

# **THE FALL OF ORTHODOX ENGLAND**

*The Spiritual Roots of the Norman Conquest, 1043-1087*

*Vladimir Moss*

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION: ENGLAND AND THE CONTINENT</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>The Beginning of the End</i>	5
<i>The Rise of the Heretical Papacy</i>	6
<i>The Growth of Feudalism</i>	9
<i>The English Monarchy</i>	12
<i>Rome and the Holy Roman Empire</i>	15
<i>The Papal Reform Movement</i>	18
<i>The Rise of the Normans</i>	21
<i>The Challenge Facing the English</i>	23
<b>1. SAINT EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1043-1066)</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>Early Years</i>	24
<i>Years in Exile</i>	26
<i>Edward the King</i>	28
<i>Edward the Miracle-Worker</i>	29
<i>The Rebellion of Earl Godwin</i>	31
<i>The Affair of Archbishop Stigand</i>	34
<i>The Papal Embassy</i>	35
<i>The Question of the Succession</i>	37
<i>The Rebellion of Earl Tostig</i>	40
<i>The Prophetic Moses</i>	41
<b>2. MARTYR-KING HAROLD AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST (1066-1070)</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>The Wages of Sin</i>	47
<i>The Embassy to Rome</i>	48
<i>Harold the King</i>	51
<i>The Battle of Stamford Bridge</i>	53
<i>The Battle of Hastings</i>	55
<i>The Burial of King Harold</i>	57
<i>William the King</i>	58
<i>The Harrowing of the North</i>	60
<i>The Last Stand of the English</i>	64
<b>3. DOOMSDAY (1070-1087)</b>	<b>66</b>
<i>The Papist Reformation of the English Church</i>	66
<i>The Gregorian Revolution</i>	72
<i>The King and the Church</i>	77
<i>The English Diaspora</i>	79
<i>The Death of the Tyrant</i>	84
<b>CONCLUSION. THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION</b>	<b>87</b>
<i>The Anglican Reformation</i>	88
<i>The Non-Jurors</i>	90
<i>The Branch Theory</i>	92
<i>"He that Restraineth"</i>	94
<i>The Return of the Branch</i>	95

<b>APPENDIX 1. WHEN DID THE WEST FALL AWAY FROM HOLY ORTHODOXY?</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2. A SERVICE TO ALL SAINTS OF THE BRITISH ISLES</b>	<b>105</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	105
<i>Vespers</i>	107
<i>Matins</i>	110
<i>Liturgy</i>	121
<b>APPENDIX 3. SERMON IN PRAISE OF THE BRITISH SAINTS</b>	<b>122</b>

## FOREWORD

On October 14, 1066, at Hastings in southern England, the last Orthodox king of England, Harold II, died in battle against Duke William of Normandy. William had been blessed to invade England by the Roman Pope Alexander in order to bring the English Church into full communion with the “reformed Papacy”; for since 1052 the English archbishop had been banned and denounced as schismatic by Rome. The result of the Norman Conquest was that the English Church and people were integrated into the heretical “Church” of Western, Papist Christendom, which had just, in 1054, fallen away from communion with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, represented by the Eastern Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Thus ended the nearly five-hundred-year history of the Anglo-Saxon Orthodox Church, which was followed by the demise of the still older Celtic Orthodox Churches in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

This small book is an account of how this came to pass. It is neither the aim of the present writer, nor would it be within his competence, to give a detailed political, military or social history of the period. With regard to most of the major issues disputed by historians, he has simply adopted, without detailed argument, what seems to him to be the most plausible version of events. Thus with regard to King Edward’s alleged bequest of his kingdom to William of Normandy, he has adopted the position taken by Ian Walker, Nicholas Higham and George Garnett; while with regard to the Pope’s involvement in the invasion, he has followed George Garnett, David Douglas, Frank Barlow, David Howarth and Frank McLynn. The main aim of the present work is twofold: first, to provide a *spiritual* (as opposed to a political or social) history of the decline and fall of Orthodox England, and secondly, to collect material relevant to the hoped-for future glorification of the great spiritual heroes of the period – notably King Edward the Confessor and Martyr-King Harold – in the Orthodox Church. The writer feels that such an undertaking is especially timely now that the relics of Martyr-King Harold have been discovered and identified through the invaluable research carried out by John Pollock. It is this spiritual and hagiographical nature of the present work that explains why the writer has made much more extensive use of the hagiographical materials available than most modern researchers into the period, with their bias against anything that smacks of the miraculous.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us! Amen.

*East House, Beech Hill, Mayford, Woking, England.  
January 7/20, 2011.*

## INTRODUCTION: ENGLAND AND THE CONTINENT

### The Beginning of the End

The ancient Celtic Churches of the British Isles had never had much to do with Rome – not out of antipathy, but because of the geographical distance to Rome and, especially, a long period in the fifth and sixth centuries during which the Celts had been cut off from the Church on the continent by the pagan invasions. In any case, Celtic Christianity owed as much to Eastern, especially Coptic Christianity, as it did to Rome. By contrast, after the English were converted to Orthodoxy in the seventh century, they became perhaps the most fervent “Romanists” of all the peoples of Western Europe.

This devotion sprang from the fact that it was to Rome, and specifically to Pope St. Gregory the Great and his disciples, that the Angles, Saxons and Jutes of Southern England owed their conversion to the Faith in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. From that time English men and women of all classes and conditions poured across the Channel in a well-beaten path to the tombs of the Apostles in Rome, and a whole quarter of the city was called “Il Borgo Saxono” because of the large number of English pilgrims it accommodated. English missionaries such as St. Boniface of Germany carried out their work as the legates of the Roman Popes. And the voluntary tax known as “Peter’s Pence” which the English offered to the Roman see was paid even in the difficult times of the Viking invasions, when it was the English themselves who were in need of alms.

However, the “Romanity” to which the English were so devoted was not the Franco-Latin, Roman Catholicism of the later Middle Ages. Rather, it was the Greco-Roman Romanitas of Orthodox Catholicism. And the spiritual and political capital of Romanitas until the middle of the fifteenth century was not Old Rome in Italy, but the New Rome of Constantinople. Thus when King Ethelbert of Kent was baptized by St. Augustine in 597, “he had entered,” as Fr. Andrew Phillips writes, “Romanitas, Romanity, the universe of Roman Christendom, becoming one of those numerous kings who owed allegiance, albeit formal, to the Emperor in New Rome...” Indeed, as late as the tenth century the cultural links between England and Constantinople remained strong.

We may tentatively point to the murder of King Edward the Martyr in 979 as the beginning of the end of Orthodox England. “No worse deed for the English was ever done than this,” said the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. And while it was said that there was “great rejoicing” at the coronation of St. Edward’s half-brother, Ethelred “the Unready”, St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, sorrowfully prophesied great woes for the nation in the coming reign.

He was right; for not only were the English defeated by the Danish pagan invaders and forced to pay ever larger sums in “Danegeld”, but the king himself, betrayed by his leading men and weighed down by his own personal failures, was forced to flee abroad in 1013. The next year he was recalled by the English leaders, both spiritual and lay, who declared that “no lord was dearer to them than their rightful lord, if only he would govern his kingdom more justly than he had done in the past.” But the revival was short-lived; further defeats followed, and in 1017, after the deaths both of King Ethelred and of his son Edmund Ironside, the Danish Canute was made king of all the English. Canute converted to the faith of his new Christian subjects; and the period of the Danish kings (1017-1042) created less of a disruption in the nation’s spiritual life than might have been expected.

Nevertheless, it must have seemed that God’s mercy had at last returned to His people when, in 1043, the Old English dynasty of Alfred the Great was restored in the person of King Ethelred’s son Edward, known to later generations as “the Confessor”.

It is with the life of King Edward that our narrative begins.

However, in order to understand the world of King Edward it is necessary briefly to review cultural and ecclesiastical developments on the continent of Europe, which began to influence England precisely in his reign. These included the rise of the heretical papacy, the growth of feudalism and the rise of the Normans.

### *The Rise of the Heretical Papacy*

As the power of the “Holy Roman Emperors” of the West declined in the ninth century, so the power of the Popes increased. Beginning with Nicholas I, they began to claim a quasi-imperial rule over the whole Church, East and West. And this combination of the roles of emperor and priest began increasingly to resemble the “*imperator-plus-pontifex maximus*” role of the pagan Roman emperors: the heresy of Papism was born.

However, for the first eight centuries, every attempt to combine the roles of king and priest in a single person was decisively rejected by the Popes. Thus when, in 796, Eadbert Praen, an English priest, assumed the crown of the sub-kingdom of Kent for himself, he was immediately rejected by the Archbishop of Canterbury and anathematised by Pope Leo III, who wrote that such a priest-king was like Julian the Apostate. But gradually, and with increasing self-assertion, the Popes themselves claimed a kingly power and role.

One of the reasons for this was that after the Western Empire had collapsed after 476 and split up into a number of independent kingdoms, the Church remained united, making her by far the most prominent survival of Christian Romanity in the West. Even the most powerful of the western kings did not command a territory

greater than that of a Roman provincial governor, whereas the Pope was not only the undisputed leader of the whole of Western Christendom but also the senior hierarch in the whole of the Church, Eastern and Western. However, as long as the Popes remained both Orthodox in faith and loyal subjects of the Eastern Emperor in politics, – that is, until Pope Stephen’s political break with Byzantium in 756, – the lack of a political power in the West commensurate with the ecclesiastical power of the Popes was not a pressing necessity; for everyone accepted that in the political sphere the Eastern Emperor was the sole *basileus* of the whole of Christendom, and the western kings were his sons or satraps; while in the ecclesiastical sphere there was no single head under Christ, the Body being overseen by its “five senses”, the five patriarchates, of which Rome was simply the *primus inter pares*.

But problems arose when Rome broke its last political links with the Eastern Empire and sought a new protector in the Frankish empire of Pepin and Charlemagne. This caused changes in the political ideology of the Franks, on the one hand, who came to see themselves as the real Roman Empire, more Roman and more Orthodox than the Empire of the East; and on the other hand, in the ecclesiology of the Popes, who came to see themselves as the only Church of this renewed Roman Empire, having ultimate jurisdiction over all the Churches in the world. Frankish caesaropapism soon collapsed; but Roman papocaesarism continued to grow until it claimed supreme authority in both Church and State...

In fact, there is a strong argument to be made for the thesis that the ultimate gainer from Charlemagne’s coronation in 800 was not the new emperor, but the Pope. Judith Herrin writes: “Of the three powers involved in the coronation event of 800, the Roman pontiff emerges as the clear winner in the triangular contest over imperial authority. By seizing the initiative and crowning Charles in his own way, Pope Leo claimed the superior authority to anoint an imperial ruler of the West, which established an important precedent... Later Charles would insist on crowning his own son Louis as emperor, without papal intervention. He thus designated his successor and, in due course, Louis inherited his father’s authority. But the notion that a western ruler could not be a real emperor without a papal coronation and acclamation in ancient Rome grew out of the ceremonial devised by Leo III in 800.”

So the foundations were laid for the growth of papal power in the political as well as the ecclesiastical spheres, which growth was especially evident as Carolingian power declined later in the ninth century.

The significant figure here is Pope Nicholas I, whose first task was to establish his supremacy over the Church in the West. However, an Orthodox ecclesiology still prevailed at the metropolitan and lower levels. Thus the archbishops of Trèves and Cologne replied to an unjust sentence by Nicholas as follows: “Without a council, without canonical inquiry, without accuser, without witnesses, without convicting us by arguments or authorities, without our consent, in the absence of the metropolitans

and of our suffragan bishops, you have chosen to condemn us, of your own caprice, with tyrannical fury. But we do not accept your accursed sentence, so repugnant to a father's or a brother's love; we despise it as mere insulting language; we expel you yourself from our communion, since you commune with the excommunicate; we are satisfied with the communion of the whole Church and with the society of our brethren whom you despise and of whom you make yourself unworthy by your pride and arrogance. You condemn yourself when you condemn those who do not observe the apostolic precepts which you yourself are the first to violate, annulling as far as in you lies the Divine laws and the sacred canons, and not following in the footsteps of the Popes your predecessors..."

Nicholas did not confine himself to unjustly deposing western bishops: he also deposed St. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, whose speedy promotion to the rank of patriarch from the lay state he considered uncanonical (although many holy patriarchs, and the famous St. Ambrose of Milan, had risen to the episcopate as quickly). All this was in accordance with his theory, first put forward in 865, that the Pope had authority "over all the earth, that is, over every other Church", "the see of Peter has received the total power of government over all the sheep of Christ". The Emperor Michael III was furious, but Nicholas replied: "The day of king-priests and emperor-pontiffs is past, Christianity has separated the two functions, and Christian emperors have need of the Pope in view of the life eternal, whereas popes have no need of emperors except as regards temporal things."

This would suggest that Nicholas supported the Orthodox teaching on the separation of the secular and ecclesiastical powers. However, while it was useful for him to preach the Orthodox doctrine in order to limit the power of the emperor, he accepted few, if any, limitations on his own power. He even hinted that the Byzantine emperors might not be legitimate emperors of the Romans, which would imply that the only legitimate emperor was the Frankish one, or, if the forged *Donation of Constantine* was to be believed, the Pope himself!

Thus he said that it was ridiculous for Michael to call himself Roman emperor, since he did not speak Latin. Then he demanded from the Emperor the return of his territories in the Greek-speaking south of Italy for no other reason than that they had once, centuries before, come within the jurisdiction of the Roman patriarchate: "Give us back the patrimony of Calabria and that of Sicily and all the property of our Church, whereof it held possession, and which it was accustomed to manage by its own attorneys; for it is unreasonable that an ecclesiastical possession, destined for the light and service of the Church of God, should be taken from us by an earthly power."

Finally, he sent missionaries to Bulgaria, which was deep within the traditionally Byzantine sphere. To add injury to insult, these missionaries preached the heresy of the Filioque to the newly converted Bulgarians. For this reason, a Council convened at Constantinople in 867 presided over by St. Photius, and at which the archbishops



of Trèves, Cologne and Ravenna were present, excommunicated and anathematized Nicholas.

