallen into disuse and thus, when the Estates General met in 1789, the effect was revolutionary. Bonaparte’s legislative body was, until 1814, submissive and compliant....

“Police control and limitations on personal freedom had been a focus of condemnation by the Philosophes before the Revolution, but had not been entirely efficient: a whole industry of importing and distributing banned texts had flourished in the 1770s and 1780s. Bonaparte’s police were more thorough, and so swingeing were the penalties that self-censorship rapidly became the safest path for a newspaper to take. Bonaparte closed down sixty of the seventy-three newspapers in Paris in January, 1800, and had a weekly summary prepared of all printed material, but he was soon able to tell his Chief of Police, Fouché, ‘They only print what I want them to.’⁴⁷ In the same way, the hated lettres de cachet appear limited and inefficient when compared to Bonaparte’s and Fouché’s record of police spies, trials without jury and imprisonment without trial. Bonaparte’s brief experience as a Jacobin leader in Ajaccio had taught him how to recognise, and deal with, potential opponents.⁴⁸

“The judiciary had stood apart from the kings of the ancien régime: while the King was nominally the supreme Judge, the training of lawyers and judges had been a matter for the Parlements, with their inherent privileges and mechanisms. The Parlements decided whether the King’s laws were acceptable

⁴⁶ Johnson writes: “He liked the vague and abstract notion of Rousseau’s concept, the General Will, offering a ruling elite that knew its business the opportunity to harness the people to a national effort without any of the risks of democracy. In practice an elite always formed itself into a pyramid, with one man at its summit. His will expressed the General Will... and gave it decisiveness, the basis for action. Constitutions were important in the sense that window-dressing was important in a shop. But the will was the product to be sold to the nation and, once sold, imposed” (op. cit., p. 17). (V.M.)

⁴⁷ As he said to Metternich: “You see me master of France; well, I would not undertake to govern her for three months with liberty of the press” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530). (V.M.)

⁴⁸ Johnson writes: “Fouché, who operated the world’s first secret police force, and who was the prototype of Himmler or Beria, was an important element in Bonaparte’s legacy of evil, for some of his methods were widely imitated in Austria and Prussia, where they became permanent, and even in harmless Sweden, where they were carried out by Bonaparte’s marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte” (op. cit., p. 105). (V.M.)

within the fundamental laws of France. Under the Consulate, there were no such constraints on the legislator. The judges were his appointees, and held office entirely at his pleasure; the courts disposed of those who opposed or questioned the government, far more rapidly than had been possible in the reign of Louis XVI. Imprisonment and deportation became regularly used instruments of control under Bonaparte.

“Kings of France were fathers to their people and had a sense of duty and service. Bonaparte, too, believed that he was essential to the good and glory of France, but was able to make his own decisions about what constituted the good of France in a way which was not open to the king. Finally, while the monarchy of France was hereditary and permanent, and the position of First Consul was supposed to be held for ten years, Bonaparte’s strength was demonstrated when he changed his own constitution, first to give him the role for life and then to become a hereditary monarch. All in all, no monarch of the ancien régime had anything approaching the power which Bonaparte had been permitted to take for himself...

“When a Royalist bomb plot was uncovered in December, 1800, Bonaparte seized the opportunity to blame it on the Jacobins, and many were guillotined, with over a hundred more being exiled or imprisoned. The regime of the Terror had operated in similar ways to remove large numbers of potential or actual opponents. Press censorship and the use of police spies ensured that anti-government opinions were not publicly aired. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had guaranteed freedom of expression; but this freedom had already been eroded before Bonaparte’s coup. The Terror had seen both moral and political censorship, and the Directory had on several occasions exercised its constitutional right to censor the press. Bonaparte appears merely to have been more efficient...

“Bonaparte certainly held power without consulting the French people; he took away many of the freedoms they had been guaranteed in 1789; he taxed them more heavily than they had been taxed before. [In 1803 he wrote:] ‘I haven’t been able to understand yet what good there is in an opposition. Whatever it may say, its only result is to diminish the prestige of authority in the eyes of the people’.”⁴⁹

So Napoleon was undoubtedly a despot, but a despot who could claim many precedents for his despotism in the behaviour of the Jacobins and Directory. And if he was not faithful to the forms of the revolution in its early phase, replacing democracy (of a despotic kind) with monarchy (of a populist kind), he nevertheless remained faithful to its fundamental principles - the principle, on the one hand, that nobody and nothing should be independent of the State (the principle of totalitarianism), and on the other, the principle that the Nation was the supreme value, and serving and dying for the Nation - the supreme glory.

⁴⁹ Hunt, *The French Revolution*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 104, 105-106, 107, 108, 112.

The territorial states of the eighteenth century fought limited wars, and formed a balance of power to prevent the emergence of any hegemonic power. Since their primary motive was commerce, and since commerce is advanced by peace, they aimed to avoid wars by calculated concessions and adjustments. But Napoleon reverted to the absolutist tradition of Louis XIV, aiming at complete dominance of his neighbours.

As Schroeder put it, the decade of Napoleonic hegemony in Europe was an exercise in European colonization...⁵⁰

However, writes Adam Zamoyski, "it was not so much a matter of France 'über alles'. 'European society needs a regeneration,' Napoleon asserted in conversation in 1805. 'There must be a superior power which dominates all the other powers, with enough authority to force them to live in harmony with one another – and France is the best placed for that purpose.' He was, like many a tyrant, utopian in his ambitions. 'We must have a European legal system, a European appeal court, a common currency, the same weights and measures the same laws,' Napoleon once said to Joseph Fouché: 'I must make of all the peoples of Europe one people, and of Paris the capital of the world.'"⁵¹ And yet "at bottom," as Johnson notes, "Bonaparte despised the French, or perhaps it would be more exact to say the Parisians, the heart of the 'political nation'. He thought of them, on the basis of his experience during the various phases of the Revolution, as essentially frivolous."⁵²

As Bernard Cornwell writes, Napoleon "was a superb administrator, but that was not how he wanted to be remembered. Above all, he was a warlord. His idol was Alexander the Great. In the middle of the nineteenth century, in the American Civil War. Robert E. Lee, the great Confederate General, watched his troops executing a brilliant and battle-winning maneuver and said, memorably, 'It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.' Napoleon had grown too fond of it, he loved war. Perhaps it was his first love, because it combined the excitement of supreme risk with the joy of victory. He had the incisive mind of a great strategist, yet when the marching was done and the enemy outflanked he still demanded enormous sacrifices of his men. After Austerlitz, when one of his generals lamented the French lying dead on that frozen battlefield, the Emperor retorted that 'the women of Paris can replace those men in one night'.⁵³ When Metternich, the clever Austrian Foreign Minister, offered Napoleon honourable peace terms in 1813 and reminded the Emperor of the human cost of refusal, he received the scornful answer that Napoleon would happily sacrifice a million to gain his ambitions. Napoleon was careless about the lives of his troops, yet his soldiers adored him because he had the common touch. He knew how to speak to them, how to jest

⁵⁰ Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 176.

⁵¹ Zamoyski, *1812*, p. 9.

⁵² Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁵³ In this he was very different from Wellington, who hated war and wept over the deaths of his soldiers. (V.M.)

with them and how to inspire them. His soldiers might adore him, but his generals feared him. Marshal Augereau, a foul-mouthed disciplinarian, said, 'This little bastard of a general scares me!', and General Vandamme, a hard man, said he 'trembled like a child' when he approached Napoleon. Yet Napoleon led them all to glory. That was his drug, *la Gloire!* And in search of it he broke peace treaty after peace treaty, and his armies marched beneath their Eagle standards from Madrid to Moscow, from the Baltic to the Red Sea. He astonished Europe with victories like Austerlitz and Friedland, but he also led his *Grande Armée* to disaster in the Russian snow. Even his defeats were on a gargantuan scale..."⁵⁴

The truth is, therefore, that it was neither the State nor the Nation that Bonaparte exalted above all, – although he greatly increased the worship of both in later European history, – but *himself*. So the spirit that truly reigned in the Napoleonic era can most accurately be described as the spirit of the man-god, of the Antichrist, of whom Bonaparte himself, as the Russian Holy Synod quite rightly said in 1806, was a forerunner.

As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother when her husband, Tsar Alexander I, was still under Napoleon's spell: "You know, Mamma, this man seems to me like an irresistible seducer who by temptation or force succeeds in stealing the hearts of his victims. Russia, the most virtuous of them, has defended herself for a long time; but she has ended up no better than the others. And, in the person of her Emperor, she has yielded as much to charm as to force. He [Alexander] feels a secret attraction to his enticer which is apparent in all he does. I should indeed like to know what magic it is that he [Napoleon] employs to change people's opinions so suddenly and so completely..."⁵⁵

This antichristian, seductive, serpent-like quality comes out also in Madame De Staël's characterization: "I had the disturbing feeling that no emotion of the heart could ever reach him. He regards a human being like a fact or a thing, never as an equal person like himself. He neither hates nor loves... The force of his will resides in the imperturbable calculations of his egotism. He is a chess-master whose opponents happen to be the rest of humanity... Neither pity nor attraction, nor religion nor attachment would ever divert him from his ends... I felt in his soul cold steel, I felt in his mind a deep irony against which nothing great or good, even his own destiny, was proof; for he despised the nation which he intended to govern, and no spark of enthusiasm was mingled with his desire to astound the human race..."⁵⁶

Hegel also saw this antichristian, man-god quality. Just before the Battle of Jena in 1806, he saw Napoleon riding out to reconnoiter the battlefield, and wrote: "I saw the Emperor – this world-soul – riding out of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual

⁵⁴ Cornwell, *Waterloo*, London: William Collins, 2014, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Alan Palmer, *Alexander I*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, p. 148.

⁵⁶ De Staël, in Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it.”

This is the nub of it: a “world-soul”, such as Napoleon or Hitler, Stalin or Putin, has to conquer the whole world. The mastery of one nation, even the greatest, will not satisfy him. In order to affirm and justify his quasi-divine essence, he has to compel the assent and/or worship of all men. In fact, he has to become not only *a* man-god, but *the* Antichrist, the ruler of the world. And since, as Dostoyevsky pointed out, universal worship is the innermost desire of all men, then those who do not worship the one true God, the God-man, will inevitably worship the man-god.

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4. THE ORTHODOX ANATHEMATIZATION OF ISLAM

In 1180 a Council in Constantinople anathematized “the god of Mohammed”, affirming that Allah, the god of Islam, is not the same as the Holy Trinity, the God of the Christians, the one True God. And this remains the main reason why Orthodox Christians have continued to fight holy wars with Muslim nations to the present day. For the purpose of the truly holy war is never to protect territory or political freedom as such, but to protect the Orthodox people from the threat of being forced to renounce their true faith and accept the false one of Mohammed, thereby losing their eternal salvation.

However, the Emperor Manuel I Comnenus was not happy with the Council’s decision. And he convened another Council in order to strike out the following words found in the rite for the reception of Muslims to Orthodoxy: “Anathema to the God of Mohammed, about whom Mohammed says that... He does not beget and is not begotten, and nobody is like Him.” However, the hierarchy did not want to strike out this phrase.

Then the Emperor, according to A.P. Lebedev, “issued a second decree, in which he again insisted on his opinion and then appointed another Council in Scutari, where the Emperor had withdrawn because of illness to make use of the pure country air. Thither the Emperor summoned the Patriarch and Bishops, but Manuel because of his illness could not enter into personal conversation with the Fathers: the matter was conducted through the Emperor’s beloved secretary. The latter in the person of the Emperor presented two papers to the Council. These were, first, a document in which Manuel set out his point of view on the question being debated, and secondly, his letter to the Patriarch. The Emperor demanded that the Bishops should sign the indicated document. And in the letter he in every way reproached the Patriarch and Bishops for their stubbornness and defiance, even threatening to convene a Council in which he wanted to entrust the presidency to none other than the Pope of Rome (it can be understood that the Pope in this letter served for Manuel only as a kind of scarecrow). In the same letter to the Patriarch the Emperor wrote: ‘I would be ungrateful to God if I did not apply all my efforts so that He, the true God, should not be subjected to anathema.’ But the Patriarch and Bishops even now did not want to share the Emperor’s opinion. On this occasion the noted Eustathius, Metropolitan of Thessalonica, spoke out with special zeal against the Emperor’s demands. He was a man of wide learning, distinguished by the gift of eloquence. He heatedly declared: ‘I would consider myself completely mad and would be unworthy of these hierarchical vestments if I recognized as true some Mohammedan God, who was his guide and instructor in all his disgusting deeds.’ The unusual boldness with which Eustathius began to oppose the Emperor horrified everyone. The hearers almost froze at these words of Eustathius. The Emperor’s secretary immediately set off to inform Manuel about his. The Emperor was indescribably amazed and considered himself deeply offended by Eustathius’

words. He said: 'Either I shall justify myself and prove that I do not believe in a God that is the teacher of all impiety, and then I shall subject him who vomits blasphemy against the Anointed of God to merited punishment, or I shall be convicted of glorifying another God, and not the true one, and then I will be grateful that I have been led away from a false opinion.' Patriarch Theodosius set off for the quarters of the Emperor, and for a long time tried to persuade him to forgive the act of Eustathius, and finally, to reduce the Emperor's anger, promising that he, the Patriarch, and the Bishops would agree to accept the removal of the formula about the God of Mohammed from the trebniks. And apparently, the Council did in fact cease to oppose the will of the Emperor. Manuel was delighted, forgave Eustathius and sent the Bishops off to Constantinople in peace. But the Emperor somewhat deceived himself in his hopes. The next day, early in the morning, an envoy of the Emperor came to the Patriarch demanding impatiently that the Bishops should assemble and sign a decree of the Emperor. The Bishops quickly assembled at the Patriarch's, but refused to sign the decree. Although, the day before, the Bishops, probably out of fear for Eustathius, had agreed completely to accept the opinion of Manuel, now, when the danger had passed, they again began to oppose the Emperor. They began to criticize the decree, found inaccuracies in it, began to demand changes and removals. Learning about this, the Emperor became very angry against the Bishops and showered them with indecent swear-words, calling them 'pure fools'. History does not record what happened after this. At any rate the end of the quarrel was quite unexpected: the historian Gregoras records the ending in only a few words. The Bishops, he says, somehow agreed to reject the formula which had enticed the Emperor, and replaced it with a new one, in which, instead of the anathema on the God of Mohammed there was proclaimed an anathema on Mohammed himself and on his teaching and on his followers."⁵⁷

But God's Holy Church is not mocked. The following emperors were bloody despots who tended towards self-deification. And then, in 1204, the holy City of Constantinople fell for the first time to barbarians - the Venetian-led crusaders of the Fourth Crusade.

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⁵⁷ Lebedev, *Istoricheskie Oчерki Sostoiania Vizantijsko-Vostochnoj Tserkvi* (Historical Sketches of the Condition of the Byzantine Eastern Church), St. Petersburg, 2003, pp. 122-124.

5. CLASSICAL ROMANTICISM: GOETHE AND BEETHOVEN

Probably the most famous artists of the early Romantic period were the poet Goethe and the composer Beethoven. And yet they were not typical man-gods. They displayed a mixture of Romantic passion and Classical restraint that raised their work to a pinnacle from which both the greatness of the Classical past and the madness of the Romantic future was clearly visible.

Goethe was perhaps the first romantic. His novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), was the world's first "best-seller"; its tale of unrequited love and suicide created a taste for passion, as it were, that has never since departed from the subconscious of western civilization. "What set Goethe's book apart from other such novels was its expression of unbridled longing for a joy beyond possibility, its sense of defiant rebellion against authority, and of principal importance, its total subjectivity: qualities that trail-blazed the Romantic movement."⁵⁸

But shortly after *Werther* Goethe made his famous trip to Italy, which imbued him with such a love of the Classics as to leave a permanent imprint on his art and his beliefs. Of course, he was not alone in this attraction of the Romantics to what appeared to be their artistic opposites. Byron loved Greek classicism and died in the liberation of Greece. And John Keats wrote his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" which summed up that glimpse of eternity in time that so many English-speaking poets discerned in Greek art:

*When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayst,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," - that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

As for Goethe, he was not only the first romantic but also the author of "Weimar classicism", a period in his art that extended well into the nineteenth century.

It was probably his classical tastes that enabled Goethe to escape that terrible disease of the early Romantic generation - the worship of the French revolution. He correctly called the French revolution "the most dreadful of all events", and remained firmly committed to the old regime's aristocratic and hierarchical model of politics. There may have been personal reasons for this: since 1775 he had been a leading figure at the court of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, and so had much to lose from the revolution. Moreover, he had been present at the battle of Valmy in 1792, when the revolution won its first victory over the Germans; he had witnessed the siege of Mainz, and the barbarism of Napoleon's troops when they ransacked his house in Weimar in 1806...

⁵⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe.

However, while not fooled by the revolution, Goethe was fooled by its nemesis and apotheosis, Napoleon. Mistakenly thinking that he was the reverser rather than the continuer of the revolution, "he persisted," as Professor Ritchie Robertson writes, "in admiring Napoleon, the invader of Germany and conqueror of Prussia, whom patriots denounced as a devil risen from hell. For him, Napoleon was the hero who had defeated the French Revolution and replaced anarchy with a social order which Goethe hoped would prove permanent. More than that, Napoleon was a superhuman figure, 'the highest phenomenon that was possible in history'. 'His life was the striding of a demigod from battle to battle and from victory to victory', Goethe later said to Eckermann (11 March 1828). Goethe's meeting with Napoleon [at Napoleon's request] at Erfurt on 2 October 1808, and again in Weimar on 6 October, was one of the supreme moments of his life. Napoleon awarded him the Légion d'Honneur, which he proudly wore at every opportunity. Hence he deeply disliked the often furious German nationalism that grew up during Napoleon's occupation, triumphed over his downfall, and would flourish for the next century and a half."⁵⁹

Goethe showed his affinities with the rationalist eighteenth century rather than the romantic nineteenth also in his aversion to nationalism. Again, there may have been personal motives for that. A man who in his literary career had been deeply influenced by foreign writers, from the English Shakespeare to the Greek Euripides to the Persian Hajiz, and spent much of his time translating them, was hardly likely to think that all truth and beauty was in one nation.

"Although often requested to write poems arousing nationalist passions, Goethe would always decline. In old age, he explained why this was so to Eckermann: 'How could I write songs of hatred when I felt no hate? And, between ourselves, I never hated the French, although I thanked God when we were rid of them. How could I, to whom the only significant things are civilization [*Kultur*] and barbarism, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated in the world, and to which I owe a great part of my own culture? In any case this business of hatred between nations is a curious thing. You will always find it more powerful and barbarous on the lowest levels of civilization. But there exists a level at which it wholly disappears, and where one stands, so to speak, above the nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighboring people as though it were one's own.'⁶⁰

Goethe's attitude to religion was similarly rationalist. He was not anti-religious: he objected to Voltaire's mockery of religion, his works contain sympathetic portrayals of religious people, and he counted sincere Christians among his friends. But he was too much of an Enlightenment man to believe in the literal truth of Christian dogma; he particularly disliked the doctrine of original sin, and didn't believe in miracles.

⁵⁹ Robertson, *Goethe: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 81-82.

⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe.

And he was an ecumenist, who believed in no institutional religion. As Robertson explains, his real religion was probably a kind of nature-worship. "He told Lavater firmly: 'You consider the Gospel the most divine truth; even a loud voice from heaven wouldn't convince me that water burns and fire puts it out, that a woman bears a child without a man, or that a man can rise from the dead; instead, I consider those beliefs to be blasphemies against the great God and his revelation in nature.' He thought it self-evident that there was a God who was manifested in the order of nature. Natural religion therefore did not require any effort of faith; it was only particular religions that did so. Natural religion sprang from 'the dialogue in our bosom with nature'; it depended on feeling and could not be implanted by rational argument. Hence what Faust professes to Gretchen is natural religion."⁶¹

One aspect of Goethe's private religion may have been a product of his interest in Eastern religion. This was a kind of amorality, an anticipation of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*: a belief that good and evil went together in the world like Yin and Yan, as two aspects of one reality. As he put it: nature was "an organ on which our Lord plays and the Devil treads the bellows".

Thus according to Goethe, writes Ellendea Proffer, "at the heart of everything lies a contradiction – attraction and repulsion, creation and destruction – that men see as good and evil, heaven and hell. Goethe felt that moral concepts were really only one facet of the whole, a whole in which immorality and amorality are at least equally represented. The main thing is activity – the surge of life, an everlasting repetition that never progresses, good never really does triumph over evil, but the movement in itself is what is important. All these contradictions are inseparable from one another and from God Himself."⁶²

In accordance with his views on morality, Goethe paid little attention to the fairly strict contemporary views on sexual life, and had a string of affairs. "Many of Goethe's works, especially *Faust*, the *Roman Elegies*, and the *Venetian Epigrams*, depict erotic passions and acts. For instance, in *Faust*, the first use of Faust's power after signing a contract with the devil is to seduce a teenage girl. Some of the *Venetian Epigrams* were held back from publication due to their sexual content. Goethe clearly saw human sexuality as a topic worthy of poetic and artistic depiction, an idea that was uncommon in a time when the private nature of sexuality was rigorously normative. Still worse, Goethe was a pederast: 'I like boys a lot, but the girls are even nicer. If I tire of her as a girl, she'll play the boy for me as well'. Goethe also defended pederasty: 'Pederasty is as old as humanity itself, and one can therefore say that it is natural, that it

⁶¹ Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

⁶² Proffer, "Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*: Genre and Motif", in Laura Weeks (ed.), *The Master and Margarita: A Critical Companion*, Northwestern University Press, 1996, pp. 106-107.

resides in nature, even if it proceeds against nature. What culture has won from nature will not be surrendered or given up at any price."⁶³

An important aspect of Romanticism was its subtle devaluation of science – the god of the Enlightenment – by comparison with art. Goethe was a true Romantic in this respect. For, though a scientist as well as a poet, he approached his science in a distinctly non-empirical way, fearing an excessively abstract approach to nature.

As Professor Robertson writes, "Given his fear of abstraction, Goethe was inevitably hostile to the most successful model of scientific research in his time: the conception of the universe as a great machine, operating by regular laws, and capable of being described in quantitative and mathematical terms. Goethe knew little of mathematics: in 1786 he tried to learn algebra, with limited success. He says that mathematics is all very well in its place, dealing with those restricted areas where exactitude is possible, but should abandon its claim to 'universal monarchy'. The study of nature needs to emancipate itself from mathematics and 'seek with all loving, reverent, devout energies to penetrate nature and its holy life'. Although he occasionally used a microscope to examine micro-organisms, and enjoyed looking at the moon through a telescope, Goethe generally deplored the use of instruments such as microscopes, on the grounds that they distorted the natural relation between the observer and the world.

"Despite rejecting mathematical abstraction, Goethe did not confine himself to the empirical study of phenomena. His cogently criticized the empirical method advocated early in the 17th century by Francis Bacon and practiced after 1660 by the Royal Society in London. Empirical studies need to be guided by principles, otherwise they will just lead to millions of isolated and insignificant facts. The Royal Society, though claiming to study nature without preconceptions, in fact assumed that the universe was really a great machine. The investigator, in Goethe's view, needed to remember that there were no raw facts, independent of the viewer's preconceptions.

"However, when Goethe writes, 'The supreme goal would be to grasp that everything factual is already theory,' he does not mean 'theory' in any recognizable present-day sense. He rejects 'theory' in the sense of mathematical abstraction. Nor has he any interest in causal explanations for phenomena. After all, since everything in nature is interrelated, a causal account merely privileges *one* set of relationships, a historical one, at the expense of innumerable others. Often he uses the word 'theory' in the original sense of Greek *theoria*, meaning 'looking'... Ultimately all you can do with phenomena is contemplate them. There is nothing behind them, nothing to be explained. The aphorism just quoted continues: 'The blue of the sky reveals to us the basic law of chromatics. Do not look for anything behind the phenomena: they themselves are the doctrine'. Even to express phenomena in words requires

⁶³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe.

caution, since language is just another phenomenon; we must use language with self-awareness and irony if we are not to fall into mere abstraction.”⁶⁴

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Combining the roles of statesman, poet, scientist and philosopher, Goethe was the nineteenth-century equivalent of the Renaissance man and represents, perhaps better than anybody else, the paradoxes of western civilization and the essence of its apostasy. We can understand this better if we study his most famous and influential work, *Faust*. As we read in a Wikipedia article on the play, “*Faust Part One* takes place in multiple settings, the first of which is Heaven. The demon Mephistopheles makes a bet with God: he says that he can lure God's favourite human being (Faust), who is striving to learn everything that can be known, away from righteous pursuits. The next scene takes place in Faust's study where Faust, despairing at the vanity of scientific, humanitarian and religious learning, turns to magic for the showering of infinite knowledge. He suspects, however, that his attempts are failing. Frustrated, he ponders suicide, but rejects it as he hears the echo of nearby Easter celebrations begin. He goes for a walk with his assistant Wagner and is followed home by a stray poodle (the term then meant a medium-to-big-size dog, similar to a sheep dog).

“In Faust's study, the poodle transforms into Mephistopheles. Faust makes an arrangement with him: Mephistopheles will do everything that Faust wants while he is here on Earth, and in exchange Faust will serve the Devil in Hell. Faust's arrangement is that if he is pleased enough with anything Mephistopheles gives him that he wants to stay in that moment forever, then he will die in that moment.

“When Mephistopheles tells Faust to sign the pact with blood, Faust complains that Mephistopheles does not trust Faust's word of honor. In the end, Mephistopheles wins the argument and Faust signs the contract with a drop of his own blood. Faust has a few excursions and then meets Margaret (also known as Gretchen). He is attracted to her and with jewellery and with help from a neighbor, Martha, Mephistopheles draws Gretchen into Faust's arms. With Mephistopheles' aid, Faust seduces Gretchen. Gretchen's mother dies from a sleeping potion, administered by Gretchen to obtain privacy so that Faust could visit her. Gretchen discovers she is pregnant. Gretchen's brother condemns Faust, challenges him and falls dead at the hands of Faust and Mephistopheles. Gretchen drowns her illegitimate child and is convicted of the murder. Faust tries to save Gretchen from death by attempting to free her from prison. Finding that she refuses to escape, Faust and Mephistopheles flee the dungeon, while voices from Heaven announce that Gretchen shall be saved – ‘*Sie ist gerettet*’ – this differs from the harsher ending of *Urfaust* [the earliest draft of *Faust*] – ‘*Sie ist gerichtet!*’ – ‘she is condemned.’

⁶⁴ Robertson, *Goethe: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 29-30.

“Rich in classical allusion, in Part Two the romantic story of the first Faust is forgotten, and Faust wakes in a field of fairies to initiate a new cycle of adventures and purpose. The piece consists of five acts (relatively isolated episodes) each representing a different theme. Ultimately, Faust goes to Heaven, for he loses only half of the bet. Angels, who arrive as messengers of divine mercy, declare at the end of Act V: ‘He who strives on and lives to strive/ Can earn redemption still’ (V, 11936-7).”

It is this quality of restless *striving* that is so characteristic of what we may call Faustian man, *Homo Occidentalis*. As Mephistopheles puts it:

*He serves you [God] in a very curious way indeed.
It isn't earthly nourishment he seems to need;
His fevered mind is in a constant ferment.
Half-conscious of his folly, in his pride
On all the joys of earth he wants to feed,
And pluck from heaven the very brightest star.
He searches high and low, and yet however far
He roams, his restless heart remains dissatisfied. (ll. 300-307)*

Again, Faust himself says:

*Listen: it's not on happiness I'm bent.
I want a frenzied round of agonizing joy,
Of loving hate, of stimulating discontent.
Learning and knowledge now I leave behind;
I shall not flinch from suffering or despair,
And in my inners self I wish to share
The whole experience of mankind,
To seek its heights, its depths, to know
Within my heart its joys and all its woe,
Identify myself with other men and blend
My life with theirs, and like them perish in the end. (ll.1765-1775)*

Of course, this lust for experience, “the whole experience of mankind”, was a typically Romantic attitude. But it goes back well before the Romantic period to the Renaissance, when this lust was first revealed in Western culture. Only Goethe stands above this lust - or pretends to. He sees it as a temptation posed by the devil himself, which leads inexorably to disaster. It can be construed as a striving of man for God - but a true meeting never takes place, just as God and Adam in Michelangelo's famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel stretch out their hands towards each other but never quite meet. For

*Reason and knowledge, the highest powers of mankind,
You have rejected, to oblivion consigned.
Now let the Prince of lies confuse you,
With magic spells and fantasies delude you -
And I will have you then once and for all.*

For fate has given him a mind
 So restless, so impetuous, so unconfined
 That his impatient spirit, like a waterfall,
 Pours headlong over all the pleasures life can give.
 I'll plunge him into such distraction, he will live
 A life so futile, so banal and trite,
 He'll flap and flutter like a bird stuck tight.
 He is unsatiable, and so I'll tantalize
 Him, dangle food and drink before his greedy eyes.
 In vain he'll beg relief on bended knee,
 And even if he hadn't pledged himself to me,
 He'd still be damned for all eternity! (ll. 1851-1867)

So *Faust* is a parable of the fall of man, employing many religious themes, but from the point of view of a sceptic. Just as Adam strove for deification through tasting of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so Western, Faustian man strives for knowledge (experience) and power. To that end he embraces science, magic, art and the senses – but betrays his true love. Gretchen is redeemed for her simple faith, refusing to escape from prison with aid of the devil. But the sceptic Faust, who escapes with Mephistopheles, should be damned. He is not, because *Faust* has an inauthentic sequel in which Faust is saved in spite of his bargain with the devil. Goethe is moving away from authentic tragedy. For, as Robertson writes, “after the intense agony of the ‘Prison’ scene, an unspecified time passes, and at the beginning of Part II we find Faust lying on an Alpine meadow, attended by charming spirits who pity his distress and sing him to sleep. When he wakes the next morning, Faust is refreshed and ready to continue his career, thanks to the healing power of nature. Now this may seem unfair, indeed morally offensive. After all, Faust is responsible for Gretchen’s misery and death. One might feel that he should be punished. However, it seems that he has been punished enough by the agony of confronting Gretchen in prison. Thereafter his moral failure is treated as a medical problem. Not atonement, but healing, is prescribed. A spectacular act of atonement would do no good: it wouldn’t bring Gretchen back to life, and it would only prevent Faust from achieving his potential and, perhaps, doing more good in the world. Goethe is here moving beyond catharsis and beyond tragedy.”⁶⁵

Tragically, European man followed the path Goethe’s *Faust* had laid out. In striving to “achieve his potential” he lost his soul - and soulmate. Henceforth there would be no tragedies with a Divine, let alone a Christian dimension. The tragic heroes of later European *Kultur* would be “redeemed” by suffering and striving alone – in other words, by works, not by faith. Their justification would be the same as Faust’s: striving, which would give a quality of dynamism to Western civilization, but never of peace. At most, “redemption” would be achieved by the death of all the guilty, including the hero, as in the final scene of *Hamlet* or the battlefields of World War I – a most unsatisfactory ending,

⁶⁵ Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-98.

providing no real catharsis and certainly no joy. Like the spires of the medieval Gothic cathedrals, - interest in which, not coincidentally, Goethe revived in his early essay, "On German Architecture" (1772), - Faustian man strives always upwards and outwards, knowing that the Kingdom of heaven is no longer within him... This in contrast to the curves and domes of Eastern Orthodox architecture, which as it were keep the Kingdom *inside* the building. No striving, no achievement of potential, is needed there, only obedience in love...

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) greatly admired Goethe, but he was a very different man whose legacy pointed in a very different direction. What he shared with Goethe was his being a Classical Romantic. His classicism came with his education: he was, after all, the pupil of Haydn and Mozart, the greatest of the classical composers; and his "Early Period" (roughly 1795-1802) could best be characterized as "Haydnesque" (especially the First Symphony) with some Mozartean interludes (such as the Second Piano Concerto). Only in his piano works could something radically new be detected even at this early stage (for example, in the famous "Pathétique" and "Moonlight" sonatas).

One event appears to have triggered the transition to his earth-shaking "Middle Period" (roughly 1803-1813). This was the discovery that he was going deaf - a terrible affliction especially for a composer, which he movingly recorded in his famous "Heiligenstadt Testament" (1802). Then, with the writing of his "Eroica" symphony in 1803 he embarked upon that colossal series of masterpieces that smashed the conventions followed by Haydn and Mozart, a period, writes Harvey Sachs, "leaves one with a sense of wonder bordering on disbelief: the Third ('Eroica'), Fourth, Fifth, Sixth ('Pastoral'), Seventh and Eighth symphonies; *Leonora* (the name he gave to the first and second versions of his only opera); the Fourth and Fifth ('Emperor') piano concertos; the Violin and Triple concertos; the 'Waldstein', 'Appassionata' and 'Les Adieux' piano sonatas; the Ninth ('Kreutzer') and Tenth (G Major) violin sonatas; the Third Cello Sonata, op. 69; the String Quartets, op. 59 nos. 1 to 3 ('Razumovsky'), and op. 74 ('Harp'); the 'Ghost' and 'Archduke' trios for piano, violin and cello; the *Coriolan*, *Egmont* and three *Leonore* overtures; the Choral Fantasy for piano, orchestra, and chorus; and the Mass in C Major. Probably only Mozart and Schubert, in the last ten years of their brief lives, produced in a single decade as much that is still performed frequently all over the world as Beethoven between 1803 and 1813. During the same period, Hegel wrote his University of Jena lectures, later published as *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*Phenomenology of the Spirit* or *of the Mind*), which were crucial to establishing his reputation as a philosopher; Goethe gave the world *Faust*, Part One; Schiller produced *Wilhelm Tell*; and Blake's *Milton* and the first two cantos of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* appeared. But none of these works - not even *Faust* - occupied as much space in its specific area as Beethoven's works of that decade have occupied in theirs.

“These were the works that gave birth to the familiar image of Beethoven as a tempestuous genius who shook his fist at fate and, Jove-like, loosed musical lightning bolts that welded the rationalistic Enlightenment ideals of the just-ended eighteenth century, in which he had spent roughly the first half of his life, to the stormy Romantic individualism of the newborn nineteenth. By the time he reached middle age, his startling originality had made him a European musical icon, and his much-discussed intransigence and eccentricity had become a symbol of untrammelled artistic freedom.”⁶⁶

If Beethoven’s Early Period showed him as a Classical artist, albeit a highly unusual and talented one, in the Middle Period he was predominantly the Romantic artist – indeed, the prototypical Romantic. Apart from the features mentioned by Sachs, we may point to his extremely high estimate of the role of art in general and music in particular, which was so typical of the romantics. “Music,” he said, “is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks and invents.”

For the romantics, as we have seen, the artistic genius as a God-seer or demi-god, lighting the path through the storm and stress and darkness of earthly life to the Divine Light of Heaven, was a familiar theme. We find the same idea in Goethe, who wrote: “As a temporal gospel, true poetry announces itself by knowing how to liberate us, through internal serenity and external pleasure, from the earthly burdens that weigh us down. Like a balloon, it lifts us and the ballast that we carry, into higher regions, leaving earth’s tangled paths lying spread out before us in a bird’s-eye view.”

But even at the height of his most Romantic, Middle Period, Beethoven displays important differences from Goethe. Thus the latter’s amorality with starkly at odds with Beethoven’s stern moralism. For if for Goethe sin was not natural and inevitable, and therefore not really sinful, Beethoven was quite different. Thus his struggle to obtain the wardship of his nephew Karl because of the immoral behaviour of Karl’s mother was a struggle that lasted many years and cost him a great deal both financially and emotionally. Again, he was appalled by the popularity of the “frivolous” Rossini’s operas; for him, music was too intensely serious and important to be used in such a way – the later Romantic attitude of “art for art’s sake” was profoundly foreign to him. Again, his only venture into opera scrupulously avoided the sensuality and illicit love of almost all great operas from Monteverdi’s *L’Incoronazione di Poppaea* to Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, from Verdi’s *La Traviata* to Puccini’s *La Bohème*, being a hymn to marital *fidelity*.

Beethoven was different also in his more conventional but at the same time more authentic, religiosity. Sachs argues, on the contrary, that Beethoven shared the ideas expressed in “Benjamin Constant’s treatise, *De la religion*, in which the French writer and statesman essentially equated true religion with spirituality – a quality natural to all human beings, he said – whereas formal,

⁶⁶ Sachs, *The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1924*, London: Faber & Faber, 2010, pp. 46-47.

imposed religion is inimical to the human spirit. 'Religion has been disfigured,' Constant wrote. 'Man has been pursued right to his last place of asylum, to this intimate sanctuary of his existence. Persecution provokes rebellion... There is a principle in us that becomes indignant at every intellectual fetter. This principle can be whipped into a furor; it can be the cause of many a crime; but it is connected to everything that is noble in our nature. Surely Constant's anti-dogmatic, anti-Establishment, nondoctrinaire, informal, open-minded, and indeed Romantic approach to spirituality is closely linked to Beethoven's beliefs..."⁶⁷

However, in his Late Period Beethoven enters a deeply religious phase of his career, which, while still revolutionary, cannot easily be described in such terms. The critical transition from the Middle to the Late Period in Beethoven's music – the relatively fallow years 1813-1823 – went in parallel with, and may well have been influenced by, an important political transition: the defeat of Napoleon and the Revolution and the return of Divine right monarchy in the form of the Bourbon Kings Louis XVIII and Charles X. Unlike so many romantic artists of the period, Beethoven appears to have been in no way upset by this turn of events, and gladly composed two anti-revolutionary pieces ("The Glorious Moment" and "Wellington's Victory") that he performed before all the crowned heads of Europe at the Congress of Vienna in November, 1814. It would be going beyond the evidence we have to say that Beethoven the lover of freedom, who had removed Napoleon from the dedication of his *Eroica* symphony when he became Emperor because of his despotic tendencies, had now repented of his earlier liberalism and become a reactionary. Nevertheless, there is marked return to classicism, if not in form, at any rate in spirit, in his Late Period works which seems to parallel the return to older forms of government in Europe as a whole. Only this is a revolutionary, new form of classicism which appears to combine classicism with romanticism in a unique – and uniquely religious – mixture.

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Beethoven's Last Period begins with the *Missa Solemnis*, a setting of the Catholic Mass. Elements in the musical style hark back to earlier, more Christian ages, such as the Bachian fugues⁶⁸; and Donald Tovey remarks that "Not even Bach or Handel can show a greater sense of space and of sonority. There is no earlier choral writing that comes so near to recovering some of the lost secrets of the style of Palestrina. There is no choral and no orchestral writing, earlier or later, that shows a more thrilling sense of the individual colour of every chord, every position, and every doubled third or discord."

More important, however, than these formal characteristics is the *content*. Not since the stupendous *Kyrie* of Bach's B Minor Mass had the West produced

⁶⁷ Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁶⁸ The use of this "old-fashioned" stylistic form is characteristic of Beethoven's late works, as in the "Hammerclavier" piano sonata or the *Grosse Fuge* for strings.

a work of such unequivocally *sincere faith*. And if sincere, then it cannot, of course, be described as undogmatic, especially in the *Credo*. It is significant that the work was first performed in 1824 in Orthodox St. Petersburg, not Catholic Vienna, under the patronage of Prince Nikolai Golitsyn, who commissioned many of his late sonatas and string quartets.

In the same year of 1824 Beethoven published his most famous work, the Ninth Symphony. The first three movements constitute as it were a summing up of his Middle Period – the tragic drama in the first movement, the colossal energy in the second, the profound lyricism in the third. But in the fourth, after the orchestra repeats the beginning of each of the first three movements, these are rejected in turn in order to make way for a new theme, the famous “Joy” melody that has become the “national anthem” of the European Union. This is followed by the soloists and chorus singing Schiller’s *Ode to Joy* – evidently this is the “new word” by which Beethoven means to characterize his new music, the music of his Late Period.

*All creatures drink Joy
At Nature’s breast;
All the good, all the bad
Follow her rose-bedecked trail.*

We might be tempted at first to think that the Joy in question is some sort of nature-worship. But Beethoven’s God is not the same as Goethe’s pantheist deity. First of all, the passage ends with the word “God” thundered out at length in a huge *fortissimo*. And secondly, this God is clearly a personal God, as both the words and the “solemn, even liturgical” music, ending in a mysterious *pianissimo*,⁶⁹ indicate:

*Be embraced, you millions!
By this kiss for the whole world!
Brothers, a loving Father must live
Above the canopy of the stars.*

So for Beethoven the message is that joy is possible for all, but not in the worship of nationalist-imperialist heroes such as Napoleon, but in a truly universalist union under the one, personal and transcendent God; the saviour is not nature, as Goethe thought, but the Creator of nature. Could Beethoven’s meeting with Tsar Alexander, whom he met in 1814 and who had a very similar vision of pan-European unity under the one Christian God, have influenced him? Perhaps; and it is indeed intriguing that Beethoven’s encounter with the Tsar and his relationship with his devoted Russian patrons (Count Razumovsky and Prince Nikolai Golitsyn) took place at this time.

It was a unique and decisive moment in European history, when the Orthodox East stretched out its hand to the Catholic/Protestant West, and the

⁶⁹ Sachs, *op. cit.*, pp. 158, 159.

White Tsar entered Berlin and Vienna - even godless Paris and London. But the decision went the wrong way: intrigued, and briefly grateful to their "barbarian" liberators, the Europeans nevertheless continued along their Faustian path. "The Gendarme of Europe" continued to defend them against the real barbarians - but, a generation later, there was none of the former curiosity or gratitude...

As for Beethoven, increasingly isolated from society, sick, misunderstood and lonely, he entered deep within himself, producing some of the most profoundly poignant and original works of Western music. (His great contemporary, Schubert, called for Beethoven's String Quartet in C sharp minor, opus 131, to be played at his deathbed.) Critics have called these works "mystical", but of course there can be no true mysticism where there is not the mystery of the true faith and the True Church. Nevertheless, we may be confident that Beethoven rejected the path of Faustian man; for his heart thirsted, not for the ephemeral goals of the Faustian dream, but for the living God...

January 20 / February 2, 2018; revised February 1/14, 2018.

6. EAST EUROPEAN ORTHODOXY AND THE KGB

One of the biggest fruits of *glasnost'* – which did not, however, lead to a real ecclesiastical *perestroika* – was the confirmation in January, 1992, by a Commission of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet investigating the causes and circumstances of the 1991 putsch, that for several decades at least the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate had been KGB agents.

Members of the commission - L. Ponomarev, V. Polosin and Fr. Gleb Yakunin – obtained access to the records of the fourth, Church department of the KGB's Fifth Directorate (in which the future president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, had worked), and revealed that Metropolitans Juvenal of Krutitsa, Pitirim of Volokolamsk, Philaret of Kiev and Philaret of Minsk were all KGB agents, with the codenames "Adamant", "Abbat", "Antonov" and "Ostrovsky".

This "news" was hardly unexpected. In 1989 Kharchev, Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, confirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church was rigorously controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, especially its Ideological Department, and by the KGB.⁷⁰ Again, Victor Sheimov, a former KGB major with responsibilities for upgrading the KGB's communications security system until his defection in 1980, described the Fifth Directorate as being "responsible for suppressing ideological dissent, running the Soviet Orthodox Church and laying the groundwork for the First Chief Directorate's subversive promotion of favourable opinion about the country's position and policy."⁷¹ One of Sheimov's jobs was to draft agents to infiltrate the "Soviet Orthodox Church". Again, in 1992 a former KGB agent, A. Shushpanov, described his experiences working in the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations. He said that most of the people working there were in fact KGB agents.⁷²

But it was the Commission's report on March 6 that contained the most shocking revelations: "KGB agents, using such aliases as Sviatoslav, Adamant, Mikhailov, Nesterovich, Ognev and others, made trips abroad, organised by the Russian Orthodox Department of External Relations [which was headed by Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev), the future patriarch], performing missions assigned to them by the leadership of the KGB. The nature of their missions shows that this department was inseparably linked with the state and that it had emerged as a covert centre of KGB agents among the faithful."

Again: "The Commission draws the attention of the Russian Orthodox Church leadership to the fact that the Central Committee of the CPSU and KGB

⁷⁰ Kharchev, *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts), 1992, № 8, p. 5.

⁷¹ Sheimov, *Tower of Secrets*, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1993, p. 418, in "The New Soviet Man", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, June 3/16, 1996.

⁷² Shushpanov, *Moskovskie Novosti* (Moscow News), 12 July, 1992, p. 20, in "The New Soviet Man", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, June 3/16, 1996.

agencies have used a number of church bodies for their purposes by recruiting and planting KGB agents. Such deep infiltration by intelligence service agents into religious associations poses a serious threat to society and the State. Agencies that are called upon to ensure State security can thus exert uncontrolled impact on religious associations numbering millions of members, and through them on the situation at home and abroad."⁷³

The findings of the Commission included:- (i) the words of the head of the KGB Yuri Andropov to the Central Committee sometime in the 1970s: "The organs of state security keep the contacts of the Vatican with the Russian Orthodox Church under control..."; (ii) "At the 6th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, the religious delegation from the USSR contained 47 (!) agents of the KGB, including religious authorities, clergy and technical personnel" (July, 1983); (iii) "The most important were the journeys of agents 'Antonov', 'Ostrovsky' and 'Adamant' to Italy for conversations with the Pope of Rome on the question of further relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church, and in particular regarding the problems of the uniates" (1989).⁷⁴

The Commission also discovered that the patriarch himself was an agent with the codename "Drozdov" (he was thought to have the rank of major). This was not made public because, writes Fen Montaigne, "members of the parliamentary commission had told the patriarch that they would not name him as an agent if he began cleaning house in the church and acknowledging the breadth of cooperation between the church and the KGB. 'So far, we have kept silence because we wanted to give the patriarch a chance,' said Alexander Nezhny, a journalist who said his comparison of the archives and church bulletins convinced him that Alexis II is indeed 'Drozdov'."⁷⁵

Later investigations confirmed the fact. Thus on March 18, 1996 the Estonian newspaper *Postimees* published the following KGB report from the Estonian

⁷³ Fr. George Edelshtein, "Double Agents in the Church", *Moscow News*, August 26, 2005.

⁷⁴ For more details of the parliamentary commission's revelations, see *Priamoj Put'* (The Straight Path), №№ 1-2, January, 1992, p. 1; № 3, February, 1992, p. 1; February, 1992; Alexander Nezhny, "Tret'e Imia" (The Third Name), *Ogonek* (Little Fire), № 4 (3366), January 25 - February 1, 1992; Iain Walker and Chester Stern, "Holy Agents of the KGB", *The Mail on Sunday*, March 29, 1992; John Dunlop, "KGB Subversion of Russian Orthodox Church", *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, № 12, March 20, 1992, pp. 51-53; "Three Leading Moscow Hierarchs Unveiled as KGB Operatives", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, № 3, May-June, 1992, pp. 25-29; Protodeacon Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "A ne nachalo li eto kontsa?" (Is this not the Beginning of the End?), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 9 (1462), May 1/14, 1992, pp. 609; "Ne bo vragom Tvoim povem..." (I will not give Thy secret to Thine enemy...), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), № 1, 1992, pp. 16-22; Fr. Victor Potapov, "*Molchaniem predaetsa Bog*" ("God is Betrayed by Silence"), Moscow: Isikhia, 1992, pp. 36-39; Joseph Harriss, "The Gospel according to Marx", *Reader's Digest*, February, 1993, pp. 59-63. See also I.I. Maslova, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' i KGB (1960-1980-e gody)" (The Russian Orthodox Church and the KGB (1960s to 1980s), *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), December, 2005, pp. 86-87.

⁷⁵ Montaigne, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on May 3, 1992; quoted in "The Church of the KGB", *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XIV, № 2, March-April, 1992, pp. 22-23.

SSR: "Agent 'Drozdov', born in 1929, a priest of the Orthodox Church, has a higher education, a degree in theology, speaks Russian and Estonian perfectly, and some limited German. He enlisted on February 28, 1958 out of patriotic feelings in order to expose and drive out the anti-Soviet elements among the Orthodox clergy, with whom he has connections, which represents an overriding interest to the KGB agencies. At the time of enlistment it was taken into consideration that in the future (after securing his practical work) he would be promoted through the available channels to Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia. In the period of his collaboration with the organs of the KGB, 'Drozdov' has proved himself in a positive manner, is accurate in his reports, energetic and sociable. He understands theological matters and international situations well, is eager to carry out tasks given him by us and has already presented a good quantity of worthy material... After securing the agent in practical jobs for the agencies of state security concretely worked out, we intend to use him to further our interests by sending him into the capitalist countries as a member of ecclesiastical organizations."⁷⁶

Nevertheless, what had been revealed was so shocking that the parliamentary commission was closed down by Ruslan Khasbulatov, the President of the Supreme Soviet, at the insistence, according to Ponomarev, of Patriarch Alexis and the head of the KGB, Yevgeny Primakov. One of the commission's members, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, was accused of betraying state secrets to the United States and threatened with a private persecution. Fr. Gleb remained defiant. He wrote to the Patriarch in 1994: "If the Church is not cleansed of the taint of the spy and informer, it cannot be reborn. Unfortunately, only one archbishop – Archbishop Chrysostom of Lithuania – has had the courage publicly to acknowledge that in the past he worked as an agent, and has revealed his codename: RESTAVRATOR. No other Church hierarch has followed his example, however.

"The most prominent agents of the past include DROZDOV – the only one of the churchmen to be officially honoured with an award by the KGB of the USSR, in 1988, for outstanding intelligence services – ADAMANT, OSTROVSKY, MIKHAILOV, TOPAZ AND ABBAT. It is obvious that none of these or the less exalted agents is preparing to repent. On the contrary, they deliver themselves of pastoral maxims on the allegedly neutral character of informing on the Church, and articles have appeared in the Church press justifying the role of the informer as essential for the survival of the Church in an anti-religious state.

"The codenames I discovered in the archives of the KGB belong to the top hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate."

⁷⁶ *Estonian State Archive*, record group 131, file 393, pp. 125-126; James Meek, "File links church leader to KGB", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 13, 1999; Seamus Martin, "Russian Patriarch was (is?) a KGB agent, files say Patriarch Alexej II received KGB 'Certificate of Honour'", *Irish Times*, September 23, 2000; Arnold Beichman, "Patriarch with a KGB Past", *The Washington Times*, September 29, 2000.

After citing this letter, Vasily Mitrokhin, former chief archivist of the KGB, and Professor Christopher Andrew comment: "The letter to Aleksii II was unprecedented in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church – for, as the Patriarch must surely have been aware, DROZDOV, the most important of the KGB agents discovered by Father Gleb in the KGB archives, was in fact himself..."⁷⁷

In April, 1992, Archbishop Chrysostom of Vilnius said in an interview: "I cooperated with the KGB... but I was not a stool-pigeon.... Yes, we – or, at any rate, I, and I am saying this in the first place about myself – cooperated with the KGB. I cooperated, I gave my signature, I had regular meetings, I gave reports. I have my pseudonym or nickname, as they say – 'Restavrator'. I cooperated with them consciously so as insistently to pursue my own church line – a patriotic line, too, as I understood it, with the help of these organs. I was never a stool-pigeon, I was not an informer... But together with those among us hierarchs, there are still more among the priests, there is a mass of unworthy, immoral people. It was this immorality, in the absence of a church court among us, that the KGB used. They defended them from us, the ruling bishops, so that we could not punish them."⁷⁸

In the same year he declared to the Council of Bishops of the MP: "In our Church there are genuine members of the KGB, who have made head-spinning careers; for example, Metropolitan Methodius of Voronezh. He is a KGB officer [code-name PAUL], an atheist, a liar, who is constantly advised by the KGB. The Synod was unanimously against such a bishop, but we had to take upon us such a sin. And then what a rise he had!" According to ex-KGB agent Konstantin Preobrazhensky, Methodius was in fact not only a KGB agent, but "a regular officer of the GRU, the Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Defence Ministry". In the KGB they call such people 'officers of deep cover'. There are quite a few of them in today's Moscow Patriarchate."⁷⁹

At the same Council, a commission of eight MP bishops headed by Bishop Alexander of Kostroma was formed to investigate the charges of collaboration with the KGB. This commission has up to now (twenty-six years later) produced absolutely nothing! In view of the lack of a clear-out of KGB hierarchs, it remains true that, as the saying went, "the MP is the last surviving department of the KGB" or "the second administration of the Soviet state".