Two years later, however, a palace revolution enabled another “anti-Photian” council to be convened, at which the Council of 867 was annulled. Papists have often counted this anti-Photian council as the Eighth Ecumenical – not least, one suspects, because the new Pope, Hadrian II, demanded that all its participants recognized him as “Sovereign Pontiff and Universal Pope”. But a much better claim to ecumenicity can be made for the Great Council convened at Constantinople in 879-80, which four hundred Eastern bishops and the legates of Pope John VIII attended. This Council annulled, under the papal legates’ signature, the acts of the anti-Photian council. It also made two very important decisions. First, it decreed that there was no papal jurisdiction in the East, although the papal primacy was recognised. And secondly, it reaffirmed the original text of the Nicene Creed without the Filioque, and explicitly condemned all additions to it. So a Roman Pope formally recognised that he had no jurisdiction in the Eastern Church and that the Filioque was a heresy!

### *The Growth of Feudalism*

Thus was the Papist heresy crushed – for the time being. However, the serpent of Papism lay bruised, not completely scotched; and a more permanent triumph could be hoped for only if a healthy antidote against its poison could be built up within the West. This depended, above all, on the strength of the other pillar of Christian society in the West – the sacred power of the anointed kings.

Such an antidote existed, as we shall see, in England, where a powerful monarchy ruling most of the country arose in the person of King Alfred the Great. On most of the continent, however, the monarchy was deeply involved in a phenomenon that had a profoundly negative impact on both political and ecclesiastical life – feudalism.

The word “feudalism” comes from the Latin *feuda*, translated as “fief”, which means a piece of land held in exchange for service to a lord. Feudalism, in the sense of the widespread division of the land into fiefs, is a common phenomenon in many lands in time of invasion or social decline. But the term was invented to describe the particular socio-political organisation of Western Europe in the later Middle Ages. It arose as a defensive reaction to the Viking invasions of the ninth century, and the breakdown in central authority which they caused. The breakdown was worst in West Francia, modern France, where royal authority almost disappeared. One result was serfdom: the lands which had belonged to the crown, the royal “fisc”, were given to local landowners, both ecclesiastical and lay, and the peasants who had cultivated the land, deprived of any protection from the crown, threw themselves on the mercy of the local landowners, bartering their and their children’s labour in return for protection. The second was feudalism proper: the freemen became vassals of lords, swearing to fight the lord’s battles in exchange for protection. A vassal was a knight –

that is, he owned arms and a horse and was able to fight. Since this required money, he very likely owned land – either inherited, “allodial” land, or a “benefice” or “fief” granted temporarily, in the vassal’s lifetime only. A vassal might himself have vassals. Thus many of the king’s counts, or local officials, were at the same time both feudal lords and vassals of the king.

Feudalism ate into the king’s power in two ways: first, the kings’ peasants hardly counted as his subjects any more since their real masters were now their landowners; and secondly, the king’s vassals tended to leave his service for that of the most powerful local feudal lord. The king did not always resist this process, but rather reinforced it, since he saw that the feudal lord was the only guarantee of law and order in the countryside. Thus in the capitulary of Meerssen in 847 the Frankish King Charles the Bald ordered all free men to choose a lord, and likewise forbade them to leave their lord without just reason – which effectively made the bond of vassalage permanent in all normal cases. Again, in a capitulary issued at Thionville, he gave official recognition to the vassal’s oath, which thereby replaced the oath of allegiance as the main glue holding society together. Finally, in the capitulary of Kiersy in 877, Charles sanctioned hereditary succession to counties and other fiefs, which meant that county administration became hereditary and passed out of the king’s control.

As a defensive system to preserve a minimum of order in a time of foreign invasion, feudalism undoubtedly had merits. But it was much inferior not only to Byzantine-style autocracy, but also to the forms of Western European monarchy that preceded it. It represented a regression from monarchy to a much cruder and more primitive form of social organization.

According to Ivan Solonevich, feudalism could be defined as “the splintering of state sovereignty among a mass of small, but in principle sovereign owners of property”. Contrary to Marx, it had nothing to do with ‘productive relations’ and was far from being an advance on previous forms of social organisation. “It is sufficient to remember the huge cultural and unusually high level of Roman ‘production’. Feudal Europe, poor, dirty and illiterate, by no means represented ‘a more progressive form of productive relations’ – in spite of Hegel, it was sheer regression. Feudalism does not originate in productive relations. It originates in the thirst for power beyond all dependence on production and distribution. Feudalism is, so to speak, *the democratisation of power* [my italics – V.M.] – its transfer to all those who at the given moment in the given place have sufficient physical strength to defend their baronial rights – *Faustrecht*... Feudalism sometimes presupposes a juridical basis of power, but never a moral one.

“The feudal lord does not rule ‘in the name’ of the nation, the people, the peasants, or whoever else there might be. He rules only and exclusively in his own interests, which have been strengthened by such-and-such battles or parchments. For the feudal lord the monarch is not the bearer of definite moral ideals or even of the practical

interests of the people or nation, but only 'the first among equals', who has had the luck to be stronger than the rest...

"The thirst for power is, of course, a property common to all humanity, and therefore the tendency to the development of feudalism will be to a greater or lesser degree characteristic of all countries and all peoples of the world.... But if we discard trivialities, then we must say that Rome, for example, had no knowledge at all of feudal relations. There were landowners and there were senators, there were proconsuls and there were emperors, but there were no barons. The sovereign power 'of the people and senate of Rome', engraved on the Roman eagles, remained the single indivisible source of all power – even the power of the Roman emperors. The civil wars of Rome bore no relation to the feudal wars of medieval Europe. Nor did Ancient Greece with its purely capitalist relations know feudalism. Yes, Greece was split up into a series of sovereign states, but, though tiny, these were nevertheless states – monarchies and republics, in principle having equal rights in relation to each other and by no means in relations of feudal submission or co-submission."

One of the worst aspects of feudalism was the fact that the Church, too, was bound up in the feudal nexus, with churchmen having lay lords higher than themselves and vassals lower than themselves.

This resulted, as Aristides Papadakis writes, in "the unrestrained secularization of the western clergy. By the 900s most churchmen – both high and low – had lost nearly all their independence and sense of corporate identity, as their functions everywhere became identified with those belonging to lay vassals. Quite simply, as rulers came to regard all ecclesiastical organization under their effective control as a facet of the secular system, conventions governing one sphere were adjusted to fit the other. As a result, bishops and abbots were not exempt from the secular obligations and responsibilities attached to feudal tenure. As feudal dependents they, too, had to attend court, give advice and, when required, supply their lay superiors with military service... Characteristically, promotion to an episcopal see or a rich abbey was often the reward of previous dutiful service in the royal household. It is worth adding that ecclesiastical tenants were also preferred for many posts because their lands and their jurisdictions were not governed by inheritance [celibate priests had no (legal) children]. Whereas the heirs of a lay vassal holding of the king by hereditary right could occasionally create legal difficulties or foment rebellion, an heirless but enfeoffed celibate cleric was incapable of doing so. This was probably a decisive reason why so many high ecclesiastics, time and again, became essential associates in royal government everywhere."

The control exercised by feudal lords over clerical appointments was symbolised by the ceremony of "lay investiture", whereby the lord endowed the cleric with a ring, signifying the cleric's entry into feudal tenure of a church or lands. Such a ceremony was distinct from ecclesiastical ordination. But in practice the power inherent in lay

investiture determined who should be ordained (and for how much).

“The hastily ordained and ‘invested’ clerk was often altogether unworthy (if not also incompetent and untrained) of the priestly calling. Church assemblies and individual churchmen, it is true, routinely complained. All the same, neither the power of laymen to appoint and invest clergy, nor the encroachment and spoliation of Church property, was ever discontinued. As a matter of fact, lay nominations to vacant sees became so frequent that they were no longer regarded as a radical departure from canonical tradition. The abuse was recognized as a perfectly acceptable practice. In 921 the archbishop of Cologne was thus solemnly admonished by the pope himself for attempting to block a royal appointment at Liège. Pope John X’s letter informing the archbishop that no episcopal candidate was to be consecrated in any diocese without royal authorization still survives. As far as Pope John was concerned, the right of the feudal power to interfere at the highest level in the internal affairs of the Church was ‘ancient usage’. Ecclesial autonomy, to say nothing of ecclesial political and economic freedom, was apparently of little consequence. Canon law evidently had long given way to the feudal system...”

### *The English Monarchy*

By the middle of the eleventh century the whole of Western Europe was caught up in the feudal nexus. The only major exception to the rule was *England*. “In the intricate web of vassalage,” writes J.M. Roberts, “a king might have less control over his own vassals than they over theirs. The great lord, whether lay magnate or local bishop, must always have loomed larger and more important in the life of the ordinary man than the remote and probably never-seen king or prince. In the tenth and eleventh centuries there are everywhere examples of kings obviously under great pressure from great men. The country where this seemed to present least trouble was Anglo-Saxon England...”

England before the Viking invasions, which began in 793, was divided into seven independent kingdoms. Each had its own bishops, but all, from the time of St. Theodore the Greek, archbishop of Canterbury (+691), recognised the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury. In 786, however, Prince Egfrith, son of King Offa of Mercia, was anointed even before he had ascended the throne of his father, and from the time of this, the first royal anointing in Anglo-Saxon history, the Wessex dynasty gradually came to dominate political life in England. In the late ninth century, under Alfred the Great, it led the recovery against the Viking invaders, and Alfred’s successors succeeded in uniting most of Britain in a single Orthodox kingdom until the Norman-papist invasion of 1066-70. In a real sense, therefore, the anointing of Egfrith may be said to have been the critical event that led to the creation of one nation and one State.

King Alfred came to the throne of Wessex when English civilisation was in the process of being wiped out by the pagan Danes. Almost single-handedly, he defeated

the Danes and laid the foundations for their conversion and integration into his All-English kingdom. But not content with that, he undertook the organisation and education of the badly shattered Church, beginning by sending all his bishops a copy of his own translation of the *Pastoral Care* by Pope Gregory the Great – the Roman connection again! Indeed, re-establishing links with both Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church was a priority with Alfred. He corresponded with the Patriarch of Jerusalem and sent alms to the monks of India.

The stability of Alfred's dynasty and kingdom by comparison with the sub-Carolingian kingdoms on the continent was partly owing to the fact that, like the Roman missionaries in the early seventh century, this Romanising monarch found a *tabula rasa* and was able to rebuild on relatively uncluttered, but firm foundations. In particular, the tensions between the monarchy and the local aristocracies which so weakened the West Frankish kingdom, hardly existed in England after 878 and surfaced again in a serious way only in 1052. There are several indications that the English kingdom modelled itself on Byzantium. Thus King Athelstan gave himself the Byzantine titles *basileus* and *curagulus*. Again, in 955, King Edred called himself "King of the Anglo-Saxons and Emperor of the whole of Britain". And a little later King Edgar is also called *basileus et imperator*.

In the tenth century, England reached the peak of her glory as an Orthodox kingdom, based on a monastic revival supported by a powerful king, Edgar, and a holy archbishop, Dunstan, working in close harmony. Ryan Lavelle writes: "A document from around 973, the *Regularis Concordia*,... was intended as a rulebook and liturgical guide for English monks and nuns, but it was also a bold statement of the relationship between God, the king and a Christian people. The king and queen were seen as protectors of monks and nuns in the temporal world, while, in return, the souls of the West Saxon royal family were protected with prayers by the same monks and nuns. The positions of the king and queen were therefore inextricably linked with the survival of Christianity in the kingdom. This was part of a process of legitimising royal power to an extent that was hitherto unparalleled in Anglo-Saxon England. The king had become part of the ecclesiastical order in a coronation ceremony that made him God's representative on earth. The original meaning of Christ's name, *Christus*, meant 'the anointed [king]', and the inauguration of Edgar used an *ordo* (an order of service) that put Edgar on a similar level – directly anointed by God. The monastic reform movement gave this a new impetus, to such an extent that King Edgar could go through such a royal inauguration for a second time."

Edgar's first anointing had taken place in 960 or 961, when he became King of England. For many years he was not allowed to wear his crown in penance for a sin he had committed. But in 973, the penance came to an end, and at the age of thirty (perhaps significantly, the canonical age for episcopal ordination in the West) he was anointed again, this time as "Emperor of Britain" in the ancient Roman city of Bath (again significantly, for Edgar was emphasising the imperial, Roman theme). In the

same year, again emphasising the imperial theme, he was rowed on the River Dee by six or eight sub-kings, include five Welsh and Scottish rulers and one ruler of the Western Isles. "This was a move," writes Lavelle, "that recalled the actions of his great-uncle Athelstan, the successful ruler of Britain, but it was also an English parallel to the tenth-century coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto of Germany, in which the stem-dukes had undertaken the task of feeding the emperor."

Edgar's ascription to himself of the trappings of *Romanitas* was not without some foundation. The economy was strong, the tax and legal systems were sophisticated, the coinage was secure (with an impressive system of monetary renewal whereby all coins issued from the royal mints had to be returned and reissued every five years). England was now a firmly Orthodox, multi-national state composed of three Christian peoples, Anglo-Saxons, Celts and Danes, living in mutual amity. She was at peace at home and respected abroad, spreading her influence in a beneficial way outwards through missions to the Norwegians and Swedes.

Edgar married twice, the first marriage producing a son, Edward, and the second another son, Ethelred. When he died in 975 (his relics were discovered to be incorrupt in 1052), Ethelred's partisans, especially his mother, argued that Ethelred should be made king in preference to his elder half-brother Edward, on the grounds that Edgar had not been anointed when he begat Edward in 959 or 960, and that his first wife, Edward's mother, had never been anointed, so that the throne should pass to the younger son, Ethelred, who had been born "in the purple" when both his parents were anointed sovereigns. The conflict was settled when the archbishop of Canterbury, St. Dunstan, seized the initiative and anointed St. Edward. In this way, through her stewardship of the sacrament of royal anointing, the Church came to play the decisive role in deciding the question of succession.

The religious nature of Anglo-Saxon kingship is seen in the fact that the king was seen as the "warden of the holy temple". Crimes against the Church or her servants were seen as crimes against the king, and were duly punished by him. It was seen as his duty to look after the Church and enforce her laws with secular penalties. "For a Christian king is Christ's deputy among Christian people", as King Ethelred's laws put it. Both he and the archbishop were "the Lord's Anointed" - the archbishop so that he might minister the sacraments of salvation, and the king so that, as Bede wrote in his commentary on Acts, "he might by conquering all our enemies bring us to the immortal Kingdom".

The king was sometimes compared to God the Father and the bishop - to Christ (he is often called "Christ" in Anglo-Saxon legislation). The king was the shepherd and father of his people and would have to answer for their well-being at the Last Judgement. Regicide and usurpation were the greatest of crimes; for, as Abbot Aelfric wrote in a Palm Sunday sermon, "no man may make himself a king, for the people have the option to choose him for king who is agreeable to them; but after that he has

been hallowed as king, he has power over the people, and they may not shake his yoke from their necks." And so, as Archbishop Wulfstan of York wrote in his *Institutes of Christian Polity*, "through what shall peace and support come to God's servants and to God's poor, save through Christ, and through a Christian king?"

The relationship between Church and State in England was one of "symphony" in the Byzantine sense, not of caesaropapism; for the kings, as well as being in general exceptionally pious, did nothing without consulting their bishops and other members of the *witan* or assembly - who were not afraid to disagree with the king, or remind him of his obligations. Thus, writes Barlow, "a true theocratic government was created, yet one, despite the common charge of confusion [between spiritual and political functions] against the Anglo-Saxon Church, remarkably free of confusion in theory. The duality of the two spheres was emphatically proclaimed. There were God's rights and the king's rights, Christ's laws and the laws of the world. There was an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction under the control of the bishop, but there was also the helping hand of the secular power which the church had invoked and which it could use at its discretion."

### *Rome and the Holy Roman Empire*

Turning to Rome now: the first half of the tenth century was probably the period of the deepest degradation in the eternal city's pre-schism history - the so-called "pornocracy" of Marozia, an evil woman who with her mother Theodora made, unmade, lived with and begat a series of popes. However, in 932 Marozia's second son Alberic, marquis of Spoleto, imprisoned his mother, took over the government of Rome and gave it a short period of peace and relative respectability. But in 955 Alberic died and his son Octavian became Pope John XII at the age of sixteen.

"Even for a pope of that period," writes Peter De Rosa, "he was so bad that the citizens were out for his blood. He had invented sins, they said, not known since the beginning of the world, including sleeping with his mother. He ran a harem in the Lateran Palace. He gambled with pilgrims' offerings. He kept a stud of two thousand horses which he fed on almonds and figs steeped in wine. He rewarded the companions of his nights of love with golden chalices from St. Peter's. He did nothing for the most profitable tourist trade of the day, namely, pilgrimages. Women in particular were warned not to enter St. John Lateran if they prized their honour; the pope was always on the prowl. In front of the high altar of the mother church of Christendom, he even toasted the Devil..."

Retribution was coming, however. Berengar, king of Lombardy in northern Italy, advanced on Rome, and the pope in desperation appealed to Berengar's feudal lord, Otto of Germany. This was Otto's opportunity to seize that imperial crown, which would give him complete dominance over his rivals. He marched into Italy, drove out Berengar and was crowned Emperor by John on February 2, 962. However, when Otto

demanded that the inhabitants of the Papal states should swear an oath of allegiance to him, Otto, and not to the pope, thereby treating the Papal states as one of his dependencies, the Pope took fright, transferred his support to Berengar and called on both the Hungarians and the Byzantines to help drive Otto out of Italy. But Otto saw this as treachery on the part of the pope; he summoned a synod in Rome, deposed John, and placed Leo VIII in his place. Then he inserted a clause into his agreement with Leo whereby in future no pope was to be consecrated without taking an oath of loyalty to the Emperor.

Although Otto was crowned in Rome, he did not call himself “Emperor of the Romans”, but preferred simply “emperor”. This was probably because he did not wish to enter into a competition with the Byzantine emperor. It may also have been because he had little admiration for Old Rome, just as Old Rome had little time for him. Thus He instructed his sword-bearer to stand behind him as he kneeled at the tomb of the Apostle. “For I know,” he said, “only too well what my ancestors have experienced from these faithless Romans.”

Otto gained the Byzantines’ recognition of his imperial title, and persuaded them to send Princess Theophanou, the niece of Emperor John Tzimiskes, to be the bride of his son, Otto II. The marriage was celebrated in Rome in 972. Theophanou then introduced another Byzantine, John Philagathos, as godfather of her son, Otto III; he later became head of the royal finances and finally - Pope (or antipope) John XV. This led to a sharp increase in Byzantine influence in the western empire, and the temporary eclipse of the new papist theory of Church-State relations. Thus in an ivory bas-relief Christ is shown crowning Otto II and Theophanou – a Byzantine tenth-century motif expressing the traditionally Byzantine concept of Church-State symphony.

In 991 Princess Theophanou died and the young Otto III became Emperor under the regency of his grandmother. He “dreamed of reuniting the two empires [of East and West] into one one day, so as to restore universal peace – a new imperial peace comparable to that of Augustus, a Roman Empire which would embrace once more the *orbis terrarum* before the end of the world that was announced for the year 1000.” To signify that the *Renovatio Imperii Romani* (originally a Carolingian idea) had truly begun, he moved his court from Aachen to Rome, and began negotiations with the Byzantine Emperor for the hand of a daughter or niece of the *basileus*, which union would enable him to unite the two empires in a peaceful, traditional manner.

The plan for union with Byzantium was foiled. But Otto sought the advice of holy hermits, and Byzantine influence continued to spread outwards from the court. And when Gerbert of Aurillac became the first Frankish Pope in 999 and took the name Sylvester II, he revived memories, in those brought up on the forged *Donation of Constantine*, of the symphonic relationship between St. Constantine and Pope Sylvester I. However, Sylvester loved the true symphony, not the forged variety: in



1001 he inspired Otto to issue an act demonstrating that the *Donation of Constantine* was a forgery. Moreover, this very unpapist Pope did not believe that he was above the judgement of his fellow-bishops. Thus he wrote in 997: "The judgement of God is higher than that of Rome... When Pope Marcellinus offered incense to Jupiter [in 303], did all the other bishops have to do likewise? If the bishop of Rome himself sins against his brother or refuses to heed the repeated warnings of the Church, he, the bishop of Rome himself, must according to the commandments of God be treated as a pagan and a publican; for the greater the dignity, the greater the fall. If he declares us unworthy of his communion because none of us will join him against the Gospel, he will not be able to separate us from the communion of Christ."

This must count as a formal abjuration of the papist heresy that had held the papacy in thrall for over two hundred years. Unfortunately, Sylvester was not imitated by his successors. But the courage of his right confession deserves appreciation.

The forty-year Ottonian period in the history of the papacy has been viewed in sharply contrasting ways. According to Voltaire in his *Essay on history and customs* (chapter 36), and some later writers, "the imprudence of Pope John XII in having called the Germans to Rome was the source of all the calamities to which Rome and Italy were subject down the centuries..." However, an unprejudiced view that tries to avoid racial stereotypes must accept that the intervention of the German monarchy in Roman affairs - until at least the death of Otto III in 1002 - was not wholly unbeneficial. *Someone* had to put a stop to the scandalous degeneration of the first see of Christendom. And if the Ottonian emperors did not finally succeed in cleansing the Augean stables, it was hardly their fault alone.

The rivalries between the Roman aristocratic families, - which were only partly influenced by the desire to keep Rome free from foreigners, - appear to have made the city virtually ungovernable in this period. The Ottonians at least seem to have had good intentions, and the partnership of the German-Greek Otto III and the Frankish Sylvester II looked on the point of restoring a true unity between the Old and the New Romes. Indeed, for a short period it even looked as if Byzantinism might triumph in the West...

"But the Romans," writes Chamberlin, "rose against [Otto], drove him and his pope out of the city, and reverted to murderous anarchy. He died outside the city in January 1002, not quite twenty-two years of age. Sylvester survived his brilliant but erratic protégé by barely sixteen months. His epitaph summed up the sorrow that afflicted all thoughtful men at the ending of a splendid vision: 'The world, on the brink of triumph, in peace now departed, grew contorted in grief and the reeling Church forgot her rest.' The failure of Otto III and Sylvester marked the effective end of the medieval dream of a single state in which an emperor ruled over the bodies of all Christian men, and a pope over their souls."

Thus by the year 1000 there was little trace of papism in the west: it was the Byzantine ideal of “symphonic” Church-State relations that had triumphed in the west’s most powerful monarchies.

However, Otto III died in 1002 and Pope Sylvester in 1003. After that the “symphony” between Church and State at the highest level of western society began to break up. Like a spinning top that, as it begins to slow down, at the same time begins to lurch more and more sharply from one side to the other, so the balance of power shifted first to the Emperor and then to the Pope.

In the first half of the eleventh century, it was the German Emperors who held the upper hand, as the Papacy descended into one of its periodic bouts of decadence. “Suddenly,” as Papadakis puts it, “the papacy was turned into a sort of imperial *Eigenkirche* or vicarage of the German crown. The pope was to be the instrument and even the pawn of the Germans, as opposed to the Romans.”

At the same time the heresy of the *Filioque* reared its head again. In 1009 Pope Sergius IV reintroduced it into the Roman Symbol of Faith, upon which the Great Church of Constantinople promptly removed his name from the diptychs. In 1014, the heretical innovation was recited again, at the coronation of Emperor Henry II. Some date the beginning of the Great Schism to this period, although it was another forty years before the formal lack of communion between East and West was cemented by the anathemas of 1054.

In 1046 Emperor Henry III acted decisively to stop the chaos into which the Roman papacy had descended, as rival families of Roman aristocrats, the Crescentii and Tusculum counts, each tried to place their candidate on the throne of St. Peter. At the Council of Sutri Henry forced the resignation of Pope Gregory VI and the deposition of Popes Sylvester III and Benedict IX. Then he proceeded to nominate four German Popes in succession: Clement II, Damasus II, Leo IX and Victor II. However, in 1056 Henry died while his son was still a child; and it was at this point that German caesaropapism began to fall. It was struck down by one of the greatest “spiritual” despots in history, Pope Gregory VII, better known as Hildebrand...

### [The Papal Reform Movement](#)

One of the Emperor Henry’s appointees, Pope Leo IX, had been bishop of Toul in Lorraine, an area that had come under the influence of a network of monasteries under the leadership of the great Burgundian abbey of Cluny. The Cluniac monasteries were “stavropegial” foundations independent of the control of any feudal lord. As such, they had assumed the leadership of a powerful reform movement directed against the corruptions introduced into the Church by the feudal system, and had had considerable success in this respect. They stressed papal authority, clerical celibacy and ecclesiastical centralisation.

Leo IX now introduced the principles of the Cluniac movement into the government of the Church at the highest level – but with results, in the reign of his successor, Gregory VII (Hildebrand), that went far beyond the original purposes of the movement, and which were finally to tear the whole of the West away from New Rome and the Byzantine commonwealth of nations... “From the outset,” writes Papadakis, “the new pope was determined to make the papacy an instrument of spiritual and moral rejuvenation both in Rome itself and throughout Europe. To this end Pope Leo journeyed to central and south Italy, but also to France and Germany, crossing the Alps three times. Nearly four and a half years of his five year pontificate were in fact spent on trips outside Rome. The numerous regional reforming synods held during these lengthy sojourns often had as their target the traffic in ecclesiastical offices and unchaste clergy. Their object above all was to rid the Church of these abuses by restoring canonical discipline. The need to reassert both the validity and binding power of canon law for all clergy was repeatedly emphasized. In addition to the decrees against simony and sexual laxity promulgated by these local synods, however, simoniacal and concubinary clergy were examined and, when required, suspended, deposed and, even excommunicated. The object, in short, was to punish the offenders as well. Even if the synods were not always successful, no one was in doubt that Leo IX and his team of like-minded assistants were serious. The immediate impact of this flurry of activity was often extraordinary...

“Overall, the progress of the new papal program was not all smooth sailing. Widespread protest, often accompanied by violent protest, was to continue for decades. Yet, all in all, by the end of the century the popular defenders of simony, of clerical marriage, and of the evils of the proprietary church had by and large vanished. The champions of reform at any rate proved more unyielding than their often more numerous adversaries. This was particularly evident in the skilful drive of the reformers to make celibacy an absolute prerequisite to ordination. This part of the Gregorian platform was reinforced by the monastic ideal, since many of the reformers were actually monks and had already embraced a continent life. Some, like the ascetic Peter Damian, cardinal-bishop of Ostia, were even eager to treat the problem as heresy and not as a matter of discipline. But the reformers were perhaps also uncompromising on this issue because they were convinced that compulsory clerical continence could advance the process of de-laicization – another more general item of their platform. A monasticized priesthood, quite simply, was viewed by reformers everywhere as a crucial corrective to clerical involvement in the world. If successful, the strategy, it was hoped, would provide the clergy with that sense of solidarity and corporate identity needed to distinguish them from the laity. In all essential respects, as one scholar has put it, the reforming initiatives of the popes were ‘an attempt by men trained in the monastic discipline to remodel Church and society according to monastic ideals... to train churchmen to rethink themselves as a distinct ‘order’ with a life-style totally different from that of laymen.’ Behind the campaign for celibacy, in sum, aside from the moral and canonical issues involved, was the desire to set all

churchmen apart from and above the laity; the need to create a spiritual elite by the separation of the priest from the ordinary layman was an urgent priority. Doubtless, in the end, the Gregorian priesthood did achieve a certain *libertas* and even a sense of community, but only at the expense of a sharp opposition between itself and the rest of society.

“By contrast, in the Christian East, as in primitive Christianity, a wholly celibate priesthood never became the norm...”

It often happens in history that one important historical process going in one direction masks the presence of another going in precisely the opposite direction. We see the same contradiction in this, the final chapter of Western Orthodox history. The process of ecclesiastical reformation initiated by Pope Leo IX in 1049, which aimed at the liberation of the Church from secular control, was - generally speaking, and with the exception of the element of clerical celibacy - a laudable and necessary programme. But the increasing distance it placed between the clergy and the laity was fraught with danger. In particular, it threatened to undermine the traditional place in Christian society of *the anointed kings*, who occupied a kind of intermediate position between the clergy and the laity. And in the hands of two ambitious clerics who entered the service of the papacy at about this time, Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida and Archdeacon Hildebrand (the future Pope Gregory VII), it threatened simply to replace the caesaropapist variety of feudalism with a papocaesarist variety - that is, the subjection of the clergy to lay lords with the subjection of the laity, and even the kings, to clerical lords - or rather, to just one clerical lord, the Pope.