Writing in 1995, John Dunlop concluded that "the overwhelming majority of the current one hundred and nineteen bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate were ordained to the episcopacy prior to August of 1991. This suggests that each of these bishops was carefully screened and vetted by both the ideological apparatus of the Communist Party and by the KGB."⁸⁰ Keston College came to

⁷⁷ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, London and New York: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1999, p. 661.

⁷⁸ *Rossijskaia Gazeta*, 1992, № 52, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Preobrazhensky, "Ecumenism and Intelligence".

⁸⁰ Dunlop, "The Moscow Patriarchate as an Empire-Saving Institution", in Michael Bourdeaux,

the same conclusion.⁸¹

In fact, according to Preobrazhensky, “*Absolutely all* [my italics – V.M.] the bishops and the overwhelming majority of the priests worked with the KGB. After all, the Church was considered to be a hostile medium, and it had to be controlled through agents. Even the very mechanism of appointing bishops allowed only agents there.

“Bishops were put into the nomenklatura of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and so each one was confirmed by the Ideological department. And what department sent documents there for important personnel appointments? You’re right: the KGB. The certificate on the future bishop was prepared by the Fifth administration, which carried out a general watch over the Church, together with the spy service, if he had been even once abroad. Each of the certificates ended with the same phrase: ‘He has been cooperating since such-and-such a year’.

“This was precisely the most important thing for the Central Committee of the CPSU! This phrase witnessed to the fact that the future bishop was not only loyal to Soviet power, but was hanging from it by a hook: after all, there are unfailingly compromising materials on every agent! And this means that no dissident outbursts were to be expected from this bishop...”⁸²

Other leading hierarchs in the Soviet bloc were communist agents. Thus Patriarch Ilia of Georgia was enrolled as an agent in 1962 – and still remains in power today, in 2018. Metropolitan Savva of Poland was recruited by the Polish communist security forces in 1966, with the codename “Yurek”. Another Polish Church leader, Metropolitan Basil, was also an agent.⁸³

The Romanian hierarchy was thoroughly penetrated. So was the Bulgarian. Metropolitan Nicholas (Corneanu) of Banat confessed that he had collaborated with the Securitate, the Romanian equivalent of the KGB, and had defrocked the priest Fr. George Calciu for false political reasons, but nevertheless declared that if he had not made such compromises he would have been forced to abandon his post, “which in the conditions of the time would not have been good for the Church”. In other words, as Vladimir Kozyrev writes: “It means: ‘I dishonoured the Church and my Episcopal responsibility, I betrayed those whom I had to protect, I scandalized my flock. But all this I had to do for the good of the Church!’”⁸⁴

M.E. Sharp (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, 1995, Armonk, NY, p. 29.

⁸¹ Felix Corbey, “The Patriarch and the KGB”, *Keston News Service*, September 21, 2000.

⁸² Preobrazhensky, *KGB v russkoj emigratsii* (The KGB in the Russian emigration), New York: Liberty Publishing House, 2006, p. 41.

⁸³ “World Orthodoxy: Savva of Poland admits collaboration with Secret Police”, <http://newsnftu.blogspot.com/2009/05/world-orthodoxy-sava-of-poland-admits.html>.

⁸⁴ Kozyrev, “[orthodox-synod] Re: The Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian persecuted Church”, orthodox-synod@yahooogroups.com. 28 November, 2002.

The first Serbian patriarch to be an agent of the Yugoslav equivalent of the KGB was Patriarch German from about 1960. This fact drew from Archbishop Averky of Jordanville the just demand that the Russian Church Abroad break all communion with the Serbian Church. Unfortunately, ROCOR went in the opposite direction, and in 2007 joined the KGB church of Moscow...

These facts, which had the capacity to shock some years ago, now only elicit boredom or mockery from the vast majority of World Orthodox. They have either "forgiven" their KGB hierarchs, or they think that their membership of the organization that has killed vastly more Christians than any other in world history was perfectly alright - perhaps even wise and necessary. This indifference to truth and justice witnesses to the inner gracelessness of World Orthodoxy and its inevitable judgement at the hands of Almighty God.

*January 27 / February 9, 2018.
Translation of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom.*

7. MERCY AND JUDGEMENT

Neither is God's mercy without judgment, nor is His judgment without mercy.
St. Basil the Great.

“Of mercy and judgement will I sing unto Thee, O Lord”, says the Psalmist (100.1). And at no time in the Church year (with the possible exception of Holy Week), do we think more about this profound subject than today, the Sunday of the Last Judgement. But it is a subject that our age finds particularly difficult to discuss, because, to put it bluntly, most people today, even so-called believers, do not believe in God’s judgement...

In this connection, it is commonplace in the West to draw a distinction between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament, it is said, emphasizes God’s judgement, while the New Testament dwells rather on His mercy. This is nonsense. God’s mercy, as St. Basil says, is always, in both the Old and the New Testaments, intertwined with His mercy, and vice-versa. If there is a difference between the two Testaments, it is that in the Old Testament, excluding certain passages from the Prophets, we see God’s judgement and mercy played out on a merely terrestrial plane, as it were, while in the New the perspective is widened to include the whole of the cosmos in the whole of time and eternity, making God’s justice infinitely more terrifying and His mercy infinitely more wonderful!

To the great discomfort of the “unbelieving believers”, nobody speaks more about God’s justice, and in more terrifying words, than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Those who believe that “God is merciful” means “God will forgive everyone, and bring everyone into Paradise” simply haven’t read the Lord’s words about, for example, the Galilean cities around Him: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you: it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell, for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you, that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you” (Matthew 11.21-24).

It is sometimes thought that since Christ abrogated some Old Testament laws, such as the lex talionis, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”, therefore the NT law must be softer, more merciful. But a glance at the Sermon on the Mount will cure one of any such thought. The OT had certain penalties for certain external actions, for example, murder. But the NT judges not only the external action, but also the inner disposition, for example, anger. And the penalty for that is much harsher. Thus “whosoever says ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hellfire” (Matthew 5.22). Personal vengeance is forbidden. But that does not mean that God will not avenge: “Vengeance is Mine – I will repay!”

For, as St. John of Damascus writes, “a judge justly punishes one who is guilty of wrongdoing; and if he does not punish him he is himself a wrongdoer. In punishing him the judge is not the cause either of the wrongdoing or of the vengeance taken against the wrongdoer, the cause being the wrongdoer’s freely chosen actions. Thus too God, Who saw what was going to happen as if it had already happened, judged it as if it had taken place; and if it was evil, that was the cause of its being punished. It was God Who created man, so of course He created him in goodness; but man did evil of his own free choice, and is himself the cause of the vengeance that overtakes him.”⁸⁵

Thus justice has an absolute value in and of itself; and if the New Testament has brought other values to the fore, such as mercy, these have in no way superseded justice. Moreover, if the new law is superior to the old, this is not because the old law is unjust, but because the new law, unlike the old, destroys evil not merely *externally*, in the realm of action, but *internally*, in the realm of the mind and the heart...

In any case, according to the new law, too, evil must be balanced by an equal and opposite good – justice must be done. The difference is that according to the new law the counter-balancing good must be offered not only by the offender, but also by the victim. Thus the offender must *repent*, and the victim must *forgive*; if there is both repentance and forgiveness, then the debt of justice is paid. But if a victim does not forgive his offender he is himself offending and adding to the total of injustice in the world. Why? First, because «all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God» (Romans 3.23), so that all the suffering we receive is, if we would only recognize it, the just repayment of our sins. And secondly, because all sin is, in the first place, sin against God, not man; for as David says: «Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightiest be justified in Thy words and prevail when Thou art judged» (Psalms 50.6). Therefore if we are to be justified before the Just Judge, we must at all times recognize that we are offenders, not victims. That is why «if we condemned ourselves, we would not be condemned» (I Corinthians 11.31).

However, the new law goes still further. If the repentance of the offender is not deep enough to expiate his sin, the victim may *take that sin upon himself*, suffering in his place. All that is required of the offender is that he accepts the gift with gratitude. This is an act of mercy that at the same time restores justice. For even under the old law, a man who is in prison because he cannot pay his debts can still be released if somebody else pays his debts. For it is not important who pays the debt, so long as the debt is paid *and justice is done*. And the great joy for Christians is that *Christ has paid that price...*

In Christ's redemptive suffering, we find the new law put into practice to a heightened and supremely paradoxical degree. For, on the one hand, since

⁸⁵ St. John of Damascus, *Dialogue against the Manichaeans*, 37.

Christ alone of all men was without sin, He alone had no need to suffer, He alone suffered unjustly. But on the other hand, for the same reason He alone could suffer *for* all men, He alone could be the perfect Victim, by Him alone could justice be perfectly satisfied. All other sacrifices for sin are tainted since they are offered from a sinful nature. Only a *sinless* human nature could offer a true sacrifice for sin.

Christ suffered all the consequences of sin, even to death, the death of the Cross, which meant that His suffering was immeasurably greater than ours insofar as His nature is immeasurably holier than ours. Thus He suffered the whole wrath of God against sin in the place of us sinners, becoming "the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1.29). "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53.4-5).

In the Cross we see both justice and mercy. In the centre is Christ, the perfectly sinless God and man Who suffered for the sins of the whole world - and the whole world could have received mercy if it had recognized its sin, recognized the justice of its punishment, and turned to the Redeemer in faith and gratitude. This is what the good thief on the right did (the Greek word describing him in the liturgical services is "eugnomon", "grateful"), and he went up to heaven. But the bad thief did not recognize the justice of his fate, did not believe, and went down to hell. And so "*In the midst of two thieves, Thy Cross was found to be a balance-beam ("merilo") of justice.*"⁸⁶

So the Cross is perfect justice - but justice of a supremely paradoxical kind. In St. Maximus' words, it is "the judgement of judgement"⁸⁷. Sin, that is, injustice, is completely blotted out - but by the unjust death and Sacrifice of the Only Sinless and Just One. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8.3) and died the death of a sinner, uttering the words expressive of sinners' horror at their abandonment by God. The innocent Head died that the guilty Body should live. He, the Just One, Who committed no sin, took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. When we could not pay the price, He paid it for us; when we were dead in sin, He died to give us life. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (I Peter 3.18). And the self-sacrificial love of this sacrifice was so great in the eyes of Divine justice that it blotted out the sins of the whole world - of all men, that is, who respond to this free gift with gratitude and repentance.

The Church has expressed this paradox with great eloquence in its service for the Exaltation of the Cross: "Come, all ye peoples, and let us venerate the blessed Wood, through which the eternal justice has been brought to pass. For he who by a tree deceived our forefather Adam, is by the Cross himself

⁸⁶ *Triodion*, Ninth Hour, Glory..., Troparion.

⁸⁷ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassius*, PG 90:408D.

deceived; and he who by tyranny gained possession of the creature endowed by God with royal dignity, is overthrown in headlong fall. By the Blood of God the poison of the serpent is washed away; and the curse of a just condemnation is loosed by the unjust punishment inflicted on the Just. For it was fitting that wood should be healed by wood, and that through the Passion of One Who knew not passion should be remitted all the sufferings of him who was condemned because of wood. But glory to Thee, O Christ our King, for Thy dread dispensation towards us, whereby Thou hast saved us all, for Thou art good and lovest mankind."⁸⁸

So there is no conflict between justice and love. To say that God should be loving but not just is like saying that the sun should give light but not heat: it is simply not in His nature. It is not in His nature, and it is not in the nature of any created being, for the simple reason that justice *is* the order of created beings, it is the state of being as it was originally created.

For, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes: "God is named Justice because He satisfies the needs of all things, dispensing due proportion, beauty and order, and defines the bounds of all orders and places each thing under its appropriate laws and orders according to that rule which is most truly just, and because he is the Cause of the independent activity of each. For the Divine Justice orders and assigns limits to all things and keeps all things distinct from and unmixed with one another and gives to all beings that which belongs to each according to the dignity of each. And, to speak truly, all who censure the Divine Justice unknowingly confess themselves to be manifestly unjust. For they say that immortality should be in mortal creatures and perfection in the imperfect and self-motivation in the alter-motivated and sameness in the changeable and perfect power in the weak, and that the temporal should be eternal, things which naturally move immutable, temporal pleasures eternal, and to sum up, they assign the properties of one thing to another. They should know, however, that the Divine justice is essentially true Justice in that it gives to all things that which befits the particular dignity of each and preserves the nature of each in its own proper order and power."⁸⁹

When people say that God is loving but not just, or that His justice demonstrates a lack of love, they do not know what they are saying. For His love is aimed precisely towards the restoration of justice, the restoration of "the nature of each in its own proper order and power", in which alone lies its blessedness. And if the restoration of justice involves suffering, this is not the fault of God, but of His creatures, who freely go against their nature as God created it and thereby create injustice, which can only be abolished through suffering.

⁸⁸ *Festal Menaion*, September 14, Great Vespers of the Exaltation of the Cross, "Lord, I have cried", "Glory... Both now..."

⁸⁹ St. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, VIII.

“If we hold the view,” says Archbishop Seraphim (Soloviev), “that God is only love, and do not bear in mind that He is also the righteous Judge, then we can come to the opinion that from God there proceeds only all-forgiveness, and so there will come a time when all sinners together with the demons will be forgiven, the eternal torments will come to an end and there will be only one eternal blessedness for all rational beings. But this opinion contradicts Divine Revelation – its witness that God will reward each man in accordance with his works, as well as the direct teaching of the Saviour on His terrible judgement and on the future unending life with eternal blessedness for the righteous and eternal torments for sinful people and demons.

“That Divine justice is at work in our salvation is witnessed by the church chant: ‘Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thine honourable blood’... The very concept of redemption contains within itself a juridical element, for it signifies buying up or satisfaction. But this satisfaction could not be demanded by Divine love, which gives everything for free. It was demanded by Divine justice. If only love were at work in our salvation, then the sacrifice of Christ on the cross would not have been necessary. Then the very word ‘redemption’ would not have been in the Holy Scriptures. But besides the welcoming words of the Apostle Paul, where he speaks about redemption (Galatians 3.13), we also have the witness of the Apostle Peter, who also gives us this concept of redemption with a juridical meaning in the words: ‘You have not been redeemed by corruptible silver or gold..., but by the precious blood... of Christ’ (I Peter 1.18-19).”⁹⁰

Modern man rejects the role of Divine justice in our salvation because he cannot understand that justice, he finds it unjust. But God is justified in His words and prevails when He is judged by those who accuse Him of injustice. As He says through the Prophet Ezekiel: “Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways” (Ezekiel 18.29-30.). Again, the Prophet Malachi says: “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgement?” (Malachi 2.17). But God is not unequal in His ways, and He is always the God of judgement.

Nor is justice a kind of cold, abstract principle imposed upon Him from without, as it were. As Vladimir Lossky writes: “We should not depict God either as a constitutional monarch subject to a justice that goes beyond Him, or as a tyrant whose whim would create a law without order or objectivity. Justice is not an abstract reality superior to God but an expression of His nature. Just

⁹⁰ Archbishop Seraphim, “V Velikuiu Subbotu. O sovместnom dejstvii bozhestvennogo pravosudia i bozhestvennoj ljubvi v dele nashego iskuplenia” (For Great Saturday. On the joint action of Divine justice and Divine love in the work of our redemption), in *Ob istinnom monarkhicheskom mirosozertsanii* (On the True Monarchical World-View), St. Petersburg, 1994, p. 199.

as He freely creates yet manifests Himself in the order and beauty of creation, so He manifests Himself in His justice: Christ Who is Himself justice, affirms in His fullness God's justice... *God's justice is that man should no longer be separated from God. It is the restoration of humanity in Christ, the true Adam.*"⁹¹

Love and justice may be seen as the positive and negative poles respectively of God's Providence in relation to the created universe. Love is the natural, that is, just relationship between God and man. Sin has destroyed love and created injustice. Divine Providence therefore acts to destroy injustice and restore love. We would not need to speak of justice if sin had not destroyed it. But with the entrance of sin, justice is the first necessity – love demands it.

However, since love never demands of others what it cannot give itself, the justice of God is transmuted into *mercy*. Mercy is that form of justice in which the punishment of sin is removed from the shoulders of the offender and placed on the shoulders of another, who thereby becomes a propitiatory *sacrifice*. Thus the Cross is both love and justice, both mercy and sacrifice. It is the perfect manifestation of love, and the perfect satisfaction of justice. It is "the mercy of peace", in the words of the Divine Liturgy, the mercy that restores peace between God and man.

This intertwining of the themes of love and justice in the Cross of Christ is developed with incomparable grace by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow: "Draw closer and examine the threatening face of God's justice, and you will exactly discern in it the meek gaze of God's love. Man by his sin has fenced off from himself the everlasting source of God's love: and this love is armed with righteousness and judgement – for what? – to destroy this stronghold of division. But since the insignificant essence of the sinner would be irreparably crushed under the blows of purifying Justice, the inaccessible Lover of souls sends His consubstantial Love, that is, His Only-begotten Son, so that He Who 'upholds all things by the word of His power' (Hebrews 1.3), might also bear the heaviness of our sins, and the heaviness of the justice advancing towards us, in the flesh of ours that He took upon Himself: and, having Alone extinguished the arrows of wrath, sharpened against the whole of humanity, might reveal in his wounds on the Cross the unblocked springs of mercy and love which was to the whole land that had once been cursed - blessings, life and beatitude. Thus did God love the world.

"But if the Heavenly Father out of love for the world gives up His Only-begotten Son; then equally the Son out of love for man gives Himself up; and as love crucifies, so is love crucified. For although 'the Son can do nothing of Himself', neither can he do anything in spite of Himself. He 'does not seek His own will' (John 5.19 and 31), but for that reason is the eternal heir and possessor of the will of His Father. 'He abides in His love', but in it He Himself receives into His love all that is loved by the Father, as he says: 'As the Father hath loved

⁹¹ Lossky, "Christological Dogma", *Orthodox Theology*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989, pp. 114-115. My italics (V.M.).

Me, so have I loved you' (John 15.9). And in this way the love of the Heavenly Father is extended to the world through the Son: the love of the Only-begotten Son of God at the same time ascends to the Heavenly Father and descends to the world. Here let him who has eyes see the most profound foundation and primordial inner constitution of the Cross, out of the love of the Son of God for His All-holy Father and love for sinful humanity, the two loves intersecting with, and holding on to, each other, apparently dividing up what was one, but in fact uniting the divided into one. Love for God is zealous for God – love for man is merciful to man. Love for God demands that the law of God's righteousness should be observed – love for man does not abandon the transgressor of the law to perish in his unrighteousness. Love for God strives to strike the enemy of God – love for man makes the Divinity man, so as by means of love for God mankind might be deified, and while love for God 'lifts the Son of man from the earth' (John 12.32 and 34), love for man opens the embraces of the Son of God for the earthborn, these opposing strivings of love intersect, dissolve into each other, balance each other and make of themselves that wonderful heart of the Cross, on which forgiving 'mercy' and judging 'truth meet together', God's 'righteousness' and man's 'peace kiss each other', through which heavenly 'truth is sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness' no longer with a threatening eye 'hath looked down from heaven. Yea, for the Lord will give goodness, and our land shall yield her fruit' (Psalms 84.11-13)."⁹²

St. Macarius "Nevsky", metropolitan of Moscow (+1926), summed up the matter: "The justice of God demands the punishment of the sinner, but the love of God demands clemency. According to the justice of God, the sinner, as having nothing by which he could satisfy this eternal justice, must be subject to eternal torments. But love demands mercy. The Wisdom of God found a means to satisfy both justice and love. This means is the Redemptive Sacrifice of the Son of God. Christ paid by His blood for the debts of all sinners. They are forgiven, but after baptism people have again offended both the justice and the love of God. Consequently, they have again become heirs of hell. Then love wishes again to have mercy, and does not subject the sinner to eternal punishment, but punishes him temporarily, calling on him to repent through this punishment. If the sinner repents, the Lord forgives him, having established for this the Sacrament of Repentance..."⁹³

Thus mercy and judgement, love and justice, are inseparable and presuppose each other in God's all-embracing plan for the salvation of mankind. Only at the Last, Most Terrible Judgement does it appear that love and justice have been disjoined, going in opposite directions. But that is only appearance, not reality, for in fact it is mankind, not God, that will have been disjoined into two parts and gone in opposite directions. The Last Judgement is a mystery proclaimed by the Word of God and grounded in the deepest

⁹² Metropolitan Philaret, "Sermon on Holy Friday (1816)", *The Works of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 107-108.

⁹³ Tatyana Groyan, *Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij. Mitropolit Makarij Altajskij (Parvoitsky – "Nevsky")*, 1835-1926 Moscow, 1996, p. 305.

reality of things. It both proceeds from the nature of God Himself, both from His love and from His justice, and is an innate demand of our human nature created in the image of God. It is the essential foundation for the practice of virtue and the abhorrence of vice, and the ultimate goal to which the whole of created nature strives, willingly or unwillingly, as to its natural fulfillment. Without the Last Judgement all particular judgements would have a partial and unsatisfactory character, and the reproaches of all unbelievers against faith would be justified; for the demand for justice - perfect justice - is an innate characteristic of the human soul. And if the Last Judgement is different from all preceding ones in that in it love seems to be separated from justice, love being bestowed exclusively on the righteous and justice on the sinners, this is because mankind will have divided itself into two, one part having responded to love with love, to justice with justice, while the other, having rejected both the love and the justice of God, will merit to experience His justice alone...

*January 29 / February 11, 2018.
Sunday of the Last Judgement.*

8. KING HAROLD AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

The rule of St. Edward the Confessor brought with it peace and prosperity to England - but a drastic decline in the moral condition of the people. Like Tsar Nicholas II, Edward presided over an unprecedented expansion of the Church's influence, which spread from England to Scandinavia, which was evangelized by English missionaries; and in 1066 there were probably over 10,000 churches and chapels for a population of 1.5 million, with 400 churches in Kent alone.⁹⁴ But, again like Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, the departure of King Edward, betrayed by many of his subjects, ushered in the fall of the nation and the triumph of the Antichrist.

Thus Edmer of Canterbury wrote of the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, that they lived "in all the glory of the world, with gold and silver and various elegant clothes, and beds with precious hangings. They had all sorts of musical instruments, which they liked playing, and horses, dogs and hawks, with which they were wont to walk. They lived, indeed, more like earls than monks."⁹⁵

Again, "several years before the arrival of the Normans," wrote the Anglo-Norman historian William of Malmesbury, "love of literature and religion had decayed. The clergy, content with little learning, could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment. The monks mocked the Rule by their fine clothes and wide variety of foods. The nobility, devoted to luxury and lechery, did not go to church in the morning like Christians, but merely, a casual manner, attended Mattins and the Liturgy, hurried through by some priest, in their own chambers amidst the caresses of their wives. The common people, left unprotected, were prey to the powerful, who amassed fortunes by seizing their property or selling them to foreigners (although by nature this people is more inclined to self-accumulation of wealth)... Drinking bouts were a universal practice, occupying entire nights as well as days... The vices attendant on drunkenness, which enervate the human mind, resulted."⁹⁶

William mentions that there were some good clergy and laymen. Nevertheless, even allowing for some exaggeration, the general picture of moral and spiritual decline is clear.

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⁹⁴ Loyn, H.R. *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*, London: Longmans, 1970, p. 254; G. Ward, *Archaeologica Cantiana*, vol. XLV, p. 89.

⁹⁵ Edmer, *Life of St. Dunstan*; quoted in Antonia Gransden, "1066 and All That Revisited", *History*, September, 1988, p. 48.

⁹⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, slightly modified from the translation in Gransden, *op. cit.*

If the curse of God on a sinful people was the ultimate cause of the tragedy, the proximate causes are to be sought in the lust for power of England's external enemies, and in particular Duke William of Normandy and the Pope of Rome.

Duke William claimed that the kingdom of England had been bequeathed to him by King Edward. However, it was to his brother-in-law, Earl Harold of Wessex, not William, that the childless king had bequeathed the kingdom on his deathbed, and this election was confirmed by the Witan, or Council of the leading men, immediately after King Edward's death. However, William pointed to three facts in defence of his claim and in rejection of Harold's.

First, there was the murder of Prince Alfred in 1036, which almost everybody ascribed to Earl Godwin, the father of Harold. However, Harold could not be blamed for the sin of his father, although that is precisely what William of Poitiers did. And there is ample evidence that King Edward had trusted Harold in a way that he had never trusted his father.

Secondly, there was the uncanonical position of Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury, who had been banned by the Pope and who, according to the Norman sources (but not according to the English) had crowned and anointed Harold as king.⁹⁷ William made out that the English Church, as well as being led by an uncanonical archbishop, was in caesaropapist submission to a usurper king.

The irony is that William's own archbishop, Maurilius, had been uncanonically appointed by the Duke, who exerted a more caesaropapist control over his Church than any European ruler before him. But the Pope was prepared to overlook this indiscretion (and the other indiscretion of his uncanonical marriage) in exchange for his military support against the Byzantine empire and England. Thus from 1059 the Normans were given the Pope's blessing to conquer the Greek-speaking possessions of the empire in Southern Italy in the name of St. Peter. And when that conquest was completed, they went on to invade Greece (in the 1080s), and then, during the First Crusade, the Near East, where they established the Norman kingdom of Antioch. For the Normans were the Bolsheviks of eleventh-century Europe, the military right arm of the totalitarian revolution that began in Rome in 1054.

Thirdly, and most seriously in the eyes of eleventh-century Europeans,

⁹⁷ See Ian Walker, *Harold. The Last Anglo-Saxon King*, Sutton Publishing, 2006, p. 138. According to Benton Rain Patterson (*Harold & William: The Battle for England 1064-1066*, Stroud: Tempus, 2002, pp. 60-62), both Stigand and Aldred were present at the coronation, but it was Aldred who poured the chrism on the new king's head. Nicholas Brooks (*The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, Leicester University Press, 1996, p. 307) also believes that Aldred carried out the ceremony. Geoffrey Hindley points out that on the Bayeux Tapestry Stigand "stands to one side of the enthroned King Harold, not wearing his pallium but displaying it to the spectator. Evidently he had not conducted the coronation" (*A Brief History of the Anglo-Saxons*, London: Robinson, 2006, p. 335).

Harold had broken the oath of fealty that he had taken to William in 1064. Now all the evidence suggests that this oath was taken under duress, which invalidated it according to the first law in the Code of King Alfred the Great.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that this sin weakened his position...

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When Harold was crowned king, William sent a formal protest to him, which was rejected. William now set about preparing to invade England and depose Harold. Having won the support of his nobles and clergy for his plans, he turned to Abbot Lanfranc of Bec for advice as to whether the Pope would support him.

One of his arguments would have been Harold's perjury, and therefore his unsuitability to be king from the Church's point of view. Also, as Patterson writes, "William perhaps would add to his list of allegations: Harold was a man of flagrantly corrupt morals, a fornicator who had brought children into the world without the benefit of a church-sanctioned marriage; he lived openly with a woman [Edith Swan Neck] who was not his wife; he lived in disdain for and in rebellion against the church's requirements for a Christian family. Surely the Pope did not wish to have such a man as king of England.

"Furthermore, William may have claimed, Stigand, the archbishop – or so-called archbishop – who supposedly heard King Edward designate Harold as his successor, was no more than Harold's family retainer. He was a fraudulent archbishop, illegally appointed while Robert of Jumièges, who was lawfully appointed, still held the office but was forced out of England by Harold and his father. Stigand was appointed solely at the demand of Harold's family, William might have claimed, in order to have him serve Harold's family's ends. The duke might have asked whether Stigand was an example of the church appointments Harold could be expected to make? Could the Pope be willing to place into the hands of a morally corrupt self-server the future of the church in England?

"Lanfranc, familiar with the church's affairs, might have offered some ammunition of his own. Harold and his brothers had persisted in supporting Stigand even though he was under a cloud of suspicion. Harold and his brothers had consistently resisted the reforms that Rome had asked the church in England to make..."⁹⁹

The result of this meeting was that, as Professor Douglas writes, "at some undetermined date within the first eight months of 1066 [William] appealed to the papacy, and a mission was sent under the leadership of Gilbert, archdeacon of Lisieux, to ask for judgement in the duke's favour from Alexander II. No records of the case as it was heard in Rome have survived, nor is there any

⁹⁸ Michael Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages*, London: Penguin books, 1994, p. 53.

⁹⁹ Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

evidence that Harold Godwinson was ever summoned to appear in his own defence. On the other hand, the arguments used by the duke's representatives may be confidently surmised. Foremost among them must have been an insistence on Harold's oath, and its violation when the earl seized the throne. Something may also have been alleged against the house of Godwine by reference to the murder of the *atheling* Alfred in 1036, and to the counter-revolution of 1052. The duke could, moreover, point to the recent and notable ecclesiastical revival in the province of Rouen, and claim that he had done much to foster it. For these reasons, the reforming papacy might legitimately look for some advantage in any victory which William might obtain over Harold. Thus was the duke of Normandy enabled to appear as the armed agent of ecclesiastical reform against a prince who through his association with Stigand had identified himself with conditions which were being denounced by the reforming party in the Church. Archdeacon Hildebrand, therefore, came vigorously to the support of Duke William, and Alexander II was led publicly to proclaim his approval of Duke William's enterprise."¹⁰⁰

Frank McLynn argues that Harold's alleged perjury was "irrelevant because, even if Harold did actually swear the most mighty oath on the most sacred relics, this neither bound Edward in his bequest nor the witan in its ratification; whatever Harold said or did not say, it had no binding power in the matter of the succession."¹⁰¹

In any case, it was the argument concerning Stigand's uncanonicity "that most interested Alexander. William pitched his appeal to the papacy largely on his putative role as the leader of the religious and ecclesiastical reform movement in Normandy and as a man who could clean the Augean stables of church corruption in England; this weighed heavily with Alexander, who, as his joust with Harald Hardrada in 1061 demonstrated, thought the churches of northern Europe far too remote from papal control. It was the abiding dream of the new 'reformist' papacy to be universally accepted as the arbiter of thrones and their succession; William's homage therefore constituted a valuable precedent. Not surprisingly, Alexander gave the proposed invasion of England his blessing.

"Some have wondered why Harold did not send his own embassy to Rome. Almost certainly, the answer is that he thought it a waste of time on two grounds: the method of electing a king in England had nothing to do with the pope and was not a proper area for his intervention; and, in any case, the pope was now the creature of the Normans in southern Italy and would ultimately do what they ordered him to do. Harold was right: Alexander II blessed all the Norman marauding expeditions of the 1060s.

"But although papal sanction for William's 'enterprise of England' was morally worthless, it was both a great propaganda and diplomatic triumph for

¹⁰⁰ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 187.

¹⁰¹ McLynn, *1066: The Year of the Three Battles*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1998, p. 182.

the Normans. It was a propaganda victory because it allowed William to pose as the leader of crusaders in a holy war, obfuscating and mystifying the base, materialistic motives of his followers and mercenaries. It also gave the Normans a great psychological boost, for they could perceive themselves as God's elect, and it is significant that none of William's inner circle entertained doubts about the ultimate success of the English venture.

"Normandy now seemed the spearhead of a confident Christianity, on the offensive for the first time in centuries, whereas earlier [Western] Christendom had been beleaguered by Vikings to the north, Hungarians to the east and Islam to the south. It was no accident that, with Hungary and Scandinavia recently Christianized, the Normans were the vanguard in the first Crusade, properly so called, against the Islamic heathens in the Holy Land."¹⁰²

This wider potential gain from an alliance with William seems to have been the pope's main motive for his blessing of the invasion. Harold's perjury and Stigand's uncanonicity were useful excuses, but no more. After all, papal legates had sat with Stigand at a council in 1062, before the invasion, and again at Winchester, after the invasion, in 1070; and he had consecrated Remigius as Bishop of Dorchester in 1067. Alexander clearly overlooked these minor misdemeanours. But the chance of gaining control over the Churches both of Normandy and England if William won, and of a fruitful long-term partnership in the East – that was another matter.¹⁰³

However, it is unlikely that William obtained the support of other major European powers for his invasion of England, as William of Poitiers claims. "It is highly unlikely, for example," writes Ian Walker, "that Swein of Denmark gave his backing to William's enterprise. He would be more likely to welcome Harold's accession since the latter might favour aiding his Danish cousin against his Norwegian enemies, as had his father Earl Godwine. It should be noted here that Swein had just emerged from a long and bloody war with Norway and was fearful of further trouble. In this context, William of Poitiers contradicts himself when he later speaks of the Danes sending troops to assist Harold against the Normans. This contradiction somewhat undermines our confidence in the further claim made by Poitiers that the Emperor Henry IV provided his own endorsement for William's claim. This seems unlikely. Henry IV or his regents, since he was still in his minority, had many other concerns and the contemporary Annals of Corvey compiled in that royal monastery in Saxony were to describe William in 1066 as removing the 'legitimate' King of England (Harold) and seizing his kingdom. What these diplomatic 'successes' described by Poitiers seem to represent is nothing more than the fact that

¹⁰² McLynn, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183. The word "crusade" is not inapt in this context. As Fr. John Romanides writes, "William landed on the shores of Britain carrying the papal banner at the head of what was essentially the army of the first Crusade" ("Fr. John Romanides on Robin Hood and Orthodoxy").

¹⁰³ Walker, *Harold. The Last Anglo-Saxon King*, Sutton Publishing, 2006, pp. 167-169.

neither Swein nor Henry IV were in a position to interfere directly in William's plans."¹⁰⁴

Hildebrand was almost certainly reminding William of his support for him at this point when he wrote, on April 24, 1080: "I believe it is known to you, most excellent son, how great was the love I ever bore you, even before I ascended the papal throne, and how active I have shown myself in your affairs; above all how diligently I laboured for your advancement to royal rank. In consequence I suffered dire calumny through certain brethren insinuating that by such partisanship I gave sanction for the perpetration of great slaughter. But God was witness to my conscience that I did so with a right mind, trusting in God's grace and, not in vain, in the virtues you possessed."¹⁰⁵

"Gilbert returned to Rouen," writes Patterson, "bearing not only the great good news [of William's victory] but the papal banner, white with a red cross, which the Pope had given him to present to Duke William, allowing the duke to go to war beneath the symbol of the church's authorisation.

"Gilbert also carried to the duke another gift from the Pope, a heavy gold ring blessed by the holy father and containing, in a tiny compartment covered by the hinged, engraved top of the ring, one of the most sacred relics the Pope could give, an enormously powerful token of divine favour to be borne by the duke into battle - a hair believed to be from the holy head of St. Peter himself..."¹⁰⁶

William's receiving the papal banner was an important propaganda victory. As Peter Rex writes, "There was a developing policy of bestowing such banners on those whose activities the papacy wished to enforce. Benedict IX, as early as 1043, had sent to Emperor Henry III, as an endorsement of his campaign against the Hungarians, a *Vexillum ex beati Petri parte*. During the expedition of Pope Leo IX against the Normans in the Papal States in 1053, to defend the Church's territories against their savagery, he had fought under the banner of St. Peter. This was part of a trend towards [the] increasing use of force, a kind of papal militarism according to some, which included the sending of papal legates and the bestowal of papal approval for military action in support of the papacy. Robert Guiscard was given a banner by Nicholas II in 1059, and others had gone to the Patarine leader Erlembald of Milan and to Roger of Sicily in 1063. Even the leaders of the Barbastro campaign in Spain had received one in 1064, so the gift of a banner to Duke William was by no means a singular event. The trend eventually culminated in the launching of the First Crusade. It was associated with a warlike rhetoric which referred to supporters of the papacy as 'Militia of St. Peter'; the faithful were regarded as soldiers in the service of St. Peter. The arrival of the Reform Party at Rome had

¹⁰⁴ Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

¹⁰⁵ Hildebrand, in Harriet Harvey Wood, *The Battle of Hastings*, London: Atlantic Books, 2008, p. 139.

¹⁰⁶ Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

been the turning point; they stood for the idea of holy war and sought put it into practice."¹⁰⁷

So at the beginning of 1066 Duke William began to gather a vast army from all round Western Europe in preparation for what became, in effect, the first crusade of the heretical Papacy against the Orthodox Church.

What would have happened if William had lost the case in Rome? John Hudson speculates that "the reformers in the papacy, who had backed William in his quest for the English throne, might have lost their momentum. Normandy would have been greatly weakened..."¹⁰⁸

The papacy, too, would have been weakened, dependent as it was on its Norman allies; which raises the intriguing possibility that the whole course of European history might have changed radically for the better, with a possible turning away of the papacy from the anti-Byzantine course and back towards its roots in Orthodox Christianity. And so the dramatic story of that fateful year of 1066 was to decide the destiny of the Western Christian peoples for centuries to come. For if the English had defeated the Normans, it is likely not only that the Norman conquests in the rest of Europe would never have taken place, but also that the power of the heretical papacy would have gone into sharp decline, enabling the forces of true Romanity to recover.

But Divine Providence judged otherwise. For their sins, the Western peoples were counted unworthy of the pearl beyond price, Holy Orthodoxy, which they had bought with such self-sacrificial enthusiasm so many centuries before.

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The anonymous biographer writes that King Harold was handsome, graceful and strong in body; and although he is implicitly critical of Harold's behaviour in 1065 during the Northumbrian rebellion (probably reflecting the views of Queen Edith), he nevertheless calls him wise, patient, merciful, courageous, temperate and prudent in character. That he was both strong and courageous is witnessed not only by his highly successful military career but also by his pulling two men out of the quicksand during his stay with William in 1064.

The fact that he was admired by most Englishmen is shown by his ascending the throne without opposition, although he was not the strongest candidate by hereditary right.¹⁰⁹ A Waltham chronicler, writing after King

¹⁰⁷ Rex, *The Last English King*, Stroud, 2008, p. 211.

¹⁰⁸ Hudson, "The Norman Conquest", *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 4, № 1, January, 2003, p. 23.

¹⁰⁹ English tradition did not insist that the king should be the nearest male kin. At the Council of Chelsea in 787 it was decreed that "kings are to be lawfully chosen by the priests and elders of the people, and are not to be those begotten in adultery or incest". Paul Hill writes: "What mattered more to the succession [than being the eldest son of the king] was the nomination by

Harold's death, wrote that he was elected unanimously; "for there was no one in the land more knowledgeable, more vigorous in arms, wiser in the laws of the land or more highly regarded for his prowess of every kind".¹¹⁰ Only after his death did anyone put forward the candidacy of Prince Edgar, the grandson of King Aethelred – and that only half-heartedly. Thus on the English side there was general agreement that, in spite of his broken oath, Harold was the best man to lead the country.

Harold was both hated and admired by the Normans. Thus William of Poitiers admitted that he was warlike and courageous. And Ordericus Vitalis, writing some 70 years after the conquest, says that Harold "was much admired for his great stature and elegance, for his bodily strength, for his quick-wittedness and verbal facility, his sense of humour and his honest bearing." Whatever his personal sins before he became king, he appears to have tried hard to atone for them once he ascended the throne. Perhaps under the influence of Bishop Wulfstan, he put away his mistress and the mother of six of his children, the beautiful Edith "Swan-neck", and entered into lawful marriage with the sister of Earls Edwin and Morcar, Alditha.¹¹¹ Then, as Florence of Worcester writes, he "immediately began to abolish unjust laws and to make good ones; to patronize churches and monasteries; to pay particular reverence to bishops, abbots, monks and clerics; and to show himself pious, humble and affable to all good men. But he treated malefactors with great severity, and gave general orders to his earls, ealdormen, sheriffs and thegns to imprison all thieves, robbers and disturbances of the kingdom. He laboured in his own person by sea and by land for the protection of his realm."¹¹²

Although there had been no open opposition to his consecration as king, one source indicates that "the Northumbrians, a great and turbulent folk, were not ready to submit", just as they had not been ready to submit to King Edward.¹¹³ Harold needed to be sure that he had the support of the turbulent North. So early in the year he enlisted the aid of Bishop Wulfstan on a peacemaking mission to Northumbria.

"For the fame of [Wulfstan's] holiness," writes William of Malmesbury, "had so found a way to the remotest tribes, that it was believed that he could quell the most stubborn insolence. And so it came to pass. For those tribes, untameable by the sword, and haughty from generation to generation, yet for

the existing monarch of his heir and the military and political strength of those brave enough to challenge him. The support of the Witan, or High Council of the country, was also a considerable bonus for any prospective candidate" (*The Road to Hastings*, Stroud: Tempus, 2005, p. 13).

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹¹¹ On Harold's "marriage", *more Danico*, to Edith, and in general on his personal life and character, see Walker, *op. cit.*, chapter 8.

¹¹² Florence of Worcester, *Chronicle*; translated in D.C. Douglas & G.W. Greenway (eds.) *English Historical Documents*, London: Eyre & Spottiswood, vol. II, p. 212.

¹¹³ William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulstani*, p. 33.

the reverence they bore to the Bishop, easily yielded allegiance to Harold. And they would have continued in that way, had not Tostig, as I have said, turned them aside from it. Wulfstan, good, gentle, and kindly though he was, spake not smooth things to the sinners, but rebuked their vices, and threatened them with evil to come. If they were still rebellious, he warned them plainly, they should pay the penalty in suffering. Never did his human wisdom or his gift of prophecy deceive him. Many things to come, both on that journey and at other times, did he foretell. Moreover he spake plainly to Harold of the calamities which should befall him and all England if he should not bethink himself to correct their wicked ways. For in those days the English were for the most part evil livers; and in peace and the abundance of pleasant things luxury flourished.”¹¹⁴

In the spring and summer, as Halley's comet blazed across the sky (it was seen as far East as Poland), the two armies massed on opposite sides of the Channel. While William built a vast fleet to take his men across the Channel, King Harold kept his men under arms and at a high degree of alert all along the southern English coast. By September, William was ready...

However, adverse winds kept him in French ports. King Harold, meanwhile, was forced to let his men go home to bring in the harvest. The English coast was now dangerously exposed...

Pierre Bouet has argued that it was not only adverse winds that kept William in the French ports, but a secret agreement with the Norwegian King Harald.

Professor François Neveux explains: “This wait [on the French coast] was not in fact due to chance, and a very satisfactory explanation has been provided recently by Pierre Bouet. William demonstrated a keen sense of strategy, and even a certain Machiavellian cunning. He was not unaware that Harold’s army was waiting for him on the beaches. An immediate landing would have led to a bloodbath. But Harold could not keep his troops conscripted indefinitely, especially not the *fyrð*, which was composed of local peasants. William had calculated correctly: on 8 September, Harold discharged his fleet and part of his army and withdrew to London, leaving the coast undefended. He was presumably convinced that William had delayed the invasion until the following spring. But William was still waiting, because he knew that another invasion of England was just then under way.

“We have no knowledge of the relations between William and the King of Norway. Had they negotiated a division of the Kingdom of England? It is not impossible. What is quite likely is that the two pretenders to the throne had made contact. The intermediary may have been Tostig, who had broken with his brother Harold and was now cooperating with his worst enemies, including the King of Norway. We know that Tostig travelled between

¹¹⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulstani*, p. 34.

Norway and Flanders several times during this period, and may also have visited Normandy. Such journeys by sea could have been quite rapid, and information circulated freely between the English Channel and the North Sea. Harald and William were both sly old foxes. Although united against Harold, they were rivals for the kingdom. A joint attack was in both their interests, as it would force Harold to divide his forces. They also knew that whoever attacked first would be at a disadvantage, because Harold's troops would still be fresh. In this game, William had a significant trump card: the climate of Normandy allowed him to wait longer than his partner and rival. In fact, Harold Hardrada did attack first."¹¹⁵

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King Harald Hardrada of Norway invaded Northumbria with the aid of the English King Harold's exiled brother Tostig. According to the medieval Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson, as the Norwegian Harald was preparing to invade England, he dreamed that he was in Trondheim and met there his half-brother, St. Olaf. And Olaf told him that he had won many victories and died in holiness because he had stayed in Norway. But now he feared that he, Harald, would meet his death, "and wolves will rend your body; God is not to blame." Snorri wrote that "many other dreams and portents were reported at the time, and most of them were ominous."¹¹⁶

After defeating Earls Edwin and Morcar at Gate Fulford on September 20, the Norwegian king triumphantly entered York, whose citizens (mainly of Scandinavian extraction) not only surrendered to him but agreed to march south with him against Harold.¹¹⁷ This betrayal, in the same city in which, 760 years before, St. Constantine the Great, had been proclaimed emperor by the Roman legions, was probably decisive in sealing the fate of Orthodox England. It may also be the reason why it was precisely Northumbria that suffered most from William the Conqueror's ravages in 1066-1070...

However, on September 25, after an amazingly rapid forced march from London, the English King Harold arrived in York, and then almost immediately hurried on to Stamford Bridge, where the Norwegians and rebel English and Flemish mercenaries were encamped. After a long battle in which both sides suffered huge losses, the Norwegian army was destroyed and both Harald Hardrada and Tostig were killed. The English King Harold entered York in triumph.

The 'C' manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ends on this high point; but

¹¹⁵ Neveux, *A Brief History of the Normans*, London: Constable & Robinson, 2008, pp. 134-135.

¹¹⁶ Sturluson, *King Harald's Saga*, 82; translated by Magnusson & Palsson, Harmondsworth: Penguin books, 1966. Harald of Norway was married to the Kievan princess Elizabeth - another example of the extensive links between the Varangians of Russia and other parts of North-West Europe.

¹¹⁷ R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1985, p. 135.

Divine Providence decreed that "the end was not yet".

Harriet Harvey Wood writes: "If it had not been for what happened so soon afterwards, Stamford Bridge would be remembered as a battle of the highest significance in its own right. The death of Harald Hardrada, the legendary and most feared warrior of his time, and the destruction of his army, marked the end of the Viking age that had influenced so much of Europe, from Byzantium to the Atlantic. It also marked the end of centuries of assault on England; although there were to be sporadic and local attacks thereafter, mainly from Sweyn Estrithson, there would be nothing on the scale of what had gone before. Under any circumstances, it was a remarkable achievement for the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, one that the bones of Alfred, Edward the Elder and Aethelred would have saluted; in the peculiar circumstances of 1066, it was astonishing. But it was not achieved without damage. The Norwegian army may have been virtually destroyed, but they took many Englishmen with them. Between the men lost by Edwin and Morcar at Gate Fulford and those killed and wounded at Stamford Bridge, the fighting strength of the kingdom was much diminished..."¹¹⁸

On October 1, while he was celebrating his victory in York, King Harold heard that William, having set out from France on September 27, had landed at Pevensey on the south coast. Although, from a military point of view, he would probably have done better to rest and gather together a large force from all round the country while drawing William further away from his base, thereby stretching his lines of communication, Harold decided to employ the same tactics of forced marches and a lightning strike that had worked so well against the Norwegians. So he marched his men back down to London.

On the way he stopped at Waltham, a monastery he had founded and endowed to house the greatest holy object of the English Church - the Black Cross of Waltham. Several years before, this Cross had been discovered in the earth in response to a Divine revelation to a humble priest of Montacute in Somerset. It was placed on a cart drawn by oxen, but the oxen refused to move until the name "Waltham" was pronounced. Then the oxen moved, without any direction from men, straight towards Waltham, which was many miles away on the other side of the country. On the way, 66 miracles of healing were accomplished on sick people who venerated it, until it came to rest at the spot where King Harold built his monastery.¹¹⁹

Only a few days before, on his way to York, King Harold had stopped at the monastery and was praying in front of the Black Cross when he received a message from Abbot Aethelwine of Ramsey. King Edward the Confessor had appeared to him that night and told him of Harold's affliction of both body and spirit - his anxiety for the safety of his kingdom, and the violent pain which

¹¹⁸ Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹¹⁹ The story is recounted in the twelfth-century manuscript, *De Inventione Crucis*, translated in V. Moss, *Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, Seattle, volume III, pp. 55-66.

had suddenly seized his leg. Then he said that through his intercession God had granted Harold the victory and healing from his pain. Cheered by this message, Harold received both the healing and the victory.¹²⁰

But it was a different story on the way back south. Harold "went into the church of the Holy Cross and placed the relics which he had in his capella on the altar, and made a vow that if the Lord granted him success in the war he would confer on the church a mass of treasures and a great number of clerics to serve God there and that he himself would serve God as His bought slave. The clergy, therefore, who accompanied him, together with a procession which went before, came to the doors of the church where he was lying prostrate, his arms outstretched in the form of a cross in front of the Holy Cross, praying to the Crucified One.

"An extraordinary miracle then took place. For the image of the Crucifixion, which before had been erect looking upward, when it saw the king humble himself to the ground, lowered its face as if sad. The wood indeed knew the future! The sacristan Turkill claimed that he himself had seen this and intimated it to many while he was collecting and storing away the gifts which the king had placed on the altar. I received this from his mouth, and from the assertion of many bystanders who saw the head of the image erect. But no one except Turkill saw its bending down. When they saw this bad omen, overcome with great sorrow, they sent the senior and most distinguished brothers of the church, Osegood Cnoppe and Ailric Childemaister, in the company to the battle, so that when the outcome was known they might take care of the bodies of the king and those of his men who were devoted to the Church, and, if the future would have it so, bring back their corpses..."¹²¹

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On October 5, Harold was back in London with his exhausted army. Common sense dictated that he stay there until the levies he had summoned arrived; but instead, to the puzzlement of commentators from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries, he pushed on by a forced march of fifty to sixty miles south, with little rest and no reinforcements. What was the reason for this crucial tactical blunder?¹²²

David Howarth has argued convincingly that the reason was that Harold now, for the first time, heard (from an envoy of William's) that he and his followers had been excommunicated by the Pope and that William was fighting with the pope's blessing and under a papal banner, with a tooth of St. Peter encrusted in gold around his neck. "This meant that he was not merely defying William, he was defying the Pope. It was doubtful whether the Church, the army and the people would support him in that defiance: at best,

¹²⁰ *Vita Haroldi*, chapter 10.

¹²¹ *De Inventione Crucis*, chapter 21.

¹²² For the view that this was not in fact a blunder, see Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-174.

they would be bewildered and half-hearted. Therefore, since a battle had to be fought, it must be fought at once, without a day's delay, before the news leaked out. After that, if the battle was won, would be time to debate the Pope's decision, explain that the trial had been a travesty, query it, appeal against it, or simply continue to defy it...

"... This had become a private matter of conscience. There was one higher appeal, to the judgement of God Himself, and Harold could only surrender himself to that judgement: 'May the Lord now decide between Harold and me'. He had been challenged to meet for the final decision and he could not evade it; in order that God might declare His judgement, he was obliged to accept the challenge in person.

"He left London in the evening of 12 October. A few friends with him who knew what had happened and still believed in him: Gyrth and his brother Leofwine, his nephew Hakon whom he had rescued from Normandy, two canons from Waltham already nervous at the miracle they had seen, two aged and respected abbots who carried chain mail above their habits, and - perhaps at a distance - Edith Svanneshals, the mother of his sons. He led the army, who did not know, the remains of his house-carls and whatever men of the fyrd had already gathered in London. The northern earls had been expected with contingents, but they had not come and he could not wait. He rode across London Bridge again and this time down the Dover road to Rochester, and then by the minor Roman road that plunged south through the Andredeswald - the forest now yellow with autumn and the road already covered with fallen leaves. The men of Kent and Sussex were summoned to meet at an ancient apple tree that stood at the junction of the tracks outside the enclave of Hastings. Harold reached that meeting place late on Friday 13, ready to face his judgement; and even while the army was forming for battle, if one may further believe the *Roman de Rou*, the terrible rumour was starting to spread that the King was excommunicated and the same fate hung over any man who fought for him."¹²³

The only military advantage Harold might have gained from his tactics - that of surprise - was lost: William had been informed of his movements. And so it was William who, early on the morning of October 14, "came upon him unexpectedly before his army was set in order. Nevertheless the king fought against him most resolutely with those men who wished to stand by him, and there was great slaughter on both sides. King Harold was slain, and Leofwine, his brother, and Earl Gurth, his brother, and many good men. The French had possession of the place of slaughter, as God granted them because of the nation's sins..."¹²⁴

¹²³ Howarth, 1066: *The Year of the Conquest*, Milton Keynes: Robin Clark, 1977, pp. 164-165. Patterson (*op. cit.*, pp. 158-159) confirms the story of the excommunication, adding that it was conveyed to Harold by the English-speaking monk Hugh Margot of Fecamp abbey.

¹²⁴ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, D, 1066.

As William of Malmesbury said, the English "were few in numbers, but brave in the extreme". Even the Normans admitted that the battle had been close. But God judged in favour of the Normans "because of the nation's sins".