The problem was that by now Church and State were so deeply entangled with each other that nobody, on either side of the controversy, could conceive of a return to the traditional system of the symphony of powers, which allowed for the relative independence of both powers within a single Christian society. Thus the Church wished to be liberated from “lay investiture”. But she did not want to be deprived of the lands, vassals and, therefore, political power which came with investiture. Indeed, the last act in the life of Pope Leo IX himself was his marching into battle at the head of a papal army in 1053 in order to secure his feudal domains in Benevento, which had been granted to him by his kinsman, Emperor Henry III.

Contemporary western society was shocked by that; for, worldly and entangled in secular affairs as bishops had become, it was still felt that war was not an activity suited to a churchman. But that shock was as nothing to the trauma caused in the 1070s and 1080s by Hildebrand’s creative interpretation of the basic feudal relationship: all Christians, he said, were “the soldiers of Christ” and “the vassals of St. Peter”, i.e. of the Pope, and the Pope had the right to call on all the laity to break their feudal oaths and take up arms against their lords, in obedience to himself, their ultimate feudal suzerain, who would repay them, not with lands or physical security, but with the absolution of sins and everlasting life! Thus freedom from lay control, on

the one hand, but control over the laity, and greater secular power, on the other: that was the programme – both contradictory and hypocritical - of the “reformed” papacy

But before undertaking this assault on the West, the papacy needed to secure its rear in the East. This was achieved by picking a quarrel with the Eastern Church and sending Cardinal Humbert to Constantinople to anathematize it in 1054. Pope Leo IX was actually dead when the exchange of anathemas took place, but that he was a truly papist pope is proved by his words: “If anywhere in the universe any people proudly disagrees with the Roman Church, it can no longer be called or considered to be a Church – it is already an assemblage of heretics, a conventicle of schismatics, a synagogue of Satan”. In reply to this Patriarch Michael (Cerularius) of Constantinople said: “O you who are Orthodox, flee the fellowship of those who have accepted the heretical Latins and who regard them as the first Christians in the Catholic and Holy Church of God!”

For it was in this proud exaltation of the opinion of one local Church, the Roman – or rather, of one man in one local Church – above the Universal Church that the whole tragedy of the further development of Western civilisation lay...

The now definitely secular character of the papacy was demonstrated at the inauguration of Pope Nicholas II, when a quasi-royal *coronation* was introduced as part of the rite. Then, in 1059, he decreed that the Popes should be elected by the cardinal-bishops alone, without the participation of the people. “The role of the Roman clergy and people,” writes Canning, “was reduced to one of mere assent to the choice. The historical participation of the emperor was by-passed with the formula ‘saving the honour and reverence due to our beloved son Henry [IV] who is for the present regarded as king and who, it is hoped, is going to be emperor with God’s grace, inasmuch as we have now conceded this to him and to his successors who shall personally obtain this right from the apostolic see’.”

Sixty years before, Otto III had bombastically claimed that he had “ordained and created” the Pope. Now the wheel had come round full circle: the emperors were emperors only by virtue of receiving this right from the Pope.

### [The Rise of the Normans](#)

Four months later, the new Pope made a hardly less momentous decision: he entered into alliance at Melfi with the Normans of South Italy, the same nation whom the last Orthodox Pope, Leo IX, had died fighting, and whom he had cursed on his deathbed. The alliance was momentous because up to this moment the Popes had always turned for protection to the Christian Roman Emperor, whether of East Rome or of the “Holy Roman Empire” of the West. Indeed, the Pope had insisted on crowning the “Holy Roman Emperor” precisely because he was the papacy’s official guardian. For it was unheard of that the Church of Rome should recognise as her

official guardian any other power than the Roman Emperor, from whom, according to the forged *Donation of Constantine*, she had herself received her quasi-imperial dignity and power. But just as, in the middle of the eighth century, the Papacy had rejected the Byzantines in favour of the Franks, so now - after cutting the last remaining links with Byzantium by "anathematising" the Orthodox Church - it rejected the Germans in favour of the Normans, a recently formed nation of Viking origin but French speech and culture.

Now the Normans had recently seized a large swathe of land belonging to the Lombards and Byzantines in Southern Italy. The Pope legitimised this robbery in exchange for the Norman leaders Richard of Capua and Robert Guiscard becoming his feudal vassals and swearing to support the Papacy. In addition, Robert Guiscard specifically promised: "If you or your successors die before me, I will help to enforce the dominant wishes of the Cardinals and of the Roman clergy and laity in order that a pope may be chosen and established to the honour of St. Peter."

Guiscard was as good as his word. "Every stage in the Norman progress," writes Professor Douglas, "entailed from the first a practical extension of papal power in the countries which were being subjected to the Normans." "Thus after 1059 the Norman conquests were made progressively to subserve the restoration of the Latin rite and the extension of papal jurisdiction in southern Italy" - at the expense both of the Byzantines and of the German Emperor, Henry IV, who was at that time still a child and therefore unable to react to the assault on his position.

Even before this, the Papacy had begun to forge close bonds with the Normans in their homeland in Northern France, whence the papal assault on that other fortress of old-style Orthodox Autocracy, England, would soon be launched. Thus in 1055, the year after Duke William of Normandy seized effective control of his duchy by defeating a coalition led by his lord, King Henry I of France, the old-fashioned (that is, Orthodox) Archbishop Mauger was deposed to make way for the more forward-looking Maurilius. He introduced "a new and extraneous element" - that is, an element more in keeping with the ideals of the heretical, "reformed papacy" - into the Norman Church. Then, in 1059, papal sanction for the marriage between Duke William and Matilda of Flanders, which had been withheld by Leo IX, was finally obtained, opening the way for full co-operation between the Normans and the Pope. Finally, William supported the candidacy of Alexander II to the throne as against that of Honorius II, who was supported by the German Empress Agnes. The Pope now owed a debt of gratitude to the Normans which they were soon to call in...

By the 1060s, then, there were only two powers in the West that stood in the way of the complete triumph of the crude, militaristic ethos of feudalism: the Orthodox autocracies of England and Germany. By the end of the century both powers had been brought low - England by military conquest and its transformation into a single feudal fief at the hands of the Normans, and Germany by cunning dialectic and the fear of

excommunication by the Pope.

### *The Challenge Facing the English*

The weakness of the English consisted in the fact that in their whole history there was not a single instance of struggle with Rome over doctrinal (as opposed to canonical or administrative) matters, nor any appeal by the English Church to the Eastern Churches against the Pope; so that there were no clear indications as to how a struggle between the King and the Pope, or the local Church and the Pope, would end...

However, from the late tenth century, instances of tension between England and Rome become more common. Thus St. Dunstan refused to sanction an uncanonical marriage which the Pope approved of, saying: "I am not to be moved, even by the threat of death, from the authority of my Lord." Again, in 991, at a Council in Rheims attended by English as well as French bishops, Arnulph, bishop of Orleans, said that if Pope John XV had no love and was puffed up with knowledge, he was the Antichrist. And in the early eleventh century Archbishop Wulfstan of York (+1023) openly warned the Pope against the sin of simony; while King Canute obtained from him a promise not to exact money from the English archbishops for the *pallium*.

But these were minor challenges compared with the one that now faced the English. For now, if they were to preserve their spiritual and national identity, they would have to break, finally and decisively, with the place and the institution to which they had been so devoted – Rome and the Roman papacy...

## 1. SAINT EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1043-1066)

### Early Years

The holy King Edward was born in about 1003. His father was the English King Ethelred, and his mother – the Norman princess Emma. When Queen Emma was pregnant with him, “all of the men of the country,” as his earliest, anonymous biographer records, “took an oath that if a man child should come forth as the fruit of her labours, they would await in him their lord and king who would rule over the whole race of the English.”

In spite of this promise, Edward’s claim to the throne was laid aside in favour of those of Ethelred’s six sons by an earlier marriage – in particular, Edmund Ironside, who became king in 1015 and was killed in the same year, and the Danish King Canute’s sons by Elgiva of Northampton (Harold I) and Queen Emma (Hardacanute). It must therefore have seemed a great miracle to his contemporaries that Edward should finally, when already in middle age, have succeeded to the throne of his fathers, reigning in peace for another twenty-four years. It must have seemed, moreover, that God was taking pity on His people again after the heavy chastisement of the Danish yoke (1016-1042); for, as the anonymous biographer writes, “just as a father, after chastising his children, in a peace with them again, shows himself a soothing comforter, so God’s loving kindness, sparing the English after the heavy weight of his rebuke, showed them a flower preserved from the root of their ancient kings, and both gave them the strength and fired their minds to seek this flower for the kingdom as well as for their salvation.”

When Edward was still in his cradle, he was brought to the monastery of Ely by his parents, “and was offered,” according to the monastery’s chronicler, “above the holy altar... Moreover, as the elders of the church who were present and saw it used to tell, he was brought up there in the monastery with the boys for a long time, learning the psalms and hymns of the Lord with them.”

Some have doubted whether an English king could have been dedicated his son to a life of monastic chastity in this way. But he was not regarded as the immediate heir: in the charters of the latter period of Ethelred’s reign, his name is added at the bottom of the list of princes. Moreover, so close were the links between the English royal family and the monasteries that both Kings Edgar and Edward the Martyr were brought up by monks, while the daughters of Kings Alfred and Edward the Elder, and the sister of Edward the Martyr, were dedicated as nuns. It is therefore not impossible that the future King Edward was brought up by monks, at least until the royal family was forced to flee to Normandy in 1013.

The fruits of the boy’s pious upbringing were soon evident. On February 2, 1014,



King Swein of Denmark was miraculously killed by St. Edmund while he was ravaging East Anglia. This event was made known by revelation to Prince Edward, although he was only a boy of twelve at the time.

But when Edward had this revelation, his father King Ethelred and the whole of the royal family were in exile in Normandy, expelled by their subjects, who had been exasperated by his failed policies against the Danes, and especially by the fruitless payment of ever larger amounts of tax, the *Danegeld*. Archbishop Wulfstan of York saw in this and other betrayals the root cause of the people's failure to repel the pagan Danes: "For there are here in the land great disloyalties towards God and towards the state, and there are also many here in the country who are betrayers of their lords in various ways. And the greatest betrayal in the world of one's lord is that a man betray his lord's soul; and it is also a very great betrayal of one's lord in the world, that a man should plot against his lord's life or, living, drive him from the land; and both have happened in this country. They plotted against Edward [the Martyr] and then killed him... Many are forsworn and greatly perjured, and pledges are broken over and again; and it is evident in this nation that the wrath of God violently oppresses us..."

The English repented and recalled their king from exile. However, on April 23, 1016, he died "after a life of much hardship and many difficulties. Then, after his death, all the councillors of England chose Edmund [Ironside, his eldest son by his first wife] as king, and he defended his kingdom valiantly during his lifetime."

The seven short months of Edmund's reign are among the most dramatic in English history, matched only by the nine months of Harold Godwinson's in 1066. The pattern of events, moreover, was very similar to that later drama: great extremes of heroism and treachery, culminating in the crucifixion of a conquered country. Thus immediately after the *witan* proclaimed Edmund king in London, the bishops and chief men of Wessex assembled and unanimously elected Canute, the son of King Swein, as king. Meeting him at Southampton, writes Florence of Worcester, "they repudiated and renounced in his presence all the race of Ethelred, and concluded peace with him, swearing loyalty to him, and he also swore to them that he would be a loyal lord to them in affairs of Church and state."

Undeterred by this treachery to the ancient royal dynasty that had served England so well, King Edmund raised no less than five armies against the Danes, and was finally killed, on November 30, not by a Dane, but by the ubiquitous traitor of his father's reign. He was buried beside his grandfather, King Edgar the Peaceable, at Glastonbury. And so the whole of England passed into the hands of Canute the Dane...

The young Prince Edward, lover of monasticism though he was, had shown great valour as a warrior in this period. Thus we read in a Scandinavian source that, during a battle for London between the English and the Danes, "Thorkel the Tall had taken

the one part of the town; many of his host had fallen there. Then Earl Thorkel the Tall went to King Canute to win the other part of the town, and as luck would have it, just saved his life, for Edward, King Ethelred's son, struck at that time a blow which men have held in memory in after days. Thorkel thrust Canute off his horse, but Edward smote asunder the saddle and the horse's back. After that, however, the brothers had to take to flight, and Canute exulted in his victory, and thanked King Olaf for his help."

Canute was to become an exemplary defender of the Church; but at the beginning of his reign he acted like the inveterate pagan that he still was, inflicting the last and largest ever *Danegeld* tax on the nation, while disposing of all his possible political opponents. Thus Prince Edwy, St. Edward's half-brother, was killed, while his brothers Edward and Edmund were sent "to the king of the Swedes to be killed." The Swedish king, however, was a Christian, baptised by the English missionary bishop St. Sigfrid. So he would not acquiesce in Canute's demand, in spite of the treaty he had with him. Instead, "he sent them to the king of the Hungarians, Solomon by name, to be preserved and brought up there..."

### *Years in Exile*

To avoid the same fate, St. Edward and his brother Alfred were forced to return to Normandy... Soon the princes had another shock. In July, 1017 King Canute married Emma, King Ethelred's widow. To her sons in exile in Normandy it must have come as a shock that their mother should marry the conqueror of their country and the murderer of their brothers, while letting them languish alone in exile. This may explain, at least in part, the difficult relations King Edward had with his mother at the beginning of his reign.

Now on the death of King Canute, the throne of England passed to his son by Elgiva of Northampton, Harold, while Denmark was ruled by his son by Queen Emma, Hardacanute. Initially, Emma hoped that her son Hardacanute would become king; and, supported by the powerful Earl Godwin of Wessex, she even had coins struck in Hardacanute's name at her base in Winchester, while the coins in currency north of the Thames bore Harold's name. However, when it became clear that he was not going to come to England from Denmark, she turned to her sons in Normandy. She wrote to them to leave Normandy and join her at Winchester.

Now Edward, as David Raraty says, "never regarded either Harthacnut or Harold as legitimate rulers, but had himself begun to use the royal style in Normandy, on Mont-St-Michel and Fécamp charters as early as the reign of Duke Robert." So he had no hesitation in responding to his mother's call. However, he was forced to return after a battle in the Southampton area.

Then came his brother Alfred. The murder of Prince Alfred – probably by Emma's

former ally Earl Godwin at King Harold's instigation – was, as we have seen, one of the excuses William of Normandy used for the invasion of 1066. The Abingdon manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (c. 1050) records: "Godwin prevented him [Alfred], and placed him in captivity, dispersing his followers besides, killing some in various ways. Some were sold for money, some cruelly murdered, some put in chains, some blinded, some mutilated and some scalped. No more horrible deed was done in this land after the Danes came and made peace with us." And in another chronicle we read that in 1040 Godwin admitted to the murder, but swore to King Hardacanut and all the chief men of the land "that it was not by his counsel or his will that his brother was blinded, but that his lord King Harold had ordered him to do what he did."

Prince Alfred actually died from his wounds in the monastery of Ely, that great fortress of Anglo-Saxon Orthodoxy. The body was buried with great honour in the southern porch of the west end of the church, where "wondrously beautiful visions of lights often occur", wrote the monastery chronicle. And there were "many miracles..., as people report who even declare most repeatedly that they have seen them."

The years which followed Prince Alfred's murder, until his brother Edward ascended the throne, were among the most wretched in English Orthodox history. The Danish rule, which had been tolerable under Canute, now became an oppressive yoke. In 1038 Archbishop Athelnoth "the Good" died, followed, seven days later, by Bishop Athelric of Selsey: "for he had besought God that he should not live long in this world after the death of his most beloved father, Athelnoth." In the next two years these losses were compounded by the deaths of Bishops Alfric of Elmham, Beorhteah of Worcester, Beorhtmaer of Lichfield and Edmund of Durham, who were succeeded by men of much lower spiritual stature. Thus to York came Alfric Puttoc, or the Hawk, who was angry when, in 1038, the vacant see of Worcester was not also given to him, as it had been, by an exceptional measure, to two of his predecessors. Instead the king gave it to a favourite of Godwin's, Lifing of Crediton, who now held three sees simultaneously. Nor was this the only case of sees held in plurality or through simony. Elmham was given to a king's chaplain, Stigand (later archbishop of Canterbury). "But he was afterwards ejected, and Grimcetel was elected for gold, and held then two dioceses."

However, as the spiritual atmosphere darkened, a revelation was given to one of the last of the holy bishops – Brihtwald of Ramsbury. He was once weeping over the plight of the people, "and asked," records King Edward's anonymous biographer, "that God's mercy should look favourably upon them. At that time he passed the watches of his weeping in the monastery of Glastonbury, and weary after so many tears the man of God fell asleep. When lo! In the Holy of Holies he saw the blessed Peter, the first of the Apostles, consecrate the image of a seemly man as king, mark out for him a life of chastity, and set the years of his reign by a fixed reckoning of his life. And when the king even at this juncture asked him of the generations to come who would reign in the kingdom, Peter answered, 'The kingdom of the English is of

God; and after you he has already provided a king according to His will.”

The “seemly man” marked out for a life of chastity was King Edward. And the prophecy began to be fulfilled when King Harold’s successor Hardacanute died suddenly while drinking at a marriage feast in 1042. Supported by the most powerful man in the realm, Earl Godwin, Prince Edward was recalled from exile.

### Edward the King

And so Edward was consecrated king of England in London at Pascha, 1043. “Great was the joy that the English had,” writes an early French chronicler. “For the Danes had held them cheap, and often humiliated them. If a hundred of them met a single Dane, it would go badly for them if they did not bow to him. And if they met upon a bridge, they waited; it went badly for them if they moved before the Dane had passed. As they passed, they made obeisance, and whoever failed to do this was shamefully beaten if caught. So cheap were the English held. So much did the Danes insult them.”

The long years of exile in Normandy seem to have changed the fiery warrior of London bridge. He was a man, writes William of Malmesbury, “from the simplicity of his manners, little calculated to govern, but devoted to God, and in consequence directed by Him; for while he continued to reign, there arose no popular commotions which were not immediately quelled. There was no foreign war; all was calm and peaceable, both at home and abroad, which is the more an object of wonder, because he conducted himself so mildly that he would not even utter a word of reproach to the meanest person.... In the meantime, the regard which his subjects entertained for him was extreme, as was also the fear of foreigners; for God assisted his simplicity, that he might be feared who knew not how to be angry.”

And yet the inner fire was still there. “If some cause aroused his temper,” writes William of Malmesbury, “he seemed terrible as a lion, but he never revealed his anger by railing. To all petitioners he would either grant graciously or graciously deny, so that his gracious denial seemed the highest generosity. In public he carried himself as a true king and lord; in private with his courtiers as one of them, but with royal dignity unimpaired. He entrusted the cause of God to his bishops and to men skilled in canon law, warning them to act according to the case, and he ordered his secular judges, princes and palace lawyers to distinguish equitably, so that, on the one hand, righteousness might have royal support, and, on the other, evil, when it appeared, its just condemnation. This good king abrogated bad laws, with his *witan* (parliament) established good ones, and filled with joy all that Britain over which by the grace of God and hereditary right he ruled.”

Indeed, in later centuries, when the English groaned under the exactions of their Norman kings, they appealed for a return to the just laws of the good King Edward. “In the exaction of taxes he was sparing, as he abominated the insolence of collectors:

in eating and drinking he was devoid of the addiction to pleasure which his state allowed: on the more solemn festivals, though dressed in robes interwoven with gold, which the queen had most splendidly embroidered, yet still he had such forbearance as to be sufficiently majestic, without being haughty; considering in such matters rather the bounty of God than the pomp of the world. There was one secular enjoyment in which he chiefly delighted; which was hunting with fleet hounds, whose baying the woods he used with pleasure to encourage: and again, the flying those birds, whose nature it is to prey on their kindred species. In these exercises, after hearing Divine service in the morning, he employed himself whole days. In other respects he was a man by choice devoted to God, and lived the life of an angel in the administration of his kingdom: to the poor and to the stranger, more especially foreigners, and men of religious order, he was kind in invitation, munificent in his presents, and constantly exciting the monks of his own country to imitate their holiness. He was of middle height; his beard and hair swan-white; his countenance florid; fair throughout his whole person; and his form of admirable proportion."

### *Edward the Miracle-Worker*

Moreover, according to the anonymous biographer, who learned it "from the joint testimony of good and fitting men", God glorified King Edward with the gift of miracles.

"A certain young woman, already provided with a husband, but gladdened with no fruits of the marriage, had an infection of the throat and of those parts under the jaw which... are called glands. These had so disfigured her face with an evil smelling disease that she could scarcely speak to anyone without great embarrassment. She was informed in a dream that if she were washed in water by King Edward she would be cured of this most troublesome pox. She then, with the certainty of faith, revealed the dream's instructions. And when the king heard of it, he did not disdain to help the weaker sex, for he had the sweetest nature, and was always charming to all suitors. A dish of water was brought; the king dipped in his hand; and with the tips of his fingers he anointed the face of the young woman and the places infected with the disease. He repeated this action several times, now and then making the sign of the Cross. And believe in wonder one about to relate wonders! The diseased parts that had been treated by the smearing of the king softened and separated from the skin; and, with the pressure of the hand, worms together with pus and blood came out of various holes. Again the king kneaded with his holy hand and drew out the pus. Nor did he shrink from the stench of the sick woman until with his healing hand he had brought out all that noxious disease. Then he ordered her to be fed daily at the royal expense until she could be fully restored to health. And hardly had she been at court a week, when, all foulness washed away, the grace of God moulded her with beauty. And she, who formerly through this or some other sickness had been barren, in that year became pregnant by the same husband, and lived henceforth happily enough with all around her. Although this seems new and strange to us, the Franks aver that Edward

had done this often as a youth when he was in Neustria, now known as Normandy.

“Likewise a certain blind man was going about claiming that he had been advised in sleep, that if his blind face were washed in the water with which the king rinsed his hands, he would both overcome the blindness and restore his lost sight. When Edward heard of this from his privy councillors, at first he contradicted and blamed them for believing it to be true. But when they demanded urgently that he should not resist God’s will, at length he courteously agreed. It was then, as they say for certain, the day of the vigil of the festival of All Saints, when the king, having made his morning ablutions, entered the chapel. Meanwhile his servants washed the blind man with the same water, and conducted him after the king into the house of prayer. When the king left after the canonical hours had been solemnly sung in honour of all the saints, word was brought to him by his courtiers that he who was blind now saw. The king, therefore, with pious curiosity, came unto him in the chapel, and, calling him to him, inquired whether he could indeed see. This the man began to affirm and gave thanks to God. To test the truth of his words, however, the king, as pure as a dove, stretched forth the palm of his hand, and asked for an account of his action. ‘You stretch out your hand, oh my lord king,’ the man replied. Once more the king, grasping his forefinger and middle finger like a pair of horns before the man’s eyes, asked what he did. And the man answered what he saw. Also, a third time, the king, grasped his beard in his hand, again asked him what he did. And the man furnished correctly the information that he sought. Then the king considered that he had been sufficiently examined, and went forward for a little to pray; and, having thrice bowed his knee before the altar, he gave thanks to God and entrusted the man to his servants to be maintained as long as he lived at the royal charge. The man lived for a long time at court, a witness to the virtue he had received by the glory of God.”

“Again,” writes Osbert of Clare, “it was revealed by a sure vision to a man who had been completely blind for three years, and who sprang from the citizens of Lincoln town, that he would recover the sight of both eyes from.. Edward. For he was ordered to be washed in the water poured on the king’s hands, and so be freed at length from the darkness of his former blindness. The blind man hastened quickly to court, and asked the king’ servants to grant him that which he had not had for a long time. And so, when his face had been washed in the same way as the previous blind man, he was restored to health, and the renewed glory of his former condition was given back to him. There still survives to this day a witness who saw him long ago as a blind man and afterwards knew him clear-sighted, with the darkness dispelled.

“The glorious king ordered a royal palace to be built at Brill, whereupon a great crowd of rustics poured into the wood with axes. It was summer time, when men, after they have filled their bellies, are quick to rest, and then, in the afternoon, hasten back more eagerly to work. Among the other labourers on the royal building was a young man named Wulfwi, who, from his greediness for wheat, was surnamed ‘Spillecorn’. He rose from sleep having lost his sight, and remained blind for nineteen

years. At length God's mercy looked upon him, and he who had lacked sight for so long a time regained it through a heavenly visitation. A citizen's wife approached this man who laboured under so wondrous a disability, and told him in clear words what she had learned about him in a vision. 'Dear man,' she said, 'visit eighty churches, bare-footed and wearing only woollen clothes; and thus you will experience the merit of the saints, whose patronage you seek with faith, in the purging of your blindness; but the privilege is reserved especially to St. Edward the king that the water in which he washes his hands should restore to you the light of your eyes.' No sluggard after hearing this, the visited that number of churches, and finally he put his case to the king's chamberlains. These made no haste to seek out the king and acquaint him with the poor man's requirements. 'For the poor man is always despised'; and when money runs out the name and fruits of friendship are wont to perish. The mendicant, however, battered diligently at the door of God's mercy, in order to recover the sight of his eyes through.. Edward the king. At length, worn out by the insistence of the blind man, a chamberlain went straight to the prince and related from beginning to end the vision which had been told the poor man. 'Mother of God,' said the king, 'my Lady and ever virgin Mary, stand witness that I shall be exalted beyond measure [I shall be very grateful', according to another version] if God should work through me that of which the vision told.' Then the king dipped his fingers in the liquid element and mercifully touched the sightless eyes. And lo! Blood poured copiously through the hands of the prince. The man, cured of his blindness, cried out, and, filled with a great joy, exclaimed, 'I see, O king, your bright countenance. I see the gracious face of life. God has given me light, and Edward the anointed.' The man of God, contemplating this deed, gave thanks to Almighty God, by Whose mercy a day of brightness had dawned for the blind man. This miracle was performed by the dispensation of the Lord, just as it had once been revealed to him by the woman's vision, at the royal house called Windsor... To the blind man miraculously made to see, he entrusted the custody of his chief palace for the term of his whole life.

"... When one of the courtiers had witnessed this great miracle, in which a blind man was freed from darkness by the king, he endeavoured reverently to steal what remained of the king's washing water. Having carried the water out of doors, he came upon four beggars, of whom three were burdened with the loss of their eyes, and on the fourth only one eye was bright. But the courtier, a man of faith, washed their blindness, and the power of God restored to them, in the court of the great king, the seven lost eyes."

### [The Rebellion of Earl Godwin](#)

The only serious blot on the life of King Edward, according to his biographers, was his relationship with his mother, Queen Emma - although, as we shall see, he repented of his harshness towards her. In 1043, the king, with Earls Godwin, Leofric and Siward, came to Winchester and imprisoned her. Then, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, they "deprived her of all her innumerable treasures, because she had been

too strict with the king, her son, in that she had done less for him than he wished, both before his accession and afterwards..." It seems that she was also accused of plotting with King Magnus of Norway.

However, as Frank Barlow writes, "Emma, when reduced to poverty and despair, had a dream in which [St. Mildred] promised to help her because she, with Cnut, had patronized the translation of St. Mildred from Thanet to St. Augustine's, Canterbury. Whereupon Emma borrowed 20s., sent it by means of her thegn [retainer], Aethelweard Speaka, to Abbot Aelfstan of St. Augustine's, and, miraculously, the king's heart was changed. Edward 'felt shame for the injury he had done her, the son acknowledged the mother, he restored her to her former dignity and he who had proclaimed her guilty begged her pardon.' Everything she had possessed was restored to her; her accusers and despoilers were confounded."

Nor is this the only time that the queen was exonerated through the intercessions of the saints. Thus Canon Busby writes: "She had been accused of unchastity in association with Bishop Alwyn [Aelfwine] of Winchester. In order to prove her innocence she was obliged to undergo the ordeal of walking over nine red-hot ploughshares placed on the pavement of the nave of the Cathedral. The Cathedral annalist says: 'The news was spread throughout the Kingdom that the Queen was to undergo this ordeal; and such was the throng of people who flocked to Winchester, that so vast a concourse on one day was never seen before. The King himself, Saint Edward, came to Winchester; nor did a single noble of the Kingdom absent himself, except Archbishop Robert, who feigned illness and, being inimical to the Queen, had poisoned the King's mind against her, so that if her innocence were proved he might be able to make his escape without difficulty. The pavement of the church being swept, there was placed upon it nine red-hot ploughshares, over which a short prayer was said, and then the Queen's shoes and stockings were drawn off, and laying aside her mantle and putting on her veil, with her garments girded closely round her, between two bishops, on either hand, she was conducted to the torture. The bishops who led her wept, and, though they were more terrified than she was, they encouraged her not to be afraid. All persons who were in the church wept and there was a general exclamation "O Saint Swithun, Saint Swithun, help her!" The people cried with great vehemence that Saint Swithun must hasten to the rescue. The Queen prayed: St. Swithun, rescue me from the fire that is prepared for me. Then followed a miracle. Guided by the Bishops she walked over the red-hot ploughshares, she felt neither the naked iron nor the fire.'"