Why did the chronicler say: "with those men who wished to stand by him"? *Because many did not wish to stay with him when they learned of the Pope's anathema.* And yet many others stayed, including several churchmen. Why did they stay, knowing that they might lose, not only their bodies, but also, if the anathema was true - their eternal souls? Very few probably knew about the schism of 1054 between Rome and the East, or about the theological arguments - over the Filioque, over unleavened bread at the Liturgy, over the supposed universal jurisdiction of the Pope - that led to the schism. Still fewer, if any, could have come to the firm conclusion that Rome was wrong and Constantinople was right. That Harold had perjured himself in coming to the throne was generally accepted - and yet they stayed with him.

In following Harold, the English who fought and died at Hastings were following their hearts rather than their heads. Their hearts told them that, whatever the sins of the king and the nation, he was still their king and this was still their nation. Surely God would not want them to desert these at the time of their greatest need, in a life-and-death struggle against a merciless invader? Perhaps they remembered the words of Archbishop Wulfstan of York: "By what means shall peace and comfort come to God's servants and God's poor, but through Christ and through a Christian king?"¹²⁵ Almost certainly they were drawn by a grace-filled feeling of loyalty to the Lord's Anointed; for the English were exceptional in their continuing veneration for the monarchy, which in other parts had been destroyed by the papacy.¹²⁶

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After Hastings, William could claim that God had decided between him and Harold in his favour. And yet even his Norman bishops were not so sure. Thus in a conciliar enactment of 1070, Bishop Erminfrid of Sion, the papal legate, led them in imposing penances on all of William's men who had taken part in the battle - in spite of the fact that they had fought with the Pope's blessing! The doyen of Anglo-Saxon historians, Sir Frank Stenton, calls this "a remarkable episode"¹²⁷

William's actions just after the battle were unprecedentedly cruel and impious, even by the not very civilized standards of the time. Thus he refused

¹²⁵ Wulfstan, *The Institutes of Polity*, 2; translated in Michael Swanton (ed.) *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 188.

¹²⁶ "Indeed," writes Loyn, "the pre-eminence of the monarchy, for all the political vicissitudes involving changes of dynasty, is the outstanding feature that strikes the careful student of eleventh-century England" (*op. cit.*, p. 214).

¹²⁷ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, p. 653. See also J.E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English", in Peter Clemoes & Kathleen Hughes (eds.), *England before the Conquest*, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p. 282.

to give the body of King Harold, which had been hideously mutilated by the Normans, to his mother for burial, although she offered him the weight of the body in gold. Eventually, the monks of Waltham, with the help of Harold's former mistress, Edith "Swan-neck", found the body and buried it, as was thought, in Waltham.

However, there is now compelling evidence that the mutilated remains discovered in a splendid coffin in Godwin's family church at Bosham on April 7, 1954 are in fact the body of the last Orthodox king of England.

In fact, two royal coffins were found on that date. One was found to contain the bones of a daughter of King Cnut, who had drowned at a young age. The other, "magnificently furnished" coffin contained the bones of a middle-aged man, but with no head and with several of the bones fractured. It was supposed that these were the bones of Earl Godwin, the father of King Harold.

For several years no further attention was paid to this discovery. Recently, however, a local historian, John Pollock, has re-examined all the evidence relating to the bones in the second coffin and has come to the conclusion that they belong to none other than King Harold himself. Pollock points out, first, that they could not belong to Earl Godwin, because, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Godwin was buried in Winchester, not Bosham. Secondly, the bones are in a severely mutilated state, which does not accord with what we know about Godwin's death. However, this *does* accord with what we know about King Harold, for he was savagely hacked to pieces by four knights at Hastings. As the earliest account of the battle that we have, by Guy, Bishop of Amiens, says: "With the point of his lance the first (William) pierced Harold's shield and then penetrated his chest, drenching the ground with his blood, which poured out in torrents. With his sword the second (Eustace) cut off his head, just below where his helmet protected him. The third (Hugh) disembowelled him with his javelin. The fourth (Walter Giffard) hacked off his leg at the thigh and hurled it far away. Struck down in this way, the dead body lay on the ground." Moreover, the Bayeux Tapestry clearly shows the sword of one of the knights cutting into the king's left thigh - and one of the bones in the coffin is precisely a fractured left thigh bone. Thirdly, although the sources say that Harold was buried in the monastery he founded at Waltham, his body has never been found there or anywhere else. However, the most authoritative of the sources, William of Poitiers, addresses the dead Harold thus: "Now you lie there *in your grave by the sea*: by generations yet unborn of English and Normans you will ever be accursed..." The church at Bosham is both by the sea and not far from the field of battle...

Therefore the grieving monks who are said to have buried King Harold's body at Waltham, could in fact have buried it in his own, family church by the sea at Bosham. Or, more likely, William himself buried it at Bosham, since the church passed into his possession, and he is said to have ordered its burial "on the sea-shore". But this was done in secret, because the Normans did not want any public veneration of the king they hated so much, and the Church could

not tolerate pilgrimages to the grave of this, the last powerful enemy of the "reformed Papacy" in the West. And so the rumour spread that Harold had survived the battle and had become a secret hermit in the north - a rumour that we can only now reject with near-certainty.¹²⁸

It took another three and a half years for William to subdue the whole of England. In that period great numbers died from war or starvation, especially in the north. Domesday Book reports complete devastation in Yorkshire. The English churches were destroyed, their relics desecrated, and all the bishops removed (with the exception one, Wulfstan of Worcester), being replaced by continentals. Most English land was confiscated and given to the conquerors, who held their possessions as fiefs of the king, thereby creating a new form of despotism, *the feudal monarchy*. In time, all the traditions of Orthodox England, including its language, were destroyed. Orthodox England had fallen to the Antichrist...

Bishop Aethelwine of Durham solemnly cursed the papist invaders of his country. He joined the famous rebel Hereward the Wake at Ely but was captured and died of hunger in prison at Abingdon. He was not the only bishop to defy the papists. His brother Aethelric, who had retired as Bishop of Durham in 1056 to make way for his brother, was brought from Peterborough, condemned for "piracy" and imprisoned in Westminster Abbey. There he lived for two more years "in voluntary poverty and a wealth of tears"¹²⁹, and was never reconciled with William. He died on October 15, 1072, was buried in the chapel of St. Nicholas, and was very soon considered a saint, miracles being wrought at his tomb.¹³⁰ For "those who had known him when living," writes William of Malmesbury, "transmitted his memory to their children, and to this day [c. 1120] neither visitors nor supplicants are wanting at his tomb."¹³¹

The last English rebel, Earl Waltheof of Northumbria, was executed at Winchester on May 31, 1076, just as he finished praying: "... and lead us not into temptation." "And then, goes the story, in the hearing of all, the head, in a clear voice, finished the prayer, 'But deliver us from evil. Amen.'" He was buried at Crowland, and according to Abbot Wulfketyl of Crowland many miracles took place at his tomb, including the rejoining of his head to his body.¹³² However, veneration of him as a saint was not permitted by the Norman authorities: Abbot Wulfketyl was tried for idolatry (!) before a council in London, defrocked, and banished to Glastonbury...¹³³

¹²⁸ Pollock, *Haroldus Rex*, Bosham: Penny Royal Publications, 1996. In 2003 a petition that the remains be exhumed so that their identity could be established through scientific means, including DNA testing, was rejected by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Chichester. See <http://www.bosham.org/bosham-magazine/history/King-Harold-remains.htm>.

¹²⁹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, III, 131.

¹³⁰ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, D, 1073; E, 1072.

¹³¹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, III, 131.

¹³² William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*; Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

¹³³ For a more detailed history of the English resistance to the Norman-papist invasion, see Peter Rex, *The English Resistance: The Underground War against the Normans*, Stroud: Tempus, 2004.

Only in the diaspora did English identity and English traditions survive. Most of the nobility fled – some to Scotland, some to Scandinavia. In 1075 350 boatloads of warriors led by Earl Siward of Gloucester fled to Constantinople, where they entered the army of the Byzantine Emperor, who gave them land in the Crimea and the Azov area, and a basilica in the City (whose ruins can still be seen). None fled to the traditional haunt of English exiles, Old Rome...

King Harold's daughter Gytha fled to Smolensk, where she was married to Vladimir Monomakh, future Great Prince of Kiev, bearing him six children. These included St. Mstislav, Great Prince of Kiev from 1125 to 1132, who was called "Harold" after his grandfather in Scandinavia. In this way the blood of the anointed English Orthodox kings was united to that of the Third Rome of Russia...

*January 30 / February 12, 2018.
St. Bathilde, Queen of France.*

9. THE FLOWERING BRANCH

An Exercise in Prophetic Interpretation

The time is very early in 1066, the most dramatic and fateful year in the whole of English and British history. The place is the palace of Westminster in London, where all the chief men of the land are gathered for the twelve-day feast of Christmas and for the consecration of King Edward's great new church dedicated to the Apostle Peter. And perhaps also to elect a new king: for the "good King Edward", as he was known by later generations, renowned for his gifts of prophecy and miracle-working, and known as "the Confessor" to distinguish him from his holy uncle, King Edward the Martyr (+978), is dying childless.

There could hardly have been a more dangerous time for the kingdom to be without an obvious heir. First, there has just been a semi-rebellion of the northern province of the country, Northumbria, against their Earl Tostig, a scion of the most powerful family in the land, the Godwins, and brother of Edward's Queen Edith. When Edward's chosen mediator, Earl Harold, the senior member of the Godwin family, decided in favour of the Northumbrians and against his brother Tostig, the furious earl fled the kingdom, vowing revenge. Secondly, there were several foreign contenders for the English throne, among them the Danish King Swein, the Norwegian King Harald Hardrada, the greatest warrior of the age, and – Duke William "the Bastard" of Normandy. Thirdly, and most seriously, the English Church was in a kind of semi-schism from its Mother Church in Rome because the canonical English primate, the Norman Archbishop Robert of Canterbury, had run away from his see, and King Edward had given his pallium (omophorion) to the English Bishop Stigand. Rome would not act against England as long as the revered King Edward was alive; but anything was possible after his death...

King Edward fell into a coma. What happened next was recorded by an unknown monk of Canterbury, writing only shortly after the events he describes, of which he may even have been an eye-witness: "When King Edward, replete with faith, perceived that the power of the disease was forcing him to his end, with the commendation and prayers of the most important of God's faithful he resigned himself to the funeral rites..."

"While he slept those in attendance felt in his sleeping body the travail of an unquiet soul, and woken by them in their terror, he spoke these words. (Up till then, for the last two days or more, weakness had so tired him that when he spoke scarcely anything he said had been intelligible.) 'O eternal God,' he said, 'if I have learned those things which have been revealed to me from Thee, grant also the strength to tell them. But if it was only an illusion, let my former sickness burden me according to Thy will.' And then, as they who were present testify, he used such resources of eloquence that even the healthiest man would have no need of more.

"'Just now,' he said, 'two monks stood before me, whom I had once known

very well when I was a young man in Normandy, men of great sanctity, and for many years now relieved of earthly cares. And they addressed me with a message from God.

""Since," they said, "those who have climbed to the highest offices in the kingdom of England, the earls, bishops and abbots, and all those in holy orders, are not what they seem to be, but, on the contrary, are servants of the devil, on a year and one day after the day of your death God has delivered all this kingdom, cursed by Him, into the hands of the enemy, and devils shall come through all this land with fire and sword and the havoc of war."

"Then I said to them, "I will show God's designs to the people, and the forgiveness of God shall have mercy upon the penitents. For He had mercy on the people of Nineveh, when they repented on hearing of the Divine indignation."

"But they said, "these will not repent, nor will the forgiveness of God come to pass for them."

""And what," I asked, "shall happen? And when can a remission of this great indignation be hoped for?"

""At that time," they answered, "when a great tree, if cut down in the middle of its trunk, and the part cut off carried the space of three furlongs from the stock, shall be joined again to the trunk, by itself and without the hand of man or any sort of stake, and begin once more to push leaves and bear fruit from the old love of its uniting sap, then first can a remission of these great ills be hoped for.""

"When those who were present had heard these words – that is to say, the queen, who was sitting on the floor warming his feet in her lap, her brother, Earl Harold, and Rodbert, the steward of the royal palace and a kinsman of the king, also Archbishop Stigand and a few more whom the blessed king when roused from sleep had ordered to be summoned – they were all sore afraid as men who had heard a speech containing many calamities and a denial of the hope of pity. And while all were stupefied and silent from the effect of terror, the archbishop himself, who ought either to have been the first to fear or give a word of advice, with folly at heart whispered in the ear of the earl that the king was broken with age and disease and knew not what he said. But the queen, and those who had been wont to know and fear God in their hearts, all pondered deeply the words they had heard, and understood them quite otherwise, and correctly. For these knew that the Christian religion was chiefly dishonoured by men in Holy Orders, and that... the king and queen by frequent admonition had often proclaimed this."¹³⁴

King Edward died on January 5, 1066. The next day he was buried and his

¹³⁴ Anonymous, *Vita Aedwardi Regis*.

brother-in-law, Harold, was crowned with the agreement of all the chief men of the kingdom and of Edward himself – but not of Duke William, who, supported by Pope Alexander II, declared him a usurper and started gathering a huge army to invade England. The nine months and nine days of King Harold's reign were filled to the brim with activity of all kinds, and especially - war. Four times the king had to summon his forces from all over England to defend the land against various external threats. King Swein was seen off; King Hardrada and Tostig were crushed in the great battle of Stamford Bridge in September – the last victory of Orthodox Christianity over Viking paganism. However, in October the exhausted Harold was defeated and killed at Hastings by William, who was fighting under a papal banner and with some relics of St. Peter around his neck. After devastating the south-east, William entered London and on January 6, 1067, exactly one year and one day after King Edward's death, he was crowned as the first Catholic king of England. Then he set off on the terrible three-and-a-half-year campaign that destroyed English Orthodox civilization and has been called the first European genocide.

Now that “he who restrains”, the Orthodox autocrat, had been removed (II Thessalonians 2.7), the way was opened for the Roman Catholic Antichrist to conquer England and absorb it into his own dark kingdom!

So the first part of King Edward's prophecy had been fulfilled with precision. But what of the second part? What does the tree signify? And what is the meaning of the branch, and its reunification with the trunk?

It is usually thought – by those few who believe in the prophecy, not dismissing it as the ravings of a comatose madman – that the return of the branch to the trunk means the marriage, in the year 1100, of King William's fourth son, Henry I of England, to Matilda, daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and his wife Margaret, a princess of the Old English dynasty of King Alfred the Great, on the grounds that the trunk of the tree represents the Old English dynasty while Matilda represents the branch of that dynasty that returned to power in England through her marriage to Henry I after a journey of three “furlongs” – that is, three decades, or three generations, of English kings.

However, there is a major problem with this interpretation, namely: what, if anything, changed as a result of this marriage? And the answer is: nothing important. The Norman dynasty was followed by another French-speaking dynasty, that of the Plantagenets. There was no real return of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy, and English traditions remained trampled upon. So the prophesied “remission of the great evils” brought upon the country by the Norman-Papist conquest of 1066 simply did not take place.

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Let us ponder another interpretation... The trunk represents Orthodox monarchism. Its splitting in half represents the war between the old regime

under King Harold and its successor under King William. The branch is Harold's daughter Gytha, and its travelling "three furlongs" - her flight eastwards in three stages: first to Flanders, then to Denmark, and finally to Kiev. The reunification of the branch with the trunk represents the reunification of Orthodox monarchism in its Eastern and Western variants through the marriage of Gytha to the future Great Prince Vladimir Monomakh of Kiev.

Now history contains many "rags to riches" stories, demonstrating how God can raise anyone He chooses from the dung-hill to the heights of earthly power and glory. Among these, one of the most dramatic is that of Princess Gytha. When her father was killed at Hastings on October 14, 1066, defending his kingdom against the Roman Catholic Duke William of Normandy, she and her whole family were in danger of extinction by the cruel and vengeful William. But God not only protected her life. He raised her to the throne of the Great Princedom of Kiev, marrying her to Great Prince Vladimir Monomakh, - a marriage celebrated in modern times by an epic poem in Russian¹³⁵ - through whom she united the blood of the English Royal Family to that of the Russian Riurik dynasty.

We know very little about Princess Gytha's early life. She was born probably in the late 1040s to Earl Harold Godwinson, later King Harold II, and his common-law wife, Edith "Swan Neck", a beautiful and wealthy English aristocrat. Although Harold and Edith were not married in church, but more danico, "in the Danish way", such marriages had a legal status, and there is every indication that it was a loving and stable relationship, producing many children, which only ended early in 1066, when King Harold, to please the Church and probably also for political reasons, married Alditha, the sister of Earls Edwin and Morcar.

Gytha's grandparents were the most powerful aristocrats of the time, Earl Godwin of Wessex and Countess Gytha. Godwin was an Englishman from Sussex who fought bravely for King Edmund Ironside until his death on the field of battle in 1016 at the hands of the Danes under King Cnut "the Great", who then subdued the whole of England. But Cnut respected his new dominion; he was baptized and did his best to unite the English and the Danes. Thus he promoted Godwin and married him to his sister-in-law Gytha. In the years that followed, the Anglo-Danish Godwin family increased in power and wealth under both Danish and English kings. Godwin's daughter Edith married King Edward the Confessor, and his son Harold became king on Edward's death in January, 1066.

¹³⁵ Igor Avtamonov, *Vladimir Monomakh i Gita Garol'dovna*, Los Angeles, 1988.

A portrait of Countess Gytha can still be seen in a stained-glass window of her family's church of St. Nectan at Stoke in North Devon.¹³⁶ It was there that St. Nectan's fragrant relics were uncovered, following a revelation to the local priest, in the first half of the eleventh century. St. Nectan appears to have become the family's protector; for one of St. Nectan's miracles was worked on behalf of Earl Godwin.¹³⁷

The Normans viciously attacked the Godwin family, falsely accusing King Harold of being a usurper and finally killing him at Hastings - "because of the sins of people", as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* puts it. The grieving Countess Gytha, accompanied by Edith Swan-neck, pleaded with William to give her her son's body in exchange for its weight in gold. William refused...

The formidable old countess now proceeded to organize the resistance to the usurper King William from her estates in the south-west of England, and especially from the ancient Roman city of Exeter. But it was difficult for her: not only Harold, but also her other sons Earls Gyrth and Leofwine had been killed at Hastings, and she had only her grandsons Godwine and Edmund left to lead the armies. In 1067, Exeter fell after a long siege, and the Dowager-Queen Edith, King Harold's sister, surrendered to William; while Queen Alditha, King Harold's wife, fled to Chester, another old Roman city in the north of England, with her baby son Harold. Meanwhile, probably the nearest adult claimant to the English throne, Edgar the atheling, whose family had spent some time in Valaam, in the north of Russia, during Cnut's reign, fled to King Malcolm (the victor over the famous King Macbeth of Shakespearean fame) in Scotland.

The grandsons continued the struggle, however. Their ultimate failure, writes Ian W. Walker, "was due in the main to William's reaction to the very real threat they posed. His campaign in the south-west decisively nipped their schemes in the bud. Subsequently, they were forced to base themselves abroad and use mercenary troops, making it difficult for them to win any real support in England. Another significant factor was their failure to win the support of their cousin, Swein of Denmark, who was clearly intent on pursuing his own claim to the throne rather than supporting that of his cousins. The fact that many of Harold's key supporters had fallen at Hastings, and that the Normans controlled a large part of the family lands in the south-east severely handicapped them. The brothers' inexperience in warfare was also a contributory factor to their failure, although the long defence of Exeter and their victory over Eadnoth [the *staller*, who had served the Godwins, but changed sides after Hastings] suggest this was not decisive. Perhaps if either Gyrth or Leofwine, with their greater authority and experience, had survived the battle at Hastings things might have been different.

¹³⁶ Stoke belonged to the wealthy estate of Harland, which in the Domesday survey of 1086 is recorded as having belonged to Countess Gytha before 1066. See John Morris (ed.), *Domesday Book*. 9. *Devon*, Chichester: Phillimore, 1985, 100 d.

¹³⁷ See the 12th century Gotha manuscript life of St. Nectan translated by G.H. Doble, *The Saints of Cornwall*, Truro: Holywell Press, part 5, pp. 59-79.

“The brothers’ bid for the throne was over, but this was not the end of the story. A considerable amount is known about the fate of the remnants of King Harold’s family after their final withdrawal from England in 1069. The elderly Countess Gytha, with Harold’s sister Gunnhild, probably settled in quiet retirement at St. Omer in Flanders, where Count Baldwin VI apparently received them charitably as relatives of] his aunt Judith [wife of Earl Tostig Godwinson, killed with the Norwegian King Harald at Stamford Bridge in 1066] and in spite of their rivalry with his brother-in-law, William of Normandy. Countess Gytha’s remaining treasure may have helped to persuade Baldwin to provide them with refuge. Thereafter, the royal ladies performed good works, and the death of the king’s sister, Gunnhild, was recorded at Bruges in 1087. She bequeathed a psalter with Anglo-Saxon glosses to St. Donation’s in Bruges and this book, known as ‘Gunnhild’s Psalter’, was still there in the sixteenth century. She also donated a collection of religious relics to St. Donation’s, most notably the mantle of St. Bridget. A copy of [Abbot] Aelfric’s works donated to St. Bertin’s may, perhaps, have been a legacy of Countess Gytha.

“It seems likely that King Harold’s sons escorted these ladies to Flanders, as it would have been rather risky for them to navigate the Norman-controlled Channel alone...The presence of these exiles must have caused King William considerable unease. Indeed, the arrival of this group in Flanders, perhaps in late 1069 or early 1070, may have prompted William to depose Bishop Aethelric of Sussex on 24 May 1070, in case he became a fifth column in support of their return. He was, after all, a relative of the family and based in the ancient family heartland just across the Channel from them. Therefore, it became imperative to remove him for political reasons. It seems likely that this was the reason for Papal concern about this particular deposition, as expressed in a number of later Papal letters. On 16 July 1070 Baldwin VI died and a succession dispute broke out between his infant sons, supported by King William, and his brother, Robert the Frisian. This dispute ended on February 22, 1071 at the battle of Cassel, the victory falling to William’s enemy, Robert, who became the uncontested Count of Flanders. The threat of a descent by Harold’s sons on Sussex from a hostile Flanders may have contributed to the unusual organization of the Norman castellanries in the Sussex rapes.

“It was probably from Flanders, where they had accompanied or followed the ladies of the family, that King Harold’s sons, Godwine and Edmund, journeyed to the court of their cousin, Swein of Denmark, accompanied by their sister Gytha. This is recorded by Saxo Grammaticus, who, although writing much later, seems to portray a not improbable situation and whose account is perhaps confirmed by two independent sources. The latter record an embassy to Denmark by Godwine the younger, mistakenly identified as Harold’s brother rather than his son, which sought King Swein’s aid against William. The brothers may have hoped that their arrival in Denmark would finally secure Swein’s backing for their restoration. If so, they were swiftly disillusioned, as Swein’s own recent invasions of England had proved fairly

disastrous and he was in no hurry to repeat them. Thereafter Swein's death in 1074 or 1076 ushered in a period of confusion, which was not fully resolved until well into the next century. The final fate of Godwine and Edmund is unknown, but Gytha, according to later Scandinavian sources, was sent by Swein to marry the Russian Prince of Smolensk, Vladimir *Monomakh*. The date of the event is unclear but it probably occurred in 1074 or 1075. It has been objected that no Russian source records the name of Vladimir's first wife and Vladimir's own testament records her only as the mother of his son George. However, this is not unusual and many women are unnamed in Russian sources, including Vladimir's own Byzantine mother, and the fact of the marriage appears to be generally accepted.

"Prince Vladimir was then around twenty-six years old and ruler of the city of Smolensk in Western Russia. He held an important but not key position in the complex hierarchy of Russian princes. At this time, Russia consisted of a series of principalities each based on a major city and each ruled by a member of the dynasty of St. Vladimir. The principalities were arranged in a rough hierarchy with Kiev at the summit, usually ruled by the senior prince. Vladimir probably welcomed his marriage as providing him with a royal connection. It also brought with it an alliance with the Danes, which might prove very useful in dissuading the neighbouring Poles from invading Russia.

"The marriage proved fruitful and in 1076 Mstislav, the first of a number of sons, was born to Gytha in Novgorod. Two years later, Vladimir was promoted to the position of Prince of Chernigov, following the expulsion of his cousin, Oleg, from the city. He successfully ruled this, the second city in Russia and an important bastion, for some sixteen years, defending it against a series of attacks from the steppe nomads. Finally, in 1094, he was expelled by Oleg with the aid of nomad allies and he moved to his father's city of Pereyaslavl. It is likely that Gytha accompanied her husband throughout this period and shared in successes and failures. She appears to have provided him with a large number of children, perhaps as many as eight sons and three daughters. In this respect, Gytha appears to have been as fruitful as her mother, Edith 'Swan-neck', and her grandmother and namesake, Gytha...

"Gytha died on 7 May 1107 before her husband attained the pinnacle of his career by becoming Grand Prince of Kiev in 1113. The eldest of her sons, Mstislav, born in Novgorod in 1076, was widely known in the Norse world by her father's name, Harold. He went on to succeed his father as Grand Prince of Kiev in 1125, ruling the city until his own death in 1132."¹³⁸

Great Prince Mstislav-Harold also has the name of Theodore (he took two names in Holy Baptism – Theodore and Harold), and is numbered among the saints of the Russian Church, being commemorated on April 15.

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¹³⁸ Walker, *Harold, the Last Anglo-Saxon King*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004, pp. 216-219.

Let us now return to King Edward's prophecy, and examine whether the interpretation of the branch and its fruit as Princess Gytha and her progeny is viable.

There are two obvious objections to it. The first is that the association of the prophecy with the distant country of Russia seems far-fetched and artificial. The second is that the "remission of the great evils" spoken of in the prophecy has not been fulfilled in any obvious way.

In answer to the first objection, let us first pay heed to an interesting theory put forward by, among others, the Russian priest Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky. This theory consists in the assertion that in the eleventh century most of northern Europe, in a vast arc stretching from Kievan Rus' in the East to Scandinavia in the north to England in the West, was in fact a single cultural area comprising three ethnic groups, the Russians, the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons, united by a single warrior elite of Scandinavian origin - known as "Northmen" in both England and Russia, but better known as "Vikings" today - who had conquered the Russians in the East and the Anglo-Saxons in the West. The cultural unity of the area was strengthened by the Christianization of its pagan elements - Scandinavia by English missionaries and its trio of Christian Olafs (Olag Trygvasson of Norway, Olaf the Saint of Norway and Olof Skotkonung of Sweden, father of St. Anna of Novgorod), and Russia by the Byzantines.

Much has been made of the fact that Russia, unlike Western Europe, derived its faith from the Eastern Orthodox, while England and Scandinavia later came under the religious control of the Roman Catholic papacy. This is indeed a very important fact - caused in no small part by William of Normandy's destruction of Anglo-Saxon Orthodoxy after the Battle of Hastings, which had a knock-on effect for the whole of Western Europe. But in the period before Hastings, England - and therefore also its ecclesiastical dependency, Scandinavia - was an Orthodox country in full communion and constant contact with the Eastern patriarchates.

This meant that in the period in question England, Scandinavia and Russia were united as never before - not only culturally, but also religiously. Perhaps the best proof of that is that after 1066 English warriors and aristocrats migrated in large numbers to Constantinople and (in the person of Princess Gytha) to Russia - but not at all to the ancient haunt of English exiles, Old Rome. Therefore just as it was natural for the Russian Orthodox after 1917 to emigrate to other Orthodox countries such as Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, so it was natural for Gytha after 1066 to emigrate to Russia. There, in spite of obvious differences, she would have felt cultural and religious affinities. She might even have been able to speak the Scandinavian language of the elites, if not the Slav language of the lower classes.

Moreover, there were clear precedents for Gytha's decision. In 1028, when he was driven out of his Norwegian kingdom by King Cnut, St. Olaf, of

Norway decided to flee to Sweden and thence to the court of his kinsman, Yaroslav of Kiev. A generation earlier, King Olaf Tryggvason had been given refuge by St. Vladimir of Kiev. Perhaps the closest precedent is that of St. Anna of Novgorod. The daughter of King Olof Skotkonung of Sweden, and baptized by an English bishop, St. Sigfrid of Vaxjo, she married Prince Vladimir Yaroslavovich of Novgorod, thereby making the same transition from Western Orthodox monarchism to Eastern Orthodox monarchism that Gytha made a little later.

The symbolism of the flowering of the branch can also be successfully interpreted in accordance with this interpretation. For the marriage of Vladimir and Gytha did produce fruit – their six children. Moreover, in the person of their eldest son Mystislav the fruit was truly holy. Thus the “bearing of fruit from the old love of its uniting sap” represents Gytha’s bearing of good fruit in the person of her eldest son, St. Theodore-Mystislav-Harold, Great Prince of Kiev, whose triple-barreled name – Greek, Russian and English - represents not only the three blood-lines he inherited from his parents, but also the continuing vitality of Christian Monarchism in its three historical manifestations – the First Rome in the West, the Second in Constantinople and the Third Rome in Russia.

However, as with the first interpretation, so with this second one, a formidable problem is presented by the “remission of great evils”. What could this refer to? As we have seen, there was certainly no remission of great evils in England. Nor is it clear that anything of the sort happened in Russia.

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So let us turn, finally, to a third possible interpretation that will, hopefully, make sense of the whole of King Edward’s prophecy... The great tree represents the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Orthodox Church. Until 1054 the Church in East and West was one. However, in 1054 it was split in two by the mutual anathemas exchanged by Pope Leo IX of Rome and Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople. In the West those who wished to escape the Roman Catholic menace and remain in Orthodoxy had to flee eastwards, to Byzantium or Russia. However, for a long time this migration was undertaken only by a handful of people – Princess Gytha and St. Anna of Novgorod are two early examples; St. Anthony the Roman, St. Macarius the Roman, St. Procopius of Lubeck and the holy Royal Martyrs Tsaritsa Alexandra and Grand Duchess Elizabeth are later examples. However, in the twentieth century this trickle of migrants became a flood. Western Orthodoxy was reborn. Only what was needed now to be reunited with the trunk of the Orthodox Church was not a physical migration but a spiritual one. For many tens of thousands of Eastern Orthodox migrated to the West, where westerners could join them without leaving their homelands.

Very many westerners have made this spiritual voyage without being preached to, but only as a result of God’s call. This effortless conversion is what is meant by the words of the prophecy that the branch will be rejoined to the

trunk “by itself and without the hand of man or any sort of stake”. As for the distance of “three furlongs” that separates the branch from the tree, this may signify the three religious revolutions, or heretical upheavals, that have taken the Western peoples further and further away from Orthodoxy: first the Roman Catholic revolution of the late eleventh century, then the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century, and then the Ecumenist revolution of the twentieth century. Indeed, it has been only since the foundation of the ecumenical movement after the First World War that the conversion of Western heretical Christians to Orthodoxy has begun to take place on a large scale. Indeed, this conversion has been a powerful witness in itself to the falseness of the ecumenist heresy: far from accepting that they are already in the True Church, and that the Church can embrace all kinds of contradictory beliefs within itself, these western converts have witnessed by their words and actions that the Truth is only in Orthodoxy and that they are prepared to abandon their former beliefs and churches in order to join it.

As for this branch putting forth leaves and bearing fruit, as the prophecy indicates, this has only just begun. Nevertheless, some green leaves are already discernible: by common consent, the American Fr. Seraphim Rose and the Chilean Jose Munoz were exceptional Orthodox Christians. We may hope that in the not so distant future there will be further spiritual fruits in more and more Western Orthodox Christians. And then the last part of the prophecy, the “remission of great evils”, - that is, the removal of heresy and all the evils of contemporary western civilization, - will be fulfilled...

Of course, this third interpretation of St. Edward’s prophecy is as speculative as the first two. But it has the advantage over the others of accounting for more parts of the prophecy. Moreover, would it not be appropriate that the last recognized saint of the West should on his deathbed utter a prophecy about the resurrection of Western Orthodoxy?

February 5/18, 2018.

Martyr-Prince Alfred of England, brother of St. Edward the Confessor.

10. PUTIN, THE COMMUNIST CHRISTIAN

Putin's regime claims to be the successor not only of the RSFSR and the USSR but also of the pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox Empire. It may be described as neo-Soviet and neo-Fascist, without the apparatus of conventional Marxism but with "Communist Christianity", drawing support from a heady mixture of conflicting constituencies: nationalists and democrats and monarchists, Orthodox Christians and pagan mystics and dyed-in-the-wool atheists, westerners and capitalists, mafiosi bandits and Slavophile patriots. Putin aims to find a place in his all-embracing heart for all the Russias of the last century – and all its faiths going back to the tenth century.

One of those faiths is communism, and Putin has clearly not renounced that. As he said in 2016 to the Pan-Russian People's Front: "You know that like millions of Soviet citizens – over 20 million – I used to be a member of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), and not just a regular member: for almost 20 years I worked for the organization called the Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union [KGB]. This organization derives from the Cheka [Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage], which was then called the armed unit of the Party. If for some reason a person left the Communist Party, they were immediately fired from the KGB. I did not join the party simply because I had to, though I cannot say I was such a dedicated communist, but I treated this with great care. As opposed to numerous party functionaries, I was not one of them; I was a rank-and-file member. As opposed to many functionaries, I did not trash my membership card, I did not burn it. I would not want to criticize anyone now – people had different motives and this is their own business. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union fell apart; my membership card is still out there somewhere.

"I have always liked communist and socialist ideas. If we consider the Code of the Builder of Communism that was widely published in the Soviet Union, it strongly resembles the Bible. This is not a joke; it was actually an excerpt from the Bible. It spoke of good things: equality, fraternity, happiness. However, the practical implementation of these ideals in this country had little in common with what the utopian socialists Saint-Simon or Owen spoke about. This country had little resemblance to their City of the Sun."¹³⁹

Andrei Melnikov writes illuminatingly on a more recent expression of these views: "Vladimir Putin's words to the effect that the communist ideology is 'very close' to Christianity, were uttered in a documentary film 'Valaam' that was shown on January 14 of this year [2018] on the television channel 'Russia 1'. They elicited a strong reaction even in spite of the fact that the Russian president had expounded similar views earlier. The head of the government's thought has probably sounded particularly clearly now in view of the beginning of the presidential campaign. Let us not note that the maker of the film was the journalist Andrei Kondrashov, who was recently appointed head of Putin's pre-

¹³⁹ <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/page/130>.

election campaign headquarters. The president visited Valaam monastery in June, 1917, and he has been there before.

“‘Faith,’ said Putin on the television screen, ‘has always accompanied us. It has become stronger when our country was suffering particularly intensely during the most God-fighting years, when priests were killed and churches destroyed. But at the same time, you know, they created a new religion’ - the communist ideology, - which ‘is very akin to Christianity’. ‘Freedom, brotherhood, equality, justice - all these are invoked in the Holy Scriptures, it’s all there. And what of the ‘Law Code of the Builder of Communism’? This was a sublimation, a primitive excerpt from the Bible, they didn’t think up anything new there’.

“Let us recall that the president said similar things earlier. For example, during his speech in 2016 before the activists of the Pan-Russian People’s Front - a structure that had played the role of locomotive in the preceding electoral campaign of the acting president. ‘I very much like and to this day I still like communist and socialist ideas,’ said Putin then. ‘If we look at the ‘Law Code of the Builder of Communism’, which was published in large quantities in the Soviet Union, we see that it is very reminiscent of the Bible. This is no joke, this is in fact an extract from the Bible.’ ‘But the practical incarnations of these remarkable ideas in our country were far from what the socialist utopians expounded. Our country was not like the City of the Sun’, explained the head of the Russian state to the PPF activists.

“However, this time Putin added one more ‘burning’ topic - the fate of Lenin’s body in the Mausoleum. The past year was marked, in connection with the 100th anniversary of the revolution, by a sharpening of the discussion over the burial of the leader of the world revolution. One of those who expressed himself in favour a ‘normal’ burial of Lenin was the head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov, after which he had a bit of a quarrel with the president of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Gennady Ziuganov.

“‘Look,’ said Putin, ‘they put Lenin in the Mausoleum. In what does this differ from the relics of the saint? For the Orthodox, or simply for Christians? When they tell me: there is no such tradition in the Christian world, how come? Go to Athos and look. There they have holy relic. Yes, and her (on Valaam) there are also holy relics, those of Sergius and Herman.’ ‘In essence, the authorities at that time thought up nothing new. They simply adapted what humanity had already long ago invented to their own ideology,’ explained the head of the state.

“These words on ‘relics’ received a stormy reaction from the State Duma Deputy Natalya Poklonskaya, who in the course of the past year, in unison with Kadyrov, spoke out for the burial of Lenin. ‘In my view, it would be incorrect and a consciously self-interested distortion, for political or other motives, to use and interpret ‘in one’s own way’ the words of the president on a certain parallel

between the dead body of Ulyanov in the Mausoleum, on whose conscience are millions of murdered people, and the holy relics in the monasteries and churches. The opinion he voiced is not about that, but about government regimes and the attempt to create a false religion at a definite stage of history,' wrote Poklonskaya in her account on Facebook.

However, the words on the Mausoleum were received with rapture by the communists headed by Gennady Ziuganov. On the one hand, this is understandable: Ziuganov has himself expressed analogous idea about the similarity between the moral imperatives of communism and those of Christianity. 'If you take the Moral 'Code of Law of the Builder of Communism' and the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus Christ and put them side to side, you will be surprised: the texts coincide completely,' declared the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in 2012 in an interview on the same 'Russia 1' channel. On the other hand, the rhetoric of compromise addressed to the older generation, who are not indifferent to their memories of the Soviet past, contributes to the rising popularity of Pavel Grudinin, a candidate for the presidency from the CPRF.

"If all this is understandable for the communist electorate, there remains the question: to what extent do the thoughts of the president chime in with the point of view of the church? If we are to take the opinion of Patriarch Cyril of Moscow and All Russia as the official position of the ROC, then it is impossible for us not to register the striking consonance between his sermons and the speeches of Putin on the issue in question, with the exception, perhaps, of his words on Lenin. On April 6, 2011 in Kiev the head of the ROC said: 'Even the years of life in the conditions of unbelief did not root out in us that very programme which was laid as a certain Code of development of our Orthodox peoples. And in this sense the unbelievers of the Soviet period were in a rudimentary way Orthodox Christians - they remained in the same system of values... At that time atheist ideology wanted to reform the system of values, but did not encroach on morality. Take the very 'Code of Law of the Builder of Communism' - it was dictated from the Bible. Without God, but the same morality.' However, with regard to the burial of Lenin, the representatives of the Church in 2017 more than once said that it was necessary to wait with that.

"'Putin's real ideas about Christian values are hidden from us,' thinks the leader of the Centre for the Study of Problems of Religion and Society at the Institute of Europe RAN, Roman Lunkin. 'The president has not spoken about fulfilling the Gospel commandments or about his parish life.' 'For Putin the important things in public are formalities - his baptism in childhood, Orthodoxy as an element consolidating society, his principled visits to a simple church service at Christmas and more officially - at Pascha,' said the religious expert of 'NGR'.

"A leading expert of the Centre for Political Technologies, Alexei Makarkin, pointed to the fact that 'in his interview Putin did not say that this was

Christian tradition in its pure form, that would have been strange: he spoke about copying tradition, and the striving of the essentially antichristian party to borrow something.' 'In this way each auditorium can read what it wants,' explained the political expert. 'The main auditorium - nostalgic Russians - can read in it the main thing that Putin is against - that Lenin should be taken out of the Mausoleum, at any rate now. At the same time there is another variant for people holding other views, in the first place believers: who, from the point of view of the believers, will copy Jesus Christ? He will be copied by the Antichrist, who will try to make out that he is Jesus, being in actual fact his most terrible enemy. For the Christians there could be the following interpretation: since the president recognizes that the communists can copy certain Christian traditions, that means that everything is in fact like that - the enemies of Christ are trying to copy, while at the same time distorting,' said Markarkin of the 'NGR'." ¹⁴⁰

This article goes a long way to answering the question that has exercised and divided Russian True Orthodox Christians: is Putin's regime a reincarnation of the antichristian Soviet regime, or something new (and supposedly better)? If the former, then it lies under the same anathema of the Moscow Council of 1918 that fell on the obviously antichristian Soviet regime and all those who cooperated with it. If the latter, then it does not fall under the anathema and is acceptable and legitimate. However, this "either/or" formulation of the question is misleading; it fails to take into account the possibility that Putin's regime is *worse* than the Soviet regime, being antichristian in a different, more subtle and more profound manner.

The word "Antichrist" has a dual meaning. The preposition "anti" in Greek can mean either "against" or "in the place of". The Soviet regime was clearly "against" Christ - it murdered millions of Christians, and persecuted the faith in word and deed. However, it did not pretend to "take the place of" Christ or God. For how could it take the place of a being that, according to communists, does not exist?

But the Soviet regime came to an end in 1991, and with it so did the open persecution of Christians. There was nobody left in Russia who was openly "anti" - in the sense of "against" - Christ. There were still very many atheists and heretics, but no more "God-fighters"; all the surviving former God-fighters were living on their pensions; "God-fighting" was no longer legal or in any way approved.

But in 2000 Putin came to power. Now Putin was director of the FSB (KGB), the executive branch, as it were, of the Soviet government's war against God. For such a man to become president was therefore a profound shock and a stern warning for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. It was as if the head of the Inquisition had become head of the World Council of Churches, or Himmler -

¹⁴⁰ Melnikov, "Valaamovo otkrovenie dlia chetvertogo sroka" (A Valaam Revelation for a Fourth Term), *N-G Religia*, Putin, Interview reported on *Russia Today*, 2018.

the president of Germany after the war. Nothing similar would have been even tolerated in a western country. But it was tolerated in Russia, first, because, as surveys showed, most Russians still considered the Soviet Union to be their native country, and Lenin and Stalin to be heroes; and secondly, because the West clung on to the stupid belief that over seventy years of the most terrible blood-letting in history – far longer and far more radical than Hitler’s twelve years in power – could be wiped out and reversed without any kind of decommunization, without even a single person being put on trial for the murdering of innocent people in the name of the “collective Antichrist” of Soviet power. The tragic farce has reached such a stage that the KGB has become a hero of Russia literature cinematography, with its own church in the middle of its chief prison, the Lubyanka in Moscow – not, as it might be thought to commemorate the martyrs who suffered so terribly within its walls, but for the executioners! The West concurred with this filthy whitewash; the official Orthodox Church (itself ruled by KGB agents) concurred; the masses of the Russian people concurred by voting Putin into power repeatedly.

And then the “rebirth” took place: without repenting in the slightest of his communist past, and while gradually reintroducing more and more Soviet traditions and symbols, Putin underwent a conversion to Christ! Or rather, from being part of the body of the Soviet Antichrist, which was “anti”, that is, “against” Christ, he is now preaching a form of Communist Christianity that, as Makarkin puts it, “copies” Jesus Christ, placing its own ideas “in the place” of Christ’s and passing them off as His. And if the “copy” is a poor one – just as Lenin’s stinking body is a very poor imitation of the fragrant relics of the saints, and the murderous “Code of Law of the Builder of Communism” is a very poor imitation of the Sermon on the Mount - this does not matter, so long as the masses are taken in by it, or, if not taken in by it, at least convinced that Christ and the antichristian state are now on the same side...

So the Russian revolution has mutated from one kind of Antichristianity to another, from Lenin’s Antichristianity that was openly against Christ, to Putin’s Antichristianity which pretends not to be against Christ but to copy Him and take His place...

There can be no doubt that this new, more sophisticated kind is more dangerous than the former – and closer to the kind that will be practised by “the personal Antichrist” himself at the end of time. For of that Antichrist the Lord said: “I have come in My Father’s name and you do not believe Me: if another shall come in his own name, him you will believe” ([John 5.43](#)). In other words, you have rejected the real Christ, and as a direct result you will accept an imposter, a man-god, for the real thing, the God-Man.

But we must not be deceived, remembering Putin’s words: “Once a chekist, always a chekist...”

February 10/23, 2018.

11. THE NATIONS, NATIONALISM AND THE RUSSIAN IDEA

The love of one's country is one of those forces in human nature which can be used for good or for evil, for the love of God and the building up of His Kingdom, or for the hatred of one's neighbour and the destruction of mankind. In a sermon delivered in the revolutionary year of 1905, St. John of Kronstadt said: "The earthly fatherland with its Church is the threshold of the Heavenly Fatherland. Therefore love it fervently and be ready to lay down your life for it, so as to inherit eternal life there." Nearly forty years later, however, some Catholic Croat murderers of Orthodox Serbs, when told (by a Catholic) that they would go to hell for their actions, replied: "Alright, so long as the Serbs will be there also"! Such is the power of national hatred, that it can willingly barter eternal life for the grim satisfaction of destroying one's national enemy.

By the end of the twentieth century, it looked as if national hatred had replaced ideological hatred as the major passion tearing mankind apart. Whether in the former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union, in Somalia or Ruanda or East Timor, it was wars between tribes, nationalist wars, that were making rivers of blood flow and causing "the international community" to despair. And international organizations seemed powerless to stop them.

Characteristic was the remark of Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission and one of the leading internationalists of the time: "I have lived through two humiliating moments in my life. The first was when I was 15 and the Germans invaded France. I saw the population fleeing before the enemy, including soldiers on bicycles whose only thought was to save their own skin. I swore then that such a thing must never happen again. But the same thing is happening again today, in Bosnia. I am ashamed, dishonored. Soon I will turn 69. One day I will die, and I will have done nothing to stop all that."

However, instead of wringing our hands, we should take sober note why it is that, in an age of unparalleled international cooperation and gigantic efforts to overcome national antagonisms - the age of the League of Nations and the United Nations, of the Soviet Union and the European Union - everything seemed to be falling apart and nationalism in its evil mode was as virulent as ever. It is obvious that the world-view on which these grand schemes were based was false, that it had not penetrated to the mystery of the nation and the nature of nationalism. Their intentions may have been good (in some cases), but the experience of the twentieth century showed - and the experience of the first two decades of the twenty-first century has not disproved the contention - that such good intentions only lead to hell - hell on earth and hell in the life to come.

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One of the major lessons to be drawn from the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia is that nationalism is a force that cannot be indefinitely suppressed, nor made to wither away. Leaders who ignore it usually end up by being swept away by it. Moreover, this is a lesson for democratic leaders no less than for communist dictators; for simply providing every citizen of a multinational state with a vote and certain human rights does not remove the potential for ethnic conflict. Only very few democratic states have successfully solved the problem of nationalism; the exceptions, like Switzerland, are better described as confederations of relatively homogeneous territorial nation states. As Michael Lind points out, even such highly civilized democracies as Canada and Belgium are threatened with disintegration by nationalistic demands for self-determination, while the United States, Russia and China, all have serious ethnic problems.

On the other hand, a strict application of the principle of national self-determination will not solve the problem. It is not simply that the oppressed minority in the larger unpartitioned state often becomes the oppressing majority in the smaller partitioned state; or that many nations, once independent, are too small to be economically viable; or that some ethnically homogeneous nations are completely surrounded by larger nations, as Tatarstan is surrounded by Russia. Perhaps the strongest argument against self-determination is that the ethnic populations in most modern States are so mixed up that the attempt to separate them is practically impossible or is necessarily accompanied by enormous hardships and even war. Thus the idea of creating an ethnically homogeneous state for the Kurds is opposed by all the states in the region, while the idea of partitioning, say, Latvia between the Latvians and the Russians, is extremely problematic.

Like sexuality in individual psychology, nationalism in social psychology must be contained without being suppressed, recognized without being incited or pandered to. And again like sexuality, nationalism must be recognized as a force that is vital for the perpetuation of the race. Thus Anne Applebaum writes: "Western diplomats should be interested in the Central European right and in healthy nationalist movements elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Not all 'nationalist' or even 'patriotic' emotion is necessarily a symptom of antidemocratic tendencies. Nor is it all extraneous to the progress of reform. The quality of the civil servants, diplomats, and soldiers in Central Europe, for example, will depend largely on whether Central European politicians manage to revive national pride, given that salaries in the public sector will remain low. One of the few emotions that can keep a good Slovak scientist in Slovakia, or a talented Ukrainian entrepreneur in Ukraine, is patriotism."

We could do with more enlightened patriotism; for it is the excess of benighted nationalism that is the real worry in international politics today. Nationalism should be purified and sublimated, not only to the level of

enlightened patriotism, but to a higher, supra-national level which will allow the expression of national feelings without leading to international conflicts. The question is: how?

Historically speaking, the only force, apart from force of arms, that has been capable of holding different nations together in one state for long periods of time has been *religion*. The Latin root of the word "religion" means "binding together", and there can be no doubt that universalist religions such as Confucianism in China, or Islam in the Middle East, or Orthodox Christianity in Eastern Europe have had a measure of success in binding together multi-national empires. Of course, religion can also divide; but it is important to understand the difference between religious and nationalistic conflicts.

Religious and ideological conflicts are, in general, conflicts about truth and falsehood, right and wrong. As such, they are at least theoretically capable of resolution by rational means, by discussion and argument, by the conversion of one side to the opinion of the other. Nationalist conflicts, on the other hand, are based on emotional ties and sympathies which are much more difficult to change. Of course, points of fact or morality are often hotly debated in nationalist conflicts - the justice of this or that change of boundaries, for example, or the agent of this or that murder or bombing. But it is a characteristic of nationalist conflicts that even when the facts are clear, the antagonists still cannot come to an agreement because the cause of the conflict actually has very little to do with truth or justice, but rather with the simple fact that the two nations *hate each other*, or, at any rate, feel the other nation to be so different, so *strange*, that real cooperation is considered impossible.

The tragedy is that in most cases religious conflicts have become mixed up with nationalist ones in a manner that is very difficult to disentangle. Sometimes this is the fault of the religion, in that it consists of little more than an intellectual underpinning of nationalist prejudices. All religions that believe in a super-race are of this kind. Again, many pagan religions serve the purpose of exalting a particular territory in the minds of its inhabitants, assuring them that this territory is the object of particular favour by one, if not all the gods. Hence the ancient cults of Athene of the Athenians, or "Diana of the Ephesians" - or of Jerusalem in contemporary Judaism.

But even universalist religions tend to become associated with those nations or regions that first embraced them or embraced them most ardently. Thus although Orthodox Christianity is a faith in which "there is neither Greek nor Jew", it came to be called "the Greek faith" because of the great importance of the Byzantine empire as the cradle of Orthodox civilization. Later, however, when the centre of power in the Orthodox world shifted northwards, the peasants of the Russian empire tended to use the words "Russian" and "Orthodox" as synonyms, so that, for example, Christ was "the Russian God" and the Apostles were "Russian" (although

the peasants certainly understood that they were ethnically Jews), while a Russian who fell away from Orthodoxy would cease to be "Russian" and might well (if he became a Marxist) be classified as a Jew.

These changes in linguistic practice are not necessarily evidence of the degradation of a universalist religion into nationalism. In many cases, they are rather an almost inevitable consequence of the fact that universalist religions acquire particular national incarnations and become particularly associated with those incarnations. Conversely, national identity and character are very profoundly affected by the religion or ideology which the nation adopts.

Indeed, Solzhenitsyn and others have argued that religious, ideological and cultural criteria of national identity are much more important than purely genetic ones; and this idea, which would have seemed simply common sense in earlier, more religious and less nationalist times, has much to commend it today. First, very few people in today's world, especially in Europe, have no mixed blood or can be called genetically "pure", so that the idea of classifying people along genetic lines is scientifically useless even if it were not morally dubious. Secondly, the attempt to look at nations from a purely genetic standpoint means completely to misunderstand the nature of those nations whose continuing strong identity over the centuries is unlikely to have been the result of genetic inheritance, but is almost certainly the result of a commonly held *faith* - the Jews, for example. And thirdly, many nationalist prejudices and potential conflicts could be defused if the wrath of those who have these prejudices could be diverted from what they see as the offending *genetic* nation to the offending *ideological* nation.

What would be the consequences of defining nations primarily in terms of their religious, ideological and cultural allegiances rather than in terms of their genetic inheritance? First, if accepted on a wide scale, it would help to defuse nationalist conflicts between nations that are ideologically and culturally close. It has been pointed out that relations between democratic states are usually harmonious; but the same could probably be argued with regard to relations between many other states that share other religions or ideologies.