Edward's suspicions of his mother may have been the result of her close links with Earl Godwin of Wessex, the murderer of his brother Prince Alfred. The king, as we have seen, owed the smoothness of his accession to the throne in large part to the support of Godwin, and it was probably in gratitude for this support that he had agreed to marry his daughter Edith. However, he had never really lost his distrust for the powerful earl, and in 1051 the latent tensions between the two men flared into



open conflict.

The king had promoted to the see of Canterbury a Norman, Bishop Robert of London, in preference to Godwin's candidate (and relative), the Canterbury monk Alfric. The new archbishop quarrelled with Godwin, accusing him of encroaching on church lands in the Canterbury diocese. Then, in September, Count Eustace of Boulogne, the king's brother-in-law, came to Dover with a small detachment of men. A riot between the Frenchmen and Count Eustace's men ensued, in which several people were killed. Godwin took the side of the men of Dover, which was in his earldom, and, having with his sons assembled a large military force, demanded of the king that he give up Count Eustace and his companions. However, the king, supported by the forces of Earls Siward, Leofric and Ralph, refused.

Through the mediation of Earl Leofric, a military confrontation was avoided, and it was agreed that the king and Godwin should meet in London. But before they could meet, Godwin, seeing that his support was waning, fled. Then the king and the witan ordered the banishment of him and his five sons. Moreover, the king renounced his queen, Godwin's daughter, although they were "as one person in double form", according to the anonymous *Life*, and she retired to the convent of Wherwell.

After Godwin's expulsion, the earldom of his eldest son Swein was given to Earl Odda, and it looked for a time as if King Edward would really be able to rule his kingdom through subordinates whom he trusted. But, even in exile, Godwin's power was still great. "If any Englishman had been told that events would take this turn," wrote the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, he would have been very surprised, for Godwin had risen to such great eminence as if he ruled the king and all England."

So the next year Godwin attempted to win back his former position by force. Helped by his sons Harold and Leofwine, who had levied troops in Ireland and landed in the West Country, he marched on London. Once again, a military confrontation was avoided, and both sides disbanded their troops. But this time the advantage was with Godwin, and the king fully restored to him and his sons, except Swein, all the honours they had forfeited. The king took back his queen, while Archbishop Robert, mounting a horse and dropping his pallium in the process, fled to the continent.

Peace was restored, but in circumstances so detrimental to the king's authority, and accompanied by the fickleness of such a large part of the people, that the omens for the future looked grim...

In the very year of Godwin's rebellion, 1052, a sign was manifested signifying the holiness of the royal line of Wessex of which King Edward was the heir, and the evil of those who would attempt to contest its authority. For the body of Edward's grandfather, King Edgar the Peaceable, was found to be incorrupt by Abbot Ailward

of Glastonbury. Moreover, the irreverence with which the holy body was handled indicated how irreverently the royal authority of St. Edward was soon to be treated.

“For when,” writes William of Malmesbury, “the receptacle which he had prepared seemed too small to admit the body, he profaned the royal corpse by cutting it. When the blood immediately gushed out in torrents, shaking the hearts of the bystanders with horror. In consequence his royal remains were placed upon the altar in a shrine, which he had himself given to this church, with the head of St. Apollinaris and the relics of the Martyr Vincent; which, having purchased at great price, he had added to the beauty of the house of God. The violator of the sacred body presently became distracted; and, not long after, as he was going out of the church, he met his death by a broken neck. But the display of royal authority did not cease with that: it proceeded further, a blind lunatic being cured there...”

At about the same time the relics of the Martyr-King Edmund of East Anglia were uncovered and found to be incorrupt by Abbot Leoftsan of Bury St. Edmund’s, which further helped to demonstrate the holiness of the royal rank that Godwin had so dishonoured by his actions.

In 1053, however, when he was at the height of his power, Godwin himself died in dramatic circumstances that suggested Divine retribution. He choked on a piece of bread after swearing to the king: “Let God Who knows all things be my judge! May this crust of bread which I hold in my hand pass through my throat and leave me unharmed to show that I was innocent of your brother’s death!” “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord!”

### [The Affair of Archbishop Stigand](#)

We now come to the affair of Archbishop Stigand, which was to have such fatal consequences for England. As we have seen, in 1052 Archbishop Robert fled to the continent, leaving his *pallium* behind. With the acquiescence of the king, but in face of the furious opposition of successive popes, Bishop Stigand of Winchester was allowed to take up the *pallium* and serve as archbishop in Robert’s place. The question is: was he a true archbishop? And: if so, could the English Church be said to have been under the pope’s jurisdiction during his archbishopric, that is, from 1052?

The fact that Stigand had not received his *pallium* from the pope may not have seemed important; for a generation before both Archbishop Wulfstan of York and King Canute had protested against the supposed necessity of English bishops’ travelling the long and difficult journey to Rome for the *pallium*. Moreover, it was an historical fact that before 735 no English archbishop had done this. But Archbishop Robert was still alive and had not been formally deposed...

Frank Barlow has shed some light on this problem. “Three aspects of the story need

investigation," he writes. "Was England aware of Stigand's incapacity as archbishop, of his suspension from his episcopal office, and of his excommunication?"

"There is no doubt that during Edward's reign Stigand was not recognised as an archbishop except in 1058 after the receipt of his *pallium* [which, however, he received from an "anti-pope", Benedict X, thus forming the basis for another of the charges that the papal legates levelled against him in the council of 1070]. Until that year he consecrated no bishop. By 1061, when two bishops went to Rome for consecration, his incapacity was again notorious. The Normans, too, were either aware of the position or learned it in England. William, who needed traditional and legitimate coronation, must have disregarded Stigand with the greatest reluctance. But from 1067 to 1070 he seems to have been accorded full metropolitan respect by the Normans. Expediency or William's arbitrariness may have been the cause.

"On the other hand, there is no evidence that anyone regarded Stigand as suspended from his episcopal office. He appears in all the witness-lists to 'royal' diplomas. He is known to have blessed abbots in 1061, 1065, and 1066... There is no strictly contemporary evidence that he was at any time shunned by the English kings, prelates, or laity..."

The whole matter is greatly complicated, as we have seen, by the fact that the Roman papacy was anathematised by the Orthodox Church of the East in 1054, which meant that the anathemas that the Popes launched against Stigand from that time were null and void. Thus even if we agree that Stigand's position was strictly uncanonical, it must also be admitted that it was providential, in that it meant a loosening of the ties between England and Rome at precisely the moment when the latter was falling into heresy and schism. Stigand had the other, not inconsiderable advantage that he was accepted by both sides in the near-civil war that had only just come to an end; so he could serve as a peacemaker between the king and Godwin's faction.

King Edward's decision to support Stigand as against his friend Archbishop Robert and the pope himself may seem surprising in view of his close co-operation with Pope Leo in his reforming councils since 1049. It may be that he thought that the unity of the English Church and nation at this critical hour was the overriding priority - and if, so then in view of what happened after his death, we must believe that he was right. It was at this point that the king's reputation for holiness may have played a critical part in saving his nation; for however much the popes fulminated against the "schismatic" Stigand, they never said a word against King Edward, and were forced to wait until after his death before launching an anti-English crusade...

### [The Papal Embassy](#)

The traditionally turbulent Anglo-Danish North had been remarkably quiet during Godwin's rebellion. This had much to do, no doubt, with the firm hand of Earl Siward

of Northumbria. However, in 1053 Earl Siward died and was buried in the church which he had dedicated to St. Olaf outside York. Since his son had been killed in a battle against King Macbeth of Scotland, he was succeeded by one of Godwin's sons, Tostig. Then, in 1057, the good Earls Leofric and Odda, who had been the foremost defenders of the Church in the Midlands, also died.

England's spiritual heart was beating more faintly now; and from now on pressure on the sickly organism from without – specifically, from Rome – began to increase. Thus it was at about this time that one of the bishops-elect, Walter of Hereford, decided to go to Rome to be consecrated. If, as seems likely, he was trying to avoid the "schismatic" Archbishop Stigand, then he avoided Stigand only to fall into the hands of the much more surely schismatic Pope Nicholas!

In 1061 this visit was followed by that of the archbishop-elect of York, Aldred, who went to Rome for his *pallium* in the company of Earl Tostig of Northumbria and several other English nobles. But "he found Pope Nicholas at first no friend to his desires," writes William of Malmesbury, "for Aldred was not minded to give up [the diocese of] Worcester. Aldred was so bound by ties of love to Worcester that it was dearer to him than the dignity of the archbishopric. So, after long disputation, Aldred returned homeward and came to Sutri. Earl Tostig who was with him was threatening that for this [refusal by the pope] there would be no more paying of Peter's Pence from England."

However, in the course of their journey home, Aldred and Tostig "were attacked by robbers and stripped, to the great horror of beholders, and made their way back to Rome. Their sufferings so far melted the rigour of the apostolic see, that Aldred received the *pallium* of York, having pledged himself to resign Worcester provided that he could find a better priest in the diocese to put in his place."

It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if Aldred had returned to England without the *pallium*. It is quite possible that, following the example of Stigand, and with King Edward's support, he would have assumed the archbishopric anyway, thus placing both of England's metropolitan sees in schism. But the robbers – and Pope Nicholas' *realpolitik* – saved the day for Rome.

And to reinforce his authority in England, the pope now sent two cardinals with Aldred on his journey home – this was the first papal legation to England since the council of Chelsea in 787. They stayed with Prior Wulfstan at Worcester, and, impressed by his piety, suggested him for the bishopric of Worcester. "By these praises," we read in Wulfstan's life by William of Malmesbury, "they aroused the goodwill of King Edward in whom the trafficker in benefices and the covetous man never found anything to forward their designs. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York gave their support to the Cardinals, the one of kindness, the other of knowledge; both by their sentence. With them in praising Wulfstan were the Earls Harold and

Elfgar, men more famed for warlike courage than for religion. They bestirred themselves vigorously in his cause, sending mounted messengers on Wulfstan's behalf, who rode many miles in little time to hasten on the matter. So [Wulfstan] was presented to the Court, and bidden to take upon him the office of Bishop. He earnestly withstood them, crying out that he was unequal to so great a charge, while all men cried that he was equal to it. So entirely was the whole people agreed, that it were not wrong to say that in all those bodies there was, concerning this matter, but one mind. But, to be brief, the cardinals and archbishops would have lost their labour, had they not pleaded against his unwillingness the duty of obeying the Pope. To that plea he must needs yield... So King Edward well and truly invested Wulfstan with the Bishopric of Worcester... Not long after he was consecrated at York by [Archbishop Aldred]: because Stigand of Canterbury was under the Pope's interdict."

The new Bishop Wulfstan was the one Englishman, besides the king himself, who, by the reputation of his asceticism and miracle-working, and the power of his preaching, could have inspired his countrymen to rebel against the now schismatical papacy if he had chosen to do so. But it may be wondered whether the legates' choice of Wulfstan for the bishopric (although they did not consecrate him) made him, so to speak, "the pope's man" at this time. As we shall see later, he served his country well in 1066 when he galvanised support in the North for the new King Harold; but after 1066 he sadly succumbed to the new Norman-papist regime.

Much depended now on the character of Wulfstan's close friend, Earl Harold, the new head of the Godwin clan and the most powerful man in England after the king. We have seen him supporting his father in rebellion against the king in 1051; but this may have been the result of family pressure rather than proof of a rebellious disposition. From 1052 he appears as completely loyal to the king, even as against the interests of his brothers; and the king appears to have trusted him in a way he never trusted his father. Unlike his father, he gave generously to the Church. And his religious feelings, already in evidence through his love for Bishop Wulfstan, were further stimulated by his healing through a holy relic which had been revealed some years earlier and had passed into the possession of his earldom.

### [The Question of the Succession](#)

King Edward was childless; so the question of who should succeed him became more pressing as he grew older. The king and his *witan* thought of Prince Edward, the son of King Edmund Ironside and the king's own nephew. After the Danish conquest of England in 1016, Edward and his family had gone into exile, first in Ladoga and Kiev in Russia, and then in Hungary. When they heard that he was alive, the English immediately sent an embassy headed by Bishop Aldred to the German Emperor Henry III in order to secure the prince's return from Hungary. Aldred failed because of Henry's conflict with Hungary; but on the death of the emperor in 1056, the king

tried again, sending, probably, Earl Harold, to perform this difficult and important task.

This time the mission was successful; but shortly after his arrival in England on August 31, 1057, Prince Edward died. Great was the sorrow of the English people, who suspected foul play: "We do not know for what reason it was so arranged that he could not see his kinsman, King Edward", said the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* pointedly. Many in the Norman faction suspected the Godwin family of removing another strong claimant to the throne. But since, as Walker argues, it was Harold Godwinson who carried out the difficult task of getting Edward from Hungary to England, it is very unlikely that he would have had any hand in an assassination attempt. Moreover, Edward's son Edgar was always treated with honour by Harold.

In 1063 Earls Harold and Tostig conducted a highly successful campaign by land and sea to subdue Prince Gruffydd of North Wales, who had been encroaching on English territory. The subjection of the Welsh further enhanced the prestige of Earl Harold, who, as well as being the biggest landowner in the country and the king's brother-in-law, was now the king's most trusted and efficient servant. There must have been many at this time who thought that he, rather than the young and inexperienced Prince Edgar, should succeed the old King Edward.

But in 1064 Earl Harold made a great blunder. The story is related with variants and inconsistencies in the Norman sources and on the Bayeux tapestry, but is not related at all in the pre-Conquest English sources. Nevertheless, this much is clear: that Harold sailed from Bosham in Sussex on a mission to the continent, that he was storm-driven onto the coast of Ponthieu, where he was captured by Count Guy, that William of Normandy ransomed him from Guy and treated him kindly at first, but that later he was persuaded, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to make an oath over a box of artfully concealed holy relics in Rouen that he would support William's claim to the English throne.

Now William's claim was based, in the first place, on his blood relationship to Queen Emma, King Edward's mother. But his case rested mainly on his assertion that in 1051 King Edward had promised him the throne on his death. The Norman sources further assert that in 1064 Harold was sent to Normandy by King Edward in order to confirm his earlier promise to William and in order that Harold should swear fealty to him.

Most modern historians doubt that King Edward made this promise. Not only is there no English evidence for it: such a testament had no precedent in English history: the English sources are unanimous in asserting that King Edward nominated Harold as his heir on his deathbed. Thus Nicholas Higham writes: "The Bayeux Tapestry shows the old king, distinguished by his crown, shaggy hair and beard, as he extends his hand to his kneeling brother-in-law Harold. Edward's *Life*, written soon after,

suggests Edward commended 'this woman [the queen] and all the kingdom to your protection'; and every version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* offers something similar."

Ian Walker writes: "We have seen that it is unlikely that any such promise [to William] was given by Edward, but rather that it was probably invented and imparted to William by Robert of Jumièges, Archbishop of Canterbury, following his exile in 1052. If this was the case, could Edward nevertheless have intended to make William his heir at this later date? This is highly unlikely. In 1051 Edward had no clearly established heir, although he did have a number of potential heirs, all with better qualifications than William. Now, he had secured a suitable and established heir in the person of his nephew, *Atheling* Edgar, and a reserve in Harold, the son of his deceased nephew, Earl Ralph. As a result of this change in circumstances the reasons adduced against the nomination of William as heir in 1051 apply with even greater force to any such nomination in 1064. He remained a man with only distant links to the English dynasty and little or no support in the country, although he was now secure in possession of his duchy and much more widely known and regarded than in 1051. In addition, William's recent conquest of Maine had resulted in the imprisonment and death of Edward's nephew, Count Walter of the Vexin. Count Walter died in suspicious circumstances while in William's custody, allegedly by poison, something unlikely to endear him to Edward. William of Poitiers hints that Edward was close to death and this was why he now sent Harold to pledge his kingdom. There is no support for this in English sources, which show that the king was still healthy enough to go hunting in autumn 1065. The suggestion that Edward intended William as his heir in 1064 seems less credible even than the case for this in 1051."

Why, then, did Harold make the journey? One Anglo-Norman source suggests that he was simply on a fishing trip and landed up on the wrong side of the Channel. However, the eleventh-century Canterbury Monk Edmer of Canterbury, using sources close to the family, has a more plausible story, namely, that Harold "asked leave of the king to go to Normandy to set free his brother and nephew who were being held there as hostages" (Godwin had given these hostages to the king after his abortive coup in 1051). In support of this theory is the fact that Harold did return with one of the hostages, his nephew Hakon. William continued to hold Harold's brother, Wulfnoth... Edmer continues: "The king said to [Harold]: 'I will have no part in this; but, not to give the impression of wishing to hinder you, I give you leave to go where you will and to see what you can do. But I have a presentiment that you will succeed in bringing misfortune upon the whole kingdom and discredit upon yourself. For I know that the Duke is not so simple as to be at all inclined to give them [the hostages] up to you unless he foresees that in doing so he will secure some great advantage to himself.'"

The king's prophetic spirit did not fail him; and according to a twelfth-century tradition, a great blow was miraculously struck at the oak in Rouen where Harold

made his oath to support William's claim to the throne – an oath, which, since he broke it when he himself became king, led to his and his country's downfall. "For the oak, which was once a tree of great height and beauty, ... is stated, wonderful to relate, to have shed its bark, and to have lost its greenness and its foliage. A sight well worth seeing, for a tree which a little time before was remarkable for the number and thickness of its leaves, shrivelled up from the roots, as quickly as did the gourd of Jonah and the olive of that other prophet and all its branches became white."

Just as the Lord's withering of the fig tree signified the falling away of the Jewish synagogue, so the withering of the oak at Rouen signified the falling away of the English Church...

### *The Rebellion of Earl Tostig*

In 1065 a serious rebellion against King Edward's rule broke out in the North. As we have seen, the traditionally turbulent Anglo-Danish North had been remarkably quiet during Godwin's rebellion in 1051-52. This had much to do, no doubt, with the firm but just government of Earl Siward; but his successor, Earl Tostig, while no less firm, appears to have been considerably less just. According to the anonymous biographer, several members of the *witan* "charged that glorious earl with being too cruel; and he was accused of punishing disturbers more for desire of their property which would be confiscated than for love of justice." But the same author excused Tostig on the grounds that "such.. was the cruelty of that people and their neglect of God that even parties of twenty or thirty men could scarcely travel without being either killed or robbed by the multitude of robbers in wait."

However, that there was probably some justice in the accusations appears from the fact that St. Cuthbert once intervened on behalf of a man condemned by Tostig, as Barlow describes in this summary of Simeon of Durham's account: "[Tostig] had succeeded in arresting a man named Aldan-hamal, a malefactor notorious for theft, robbery, murder and arson. The criminal was condemned to death, despite attempts by kinsmen and friends to bribe the earl; and while in fetters at Durham awaiting execution, when all efforts at rescue had failed, his conscience was smitten, he repented of his crimes, and he promised St. Cuthbert that if he could go free he would make full atonement. St. Cuthbert heard his prayer, struck off his fetters, and allowed him to make a lucky escape into the church. The guards, under Tostig's thane Barcwith, went in pursuit and considered breaking open the doors of the cathedral, for freedom of sanctuary, they thought, would allow all thieves, robbers, and murderers to laugh in their faces. But Barcwith was immediately struck down by heaven for his impiety and within an hour or two died raving mad; and Earl Tostig, terrified by his fate, pardoned the criminal and, later, held him in esteem."

The immediate cause of the rebellion appears to have been an extra tax imposed by Tostig on his earldom. The rebels seized York while Tostig was hunting with the king



in Wiltshire, and proceeded to slaughter his officials and seize his treasury. They then summoned Morcar, younger brother of Earl Edwin of Mercia, and with him as their "earl" marched south to plead their case with King Edward, ravaging Tostig's lands on the way. Earl Edwin joined them at Northampton, and there Earl Harold also came as the emissary of King Edward.

Harold was in a most difficult position. His natural desire was to support his brother against the rebels. But that would have led to civil war, which Harold now drew back from, just as his father and King Edward had done during the earlier crisis of 1051-52. In his meeting with the king at Oxford he counselled agreeing to the terms of the rebels. With great sorrow and reluctance, the king complied: Tostig was deposed, the rebels were pardoned and Morcar was confirmed as Earl of Northumbria.

In the following month Earl Tostig and his wife fled to her brother, Count Baldwin of Flanders. Tostig was bitter that the king had not supported him against the rebels. But he especially blamed his brother Harold, claiming that the Northumbrians "had undertaken this madness against their earl at the artful persuasion of his brother, Earl Harold." Harold denied this on oath; and since he gained nothing from the affair except the undying enmity of his brother, who fought against him in 1066, he must be believed.

The most serious result of the rebellion was the breakdown in health of the king, who had wanted to fight the rebels, but had been prevented by bad weather, his inability to raise enough troops and the reluctance of those around him to engage in civil war. "Sorrowing at this, he fell ill, and from that day until the day of his death he bore a sickness of the mind. He protested to God with deep sorrow, and complained to Him, that He was deprived of the due obedience of his men in repressing the presumption of the unrighteous; and he called down God's vengeance upon them..."

### *The Prophetic Moses*

In the second half of his reign, as the situation within the country worsened, the holy King Edward turned more and more to heavenly pursuits, and his prophetic gifts manifested themselves in still greater abundance.

Once, at Holy Pascha, the king returned after the Divine Liturgy to his seat at the royal banquet in Westminster. "While the rest were greedily eating," writes William of Malmesbury, "and making up for the long fast of Lent by the newly provided viands, he, with mind abstracted from earthly things, was absorbed in the contemplation of some Divine matter, when presently he excited the attention of the guests by bursting into profuse laughter: and as none presumed to inquire into the cause of his joy, he remained silent as before, till satiety had put an end to the banquet. After the tables were removed, and as he was unrobing in his chamber, three persons

of rank followed him; of these Earl Harold was one, the second was an abbot, and the third a bishop, who, presuming on their intimacy with the king, asked the cause of his laughter, observing that it seemed just cause for astonishment to see him, in such perfect tranquillity of mind and occupation, burst into a vulgar laugh while all others were silent. 'I saw something wonderful,' said he, 'and therefore I did not laugh without a cause.' At this, as is the custom of mankind, they began to inquire and search into the matter more earnestly, entreating that he would condescend to disclose it to them. After much reluctance, he yielded to their persevering solicitations, and related the following wonderful circumstance, saying that the Seven Sleepers in Mount Coelius [Ephesus] had now lain for two hundred years on their right side, but that, at the very hour of his laughter, they turned upon their left; that they would continue to lie in this manner for seventy-four years, which would be a dreadful omen to wretched mortals. For everything would come to pass, in those seventy-four years, which the Lord had foretold to His disciples concerning the end of the world: nation would rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there would be earthquakes in divers places, pestilences and famine, terrors from heaven and great signs; changes in kingdoms; wars of the Gentiles against the Christians, and also victories of the Christians over the pagans. Relating these matters to his wondering audience, he descanted on the passion of these sleepers, and the make of their bodies, thought totally unnoticed in history, as readily as though he had lived in daily intercourse with them. On hearing this, the earl sent a knight, the bishop a clergyman, and the abbot a monk, to Maniches the Emperor of Constantinople, giving them at the same time what is called a holy letter, that the martyr-relics of the Seven Sleepers should be shown to the delegates of the king of England. It fell out that the prophecy of King Edward was proved by all the Greeks, who could swear that they had heard from their fathers that the men were lying on their right side, but after the entrance of the English into the vault, they published the truth of the foreign prophecy to their countrymen. Nor was it long before the predicted evils came to pass; for the Hagarenes, Arabs and Turks, nations averse to Christ, making havoc of the Christians [at the battle of Manzikert in 1071], overran Syria, Lycia and Asia Minor, altogether devastating many cities, too, of Asia Minor, among which was Ephesus..."

Thus the reputation of King Edward, already renowned for his holiness in England and Western Europe, was beginning to spread even to the Orthodox East - whither so many exiled English families would soon have to flee.

On another occasion, as Ailred of Rievaulx tells the story, the king attended the service for the consecration of a church at Havering in Essex. As he was coming out of the church, a beggar met him and asked for alms. Edward did not have any money on him at the time; but since he never liked to send beggars away empty-handed, he gave him the costly ring which was on his finger. Some time later, some English pilgrims were in trouble near Bethlehem in the Holy Land. A beggar came up to them and asked them what the matter was. When they had explained it to him, he helped them. Then he gave them a ring and asked them to give it to their king in England,

with a message from St. John that for his chaste life he was to inherit the joys of Paradise in six months' time. Edward received the message with joy, realizing that the beggar to whom he had given the ring was St. John the Evangelist and Theologian. And in six months' time he reposed in peace.

The ring was found again when St. Edward's tomb at Westminster was opened in 1102. A sweet fragrance filled the church, and the body was found to be completely incorrupt. On the finger of his hand was the ring.

In 1163 the tomb was opened again. Frank Barlow writes: "They saw, a little obscured by the mortar and dust which had fallen down, the saint wrapped in a cloth of gold, at his feet purple shoes and slippers, his head and face covered with a round mitre, likewise embroidered with gold, his beard, white and slightly curled, lying neatly on his breast. Joyfully they called over the rest of the party, and as they cleared out the dirt from the tomb, they explored everything gently with their hands. To their relief nothing had changed. The body was still intact and the vestments were only a little dulled and soiled. Six of the monks lifted the body, laid it on a carpet, wrapped it in a precious silk cloth, and placed it in a wooden coffin or feretory, which they had prepared. Everything they found with the body was transferred to the new shrine, except the ring, which Laurence [the abbot of Westminster] removed to preserve as a memorial and as a sign of his personal devotion to the saint."

And so the holy king approached his departure from this life. One more public act of his reign remained to be performed: the dedication of his favourite project, the Abbey of St. Peter at Westminster. This act was of great symbolic importance; for according to tradition, the original church built on the site in St. Mellitus' time had been dedicated, not by hand of man, but by angels; and now the last man of truly angelic life in the land of the Angles, the virgin King Edward, came to lay the last stone in the edifice of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. Built to atone for his inability to keep a vow he had made to go on pilgrimage to Rome, it became the last monument of English Orthodoxy before its engulfment by the papist heresy.

A great assembly of men from all parts of the land assembled to celebrate Christmas and then the dedication of the church to Christ. Then, as the Monk Sulcard relates, "on Christmas Eve itself, the most kindly king began to get worse. Concealing the fact, however, he spent Christmas day both in the church and in the palace rejoicing with his nobles. But on the morrow, when he could hide it no longer, he began to rest apart, and sent messengers to bid his court be of good cheer and to carry out the dedication of his monastery through fitting persons."

The dedication of the abbey church took place on Holy Innocents Day, 1065, as the innocent sufferer lay on his deathbed.

The anonymous biographer, writing from eye-witness testimony, continues the

story: "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.”

King Edward died on January 5, 1066. The first part of his prophecy was fulfilled exactly; for one year and one day after his death, on January 6, 1067, Duke William of Normandy, having been crowned as the first Catholic king of England, set off on the three-and-a-half-year campaign which destroyed the face of the country - the Antichrist had come to England!

Modern historians have accused King Edward of weakness. Humility and chastity in the midst of a corrupt and adulterous generation are not properly thought of as signs of weakness, but rather of great spiritual strength and grace. However, let us concede that St. Edward had a certain weakness: like Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II, whom he resembled so closely, his weakness was that he trusted people too much, and was constantly being betrayed by them.

In 1013 he and his father had been betrayed by the people when they drove him into exile in Normandy. In 1016 the people had again betrayed his brother King Edmund, forcing him into exile again. In 1017 his mother had married his country's conqueror and abandoned him with his brother Prince Alfred in a foreign land. In 1036 his brother had been murdered, and only a few years later, in 1045, he had been forced to marry the daughter of his brother's murderer. He had trusted Archbishop Robert, who was the only man to share his perception of the danger posed by Earl Godwin – but the people forced the expulsion of Robert and the reinstatement of Godwin. He had trusted Earl Harold, but Harold refused to fight against his rebellious brother Tostig. He had trusted the English people when they recalled him from exile in 1043, thereby ending the hated Danish yoke; but the people had often, like the stiff-necked Israelites, longed to return to the spiritual Egypt, as when the Northumbrians, demanded a return to the laws of the Danish Canute.