Secondly, it should warn us against being too optimistic with regard to the resolution of differences between genetically similar, but ideologically disparate, states, such as Communist Korea and Democratic Korea, or Catholic Croatia and Orthodox Serbia. Genetic kinship actually appears to increase the depth of the differences in these cases, as if the fact that a man of a different ideological nation is related to one by blood makes his crime blacker and more unforgiveable. A lessening of ideological intensity, as in Western Europe after the Wars of Religion, or the imposition of a third ideology upon the other two, as when Communism was imposed upon Croatian Catholicism and Serbian Orthodoxy, may help to control the conflict temporarily. But no permanent cessation of hostilities can be

envisaged until the different genetic nations become one nation religiously or ideologically. Moreover, the nations must become ideologically one not by imposition but by genuine conversion.

Thirdly, the definition of nations in terms of their ideologies rather than their genetic inheritance should focus our attention primarily on the vital task of finding the best ideology and defending it by all the intellectual and spiritual means at our disposal. The West forms a single ideological nation, its ideology being the belief in democracy, human rights and a free-market economy. This ideology has had a remarkable success in recent years, but its failures are also becoming more glaring and obvious in the eyes of those who hold different ideologies, such as Islam. We have mentioned one of its weaknesses: its failure to control nationalism. Another weakness is the moral corruption of its leaders and the lack of respect in which they are held in most democratic (not to mention non-democratic) countries. A third is its failure to provide any higher or deeper spiritual goal for its citizens than the provision of material goods on a fairly egalitarian basis. If democracy is the best ideology, then it must be the primary task of democrats to defend their ideology against these attacks, and to show that these weaknesses are unreal, or real but corrigible within the democratic framework. But in spite of the huge prestige gained by their victory over Communism in 1989-91, they have singularly failed in that task...

Perhaps the gravest weakness of democracy, and the root cause why it seems to fail in relation to the strongest nationalisms and non-democratic religions, is that it tends to underestimate the importance of ideology. Indeed, democracy may be defined as the ideology that ideology does not ultimately matter, but only the will of the majority, however radically that that will may change over time. Thus democracy does not claim for itself that it embodies the ultimate truth about God, man and the universe; it only says that if the citizens of a state have differing views about God, man and the universe, and about how their different views should be embodied in law, they should simply vote on it, and accept the will of the majority... Of course, it is part of the democratic ideology that the will of the minority should be "respected". But in practice it is not, especially in recent times: it is a paradox of contemporary liberal democracy that while preaching the maximum of "freedom", it is often extremely intolerant of those who do not believe in their "freedom" - for example, in sexual matters.

In any case, it is obvious that questions of truth cannot be decided by a vote. Nor, if the matter is important, and the ethnic and religious minorities strong-willed, will a majority vote ever settle the matter for the minorities. For why should what they see to be the will of God, or of the nation as expressed by the traditions passed down from all past generations, be overthrown by a single vote in the present?

For example, Judith Miller writes about two influential leaders of modern Islam: "for both Turabi and Fadlallah, the Western notion of democracy is

alien: to Islam, rule is a prerogative not of the people, but of God, who appointed the prophet, who, in turn, prescribed the general precepts of governance in God's own words, the Koran. For both men, no parliamentary majority, however large, can nullify God's laws as codified in Islamic law."

A similar position is taken by Orthodox Christian nationalists, for whom democratic majorities have no validity if they involve the breaking up of the historic Orthodox nation or the permitting of phenomena such as pornography or abortion or homosexuality, which are contrary to the Gospel of Christ.

Some democrats have argued that the only way to eliminate some of the most serious nationalist conflicts is to include both nations in one "super-nation" - with the important proviso, however, that both nations should have voted for entrance into the new "super-nation" by lawfully elected majorities. Thus the elimination of the rivalry between France and Germany was seen as the main justification for the creation of the European Union by some of its founders. Whether the peace was preserved in Europe after 1945 more by the EU, or by NATO and the American army, is a moot point - but it cannot be denied that, at least in the early days, the preservation of the Common European Market created an important motive for keeping the peace.

However, it is dangerous to believe that nationalism as such can be cured by abolishing the nations and merging them into some artificial kind of super-nation. The former Soviet Union is a vivid example of this fallacy. The Bolsheviks first tried to use and incite national feeling in order to destroy the multi-national empire of Russia. Then they tried to impose their own brand of anti-nationalism on all the nations of the former empire, suppressing the old nationalisms in favour of a new "Soviet patriotism". But the old nationalisms were not destroyed; and once the dead hand of Bolshevism was removed they emerged in a still more virulent form.

The European Union was created in a less crude, more consensual way. But just as you cannot "buck the market", so you cannot "buck human nature" and its need to belong to larger bodies and communities. The old nationalisms show no sign of dying; and in traditionally insular countries, such as Britain, or traditionally Catholic ones, such as Poland, or traditionally Orthodox ones, such as Greece, attempts to force them into an unnatural union with other nations with quite different traditions appear to be increasing centrifugal tendencies.

The problem with the creation of "super-nations" like the European Union is that the decision of a member-nation to "pool" its sovereignty in that of the larger nation is irreversible, which immediately puts it in a different and far more controversial category than the majority of reversible democratic decisions. Take the decision of Sweden to join the European Union, which was based on the "yes" vote by a narrow majority of the

Swedish electorate. The Swedish government declared beforehand that the decision of this poll would be final, whichever way it meant. This is understandable in view of the fact that the legislation effecting entry into the European Union is binding on successive national governments. But is this really democratic? Why should the decision of the electorate in November, 1994 be more binding than one at an earlier or later time, especially when the consequences are so important and imponderable in the long term? Why should the Swedes be able to change their mind on all other issues, including the composition of their national government, but not on this one? If the powers of national vetoes continue to be whittled down, and Europe turns out to be a bureaucratic monster passing legislation which is consistently opposed by the majority of the Swedish electorate as being counter to Swedish interests, why should Sweden not be allowed to pull out? Can national self-determination ever be finally bargained away? Is it not, according to the principles of democracy, an irreducible right, like the right to practise one's religion?

Most recently, of course, it is the British who have reversed the decision they made over forty years ago to join the European Union. The emotional intensity of this debate has revealed that it is not the economic arguments, still less the question whether Britain outside the EU might enter into war with the EU, that are the most important factors here, but three different types of *nationalism*: (i) British, as expressed by the vote of the great majority of the English people outside London to leave the EU, (ii) European, as expressed by the vote of the great majority of Londoners and the intellectual elites to remain in the EU, and (iii) Scottish, as expressed by the majority of Scots to remain in the EU and not in the United Kingdom. This demonstrates two important and apparently conflicting facts. First, that the full union between England and Scotland, which goes back to 1707 and has proved to be one of the most successful unions in political history, is still fragile. And secondly, that the partial union between Britain and the EU, which goes back only forty years, has already created a new kind of nationalism, a European nationalism, that has seriously undermined the old, British one.

Two related factors are important in the understanding of this phenomenon: the rapid decline of religion in recent years, which undermines belief not only in God but also in tradition and in the importance of the past allegiances; and an increase in materialism. The whole of the West - indeed, the whole of mankind - has become more individualist than before, with the result that old allegiances have dissolved and new relationships created on the basis, essentially, of money alone. So those with strong economic ties to Europe will vote for Europe, generally speaking; while sentimental and cultural ties with "the old country" will count for less with them.

But this works in the opposite direction, too: as trade becomes more international, trading blocs become less important, and a European identity becomes less strong. The rapidly increasing individualism and atomization

of mankind is undermining *all* nationalisms. However, this brings us back to the psychological need to belong, which is the basis of nationalism: feeling alone in an increasingly atomized world, men will seek to join some nation - and the smaller and older sovereign nations are just as attractive, if not more so, than the big new "super-nations" in satisfying the need to belong to a community.

One thing is clear: democracy alone is not sufficient to bind the nations together if they are both very large and very diverse in language, culture and religion. There must be something stronger which makes the sub-nations or individual nations feel that they truly belong to the super-nation, which has its own individuality and ideology. In other words, the super-nations must be unions in spirit and truth, and not only in budget contributions and ballot-boxes. The greatest task facing the Western nations today is the finding of that spirit and truth. Otherwise they will succumb to the combined onslaught of disgruntled ethnic minorities from within and determined religious majorities from without.

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What do the Holy Scriptures teach us about nations and nationalism?

Holy Scripture recognizes only two nations or races in the strict sense of the word: the race of fallen mankind, which derives its origin from the first Adam, and the race of redeemed mankind, which derives its origin from the last Adam, Christ. The race of fallen mankind lost its original unity as a consequence of sin - the sin of paganism in particular, and the building of the Tower of Babel. In order to check the spread of sin, God separated the nations both geographically and linguistically. However, the memory of their original unity was never lost. That they were and are of one blood is asserted by the Apostle Paul in his sermon to the Athenians: "God made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling." ([Acts 17.26](#)).

Nationalism contradicts this primordial fact of the original unity of mankind in Adam. Since we are all originally one, no man or race of men is *essentially* higher or lower than any other. For as the Apostles Paul and Barnabas said to the pagans of Lystra who wanted to make them gods: "We also are men with the same nature as you" ([Acts 14.15](#); cf. [James 5.17](#)).

At Pentecost, our original unity was restored by our receiving the Holy Spirit, which transplanted us, as it were, onto a new root - Christ; for "we hear [the word of God], each in our own language in which we were born" ([Acts 2.8](#)). From a physical, genetic point of view, there is no difference between the two races, but from the spiritual point of view the difference is enormous. In a word, fallen mankind has lost the Spirit of God, the only true Spirit of unity ([Genesis 6.3](#)), whereas redeemed mankind has been born

again "of water and the Spirit" ([John 3.5](#)).

In the race of redeemed mankind, which is the Orthodox Church founded by Christ, national differences become of minor importance. For "there is neither Jew nor Greek;... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" ([Galatians 3.28](#)). The very first Church Council, and the very first doctrinal decision of the Church, was concerned to abolish any essential distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament Church ([Acts 15](#)).

At the same time, national differences continue to exist and play a role in the mystery of God's Providence. This is particularly emphasized by the Apostle Paul in his words on the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles ([Romans 9-11](#)). The Jews, he says, have been cut off from the race of redeemed mankind, while the Gentiles have been grafted in. However, this position can be reversed, so there is no reason for "anti-semitism" - "do not be haughty, but fear" ([Romans 11.20](#)).

Thus the Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, are "a chosen race, a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a people whom he has gained" ([I Peter 2.9](#)). Indeed, there is an important sense in which the Christians are *the only* true nation, the only nation that will endure forever; for "you [when you were pagans] were once not a people, but now are the people of God, and you did not seek after mercy but now have received mercy" ([I Peter 2.10](#)). As the Lord said through the Prophet Hosea: "I shall call [those who were] not My people and [those who did] not receive mercy [I shall call a people] having received mercy, and it will be in the place where it was said, 'You are not My people', there they will be called the sons of the living God" (1.9, 2.24; cf. [Romans 9.25-26](#)).

This is a very brief summary of the first principles of the Orthodox Church's teaching on the nations and nationalism. Let us now turn to some more recent definitions of the nation, and how they apply to some contemporary nations.

In an article written in 1970, and entitled "Three Attitudes to the Homeland", the Russian Slavophile Vladimir Osipov proposed the following set of criteria: "What is a nation? Faith, blood, language and the land. Religion, and even a certain complex of rites, are a part - indeed, the most important part - of the spirit of a nation. An individual person can get by without religion. But without religion, an individual nation cannot survive as a nation... A people disintegrates literally before one's eyes when faith in God disintegrates..."

Here we find the religious approach to the problem of nationalism - the importance attached to the faith of the nation - that is characteristic of almost all Russian writers. It is not that the call of blood, language and land are not felt by Russians. But the strength of the Orthodox Christian tradition in defining the Russians' consciousness of themselves and of others remains

strong, even after so many years of atheist and internationalist socialist propaganda. And this tradition declares that blood, after all, is not a defining quality of nations (especially in such a racially mixed nation as Russia). As for language and land, they change and develop without the essential spirit of a country changing - although there is no doubt that a deep knowledge of the language, and living contact with the land, have an important role in keeping the spirit of a nation alive.

The Russian parliamentarian and philosopher Viktor Aksyuchits echoes this judgement: "The positivist definitions of a people - for example, common origin (blood), language, territory, economic structure, culture, state unity - do not embrace the concept of that mysterious unity which is the people, the nation. All such definitions are only partial. They cannot, for example, explain the existence of such a people as the Jews, who in the thousands of years of their existence have become mixed in blood, have changed their language and culture, have not had a common territory, or economic structure, or their own statehood, but have nevertheless been fully preserved as a people."

The example of the Jews is indeed instructive, and there can be little doubt that the only major bond holding them together as a nation since the destruction of their statehood in 70 A.D. has been their faith. This faith is a nationalistic faith - as Kartashev writes, "Judaism established itself on a primordial, ethnically closed-in-on-itself nationalism of the blood". But while blood alone cannot hold a nation together, *faith* in blood, even though it must be a false faith, can give a nation a terribly powerful - and powerfully terrible - strength and unity, as the whole history of the Jews since Christ has demonstrated. When faith begins to weaken, however, a nation resorts to other means, such as land, language and blood, to hold itself together. Thus when the Jewish leaders felt that the identity of their nation was being threatened through assimilation with the European nations in the nineteenth century, they founded the Zionist movement in 1897 with the explicit aim of strengthening the Jewish identity by a return to the land of Israel. Since then, moreover, it has been felt necessary to resurrect the Hebrew language and to make common blood a condition of citizenship in the state of Israel.

Also important in helping a nation to define itself and hold together is a common tradition of statehood. It is interesting that most nations with a strong sense of identity have been monarchies, while democracy has tended to undermine a nation's identity. This is because monarchy, being based on conservative, rather than revolutionary principles, helps to preserve a nation's memory and therefore its sense of who and what it is. Democracy, on the other hand, usually begins with a revolution that denies the validity and sanctity of the pre-revolutionary past. Moreover, every new democratic government comes to power on the promise of doing better than its inadequate predecessor; so the emphasis is on constant change and renewal - "permanent revolution".

Now since faith is so important in defining a nation's identity, a change of faith can mean the death of one nation and the birth of another, even when genetic, linguistic and territorial ties have not been broken.

Thus in a real sense the Jewish nation died when it killed Christ. And Holy Scripture affirms that anti-Christian Jews are not true Jews (cf. Romans 2.28; Revelation 2.9). And so the return of the Jews to Christ will indeed be, as the Apostle Paul says, "life from the dead" (Romans 11.15), the resurrection of the true spiritual identity of the Jewish people.

Let us take another example, that of England. Now the faith that made England a single nation with a clear self-identity was Orthodox Christianity. And for several centuries before the Norman Conquest of 1066, England was a traditional hereditary monarchy of the Orthodox type. Her kings were crowned by the Church and revered, as in Byzantium and Russia, as the Anointed of God. Disobedience to the king was considered a sin, not only against the state, but also against the faith.

However, "apparently as the result of one day's fighting" in 1066, writes the historian R.H.C. Davis, "England received a new royal dynasty, a new aristocracy, a virtually new Church, a new art, a new architecture and a new language". As the nineteenth-century historian Edward Augustus Freeman put it: "The Norman Conquest is the great turning-point in the history of the English nation... Its whole importance is not the importance which belongs to a beginning, but the importance which belongs to a turning point. So far from being the beginning of our national history, the Norman Conquest was the temporary overthrow of our national being."

This break in the national traditions, and therefore the national self-awareness of the English, was so radical that until recently English schoolchildren were taught English history beginning only from 1066 - as if the thousand or so years of earlier history were of no significance. There was some teaching about Britain's pre-Christian, pagan past; but England's Golden Age, the Age of the Saints, was dismissed as Dark Age barbarism. Only recently has some publicity begun to be given to English Orthodoxy, as in the recent excavation of an amazing hoard of gold objects dating from the seventh or eighth centuries in Staffordshire.

Together with the other English Orthodox traditions, the tradition of the monarchy also suffered damage after the Norman Conquest. Although the king continued to be crowned by the Church, the idea of the holiness of the monarchy was gradually lost. In 1216 the powers of the monarchy were limited by the *Magna Carta* to take account of the interests of the nobility; and further limitations followed. However, in the 16th century Shakespeare still had a strong feeling for it, as we can see in his play, *Richard II*; and even today, centuries after the "glorious" revolution of 1688 deprived the monarchy of any real power or sanction by making it constitutional, the

English still have an instinctive veneration for the institution. This witnesses to a kind of schizophrenia in the English soul. For while the dominant faith of the English is undoubtedly democratic and materialistic, the monarchy still serves as a link with that past when England had a different faith - and was in effect a different nation...

Another instructive, and still more complex example is Greece. Before their conversion to Christ, the Greeks had already had a long and complex existence as a nation. At first they lived in a multitude of independent city-states, each with his own god, such as Athene of Athens and "Diana of the Ephesians". But in spite of their political and religious divisions, the Greeks always felt their unity as a nation; and the distinction between Greeks and Barbarians is a very ancient one. Only the Jews and the Chinese, among the very ancient nations, have a similarly clear, ethnocentric view of the universe.

Then, in the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ, the Greeks' faith in their gods began to wane under the influence of philosophy and democracy. For, as Alexei Khomyakov pointed out, the rise of democracy is usually accompanied by a decline in religion. This prepared the way for Alexander the Great, under whom the Greeks acquired a world empire and an imperialist state structure. Then Greece itself became simply one province in the new world-empire of Rome, although Hellenic culture continued to extend its influence. Indeed, Hellenism, with its mixture of eastern and western elements, was destined to become the foundation civilization of the whole of Europe and the Mediterranean world, from Hadrian's wall on the Scottish border to the Euphrates river on the Persian border.

With the coming of St. Constantine the Great, the empire became Christian and the Greeks were reborn as the "Christian Romans" or Romeioi - a name that the Greeks of Pontus and the Eastern coast of the Black Sea continued to retain for themselves well into the twentieth century. During this period, the prestige of Christianity was so great that the Christian Greeks took no particular pride in Hellenism, which was associated with the pagan, pre-Christian past; for they now redefined themselves as Christians and Romans. The best elements in Hellenism were incorporated into the Byzantine Christian synthesis, while the pagan elements were discarded and derided.

However, when Constantinople, the New Rome, fell in 1453, and especially after the liberation of Greece in 1821, the Greeks started redefining themselves again as Hellenes, and began to look back to their pagan past with pride, as if that were no less a real part of their national identity than their Christianity. And in our time this has led to a real crisis of identity. For the contemporary Greeks have to decide who their real spiritual ancestors are: the pagan democratic Greeks like Pericles and Sophocles, the pagan imperialist Greeks like Alexander of Macedon and Antiochus Epiphanes (one of the great persecutors of the people of God), or

the Christian Roman Greeks such as the Holy Fathers of the Church and the new martyrs of the Turkish yoke. Their membership of the pseudo-democratic and secularist confederation of the European Union makes them emphasize their pagan democratic past. The dispute over Macedonia leads them to emphasize their pagan imperial past. And only rarely do they hark back to their Christian Roman past in its spiritual, universalist profundity. It is this schizophrenia in the Greek soul that makes it so difficult for them to define themselves and their aims, both to themselves and to the outside world.

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From this discussion, we can see that a nation is in many ways like a person. Like a person, each nation can be said to have a spirit, a soul and a body. Its "spirit" is that which unites it with God and unites it with all other nations that are in God - what Vladimir Soloviev called "the idea that God has of it in eternity". Since only the Orthodox Christian nations are united with God, only they can be said to be spiritual in this sense: the other nations are united in spirit to other gods, such as the god of Islam or of the god of revolutionary nationalism or internationalism, or Mammon...

The spirit of a nation is sometimes so strong that it is felt that a person cannot belong to the nation in any way unless he also confesses the faith of that nation. A clear example is Old Testament Israel in its peak period from Moses to Solomon, when "Israel" referred both to a faith and to the people confessing that faith. A modern example is Iran, whose internal identity and external foreign policy are almost completely dependent on its self-appointed status as the guardian of the Shiite Muslim faith. Another important example is "Holy Russia" in the Muscovite period, when to be Russian meant necessarily to be Orthodox Christian.

At the same time, there are important differences, even in very religious societies, between the Church (in Christian societies) and society or the nation in general. One of these differences, as Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky points out, is that "the nucleus of society is the family, whereas the nucleus of the Church is the person. Within the Church a person is united with other persons without any loss of his individuality, for this unity takes place in the Super-Person (Divine Person) of Jesus Christ... [As to so-called 'human rights',] they are provided (in the conditions of a morally healthy society) within the family in accordance with the familial status of each member of this unit of society. So a normal society should defend, not 'human rights'... but *the rights of the family*, defending them from suppression and destruction."

Moreover, even in such spiritually intense and unified societies, the idea of the nation is never completely exhausted by the content of its faith; this remnant we may call the soul of the nation. For if the faith is a universalist one, it will also be incarnate in other nations having different souls but the

same faith or spirit. And even if the faith is not universalist, but exclusive to one and one only nation, like "Diana of the Ephesians", the nation concerned will differentiate itself from the other nations not only in terms of its faith but also in terms of many other, less spiritual characteristics.

For the soul of a nation is tied up in certain very specific and unique ways with its history, its geography, its climate, and its physical and psychological characteristics. Thus for an Englishman, regardless of his faith or the faith of his nation, his Englishness involves what might be called a specifically geographical element - the feeling of belonging to the island which Shakespeare in *Richard II* compared to "a silvery stone set in a silvery sea"; and this element may contribute to what other nations see as the Englishman's reserved, self-contained, insular nature. On the other hand, the expansiveness and tendency to extremism that characterizes the Russians in their own and others' estimation, has been considered by some - for example, Berdyaev - to be conditioned by the limitless flat steppes of their homeland.

In some nations, the spiritual element in its national feeling is so weak as to be almost non-existent. But since man cannot exist without some guiding principle, the spiritual vacuum thus created will be filled by the deification of the nation itself, or of the state or leader in which its national life is temporarily incarnate - that is, in nationalism or totalitarian statism. In pagan societies the tendency towards statism is expressed especially in the deification of the king. Hence the god-kings and emperors of Ancient Egypt, Babylon and Rome. In Western, post-Christian societies, this tendency finds a less religious but still powerful expression, as in Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.

However, there are some societies in which both religious faith and national feeling have been reduced to a pale shadow of themselves. The spiritual and emotional vacuums thus created will then be filled, on the one hand, by a frenzy of economic activity, and on the other hand, by an extreme elaboration of state structures of every kind. This indicates that the identity of the nation is almost exclusively carnal, consisting in the almost exclusive cult of the body. In both its personal and its collective forms, it is a comparatively modern development. But today, in the shape of western capitalist, democratic civilization, it has spread throughout the world.

However, even when men have agreed that the main purpose of life is to satisfy material, bodily needs, and that the best instrument to this end is through the body of the nation - the state, they still remain essentially spiritual beings whose spiritual and emotional nature cannot be satisfied by bread alone. Therefore the builders of modern western societies have provided them with something else: circuses. For whereas the religious societies of the past spent vast sums on the construction of cathedrals or temples or mosques, and the nationalist societies of more recent times spent equally vast sums on the construction of the thrones and palaces of their

god-kings, modern democratic societies spend substantial (but comparatively much smaller) sums on the construction of sports halls and stadia, cinemas and concert-halls. Here the need to worship something or someone greater than oneself - a sports team or a rock star - can be satisfied. And here nationalist passions can be expressed and defused in comparative safety.

Thus just as in an individual person the weakening of the spirit inevitably leads to the domination of the flesh, so is it in the life of nations. When the soul of the nation ceases to worship God in the spirit, it worships either its own soul or its own body. This is the origin both of nationalism and of democratism, in which "the pursuit of happiness" - psychological and material happiness - becomes the constitutional foundation of society.

It follows that to say of nationalism that it is "caused by wounds, some form of collective humiliation" is misleading. For it implies that the excesses of fallen nationalism are purely psychological in nature and can be cured by some kind of "collective therapy"; whereas the roots of the disease are spiritual and come from a loss of faith. Just as the fire of fallen desire is kindled when the fire of the Holy Spirit is quenched in the individual soul, so the fire of nationalism is kindled when the fire of love for God and the truth is weakened.

A true union of nations is possible only on the basis of the common acceptance of a single spirit or faith. If the basis of the union is not spirit, but flesh - economic self-interest - then the union is bound to fail; for materialism pits nations no less than individual men against each other. Or if it succeeds, it can do so at only at the cost of the physical disappearance of the weaker nations and the spiritual death of all of them.

But if a nation, like an individual person, is an eternal personality made in the image of God, the disappearance of a nation cannot be justified by any super-national aims, however superficially laudable. For this would be murder. So we come back to the question: to what extent can we say that a nation is like an individual person? Is it really as eternal as a person? Or are some - perhaps all - nations destined to disappear forever?

The view that a nation is a person and therefore eternal in all significant respects was expressed by Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "Recently it has become fashionable to speak of the levelling of nations, and the disappearance of peoples in the melting-pot of contemporary civilization. I do not agree with this, but to discuss it is a separate question, and at this point I think it fitting to say only that the disappearance of nations would impoverish us no less than if all individual people were assimilated into one character, one person. Nations are the wealth of humanity, its social personalities; the smallest of them bears its own special traits, and hides within itself a special facet of the Divine plan..."

"It is precisely he who gives the highest value to the existence of nations, who sees in them not a temporary fruit of social formations, but a complex, vivid, unrepeatable organism that cannot be invented by men - he it is who recognizes that nations have a fullness of spiritual life, a fullness of ascents and falls, a range extending from holiness to villainy (though the extreme points are achieved only by individual personalities).

"Of course, all this changes greatly in the course of time and the flow of history; that most mobile line dividing good from evil is always swaying, sometimes very stormily, in the consciousness of a nation, - and for that reason every judgement and every reproach and self-reproach, and repentance itself, is tied to a specific time, flowing away with the passing of that time and remaining only as memorial contours in history.

"But, you know, in the same way even individual persons in the same way, under the influence of its events and their spiritual work, change to the point of unrecognizability in the course of their lives. (And this is the hope, and salvation, and punishment of man, that we can change, and are ourselves responsible for our own souls, and not birth or the environment!) Nevertheless, we take the risk of evaluating people as "good" and "bad", and no-one contests this right of ours.

"Between a person and a nation there is the deepest similarity - in the mystical nature of the uncreatedness of both the one and the other. And there are no human reasons why, in allowing ourselves to evaluate the changeability of the one, we forbid it for the other."

Viktor Aksiuchits has qualified, without radically changing, this idea of the nation-person: "A person is an individual subject, an eternal individual soul. But a people is a conciliar [sobornij] subject, its soul is conciliar. Therefore a people is not a person, but a conciliarity [sobornost'], although many characteristics of a person extend to the conciliar soul of a people. A people possesses the freedom of historical self-definition, but this freedom is conciliar, and not individual. The historical responsibility of a people and its moral accountability also have a conciliar character.

"All the metaphysical characteristics of a people are structured around conciliarity. Conciliarity is not the mechanical sum of individuals, but their free unity. A people is a conciliar unity of eternal human souls... It is the idea of the Creator concerning their common mission and the responsible thought of eternal souls concerning the unity of their historical calling."

Even with this qualification, however, there are limits to the extent we can talk about nations as persons. Thus while persons have eternal souls, this can be said of nations only in a metaphorical sense. For, as Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow says, "for earthly kingdoms and peoples their kingly and popular existence can only have an earthly character". Again, as Dora Shturman points out, however much individual people change, each still

has one mind and one conscience (unless he is schizophrenic). A nation, however, is composed of many people with often sharply differing aims and outlooks.

Another criticism of the nation-person metaphor is that whereas at the Last Judgement "all the nations will be gathered before Him" (Matthew 25.32), and men can be said to have a collective responsibility for their nation's actions, in the final analysis it is only individuals that are sent to heaven or hell. Thus a man can free himself from responsibility for the crimes of his nation by condemning them, like the Germans who refused to accept Nazism - or the Jews who refused to mock Christ. And in the same way a man can deprive himself of the honour of belonging to a great nation by his betrayal of its noble ideals, like the Greeks who converted to Islam - or the Russians who joined the revolution.

We may wonder, moreover, whether every nation is called to an eternal destiny. In the Old Testament the Lord "destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan" (Acts 13.19), demanding of King Saul the complete extirpation of the Amalekites (he disobeyed in obedience to "the voice of the people" and was removed from his throne). The Assyrians were another example of a nation that rises and falls so rapidly that it seems as if their only purpose is to chastize the people of God and then disappear once this purpose is accomplished (for "shall the axe vaunt itself over Him Who hews it?" (Isaiah 10.15)). That is perhaps why Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow explicitly denied that the nation has an eternal, heavenly destiny.

But in every age there have been those who have fled from their doomed and ephemeral nation and joined themselves to the nation that lives for ever, such as Rahab the Canaanite or Ruth the Moabite or Cornelius the Centurion or Prince Peter of the Tatar horde or St. Macarius the Roman or St. Alexandra the New Martyr. And if that doomed nation can be said to be eternal, it is only in the persons of these individuals who renounced it. For in them alone is the word fulfilled: "All the nations whom Thou hast made shall come and shall worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name" (Psalms 85.9).

Even those Orthodox nations which have over the centuries evolved a collective personality that can be termed essentially Christian and therefore eternal by nature have to struggle to preserve that personality to the end. Thus "the glory that was Greece" will remain a phrase in the past mode if the Greeks exchange the truly "great idea" (megali idea) of Christian Rome for the petty nationalism of a neo-pagan Greece. And Serbia will become "greater" only in the territorial sense if she abandons the universalist vision of St. Savva.

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Let us now look a little more closely at what the West sees as the

"problem" of Russian nationalism.

Since there can be no solution to any national problem unless there is an understanding of the nation in question, we must first try and penetrate to the mystery of the Russian national identity. And this is no easy task if we look only at Russia in this century; for in our century Russia has passed from theocracy to democracy to satanocracy to democracy again, from multi-national empire to anti-national anti-empire to nation-state. And yet from a longer historical viewpoint the perplexities disappear. "The Russian idea" is clear - it is Orthodoxy. For the Russians are sharply distinguished from other great Christian nations, such as the Greeks and the Romans, by the fact that almost their entire history has been Orthodox Christian. And this has been a great advantage for them in defining themselves; for whereas, as we have seen, the Greeks have often had a problem in deciding which is more essentially Greek - their pagan past or their Christian past, for the Russians there has been no contest: at least until 1917, the Russian soul was an Orthodox Christian one. It is as if the pagan Russian past had not existed: it was an obscure period of "pre-history" swallowed up in the blinding light of the primal act of her true history - her baptism at the hands of the enlightener of Russia, the holy Great-Prince Vladimir.

Vladimir himself, by his dramatic and complete conversion from savage, lustful paganism to self-sacrificial Christianity, symbolized the rebirth that had taken place in the Russian soul. This was no tentative, half-hearted conversion, but a complete change of spirit; and so it was with the Russian people as a whole. Thus whatever other temptations Russia has had to endure since her Baptism in 988, a full-scale return to paganism was not one of them - until the critical turning-point of 1917. Paganism in Russia was comparatively weak, disorganized and, above all, provincial. It was no match for the superior civilization and universalist grace and power of the Christian Gospel, supported as it was both by the political power and charisma of St. Vladimir and by the spiritual power of the Great Church of Constantinople at her height.

The history of the Baptism of Russia explains many of the antinomies which Berdyaev and others have seen in the Russian soul.

First, the speed and completeness with which the Baptism of Russia unified all the widely-scattered and hitherto disunited tribes of the Eastern Slavs, Finno-Ungrians and others goes some of the way to explaining why religion, the spiritual realm, is, and continues to be, so important in the Russian land, as opposed to the more worldly and material factors which have served to unite other nations and which have therefore played a greater role in their subsequent development. It was religion that united the Russian land. Only religion could have united the Russian land. Only religion will reunite the Russian land. Therefore it is in terms of religion that Russians see themselves and their relationship to other nations. In a perverse kind of way, this is true even of the Soviet period, when Russia

seemed to lose her religion. For it was then as if the Apostle Paul returned to being the persecutor Saul without losing his burning zeal for religion.

On the other hand, the great importance which St. Vladimir played in the Baptism - for it was indeed a conversion of the people "from the top down" - laid the foundations for the development of a powerful centralized State in Russia, and the close links between the State and the Church - closer than in any other Christian nation. Thus in the Russian soul, spirituality and statehood, the Cross and the Crown, are not felt to be the opposites that they have tended to become in the West; for it was the Crown, in the person of St. Vladimir, that won Russia for the Cross, and the Russian people have continued to see in the will of the Tsar the expression of the will of God.

The holy Elder Barsanuphius of Optina expressed this relationship well: "The devotion of the Orthodox Russian people to their Tsars is not at all the same as the devotion of the western peoples to their sovereigns. According to modern western conceptions, the sovereign is nothing other than a representative of his people - and the western peoples love their representatives and willingly submit to them when they faithfully carry out this mission, or when by the power of their genius they draw the people after them and blind them by the brilliance of glory and state power, like Napoleon in France and Frederick in Prussia [and, we might add, Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany]; but this love is self-serving and egoistical. In the West it is themselves that the people love in their sovereigns. If the king by his personal character is unable to be the faithful reflection and representative of the will of the people and the strivings, ideas and passions that rule in it, then they restrict and constrict his will by means of constitutional vices. But if the king does not submit to these attempts, and is unable to submit to the taste and character of his subjects, then he is deprived not only of the love of the people, but also of the throne, as it was with Charles X and Louis-Philippe and the Sardinian king Albert.

"It is not at all like that with us in Russia: our Tsar is the representative of the will of God, and not the people's will. His will is sacred for us, as the will of the Anointed of God; we love him because we love God. If the Tsar gives us glory and prosperity, we receive it from him as a Mercy of God. But if we are overtaken by humiliation and poverty, we bear them with meekness and humility, as a heavenly punishment for our iniquities, and never do we falter in our love for, and devotion to, the Tsar, as long as they proceed from our Orthodox religious convictions, our love and devotion to God."

A second antimony in the Russian soul which is largely explained by the history of the Baptism of Russia is the contrast between the Russians' great receptiveness to foreigners and foreign ideas, on the one hand, and their great pride in their own country, on the other. For, on the one hand, the Baptism of Russia came from outside; Russia received its faith, literature and almost its entire civilization from the hands of Greeks and Bulgarians.

For, as we have seen, the Christian faith and Christian civilization in Russia did not have to contend with a powerful and highly developed native pagan tradition, as it did in Greece and Rome. Hence the innate respect for foreigners, who brought to Russia almost everything that the Russians treasure in themselves. On the other hand, no nation has more thoroughly absorbed the Christian Gospel than the Russians. In spite of sins and falls, to which every Christian nation has succumbed, the Russians have equalled their foreign teachers in their devotion to Christ, as is witnessed by the extraordinary abundance of their saints and martyrs - not least in the Soviet period, when the Russian Church added many times more martyrs to the Heavenly Church than the 350,000 which, according to the menologia, were acquired by the whole Church from the time of the Apostles.

These two antinomies of the Russian soul - spirituality and statehood, and universality and nationalism - have marked the whole history of Russia. At particular times, one or the other pole of the antimony has become more dominant, but only temporarily. Thus if we examine the spirituality-statehood antimony, we note that during the later Kievan period, and under the Mongol yoke, the centralizing state disappeared and centrifugal forces appeared in the Russian lands. And this went together with a decrease in spiritual power. However, the revival of spirituality associated with the name of St. Sergei of Radonezh in the fourteenth century also led to the revival of a powerful centralized state in the form of Moscow. Again, the centralized state collapsed during the Time of Troubles at the end of the sixteenth century, when the Poles conquered Moscow and placed a Catholic tsar, the false Dmitri, on the throne. But a revival of faith and courage led by St. Hermogen, patriarch of Moscow, led to the restoration of the monarchy under the Romanov dynasty which survived until the revolution. Finally, a still steeper decline in spirituality led to the revolution and the collapse of the Russian state in 1917.

With regard to the second, universality-nationalism antimony, we see a similar pattern. Generally speaking, the Kievan period may be described as broadly universalist, the Muscovite period increasingly nationalist, and the Petersburg period again universalist. But as long as the dominant religion and ethos of the state and people remained Orthodox Christianity, the poles of this antimony were kept in balance, and extremists, such as the anti-national universalist Socialists or the anti-universalist nationalist Old Ritualists, remained on the borders of society.

However, the revolution of 1917 destroyed the balance of antinomies in the Russian idea and introduced what was in essence a quite different idea, the Soviet idea, corresponding to the emergence of a new nation, the Soviet nation.

The balance between spirituality and statehood was destroyed by the complete dominance of the state in all spheres of life and the attempted complete destruction of the Orthodox Church and spirituality. Of course,

the Soviet Union was not without a spirituality of its own, but it was a demonic spirituality, a spirituality that exalted "history" over morality, the flesh over the spirit, hatred over love. It was a state possessed by demons, like the town of Dostoyevsky's prophetic novel, *The Demons*.

The balance between universalism and nationalism was also destroyed. Everything that was native and Russian was despised and trampled on; the very word "Russia" was removed; and the leaders of the revolution were almost all non-Russians who hated Russia. In the place of the ideas and traditions of the Russians were introduced the ideas and traditions of the West carried to their logical and absurd conclusions. Of course, the Soviet regime claimed to be internationalist; but in actual fact it was rigorously anti-nationalist, and was aimed at the destruction of all national cultures - first of all the Russian and Orthodox cultures, and then all the others, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and pagan. Only in the "the Great Patriotic War", as the Soviets deceptively called it, was a perverted form of Russian nationalism reintroduced in order to save the state against German Fascism - only to be vigorously suppressed again after the danger had passed.

The revolution therefore presented, as Solzhenitsyn eloquently argued, an almost complete break in the history and spiritual identity of the Russian nation. Far from being a logical continuation of the Russian idea, as some have argued, it was a complete denial of that idea. So what the Mongols in the 13th century, the Judaizers in the 15th, the Poles in the 16th and 17th, and even the westernizing reforms of Peter the Great in the 18th centuries had failed to achieve was achieved by Lenin and Stalin.

In view of this, it is only natural to regard the revival of Russian national feeling that began in the 1970s and gathered pace under Gorbachev and Yeltsin as a lawful and healthy reaction to the nightmare of the Soviet period, and the only sure and organically based path to the restoration of Russia as the great and civilized nation she was before it. However, there is a view that is widely held both in the West and in Russia that this national-religious renaissance of Russia is in fact the greatest possible threat to the civilized world. According to this view, the nationalisms of the small countries of the former Soviet Union - of the Baltic states, of the Ukraine, of the Caucasian and Central Asian republics - are only right and natural; but the nationalism of Russia - the nation which suffered most from Communism, while offering the strongest opposition to it - is somehow of a quite different, and much more sinister nature, involving a kind of mixture between Communism and Fascism which has been given the name "National Bolshevism".

The main critic of "National Bolshevism" in the Gorbachev period, Alexander Yanov, argued that all Russian nationalism, whether religious or irreligious, was irremediably inclined towards authoritarianism, and that all Russian regimes since Ivan the Terrible were simply phases (reform, counter-reform or stagnation) of a single, cyclically recurring authoritarian

idea, which he called "the Russian idea". Soviet society under Gorbachev, said Yanov, was going through a reform phase of the cycle, which, if encouraged and not allowed, as previously, to stagnate, might lead to a breaking of the cycle and the introduction of "real" civilization, i.e. Western-style democracy, into Russia. If, on the other hand, this anti-Western, anti-semitic (as he claimed) Russian nationalism were allowed to triumph, this would represent a turning of the cycle towards counter-reform, i.e. the transformation and revitalization of the Soviet State into a neo-Fascist monster. For the sake of the peace of the world, said Yanov, this must be prevented.

In 1999 Alexander Dugin's *Absoliutnaia Rodina*, "The Absolute Homeland", presaged the birth of this monster. It came in the next year with V.V. Putin, who, after a cautious start has steadily transformed the Russian democracy into an authoritarian, neo-Soviet, neo-Fascist monster, thoroughly earning his nickname of "Putler". As long as there exist people of a basically Soviet mentality whose knowledge of Russian history and true Russian spirituality is meagre, the possibility will exist of their claiming that their essentially Soviet "spirituality" is a continuation and incarnation of "the Russian idea".

But it is a grave mistake to label all Russian nationalists and patriots as "National Bolsheviks", still more to think that the whole of Russian history is simply a recurring cycle of authoritarianism interspersed with brief and insecure periods of relative democracy. And in fact Yanov's thesis was itself an example of the Soviet type of thinking which he claimed to be warning against. For this was precisely the distorted view of Russian history the West began to develop in the nineteenth century, which was taken over by the Russian westernizing liberals. The truth is that the true Russian nationalism is inextricably bound up with Orthodoxy. So the way to avert "National Bolshevism" is to revive the true Russian nationalism - that is, to regenerate Russian Orthodoxy, which, however, is impossible as long as the official Russian Church is in the hands of a KGB patriarch no less Fascist than Putin.

A healthier - and more typical - example of Russian religious nationalism is represented by the thought of Vladimir Osipov. We may recall that Osipov considered that four elements go to make up a nation - faith, blood, language and land. But he accepted that the most important of these elements was the faith: "Christ and His teachings are in the final analysis more important for me than nationalism."

At the same time he recognized at the time he was writing - over 40 years ago - that the national element in the Russian religious-national movement was more important than the religious: "I know the soul of the contemporary Russian: the national principle is at the moment more clear and alive for him than the religious principle. Hence patriotism, national self-consciousness and self-respect provide at the moment the only reliable bridge to moral, cultural and biological salvation."

But is it really reliable? The emergence and relative stability of Putin's regime since 2000 indicates the opposite. It shows that the revival of "patriotism, national self-consciousness and self-respect", while desirable in themselves, is bound to degenerate into a kind of Fascism unless it is underpinned and inspired by "the religious principle" - True Orthodoxy.

Therefore the first priority is to remove the present "Soviet Orthodox" Church of the Moscow Patriarchate with its KGB hierarchs, its glorification of the Red Army and its whitewashing of the crimes of the Soviet past, together with its conniving at Putin's blasphemous "Communist Christianity". There are signs that a disillusionment with the MP is beginning to take place. But as long as the false church is supported by the false state, its position seems reasonably secure.

It would be different if the state itself suffered some external humiliation or defeat, perhaps in a war against stronger nations such as China or America. And then, through the prayers of the millions of new martyrs of the Soviet period, a resurrection of Holy Russia led by a truly Orthodox Tsar will take place. Of this, as New Hieromartyr John of Latvia, one of the many non-Russians who acquired sanctity as a citizen of Holy Russia, said, "we can and must be convinced".

In the meantime, the social basis for this resurrection can be prepared by a gradual national-religious regeneration of Russian society from below, under the leadership, not of the Moscow Patriarchate, but of the truly Orthodox Church. Alexander Kartashev, Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod under the Provisional Government in 1917, indicated how such a regeneration of society from below could proceed: "Through the Christian transfiguration of the 'inner man', by itself, gradually and imperceptibly, the whole environment in which the spiritually renewed Christian lives and acts - society, culture, the State - will be transfigured. The latter live and develop according to their own natural laws, which are exterior for Christianity, but can be subjected to its influences and, if only to a certain degree, transfigured. In the last analysis they are impenetrable for Christianity, for they are foreign by their nature. They are categories, not of a spiritual, but of a cosmic, order. The Lord opposed Himself to 'this world', and the apostle of love commanded us 'not to love this world'. The category 'society' is of 'this world', and for that reason the Christian heart must not cleave to it. Social life is a certain mechanism of the concatenation of personalities and is fatally subject to a certain mechanical conformity with law, which is foreign to the kingdom of spiritual freedom - that is, the Christian religion, the Church. Being a true member of this mystical society, the individual Christian, and through him the whole Church, is 'spiritually-automatically', inwardly, imperceptibly enlightening, exalting and transfiguring external, sinful society. All other methods except this, which goes from the depths of the personal transfiguration of the spirit, are non-Christian methods."

Aksyuchits writes: "The essence of what we are living through now could be expressed in the words: we as a nation have suffered a deep spiritual fall - we have renounced God, which is also to say, the meaning of life. But in spite of the 'common sense' of history, we have not been finally annihilated, we are still alive and have the chance of living on and being regenerated. But this is possible only if we become ourselves in our best qualities, and again bring to light the muddied image of God in ourselves.

"Being at the bottom of a historical funnel, we as a fact of our lives have acquired the possibility of seeing in the past of Russia not only a series of errors and vices, but also the image of a renewed, transfigured Russia, and the contours of that ideal which the Russian people was giving birth to in torments, and to which it was striving in spite of all sins and falls. There were moments in the history of Russia when the Russian idea shone forth with an unfading light - this was the light, above all, of Russian sanctity. There were periods when the idea of a national calling was eclipsed and consigned to oblivion. But it was never cut off entirely, but was enriched by the tragic experience of history. And this unbroken line is the line of our life, it is the ordinance of God concerning the Russian people from generation to generation. And only the living spirit of this theandric ordinance, only the assimilation of the Russian idea gives us as a people and each one of us as a personality the possibility of holding out, surviving and transfiguring our lives..."

This truly Christian Russian nationalism is found especially among the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia. For example, during the 1970s the great wonderworker nicknamed the "Tsar of Mordovia", Hieromonk Michael Yershov, after half a century in the Soviet camps and psychiatric torture-hospitals still retained a burning faith in the resurrection of Russia. And Eugene Vagin, who met Fr. Michael, reported that this faith was common to all the members of his Church: "All members of this Church, even the 'uneducated', are characterized by a special suffering over the fate of Russia, which is placed by them in the center of all the world's events (this is often interpreted in a very original way, always in apocalyptic, eschatological tones). Their 'Russianness' is not set aggressively against other nations and peoples, but is accepted inwardly and in confidential conversations, as a sign of a 'special chosenness'. I have often heard in their midst the old proverb applied to the fate of Russia: 'Whom the Lord loves more, He makes to suffer more.'..."

This faith in the chosenness of the Russian people by no means implies a blindness to their faults. On the contrary, Russia, in the understanding of the Catacomb Church, is suffering so much now precisely because by her actions she has rejected her great calling. For with a great calling go great responsibilities. Thus the Russian religious philosopher I.A. Ilyin described the true patriotism as follows: "To love one's people and believe in her, to believe that she will overcome all historical trials and will arise from

collapse purified and sobered - does not mean to close one's eyes to her weaknesses and imperfections, perhaps even her vices. To accept one's people as the incarnation of the fullest and highest perfection on earth would be pure vainglory, sick nationalist conceit. The real patriot sees not only the spiritual paths of his people, but also her temptations, weaknesses and imperfections. Spiritual love generally is not given to groundless idealization, but sees soberly and with extreme acuteness. To love one's people does not mean to flatter her or hide from her her weak sides, but honourably and courageously criticize them and tirelessly struggle with them."

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Finally, we may ask the question: is the Russian idea, even when purified of all Soviet dross, really compatible with the national ideas of other nations - the Jews, for example, or the Chinese, or the Americans?

Of course, the answer to this question does not depend only on the nature of the Russian idea, but also on the natures of the other national ideas. And even if the answer to the question may be "no" in a particular instance, we should not assume that the fault must lie with the Russian idea. Thus the Jewish idea, as we have seen, is in essence hostile to the ideas of all other nations, being in essence chauvinist and racist. Again, the Chinese idea is similar in essence to the ideas of the ancient pagan satanocracies, and is now allied with the definitely satanic idea of Communism. Even the American idea, in spite of the altruistic assertions of successive presidents, is felt by many nations as a threat to their own national identity; for "making the world safe for democracy" necessarily means making the world unsafe for those for whom democracy is not the supreme ideal.

The Russian idea is in essence the Orthodox Christian idea. It is the idea that the whole of society, from the structure of the state to the personal lives of every citizen, should be subordinate to Christ in the Orthodox Church. As such, it is not chauvinist, but universalist; for Orthodoxy, even in its national incarnations, is a universal faith.

Is it expansionist? Insofar as all universalisms have an implicitly messianic character, it is spiritually expansionist - that is, it seeks, out of love for neighbour, to communicate the truth of its own idea to other nations. But spiritual expansionism is a process of peaceful persuasion, and entails physical expansionism only in certain circumstances. Russia (as opposed to the Soviet Union) has never forcibly annexed any Orthodox territory to itself with the exception of Bessarabia in 1812. Even the annexation of Georgia in 1801 took place only after the repeated requests of Georgian princes over the course of more than two centuries. And the liberation of Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia in the late nineteenth century was just that - a liberation, not an annexation.

As regards non-Orthodox nations, the situation is more complex... Russia began to expand eastwards in the sixteenth century, and this took place partly through the peaceful colonization of sparsely inhabited areas in the Russian north and Siberia, and partly through military conquest, as in Ivan the Terrible's conquest of Kazan. However, it must be remembered that the wars against the Tatars were wars against the former conquerors of Russia herself, and the Golden Horde continued for centuries to be a threat to the existence of Russia both physically and spiritually. In relation to the West - to the Poles, the Swedes, the French and the Germans - Russia's wars have almost always been defensive in character, involving the recapture of Russian lands with large Russian populations whose spiritual and physical identity was most definitely under the most serious threat. Only very rarely has Russia embarked upon an offensive war; and as Henry Kissinger has remarked, "Russia has exhibited a curious phenomenon: almost every offensive war that it has fought has ended badly, and every defensive war victoriously - a paradox." A paradox, perhaps; but one with a clear explanation: when Russia has fought in defence of her Orthodox idea, the Lord has given her victory, withdrawing His support only when she has betrayed that idea.

Therefore as long as Russia remains true to her idea, we can expect her to come into conflict with other nations only when that idea is itself under threat. At the present time, however, that idea is not yet incarnate within Russia herself; for neither Putin's "One Russia", nor any of its political contenders, is the true Russia - Holy Russia. But as the true and holy Russia struggles to surface from under the rubble of forces and ideologies alien to herself, we can expect a reaction from her enemies.

First, and most immediately, there is the conflict between the Russian idea and the Muslim idea - two universalisms which have struggled with each other for many centuries and whose radical incompatibility is evident to any unprejudiced observer, however hard Putin may deny it. Conflicts between the present Russian regime and the Muslim world are already present in the Caucasus, in Central Asia, in the Balkans and, especially, in the Middle East. For the pseudo-theocracy of Islam is expansionist in both the spiritual and physical senses, and will always be tempted to undertake a jihād or "holy war" against the pseudo-Orthodox pseudo-autocracy of contemporary Russia.

Secondly, there is an inherent conflict between the Russian idea and the democratic ideas of other western states, such as the European Union and America. In the former case, Putinist propaganda mocks the LGBT agenda of "Eurosodom", and is working hard to undermine the EU through rightist parties in several countries (Dugin, "Putin's Rasputin", is leading the way here), through the millions of Russian émigré fifth-columnists in the region, through its military intervention in Eastern Ukraine and through its more undercover interference against pro-western governments in Montenegro and Macedonia (while arming an anti-western police force in Bosnia). In the

latter case, we see constant anti-Americanism reminiscent of the Soviet era, combined with attempts to subvert and recruit high-ranking American officials (not excluding the president himself), to undermine the petrodollar and to undermine American power in the Middle East and other parts of the world, not least through the escalation of a new arms race in which Putin now claims to have an "invincible" new type of nuclear weapon.

Thirdly, there is bound to come a conflict between Russia and China. Already in the early 1960s a gulf opened up between the world's two largest communist satanocracies, and now China, while keeping the communist regime intact (and greatly increasing the powers of the Communist General Secretary), has embarked on an ambitious, and so far very successful programme of economic liberalization which is making her more powerful than ever. It would be ironic - but also poetic and Divine justice - if the final death-blow to Sovietism, whether in its internationalist or nationalist form, should come in a war with the greatest achievement of Soviet messianism.

In his famous "Pushkin speech", Dostoyevsky emphasized the "proclivity for universal susceptibility and all-reconciliation" of the Russian soul, as opposed to the narrow egoism of the non-Orthodox European nations. This judgement has been mocked by many, of various nations, who prefer to see in Russia the precise opposite. However, the present writer believes that Dostoyevsky's judgement is correct so long as we distinguish carefully between the Russian nation and the Soviet nation. Moreover, it contains a challenge, not only for Russians who might wish to distort the Russian idea in a democratic or chauvinist direction, but also for the West. This challenge might be formulated as follows. If you truly want a true, and not a false peace, and a real, and not an illusory harmony of nations, then you have nothing to fear from Russia becoming herself once again. On the contrary, since the Russian idea is universal and true, being in essence the same idea that the Creator and King of the nations has for all the nations, you should embrace it yourselves! For the Orthodox Christian idea, which has become the Russian idea, can also become the Jewish, and the American, and the Chinese idea, with each nation bringing its own physical and psychological individuality and talents to the service of every other nation, and the King of the nations, Christ God. For of His Kingdom and Nation on earth, the Orthodox Church, the Lord says: "Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut; that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste..." ([Isaiah 60.11-12](#)).

*February 17 / March 2, 2018.
St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow.*

12. THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND CULTURAL MARXISM

Long before old-fashioned Marxism was defeated in 1991, it had evolved a still more dangerous mutant called *Cultural Marxism*. This mutant of Marxist thinking now appears to have taken over the cultural and intellectual life of the Capitalist West.

For “Marxist thinking,” we read in an article written in 2002, “retains great influence far beyond the dwindling number who proclaim themselves to be Marxists. The labour theory of value and the rest of Marx's economic apparatus may be so much intellectual scrap, but many of his assumptions, analytical traits and habits of thought are widespread in western academia and beyond.

“The core idea that economic structure determines everything has been especially pernicious. According to this view, the right to private property, for instance, exists only because it serves bourgeois relations of production. The same can be said for every other right or civil liberty one finds in society. The idea that such rights have a deeper moral underpinning is an illusion. Morality itself is an illusion, just another weapon of the ruling class. (As Gyorgy Lukacs put it, ‘Communist ethics makes it the highest duty to act wickedly...This is the greatest sacrifice revolution asks from us.’) Human agency is null: we are mere dupes of ‘the system’, until we repudiate it outright.

“What goes for ethics also goes for history, literature, the rest of the humanities and the social sciences. The “late Marxist” sees them all, as traditionally understood, not as subjects for disinterested intellectual inquiry but as forms of social control. Never ask what a painter, playwright, architect or philosopher thought he was doing. You know before you even glance at his work what he was *really* doing: shoring up the ruling class. This mindset has made deep inroads – most notoriously in literary studies, but not just there – in university departments and on campuses across Western Europe and especially in the United States. The result is a withering away not of the state but of opportunities for intelligent conversation...”¹⁴¹

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Cultural Marxism began as the result of the evident failure of Western Marxism in the years immediately after the First World War.¹⁴² Reflecting on the reasons for this, two prominent Marxist thinkers, Antonio Gramsci and George Lukács, “concluded that the working class of Europe had been blinded by the success of Western democracy and capitalism. They reasoned that until both had been destroyed, a communist revolution was not possible.

¹⁴¹ “Marx after Communism”, *The Economist*, December 19, 2002.

¹⁴² See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7lhWp7G9rA&sns=em> for an excellent summary of Cultural Marxism.

“Gramsci and Lukács were both active in the Communist party, but their lives took very different paths.

“Gramsci was jailed by Mussolini in Italy where he died in 1937 due to poor health.

“In 1918, Lukács became minister of culture in Bolshevik Hungary. During this time, Lukács realized that if the family unit and sexual morals were eroded, society could be broken down.

“Lukács implemented a policy he titled ‘cultural terrorism,’ which focused on these two objectives. A major part of the policy was to target children’s minds through lectures that encouraged them to deride and reject Christian ethics.

“In these lectures, graphic sexual matter was presented to children, and they were taught about loose sexual conduct.

“**Here again, a Marxist theory had failed to take hold in the real world.** The people were outraged at Lukács’ program, and he fled Hungary when Romania invaded in 1919.

“**All was quiet on the Marxist front until 1923 when the cultural terrorist turned up for a ‘Marxist study week’ in Frankfurt, Germany.** There, Lukács met a young, wealthy Marxist named Felix Weil.

“Until Lukács showed up, classical Marxist theory was based solely on the economic changes needed to overthrow class conflict. Weil was enthused by Lukács’ cultural angle on Marxism.

“Weil’s interest led him to fund a new Marxist think tank—the Institute for Social Research. It would later come to be known as simply The Frankfurt School.”¹⁴³

In the same year of 1923, according to Bernard Connolly, another of the founders of the Frankfurt School of social philosophy, Willi Munzenberg, “reflected on the failure of the ‘urban proletariat’ to mount successful revolutions in economically advanced countries in the way predicted by Marx. To counter that failure it was necessary, he proclaimed, to ‘organise the intellectuals and use them to make Western civilization stink. Only then, after they have corrupted all its values and made life impossible, can we impose the dictatorship of the proletariat.’ Corrupting the values of Western civilization meant undermining and, ultimately, proscribing all the institutions, traditions, structures and modes of thought (‘tools of oppression’) that underpinned that civilization. Once national sovereignty and political legitimacy were got out of

¹⁴³ Admin 1, “The Birth Of Cultural Marxism: How The “Frankfurt School” Changed America (and the West)”, *Smash Cultural Marxism*, January 15, 2017.

the way, it would be much easier for a central, unaccountable and malign ('politically correct') government to proscribe all the other foundations of civilization."¹⁴⁴

"In 1930, the school changed course under new director Max Horkheimer. The team began mixing the ideas of Sigmund Freud with those of Marx, and cultural Marxism was born.

"In classical Marxism, the workers of the world were oppressed by the ruling classes. The new theory was that everyone in society was psychologically oppressed by the institutions of Western culture. The school concluded that this new focus would need new vanguards to spur the change. The workers were not able to rise up on their own.

"As fate would have it, the National Socialists came to power in Germany in 1933. It was a bad time and place to be a Jewish Marxist, as most of the school's faculty was. So, the school moved to New York City, the bastion of Western culture at the time.

"In 1934, the school was reborn at Columbia University. Its members began to exert their ideas on American culture.

"It was at Columbia University that the school honed the tool it would use to destroy Western culture: the printed word.

"The school published a lot of popular material. **The first of these was *Critical Theory*.**

"Critical Theory is a play on semantics. The theory was simple: criticize every pillar of Western culture—family, democracy, common law, freedom of speech, and others. The hope was that these pillars would crumble under the pressure.

"Next was a book Theodor Adorno co-authored, *The Authoritarian Personality*. It redefined traditional American views on gender roles and sexual mores as 'prejudice.' Adorno compared them to the traditions that led to the rise of fascism in Europe.

"Is it just a coincidence that the go-to slur for the politically correct today is 'fascist'?"

"The school pushed its shift away from economics and toward Freud by publishing works on psychological repression.

¹⁴⁴ Connolly, *The Rotten Heart of Europe*, London: Faber, 2012, p. x. Mary Wakefield and Freddy Gray write: "In the 1930s, brilliant operatives like Willi Muenzenberg convinced 'useful idiots' to join anti-fascist organisations that were in reality fronts for the Soviet-backed Communist International." ("Vladimir Putin's New Plan for World Domination", *The Spectator*, 22 February, 2016).

“Their works split society into two main groups: the oppressors and the victims. They argued that history and reality were shaped by those groups who controlled traditional institutions. At the time, that was code for males of European descent.

“From there, they argued that the social roles of men and women were due to gender differences defined by the ‘oppressors.’ In other words, gender did not exist in reality but was merely a ‘social construct.’

“Adorno and Horkheimer returned to Germany when WWII ended. Herbert Marcuse, another member of the school [who joined it in Germany in 1933], stayed in America. In 1955, he published *Eros and Civilization*.

“In the book, Marcuse argued that Western culture was inherently repressive because it gave up happiness for social progress.

“The book called for ‘polymorphous perversity,’ a concept crafted by Freud. It posed the idea of sexual pleasure outside the traditional norms. *Eros and Civilization* would become very influential in shaping the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

“Marcuse would be the one to answer Horkheimer’s question from the 1930s: Who would replace the working class as the new vanguards of the Marxist revolution?

“Marcuse believed that it would be a victim coalition of minorities – blacks, women, and homosexuals.

“The social movements of the 1960s – black power, feminism, gay rights, sexual liberation – gave Marcuse a unique vehicle to release cultural Marxist ideas into the mainstream. Railing against all things ‘establishment,’ the Frankfurt School’s ideals caught on like wildfire across American universities.

“Marcuse then published *Repressive Tolerance* in 1965 as the various social movements in America were in full swing. In it, he argued that tolerance of all values and ideas meant the repression of ‘correct’ ideas.

“It was here that Marcuse coined the term ‘liberating tolerance.’ It called for tolerance of any ideas coming from the left but intolerance of those from the right. One of the overarching themes of the Frankfurt School was total intolerance for any viewpoint but its own. That is also a basic trait of today’s political-correctness believers.

“To quote Max Horkheimer, ‘*Logic is not independent of content.*’

“The Frankfurt School’s work has had a deep impact on American culture. It has recast the homogeneous America of the 1950s into today’s divided, animosity-filled nation.

“In turn, this has contributed to the undeniable breakdown of the family unit, as well as identity politics, radical feminism, and racial polarization in America.¹⁴⁵

As indicated above, Cultural Marxism is closely related to the idea of political correctness. Angelo M. Codevilla explains this important idea in more detail: “The notion of political correctness came into use among Communists in the 1930s as a semi-humorous reminder that *the Party’s interest is to be treated as a reality that ranks above reality itself*. Because all progressives, Communists included, claim to be about creating new human realities, they are perpetually at war against nature’s laws and limits. But since reality does not yield, progressives end up pretending that they themselves *embody* those new realities. Hence, any progressive movement’s nominal goal eventually ends up being subordinated to the urgent, all-important question of the movement’s own power. Because that power is insecure as long as others are able to question the truth of what the progressives say about themselves and the world, progressive movements end up struggling not so much to create the promised new realities as to force people to speak and act as if these were real: as if what is correct politically – i.e., what thoughts serve the party’s interest – were correct factually.

“Communist states furnish only the most prominent examples of such attempted groupthink. Progressive parties everywhere have sought to monopolize educational and cultural institutions in order to force those under their thumbs to sing their tunes or to shut up. But having brought about the opposite of the prosperity, health, wisdom, or happiness that their ideology advertised, they have been unable to force folks to ignore the *gap* between political correctness and reality.

“Especially since the Soviet Empire’s implosion, leftists have argued that Communism failed to create utopia not because of any shortage of military or economic power but rather because it could not overcome this gap. Is the lesson for today’s progressives, therefore, to push P.C. even harder, to place even harsher penalties on dissenters? Many of today’s more discerning European and American progressives, in possession of government’s and society’s commanding heights, knowing that they cannot wield Soviet-style repression and yet intent on beating down increasing popular resistance to their projects, look for another approach to crushing cultural resistance. Increasingly they cite the name of Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), a brilliant Communist theoretician for whom ‘cultural hegemony’ is the very purpose of the struggle as well as its principal instrument. His writings envisage a totalitarianism that eliminates the very possibility of cultural resistance to progressivism. But owing more to

¹⁴⁵ Admin 1, op. cit.

Machiavelli than to Marx or Lenin, they are more than a little complex about the means and are far from identical with the raw sort of power over culture enforced by the Soviet Empire or, for that matter, that is rife among us today..."

Although Gramsci died before the war, he became influential only later. "Gramsci started from mixed philosophical premises. First, orthodox Marxism: 'There is no such thing as "human nature," fixed and immutable,' he wrote. Rather, 'human nature is the sum of historically determined social relationships.' The modern prince's job is to change it. Wholly unorthodox, however, was his scorn for Marxism's insistence that economic factors are fundamental while all else is superstructural. No, 'stuff like that is for common folk,' a 'little formula' for 'half-baked intellectuals who don't want to work their brains.' For Gramsci, economic relations were just one part of social reality, the chief parts of which were intellectual and moral..."

"Gramsci co-founded Italy's Communist Party in 1921. In 1926, Mussolini jailed him. By the time he died eleven years later, he had composed twelve 'prison notebooks.' In private correspondence, he criticized Stalin's literary judgment and deemed his attacks on Leon Trotsky 'irresponsible and dangerous.' But publicly, he supported every turn of the Soviet Party line—even giving his party boss, Palmiro Togliatti, authority to modify his writings. Imprisoned and in failing health, he was intellectually freer and physically safer than if he had been exposed to the intra-Communist purges that killed so many of his comrades.

"Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony' also swung both ways. Its emphasis on transforming the enemy rather than killing him outright was at odds with the Communist Party's brute-force approach. His focus on cultural matters, reversing as it did the standard distinction between structure and superstructure, suggested belief in the mind's autonomy. On the other hand, the very idea of persuading minds not through reasoning on what is true and false, good and bad, according to nature, but rather by creating a new historical reality, is precisely what he shares with Marx and... with the fountainhead of modern thought, Niccolò Machiavelli.

"Gramsci turned to Machiavelli more than to Marx to discover how best to replace the existing order and to secure that replacement. Chapter V of Machiavelli's *The Prince* stated that 'the only secure way' to control a people who had been accustomed to live under its own laws is to destroy it. But Machiavelli's objective was to conquer people through their minds, not to destroy them. In Chapter VI of *The Prince* he wrote that nothing is more difficult than to establish 'new modes and orders,' that this requires 'persuading' peoples of certain things, that it is necessary 'when they no longer believe to make them believe by force,' and that this is especially difficult for 'unarmed prophets.' But Machiavelli also wrote that, if such prophets succeed in inculcating a new set of beliefs, they can count on being 'powerful, secure, honored and happy.' He clarified this insight in *Discourses on Livy* Book II, chapter 5: 'when it happens that the founders of the new religion speak a

different language, the destruction of the old religion is easily effected.' The Machiavellian revolutionary, then, must inculcate new ways of thinking and speaking that amount to a new language. In the *Discourse Upon Our Language*, Machiavelli had compared using one's own language to infiltrate the enemy's thoughts with Rome's use of its own troops to control allied armies. This is the template that Gramsci superimposed on the problems of the Communist revolution—a template made by one 'unarmed prophet' for use by others.

"Machiavelli is the point of departure in a section of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* that describes how the party is to rule as "the modern prince." But the modern prince's task is so big that it can be undertaken seriously only by a party (in some 50 references he leaves out the word "Communist"), which he defines as "an organism; a complex, collective element of society which has already begun to crystallize as a collective will that has become conscious of itself through action." This prince, this party, has to be "the organizer and the active expression of moral and intellectual reform...that cannot be tied to an economic program." Rather, when economic reform grows out of moral and intellectual reform, from "germs of collective will that tend to become universal and total," then it can become the basis of the secularization of all life and custom.

"The party-prince accomplishes this by being Jacobin 'in the historic and conceptual sense.' Gramsci writes: 'that is what Machiavelli meant by reform of the militia, which the Jacobins did in the French Revolution.' The party must gather consensus from each of society's discrete parts by persuading—inducing—people who had never thought of such things to join in ways of life radically different from their own. The party develops 'its organized force' by a 'minutely careful, molecular, capillary process manifested in an endless quantity of books and pamphlets, of articles in magazines and newspapers, and by personal debates repeated infinitely and which, in their gigantic altogether, comprise the work out of which arises a collective will with a certain homogeneity.'

"Which is it then for Gramsci? Does the party inspire or perhaps cajole consensus—or does it force it? His answer is ambiguous: 'Machiavelli affirms rather clearly that the state is to be run by fixed principles by which virtuous citizens can live secure against arbitrary treatment. Justly, however, Machiavelli reduces all to politics, to the art of governing men, of assuring their permanent consensus.' The matter, he writes, must be regarded from the "double perspective" ...[that] corresponds to the double nature of Machiavelli's centaur, beastly and human, of force and consensus, of authority and hegemony... of tactics and strategy.' Indeed that is Machiavelli's point: whatever it takes.

"The key to Gramsci's generalities and subtleties is to be found in his gingerly discussion of the relationship between the party and Christianity. 'Although other political parties may no longer exist, there will always exist de facto parties or tendencies... in such parties, cultural matters predominate...

hence, political controversies take on cultural forms and, as such, tend to become irresolvable.’ Translation: the progressive party-state (the party acting as a government, the government acting as a party) cannot escape the role of authoritative – perhaps forceful – mediator of societal conflicts having to do with cultural matters and must see to it that they are resolved its way.

“Specifically: as Gramsci was writing, Mussolini’s 1929 Concordat with the Vatican was proving to be his most successful political manoeuvre. By removing the formal enmity between the Church and the post-French-Revolution state, making Catholicism the state religion and paying its hierarchy, Mussolini had turned Italy’s most pervasive cultural institution from an enemy to a friendly vassal. Thousands of priests and millions of their flock would bend thoughts, words, and deeds to fit the party-state’s definition of good citizenship. Gramsci described the post-Concordat Church as having ‘become an integral part of the State, of political society monopolized by a certain privileged group that aggregated the Church unto itself the better to sustain its monopoly with the support of that part of civil society represented by the Church.’ A morally and intellectually compromised Church in the fascist state’s hands, Mussolini hoped and Gramsci feared, would redefine its teachings and its social presence to fascist specifications. The alternative to this subversion – denigrating and restricting the Church in the name of fascism – would have pushed many Catholics to embrace their doctrine’s fundamentals ever more tightly in opposition to the party. The Concordat was the effective template for the rest of what Mussolini called the corporate state.

“Gramsci called the same phenomenon a ‘*blocco storico*,’ historic bloc, that aggregates society’s various sectors under the party-state’s direction. The intellectuals, said Gramsci, are the *blocco*’s leading element. In any given epoch they weld workers, peasants, the church, and other groups into a unit in which the people live and move and have their being, and from within which it is difficult if not impossible to imagine alternatives. Power, used judiciously, acts on people the way the sun acts on sunflowers. Within this bloc, ideas may retain their names while changing in substance, while a new language grows organically. As Gramsci noted, Machiavelli had argued that language is the key to the mastery of consciousness - a mastery more secure than anything that force alone can achieve. But note that Machiavelli’s metaphors on linguistic warfare all refer to violence. How much force does it take to make this historic bloc cohere and to keep recalcitrants in it? Gramsci’s silence seems to say; ‘whatever may be needed.’ After all, Mussolini used as much as he thought *he* needed.

“In sum, Mussolini, not Stalin; forceful seduction, not rape, is Gramsci’s practical advice regarding ‘cultural hegemony.’ Gramsci means to replace Western culture by subverting it, by doing what it takes to compel it to redefine itself, rather than by picking fights with it...”

Following Gramsci’s lead, the post-war Cultural Marxists compelled Western culture to redefine itself - that is, adopt the language and values of

“political correctness”. And the storm-centre of this cultural revolution moved, together with the leaders of the Frankfurt school of social philosophy, from Europe to America...

Let us briefly take this story up to the present day.

“Beginning in the 1960s, from Boston to Berkeley, the teachers of America’s teachers absorbed and taught a new, CliffsNotes-style sacred history: America was born tainted by Western Civilization’s original sins—racism, sexism, greed, genocide against natives and the environment, all wrapped in religious obscurantism, and on the basis of hypocritical promises of freedom and equality. Secular saints from Herbert Croly and Woodrow Wilson to Franklin Roosevelt and Barack Obama have been redeeming those promises, placing America on the path of greater justice in the face of resistance from the mass of Americans who are racist, sexist, but above all stupid. To consider such persons on the same basis as their betters would be, as President Obama has called it, ‘false equivalence.’

“Thus credentialed, molded, and opinionated, a uniform class now presides over nearly all federal, and state, government bureaucracies, over the media, the educational establishment, and major corporations. Like a fraternity, it requires speaking the ‘in’ language signifying that one is on the right side, and joins to bring grief upon ‘outsider Americans who run afoul of its members...

“No more than its European counterparts does America’s progressive ruling class offer any vision of truth, goodness, beauty, or advantage to attract the rest of society to itself. Like its European kin, all that American progressivism offers is obedience to the ruling class, enforced by political correctness. Nor is there any endpoint to what is politically correct, any more than there ever was to Communism. Here and now, as everywhere and always, it comes down to glorifying the party and humbling the rest...

“The imposition of P.C. has no logical end because feeling better about one’s self by confessing other people’s sins, humiliating and hurting them, is an addictive pleasure the appetite for which grows with each satisfaction. The more fault I find in thee, the holier (or, at least, the trendier) I am than thou. The worse you are, the better I am and the more power I should have over you. America’s ruling class seems to have adopted the view that the rest of America should be treated as inmates in re-education camps...”¹⁴⁶

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By the late 1960s the Frankfurt School’s philosophy had penetrated the campuses, not only of America, but also of Western Europe. This is illustrated by the fact that the students in the Paris Uprising of 1968 marched under the

¹⁴⁶ Codevilla, “The Rise of Political Correctness”, *Claremont Review of Books*, November 8, 2016.

banner: “Marx, Mao and Marcuse”. Robert Grözinger has well described this impact of the Frankfurt School on today’s world: “The activities of the Frankfurt School, the group of intellectuals which spawned the New Left, the movement that from 1968 onwards captured the cultural hegemony in the West, can be likened to the story of the ‘Sorcerer’s Apprentice’.

“This famous ballad by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is known in the English-speaking world primarily due to the cinematic rendering of it in Walt Disney’s ‘Fantasia’, with Mickey Mouse in the title role. The creators of the ten-minute cartoon episode remained fairly true to the original, with these exceptions: Goethe’s apprentice does not fall asleep, and he hacks the bewitched broom in two only, not in innumerable splinters. A third deviation comes right at the end: In the original, the sorcerer doesn’t whack his wayward assistant with the broom. Instead, the returning senior wizard simply puts everything back in order. There is no mention of any sanction at all. Prompted maybe by Paul Dukas’ compelling and in parts spooky music (a symphonic poem composed 1897 specifically with Goethe’s ballad in mind), Disney’s filmmakers may simply have assumed the punishment and the other changes.

“In the German-speaking world, one line of the poem is often cited when describing a development over which the instigator has lost control: ‘Die ich rief, die Geister, werd’ ich nun nicht los.’ Which translates into: The spirits which I summoned, I now cannot get rid of.

“What’s interesting in this context is that Goethe wrote the ballad in the year 1797, according to *Wikipedia* as a warning to his contemporaries in view of developments in France after the revolution.

“Disney’s *Fantasia* makes no mention of Goethe, although their version is quite obviously based on his poem. Possibly because, by the time the film was being made in 1940, talk of looming war made it inexpedient to mention the great German. Instead, the introduction simply says it is an ‘ancient tale.’

“So, how does this ballad relate to the Frankfurt School and their doings in the real world? It is now half a century since the pivotal year of 1968, when people – mostly young and impressionable – across the whole West, inspired by the Frankfurt School, started their infamous ‘long march through the institutions.’ These ‘68ers’ can be divided into two groups: Sorcerer’s apprentices and hobgoblins.

“The sorcerer’s apprentices are those who with their words change – not a broom, but – other humans into the equivalent of hobgoblins and set them in motion. The latter become the water carriers for the former, until a few of the apprentices (by far not all), appalled at the ‘terrible waters’ (‘entsetzliches Gewässer’) thus rendered, desperately try to dispel the new evil.

“The representatives of the Frankfurt School, the intellectuals of the so-called ‘critical theory,’ are, or were, real life sorcerer’s apprentices. ‘Critical

theory' is not actually a theory but a school of thought, or rather a project. According to its leading theorist, Max Horkheimer (1895 - 1973), critical theory seeks 'to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them.' According to the German *Wikipedia* page on the subject, the aim of critical theory is to 'reveal the ideologies of the mechanisms of power and oppression' and to achieve a 'rational society of responsible human beings.'

"On the face of it, this all sounds well and good. However, if those really are the aims, why do we never hear anything from that group about our monetary system? Maybe I've overlooked something, but I don't think any representative of the Frankfurt School has ever seriously grappled with, say, the Austrian business cycle theory. Indeed, the words 'rational society' indicate a very different tradition from that of the Austrians, namely that of Plato and his notion of philosopher kings, who were permitted unethical means, such as the 'noble lie,' to attain the overarching aim.

"The only person who was in any way close to the attitudes of the Frankfurt School and who had seriously dealt with economics, was of a slightly earlier generation, namely John Maynard Keynes (1883 - 1946). Leading Austrian School economist Ludwig von Mises once wrote an article titled 'Stones into Bread: The Keynesian Miracle,' in which he charges the British mathematician turned economist with exactly that: bragging to be able to perform an economic miracle akin to one of the demands with which Satan tempted Jesus Christ.

"In other words, Keynes too was a sorcerer's apprentice of the kind Goethe described. Ethically and morally too, he was of the same corrosive substance as the Frankfurt School thinkers. He was a serial philanderer and described himself as an 'immoralist.' As such, the Platonist Keynes anticipated what leading Frankfurt School representative Herbert Marcuse (1898 - 1979) propagated in his book 'Eros and Civilization.' Marcuse claimed that liberation of the 'non-procreative Eros' would lead to new, paradisiacal conditions, where alienated labor would disappear and be replaced by non-alienated libidinal work.

"As Keynes despised principles, among others the principle of solid financing, he was an early representative of the present relativism and the modern sorcerer's apprentice of magical money proliferation. Without this - today pervasive - deliberate inflation, there would be much less money illusion, much less loitering, much less financing of unproductive, dreamy, or even destructive activities and organizations. His cynical adage, in the long run we are all dead, is virtually the paragon of willful present-orientation and dismissal of the future, which is characteristic of the basic attitude to life among today's representatives of the New Left, and of their followers, conscious or otherwise.

"Marcuse, in turn, was the creator of the term 'repressive tolerance.' What he meant was that normal tolerance actually serves to marginalise and suppress the truth about our immiseration (or impoverishment) in the ruling

system. Contrary to that, Marcuse established the term 'liberating tolerance.' He simply claimed that revolutionary minorities are in possession of the truth and that it is therefore their duty to liberate the majority from their fallacious views. Thus the revolutionary minorities have the right to suppress rival and supposedly harmful opinions. In addition, Marcuse also permitted the use of violence by this revolutionary minority. He legitimised this use of force as 'defensive.' It isn't the beginning of a new chain of violence, he claimed, but the attempt to break an existing one.

"This kind of misuse of language was typical of the Frankfurt School. Another example is immiseration. Because the Marxist theory of immiseration had been refuted by reality, the thinkers of the New Left switched from economics to psychology. Now they claimed that while capitalism had led to material wealth, it had caused psychological and intellectual immiseration.

"What is also striking, apart from the distortion of words and meanings, is the predominance of negativity. As the name indicates, 'critical theory' was always keen to criticise. Their utopia always remained very woolly. The reason for this is simple: Otherwise they would have had to admit that their vision was that of communism. Nevertheless, clear-sighted contemporaries realised this even in 1968. In that year, Erwin K. Scheuch edited a book about the '68ers and gave it the title 'Die Wiedertäufer der Wohlstandsgesellschaft,' meaning 'The Anabaptists of the Affluent Society.' In this book he wrote that the New Left wanted an 'undifferentiated society,' without division of labor. It seems that Marx's vision that in future people would hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, farm livestock in the evening and criticise after dinner, is still the vision of the New Left even today.

"However, the Frankfurt School suggested a different road to the communist paradise than that chosen by Lenin and Stalin in Soviet Russia. The direct intellectual precursors of the Frankfurt School, the Italian Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937) and the Hungarian Georg Lukács (1885 - 1971), had recognized that further west in Europe there was an obstacle on this path which could not be eliminated by physical violence and terror: the private, middle class, classical liberal bourgeois culture based on Christian values. These, they concluded, needed to be destroyed by infiltration of the institutions. Their followers have succeeded in doing so. The sorcerer's apprentices of the Frankfurt School conjured up an army of hobgoblins who empty their buckets over us every day. Instead of water, the buckets are filled with what Lukács had approvingly labelled 'cultural terrorism.'

"The hobgoblins of 1968 and the following years, mostly students, later became lecturers, teachers, media employees, civil servants and of course politicians. They and their later progeny are endowed with a sense of mission and the illusion of being on the side of moral righteousness. In thousands of more or less important, but always influential, positions of authority, they succeed in injecting entire generations with a disgust for their own culture and history, and a selective inability to think. With their allegedly liberating

tolerance, they have torn down natural or culturally nurtured inhibitions and replaced them with state enforced prohibitions on thinking and acting. These in turn have almost completely destroyed the natural workings and defense mechanisms of a healthy society.

“How could they have been so successful in such a short space of time? The sorcerer's apprentices apparently managed to fill a psycho-spiritual gap in the market; they supplied a demand keenly felt by those they turned into hobgoblins. The market niche to fill was an apparent shortcut to paradise. The sorcerer's apprentice in Goethe's ballad transforms the broom into a hobgoblin, so that it can do the hard work of carrying water for him. Likewise, we are always tempted to find a shortcut to paradise. Just as Keynes did with his monetary policy, which would allegedly turn proverbial stones into bread.

“The sorcerer's apprentices of the Frankfurt School dreamt of a communist paradise on earth. Initially, among the hard left they were the only ones aware of the fact that this brutal path to paradise would fail. With the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, however, this failure was obvious to all. This was the New Left's moment. It was only then that they got any traction and noticeable response. At least in Western Europe. In the US, this moment of truth may have come a little later. Gary North contends in his book ‘Unholy Spirits’ that John F. Kennedy's death was “the death rattle of the older rationalism.” A few weeks later, Beatlemania came to America. However, the appearance of the book ‘Silent Spring’ by Rachel Carson in September 1962, which heralded the start of environmentalism, points to the Berlin Wall as the more fundamental game changer in the West. A few years later, the spellbound hobgoblins began their long march through the institutions.

“Half a century after 1968, we see the catastrophic effects of this magic: a desire for instant gratification and a loss of meaning of life. The desire for instant gratification can be seen in the destruction of established institutions, especially the family, and in the countless number of abortions. Or in unbounded sexuality and the supremacy of the pleasure principle. Loss of meaning of life can be recognized in drug abuse, for example. Other effects are the dulling of the mind, a lack of general, all-round education, uncritical acceptance of claims that cannot be falsified, such as that of a supposedly man-made climate change, the acceptance of violence as a means of political debate and, of course, the cultural bursting of the dam concerning migration.

“The sorcerer's apprentices have become very quiet lately. Maybe some of them are shocked by what they have wrought. At least two of them could see what was happening even in 1968 and tried to stop the unfolding catastrophe. One of them was Theodor W. Adorno (1903 – 1969). The other was his student Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929). In the face of disrupted lectures and rising violence in general, they accused the radicals of ‘left-wing fascism.’ Like Goethe's apprentice, they realised they had created a ‘spawn on hell’ (‘Ausgeburt der Hölle’). They tried to stop the hobgoblins with a new spell, but failed.

“Currently, some people are trying to turn things around with other spells. The spells of these new sorcerer’s apprentices use magic words such as ‘nation’ and ‘the people.’ Like their predecessors, they believe that they can use the state as a magic wand, e.g. to force children into schools to learn certain world views, and everything will be all right again.

“So far, none of them, neither the older nor the younger apprentices, are calling for the ‘master’ to return, as Goethe’s apprentice does in desperation near the end. However, the ‘cultural terrorism’ keeps flowing, and the ‘terrible waters’ are rising alarmingly. The legacy of the revolt of 1968 is a complete catastrophe for western civilization. This civilization had already been suffering from the disease of statism, but nevertheless had survived two world wars and one depression. Now, the culture war is finishing it off. The result is a society that still harbours some civilizing elements, but is no longer a civilization. It is merely a shaky structure that has not yet collapsed completely, but only because the hobgoblins have not yet managed to create a strong enough wave.

“What can be done? First, we need to stop using the state like a magic wand. We have to urgently defund the hobgoblins. That means defunding, i.e. withdrawing the state from, the universities, schools and media that keep them on the move. However, there is something more fundamental we must do. We have to recognise that there’s no short cut to paradise. We have to call the ‘master.’ In Goethe’s ballad, this is a master sorcerer. Goethe himself seems to have been an agnostic. Nevertheless, I interpret this figure as the Creator. Disney’s film makers seem to have had a similar idea, consciously or not. The way they depict the master removing the water, accompanied by Dukas’ dramatic music, reminds the viewer of Moses parting the sea.

“In his ‘The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,’ C.S. Lewis has Aslan, the Christ-like lion, talk of ‘deeper magic’ that is more powerful than that of the White Witch. Mises’ Student Murray Rothbard spoke of ‘Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature.’ For those who believe, state-funded, forced egalitarianism is a revolt against God. To successfully combat this illusory magic, we ultimately need God’s ‘deeper magic.’

“Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn once said, in a speech entitled ‘Godlessness: the first step to the Gulag’: ‘If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the entire twentieth century, ... I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat once again: Men have forgotten God.’

“In the face of the atrocities of the French Revolution, Goethe predicted in his ballad that, in the end, only the ‘master’ would be able to finally stop the march of the hobgoblins and make everything right again. We would do well

to remember that when we attempt to put a stop to the New Left's evil game."¹⁴⁷

*February 28 / March 13, 2018.
St. Oswald, Archbishop of York.*

¹⁴⁷ Grözing, "The Frankfurt School and the New Left: Sorcerer's Apprentices and Hobgoblins", *Equity and Freedom*, February 5, 2018.

13. RELIGION AND MORALITY IN FIFTH-CENTURY GREECE

The event that marked the transition from Archaic Greece to Classical Greece was the war with Persia (492-449). A Greek revolt against Persian rule in Asia Minor led to the Persian Emperor Darius invading Greece. He was defeated at Thermopylae and Marathon. Then his successor Xerxes was defeated on the sea at Salamis and on land at Plataea (479). This great victory gave the decisive impulse to the Greek city-states, led by Athens, to develop the great civilization of Classical Greece, which was to be of such importance in the development of both Eastern and Western European culture.

The victory over Persia could also be said to be the beginning of that obsession with freedom as against tyranny, democracy as against despotism, that is the leit-motif of what we now call western civilization, which had a decisive impact on Republican Rome and, many hundreds of years later, on the Renaissance, the Age of Reason and contemporary liberalism. Of course, there are major differences between Classical Greek liberalism and ours – notably, in that slaves, women and “barbarians” were given no part in Ancient Greek democracy. Nevertheless, the ancestry is unmistakeable... In between, the Christian civilization of the New Rome of Byzantium, which begat all the medieval cultures of Europe, in both East and West, was also heavily influenced by Classical Greece. However, the foundational idea of the New Rome, Christianity, is quite different from liberalism, whether ancient or modern, and favoured another governmental form – Christian monarchism.

The achievements of Classical Greece were primarily secular – in art, architecture, literature and philosophy. Nevertheless, the fifth-century Greeks generally remained intensely religious; no serious steps in public life were taken without determining the will of the gods through religious rites and sacrifices. But the broadening of the membership of the citizen body, and the gradual democratization of public life had profound consequences, both religious and social. Thus “in Athens, the move from aristocratic to democratic government altered the nature of the tribes. They became, in a sense, offshoots of the public assembly, reflecting the claims of citizenship and voting rather than of the sacerdotal family. A similar symptom of social change in Rome appeared when the army was no longer organized simply according to family and gens. Instead, centuries – that is, numbers – became the basis of its organization. Former clients and plebeians had often become rich (the introduction of money facilitating the circulation of property) and they played an increasingly important military role. The original aristocratic means of making war, the cavalry, had declined as compared to expensive, heavily armoured infantry: Greek hoplites and Roman legionaries. Thus numbers and money – introducing a touch of abstraction – came to count for more within the privileged citizen class, supplementing its religious foundation...”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 34.

With regard to religion, it is hard to determine whether increased democratization brought a weakening of religious faith, or vice-versa. One thing is certain: in classical Greek democracy we see a particularly *human* view of God or the gods, suggesting that, for all their power, the gods were only relatively superior to human beings. The early word for “democracy”, *isonomia*, “equality under the law”, quite closely describes the relationship between gods and men: not equal in power, but equal – or at any rate, not radically unequal – under a higher law of cosmic justice.

Thus J.M. Roberts writes: “Greek gods and goddesses, for all their supernatural standing and power, are remarkably human. They express the man-centred quality of later Greek civilization. Much as it owed to Egypt and the East, Greek mythology and art usually presents its gods as (recognizably fallen) men and women, a world away from the monsters of Assyria and Babylonia, or from Shiva the many-armed. If the implication of this religious revolution was that the gods were no better than men, its converse was that men could be like the gods. This is already apparent in Homer; perhaps he did as much as anyone to order the Greek supernatural in this way and he does not give much space to popular cults. He presents gods taking sides in the Trojan war in postures all too human. They compete with one another; while Poseidon harries the hero of *The Odyssey*, Athena takes his part. A later Greek critic grumbled that Homer ‘attributed to the gods everything that is disgraceful and blameworthy among men: theft, adultery and deceit’. It was a world which operated much like the actual world.”¹⁴⁹

If the gods were such uninspiring figures, it was hardly surprising that the kings (whether god-kings or not) should cease to inspire awe. Hence the trend, apparent from Homeric times, to *desacralise* kingship. For if in religion the universe was seen as “one great City of gods and men”, differing from each other not in nature but in power, why should there be any greater differences in the city of man? Just as gods can be punished by other gods, and men like Heracles can become gods themselves, so in the politics of the city-state rulers can be removed from power. There is no “divine right” of kings because even the gods do not have such unambiguous rights over men.

As we pass from Homer to the fifth-century poets and dramatists, the same religious humanism, tending to place men on a par with the gods, is evident. Thus the conservative poet Pindar writes:

*Single is the race, single
Of men and gods:
From a single mother we both draw breath.
But a difference of power in everything
Keeps us apart.*

¹⁴⁹ Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon Publishing, 1992, p. 139.

Although cosmic justice must always be satisfied, and the men who defy the laws of the gods are always punished for their pride (*hubris*), nevertheless, in the plays of Aeschylus, for example, the men who rebel (e.g. Prometheus), are sometimes treated with greater sympathy than the gods against whom they rebel. Even the conservative Sophocles puts a man-centred view of the universe into the mouth of his characters, as in the chorus in *Antigone*:

*Many wonders there are, but none more wonderful
Than man, who rules the ocean...
He is master of the ageless earth, to his own will bending
The immortal mother of gods.*

We see the same humanizing tendency in the fifth-century “father of history”, Herodotus. As Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, “For Herodotus, pride always comes before a fall, but he emphasizes that such failures are not the punishment of the gods, but rather result from human mistakes. This rational approach, in which the gods did not intervene in the affairs of men, was a major innovation and formed the basis for the tradition of Western history.”¹⁵⁰

In about 415 BC the Sicilian writer Euhemerus developed the theory that the gods originated from the elaboration of actual historical persons.¹⁵¹ This humanist tendency led, in Euripides, to open scepticism about the gods. Thus Queen Hecabe in *The Trojan Women* expresses scepticism about Zeus in very modern, almost Freudian tones: “You are past our finding out – whether you are the necessity of nature or the mind of human beings”. Euripides’ “gods and goddesses,” writes Michael Grant, “emerge as demonic psychological forces – which the application of human reason cannot possibly overcome – or as nasty seducers, or as figures of fun. Not surprisingly, the playwright was denounced as impious and atheistic, and it was true that under his scrutiny the plain man’s religion crumbled to pieces.”¹⁵²

If the dramatists could take such liberties, in spite of the fact that their dramas were staged in the context of a religious festival, it is not to be wondered at that the philosophers went still further. Thus Protagoras, the earliest of the so-called sophists, – travelling teachers or professional rhetors – wrote: “I know nothing about the gods, whether they are or are not, or what their shapes are. For many things make certain knowledge impossible – the obscurity of the theme and the shortness of human life.” And again: “*Man is the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are; and of things that are not, that they are not.*”

Protagoras did not question the moral foundations of society in a thorough-going way, preferring to think that men should obey the institutions of society,

¹⁵⁰ Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 33.

¹⁵¹ C.S. Lewis, “Religion without Dogma?” in *Faith, Christianity and the Church*, London: HarperCollins, 1992, p. 165, footnote.

¹⁵² Grant, *The Classical Greeks*, London: Phoenix, 1989, p. 130.

which had been given them by the gods.¹⁵³ Thus he did not cut the bond between human institutions (*νομος*), on the one hand, and the Divine order of things (*φύσις*), on the other – a step that was not taken unequivocally until the French revolution. Nevertheless, his thought shows that secular democratism went hand in hand with religious scepticism.

Other sophists went further. Central to their teaching, writes Lane, “was the drawing of a distinction between *nomos* and *physis*, between law and nature. In the context of that distinction, they used *nomoi* (plural of *nomos*) to refer not to divine laws, as had Antigone, but to the kinds of laws passed by humans, whether individual or in groups. Man-made *nomoi* were human conventions. ‘Law’ in that sense, born of the happenstance of human contrivance, whether a tyrant’s whim or an assembly’s close-run vote, was presented as contrasting with the real nature of things – a nature that might be governed by a justice or law that is altogether different from the laws passed by humans. To contrast *nomos* and *physis* was to call attention to the conventions of human contrivance, in comparison with the unalterable nature of reality – and, for the most part, *nomos* came off worse.

“The most controversial sophists interpreted the claim that *nomoi* were man-made as the claim that they were made by *some* men for imposition upon *others* – that they offered the dominators all the advantage, and their helpless victims only disadvantage. These thinkers presented ‘nature’ as something like the red-in-tooth-and-claw view that early social Darwinists would later propose: they contended that it was natural for the strong to pursue their ends with impunity, making prey of the weak to suit their own desires. The Athenian character Callicles of Plato’s dialogues is an example of someone who has imbibed these arguments and presents them in indelible form.

“Even then, if what was natural was the rule of the strong, that left open the question of how human conventions should respond, and how their merits should be evaluated. Should one respond by attacking the strong for exploiting the weak using natural justice as a critical tool to expose the exploitative dimension of human laws? The first recorded criticism of the injustice of slavery as an institution (rather than of particular abuses) is framed in these terms. It treats slavery as a merely human law that violates the divinely sponsored and natural condition of liberty. ‘The deity gave liberty to all men, and nature created no one a slave’ is a saying of Alkadamas...

“Using the *nomos/physis* distinction to advance that radical critique of slavery or any other particular law did not find many takers, however. More

¹⁵³ J.S. McClelland writes: “The Greeks did understand that one of the ways of getting round the problem of the vulnerability of a constitution on account of its age and its political bias was to pretend that it was very ancient indeed. That meant mystifying the origins of a constitution to the point where it had no origins at all. The way to do that was to make the constitution immortal by the simple expedient of making it the product of an immortal mind, and the only immortal minds were possessed by gods, or, as second-best, by supremely god-like men” (*A History of Western Political Thought*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 11).

common was the argument that the bulk of laws do serve human interests in general – but they do so only as a kind of second-best, not serving them to the fullest possible extent. Individual humans would be best served by pursuing the justice of nature, which is a justice in which the strong rule the weak, but only if they are assuredly among the strong. The difficulty of being sure that one would win out leads to a second-best solution, of accepting human law as a way of ensuring that one gets something rather than nothing. The best thing for each individual would be to dominate others rather than being punished. But the worst thing for him would be to dominate, and get caught and punished. So justice was the middle of the road, the second-best option. Forgo the fruits of being a dominator, but thereby ensure that you don't suffer the pains of being dominated. Plato has the character Glaucon lay out this view – while distancing himself from endorsing it – in the *Republic*: justice is 'intermediate between the best and the worst; the worst is to suffer it without being able to take revenge. Justice is a mean between these two extremes. People value it not as a good but because they are too weak to do injustice with impunity.'...

“Such a relativizing of the value of justice – making it something we put up with when necessary, but not what is most beneficial or advantageous for our own happiness – marks an important challenge to the full-throated (if wistful) defences of justice in the poets... As new figures come on to the public stages of Greek society – from the older poets and philosophers, to the tragic playwrights and then the sophists – the consensus on the meaning of justice began to fray. Was justice central to the survival of civilization, or a swindle practised by the rich upon the poor?”¹⁵⁴

*

In spite of the humanism of Greek religion, and the very human frailties of the Greek gods, their power to make or break a man was still recognized by all except the most sceptical. Moreover, they insisted that there was some link, however difficult to discern at times, between the destiny of a man and a certain cosmic *justice*. As the pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander put it: “All things pay retribution to each other for their injustice according to the judgement of Time”.¹⁵⁵ Justice was a major theme of Greek philosophy from Anaximander to Plato. It was also the principal obsession of the great fifth-century Greek tragedians Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles. Most of their plots concern crime and punishment, *hubris* and *nemesis*. Tragedy was born as an inquiry into the nature of justice.

Thus at the dawn of tragedy, we find Aeschylus' archetypal tragic hero, Prometheus, “bound in adamantine chains unbreakable” and defiantly challenging the power of Zeus, the king of the gods:

¹⁵⁴ Lane, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51, 52.

¹⁵⁵ Anaximander, in Simplicius, *Physics*, 24, 17.

*Let him hurl at me the curlèd lightning's prongs;
 Let him rouse the air with spasms of saddened winds
 And thunder; let hurricane convulse the earth
 To her very roots; let the seas' savage roar
 Confound the courses of the heavenly stars;
 Let him lift me high and hurl to Tartarus' gloom
 On whirling floods of inescapable doom
 He cannot kill me.¹⁵⁶*

Zeus cannot kill Prometheus, because Prometheus is a god and immortal. But he is also the son of Earth, so he feels a bond with the mortal race of man. He belongs, therefore, to both the kingdom of heaven and the society of men, which involves him in a conflict of obligations. In bringing fire from heaven to earth, Prometheus fulfilled his obligations to me but broke his obligations to heaven. Zeus therefore bound him in chains to a rock.

Prometheus protests that this is *unjust* –

*O sky divine, and swift-winged winds,
 And river springs, and ocean waves'
 Multitudinous laughter – see!
 See, O Earth, mother of all!
 And you, all-seeing circle
 Of the sun, on you I call! See what
 On me, a god, the gods let fall!¹⁵⁷*

For according to the justice of equality a god should not be coerced by another god. On the other hand, Zeus can invoke the justice of hierarchy – Prometheus has usurped a higher place than is his by right in the hierarchy of the gods.

In Aeschylus the conflict between different criteria of justice can only be resolved by the goddess Justice herself:

*Justice lights up smoke-dimmed
 Halls of the righteous, and honours
 Those who walk with God.
 She passes by, with eyes
 Averted, gilded splendours
 Stained by filthy hands.
 For she disdains the power
 Of avarice falsely stamped
 With praise. And all things are steered
 To their appointed end.¹⁵⁸*

¹⁵⁶ Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 1043.

¹⁵⁷ Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 88.

¹⁵⁸ Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 773.

For Justice is in league with Fate:

*Justice plants the anvil:
The sword is forged by Fate.*¹⁵⁹

Thus for Aeschylus the whole of history is shaped by a divine hand, leading from injustice to the final triumph of justice.

As for human justice, that has to be steered by the gods. Thus, as Lane writes, “the final play of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* trilogy, produced in 458 BCE, called the *Eumenides*, portrays how justice was established there in the form of the ‘Areopagus’, the aristocratic court that served religious as well as judicial functions. In the play, Athena sets up the court and serves in its first case as one of the twelve jurors, sitting alongside eleven Athenian mortals, to try the prince of Argos, Orestes, for the murder of his mother and her lover. Although Orestes had in fact committed this murder to avenge his father, Agamemnon, Athena casts the deciding vote to acquit him in order to break the cycle of vengeance and instead establish new terms of justice. The image of a goddess deliberating as one member of an otherwise human jury underscored the divine nimbus attached to the idea of justice, the awe with which it had to be surrounded if social ties were to withstand the many breakdowns and violations of justice that everyday life inevitably entailed.”¹⁶⁰

In Sophocles’ *Antigone* we find a similar conflict between different kinds or criteria of justice. The conflict here is between the justice of the state and the justice of the gods or popular piety; and the issue is whether a decent burial should be given to Polyneides, who has been killed leading an abortive rebellion against Creon, king of Thebes. Since Polyneides was a traitor to his country and state, Creon orders that he remain unburied; this is the justice of the state. However, Polyneices’ sister Antigone decides to defy the edict by performing this service for her brother’s unsettled ghost:

*I will bury him –
What glory to die for that! I will lie with him
Loving and beloved; for piety
Condemned. For I have more time to serve those below
Than those up here; there I shall lie forever.*¹⁶¹

Noble words; but there is a hint here of a certain Pharisaism, even sensuality, corrupting the purity of her undoubtedly correct championship of a higher justice and morality. We find something similar in Shakespeare’s *Isabella*:

Angelo. *What would you do?*
Isabella. *As much for my poor brother as myself;*

¹⁵⁹ Aeschylus, *The Libation-Bearers*, 646.

¹⁶⁰ Lane, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁶¹ *Antigone*, 71.

*That is, were I under the terms of death,
Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to bed as to a bed
That longing had been sick for ere I'd yield
By body up to pieces.*¹⁶²

Angelo will spare the life of Isabella's brother, Claudio, who has been condemned to death for promiscuity, if she agrees to sleep with him. But Isabella remains brutally chaste:

*Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.*¹⁶³

Antigone dies for her brother; but death to her is what chastity is to Isabella.

*Nothing can robe me of my honourable death,*¹⁶⁴

She says to her sister Ismene; and

*Take heart – you live: my heart is long since dead
To serve the dead.*¹⁶⁵

Creon is clearly wrong in condemning Antigone to death and thereby upholding the justice of the state against the higher justice of the gods and popular piety. Nevertheless, Sophocles also sympathizes with his exasperation at her infatuation with death:

*There let her pray to Death – of all the gods
She worships him alone – to spare her death.
Then at length she will learn what pain unimag-
Inable is it to worship Death when dead.*¹⁶⁶

There follows an ode to "unconquerable Eros". But what kind of Eros is meant? If it is Antigone's almost Isoldean passion for death, then it may be unconquerable, but it is also destructive. Her betrothed Haimon (*haima* is the Greek for "blood") kills himself when he finds her dead – his eros has been crushed to death. The tragic irony is that she who said:

*To join in love, not hatred, was I born,*¹⁶⁷

has left in her heroic wake only hatred and suffering. She championed the justice of the gods against the justice of the state, and in this the gods supported

¹⁶² *Measure for Measure*, II, 4.

¹⁶³ *Measure for Measure*, II, 4.

¹⁶⁴ *Antigone*, 96.

¹⁶⁵ *Antigone*, 559.

¹⁶⁶ *Antigone*, 777.

¹⁶⁷ *Antigone*, 523.

her – Creon loses not only his son Haimon, but also his wife Eurydice in punishment for his “self-will”. But the chorus describes Antigone, too, as self-willed. Self-will infects both Creon and Antigone - as it infected both Angelo and Isabella in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*. To fight for justice is great and commendable; but the moral is that even the greatest feats of heroism can be corrupted by pride and therefore lead to the suffering of the innocent.

Sophocles’ last play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, performed in 406 as Athens faced defeat by Sparta, takes the analysis of justice one step further. In this work, Time, as in Anaximander, is the ultimate judge of all things. But there is no joy in the triumph of this justice, which destroys even the best that is human:

*Only the gods escape old age and death:
The rest are victims all of ruinous Time.
Earth’s strength decays, and health departs; faith dies,
And falsehood blooms; the breath of friendship fails
‘Twixt man and man, and state and state. Whether soon
Or late, sweet turns to sour, and fair to foul.
If now ‘twixt you and Thebes the day is fine,
Time will bring forth a thousand days and nights
In which the most harmonious, close-bound friends
Will be parted at spear’s point for the merest nothing.¹⁶⁸*

Oedipus’ son Polyneices enters, and appeals to his father in the name of “Mercy, who sits beside the throne of God”, to help him against his brother Eteocles. This is a new note in tragedy – mercy also has its claims, for it, too, is divine. However, it is not given to Sophocles to develop this new theme. For Oedipus, in the name of “old, eternal Justice”, brings curses on both his sons. Then he is borne away through the midst of thunder and lightning to “unseen fields of night”. He could say, as did Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens,

*My long sickness
Of health and living now begins to mend,
And nothing brings me all things...¹⁶⁹*

The third of the great Athenian dramatists, Euripides, did not share his older colleagues’ faith in justice. It wasn’t only that the justice of the state was often unjust, and the justice of the gods brought only suffering. The more fundamental question was: did justice really exist? Thus when Medea is betrayed by Jason and murders their children in revenge, the gods aid and abet her to the last. When Hippolytus ignores Aphrodite, he is destroyed together with Phaedra, the instrument of the goddess’ revenge. And when Pentheus persecutes the followers of Dionysius, he is torn apart limb from limb. Euripides did not try to justify the ways of God to men; “justice strain’d with

¹⁶⁸ *Oedipus at Colonus*, 607.

¹⁶⁹ *Timon of Athens*, V, 1.

mercy" is to be found neither in heaven nor on earth. The puzzled mind can only echo Hecuba's cry in *The Trojan Women*:

*O Zeus, be thou Natural Necessity
Or Mind of Man, to thee I pray.*

For, whatever they are, the gods exist – and in terrible power...

*

The glorious age of fifth-century Athenian democracy comes to an end with what her greatest philosopher, Plato, considered to be the greatest of all acts of injustice: the condemnation and execution of Socrates. It is beyond the scope of this work to study how this event took place and how it influenced Plato – although we shall study his verdict on the democratic political system that carried it out. More to the point here is to contrast the great advance made by Greek philosophy and tragedy in probing the nature of justice, with the great prophets of Israel, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who were praising the justice of God and denouncing the injustices of men at about the same time.

"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom". This is, of course, a quotation from the Old Testament, but it could also serve as the motto of the great Greek tragedians. The Hebrew and the Greco-Roman worlds agreed that the world is governed in accordance with Divine justice. Wisdom therefore begins in acknowledging this ineluctable fact, and managing one's life in accordance with it. To do otherwise is foolish – and will bring down upon oneself the just wrath of the Divinity.

Beyond that acknowledgement, of course, the Jews and the Greeks diverged in their thinking. The Jewish prophets, having a direct knowledge of the One True God, and a deeper and more accurate knowledge of His laws, entertained no doubts about His justice. And, having a much higher estimate of the God of Abraham than the Greeks had of Zeus and his often wayward family, they were much less patient with the idea that God was in any way unjust. Thus "The house of Israel saith, 'The way of the Lord is not equal.' 'O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways'" (Ezekiel 18.29-30.). Again, the last of the Prophets, Malachi (fifth-century BC), says: "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, 'Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them.' Or, 'Where is the God of judgement?'" (Malachi 2.17). But God, for the Jewish prophets, is never unequal – that is, unjust - in His ways; He is always the God of judgement.

The Jewish prophets are no less stern than the Greek tragedians in seeing an inexorable link between crime and punishment, *hubris* and *nemesis*. But they have none of the black pessimism of Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*. The God of justice does not only punish: He also comes to save His people from their

oppressors, “to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable years of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our Go; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be alled trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified” (Isaiah 61.1-3).

Of course, this joyful outcome for the just and the justified would come only with the Saviour, Jesus Christ, of whom the Greeks had no conception and the Jews only a dim one as yet. However, in this obsession with justice in both the Jewish and the Greco-Roman world we may see a preparation for Christ, and an anticipation of the time when both Jews and Greeks would be one in Christ, worshipping the God both of justice and of mercy. If the Law and the Prophets were “a schoolmaster to Christ” for the Jews (Galatians 3.24), then the great works of the Greek tragedians and philosophers provided that cultural and intellectual earth in which the new Christian civilization could grow and prosper. For Greek philosophy, according to Clement of Alexandria, “was given to them for a time and in the first instance for the same reason as the Scriptures were given to the Jews. It was for the Greeks the same nurse towards Christ as the law was for the Jews”.

March 7/20, 2018.

14. WHY THE MODERN WORLD-VIEW MUST BE WRONG

In his book *The Age of Genius. The Seventeenth Century & the Birth of the Modern Mind* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), A.C. Grayling convincingly demonstrates that the real break between the medieval (religious) and the modern (secular) world-views took place when the use of the method of scientific empiricism began to be generally accepted in the seventeenth century. He illustrates the difference that the changes in this century made by comparing the world-view implicit in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) and its witches and belief in hell and veneration for the sacred character of kingship, with the world view that came into being after the execution of King Charles I in 1649 for "treason", implying a rejection of the Divine Right of kings, and after the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, in which not only is a legitimate king, James II, removed, but the usurpation is given a rational justification by John Locke without any Scriptural or traditional foundation. Thus within the bounds of one century we see a massive transition, at least in the leading minds of one nation, England, "from magic to method", from an essentially religious world-view to an essentially scientific one. And the proof, according to Grayling, that this transition is from error to truth, from superstition to real knowledge, is the fact that this same transition, repeated throughout the world, and with only a few regions as yet relatively untouched by it, has had massively positive results in terms of useful technological discoveries...

Grayling's argument at its simplest goes as follows. Science works; we see its success in all the wonderful technologies which we see all around us; therefore the modern scientific world-view that has develop in parallel with science's advance since the seventeenth century must be true.

"If evidence were required for the success of science's methods, one need only say, *si monumentum requires, circumspice*: look around at today's world. The results of scientific endeavour are overwhelmingly endorsed by outcome. The application of science by means of technology is testimony to its success and – arguably – its advance towards truths about the world; even if, as must always be acknowledge, the benefits are not unmixed with problems that science and technology also bring." (p. 241)

"This transformation of world-view was not complete until after Darwin, of course, and its application via technology to the transformation of life in the world required the wider spread of literacy and education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover it is not by far the world-view of everyone even today – perhaps not even a majority of people today – but it is the world-view that drives almost everything of significance that happens in our world, from technologies to economies, with the resulting impact on the social and political organization of *almost* all societies, even the societies where the majority of people still hold a version of the pre-seventeenth century mind-set." (p. 321)

*

However, there are powerful reasons for believing that, whatever the defects of the early seventeenth-century religious world-view in the West (and there were many), the modernists such as Grayling *must be wrong*, not in their devotion to empirical method as such, nor in their pointing to the detailed accumulation of knowledge in science and technology, which cannot be denied, but in the ultimate senselessness of the general secular world-view they seek to extract from this scientific success.

In order to answer Grayling's argument, let us first ask the question: does the religious world-view – which we shall identify from now on with Orthodox Christianity, the Christianity common to both East and West for the first thousand years of Christian history – necessarily reject the major discoveries and concepts that underlie the startlingly successful technologies of today? And the answer is: no. It is perfectly possible for an Orthodox Christian, such as the present writer, to believe in sub-atomic particles, gravity, bacteria, viruses, DNA, electricity, super-novas and black holes, without surrendering an iota of his faith. Nor are we required to reject the vast majority of scientific hypotheses of a lower- or middle-order complexity and scope that form the objects of study and verification of the vast majority of scientists in their everyday working life. What we cannot accept, because it is directly contrary to the Orthodox Christian world-view, is the hypothesis of the very highest generality and scope, *the over-arching myth of the modern secular-scientific world-view*.

This view can be summed up in the following propositions:-

- (i) That the whole universe came into being spontaneously, *without a Creator, from nothing*;
- (ii) That the whole consequent development of the universe after the "Big Bang" proceeded *by chance*;
- (iii) That the simplest living cells came into being through chemical reactions, *chance evolution* from inorganic matter;
- (iv) That the extraordinarily complex and abundant variety of life-forms, plants and animals, evolved from simpler organisms *by chance and by a process of mutation and natural selection*;
- (v) That man evolved from the apes *by chance and by a process of mutation and natural selection*;
- (vi) That man, having come into being *by chance* and by a process of mutation and natural selection, has no free will and no immortal soul and therefore no moral responsibility;
- (vii) That all the greatest cultural and scientific achievements of man, from the plays of Shakespeare and the symphonies of Beethoven to the theories of Einstein, took place *by chance*;
- (viii) That miracles – that is, events that cannot be explained by scientific theories – do not exist.

Now all of these eight propositions are *unproven, unscientific assumptions* of a philosophical or metaphysical, metabiological or metapsychological nature. They cannot be deduced from the mass of existing scientific knowledge based on the existence of such real things as sub-atomic particles, gravity, bacteria, viruses, DNA, electricity, super-novas and black holes; nor are they necessary axioms without which it is impossible to understand such things or use them in scientific investigations. In other words, they are beliefs that are strictly *unnecessary* for the conducting of the scientific enterprise. But showing that one does not have to believe these propositions in order to be a real scientist is not the same as demonstrating that they are false. So we shall now adduce some arguments to show that these philosophical assumptions are false.

1. Nothing comes from nothing. The modernist view falls flat before the nihilism and nonsensicality of its initial assumption...
2. Chance is the absence of law. A chance event, if such existed, would be an event that cannot be derived from any scientific law or lawgiver, human or Divine. (Let us remember Einstein's dictum: "God does not play with dice.") However, the universe clearly contains both laws and law-givers. The whole scientific enterprise is made possible as a result of this fact. If there were no laws, there would be no science, whose essence consists in searching out and discovering laws. So how did chance give birth to law? In other words, how did chance cease to be chance? Or to put it another way: how did lawlessness become lawful? The modernist world-view has no answer to these questions.
3. Nobody has reliably produced even the smallest cell of living matter from inorganic matter. The physical difficulties involved are so great that the probability of its happening by chance are calculated to be infinitesimally small. On the other hand, the second law of thermodynamics, the best-tested law in physical science, says that there is an inexorable tendency for information to be lost – in other words, for death to triumph over life. And yet we are asked to believe that the opposite process is happening all over the planet all the time, and that all the vastly complex forms of life come into being and replicate themselves by chance, contrary to the best-tested law in physics!
4. The processes of mutation and natural selection are essentially processes of death and destruction. Therefore they cannot explain the creation of new forms of life. Life can only come from life, not from death. In fact, we now know that the characteristics of all living things, down to the smallest physical detail, are encapsulated into the fantastically complex chemical information code known as DNA. But information codes require intelligence to create them and intelligence to decode them; so DNA can only be brought into being by a super-intelligent Being.
5. The most that any scientist has demonstrated are *similarities* between apes and men. However, the attempts to demonstrate a *mechanism* by which an ape could become a man have met with universal failure. In order for an ape to become a man, vast numbers of changes in the DNA of both a male ape and a female ape – involving different, but precisely complementary changes in the male and the female – would have to take

place *simultaneously, in one generation*. This simultaneous appearance of both a male and a female of the new species is necessary if the new species is not to die out after the first generation. Moreover, to prove such an hypothesis it would have to be demonstrated, first, why “Mitrochondrial Eve”, the ancestor of our species according to modern geneticists, existed only about 6000 years ago, and secondly, why each one of these supposed changes in the ape pair was necessary for its survival. Evidently, however, not one of these changes is necessary, because apes have no difficulty in surviving as apes without feeling the necessity of turning into human beings.

6. If all our thoughts and deeds are determined by scientific laws, then, as C.S. Lewis demonstrated, there is no reason to believe our thoughts or evaluate our deeds. Why should we believe a proposition to be rational and true if it is the product either of purely chance processes or of deterministic laws of nature? And why should we judge a man’s deeds as good or bad if he can’t help committing them? Rationality and responsibility both presuppose that the governing spirit of man is *above* nature, is truly spiritual and free.
7. Even the most complex machine cannot produce *beauty*. Indeed, the existence of beauty, both in nature and in the works of great artists, is one of the strongest arguments against atheism and materialism. The beauty of holiness is a still greater argument for the existence of a supernatural underpinning of the universe by the Holy One.
8. By any definition of “miracle” the existence of the universe, supposedly out of nothing, is a miracle. However, while believing in this truly unbelievable miracle (but without, of course, calling it a miracle), the modernists refuse to accept the existence of smaller-scale miracles, insisting that they are impossible *on principle*. But no good reason has ever been produced for denying the possibility of miracles *on principle*. If we cannot explain how scientific laws come into being from chance processes (point 1), there is no way of excluding the possibility of *exceptions* to scientific laws. As a matter of fact, the recent hypothesis of *the multiverse* presupposes not only the possibility, but also the actuality, of every possible event – including, therefore, every possible miracle - taking place in some other universe than our own. However, this concept already undermines the very concept of a single reality...

In conclusion, the modernist world-view undermines the concepts, not only of God, but also of reality, truth, beauty, rationality, freedom and responsibility. If we wish to hold on to these things – which we must do if we are not to lose our minds – then we must reject the modernist world-view. Fortunately, this does not necessitate rejecting science, whose results remain true so long as they are attained by truly empirical methods, without flying into the metaphysical flights of fancy of our contemporary myth-makers, whose thoughts rest, not on rock, nor even on sand, but on literally nothing...

April 11/24, 2018.

15. THE WORST EVIL

“The whole world lies in evil”, said the holy Apostle John (I John 5.19). The *whole* world. Therefore there is nothing to hope for from the world; nothing *in* the world or *of* the world will save us. Only that which is not of this world – Christ and His Holy Church – can save us. “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God” (Psalms 19.7).

Having said that, there are degrees of evil; not all evil is equally destructive of our souls. The worst evil is that which is closest to the heart of our spiritual life. Less evil than the wolf that openly bares its teeth against us from outside is the wolf that puts on sheep’s clothing and creeps into the sheepfold.

For the Orthodox Christian, that means that the worst evil is the evil coming *from within* the Orthodox Church. But how can evil come from “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3.15), the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church? By being transformed into a coven of heresies...

Approximately one hundred years ago, St. Anatoly the Younger, the great Optina elder, said: "Heresies will spread everywhere and deceive many people. The enemy of the human race will act with cunning in order to draw into heresy, if possible, even the elect. He will not begin by crudely rejecting the dogmas of the Holy Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus Christ and the virtue of the Theotokos, but he will begin imperceptibly to distort the teachings and statutes of the Church and their very spirit, handed down to us by the Holy Fathers through the Holy Spirit. Few will notice these wiles of the enemy, only those more experienced in the spiritual life. Heretics will seize power over the Church and will place their servants everywhere; the pious will be regarded with contempt. He (the Lord) said, 'by their fruits ye shall know them', and so, by their fruits, as well as by the actions of the heretics, strive to distinguish them from the true pastors. These are spiritual thieves, plundering the spiritual flock, and they will enter the sheepfold (the Church), climbing up some other way, as the Lord said: They will enter by an unlawful way, using force and trampling upon the Divine statutes. The Lord calls them robbers (cf. John 10.1). Indeed, their first task will be the persecution of the true pastors, their imprisonment and exile, for without this it will be impossible for them to plunder the sheep."

There can be absolutely no doubt that, in accordance with this prophecy, all the official Orthodox Churches have now been taken over by heretics. The inter-war period, roughly from 1918 to 1945, was the period in which the true pastors were killed or exiled – and in such numbers as has not been seen in the whole history of Christianity. Since then, there has been no comparable persecution of the Orthodox Church *from outside* for the simple reason that the official Orthodox Churches have been taken over *from within*; they are already ruled by Satan, so he does not need to destroy them physically.

This is not to say that the True Church has ceased to exist. The True Church will never cease to exist: in accordance with the Saviour’s promise she will

prevail against the very gates of hell (Matthew 16.18) – that is, soul-destroying heresies, so-called because they open the gates directly into hell. But she is small, persecuted, divided, scarcely noticed or talked about even by the multitudes of those who call themselves Orthodox.

For "there will be a storm," said St. Anatoly, "and the Russian ship will be destroyed. Yes, it will happen, but, you know, people can be saved on splinters and wreckage. Not all, not all will perish..."

So if you find yourself, not in a "splinter group", but in one of the great official Orthodox Churches numbering millions of people, you can be sure you are *not* in the True Church. For you the word of the Lord is applicable: "Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18.4). If on the other hand you find yourself in a splinter group, you may be among those who are surviving, albeit with difficulty.

Of course, this is not an infallible criterion: even into those splinter groups that have separated themselves from the prevailing apostasy, the wolf of heresy may enter and start devouring the sheep. Moreover, there is the ever-present danger that the True Christian, living on one of these islands of God's Archipelago, may *lose hope*, may come to believe that his little island will be eventually overwhelmed by the tsunami of apostate Orthodoxy, and therefore decide to throw himself into the waves of the sea, or decide to join himself to one of the false churches of official Orthodoxy. To such a Christian the word of the Lord is applicable: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12.32).

Moreover, we must remember that the splinters of True Orthodoxy will not always remain splinters. For St. Anatoly also prophesied: "A great miracle of God will be revealed. And all the splinters and wreckage will, by the will of God and His might, be gathered together and united, and the ship will be recreated in its beauty and will go along the path foreordained for it by God. That's how it will be, a miracle manifest to all..."

*May 10/23, 2018.
Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot.*

16. A VERY SHORT EXPOSITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN THE HEAVENS. We lift our eyes to heaven, not allowing ourselves to be distracted by anything on earth. To do otherwise would be to insult the one God and Master of all things, both in heaven and on earth.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME. The purpose of the Christian life is to glorify God. We glorify God by glorifying His Name, that is, His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

THY KINGDOM COME. In order to glorify the Father in the Son, we need the Holy Spirit. So we pray for the Coming of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of God's Kingdom in us, without which it is impossible to please Him.

THY WILL BE DONE. We cannot receive and retain the Holy Spirit unless we do the Will of God in all things. May God give us the Grace to unite our will with His.

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. We pray that we may do the Will of God on earth in the same way as it is done in Heaven by the Angels and Saints.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. We carry out the Will of God in our souls and our bodies. But our bodies need both material food and the Bread of heaven in order to carry out His Will.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS. The main obstacle to doing the Will of God is our sins. We therefore pray the Father to remit them through the Sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. The main obstacle to our receiving the remission of our sins is our hatred of our neighbour. We therefore pray for the removal of all hatred from our hearts.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION. May God not allow us to fall into situations that are above our strength, so that we sin a sin unto death and fall away from His Grace.

BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE. If we fall away from God's Grace, we fall into the hands of the devil. May God deliver us from this, the worst of all evils.

AMEN.

May 17/30, 2018.

17. ST. CONSTANTINE'S NEW CONCEPT OF THE STATE

A.N. Wilson writes: "Edmund Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* caused dismay to eighteenth-century churchmen with its controversial and primary contention that European civilization was undermined, less by the advance of the barbarian hordes without, than by the growth of Christianity within, its borders. What was it about Christianity, according to this diagnosis, which was so corrosive of the civilized idea? It was, surely, that the fanatical early Christians, zealous for a holy death, and fervently credulous about the greater reality of the life beyond than life before it, made civilization itself seemed superfluous. What use are the skills of statesmanship, of civil planning, of architecture, of laws, if at any moment, as the early Church taught and believed, the very edifice of worldly existence was going to be wound up, if the Maker was to bring the pageant of human history to a close, taking to Himself His few chosen ones in robes of white to sing perpetual hymnody before His throne, and hurling the rest, the huge majority, into pits and lakes of everlasting fire and destruction?"¹⁷⁰

Of course, this is a parody of the true Christian teaching. If we take the very earliest writings of the New Testament, St. Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians, we see that, while the early Christians certainly longed for the Second Coming of Christ, and thought it might be very soon, St. Paul warned against extreme apocalypticism: "Do not be shaken or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the Day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means, for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself to be God" (II Thessalonians 2.2-4).

In other words, the Day of Christ is not just around the corner. Some important events have to take place first – specifically, the coming of the Antichrist.

Moreover, the Antichrist will not come until another very important event has taken place – the fall of the Roman empire, or monarchical power in general. For this is how the Holy Fathers interpret the words: "He who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His Coming" (II Thessalonians 2.7-8).

Roman, or monarchical power is that which "restrains" the coming of the Antichrist. When that is "removed", then the Antichrist will appear – and only then will Christ come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 461.

“There is also another and a greater necessity,” writes Tertullian, “for our offering prayer on behalf of the emperors as also for the whole state of the empire, ... since we know that by the prosperity of the Roman empire the mighty power impending on the whole world and threatening the very close of the age with frightful calamities shall be delayed. And as we are loath to suffer these things, while we pray for their postponement we favour the stability of Rome - nay, we pray for the complete stability of the empire and for Roman interests in general. For we know that the mighty shock impending over the whole earth - in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes - is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire.”¹⁷¹

“The subject here,” writes Professor Marta Sordi, “was the interpretation given to the famous passage from the second Epistle to the Thessalonians (2.6-7) on the obstacle, whether a person or an object, which impedes the coming of the Anti-Christ. Without attempting to interpret this mysterious passage, the fact remains that all Christian writers, up to and including Lactantius, Ambrose and Augustine, identified this restraining presence with the Roman empire, either as an institution or as an ideology. Through their conviction that the Roman empire would last as long as the world (Tertullian *Ad Scapulam* 2) the early Christians actually renewed and appropriated as their own the concept of *Roma aeterna*. ‘While we pray to delay the end’ - it is Tertullian speaking (*Apologeticum* 32.1) - ‘we are helping Rome to last forever’.”¹⁷²

Thus St. John Chrysostom wrote about “him that restraineth”: “Some say the grace of the Holy Spirit, but others the Roman rule, to which I much rather

¹⁷¹ Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, 32.1.

¹⁷² Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 173. Tertullian also writes: “The Christian is hostile to nobody, least of all to the emperor, whom... he wishes well, with the whole Roman empire, so long as the world shall last, for so long as it shall last (*Ad Scapulum* 2). Again Lactantius writes: “It is apparent that the world is destined to end immediately. The only evidence to diminish our fear is the fact that the city of Rome continues to flourish. But once this city, which is the veritable capital of the world, falls and there is nothing in its place but ruins, as the Sibyls predict, who can doubt that the end will have arrived both for humanity and for the entire world?... The Sibyls openly speak of Rome being destined to perish. Hystaspes also, who was a very ancient king of the Medes,... predicted long before that the empire and name of Rome should be effaced from the globe... But how this shall come to pass I shall explain... In the first place, the empire shall be parceled out, and the supreme authority being dissipated and broken up shall be lessened,... until ten kings exist all together;... these... shall squander everything and impair and consume... The very fact proclaims the fall and destruction to be near, except that so long as Rome is safe it seems that nothing of this need be feared. But when indeed that head of the world shall fall and the assault begin that the Sibyls speak of coming to pass, who can doubt that the end has already come?... That is the city that has hitherto upheld all things, and we should pray and beseech the God of heaven, if indeed his decrees and mandates can be postponed, that that detested tyrant may not come sooner than we think” (*Institutes* VII, 15, 16, 25). And pseudo-Ephraim writes: “When the kingdom of the Romans shall begin to be consumed by the sword, then the advent of the evil one is at hand... And already is the kingdom of the Romans swept away, and the empire of the Christians is delivered unto God and the Father, and when the kingdom of the Romans shall begin to be consumed then shall come the consummation” (1, 5). See W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999, pp. 124-125. St. Ambrose of Milan also believed that the fall of Rome would bring in the Antichrist.

accede. Why? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts of grace, withhold him... If he were about come when the gifts of grace cease, he ought now to have come, for they have long ceased. But he said this of the Roman rule,... speaking covertly and darkly, not wishing to bring upon himself superfluous enmities and senseless danger.¹⁷³ He says, 'Only there is the one who restraineth now, until he should be taken out of the midst'; that is, whenever the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then shall he come. For as long as there is fear of the empire, no one will willingly exalt himself. But when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavour to seize upon the sovereignty both of man and of God."¹⁷⁴

It follows that the early Christians, far from believing that political power and the fabric of Roman civilization was superfluous, were highly motivated to preserve it in being. For when that fabric collapsed, the Antichrist would come... So, while it was true that the Christians placed no ultimate, permanent value on Roman civilization, they were by no means its enemies.

Fr. Georges Florovsky has described this antimony well. "The Early Christians," he writes, "were often suspected and accused of civic indifference, and even of morbid 'misanthropy', odium generis humani, - which should probably be contrasted with the alleged 'philanthropy' of the Roman Empire. The charge was not without substance. In his famous reply to Celsus, Origen was ready to admit the charge. Yet, what else could Christians have done, he asked. In every city, he explained, 'we have another system of allegiance', allo systema tes patridos (*Contra Celsum*, VIII.75). Along with the civil community there was in every city another community, the local Church. And she was for Christians their true home, or their 'fatherland', and not their actual 'native city'. The anonymous writer of the admirable 'Letter to Diognetus', written probably in the early years of the second century, elaborated this point with an

¹⁷³ For he could have been accused of preparing the fall of Rome, aeterna et invicta, which would have given them an excuse for persecuting the Christians on the same basis as they persecuted the Jews - as political revolutionaries. (V.M.). Cf. Patriarch Nikon of Moscow: "It is necessary to investigate: who is he who restrains, and why does Paul speak about him unclearly? What hinders his appearance? Some say - the grace of the Holy Spirit, others - Roman power. I agree with the latter. For if Paul had meant the Holy Spirit, then he would have said so clearly. But he [the antichrist] was bound to come when the gifts of the Holy Spirit should become scarce, they have already become scarce a long time ago. But if he is speaking of Roman power, then he had a reason for concealment, for he did not want to draw from the Empire persecution on the Christians as if they were people living and working for the destruction of the Empire. That is why he does not speak so clearly, although he definitely indicates that he will be revealed at the fitting time. For 'the mystery of iniquity is already at work', he says. By this he understands Nero, as an image of the antichrist, for he wanted people to worship him as god. ... When he who restrains now will be taken away, that is, when Roman power will be destroyed, he will come, that is, as long as there is fear of this power nobody will introduce anarchy and will want to seize for himself all power, both human and Divine. For, just as earlier the Median power was destroyed by the Babylonian, and the Babylonian by the Persian, and the Persian by the Macedonian, and the Macedonian by the Roman, so this last will be destroyed by the antichrist, and he by Christ..." (in Zyzykin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 48-49).

¹⁷⁴ St. Chrysostom, *Homily 4 on II Thessalonians*.

elegant precision. Christians do not dwell in cities of their own, nor do they differ from the rest of men in speech and customs. 'Yet, while they dwell in the cities of Greeks and Barbarians, as the lot of each is cast, the structure of their own polity is peculiar and paradoxical... Every foreign land is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is a foreign land... Their conversation is on the earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.' There was no passion in this attitude, no hostility, and no actual retirement from daily life. But there was a strong note of spiritual estrangement: '*and every fatherland is a foreign land.*' It was coupled, however, with an acute sense of responsibility. Christians were confined in the world, 'kept' there as in a prison; but they also 'kept the world together,' just as the soul holds the body together. Moreover, this was precisely the task allotted to Christians by God, 'which it is unlawful to decline' (*Ad Diognetum*, 5, 6). Christians might stay in their native cities, and faithfully perform their daily duties. But they were unable to give their full allegiance to any polity of this world, because their true commitment was elsewhere...."¹⁷⁵

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Constantine not only renewed the empire from within: he transformed the very ideology of empire, and the relationship of Rome to other kingdoms and empires.

The pagan Roman empire was founded on the familiar fallen passions of love of glory and love of power. Excuses were found for invading neighbouring territories; many innocent "barbarians" were killed, and their lands and property plundered. Nations that resisted Roman power, such as the Carthaginians and the Jews, were treated with vengeful cruelty. Julius Caesar's extraordinarily bloody conquest of Gaul may serve as an example of how the Roman empire was typically expanded.

Constantine tried to change this bloody tradition. Although an experienced and highly successful soldier himself, who did not flinch from extreme measures when he considered them necessary, he glorified peace rather than war, Christ rather than himself or Rome, and while defending the boundaries of the empire, undertook no offensive campaigns beyond them. The one apparent exception to this rule only goes to prove that the imperial ideology really had changed.

The apparent exception was *Persia*, the age-old rival of Rome in the East, which had deeply humiliated Rome by defeating and capturing the Emperor Valerius in 260, and against which Constantine was preparing an expedition when he died in 337.

"Constantine's abortive Persian conquest," writes Edward Leithart, "looks like another Roman adventure driven by sacrificial frenzy, vengeance and a

¹⁷⁵ Florovsky, "Antinomies of Christian History: Empire and Desert", *Christianity and Culture*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1974, pp. 68- 69.

desire to keep enemies in their subordinate place. Yet there are hints that between 306 and the 330s something had changed. Sometime before, Constantine had written a 'tactful, allusive, and indirect' letter in his own hand to Shapur. Addressing the Persian king as a 'brother', he summarized the 'most holy religion' that had given him 'deeper acquaintance with the most holy God'. Finding common ground with non-sacrificial Persian Zoroastrian practice, Constantine emphasized that the 'God I invoke with bended knees' is horrified by 'the blood of sacrifices' and recoils from 'their foul and detestable odors.' The sacrifice he craves is 'purity of mind and an undefiled spirit' that manifests itself in 'works of moderation and gentleness'. 'He loves the meek,' Constantine continued, 'and hates the turbulent spirit.... While the arrogant and haughty are utterly overthrown, he requites the humble and forgiving with deserved rewards.'

"The purpose of the letter was to advise Shapur about how to deal with the sizable Christian community in his own realm. Constantine was an eyewitness of 'the end of those who lately harassed the worshippers of God by their impious edicts,' and he warned Shapur not to follow their example. Everything is 'best and safest' when men follow God's laws and recognize that God is at work through the church, endeavouring to 'gather all men to himself'. He expressed his joy at hearing that Persia was full of Christians, and he closed the letter with a prayer that 'you and they may enjoy abundant prosperity, and that your blessings and theirs may be in equal measure,' so that 'you will experience the mercy and favor of that God who is the Lord and Father of all.'

"Constantine's letter has been called a 'veiled warning' and has been interpreted as a provocation, a threat and a sign of his belief that as Roman emperor he had responsibility for all Christians. Constantine's Persian policies certainly backfired. He initiated his final campaign when a delegation from Armenia visited Constantinople in 336 to ask him for assistance against a Persian coup. Since the conversion of the Armenian king Trdat (Tiridates) in 314, Armenia had been officially Christian, more explicitly so than was the Roman Empire under Constantine. In the 330s, Persians under Shapur II had invaded, captured and blinded the Armenian King Tirhan, and placed Shapur's brother Narseh on the Armenian throne. Constantine responded swiftly. He designated his nephew Hannibalianus as 'king of kings' and gave him authority over Armenia and Pontus. Like his letter, his preparations for war with Persia were intended, among other things, to defend a Christian people. When Constantine died before the campaign could be launched, Shapur, apparently suspicious that the Christians of Persia were allied with Rome, initiated a violent persecution. Persian Christians, in response, kept themselves aloof from the dominant orthodoxy of the West.

"Yet I cannot agree that the letter to Shapur was intended as a provocation. Constantine warned Shapur, but he warned him of divine judgement, not that he would personally take vengeance if Shapur were to attack Christians. In the closing section Constantine issued an altar call, inviting Shapur to protect Christians and to join him in worship of the high God, the God of the

Christians. Hermann Dorries summarizes the message of the letter as an invitation to share in the blessing of Christianization: 'what the true faith had done for the Roman Empire,' Constantine urged, 'it would do also for the Persian.' It was an unprecedented diplomatic move - a Roman emperor who 'attributed his success to heavenly assistance... invited his only formidable enemy to share in this aid.' More broadly, the letter reveals how far Constantine had moved from tetrarchic political theology. For Diocletian 'religion and nation meant the same thing,' but for Constantine there was a potential unity, even between East and West, even between Persia and Rome, that transcended boundaries and national interests..."¹⁷⁶

This is an insightful and true remark, and if anything underestimates the revolutionary character of Constantine's new imperial ideology. Pagan religion and politics were irredeemably *particularist*. The pagan gods protected particular men and cities or states against other men, cities and states that were protected by other gods. And if pagan Rome had a policy of including as many local gods as possible into its "pantheon" (which means "all gods"), this did not alter the fundamentally particularist nature of its religion. Christianity was difficult to absorb within this structure not only because the Christians refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods, but also because their God was of a totally different kind - universal, completely all-encompassing, and infinitely above everything that can be called "god", "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1.21). Moreover, this God claimed dominion over *the whole world*...

When Constantine came to power, being a sincere, determined and deeply thoughtful Christian, he sought to adapt the Roman political theology to its new God, making it truly *universalist*. Scornfully rejecting all divine honours for himself, he sought to subdue himself and all his subjects to the true King of kings. But this also transformed his relationship with other kings, such as Shapur of Persia. For Shapur, too, had been given his dominion by God, making him and Constantine no longer rivals, but "brothers", as Constantine himself put it - if not in Christ, at any rate in kingship, as political rulers established by God. But this had the further consequence that extension of the empire by the former rapacious methods was no longer acceptable. Only if Shapur maltreated his Christian subjects or other Christians, such as the Armenians, could Constantine intervene to defend his brothers in Christ on the assumption that Shapur had now ceased to be his brother in kingship, having "disestablished" himself from God.

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But where did this leave the Roman Empire? No longer unique, but just one kingdom among many?

¹⁷⁶ Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2010, pp. 246-247.

Not quite. If all legitimate political authorities have been established as such by God, and there is no genuine authority that has not been thus established (Romans 13.1), this would appear to place all authorities essentially on the same level. But the Roman Empire remained unique in that Christ had been born in it and God had chosen the empire also to be the birthplace and seed-plot of His Church. This gave it a certain uniqueness, seniority and prestige in the eyes of all Christians, even those who lived in other polities and therefore owed obedience to other authorities, thereby making it in this sense *the universal empire*. But this did not mean that the empire was destined to become *the universal ruler of all nations*, as some later Byzantines tended to think: it meant that the Roman Empire would be, as long as it lasted, the “first among equals” among Christian states, and therefore the object of *universal veneration* by the Christians of all nations.

Another consequence of this theology was that the Roman Empire had a special obligation to spread the Gospel to other kingdoms and nations, to be *missionary*. And Constantine, as always, was fully alive to this consequence. As Leithart writes, he “had a deep sense of historical destiny, and as a result his foreign policy was guided in part by the desire to extend the church’s reach. He envisioned a universal empire united in confession of the Nicene Creed, an empire that would have a symbolic center in the Church on Golgotha in Jerusalem and that would stretch to India and Ethiopia and someday include even Persia. But Constantine did not necessarily regard annexation into the Roman empire as an essential element of that vision. He seems instead to have envisioned a Christian commonwealth. Perhaps the empire would have remained dominant, but in Constantine’s cosmopolitan mind it would not have been coextensive with ‘Christ’s dominion’.

“Though he probably did not impose Christianity on conquered Goths, his triumphs among the Goths assisted the spread of Christianity. After his victory in 332, Bishop Ulfila was consecrated and sent as a missionary in Gothic territory. Churches were also established in the ‘Mountain Arena’, the Arab territories that served as a buffer between the empire and Persia. Eusebius mentions Arab Christian communities, and there was an Arab bishop at the council of Nicaea. Further east in Iberia (Georgia) [where St. Nina evangelized] there were Christians, and to the south Ethiopia (Aksum) also became Christian under Ezana. As already noted, Armenia became officially Christian shortly after Constantine defeated Maxentius. By the time he died, Constantine had left behind a ‘universal Christian commonwealth embracing Armenians, Iberians, Arabs, and Aksumites’ that continued to take form under his Byzantine successors. This was *not*, it should be noted, an extension of Roman governance; it is rather that Roman imperial order had been reshaped, to some degree, by the demands of Christian mission...”¹⁷⁷

Although Constantine never received a visible anointing to the kingdom, the Church has always believed that he received the invisible anointing of the

¹⁷⁷ Leithart, op. cit., p. 288.

Holy Spirit: “Thou wast the image of a new David, receiving the horn of royal anointing over thy head; for with the oil of the Spirit hath the transcendent Word and Lord anointed thee, O glorious one. Wherefore, thou hast also received a royal sceptre, O all-wise one, asking great mercy for us.”¹⁷⁸

St. Constantine died at midday on Pentecost, 337 shortly after receiving Holy Baptism, and was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles amidst the sepulchres of the twelve apostles. For in his person the Church had indeed found an “equal to the apostles”; Rome and much of what the Romans called “the inhabited world” had been baptized through him (at his death about 40% of the empire was Christian, as opposed to 5-10% in 306), receiving true renewal of spirit in the Holy Spirit. In his reign the process of converting the world that began at Pentecost reached its first climax...

Why did he leave his baptism so late? Was it because ruling the empire involved committing so much violence that he had to put off baptism until as late as possible? Possibly...¹⁷⁹

However, Constantine’s actions at the very end can be seen as a kind of final sermon and testament on statehood in symbolical language. Thus after his baptism he put off the imperial purple, never to put it on again – for the kingdoms of this world pass away, never to return. But then he put on the shining white baptismal robe, never to take it off again – for the Kingdom of God, which is not of this world, abides forever...

May 21 / June 3, 2018.

Holy Equals-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helena.

¹⁷⁸ *Menaion*, May 21, Mattins for the feast of St. Constantine, sedalen.

¹⁷⁹ Florovsky writes that one of the reasons why he delayed his baptism “was precisely his dim feeling that it was inconvenient to be ‘Christian’ and ‘Caesar’ at the same time. Constantine’s personal conversion constituted no problem. But as Emperor he was committed. He had to carry the burden of his exalted position in the Empire. He was still a ‘Divine Caesar’. As Emperor, he was heavily involved in the traditions of the Empire, as much as he actually endeavoured to disentangle himself. The transfer of the Imperial residence to a new City, away from the memories of the old pagan Rome, was a spectacular symbol of this noble effort” (op. cit., p. 73).

It must be remembered, however, that the Eusebius of Caesarea’s ascription of Constantine’s baptism to Eusebius of Nicomedia (who was, after all, an Arian, albeit a secret one) was disputed from early times. Thus the *Chronicle* of St. Theophanes dismisses the claims of Eusebius of Caesarea as Arian lies. John Malalas says he was baptized by St. Sylvester, Pope of Rome, in the 500s. And the *Life of St. Sylvester of Rome* written in the early 400s says that St. Sylvester baptized St. Constantine. This theory can also be found in the liturgical texts for St. Constantine’s feast in the *Menaion* (Hieromonk Enoch).

18. THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

God punished the northern kingdom of Israel for its impiety by sending the Assyrians to destroy it before destroying the instrument of His wrath (Isaiah 10.15) - a pattern that we find throughout history. In 586 He punished the southern kingdom of Judah for similar impiety by sending Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to destroy the Temple and exile the people to Babylon. For "the Lord, the God of their fathers, constantly sent to them by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising His words, and scoffing at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged: He gave them all into his hand" (II Chronicles 36.15-16).

The Jews had hoped to rebel against the Babylonians by appealing to the other despotic kingdom of Egypt. But the Prophet Jeremiah rebuked them for their lack of faith. If God wills it, he said, He can deliver the people on His own, without any human helpers, as He delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrians in the time of Hezekiah.

However, national independence had become a higher priority for the Jews than the true faith. The only remedy, therefore, was to humble their pride by removing even their last remaining vestige of independence. Therefore, said the Prophet, "bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and live! Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon... And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace..." (Jeremiah 27.12-13, 29.7).

Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem and carrying away of the Jews to Babylon, writes L.A. Tikhomirov, "was understood by the Jews as a punishment of God for their apostasy and corruption. In Babylonia, therefore, there began a process of repentance and regeneration. But on the other hand a powerful spiritual temptation awaited the Jews. Chaldea at that time had become an advanced country of pagan culture. In respect of religion it preserved all the charms of the magic of ancient Sumeria and Akkad, adding to it the astronomical and astrological science of Assyrian star-gazing, which, as we have seen, were already practiced in Judah in the reign of King Josiah. The three main branches of 'Chaldean wisdom' combined a considerable fund of real scientific knowledge with the higher philosophy worked out through the ages by the mind of the Assyrio-Babylonians, combined with the teaching of Zoroaster and offshoots of Hinduism. Paganism presented itself before the captives from Jerusalem as a huge intellectual power armed with everything that men could learn and assimilate at that time.

“To this we must add that Babylon had attained the highest level of political might and represented a remarkable system of state structure which was hardly excelled by all the ancient states. A profoundly worked out law guaranteed the inhabitants’ rights, and the Babylonian citizens of other tribes here came upon such perfect civil conditions as they could not even imagine in their native countries. The agriculture, industry and trade of Babylon were at a high level of development. As captives of another tribe, crushed materially and morally, recognizing that they had betrayed their Lord, the Jews came into a country that was striking by its might, glitter, wealth, knowledge, developed philosophical thought – everything by which one nation could influence another. If they ‘sat by the waters of Babylon and wept’, dreaming of revenge on the destroyers of their fatherland, they also could not help being subjected to the influences of Chaldean wisdom.

“They had grown up in the thousand-year conviction of the loftiness of their chosen people, of which there was no equal upon the earth. They remembered amazing examples of the help of the Lord in the past, when He had crushed the enemies of Israel, including the Assyrians themselves. They were filled with determination to raise themselves to the full height of their spirit and their providential mission. On the other hand, they did not have the strength not to submit to the intellectual influence of Babylon. In general, the age of the Babylonian captivity was the source of very complex changes in Israel. In the higher sphere of the spirit prophetic inspirations finally matured to the vision of the nearness of the Messiah. In the conservative layer of teachers of the law there arose a striving to realize that ‘piety of the law’, the falling away from which, as it seemed to all, had elicited the terrible punishments of God. There began the establishment of the text of the law and the collection of tradition; an embryonic form of Talmudic scholarship was born. Beside it, the masses of the people involuntarily imbibed the local pagan beliefs, and the teachings of ‘Chaldean wisdom’ was reflected in the minds of the intelligentsia; there was born the movement that later expressed itself in the form of the Cabbala, which under the shell of supposedly Mosaic tradition developed eastern mysticism of a pantheistic character...”¹⁸⁰

In His parable of the good figs and the bad figs, the Lord indicated that the Babylonian captivity was for the good of those exiled but for the punishment of those who remained behind: “Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. For I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them and not pull them down and not pluck them up. Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.

¹⁸⁰ Tikhomirov, *Religio-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, pp. 135-136.

“And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad – surely thus says the Lord – so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt.” (Jeremiah 24.5-8).

And yet, as we read in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, even among the exiles, many did not repent and did not return to Jerusalem, staying among the pagans and learning their ways. At the same time, the books of Daniel, Esther and Tobit show that piety was not completely extinguished even among those Jews who stayed in Persia. Eventually, a pious remnant, stirred up by the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah, returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple.

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The Babylonian captivity,” writes Deacon Pavel Serzhantov, “was permitted as a means of punishing the people, as a penance. The time of destruction and punishment came to an end, and the time of creation and repentance began, the time of the mercy of God. The Lord leads His people through severe testing – such trials that it seems to some that God abandoned His people and forgot about them, not sympathizing with their suffering, not paying heed to the lawless invaders. Is this really how we should understand it? No. *For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye* (Zechariah 2:8).”¹⁸¹

Zechariah was not the only prophet sent by God to comfort the suffering Jews. In a sermon delivered in Shanghai in 1948, St. John Maximovich said: “There was no limit to the grief and despondency of the ancient Jews when Jerusalem was destroyed and they themselves were led away into the Babylonian captivity.. *Where are Thine ancient mercies, O Lord, which Thou swarest to David? (Psalm 88:50)*, they cried out. *But now Thou, hast cast off and put us to shame... They that hated us spoiled for themselves and Thou scatterest us among the nations (Psalm 43:10-12)*).

“But when it seemed that there was no hope for deliverance, the Prophet Ezekiel, who was likewise in captivity, was made worthy of a wondrous vision. *And the hand of the Lord came upon me*, he says of this. The invisible right hand of the Lord placed him in the midst of a field full of human bones. And the Lord asked him: *Son of man, will these bones live?* And the Prophet replied: *O Lord God, Thou knowest this*. Then the voice of the Lord commanded the Prophet to say to the bones that the Lord will give to them the spirit of life, clothing them with sinews, flesh, and skin. The Prophet uttered the word of the Lord, a voice resounded, the earth shook, and the bones began to come together, bone to bone, each to its own joint; sinews appeared on them, the flesh grew and became covered with skin, so that the whole field became filled with the bodies of men; only there were no souls in them. And again the Prophet heard the Lord, and at His command he prophesied the word of the Lord, and from the

¹⁸¹ Serzhantov, “The Apple of the Almighty’s Eye”, *Orthodox Christianity*, February 21, 2017, <http://orthochristian.com/101230.html>.

four directions souls flew to them, the spirit of life entered into the bodies, they stood up, and the field was filled with an assembly of a multitude of people.

“And the Lord said, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; and they say, Our hope has been lost, we have perished... Behold, I will open your tombs and will bring you up out of your tombs, My people, and I will put My spirit within you and ye shall live, and I will place you upon your own land (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

“Thus the Lord God revealed to Ezekiel that His promises are steadfast, and that what seems impossible to the human mind is performed by the power of God.

“This vision signified that Israel, after being delivered from captivity, would return to its own land; in a higher sense, it indicated the settlement of the spiritual Israel in the eternal heavenly Kingdom of Christ. At the same time there is prefigured also the future General Resurrection of all the dead.”¹⁸²

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The drama of the Jews’ return from exile began one night in 539 BC, when Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar, was feasting with his lords, wives and concubines, drinking in the very same holy cups that had been taken by his father from the Temple in Jerusalem. At that point a mysterious hand appeared writing on the wall. The Prophet Daniel was summoned and said: “This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom and finish it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. PERES: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (Daniel 5.26-29)

That very night Babylon was conquered, and Belshazzar killed, by Cyrus the Great, King of the Medes and Persians, one of the greatest rulers of history, whom the Lord even called “My anointed” (Isaiah 45.1), although he was a pagan.

Cyrus extended the Persian empire to the east and the west, and practiced a remarkable degree of national and religious toleration for his time.¹⁸³ He immediately freed the Jews and allowed them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. The Lord had saved His people through His anointed king...

Moreover, according to Yuval Noah Harari, it was Cyrus who introduced one of the most important political ideas in history: the idea that an empire can

¹⁸² St. John, “Will these Human Bones Come to Life?” *The Orthodox Word*, No. 50, May-June, 1973.

¹⁸³ Jaime Alvar Ezquerro, “Dawn of Persia”, *National Geographic Magazine*, September/October, 2016, 34.

exist for the benefit of *all* its subject peoples, not just the dominant nation. “For the kings of Assyria always remained the kings of Assyria. Even when they claimed to rule the entire world, it was obvious that they were doing it for the greater glory of Assyria, and they were not apologetic about it. Cyrus, on the other hand, claimed not merely to rule the whole world, but to do so for the sake of all people. ‘We are conquering you for your own benefit,’ said the Persians. Cyrus wanted the peoples he subjected to love him and to count themselves lucky to be Persian vassals. The most famous example of Cyrus’ innovative efforts to gain the approbation of a nation living under the thumb of his empire was his command that the Jewish exiles in Babylonia be allowed to return to their Judaeian homeland and rebuild their temple. He even offered them financial assistance. Cyrus did not see himself as a Persian king ruling over Jews – he was also the king of the Jews, and thus responsible for their welfare...

“In contrast with ethnic exclusiveness, imperial ideology from Cyrus onward has tended to be inclusive and all-encompassing. Even though it has often emphasized racial and cultural differences between rulers and ruled, it has still recognized the basic unity of the entire world, the existence of a single set of principles governing all places and times, and the mutual responsibilities of all human beings. Humankind is seen as a large family: the privileges of the parents go hand in hand with responsibility for the children.”¹⁸⁴

Of course, the word “empire” has become associated with evil institutions that were ethnically exclusive – Hitler’s empire is the most famous example. Nevertheless, multi-national empires have in general been more universalist in their ideology than smaller groupings centred on the power and glory of a single nation. And this remains the abiding glory of Cyrus the Great, the first non-Jewish “anointed of the Lord”. His imperial ideology was to be inherited by Rome. And from there it descended to the Second Rome of Constantinople and the Third Rome of Russia...

*June 14/27, 2018.
St. Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople.*

¹⁸⁴ Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Mankind*, London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 218, 219.

19. ART, ETHICS AND OSCAR WILDE

Rarely has a star ascended the literary firmament so swiftly and so brilliantly as the Anglo-Irish playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), only to fall so precipitously and so disastrously. He is known – and glorified by today's establishment – for his homosexuality. But that is not the most important thing about him...

Wilde belonged to that movement known as aestheticism, a reaction against the realist trend of most of mid- and late-nineteenth-century art and literature whose spiritual home was France.

“The Symbolists,” writes Sir Richard Evans, “were rebelling against not only the notion of realistic representation but also the conscription of the arts into the service of nationalism, arguing instead that the arts were entirely autonomous from social or political life. The French writer Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) dealt in his novel *Against Nature* what Zola called a ‘terrible blow’ to Realism: the action, or rather inaction, of the novel takes place in a hallucinatory world in which the imagined becomes more real than the real. In Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) the ravages of the protagonist’s dissolute life are visited upon his portrait, while his own physical appearance remains untouched by age or the consequences of sin. Art, argued Wilde and the other proponents of Aestheticism in the 1890s, should be pursued for art’s sake, and for no other purpose.”¹⁸⁵

But what did this slogan, “Art for art’s sake”, really mean? Granted that the artist is aiming first and foremost at *beauty* rather than any kind of propaganda, does this mean that Keats was wrong when he said that truth, beauty and goodness always go together, and that the striving for beauty – real beauty – can be really independent of the striving for truth and goodness?

On this point we must agree with Friedrich Nietzsche, who denied there is any such thing as art for art’s sake: “When the purpose of moral preaching and of improving man has been excluded from art, it still does not follow by any means that art is altogether purposeless, aimless, senseless – in short, *l'art pour l'art*, a worm chewing its own tail. ‘Rather no purpose at all than a moral purpose!’ – that is the talk of mere passion. A psychologist, on the other hand, asks: what does all art do? does it not praise? glorify? choose? prefer? With all this it strengthens or weakens certain valuations. Is this merely a ‘moreover’? an accident? something in which the artist's instinct had no share? Or is it not the very presupposition of the artist's ability? Does his basic instinct aim at art, or rather at the sense of art, at life? at a desirability of life? Art is the great stimulus to life: how could one understand it as purposeless, as aimless, as *l'art pour l'art*?”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 532.

¹⁸⁶ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Gods*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” 24.

Wilde devoted not only his whole artistic oeuvre to the doctrine of aestheticism, but also his whole life. With a ferocious energy that belied the mask of idleness and indifference that he put on, he tried to make the whole of his life into a work of art. As he said to André Gide: "J'ai mis tout mon génie dans ma vie, je n'ai mis que mon talent dans mes oeuvres."¹⁸⁷ He made his art, including his greatest work, his life, into an idol in the strict sense of the word. And God destroyed him for his idolatry...

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"Art is the great stimulus to life," said Nietzsche. Indeed, but how does it best accomplish this purpose? By the grim realism of the late-nineteenth-century novel? Or by some other means? The "art for art's sake" movement was reacting against grim realism in art. Their slogan was not expressing a frivolous attitude to life, but rather an exalted attitude to art, as not so much "holding a mirror up to nature", in Hamlet's words, but revealing beauties in life that are invisible to the non-artistic eye, even if the artist has to resort to distorting the surface reality, - that is to say, "lying" - in order to do it. This is a highly ambitious, romantic, if not Platonic understanding of art, which is perhaps best expressed - albeit with characteristic hyperbole - in a dialogue by Oscar Wilde called "The Decay of Lying" (1891), in which "lying" - i.e. the artistic imagination - is exalted above a narrowly realist, positivist understanding of truth.

"If something cannot be done," writes Wilde, "to check, or at least to modify, our monstrous worship of facts, Art will become sterile and beauty will pass away from the land.

"Even Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, that delightful master of delicate and fanciful prose, is tainted with this modern vice, for we know positively no other name for it. There is such a thing as robbing a story of its reality by trying to make it too true, and *The Black Arrow* is so inartistic as not to contain a single anachronism to boast of, while the transformation of Dr. Jekyll reads dangerously like an experiment out of the *Lancet*. As for Mr. Rider Haggard, who really has, or once had, the makings of a perfectly magnificent liar, he is now so afraid of being suspected of genius that when he does tell us anything marvellous, he feels bound to invent a personal reminiscence, and to put it into a footnote as a kind of cowardly collaboration..."¹⁸⁸

The famous French realist novelist Zola comes in for even harsher criticism. Although Wilde admits that Zola is "not without power" at some times, for example in *Germinal*, still "his work is entirely wrong from beginning to end, and wrong not on the ground of morals, but on the ground of Art. From any ethical standpoint it is just what it should be. The author is perfectly truthful,

¹⁸⁷ Collins *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, London: HarperCollins, 2003, introduction to the 1994 edition, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", *op. cit.*, p. 1074.

and describes things exactly as they happen. What more can any moralist desire?... [Zola's characters] have their dreary vices, and their drearier virtues. The record of their lives is absolutely without interest. Who cares what happens to them? In literature we require distinction, charm, beauty and imaginative power. We don't want to be harrowed and disgusted with an account of the doings of the lower orders..."¹⁸⁹

"Charles Dickens was depressing enough in all conscience when he tried to arouse our sympathy for the victims of the poor-law administration..."

"Believe me, my dear Cyril, modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter are entirely and absolutely wrong. We have mistaken the common livery of the age for the vesture of the Muses, and spend our days in sordid streets and hideous suburbs of our vile cities when we should be out on the hillside with Apollo. Certainly we are a degraded race and have sold our birthright for a mess of facts..."

"Art begins with abstract decoration, with purely imaginative and pleasurable work dealing with what is unreal and non-existent. This is the first stage. Then Life becomes fascinated with this new wonder, and asks to be admitted to its charmed circle. Art takes life as part of her rough material, recreates it, and refashions it in fresh forms, is absolutely indifferent to fact, invents, dreams, and keeps between herself and reality the impenetrable barrier of beautiful style, of decorative or ideal treatment. The third stage is when Life gets the upper hand, and derives Art out into the wilderness. This is the true decadence, and it is from this that we are now suffering..."¹⁹⁰

"What is true about the drama and the novel is no less true about those arts that we call the decorative arts. The whole history of these arts in Europe is the record of the struggle between Orientalism, with its frank rejection of imitation, its love of artistic convention, its dislike to the actual representation of any object in Nature, and our own imitative spirit. Wherever the former has been paramount, as in Byzantium, Sicily and Spain, by actual contact or in the rest of Europe by the influence of the Crusades, we have had beautiful and imaginative work in which the visible things of life are transmuted into artistic conventions, and the things that Life has not are invented and fashioned for her delight. But wherever we have returned to Life and Nature, our work has always become vulgar, common and uninteresting..."¹⁹¹

It is perhaps unexpected to find Wilde as a champion of Byzantine art, which contains a "spiritual realism" that escapes him. (His contemporary and fellow Anglo-Irish poet, W.B. Yeats, expresses a deeper appreciation of the iconic, non-representational, timeless but at the same time spiritually realistic quality of Byzantine art in "Sailing to Byzantium":

¹⁸⁹ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1075.

¹⁹⁰ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", pp. 1077, 1078.

¹⁹¹ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1080.

*Gather my soul
Into the artifice of eternity.*

Wilde would have been right to date the beginning of Western art's imitative, representative, materialist tendency to the time of the Crusades, when the West had just broken communion with Orthodox Byzantium. Instead, he places the beginning of this decadence somewhat later, in the Renaissance; it was already evident, he asserted, in the more boorish parts of Shakespeare's plays. But he lays the main blame for contemporary boorish realism on America, its "crude commercialism, its materialising spirit, its indifference to the poetic side of things..."¹⁹²

"Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of herself. She is not to be judged by an external standard of resemblance. She is a veil, rather than a mirror. She has flowers that no forests know of, birds that no woodland possesses. She makes and unmakes many worlds, and can draw the moon from heaven with a scarlet thread. Hers are the 'forms more real than living man', and hers the great archetypes of which things that have existence are but unfinished copies. Nature has, in her eyes, no laws, no uniformity. She can work miracles at her will, and when she calls monsters from the deep they come..."

"Paradox though it may seem – and paradoxes are always dangerous things – it is none the less true that Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life..."¹⁹³

"The Greeks, with their quick artistic instinct, understood this, and set in the bride's chamber the statue of Hermes or of Apollo, that she might bear children as lovely as the works of art that she looked at in her rapture or her pain. They knew that Life gains from Art not merely spiritually, depth of thought and feeling, soul-turmoil or soul-peace, but that she can form herself on the very lines and colours of art, and can reproduce the dignity of Pheidias as well as the grace of Praxiteles. Hence came their objection to realism. They disliked it on purely social grounds. They felt that it inevitably makes people ugly, and they were perfectly right. We try to improve the conditions of the race by means of good air, free sunlight, wholesome water, and hideous bare buildings for the better housing of the lower orders. But these things merely produce health, they do not produce beauty. For this, Art is required, and the true disciples of the great artist are not his studio-imitators, but those who become like his works of art, be they plastic as in Greek days, or pictorial as in modern times; in a word, Life is Art's best, Art's only pupil.

"As it is with the visible arts, so it is with literature... Schopenhauer had analysed the pessimism that characterises modern thought, but Hamlet invented it. The world has become sad because a puppet was once melancholy.

¹⁹² Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1081.

¹⁹³ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1082.

The Nihilist, that strange martyr who has no faith, who goes to the stake without enthusiasm, and dies for what he does not believe in, is a purely literary product. He was invented by Tourgenieff, and completed by Dostoevski. Robespierre came out of the pages of Rousseau... Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose...

"Life holds up the mirror to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realises in fact what has been dreamed in fiction... Young men... have died by their own hand because by his own hand Werther died."¹⁹⁴

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Wilde's life held up the mirror to his art, to the whole of the "art for art's sake" movement, and, still more generally, to the whole of western bourgeois civilization as it reached its glittering, gaudy climax in the years leading up to the Great War.

After a brilliant double First in Classics at Oxford, Wilde embarked on a literary career that soon had the literary greats of the time – and there were many – gaping in astonishment. His plays *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Ernest* packed playhouses then as now, eliciting tumultuous praise. His fellow Irishman George Bernard Shaw – no mean playwright himself – wrote after the first performance of *An Ideal Husband*: "Mr Oscar Wilde's new play at the Haymarket is a dangerous subject, because he has the property of making his critics dull... He plays with everything with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theatre..."¹⁹⁵

In view of Wilde's notorious homosexuality, it is tempting to search for the beginnings of this fall in his earlier life. But if the beginnings can be discerned, they are not in his sexual life - he had a happy marriage, and two sons. Nor were the themes of his plays particularly scandalous – otherwise he would never have become so popular in that strait-laced Victorian milieu. The clue to his fall is to be found in the fact that while the predominant tone of his writing is not serious, he himself took his writing ultra seriously, to the point of self-worship. Thus he describes himself as "a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age. I treated Art as the supreme reality, and life as a mere mode of fiction. I awoke the imagination of my century so that it created myth and legend around me. I summed up all systems in a phrase, and all existence in an epigram..."¹⁹⁶

So the real disease of Wilde, as of his whole generation, was *pride* and *blasphemy*. His gifts were genuine, and his work by no means superficial ("the

¹⁹⁴ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1080.

¹⁹⁵ Collins *Complete Works*, Introduction to 1994 edition, pp. 10-11.

¹⁹⁶ Holland, Collins *Complete Works*, Introduction to 1994 edition, pp. 1-2.

supreme vice," he said, is "shallowness"¹⁹⁷); in it are to be found both wit and wisdom. But if "Art is the supreme reality" and "Aesthetics are higher than ethics"¹⁹⁸, then there is no room for God or morality (although he was a Freemason at Oxford and exhibited a lifelong fascination with Catholicism). Indeed, "no artist had ethical sympathies," he wrote. "An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style. No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything..."¹⁹⁹

Having made of himself a Romantic man-god-artist, Wilde's fall was swift and steep. As his grandson Vyvyan Holland writes, by 1895 "Wilde had now reached the pinnacle of his success. Two plays of his were drawing crowded audiences in the West End, and actor-managers were falling over one another to write for them. Then the Marquess of Queensbury, with the object of attacking his son, Lord Alfred Douglas, because of his [homosexual] friendship with Wilde, launched a campaign of ungovernable fury on Wilde. The story has been told often enough; Alfred Douglas, whose only object was to see his father in the dock, persuaded Oscar Wilde to bring a prosecution for criminal libel against him. Lord Queensbury was triumphantly acquitted and his place in the dock was taken by Oscar Wilde, who was sentenced to two years imprisonment."²⁰⁰

In *De Profundis*, a letter written from prison to his former lover, Wilde shows a moving determination not to spare himself and not to yield to hatred of the man who "in less than three years had ruined me from every point of view" (although he did not spare him a lengthy description of how he had done that): "After my terrible sentence, when the prison-dress was on me, and the prison-house closed, I sat amidst the ruins of my wonderful life, crushed by anguish, bewildered by terror dazed through pain. But I would not hate you. Every day I said to myself, 'I must keep Love in my heart today, else how shall I live through the day.' I reminded myself that you meant no evil, to me at any rate: I set myself to think that you had but drawn a bow at a venture, and that the arrow had pierced a King between the joints of the harness. To have weighed you against the smallest of my arrows, the meanest of my losses, would have been, I felt unfair. I determined I would regard you as one suffering too. I forced myself to believe that at last the scales had fallen from your long-blinded eyes. I used to fancy, and with pain, what your horror must have been when you contemplated your terrible handiwork. There were times, even in those dark days, the darkest of all my life, when I actually longed to console you. So sure was I that at last you have realised what you had done..."²⁰¹

Released from prison, Wilde fled from the opprobrium of the English Pharisees – as he wrote,

¹⁹⁷ Wilde, "De Profundis", *Collins Complete Works*, p. 1005.

¹⁹⁸ Wilde, "The Critic as Artist".

¹⁹⁹ Wilde, "The Picture of Dorian Gray", *Complete Works*, p. 17.

²⁰⁰ Holland, in "Introduction to the 1966 Edition", *Complete Works*, p.11.

²⁰¹ Wilde, "De Profundis", *Complete Works*, p. 1005.

*I think they love not Art
Who break the crystal of a poet's heart
That small and sickly eyes may glare or gloat*

- to self-imposed exile in his beloved France as a penitent publican. He died soon after, penniless and miserable, in a French hotel. However, "all his life, says his grandson, "my father had an intense leaning towards religious mysticism, and was strongly attracted to the Catholic Church, into which he was received on his death bed in 1900."²⁰²

What did this final act in the life of the notorious roué mean? Perhaps, as in the similar case of Byron's death-bed conversion to Orthodoxy, it was a final recognition that the supreme reality is not Art, but God, and that Ethics *are* higher than Aesthetics. Certainly if there was one subject on which Wilde, against his principles, expressed an "ethical sympathy", it was in his withering condemnation of the English middle classes who so admired him, and of the Anglican Church whose hypocrisy he abominated: "The dreams of the great middle classes of this country... are the most depressing things I have ever read. They are commonplace, sordid and tedious. There is not even a fine nightmare among them. As for the Church, I cannot conceive anything better for the culture of a country than the presence in it of a body of men whose duty it is to believe in the supernatural, to perform daily miracles, and to keep alive that mythopoeic faculty which is so essential for the imagination. But in the English Church a man succeeds, not through his capacity for belief, but through his capacity for disbelief. Ours is the only Church where the sceptic stands at the altar, and where St. Thomas is regarded as the ideal apostle. Many a worthy clergyman, who passes his life in admirable works of kindly charity, lives and dies unnoticed and unknown, but it is sufficient for some shallow uneducated passman out of either University to get up in his pulpit and express his doubts about Noah's ark, or Balaam's ass, or Jonah and the while, for half of London to flock to hear him, and sit open-mouthed in rapt admiration at his superb intellect. The growth of common sense in the English Church is a thing very much to be regretted. It is really a degrading concession to a low form of realism..."²⁰³

So Wilde's last act was to reject appreciative but moralistic and unbelieving England for frivolous but beautiful and forgiving France; he exchanged English undogmatic Protestantism for French dogmatic Catholicism...

In the twenty-first century Wilde's countrymen, exceeding even his contemporaries' pride and blasphemy, have made of his sin an object of "gay pride", thereby nullifying the greatest achievement of his life, his (albeit incomplete) repentance. The greatness of his *art* is now firmly established, it has stood the test of time. But the greatness of the last years of his *life*, when, as we may hope, he redeemed himself through suffering and faith, showing in his

²⁰² Holland, in "Introduction to the 1966 Edition", *Complete Works*, p.12.

²⁰³ Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", *Complete Works*, 1089.

own life the falseness of his own idolatrous theory that art and the artist are greater than life and the Creator of life, still awaits just appreciation...

July 6/19, 2018.

20. THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH

The feast of the Holy Prophet Elijah is a quite exceptional feast of the Church year. Its Vespers readings – exclusively from his own life – are the longest in the whole year outside Holy Week. This saint is the only one (with the exception of the Patriarch Enoch) who has not died, who has not yet fulfilled his earthly course, but of whose dramatic end we already know the details. For he it is who will turn the hearts of the Jewish Fathers to their Christian sons, will rebuke the Antichrist to his face, and will be killed by him – before being resurrected in the eyes of the whole world three days later. The life is so dramatic, being comparable only, perhaps, to that of the Prophet and God-seer Moses, that we wonder why Hollywood has not yet made a film about him...

And yet there is one episode which, in its quiet, understated way, moves and instructs us more deeply than any other in the life of the fiery prophet of the wrath of God. Having called down the curse of famine upon the apostate Israelites, Elijah has been living a life of solitude beside the brook Cherith in the Judaeen wilderness (where the monastery of St. George of Chozeva is now). “And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have ordered a widow woman to sustain thee.” (III Kings 17).

The fact that she lived in the pagan territory of Sidon means that if she was an Israelite she was living in a land and among a people hostile to her and the true faith. Moreover, she was very poor, on the edge of starvation – a result of the drought that Elijah himself had brought down on the earth. Nevertheless, the prophet, knowing that he was not asking anything contrary to the will of God, asked her to use her last food – some flour and oil – to make a cake for him, promising that the flour and wine would last throughout the period of drought. With astonishing generosity and faith, the widow agrees to give her last to this complete stranger. But then God had “commanded” her: without violating man’s freewill, God is the master of all the impulses of our hearts, hardening the hearts of those, like Pharaoh, who inwardly resist His will, but softening and enlightening the hearts of those, like this poor widow, who inwardly fear Him with that true fear that “lasts for ever and ever”.

But then her son sickens and dies. Amazingly, she does not complain, but says to Elijah: “What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?” She knows immediately three things: that the death of her son is no accident, but that he has been “killed”, that Elijah, though “a man of God”, is the instrument of this death, and that she, as a sinner, must be the cause of her own misfortune. What astonishing faith and humility at a time of such profound sorrow!

But now it is time for the Lord to act, and to turn her sorrow into joy. Many centuries later, the Lord Himself said to another poor and humble woman living in the same region: “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire” (Matthew 15.28). The widow of Zarephath did not ask for her son to be

healed. But her desire, too, was granted. The prophet prayed, “and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” Not only is this a great miracle – in the Old Testament, only the Prophet Elisha, the disciple of Elijah, raised a child from the dead (the son of the woman of Shunam) – but also a valuable witness to the immortality of the soul, whose departure from the body is the definition of physical death.

“And the woman said to Elijah: Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.” So the woman, while obeying the prophet without murmuring, had not been *quite* sure until then that he was a true prophet...

Is this not so similar to our situation, so symbolic of our True Orthodox Church in these last, terrible, pre-Antichrist times? Our situation from an external point of view is desperate: heresy appears to have triumphed throughout the world and in all the major Churches. The leaders of the New Israel – as they think themselves to be – follow the new Baalim of the World Council of Churches and fawn before the new Ahab of Putin. We have been reduced to gathering sticks outside the gate of the city of the evil-doers in preparation of a last meagre supper before we die.

But the Church will never die; the faithful will continue to be fed by the oil and flour of the sacraments until the end of the spiritual drought; the gates of hell itself will not prevail against the little flock of Christ’s True Church. Sooner or later, a new Elijah will arise to rebuke the tyrant, slaughter his false priests, and cast his bride, the Jezabel of pseudo-Orthodoxy from the ramparts of her pride onto the street below, where the dogs – the demons – will lick her blood. And then the son of the widow, the last generation of True Christians, will be raised from the dead in order to proclaim the Gospel of the True God to all the nations: “And then the end will come” (Matthew 24.14)...

*July 20 / August 2, 2018.
Holy and Glorious Prophet Elijah.*

21. AMERICA, BRITAIN AND THE BIRTH OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Tony Judt writes: “The very scale of the collective misery that Europeans had brought upon themselves in the first half of the twentieth century had a profoundly de-politicizing effect; far from turning to extreme solutions, in the manner of the years following World War One, the European publics of the gloomy post-World War Two years turned *away* from politics. The implications of this could be discerned only vaguely at the time – in the failure of Fascist or Communist parties to cash in upon the difficulties of daily existence; in the way in which economics displaced politics as the goal and language of collective action; in the emergence of domestic recreations and domestic consumption in place of participation in public affairs...

“In more ways than most contemporaries could possibly have foreseen, a new Europe was being born.”²⁰⁴

In Western Europe, the post-war poverty and depression had been much greater than in the Anglo-Saxon countries (especially North America), and therefore the contrast as prosperity returned in the 1950s was the more striking. Thus while in the period 1913-50 the average growth rate in Britain, France and Germany was 1.3 percent, in the period 1950-73 “French growth rate per annum had averaged 5 percent, West Germany had grown at nearly 6 percent and even Britain had maintained an average rate above 3 percent.”²⁰⁵ This extraordinary growth in prosperity, unparalleled in European history, could not fail to have an important and deleterious effect on the European psyche, accelerating its already pronounced turning away from religion and the spiritual life to Mammon. The American gospel of self-fulfilment played its part in this change, as preached by the wave of Hollywood films that poured into Europe. But there were other, still more significant factors.

One was the increased size and influence of the state, not in the totalitarian form of the contemporary Soviet Union, but in the more subtle and beguiling form of the West European welfare state...

West European welfarism, otherwise known as Social Democracy, was for the time being a great success. As Judt writes: “In the peak years of the modern European welfare state, when the administrative apparatus still exercised broad-ranging authority and its credibility remained unassailed, a remarkable consensus was achieved. The state, it was widely believed, would always do a better job than the unrestricted market: not just in dispensing justice and securing the realm, or distributing goods and services, but in designing and applying strategies for social cohesion, moral sustenance and cultural vitality. The notion that such matters might better be left to enlightened self-interest and the workings of the free market in commodities and ideas was regarded in

²⁰⁴ Tony Judt, *Postwar*, London: Pimlico, 2007, pp. 236, 237.

²⁰⁵ Judt, *op. cit.*, pp. 456-457.

mainstream European political and academic circles as a quaint relic of pre-Keynesian times: at best a failure to learn the lessons of the Depression, at worst an invitation to conflict and a veiled appeal to the basest human instincts.

“The state, then, was a good thing; and there was a lot of it. Between 1950 and 1973, government spending rose from 27.6 percent to 38.8 of the gross domestic product in France, from 30.4 percent to 42 percent in West Germany, from 34.2 percent to 41.5 percent in the UK and from 26.8 percent to 45.5 percent in the Netherlands – at a time when that domestic product was itself growing faster than every before or since. The overwhelming bulk of the increase in spending went on insurance, pensions, health, education and housing. In Scandinavia the share of national income devoted to social security alone rose 250 percent in Denmark and Sweden between 1950 and 1973. In Norway it tripled. Only in Switzerland was the share of post-war GNP spent by the state kept comparatively low (it did not reach 30 percent until 1980), but even there it stood in dramatic contrast to the 1938 figure of just 6.8 percent.

“The success story of post-war European capitalism was everywhere accompanied by an enhanced role for the public sector. But the nature of state engagement varied considerably. In most of continental Europe the state eschewed direct ownership of industry (though not public transport or communications), preferring to exercise indirect control, often through autonomous agencies, of which Italy’s tentacular IRI was the biggest and best known...

“Doctrinal differences over the ostensible goals of the state might noisily oppose Left and Right, Christian Democrats and Communists, Socialists and Conservatives, but almost everyone had something to gain from the opportunities the state afforded them for income and influence. Faith in the state – as planner, coordinator, facilitator, arbiter, provider, caretaker and guardian – was widespread and crossed almost all political divides. The welfare state was avowedly social but it was far from socialist. In that sense welfare capitalism, as it unfolded in Western Europe, was truly post-ideological.

“Nevertheless, within the general post-war European consensus there was a distinctive vision, that of the Social Democrats. Social Democracy had always been a hybrid; indeed, this was just what was held against it by enemies to the Right and Left alike. A practice in lifelong search of its theory, Social Democracy was the outcome of an insight vouchsafed to a generation of European socialists early in the twentieth century: that radical social revolution in the heartlands of modern Europe – as prophesied and planned by the socialist visionaries of the nineteenth century – lay in the past, not the future. As a solution to the injustice and inefficiency of industrial capitalism, the nineteenth-century paradigm of violent urban upheaval was not only undesirable and unlikely to meet its goals; it was also redundant. Genuine improvements in the condition of all classes could be obtained in incremental and peaceful ways.

“It did not follow from this that the fundamental nineteenth-century socialist tenets were discarded. The overwhelming majority of mid-twentieth century European Social Democrats, even if they kept their distance from Marx and his avowed heirs, maintained as an article of faith that capitalism was inherently dysfunctional and that socialism was both morally *and economically* superior. Where they differed from Communists was in their unwillingness to commit to the inevitability of capitalism’s imminent demise or to the wisdom of hastening that demise by their own political actions. Their task, as they had come to understand it in the course of decades of Depression, division and dictatorship, was to use the resources of the state to eliminate the social pathologies attendant on capitalist forms of production and the unrestricted workings of a market economy: to build not economic utopias but good societies.”²⁰⁶

However, the European Social Democrat idea that “capitalism was inherently dysfunctional and that socialism was both morally and economically superior” must be borne in mind when we come to the main *political* expression of the movement – the European Union. The underlying pathos of the European Union was socialist and collectivist, and consequently anti-nationalist. It is this fact more than any other that has caused the long-running battle between Britain (standing for the sovereignty of individual nation-states) and the EU (standing for the socialist super-state) that has reached a climax in our days.

*

The European Union (EU), - or, as it was originally called, the European Economic Community (EEC) - was originally composed of the six Benelux countries, who created it jointly at the Treaties of Rome in March, 1957. This was the right moment for the French, the real drivers of the Union, because they felt betrayed by the British at Suez in 1956, and now hurled themselves enthusiastically in the opposite direction - towards Germany and the Continent. In June, the German Bundestag voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Treaties. However, as Matthaus Haeussler writes, “Not all Germany’s parliamentarians played along. The young Helmut Schmidt - a brash, chain-smoking Social Democrat from Hamburg - refused to support the Treaties, largely because of British non-participation. ‘Much as I was convinced of the necessity of European integration,’ he later reflected later, ‘I then thought... that the EEC could never be successful in the absence of British experience and pragmatism.’”²⁰⁷

As Britain wavered over whether to join the EU or not, and he himself ascended to greasy ladder to becoming Chancellor of Germany, Schmidt’s attitude to the British changed, and he came to think that De Gaulle had been

²⁰⁶ Judt, *op. cit.*, p. 361, 362-363.

²⁰⁷ Haeussler, “Schmidt and the Brits”, *History Today*, August, 2018, p. 46.

right in vetoing Britain's original application to join the Community. Nevertheless, the British arguments against membership, and criticisms of the EU's institutional structure, did not go away, leading first to Britain's decision to leave the EU in 2016 and then, after Chancellor Merkel's decision to open the doors to immigration into the EU in 2015, to a Europe-wide resurgence of "Euroscepticism" at the time of writing. In many ways, the whole history of the EU has been defined by the quarrel between the French and Germans, on the one side, and the British, on the other, on what the future of Europe should be.

After the war, the British by no means turned away from Europe, being very active in policing and feeding the British zone of occupation in North Germany, in organizing the Berlin Airlift, and in the creation of NATO. And there were many prominent Britons who believed in the creation of the European Union *for the sake of peace*. As David Reynolds puts it, for them the Treaties of Rome were "effectively a peace settlement for Western Europe".²⁰⁸ Many intellectuals in the early post-war generations believed that yet another war among the nations of Europe could be prevented only by uniting them in a new supranation. This was also Churchill's motivation when, in a speech in Zurich on September 19, 1946, he called for a United States of Europe (with or without Britain – he never made clear), towards which the essential first step would have to be peace between France and Germany. In this sense he was, if not the father, at any rate the godfather of Europe.²⁰⁹

According to Michael McManus, peace was also the motivation of the British Prime Minister Edward Heath, who took Britain into the Union in 1973. Heath "had first-hand experience of a Nuremberg rally in 1937, of the Spanish Civil War in 1938, and of combat in the Second World War itself. His greatest fear was of a resurgence of nationalism in Europe and of another ruinous war. European unity was, for him, first and foremost, the necessary key to peace. This was the predominant view within the Conservative Party from the mid-1950s until the mid-1980s including most of Margaret Thatcher's premiership. After the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, however, she recognised a new reality and was fearful of a united Germany. But Sir Edward's needle had got stuck..."²¹⁰

But was it really the European project that kept the peace in Europe? Hardly... The real causes of the preservation of peace between the West European countries were mutual exhaustion, the common threat of the Red Army just over the Elbe – and the consequent felt need for the formation of NATO. In fact, the real peace-maker was *the American army*, together with other American institutions in Europe. It was they that both defended the West

²⁰⁸ Reynolds, *The Long Shadow. The Great War and the Twentieth Century*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

²⁰⁹ "Let Europe Arise! – Winston Churchill", https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/074567-008-A/let-europe-arise-winston-churchill?xtor=CS1-41-%5Bdesktop%5D-%5BspeechChurchill%5D&kwp_0=497024&kwp_4=1786590&kwp_1=760537

²¹⁰ McManus, "European dream that belonged to a different era", *The Sunday Telegraph Review*, July 3, 2016, p. 19.

against the Soviets and constantly cajoled the Europeans, especially the French, into working together for the common good.²¹¹

“British politicians,” writes Tombs, “were never indifferent to Europe,... and 1950s polls showed public support for European unity. Bevin’s problem was over-ambition, aiming to create an independent European super-power. These visions were dispelled by the Cold War..., and then by the beginnings of European integration through the European Coal and Steel Community. Britain’s policy now focused on ensuring a continuing American commitment to European security through NATO. Behind the scenes, there was unprecedented sharing of secret intelligence with the United States under a 1947 treaty, which also included Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and which still applies. The relationship with America (‘special’, as the British saw it) was not a barrier to integration with the Continent – far from it, as the Americans were eager backers of European unity...

“The other main pillar of Britain’s foreign policy came to be Europe. The old dream of European unity had been revived during the interwar period. The Labour intellectual Harold Laski predicted in 1944 that ‘the age of the nation state is over... economically, it is the continent that counts: America, Russia, later China and India, eventually Africa... the true lesson of this war is that we shall federate the Continent or suffocate.’ The need to rebuild European economies, resist Communism, and prevent a possible resurgence of German nationalism turned rhetoric into policy. The Schuman Plan (put forward with American encouragement by the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, in 1950) provided for supranational control of the coal and steel industries of Germany, France and the Benelux countries. It also advocated a council of ministers, a court and an assembly. The Treaty of Paris (April 1951) duly set up the European Coal and Steel Community, with an explicit commitment of political unity.”²¹²

As Yanis Varoufakis points out, however, the ECSC was in fact a *cartel*, and therefore “a remarkable departure from American principles of governance, which since President Theodore Roosevelt had included a healthy dose of cartel busting. However, America’s global plan could not fly in Europe unless it made its peace with the *Mitteleuropa-Paneuropa* ideology intimately associated with Central Europe’s cartels.

“Making their peace with Central European corporatism, American policymakers had to swallow not only the idea of building the new Europe on a cartel of big business but also the unsavoury political agenda that went with it. Corporatists like Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet were bent on constructing the Brussels-based bureaucracy as a democracy-free zone. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi put it succinctly in one of his speeches when he declared

²¹¹ The Cambridge historian Robert Tombs “points out that Nato and nuclear weapons have done more to keep the peace than the EU” (in Brian Appleyard, “Brains for Brexit: top academics and thinkers put the case for Brexit”, *Sunday Times*, February 18, 2018).

²¹² Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, pp. 805, 806.

his ambition for Europe to 'supersede democracy and for it to be replaced by a 'social aristocracy of the spirit'. As always happens when a technocracy harbouring a deep Platonic contempt for democracy attains inordinate power, we end up with an antisocial, dispirited, mindless autocracy.

"Europeans recognize this in today's Brussels-based bureaucracy. Every survey of European public opinion finds large majorities with no trust in the EU's institutions. While it is true that citizens around the world – for example, in Britain, the United States or India – are highly critical of their state's institutions, the discontent with Brussels is qualitatively different. Take Britain for instance. The British state evolved as a set of institutions whose function was to regulate the struggle between different social groups and classes. The tussle between the king and the barons gave rise to Magna Carta, a deal the essence of which was to limit the king's power. After the merchant class acquired economic power disproportionate to its social and political rank, the state evolved further to accommodate its interests with those of the aristocracy, especially after the 1688 Glorious Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought new social strata into the mix (industrialists, trade unions, local communities made up of former peasants), extending the franchise and refining the state's apparatus.

"Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic a similar process was spawning the American constitution. The United States government and bureaucracy also emerged at a time of intense conflict between vested interests and social classes. Slave-owning landowners, mainly in the South, clashed with East Coast traders and manufacturers in Illinois, Boston and Wisconsin. The Louisiana Purchase triggered a variety of new tussles between multiple interest groups. A brutal civil war proved impossible to avert and facilitated America's consolidation. Later on, the rise of the labour unions and the military industrial complex signalled fresh rivalries. To bring the nation together and to homogenize its institutions so as to deal with the political, social and financial crises that these tensions threw up, Congress had to play a central equilibrating role. Indeed, no authority in the United States can defy Congress or ignore it. Whatever demerits American democracy may have, there can be no doubt that the democratic process is essential to keeping the nation together.

"By contrast, the European Union's institutions did not evolve in response to social conflicts. National parliaments and institutions did all the heavy lifting in terms of ameliorating social conflicts while the Brussels bureaucracy was devised for the purpose of managing the affairs an industrial cartel made up of Central European heavy industry. Lacking a Demos – a 'We the people...' – to keep them in line, and indeed to legitimize their activities, Brussels bureaucrats both disdained democracy and were shielded from its checks and balances. While the cartel they administered was doing well under the auspices of the American-designed global financial system, the European Union's institutions enjoyed widespread acceptance. However, unlike America's Congress-centric system, the European Union lacked the democratic process necessary to fall back on in times of trouble.

“From the viewpoint of its official ideology, the European Union sounded very similar to the United States, even to liberal Britain. Free-market liberalism seemed to be the order of the day, and a single market free of state patronage the union’s objective. And yet, remarkably, the European Union began life as a cartel of coal and steel producers which, openly and legally, controlled prices and output by means of a multinational bureaucracy vested with legal and political powers superseding national parliaments and democratic processes. Indeed, the inaugural task of the Brussels bureaucracy was to fix the price of steel and coal products and remove all restrictions on their movement and trading among the cartel’s member states. Curiously perhaps, this made perfect sense: what would be the point of cross-border cartel if its products were stopped at the borders, taxed and generally impeded by national government officials? The equivalent in the United States would have been a Washington bureaucracy, operating without a Senate or a House of Representatives to keep the bureaucrats in check, able to overrule state governments on almost anything and bent on fixing prices at levels higher than the market would have selected.

“The next step was obvious too: once tariffs on coal and steel were removed, it made sense to remove all tariffs. Except that French farmers, who always exerted exceptional influence on France’s political system, did not like the idea of untrammelled competition from imported milk, cheese and wine. So to co-opt French farmers, the so-called Common Agricultural Policy was established. Its purpose? To secure the farmers’ consent to a European free trade zone by handing over to them a chunk of the cartel’s monopoly profits.

“By the end of the 1950s a fully-fledged European Union (then known as the European Economic Community) which had evolved from the European Coal and Steel Community) had sprung from the multinational heavy industry cartel and its political incarnation in Brussels. Dollarized by the United States, it soon began to create large surpluses, which funded postwar Central European prosperity in the stable world environment provided by the Bretton Woods system, which was itself constantly stabilized by a United States ready and willing to recycle to Europe a large chunk of America’s surpluses. A golden age dawned, brimming with high growth, non-existent unemployment and low inflation, spawning a new Europe of shared prosperity. It was an American triumph that Europe’s elites were determined to portray as their own...”²¹³

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard confirms Varoufakis’ important conclusion: “The European Union was always an American project.

“It was Washington that drove European integration in the late 1940s, and funded it covertly under the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations.

²¹³ Varoufakis, *And the Weak Suffer What They Must?* London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 58-60.

“While irritated at times, the US has relied on the EU ever since as the anchor to American regional interests alongside NATO.

“There has never been a divide-and-rule strategy...

“The Schuman Declaration that set the tone of Franco-German reconciliation - and would lead by stages to the European Community - was cooked up by the US Secretary of State Dean Acheson at a meeting in Foggy Bottom. ‘It all began in Washington,’ said Robert Schuman's chief of staff.

“It was the Truman administration that browbeat the French to reach a modus vivendi with Germany in the early post-War years, even threatening to cut off US Marshall aid at a furious meeting with recalcitrant French leaders... in September 1950.

“Truman's motive was obvious. The Yalta settlement with the Soviet Union was breaking down. He wanted a united front to deter the Kremlin from further aggrandizement after Stalin gobbled up Czechoslovakia, doubly so after Communist North Korea crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded the South.

“For British eurosceptics, Jean Monnet looms large in the federalist pantheon, the eminence grise of supranational villainy. Few are aware that he spent much of his life in America, and served as the war-time eyes and ears of Franklin Roosevelt.

“General Charles de Gaulle thought him an American agent, as indeed he was in a loose sense. Eric Roussel's biography of Monnet reveals how he worked hand in glove with successive administrations.²¹⁴

“General Charles de Gaulle was always deeply suspicious of American motives...

“Nor are many aware of declassified documents from the State Department archives showing that US intelligence funded the European movement secretly

²¹⁴ “It was Monnet,” write Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, “who had secured the Allies’ backing for General de Gaulle against Roosevelt’s opposition, and in return, de Gaulle gave him responsibility for rebuilding the French economy and industry - a position he used to achieve his great dream, laying the foundations for the EEC.

“The ‘Schuman Declaration’ was the result of intrigue, trickery and subterfuge by Monnet, his most audacious trick being to get French and West German governments to set up a *supranational* organisation to co-ordinate their industries without realising exactly what they had signed up to. This radical new concept, of an organisation with control over individual nations’ industries but with its own, outside autonomy, laid the foundation for all that came after. Unsurprisingly, Monnet became president of the new body, called - with a chillingly Orwellian tone - the High Authority. Schuman became the first president of the European Parliament in 1958.” (“Synarchy: The Hidden Hand behind the European Union”, *New Dawn*, Special Issue 18, <http://www.newdawnmagazine.com/articles/synarchy-the-hidden-hand-behind-the-european-union>.) See also Alan Sked, “How A Secretive Elite Created The EU To Build A World Government”, *Sunday Times Style Magazine*, 28 November, 2015. (V.M.)

for decades, and worked aggressively behind the scenes to push Britain into the project.

“... One memorandum dated July 26, 1950, reveals a campaign to promote a full-fledged European parliament. It is signed by Gen William J. Donovan, head of the American wartime Office of Strategic Services, precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency.

“The key CIA front was the American Committee for a United Europe (ACUE), chaired by Donovan. Another document shows that it provided 53.5 per cent of the European movement’s funds in 1958. The board included Walter Bedell Smith and Allen Dulles, CIA directors in the Fifties, and a caste of ex-OSS officials who moved in and out of the CIA.

“Bill Donovan, legendary head of the war-time OSS, was later in charge of orchestrating the EU project... The US acted astutely in the context of the Cold War. The political reconstruction of Europe was a roaring success.”²¹⁵

“The Schuman Plan,” continues Tombs, “was deliberately presented to Britain without consultation, as a *fait accompli*, which it was given forty-eight hours to accept in principle. Bevin would not take on ‘obligations’ in Europe that restricted Britain’s interests elsewhere, and he was suspicious of supranationality – ‘a Pandora’s box full of Trojan horses’, in his attributed phrase. Labour’s recent nationalization of coal and steel meant that government and unions were unwilling to hand control to an unaccountable body in Luxembourg – as Herbert Morrison, Bevin’s successor at the Foreign Office, put it, ‘the Durham miners won’t wear it’. Because of the Great Depression, the Second World War and the devastation of Europe, British trade had moved elsewhere, especially to the ‘Old Commonwealth’ countries, from which it imported cheap food and to which it exported manufactured goods. In retrospect, and even for some at the time, it is clear that this was an unusual and temporary circumstance. It is nevertheless understandable that Labour backed colonial development and Commonwealth ties, for reasons both of sentiment and of self-interest. In 1950 Europe took only 10 per cent of British exports. Australia was economically as important to Britain as ‘The Six’ (members of the Coal and Steel Community) combined, and New Zealand more important than Germany. As Keynes put, ‘What suits our exporters is to have the whole world as their playground’. So Labour’s refusal to join the ECSC was inevitable. After the Suez debacle, the French, let down as they saw it by the Anglo-Saxons, turned towards Europe and Germany as alternative sources of Great Power status. The Treaty of Rome was signed in March 1957 setting up a European Economic Community committed to ‘ever closer union’.

²¹⁵ Evans-Pritchard, “The European Union always was a CIA Project, as Brexiteers Discover”, *The Daily Telegraph*, business section, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/04/27/the-european-union-always-was-a-cia-project-as-brexiteers-discover/>

“It is commonly asserted that had Britain joined in early, during the 1950s, its moral stature and political weight could have enabled it to lead Europe, shaping developments in its own interests. This notion of Britain taking the helm is, in the view of the official historian of Britain’s European policy, ‘shot through with nationalistic assumptions... as great as and more misguided’ than those underlying its world-power pretensions. This was dramatically demonstrated when in 1958 Britain tried to negotiate a free-trade agreement with the EEC. General de Gaulle, newly installed in power, stopped the negotiations in November 1958 – the first and most damaging of his three vetoes. Although the German finance minister, Ludwig Erhard, architect of its ‘economic miracle’, was in favour, the chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, would not oppose France. So Britain set up the European Free Trade Association in 1959, with Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Switzerland, Austria, Ireland and Portugal.

“Britain soon abandoned this policy, however. Here ‘declinism’ played a crucial role, creating a desperate hope that joining the EEC could both remedy supposed economic failure and buttress influence in Washington and the Commonwealth. Washington disliked EFTA and put pressure on London to apply to join the EEC. ‘If we try to remain aloof,’ a Cabinet committee warned in 1960, ‘bearing in mind that this will be happening simultaneously with the contraction of our overseas possessions, we shall run the risk of [losing] any real claim to be a world Power.’ The Foreign Office feared that ‘at the best, we should remain a minor power in an alliance dominated by the United States.’ Macmillan formally applied to join in 1961. ‘The question,’ thought the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, ‘is how to live with the Common Market economically and turn its political effects into channels harmless to us.’ This question would continue to exercise politicians of several generations.

“The main problem was France, newly ascendant and ambitious under Charles de Gaulle elected president of the new Fifth Republic in December 1958, and an old man in a hurry. He intended to make France the leader of Europe, and wanted ‘to be the cock on a small dunghill instead of having two cocks on a large one’, as Macmillan put it to a sympathetic President John F. Kennedy in 1963. Macmillan’s frustration stemmed from a televised press conference on 14 January when de Gaulle, after long and wearisome negotiations, summarily vetoed the British application for membership on the grounds that ‘England is an island sea-going, bound up by its trade, its markets, its food supplies, with the most varied and often the most distant countries.’ This would disrupt what he called a truly ‘European Europe’. The humiliation of de Gaulle’s veto further weakened Macmillan at home, where he was beset by the Profumo scandal, and he resigned, ostensibly on health grounds, that October.

“The Labour Party had been led since 1963 by Harold Wilson. He was the most brilliant politician of his day, prototype of a new grammar-school-educated North Country professionalism that seemed to be elbowing aside the effect public school upper-class, embodied by Macmillan and his successor as

party leader, the honourable, inoffensive, but emphatically not modern 14th Earl of Home, probably Britain's last aristocratic Prime Minister, who held office (renouncing his earldom) from 1963 to 1964 – his mother was said to have remarked that 'it was very good of Alec to have taken the job on.' Wilson, Prime Minister from 1964 to 1970, was thus an embodiment of the social and cultural changes of the 1960s. He was an economist praising 'pragmatism' and embodying the new concept of 'meritocracy'. In retrospect he seems an oddly insubstantial figure with no defining ideas, mainly remembered for his dictum that 'a week is a long time in politics'. Like most of his party, he was suspicious of European membership and urged support for Commonwealth trade: 'We are not entitled to sell our friends and kinsmen down the river for a problematical and marginal advantage in selling washing machines in Düsseldorf.' Once in power in 1964, Wilson found that plans for galvanizing Commonwealth trade were a pipedream. He renewed the application for the EEC, reflecting that Britain was like a faded beauty, and Europe a go-ahead young man with good prospects: if not a love match, it could be Britain's last chance for a comfortable settlement. But de Gaulle pronounced a third veto on 16 May 1967, using language of 'quite exceptional bitterness, hostility and scorn'. Britain, he said, was economically incapable of membership, and its desire for accession was driven by desperation. The English, he told his entourage, 'are a worn-out people'.

"After de Gaulle had retired in 1969, following his humiliation by rioting students in Paris, Edward Heath's 1970 Conservative government seized the opportunity to pursue the application. Belief that membership at any price was the only remedy for Britain's diplomatic, economic and political 'decline' had become the orthodoxy: Britain was 'the sinking Titanic', as one of Heath's advisers put it, and Europe the lifeboat. Heath, the most 'pro-European' Prime Minister Britain has ever had, assured the French that the British were now ready to 'give priority to [Europe] over their other interests in the world,' though he grumbled privately that the Europeans 'are constantly barging ahead with regulations drawn up to suit themselves and then coming along, more or less with a take-it-or-leave-it attitude, to present them to us.' Sir Con O'Neill, the chief official negotiator, was clear that the EEC was about power: 'None of its policies was essential to us; many of them were objectionable.' But, outside, Britain would decline into 'a greater Sweden' – something Whitehall regarded as a fate worse than death. The terms for entry were tough, including sharing Britain's vast fishing grounds, accepting the Common Agricultural Policy to protect farming by raising prices and penalizing imports, and a large British financial contribution to common funds; but O'Neill decided to 'swallow the lot'. Public support had collapsed since the first failed attempt to join, so the government mounted the biggest state publicity campaign since the war with vociferous support from business and most of the intelligentsia. The issue was carefully depoliticized: 'The Community... hasn't made the French eat German food or the Dutch drink Italian beer.' The EEC's faster economic growth was the main theme, represented on the front of an official pamphlet, *The British European*, by a page three girl in a skimpy Union Jack bikini proclaiming 'EUROPE IS FUN! More Work But More Play Too!' Politicians and

diplomats concealed – perhaps from themselves – the commitment to ‘ever closer union’ clearly spelled out in the founding treaties, which they dismissed as verbiage. The European Communities Act (1972), the legal basis of membership, declared that all present or future ‘rights, liabilities, obligations and restrictions’ created by European law automatically applied to the United Kingdom ‘without further enactment’ by Parliament, and with supremacy over English (and Scottish) law. High legal authorities debated whether this had ended, or could end, parliamentary sovereignty, without reaching clear conclusions. The public too was confused, tending to notice when picturesque cases emerged, such as that of the ‘metric martyrs’, Sunderland market traders summonsed in 2003 for selling their greengrocery in pounds.

“If Britain’s rulers had not been so panicky about ‘decline’, would they have followed a different policy? Would a longer game, and less eagerness to ‘swallow the lot’, have secured a better and less troubled relationship with Europe? It is commonly said that Britain joined the Common Market too late. Perhaps, on the contrary, it joined too early – just before the European economies entered a period of stagnation, and before it had faced up to its own economic shortcomings. In their haste, politicians avoided the question of what membership ultimately involved in terms of shifts of power and sovereignty. It turned out that de Gaulle had been right in fearing ‘England’ as a disruptive presence.”²¹⁶

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What were the attitudes of the other major players to Britain’s accession? France’s attitude, as we have seen, was deeply influenced by Great Power ambitions and a centuries-old rivalry with Britain. Germany’s was more subtle and more interesting. As Haeussler writes, “For most Germans of Schmidt’s generation, the European project exerted a powerful emotional pull that stretched far beyond the concrete advantages of a customs union: it offered a unique opportunity to rehabilitate and reinvent postwar Germany within a European framework and to distance itself from the horrors of the recent past. Wilson and Thatcher, by contrast, may have concluded rationally that EC membership was in Britain’s national interest, but they lacked any comparative emotive and personal attachment to the European project. The EC therefore remained only one of many possible arenas for European cooperation in 1970s Britain – and not one that suited the country particularly well. For most Germans, however, the EC had by that time become the *only* framework for European cooperation. Any criticisms of its institutions and policies were almost inevitably interpreted as more general attacks on the very principles of European cooperation and solidarity...”²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 805-809.

²¹⁷ Haeussler, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

And what of America, which, as we have seen, had been the real force pushing the European states into a political union? Did the Americans' support wane as the EU's undemocratic and socialist essence became clearer, and as the EU adopted an increasingly competitive attitude in relation to them? After all, in spite of the enormous debt the European Union owes to America - deliverance from Nazi rule, the Marshall plan, the underwriting of the world's economic system, the protection against Communism provided by the American army in Europe and round the world - anti-Americanism has been a defining sentiment of European leaders almost from the beginning. The ungrateful and ultimately self-defeating desire to undermine American leadership in the western world has manifested itself in many ways: in France's (temporary) withdrawal from NATO, in the efforts to undermine the Bretton Woods Agreement, which led to the "Nixon Shock" of 1971, in Germany's *Ost-Politik* at the height of the Cold War, most recently in many members' reluctance to pay their share of Europe's own defence.

In spite of these tensions, the United States has remained remarkably loyal to its European allies, and to the European project as a whole. Thus as recently as the Brexit referendum of 2016, President Obama interfered strongly on the side of the "Remainers".

Only since the election of President Trump in November, 2016 have serious tensions emerged. Trump supported Brexit, and strongly criticized the Europeans' failure to pay their fair share towards NATO (America pays 4% of its GDP to NATO, Britain - 2%, and Germany - only 1.2%!) In 2017 the German Chancellor Angela Merkel complained that Britain and the United States were supposedly withdrawing from Europe, and then went on to say that Europe should "go it alone" in its defence. Of course, Europe has long wanted to have its own army, the one attribute of a truly sovereign state that it does not yet have. But in view of the Europeans' reluctance to pay for their own defence, a European army could only be built at the expense of withdrawing forces from NATO, thereby undermining European security at a critical moment of history. As Putin probes Europe's defences in more ways than one, the EU's hostility to the United States, its progenitor and long-term benefactor, may well cost it dear in the future...

July 27 / August 9, 2018.

22. FREEDOM OR FREE WILL?

Since at least the sixteenth century, our civilization has taken “freedom” as its slogan and mantra. To take just one example, Leonardo da Vinci: “The chief gift of nature... is freedom.” Liberalism, which is still the dominant moral and political philosophy of the western world, glorifies freedom as the supreme value.

But are we free, or do we just have free will? There is a difference, a big difference. In the beginning, in Paradise before the Fall, Adam and Eve had freedom in the sense that there was no impediment, whether from within or outside themselves, to their acting in full accordance with their nature as God created it. Being free in this sense, they were filled with the Grace of God, willingly and joyfully carrying out the Will of Him, “Whose service is perfect freedom”.

Adam and Eve also had free will. But until the serpent tempted them, there was no need to exercise it, because before then was no choice presented to them between God’s will and the will of anybody else. Tragically, they then exercised their free will in opposition to God’s will and the natural freedom of their unfallen nature. And this had the further consequence that this natural, primordial freedom was destroyed, as man found himself opposed by a sinful nature within and all kinds of temptations from within and without. He was now bound by sin; the wrong exercise of his free will had led him to the deprivation of his freedom, to slavery to sin, death and the devil...

Liberal politics and morality increase man’s slavery by encouraging him, or at least not forbidding him, to choose their own or some other fallen will against the Will of God. So he will is no longer truly free; he has become self-willed or willful rather than obedient to God’s will and therefore free.

The only way out of this trap is to return to the truth and recognize the difference between true freedom and free will, aiming to attain the former and not indulge the latter. For, as the Lord say: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 4.22). For we must act, as St. Peter said, “as free, and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.”(I Peter 2.16).

*August 23 / September 5, 2018.
Apodosis of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.*

23. THE FALL OF PATRIARCH KIRILL OF MOSCOW

Patriarch Kirill's juggernaut has come to a shuddering halt. In spite of a last-minute flight to Constantinople to try and dissuade the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew from his plan, the latter has decided to grant a Tomos of Autocephaly to the so-called Kievan Patriarchate. KGB Agent "Mikhailov" has failed in his task of diminishing the influence of the Ukrainian Orthodox opponents of Russian Orthodoxy and their main backer, the EP. Whether this is only a temporary defeat for the MP is uncertain: that it is a defeat is certain.

The irony is that the EP and the MP have very similar ecclesiologies and modes of conduct. Both believe in building spheres of influence, empires, even "worlds" of Orthodox believers and patriarchates. The EP uses its supposed right as "first hierarch of Orthodoxy" to employ the weapon of granting "autocephalies" to its chosen satellites. These have gouged out and encircled the "Russian world". As early as 1938 St. John Maximovich was pointing this out. By then the EP had taken out the following chunks from non-Greek Orthodoxy: Poland, the Baltic States, Finland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the West European exarchate. After the war, the MP controlled all the East European patriarchates and Georgia, not through granting autocephalies, but through the Red Army and the KGB. Its only venture into autocephaly-creation was the Orthodox Church of America in 1970 - a complete failure except from an espionage point of view. It also, of course, held Ukraine in its vice. But the gradual political liberation of Ukraine from the Soviet Union and Putin's Neo-Soviet Russian Federation since 1991 has turned the tables on Moscow. Symbolic of that is the fact that Kirill's greatest enemy, "Patriarch" Philaret (Denisenko) of Kiev, is a former KGB agent and colleague in that ultra-evil organization with Kirill. Now he is working against his former masters. (Will he now be a candidate for the "novichok" treatment? Unlikely. He would be hailed as a (pseudo-)martyr...) Up to now that patriarchate (like the American autocephaly) has been considered illegal by most of World Orthodoxy (and all of True Orthodoxy, of course). But after the Tomos is published, it will be "legal" in the eyes of Greek Orthodoxy (except, perhaps, Jerusalem, which with Serbia has sided with Moscow in this quarrel).

Kirill and Bartholomew are also united in their extreme pro-Catholicism. Both are vying to be the number 2 in the New World Religious Order after the Pope. In spite of Kirill's meeting with the Pope (and Fidel Castro) in Havana in 2016, Bartholomew appears to be winning that race - although the deeply contested "Ecumenical Council" in Crete did not help him - and could still be used by Kirill against him.

It is worth remembering from whom Kirill acquired his Latinophilia - his spiritual father, Metropolitan Nikodem of Leningrad, KGB Agent "Sviatoslav". Nikodem was warmly remembered at Kirill's recent meeting at the Phanar with Bartholomew. So both the Pope and the leader of Russian Orthodoxy seemingly revere this greatest traitor of Orthodoxy to Papism.

Alexander Soldatov writes: "The most vivid supporter of the 'reunion' between the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in the whole of history was Metropolitan Nikodem (Rotov) – the spiritual father and protector of the present Patriarch Cyril. In the Moscow Patriarchate it is widely believed that he was a secret cardinal, and also the prophecy of Blessed Pelagia of Ryazan addressed to Nikodem: 'You will die like a dog at the feet of your pope'. The metropolitan really did die at the age of 48 during a reception by Pope John-Paul I [in 1978]. In spite of his young age by hierarchical standards, Nikodem did a great deal. He was the first in the history of the Russian Church to serve with the Catholics, absorbed the Catholic mass, practiced spiritual exercises according to the method of Ignatius Loyola, and idolized pontiffs, especially the 'red pope', John XXIII, to whom he devoted his master's dissertation. He went to the Vatican every year; from 1968 he began to take with him Volodya Gundiaev, the present patriarch. In 1969, when Patriarch Alexis I was dying, Nikodem was able to push through the Synod the decision to make it obligatory for Orthodox priests to give communion to Catholics 'in the case of mortal danger'. This decision was condemned even by the ecumenically-minded Greeks [and condemned as "heretical" by the Russian Church Abroad in 1971].

"The Russian émigré and well-known theologian Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) explained this tendency as follows: 'Metropolitan Nikodem was drawn to Catholicism above all by the idea he had of it as a powerful, strictly disciplined, single Church. In vain did they tell him many times that such a picture did not correspond to contemporary reality... Metropolitan Nikodem was in no way willing to renounce his conviction! It was the external appearance that worked on him.'"

Nikodim's links with the Vatican went much further than an intellectual affinity. He was in fact a high-ranking Jesuit and secret Vatican bishop! This at first sight unlikely hypothesis gains credibility from two witnesses. The first is from the True Orthodox hieromonk Fr. Tikhon Kozushin: "In 1989 I and several other Orthodox 'informals' were invited to lunch at the French embassy. Among other guests there was an elderly man from France of Czech origin. He introduced himself as the director of a Catholic boarding-school in Medon, a suburb of Paris and a high-ranking officer of the Jesuit order. And then he said that Metropolitan Nikodem was also a secret-official officer of the order who was quite close to the Pope."

The second witness is Fr. Michael Havryliv, a Russian priest who was secretly received into the Catholic Church in 1973. Fr. Serge Keleher writes: "A Capuchin priest told Havryliv that Metropolitan Nicodemus [of Leningrad] was secretly a Catholic bishop, recognized by Rome with jurisdiction from Pope Paul VI throughout Russia. This assertion is not impossible – but neither is it entirely proved.

“On September 6 1975 Havryliv made a sacramental general Confession before Metropolitan Nicodemus, who then accepted Havryliv’s monastic vows and profession of Faith to the Apostolic See and the Pope of Rome. Kyr Nicodemus commanded Havryliv to order his monastic life according to the Jesuit Constitutions, and presented him with a copy of this document in Russian. This was all done privately; four days later the Metropolitan tonsured Havryliv a monk. On 9 October Kyr Nicodemus ordained Havryliv to the priesthood, without requiring the oaths customary for Russian Orthodox candidates to Holy Orders.

“In 1977 Havryliv was reassigned to the Moscow Patriarchate’s archdiocese of L’viv and Ternopil... In Havryliv’s final interview with Kyr Nicodemus, the Metropolitan of Leningrad ‘blessed me and gave me instructions to keep my Catholic convictions and do everything possible for the growth of the Catholic cause, not only in Ukraine, but in Russia. The Metropolitan spoke of the practice of his predecessors – and also asked me to be prudent.’”

These words indicate the power-loving truth behind the mask of the Vatican’s ecumenism; and the fact that Havryliv was re-ordained by Nikodem shows that Rome accepts the sacraments of the Orthodox for only as long as it suits her. The Orthodox were, according to Vatican II, not heretics, but “separated brethren”. However, the “separated brethren” still had to return in repentance to their father, the Pope...

The intriguing question is: which master was Nikodem really serving – the Soviets or the Vatican? His pro-Soviet statements on the international stage were notorious. But his love of Catholicism also seems to have been sincere...

In any case, the Catholics with their “liberation theology” were moving ever closer to communism (today’s Pope Francis I is more leftist in his ideology than any previous pope), while Nikodem was rushing to meet them from the other direction.

Thus Soldatov writes: “Nikodem’s sympathies with Catholicism were interwoven with a very specific ‘theology of communism’. He considered the Soviet socialist system to be the closest to Christianity and dreamed of a powerful Orthodox USSR.

“A group of church dissidents addressed the Local Council of the ROC of the MP in 1971, at which Nikodem was almost elected patriarch. Their lengthy address ‘On the newly-appeared false teaching of Metropolitan Nikodem (Rotov)’ called this teaching ‘apocalyptic religious communism’...”

Whatever his private convictions, and however he may or may not have bound himself to the coattails of the pope in imitation of his spiritual father, Kirill has to moderate his Latinophilia now. Already he has been labelling his Ukrainian opponents as uniates. If he is to survive, his most profitable course is likely to be a sharp turn against the Vatican. Of course, he will need the

approval of his master Putin for that. Putin (who likes to turn up late to audiences with the Pope) may well agree to return to Stalin's well-known contempt for the Pope ("How many legions has the Pope?" he asked). But will he retain the services of Kirill, who has failed in Ukraine and is an unpopular patriarch for other reasons (for example, his extreme wealth - he is probably the first billionaire monk in history)? Perhaps Putin will sack Kirill and put his confessor, Metropolitan Tikhon Shevkhunov, in his place. Time will tell...

24. THE END OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION?

The title of this article may sound melodramatic and “over the top”. It is not. Nor are we talking about the *physical* destruction of human civilization through a nuclear apocalypse. Such an event is quite possible, even likely; but it is not what we are talking about. We are talking about *the destruction of the family* through the LGBT movement and the impending legalization even of paedophilia by the United Nations.²¹⁸

The protection of the family, physically, socially and morally, is the main purpose and criterion of civilization; the state, according to St. Philaret of Moscow is simply the family writ large, with the head of the state as the father of the extended family – the “batyushka-tsar”, as he was called in Russia. When the state begins to *attack* the family, and when even most of the states of the world combine in supporting such aggression, we are justified in talking about the end of human civilization.

Of course, sexual sin and perversion have been present throughout history and in all civilizations. And some forms have even become the norm in some civilizations – for example, paedophilia in Classical Greece – which is highly significant in view of the important role Classical Greece (together with Byzantine Christianity) had in giving birth to modern western civilization. But what we are witnessing today is on an altogether larger and more systematically organized scale: the international norm has now become perversion, encouraged and enforced by laws and all the apparatus of state power. Of course, there are still many normal, heterosexual people; and some societies, especially in Russia and Eastern Europe, and some countries of Africa and South America, are attempting to resist the trend. But there are strong reasons for believing that these “reactionaries” do not have the spiritual strength to resist the trend towards a complete, barbaric sexual free-for-all similar to that which prevailed on the earth before Noah’s flood or on a smaller scale in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Take Russia. Since 2000, Putin has been steadily leading Russia back to Sovietism and a justification of all the terrible sins committed by that most evil of empires. The one redeeming nature of his regime has been its rejection of the LGBT movement. But is God going to support a regime that in every other respect defies His laws? The supposed moral guardians of the land, the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate, are riddled with homosexuals even while they hypocritically condemn the sins of the West. Nor are they faithful to the dogmatic teaching of the Orthodox Church: the heresies of Sergianism and Ecumenism are the best-known of the heresies that the MP continues to take part in with great enthusiasm.

²¹⁸ “The UN Is Normalizing Pedophilia: The Deep State Is Free to Prey Upon Your Children”, Humans are Free”, <http://humansarefree.com/2017/10/the-un-is-normalizing-pedophilia-deep.html?m=0>.

The only hope for the world and human civilization is a counter-revolution in Russia that completely extirpates Sovietism in all its forms. God will give power and strength to His people - but only if they show themselves to be truly His people by unhypocritically confessing the True Orthodox faith in word and deed and by rejecting leaders whose deepest loyalty is to the anti-Christian Russian revolution - or to the income stream that comes to them from exploiting the resources of the Russian land and from their continuing participation in the corrupt economic nexus of the West. Only then will a renewed and resurrected Holy Russia be ready to lead the fight against the Western Antichrist.

*September 9/22, 2018.
Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God.*

25. HAS PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW OVER-REACHED HIMSELF?

From a purely ecclesiastical point of view, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict can be evaluated in a very simple way by the True Orthodox: none of the main actors in the conflict are truly Orthodox, all are in heresy or schism, so we can regard the actions of none of the Churches involved as canonical or inspired by the Holy Spirit. However, from a political, and especially from a personal or practical point of view the matter is by no means so simple – and not only for people of Russian or Ukrainian origin. Moreover, the consequences of the conflict for the further development of World Orthodoxy are of grave concern for all.

The ecclesiastical dispute in its present phase centres on Patriarch Bartholomew's project to create an Ukrainian autocephalous Church. In 1686 Patriarch Dionysius IV of Constantinople handed over jurisdiction of the Kievan Metropolia to the Moscow Patriarchate. This made good sense at the time because the Muscovite tsardom, whose influence and power had been extending south and west into the Ukraine and Belorussia for several decades, was in a much better position to protect the Orthodox Christians of the region from heterodox and Muslim influences and persecution than Constantinople, which was itself under the power of the Ottoman Sultans. Nor did Constantinople contest the canonicity of Moscow's rule over the Kiev metropolia at any time before the revolution of 1917... After 1917 three major new factors began to complicate the situation: Constantinopolitan imperialism, Ukrainian nationalism and, of course, Soviet communism. All three tendencies were anti-Orthodox, and all three were resisted by the Moscow Patriarchate under Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow and Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, both of whom received the crown of holy martyrdom. Thus the MP resisted and condemned Constantinople's creation of illegal autocephalies in Poland, the Baltic States, Finland and Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as its support for the Russian renovationists and the self-consecrating Ukrainian autocephalists. There is therefore a solid canonical and truly Orthodox foundation to the Russian Orthodox opposition to Ukrainian autocephaly. Of course, the MP today is not the MP of the 1920s – the organization going by that name was built by Stalin and the traitor Metropolitan Sergius (later "patriarch of Moscow") on the bones of the faithful hierarchs of the canonical, truly Orthodox MP that existed before Sergius' surrender to the Bolsheviks in 1927. But the valid arguments of the true, pre-1927 Russian Church against Ukrainian autocephaly are not undermined by the fact that they are also supported by today's false, Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate. It follows that we must agree with the assertion of Archbishop Tikhon, head of the Russian True Orthodox Church, that Constantinople's granting of Ukrainian autocephaly is "at a minimum an unwise step".²¹⁹

²¹⁹ <https://riafan.ru/1100736-glava-ripc-predostavlenie-ukraine-avtokefalii-kak-minimum-nerazumnyi-shag>, September 18, 2018.

Archbishop Tikhon also said that the whole process initiated by Constantinople was “highly politicized”. In this we must also agree; but it is not clear what conclusion follows from this fact because there is strong political pressure on both sides in this conflict. Political pressure was brought to bear on the original declaration of a Ukrainian autocephalous church just after the revolution by Ukrainian nationalists and Soviet communists, leading to the martyrdom of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev in 1918. However, today’s declaration of autocephaly has been brought about by a different combination of pressures: Ukrainian nationalists and American liberals. In fact, today’s ecclesiastical war between Moscow and Constantinople is really a proxy war between their respective political backers, the KGB and the CIA.

The former assertion, that the MP is backed (and thoroughly infiltrated and controlled) by the KGB, is beyond dispute and there are few attempts to hide it now that the KGB has been rehabilitated in the eyes of those Russian people who either reject or do not know the history of the Russian Church and the Russian nation. The idea that this leopard has really changed its spots is highly dubious; but, sadly, it is generally accepted... The latter assertion, that the EP is backed by the CIA, is more difficult to prove, but still very likely. In general, the CIA has interfered less in religious affairs than the KGB, perhaps because it is influenced, as ex-KGB agent Konstantin Preobrazhensky has speculated, by the American belief in the complete separation of Church and State. But since the Second World War the influence of the American state on the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been obvious, albeit exerted in a more subtle way than the KGB’s influence on the MP. Thus in 1949 President Truman lent Archbishop Athenagoras his private plane to fly to Constantinople and seize control of the patriarchate. And an EP blog has recently declared: “American presidents understood that Washington’s active support and defense of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was not only consistent with the principle of religious freedom but was also an important, global resource for highlighting and communicating American values in the twin arenas of international relations and Great Power diplomacy.”²²⁰

The historian Kirill Alexandrov has also justly pointed to the influence that America has on the EP’s moral teaching, since “the social morals that reign in the ‘progressive’ American society affect the self-consciousness of members of the American Archdiocese. I want to believe that simple Orthodox Greeks in the US really live according to Christ’s commandments, and try to ‘*depart from evil and do good*’. But here follows a strong example, characterizing the morals of the top leadership of the American Archdiocese, and it should be noted that conventionally, a very important role in its management is played by lay people, usually businessmen or politicians.

²²⁰Alexandros Kyrou, in <https://blogs.goarch.org/blog/-/blogs/truman-athenagoras-and-world-orthodoxy-an-historical-alternative-to-current-us-relations-with-constantinople-part-two>, blogs.goarch.org, April 21, 2014.

“One such influential politician in the Greek community is Michael Huffington, a prominent member of the Republican Party, a member of the US House of Representatives from California in 1993-95, and the founder of the influential media resource: *The Huffington Post*, which in 2012, was named the most popular political site in the US.

“Michael Huffington was first a member of the Presbyterian Church, and then moved to the Evangelical, and in 1996, after traveling to Istanbul and having talks with the Phanarites, he became Orthodox. This, however, did not prevent him from openly declaring his homosexuality two years later, and even releasing in 2007 a film that promotes same-sex ‘love’ with a very frilly title: ‘We’re all Angels’.

“In addition, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and M. Huffington sponsor various projects for the promotion of LGBT communities, and ecumenical projects In order to bring the Orthodox and Catholics closer, he created at Loyola Marymount University, an ecumenical institution in his own name, the Huffington Ecumenical Institute, and stated that his dream is to see Catholics and Orthodox commune together. Considering that he is already 71 years old, he hopes that this will happen soon.

“And this man in June 2018 openly called for the resignation of Archbishop Demetrios, the Primate of the American Archdiocese.

‘The reason for such appeals was a scandal involving the disappearance of the huge amounts from the treasury of the American archdiocese allocated for the construction of Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York, and some other moments. The influential American edition *The National Herald* published an article dedicated to the analysis of the scandal in the American Archdiocese at the recent Synaxis.

“The publication contains the words of Archbishop Demetrios, with whom he reacted in reproach for the misuse of funds, and the assertion that after this, the sponsors of the Archdiocese no longer trust him. He said that sponsors don’t have the right to ask what happened to the money, just as he does not ask them how they made their money.

“Of course, it is very unusual to hear such maxims from an Orthodox Hierarch. But there is reason to believe that the US authorities know perfectly well who spent these funds and how, and Archbishop Demetrios with such rhetoric nobly tries to escape the threat of some of his high-ranking colleagues.

“Thus, the US seems to have many levers of pressure on the Ecumenical Church—the very one which aggressively claims to be the undisputed head of the entire Orthodox world.”²²¹

*

But, granted that Bartholomew’s action in granting the Ukrainian Church (or rather, just one of the three Ukrainian Orthodox churches) autocephaly is almost certainly both uncanonical and politically motivated (by American interests and the LGBT lobby), and therefore “unwise”, is it likely to succeed?

The answer to this question depends on the further question: “What is he trying to achieve?”

The first, most charitable hypothesis is that he is really trying to unite the three main branches of Ukrainian Orthodoxy (KP-UOC, UOAC and UOC-MP) under his own favoured candidate, KP-UOC. However, this is bound to have the opposite effect, driving KP-UOC and UOC-MP further away from each other (the position of UOAC is less clear). We are reminded of the fate of Moscow’s creation of autocephaly for the Orthodox Church of America in 1970: to this day no other Local Orthodox Church recognizes the OCA, while the other Orthodox jurisdictions in America have not united under it.

The second hypothesis is that he is vaingloriously trying to strengthen his own image as the Pope of Eastern Orthodoxy. But this project, too, is likely to fail. After all, most of the Local Orthodox Churches have already come out against his Tomos of Ukrainian Autocephaly, including the Church of Greece, which, being Greek, one might have expected to support him. The bitter fact for Bartholomew is: while he appears to be winning his race with Kirill of Moscow to be the Pope’s most favoured Orthodox patriarch, he is not at all popular in the Orthodox Church as a whole. There is a profound psychological reason for this: the World Orthodox have betrayed Orthodoxy by voluntarily following Bartholomew and other false hierarchs into the World Council of Churches and the rainbow-coloured embrace of the apostate West, and many of them have a bad conscience because of this. But, instead of repenting correctly by breaking communion with both apostate Catholics and Protestants and the false Orthodox hierarchs, they choose to put the blame on their leaders rather than themselves. The laity hope against hope that their clerical leaders will repent of their ecumenical course, so that they themselves will not have to take a stand against them. But in their heart of hearts they know that this is not going to happen, and so they direct their own feelings of guilt against their leaders. However, while they are right in thinking that “the leaders of this people cause them to err”, the fact remains that “those who are led by them are destroyed” (Isaiah 9.16).

²²¹ Alexandrov, “What Moved Patriarch Bartholomew to Lay Ruin to Ukrainian Orthodoxy?” *Orthodox Christianity*, September 23, 2018, <http://orthochristian.com/115911.html>.

There remains only a third, political hypothesis: that Bartholomew is acting at the behest of his western political masters in trying to stir up nationalist passion in Ukraine. Let us look more closely at this hypothesis.

Until 1991, Russia and Ukraine were part of a single state, the Soviet Union, which found itself under the anathema of the Russian Church's 1918 anathema against the Bolsheviks and all those who cooperated with them. Ukraine voted for becoming an independent state (even in the Donbass), and since then it has moved – with some ups and downs – in a steadily anti-Soviet and pro-Western direction, until, at the present time, almost all Soviet symbolica and statues of Lenin have been cast down and all Soviet (and Nazi) propaganda have been outlawed. Only in the Russian-occupied Donbass and Crimea have symbols of Sovietism, such as the hammer and sickle, remained and even multiplied (often in blasphemous union with Orthodox Christian symbolica).

By contrast, Russia since the fall of Yeltsin and the rise to power of Vladimir Putin in 2000, and especially since its invasion of Georgia in 2008, and of Crimea and Donbass in 2014, has steadily moved in a pro-Soviet and even pro-Stalinist direction. There are of course differences between Stalinist Sovietism and Putinist Sovietism – in particular, Putin's much greater involvement in the structures of Western capitalism, which he and his billionaire Mafiosi comrades both exploit and depend on. But the similarities, and above all the similarity of *spirit*, are much more striking. Far from distancing himself from Stalinism, Putin justifies it by the nationalist myth of Stalin's "Great Patriotic War", which remains the cornerstone of Putin's ideology, denial of which can now earn a prison sentence – or death. However, since the Valdai conference of 2014, Putin has added an important new argument to his ideological armoury: the supposed greater spirituality of his Russia, as opposed not only to the heretical West, but also to Orthodox Ukraine, which is seen now as being simply an offshoot of Western heretical Christianity and pseudo-spirituality. To a True Orthodox Christian, brought up on fierce rejection both of Sergianism (the subjection of the Church to the Soviet and neo-Soviet state) and of the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches (of which the MP has been an enthusiastic and influential participant since 1961), the idea that modern Russia, ruled as it is by the KGB and the MP, could have any claim to real spirituality, and therefore have a right to criticize the spirituality of others, will seem absurd – and absurdly hypocritical. Nevertheless, Putin's argument needs to be addressed, if only because so many people believe it.

There is no doubt that the pro-LGBT agenda of the West represents an enormous threat to any Orthodox Christian that is exposed to it: those who approve of the antichristian LGBT agenda, and still more those who practice it, will not enter the Kingdom of heaven, as the Apostle Paul quite clearly says (Romans 1.32; I Corinthians 6.9). The threat is especially great in relation to the younger generation brought up in the West, where LGBT propaganda is already compulsory, with almost all escape routes now blocked...

Almost the only redeeming feature of Putin's otherwise repulsive regime is its support for Orthodox Christianity (at any rate in the heretical form preached by the MP) and rejection of the abominable sexual morality of the West. The fact that both this support and this rejection are hypocritical (the MP's hierarchy, for example, is riddled with homosexuals, and abortion is still permitted if the woman wants it and/or a doctor sanctions it; it is paid for by the state²²²) is not the point here. The fact is: at least the younger generation are being given some protection in Russia against LGBT propaganda. Without such protection it is doubtful that even the semblance of Orthodox Christianity will survive on earth for another generation...

Some draw the conclusion from this that we must support Putin's regime. The present writer does not draw this conclusion. Almost the last words of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas were that evil is not overcome by evil, but by good. The evil of the Western Antichrist will not be overcome by support for the Eastern Antichrist, nor by unequivocal support of one Orthodox nation against another. We must oppose *both* the sodomites' blasphemous union of the Cross with the rainbow-coloured flag *and* the Putinists' equally blasphemous union of the Cross with the hammer-and-sickle.

Returning, finally, to Bartholomew and his divisive project of Ukrainian autocephaly: it will not succeed, for the reasons outlined above. And Orthodox Christians, whether Russian or Ukrainian, Greek or American, must unite against everything he stands for: that is, the Trojan horse of nationalist autocephalism, ecumenism, the new calendar, western heresy and western anti-morality in general. "The walls of Jerusalem will be builded" – but only when all Orthodox Christians on all sides of the present conflict have united in offering a pure sacrifice to God, untainted by any heresy or moral abomination

September 13/26, 2018.

²²² It is often said that the number of abortions has been declining in Russia since 1990. This is true, but the numbers still remain high, and in practice there is little to stop an abortion at any stage of pregnancy if the woman wants it or a doctor approves of it. See "aborty v Rossii", <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki>. Nor is homosexuality forbidden by the state among consenting adults – although social opinion is against it.

26. THE SERPENT'S BITE

Perhaps the most counter-intuitive prefiguring of Christ's saving passion in the Old Testament is Moses' serpent. When the Israelites were in the desert of Edom they started murmuring "against God and against Moses" (Numbers 21.5). And deadly serpents began to bite them, and many died. In answer to the people's plea for help, God told Moses to fashion a fiery serpent and put it on a "pole", which Church tradition says was in the shape of a cross. "And it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Numbers 21.9).

The prophetic meaning of this story is clear. Because of our disobedience to God and His Holy Church, we are infected with the poison of the devil, which is the cause of our death, both physical and spiritual. The only cure for this death-dealing disease is to look with sincere faith and hope on the image of Christ crucified; this faith alone can deliver us from the disease of sin that, if unhealed, leads to eternal death (John 3.14-15).

This much is clear. But why is Christ seemingly portrayed as a serpent? Is not the serpent rather the image of the devil than the Conqueror of the devil?

However, this is a misunderstanding. The serpent raised on the cross in the desert is indeed an image of the devil – but of *the devil destroyed* by Christ's crucifixion. As St. Gregory the Theologian says: "[The brass serpent] saved those who looked upon it, *not because it lived, but because it was killed*, and killed with it the powers that were subject to it, being destroyed as it destroyed. And what is the fitting epitaph for it from us? 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' You are overthrown by the cross, you are slain by Him Who is the Giver of life, you are without breath, without motion, even though you keep the form of serpent lifted high up on a pole."

In general, Christ saved us from the sin of Adam by imitating the situation of Adam – but with this difference: that He did not sin. Thus Adam was born as a man of virgin soil and the inbreathing of the Spirit, and Christ was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Adam was tempted by the devil: so was Christ. Adam died from the assault of the devil: so did Christ. But since Christ, unlike Adam, never once succumbed to the will of the devil, His death became life-giving; and it gives life to all those who look on Him with faith. It was by the second Adam reversing Adam's fall, and doing in obedience to God everything that Adam did in disobedience, that the sting of death was destroyed.

October 4/17, 2018.

27. THE WIDOW OF NAIN

The Lord's raising of the son of the widow of Nain from the dead is the first of three resurrections he carried out before the greatest miracle of all, which is His raising of Himself on the third day. It teaches us many things about life and death. And on this anniversary of the repose in the Lord of Olga, the founder of our parish, it may be appropriate to say a few words on the mystery of death.

Death is God's punishment for the sin of Adam. It is not natural – that is, it is not in accordance with the nature of man as he was originally created. God created man alive and well in the fullest sense; in that original, natural state it was impossible for him to die or to suffer in any way. And being sinless, there was no need, moral or physical, for him to die; but after he disobeyed the Author of life and Life itself, it was right and just that he should be deprived of life. Of course, he continued a kind of life for many more years, but it was not life as he had known it in Paradise; it was the wretched, painful life on this dying earth, surrounded by suffering and dying creatures, that we are accustomed out of ignorance to consider true life. Christ came to restore us to true life. But, as He said to the Jews, "you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5.40).

Christ resurrected the son of the widow of Nain, not by saying anything or touching him, but simply by touching his bier. This demonstrated His complete mastery over all the elements, including the souls of men. It is not even recorded that He prayed to His Father, as He did before other miracles, as if to affirm that "I and the Father are one", one in their Divine nature, one in will, in authority and in power. That is, they do not have two separate lives, but are both Life, having life not from some other source, but from within Their common nature.

What does resurrection mean? It means the return of the soul to the body. In our materialist world, alas, few people now believe in the soul as something created independently of the body and not subject to the death of the body. Few understand that when the body dies the soul lives on, and continues to see, feel and remember. Indeed, once freed from the fallen body, the soul is in some senses more alive than before. When the son of the widow of Nin was resurrected, he immediately sat up and began to speak, showing that all his faculties had been returned to him.

When the soul is freed from the body at death, it is judged by God. As St. Paul says, "It is appointed to men to die once, and after that the judgement" (Hebrews 9.27). During this judgement, all the deeds, thoughts and feelings of our earthly life are examined in the light of the Word of God. If we have true faith in Christ, and that faith has been expressed in truly good deeds, then our sins will be remitted and we will enter the Kingdom of heaven. If, however, the balance of our deed, thoughts and feelings shows that our faith had been a sham, we will go to hell.

This process of judgement lasts for three days, which is why the Church orders her children to pray particularly fervently for the souls of the dead in the first three days after death.

When Christ came to resurrect Lazarus, he waited until the fourth day after his death, when, as his sisters told Him, his body had begun to corrupt. And we are told that He wept - the only time in the whole Gospel that Christ is portrayed as weeping. He wept out of love for His friend Lazarus. He wept over the state of his soul and body, corrupted by sin. And while He worked an extraordinary miracle in bringing him back to life, it was not yet the true life that he returned to, but this wretched life of death, corruption and sin in which we "live". So death had not yet been conquered in spite of the fact that Christ demonstrated that He was the Master of life and death, having the keys of hell and death (Revelation 1.18).

However, when Christ raised Himself from the dead, having destroyed sin and death at the root, that is, in hell itself, His Body was radiant with the Divine Light and incorrupt, never to die again. For by His Death and Descent into hell He had destroyed death in Himself and in all those who truly believe in Him. That is why, while it is only natural to weep at the bodies of those whom we love, as Christ wept at the body of Lazarus, we should stop weeping, as Christ told the widow of Nain to stop weeping, because we know that our loved ones, if they have truly believed in Christ, will be resurrected to true life in both body and soul at His Second Coming, when He comes again to judge the living and the dead. Amen.

October 6/19, 2018.

28. MEDITATION ON A PRAYER

From the Morning Prayers in the Orthodox Church we read: =

*O my most merciful and all-merciful God, Lord Jesus Christ, through Thy great love
Thou didst come down and take flesh, that all might be saved.*

All prayer should begin with thanksgiving for the good things that God has done for us. And the beginning of all good things is the Incarnation of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Without the Incarnation human nature would not have been recreated in the Virgin's womb, making possible its entrance into the Kingdom of God. If God had not become man, He could not have died the death of the Cross, offering a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men. If God had not become man, He could not have descended as a man into hades, or risen from the dead on the third day, raising all men with Himself.

And again, O Saviour, save me by Thy Grace, I pray Thee. For if Thou shouldst save me for my works, this would not be Grace or a gift, but rather a duty.

If we truly believe that Christ offered the perfect sacrifice for sin on the Cross, then we must on no account attribute our salvation to any good works on our part. For if we saved ourselves, as it were, through our good works, we would be receiving salvation as a reward for good works, as our due, as payment, as our *right*. But sinful mankind has no rights; a sinner and a debtor has no rights in relation to his creditor. He can only beg for remission of his debts, which he receives gratis, by grace, through faith in His mercy. For "by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the Grace of God" (Ephesians 2.8).

Yea, Thou Who art great in compassion, and ineffable in mercy. For he that believeth in Me, Thou hast said, O my Christ, shall live and never see death.

All those who are born in sin must die; that was the sentence of God on the human race after the sin of our first parent. But while we cannot escape physical death, we can escape the death of the soul, which is the inescapable lot of all those who die in their sins, not having believed in the mercy of God bestowed on us freely on the Cross.

*If, then, faith in Thee saveth the desperate, behold, I believe, save me, for Thou art my
God and Creator.*

When we realize that no good works of our own can save us, but only the good Work of Christ on the Cross, we turn to Him in desperation, saying: Save me, I believe. That was sufficient for the good thief on the right of Christ. He believed in Christ as his God and Creator, and in His words: "This day you will be with Me in Paradise". And he was the first to enter Paradise.

Let faith instead of works be imputed to me, O my God, for Thou wilt find no works which could justify me. But may my faith suffice instead of all works, may it answer for and acquit me, may it make me a partake of Thine eternal glory.

We are saved by grace, which comes to us through faith, not through works. Good works are essential as a testimony to the genuineness of our faith. But in themselves they do not save. Only faith in the good Work of Christ on the cross can do that.

And let Satan not seize me and tear me from Thy hand and fold.

If we falter in faith, Satan can seize us, tearing us away from the protection of God and His Holy Church, which is the community of those who are being saved through faith.

But whether I desire it or not, save me, O Christ my Saviour. Forestall me quickly, for I perish. Thou art my God from my mother's womb. Vouchsafe me, O Lord, to love Thee now as once I loved sin.

How can we not desire to be saved? If we do not believe, we will not desire to be saved, because we do not believe in the necessity of salvation, or believe falsely that we can be saved through works. Therefore let us cling to Christ, Who has loved us from our mother's womb. Let us love Him now, believing without doubt that we need to be save and that only through faith in Him we can be saved.

Vouchsafe me, O Lord, to love Thee now as fervently as I once loved sin itself, and to work for Thee without idleness, diligently, as I worked before for deceptive Satan.

When we work, not for the sake of Christ and in order to demonstrate our faith in Him, we are in fact working for Satan. So let us abandon these falsely-called good works, and work for Christ alone, out of faith and love for Him alone.

But supremely shall I work for Thee, my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, all the days of my life, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

December 12/25, 2018.

29. WHO WON THE COLD WAR?

Victory in war is attained only in two ways: either by completely destroying the enemy, or by converting him to your side. There is no third way: a victory attained in any other way is no real victory, but only a battle won, which may end in final victory – or in defeat. The victory of the West over the Soviet Union in the Cold War in 1989-91 was one such inconclusive victory, a battle won that may yet end in final defeat.

The victories won by annihilation of the enemy are many. One of the most famous in ancient times was Rome's victory over Carthage. The Romans so respected their enemies, who had dealt them their worst ever defeat at Carrhae, that they did not stop at reversing that defeat and defeating them at Zama in 202 B.C., but declared: *Cartago delenda est*, "Carthage must be destroyed". And Carthage was destroyed – completely – in 146 B.C. It never rose again.

Another victory by annihilation was the Allies' conquest of Germany in 1945. The victory over the Kaiser's Germany in 1918 had been incomplete. No Allied army stepped foot in Germany; its economic and war-making potential, though damaged, were not destroyed. Most important, the Germans did not *feel* defeated; they thought they had been "stabbed in the back". They were forced to sign a war guilt clause, but didn't believe it – there was no repentance. Nor did they pay reparations sufficient to compensate the losses suffered by the Western powers, especially France. By the time Hitler came to power, they had been remitted completely. So the still living snake was able to rise again because the seat of its power – its head – had not been crushed. That took place only in 1945, when Nazi power was crushed utterly in its deepest homeland, its capital. This was a real "twilight of the gods". The false gods of German nationalism had been truly destroyed.

Victories by conversion are much rarer and much greater from a moral point of view. Such a victory was the triumph of the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred the Great over the pagan Danes under King Guthrum in 878. Alfred defeated the Danes in battle at Ethandune; but, knowing that his victory could not be final, and that his enemy still occupied the whole of East Anglia, he offered him something quite different: baptism into the Orthodox Church (Alfred became Guthrum's sponsor), followed by a twelve-day baptismal feast and the present of East Anglia as a baptismal gift. Nor was this a superficial charade. The Danes remained Christian, and were fully integrated into Orthodox England...

Now let us turn to the Cold War. A very long war, beginning almost immediately after World War Two, in which many millions died around the globe. And yet the main antagonists – the NATO allies and the Soviet Union – never fired a single shot against each other in anger, preferring instead to fight by proxy and by the threat of mutually assured destruction. The allied "victors" did not even set foot on Soviet soil, let alone capture or destroy the enemy. The Communists simply melted away, changing their name and their ideology at the same time – but without changing their hearts...

There was an attempt at conversion, but it was feeble and unconvincing. The Germans after 1945 were subjected to a denazification programme which eventually produced good fruits – real repentance for the horrors of Nazism. Moreover, they were given a vast sum of money in the Marshall Plan which helped them rebuild their economy and become again a prosperous and peaceful nation. But there was no decommunization programme in Eastern Europe after 1991. Not a single Communist leader or Gulag commandant was brought to trial for his crimes. As for economic aid, there was some of it, but – with the exception of the aid given to the former East Germany by West Germany – it came nowhere near the levels needed or asked for.

Thus, as Simon Jenkins writes, “There was no lowering of tariffs or other barriers to trade with the east, and therefore little stimulus to growth in the post-communist economies. Brussels lobbyists opposed any inrush of low-cost produce, especially food, into the EEC’s protected markets. Despite initial pleas from Gorbachev, there was no new Marshall Aid, nor substantial inward investment, at least until former communist states joined the EU. At the same time there was a torrent of low-cost labour migrating westwards, bleeding the east of talent and further aiding the west’s economies.

“More dangerous was an instant NATO welcome to Russia’s former Warsaw Pact allies. Those republics closest to Russia, such as Belarus, Ukraine and the central Asian ‘stans’, formed a Commonwealth of Independent States under Moscow’s aegis. But the Baltic states together with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary turned their backs on the east and began negotiations with NATO as guarantor of their future security. There is no doubt this is what these countries wanted, but the alacrity with which NATO seemed ready to advance its frontier eastwards rubbed salt into the gaping wound of Russia’s national pride. Yeltsin pleaded with the west to hold back, describing NATO’s expansion as ‘a major political mistake’. He warned that ‘the flames of scar could burst out across the whole of Europe’. He was ignored. In this respect, there was an ominous sense of the cold war’s demise replicating the casual triumphalism of Versailles...”²²³

And just as the incomplete and mismanaged victory celebrated at Versailles led to the rise of an avenging angel from the still intact nest of the undestroyed enemy in the form of Hitler, so the undestroyed enemy of Communism has given birth to Putin. “In 1999,” continues Jenkins, “Yeltsin anointed a former Leningrad KGB boss, Vladimir Putin, as his successor. The contrast was total. Putin was the epitome of a tough, communist-era apparatchik. The ex-intelligence officer had no time for the niceties of democracy, but a keen sense of the need to restore Russian pride. He would issue pictures of himself hunting and bare-chested on horseback. His court of oligarchs made sure he secured as much overseas wealth as they had. Putin’s policies endorse at increasingly rigged elections, made no mention of civil rights or market economics. He was

²²³ Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfels & Nicholson, 2018, pp. 288-289.

a populist and a nationalist, his pledge merely to restore Russia's integrity and self-confidence. Opponents were bribed imprisoned or killed. The west might have felt able to humour and torment Yeltsin. It now faced the pastiche tsar of a macho state. That Russia's economy was debilitated was irrelevant. Dictatorship thrives on poverty."²²⁴

Putin has openly declared his intent to avenge Russia's defeat in the Cold War, just as Hitler set out to avenge Germany's defeat in World War One. He is able to do this because Communism was not truly defeated in the Cold War. Its leaders were not tried and punished, its ideology was not exposed for the fraud it undoubtedly is (only the economic aspect of Communism was denigrated, not its atheist heart), its secret service agents retained their stranglehold over the Orthodox Church. Therefore the day of reckoning is still in the future – and it is not at all certain who will win. For it is possible to win all the battles in a war while losing the last, decisive one...

Even if Communism loses the final battle of this coming war, a deep and long-lasting peace is guaranteed only if the whole Enlightenment philosophy which gave birth not only to Communism, but also to Fascism and Democracy, is renounced by the victors. The only teaching which does not simply oppose this triple-headed monster but *conquers* and *destroys* it is the Orthodox Christian Faith. It was the renunciation of that faith by Russia in 1917 that set in motion that long cycle of extremely bloody and inconclusive wars that we have witnessed over the last century. Only the resurrection of that faith, and the true repentance and re-conversion of Russia, will bring the final victory and true peace...

December 13/26, 2018.

²²⁴ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

31. THE ROOTS OF ATHEISM

If we ask an atheist why he does not believe in God, we will generally receive one of two kinds of answer. God does not exist, he will say, because science – especially Darwinism – has demonstrated that we came into being by chance, out of dead matter, without the need for any Creator. Or because of the manifest injustice in the world, which proves that there is no such thing as a just and loving God.

The first objection is easier to deal with. For, as St. Paul says in the first chapter of Romans, the existence of the invisible Creator is clearly demonstrated by His visible creation, so that he who does not believe “has no excuse”. And indeed, the more we study the extraordinary complexity and perfection of creation, far beyond the capacity of man to explain or imitate or emulate, the more absurd the atheist hypothesis looks. Nor has anybody been able to answer the question of how the creation can come out of nothing. The fact is: nothing comes from nothing; there must be something that brought everything that we see into being, and that something is absolute Being, “He Who Is”, God Almighty.

Intuitively, however, God Almighty must also be loving and just; He must be the height of perfection in order to bring all this perfection into being, and especially the crown of His creation – man, with his unquenchable dreams of love and justice. But then the atheist points to all the manifest injustices in the world: the babies who die young, or who grow up with crippling mental or physical disabilities; the wretched existence, even in our scientific age, of the majority of mankind; the continuing existence of genocidal tyrants, who die peacefully in their beds while their victims suffer bitter tortures to the end. “Can this be justice?” asks the atheist. “If God is almighty, why does He not bring the sufferings of the innocent to an end? If he can prevent such suffering but does not do so, does this not prove that He is neither loving nor just – and therefore that He does not exist?”

The believer is tempted to reply to these reproaches that in the life to come all these injustices will come to an end and the rightness of God’s ways will be demonstrated. Yes, there is no question about that. But such an answer will not satisfy the atheist who does not believe in the life of the age to come.

Nor did it satisfy some of the greatest saints who ever lived. It did not satisfy Righteous Job. His friends tried to convince him that he was suffering justly for his sins. He was not convinced, not because he was lacking in humility and did not see himself as a sinner, but because the answer was too pat, too superficial.

Job accepts that all men are sinners and for that reason worthy of God’s wrath: “For mortal man born of woman is short-lived and full of wrath. He falls like a flower that blooms, and like a shadow he does not continue. Have you not taken account of him, and brought him to judgement before You? For who

shall be pure from uncleanness? Not one. Even if his life is but one day upon the earth...’ (14.1-4). And yet when his friend Eliphaz says much the same thing – “For who is the mortal that shall be blameless, or who is born of a woman that shall be righteous, since He does not trust His saints, and heaven is not pure in His sight” (15.14-16) – Job says that “you are all bad comforters” (16.2). For “there was no wrongdoing in my hands, and my prayer is pure” (16.16-17).

And yet we do not find an answer to our questions in the Book of Job. What we do learn is the following. First, Job is indeed a righteous man, who was not lying when he said: “I hold fast to my righteousness and am not letting it go. For I am not conscious in myself of having done anything wrong” (27.6). Therefore Job’s friends are wrong to seek some fault in him that would justify his suffering. At the same time, while commending Job against his friends, the Lord has something to rebuke Job for: “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God let him answer for it.” We cannot argue with God or contend with His judgements. The very thought of arguing with God is sin – which Job immediately acknowledges: “Behold I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? I will put my hand on my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further” (40.1-5). How can the creature hope to understand the mind of His Creator? The gulf between the Creator and His creature is infinite. The only rational thing to do is shut his mouth.

St. Paul expressed the same thought: “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed I, ‘Why hast Thou made me thus?’ Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonor?” (Romans 9.20-21)

It is only when Job finally stops arguing with God, recognizing the boundless distance between Creator and creature that he finally receives an illumination that gives him peace and prepares the way for his rehabilitation in the eyes, not only of God, but also of men: “I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withheld from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes” (42.1-6).

This passage from Job is read on Holy Thursday in the Orthodox Church, showing Job’s suffering to be a forefigure of the suffering of Christ. For if the suffering of the righteous Job was inexplicable to Job, how much more inexplicable must the suffering of the supremely righteous Christ have seemed to His disciples? And yet through the supremely unjust suffering of the All-Righteous One God’s justice was satisfied and His love manifested to the greatest degree...

The atheist “hides counsel without knowledge”. He presumes to know that God is unjust and unloving, measuring himself as if he were on a par with “the

God, Who loves us more than we know how to love, and without Whom the very concept of justice would be inconceivable to us. Until he humbles himself, repenting in dust and ashes, he will learn nothing but only puff himself up in his insane belief that he has somehow humiliated God, put Him in His place, as it were, shown Him up for what He really is – supposing, of course, that He really exists, which the atheist claims he knows is not the case.

It is pride that hides the unbeliever from the light of truth that surrounds him on all sides. The believer does not presume to know all the answers, or even a small part of them. But his lack of knowledge does not torment him; he finds it only natural, since he knows he is a man and not God. He knows that God in his infinite wisdom, love and justice knows, and that is all that matters. For like a child he does not presume to contradict his parents or ask them to explain things that are beyond his understanding. And so: “Verily I say unto you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18.3).

*December 17/30, 2018.
Holy Prophet Daniel.*

30. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS

Contemporary Orthodox modernists who follow the teaching of the heretic Fr. John Romanides like to attack the central dogma of the Christian faith, the dogma of our redemption through the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, on the grounds that all talk of “sacrifice” and “satisfying the justice of God” is Roman Catholic. Very many passages from Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers refute this modernist idea. One of the clearest is the following from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews, which is quoted here together with the commentary on it by St. Theophan the Recluse:-

9.22-23. According to the law, almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things with better sacrifices than these.

In general, he says in the Old Testament almost all cleansings according to the law required sacrifices. Consequently, by the shedding of blood, which was a necessary condition for the forgiveness of acts committed. And so, the forefigures of the heavenly tabernacle had to be cleansed by the blood of animals, while in the heavenly tabernacle – that is, the Church of Christ – people have to be cleansed through better sacrifices than these. By which sacrifices? By the Blood of the Intercessor of the New Testament, Jesus Christ.

9.24-25. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters holy of holies every year with the blood of another.

The hierarchs of the Old Testament entered the holy of holies made with hand, which was a forefigure of the true, heavenly holy place, but Christ entered the Heaven itself, so as to intercede for us ‘in the presence of God’. He entered with His own Blood, by which He propitiated God the Father and reconciled us with Him, and also with the angels, for they also were hostile to us as enemies of the Lord. But He did not ascend into Heaven so as to enter a second time, offering Himself, as the high priests used to do it, entering the holy of holies every year (on the day of atonement) with the blood of another – that is, of animals. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as completely satisfying the justice of God, has no need to be repeated, as the death of man takes place only once.

9.26. Otherwise He would have had to suffer often since the beginning of the world. But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared in order to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.

If Jesus Christ had been an ordinary high priest, entering the holy of holies with His own sacrifice, then He, as the eternal High Priest, would have had to suffer and die constantly ‘since the beginning of the world’ – since the fall of the first parents, which is impossible for a man. Therefore He suffered and died once to

annihilate the sin of men, that is, in order to 'overthrow and weaken the sin precisely of those who, having committed it, were forgiven without punishment, while the strength of sin consists in drawing down punishment on the sinner' (Theophylact). "He died once for all men. But do not people continue to die up to now? They die, but they do not remain in death. The power of death and true death is when he who has died has no possibility of returning to life, and moreover a better life, that is, a falling asleep" (St. Chrysostom). But why did He offer Himself as a Sacrifice for the sins of men 'at the end of the ages', and not immediately after the fall of the first parents? Because at the beginning sin was not so widespread and evident to the consciousness as it became at the end of the ages (Romans 5.20); therefore the first men would not have believed in Him and His Sacrifice would have turned out to be useless. But He did not have to die a second time (St. Chrysostom).

9.27-28. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, not for cleansing from sin, but for salvation.

For it has been determined by God that man should die once. Therefore Jesus Christ, as a true man, died 'once', offering Himself as a Sacrifice, 'to bear the sins of many' - He took away the sins from man and brought them in His own Person to God, so that He should forgive them for the sake of His Sacrifice. But why then did he speak, not of all, but 'of many'? Because not all have believed. His death corresponded to the destruction of all, and, insofar as it depended on Him, He died for all. But He did not raise the sins of all because they themselves did not want it (St. Chrysostom). Then after death 'judgement' is decreed for man. In the same way Jesus Christ will appear a second time on earth, 'not for cleansing from sin' by His death, as it was at His first appearance on earth, but 'for judgement, for the salvation of those who wait for Him' - that is, for the gift of the promised blessedness to those who believe in Him and wait for His Coming to judgement. St. Paul is silent about His punishment of sinner at the judgement, but it will take place without fail.

10.1-2. For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, would have had not more consciousness of sins.

That the Old Testament sacrifices of the law had no independent significance in themselves, and served only as a shadow of good things to come - that is, the Sacrifice to come, which gives to men the promised good things of redemption - the forgiveness of sins and the pacification of the conscience - is evident from the fact that the people offered a multitude of the sacrifices indicated in the law every year, and the high priest entered with the blood of these sacrifices every year into the Holy of Holies for the purification of the people. Therefore the sacrifices themselves did not have in themselves the power to make perfect and sinless those for whom they were offered, because

if they had cleansed the conscience from evil deeds, then those who had offered one purifying sacrifice would not have needed to offer the same sacrifices another time. But the sacrifices not only did not purify the conscience of the sins committed, but even reminded them more of them.

10.3-4. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could destroy sins.

The Old Testament sacrifices produce nothing except a remembrance of sins, that is, a rebuke. They do not provide the forgiveness of sin, but to those who always offer them they demonstrate that the sins of the people remain unremitted. For every year, it is said, the blood of bulls is offered for the people, by which it is indicated that the sins were the same, just as one and the same medicine, if it is always used, shows that one and the same illness if tormenting the sick person (Theophylact). Moreover, it goes without saying that the blood of goats and bulls cannot 'destroy' the sins committed – that is, remove them from the consciousness and conscience. This inadequacy of the sacrifices to pacify the conscience was known (and portrayed) by the best people of the Old Testament – the prophets. In addition, they forefigured a better life that was pleasing to God and able to pacify the conscience. Thus in Psalm 39 (vv. 7-9) the Prophet David represented the inadequacy of the Old Testament sacrifices and the fittingness of submitting one's own will to the will of the Lord, which fulfillment was accomplished completely only by Jesus Christ.

10.5-7. Therefore when He came into the world He said: 'Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body has Thou perfected for me. Whole-burnt offering and oblations for sin hast Thou not demanded. Then I said: Behold, I am come (in the heading of the book it is written concerning me) to do Thy will, O my God.

Since fallen man was not able to submit his will to the will of God, and, besides, the sacrifices of animals did not reconcile him with God, Jesus Christ, entering the world in the flesh, says through the lips of David: Thou, O Lord, was not pleased by the sacrifices and offerings of the law for the sins of men. Therefore Thou hast decreed that My body should become an all-perfect Sacrifice (Theophylact). Thou wast not pleased by all the sacrifices of the law, so I, as it is written 'in the heading' of the book of Genesis (Genesis 3.16) concerning Me, that 'the seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent', I am ready to carry out Thy will and completely submit My will to Thine, and by My Blood save the men who have been condemned to death for their disobedience (John 4.4, 6.38). From the prophecy of David St. Paul draws the following conclusion:

10.8-9. Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings and offerings for sin, Thou hast not desired, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law), then He said, 'Behold, I am come to do Thy will, O God'. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were also established in accordance with the will of God, but not as having in themselves the power to cleanse sins, but only as forefigures of the future, true and perfect Sacrifice. But when the Hebrew people began to attribute to the sacrifices themselves a redemptive significance, then God through the Prophet David declared that He did not want these sacrifices, they were not pleasing to Him, and contradicted His will, He then revealed that the Coming One (Jesus Christ) is the true redemptive Sacrifice, that fulfills His will. From this it clearly follows that God removes the first, that is, the sacrifices of the law, and establishes the second, that is, the will of the Father – the offering on the cross of the body of Christ. It is by this Sacrifice that Christians are sanctified.

10.10. *By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

In accordance with the will of the Father, we, the Christians, have been sanctified, our sins have been forgiven, and we have become sinless – saints. By what have we been sanctified? By the death on the cross, as the one-time Sacrifice offered for us to God the Father by Jesus Christ in the body. That is why the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, although offered once for us to God the Father, but united with complete devotion to His will, was more pleasing to God than a multitude of priestly sacrifices and exalted Him Who had offered it and sanctified those for whom it was offered.

10.11-14. *And every priest standeth ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, since He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

Although the Old Testament priests stand every day around the altar and offer the sacrifices established by the law, they are completely powerless: their sacrifices will never be able to destroy sins and sanctify men. But Jesus Christ offered one Sacrifice for the sins of all men, and God has raised Him higher than all creation, seated Him on the throne next to Himself and given Him Divine power over all things as the God-Man, and submits beneath His feet all His enemies – those who do not believe in Him and the evil spirits, while those who believe in Him He has made perfect and saints forever by the one offering of Himself in sacrifice. The Holy Spirit witnessed to this through the lips of the Prophet Jeremiah:

10.15-17. *But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us: for after He had said before, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them, then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more'.*

The Holy Spirit witnesses to this Sacrifice of the New Testament, which completely reconciles us with God and completely regenerates us to a new and

spiritual life, revealing the mysteries of the economy of God to men through the lips of the Prophet Jeremiah: behold, he says, the New Testament that the Lord will conclude with men after the days of the Old Testament: He will place His laws in their hearts cleansed from sin and He will write them in their thoughts, so that they will not carry out the will of God because of external pressure, but rationally - in accordance with their own thoughts and the attraction of their own heart and conscience. And the sins they have committed will be forgiven them by the Lord. They will no longer darken their minds and hearts with impurity. Hence it evidently follows:

10.18. *Now where there is remission of sins, there is no longer an offering for sin.*

If remission of sins has been given for one Sacrifice, then what need is there after this for a second sacrifice? Thus the Jewish sacrifices are no longer necessary in the New Testament.

31. THE ROOTS OF ATHEISM

If we ask an atheist why he does not believe in God, we will generally receive one of two kinds of answer. God does not exist, he will say, because science – especially Darwinism – has demonstrated that we came into being by chance, out of dead matter, without the need for any Creator. Or because of the manifest injustice in the world, which proves that there is no such thing as a just and loving God.

The first objection is easier to deal with. For, as St. Paul says in the first chapter of Romans, the existence of the invisible Creator is clearly demonstrated by His visible creation, so that he who does not believe “has no excuse”. And indeed, the more we study the extraordinary complexity and perfection of creation, far beyond the capacity of man to explain or imitate or emulate, the more absurd the atheist hypothesis looks. Nor has anybody been able to answer the question of how the creation can come out of nothing. The fact is: nothing comes from nothing; there must be something that brought everything that we see into being, and that something is absolute Being, “He Who Is”, God Almighty.

Intuitively, however, God Almighty must also be loving and just; He must be the height of perfection in order to bring all this perfection into being, and especially the crown of His creation – man, with his unquenchable dreams of love and justice. But then the atheist points to all the manifest injustices in the world: the babies who die young, or who grow up with crippling mental or physical disabilities; the wretched existence, even in our scientific age, of the majority of mankind; the continuing existence of genocidal tyrants, who die peacefully in their beds while their victims suffer bitter tortures to the end. “Can this be justice?” asks the atheist. “If God is almighty, why does He not bring the sufferings of the innocent to an end? If he can prevent such suffering but does not do so, does this not prove that He is neither loving nor just – and therefore that He does not exist?”

The believer is tempted to reply to these reproaches that in the life to come all these injustices will come to an end and the rightness of God’s ways will be demonstrated. Yes, there is no question about that. But such an answer will not satisfy the atheist who does not believe in the life of the age to come.

Nor did it satisfy some of the greatest saints who ever lived. It did not satisfy Righteous Job. His friends tried to convince him that he was suffering justly for his sins. He was not convinced, not because he was lacking in humility and did not see himself as a sinner, but because the answer was too pat, too superficial.

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shall be pure from uncleanness? Not one. Even if his life is but one day upon the earth...’ (14.1-4). And yet when his friend Eliphaz says much the same thing – “For who is the mortal that shall be blameless, or who is born of a woman that shall be righteous, since He does not trust His saints, and heaven is not pure in His sight” (15.14-16) – Job says that “you are all bad comforters” (16.2). For “there was no wrongdoing in my hands, and my prayer is pure” (16.16-17).

And yet we do not find an answer to our questions in the Book of Job. What we do learn is the following. First, Job is indeed a righteous man, who was not lying when he said: “I hold fast to my righteousness and am not letting it go. For I am not conscious in myself of having done anything wrong” (27.6). Therefore Job’s friends are wrong to seek some fault in him that would justify his suffering. At the same time, while commending Job against his friends, the Lord has something to rebuke Job for: “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God let him answer for it.” We cannot argue with God or contend with His judgements. The very thought of arguing with God is sin – which Job immediately acknowledges: “Behold I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? I will put my hand on my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further” (40.1-5). How can the creature hope to understand the mind of His Creator? The gulf between the Creator and His creature is infinite. The only rational thing to do is shut his mouth.

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