And yet as the English Moses lay on his deathbed there were still a few, those who had been his closest attendants, who wept for him. To these he said, as the anonymous biographer recounts it: “Do not weep, but intercede with God for my soul, and give me leave to go to Him. For He will not pardon me that I should not die Who would not pardon Himself that He should not die.’ Then he addressed his last words to the queen who was sitting at his feet, in this wise, ‘May God be gracious to this my wife

for the zealous solicitude of her service. For she has served me devotedly, and has always stood close to my side like a beloved daughter. And so from the forgiving God may she obtain the reward of eternal happiness.' And stretching forth his hand to his governor, his brother, Harold, he said, 'I commend this woman and all the kingdom to your protection. Serve and honour her with faithful obedience as your lady and sister, which she is, and do not despoil her, as long as she lives, of any honour she got from me. Likewise I also commend these men who have left their native land for love of me, and have up till now served me faithfully. Take from them an oath of fealty, if they should so wish, and protect and retain them, or send them with your safe conduct safely across the Channel to their own homes with all that they have acquired in my service. Let the grave for my burial be prepared in the minster in the place which shall be assigned to you. I ask that you do not conceal my death, but announce it promptly in all parts, so that all the faithful can beseech the mercy of Almighty God on me, a sinner.' Now and then he also comforted the queen, who ceased not from lamenting, to erase her natural grief. 'Fear not,' he said, 'I shall not die now, but by God's mercy regain my strength.' Nor did he mislead the attentive, least of all himself, by these words, for he has not died, but has passed from death to life, to live with Christ.

"And so, coming these and like words to his last hour, he took the Viaticum from the table of heavenly life and gave up his spirit to God the Creator on the fourth [more accurately: the fifth] of January... Then could be seen in the dead body the glory of a soul departing to God. For the flesh of his face blushed like a rose, the adjacent beard gleamed like a lily, his hands, laid out straight, whitened, and were a sign that his whole body was given not to death but to auspicious sleep. And so the funeral rites were arranged at the royal cost and royal honour, as was proper, and amid the boundless sorrow of all men. They bore his holy remains from his palace home into the house of God, and offered up prayers and sighs and psalms all that day and the following night. Meanwhile, when the day of the funeral ceremony dawned, they blessed the office of the interment they were to conduct with the singing of masses and the relief of the poor. And so, before the altar of St. Peter the Apostle, the body, washed by his country's tears, is laid up in the sight of God. They also cause the whole of the thirtieth day following to be observed with the celebration of masses and the chanting of psalms and expended many pounds of gold for the redemption of his soul in the alleviation of different classes of the poor. Having been revered as a saint while still living in the world, as we wrote, at his tomb likewise merciful God reveals by these signs that he lives with Him as a saint in heaven. For at the tomb through him the blind receive their sight, the lame are made to walk, the sick are healed, the sorrowing are refreshed by the comfort of God, and for the faith of those who call upon Him, God, the King of kings, works the tokens of His goodness."

## 2. MARTYR-KING HAROLD AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST (1066-1070)

### The Wages of Sin

The rule of St. Edward brought with it peace and prosperity - 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. 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, just before the Conquest, 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."

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

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 and the Pope of Rome. Duke William claimed that the kingdom of England had been bequeathed to him by King Edward. As we have seen, it was to Earl Harold, not William, that the king bequeathed the kingdom on his deathbed, and this election was confirmed by the *witan* 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, 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. 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 purely 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, 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. Moreover, the first law in the Code of King Alfred the Great stated: "If a man is wrongfully constrained to promise either to betray his lord or to aid an unlawful undertaking, then it is better to be false to the promise than to fulfil it." Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that this sin weakened his position probably more than any other factor.

### *The Embassy to Rome*

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 the much-admired 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..."

The result of this meeting was that "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 evidence that Harold Godwineson 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."

According to Frank McLynn, 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. It has sometimes been queried why Harold did not send his own embassy to counter William's arguments. 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 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.

"Alexander's fiat was a diplomatic triumph, too, as papal endorsement for the Normans made it difficult for other powers to intervene on Harold's side. William also pre-empted one of the potential sources of support for the Anglo-Saxons by sending an embassy to the [German] emperor Henry IV; this, too, was notably successful, removing a possible barrier to a Europe-wide call for volunteers in the 'crusade'."

"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,,, ”

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...” In other words, the whole course of European history might have been changed... The dramatic story of that fateful year 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 that not only the Norman conquests in the rest of Europe would never have taken place, but also the power of the "reformed" 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.

### *Harold the King*

A Waltham chronicler, writing after King 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”. The anonymous biographer adds that he 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 and trusted by most Englishmen is shown by his ascending the throne without any opposition, although he was not the strongest candidate by hereditary right. Only after his death did anyone put forward the candidacy of Prince Edgar – and that only half-heartedly. Thus on the English side there was general agreement that, in spite of his oath, he was the best man to lead the country.

He 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, the beautiful Edith "Swan-neck", and entered into lawful marriage with the sister of Earls Edwin and Morcar, Alditha 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."

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. 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 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."

In the spring and summer, as Halley's comet blazed across the sky, 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; but adverse winds kept him in French ports. King Harold, however, 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 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."

### [The Battle of Stamford Bridge](#)

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."

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 the rest of England. This last betrayal, which took place in the same city in which, 760 years before, the founder of Christian Rome, 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 'C' manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ends on this high point; but Divine Providence decreed that "the end was not yet".

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 generously 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.

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 Ethelwine 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 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.

But it was a different story on the way back south to fight the Normans. 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..."

### *The Battle of Hastings*

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, after only a few days' rest and without the much needed reinforcements. What was the reason for this crucial tactical blunder?

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, 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' [William had said]. 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 housecarls 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."

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, as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says, 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..."

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 desperately close. If King Harold had not been hit in the eye by a stray arrow, the result may well have been different.

But Divine Providence judged otherwise, as the chronicler said, "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?" 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.

The English might also have reflected that this day, October 14, was the feast of St. Callistus, a third-century Pope who was considered by many Roman Christians of his time (including St. Hippolytus) to be a schismatic anti-pope. If that Pope could have been a schismatic, was there not much more reason to believe that this one was schismatic, too, being under the anathema of the Great Church of Constantinople and presuming as he did to dispose of kingdoms as he did churches and blessing the armed invasion of peaceful Christian countries by uninvited foreigners? And if so, then was it not they, the Normans, who were the schismatics, while the true Christians were those who refused to obey their false decrees and anathemas?

### *The Burial of King Harold*

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, they imposed 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".

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 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 a mutilated body discovered in a splendid coffin in Godwin's family church at Bosham on April 7, 1954 is 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 the daughter of a previous king of England, Canute, 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. He 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's death, for he was savagely hacked to pieces by four knights on the field of battle. 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 it is possible that the grieving monks who are said to have buried King Harold's body at Waltham, in fact 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 certainty.

[William the King](#)

After Hastings, William made slow, S-shaped progress through Kent, Surrey, Hampshire and across the Thames at Wallingford to Berkhamstead north of London.

As he was approaching London, near St. Alban's, the shrine of the protomartyr of Britain, he found the road blocked, according to Matthew of Paris, "by masses of great trees that had been felled and drawn across the road. The Abbot of St. Albans was sent for to explain these demonstrations, who, in answer to the king's questions, frankly and fearlessly said, 'I have done the duty appertaining to my birth [he was of royal blood] and calling; and if others of my rank and profession had performed the like, as they well could and ought, it had not been in thy power to penetrate into the land so far.' Not long after, that same Frederic was at the head of a confederacy, determined, if possible, to compel William to reign like a Saxon prince, that is, according to the ancient laws and customs, or to place... Edgar Atheling in his room. William submitted for a time, and, in a great council at Berkhamstead, swore, upon all the relics of the church of St. Albans, that he would keep the laws in question, the oath being administered by Abbot Frederic. In the end, however, the Conqueror grew too strong to be coerced by any measures, however nationally excellent or desirable, and he does not seem to have cared much about oath breaking, unless it was *he* who had enacted the oath, - the unhappy Harold, for instance, found *that* no light matter - and so William became more oppressive than ever. St. Albans, as might have been anticipated, suffered especially from his vengeance, he seized all its lands that lay between Barnet and Londonstone, and was with difficulty prevented from utterly ruining the monastery. As it was, the blow was enough for Frederic, who died of grief in the monastery of Ely, whither he had been compelled to flee."

In November the Conqueror stayed in Canterbury, from which Archbishop Stigand had fled in order to join the national resistance in London. One night, St. Dunstan was seen leaving the church by some of the brethren. When they tried to detain him he said: "I cannot remain here on account of the filth of your evil ways and crimes in the church." The first church of the kingdom did not long survive St. Dunstan's departure. On December 6, 1067, it was burned to the ground...

William continued his march, systematically devastating the land as he passed through it. Early in December he was in Southwark, burnt it, and drove off Prince Edgar's troops at London Bridge.

Important defections from the English side began to take place. The first was Edith, King Edward's widow and King Harold's sister, who gave him the key city of Winchester. Then Archbishop Stigand submitted to him at Wallingford. And at Berkhamstead, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, "he was met by Bishop Aldred [of York], Prince Edgar, Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar, and all the best men from London, who submitted out of necessity."

Finally, on Christmas Day - how fateful has that day been, both for good and ill, in

English history! - he was crowned king by Archbishop Aldred; "and William gave a pledge on the Gospels, and swore an oath besides, before Aldred would place the crown on his head, that he would govern this nation according to the best practice of his predecessors if they would be loyal to him."

The Londoners also suffered from their new master. During William's coronation service, Archbishop Aldred first asked the English in English if it was their will that William be made king. They assented. Then Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, addressed the Normans in French with the same question. When they, too, assented, those who were standing guard outside the Abbey became alarmed because of the shouting, and started to set fire to the city.

Professor Allen Brown writes: "Orderic Vitalis, in a vivid passage, describes how panic spread within the church as men and women of all degrees pressed to the doors in flight, and only a few were left to complete the coronation of King William, who, he says, was 'violently trembling'. For William this must indeed have been the one terrifying moment of his life... He believed implicitly in his right to England, and God had seemed to favour that right and to deliver His judgement on the field of Hastings. And now, at the supreme moment of anointing and sanctification at his coronation, when the Grace of God should come upon him and make him king and priest, there came a great noise, and the windows of the abbey church lit up with fire, and people fled all about him. It must have seemed to him then that in spite of all previous signs and portents he was wrong, unworthy, that his God had turned against him and rejected both him and his cause, and it is no wonder that he trembled until the awful moment had passed and the world came right again."

After the festivities, the Conqueror imposed "a very heavy tax" on the people. Then, after giving instructions for the building of castles all over the land, he returned to Normandy taking all the chief men of England with him as hostages.

### *The Harrowing of the North*

In December, 1067, he returned to England, and quickly put down rebellions in Kent and Hertfordshire. Then a more serious rebellion broke out in Exeter. Thither he marched with a combined army of Normans and Englishmen, and after a siege of eighteen days the city surrendered; which was followed by the submission of the Celts of Cornwall, and the cities of Gloucester and Bristol.

Meanwhile, in the North resistance was gathering around Earl Morcar, who had been allowed to return from Normandy; and there was a threat of interventions by King Malcolm of Scotland, who was sheltering Prince Edgar and had married his sister Margaret, and by King Swein of Denmark. After spending Pascha at Winchester, William marched swiftly north and built castles in Warwick and York, where he

received the submission of the local magnates and secured a truce with the Scottish king. Then he turned southward to secure the submission of Lincoln, Huntingdon and Cambridge.

But on January 28, 1069, the Norman whom William had appointed earl of Northumbria north of the Tees was attacked in the streets of Durham and burnt to death in the house of Bishop Ethelwine. This was followed by an uprising in York, and Prince Edgar prepared to move from Scotland. William, however, moved more swiftly, dispersing the besiegers of York castle, taking vengeance on the rebels and appointing Gospatric as earl.

In early summer, 1069, he returned to Normandy; but almost immediately a Danish fleet of about two hundred and forty ships sailed into the Humber. Combining with Edgar, Gospatric and Waltheof, they destroyed the Norman garrison at York, and then encamped on the southern shore of the Humber, fortifying the Isle of Axholme. This was the signal for other uprisings in Dorset and under Edric the Wild in the Welsh Borders.

The rebels were defeated and the Danes were paid to return home. The consequences of this last major uprising against William's rule were described by the great French historian Thierry: "The conquering army, whose divisions covered a space of a hundred miles, traversed this territory... in all directions, and the traces of their passage through it were deeply imprinted. The old historians relate that, from the Humber to the Tyne, not a piece of cultivated land, not a single inhabited village remained. The monasteries which had escaped the ravages of the Danish pagans, that of St. Peter near Wear, and that of Whitby inhabited by women, were profaned and burned. To the south of the Humber, according to the early narrators, the ravage was no less dreadful. They say, in their passionate language, that between York and the eastern sea, every living creature was put to death, from man to beast, excepting only those who took refuge in the church of St. John the archbishop [of York, +721], at Beverley. This John was a saint of the English race; and, on the approach of the conquerors, a great number of men and women flocked, with all that they had most valuable, round the church dedicated to their blessed countryman, in order that, remembering in heaven that he was a Saxon, he might protect them and their property from the fury of the foreigner. The Norman camp was then seven miles from Beverley. It was rumoured that the church of St. John was the refuge of the rich and depository of the riches of the country. Some adventurous scouts, who by the contemporary history are denominated knights, set out under the command of one Toustain, in order to be the first to seize the prize. They entered Beverley without resistance; marched to the church-yard, where the terrified crowd were assembled; and passed its barriers, giving themselves not more concern about the Saxon saint than about the Saxons who invoked him. Toustain, the chief of the band, casting his eye over the groups of English, observed an old man richly clad, with gold bracelets in the fashion of his nation. He galloped towards him with his sword drawn, and the terrified old man fled

to the church: Toustain pursued him; but he had scarcely passed the gates, when, his horse's feet slipping on the pavement, he was thrown off and stunned by the fall. At the sight of their captain half dead, the rest of the Normans turned round; and their imaginations being excited, hastened full of dread to relate this terrible example of the power of John of Beverley. When the army passed through, no one dared again to tempt the vengeance of the blessed saint; and.. the territory of his church alone remained covered with habitations and produce, in the midst of the devastated country...

"... Famine, like a faithful companion of the conquest, followed their footsteps. From the year 1067, it had been desolating some provinces, which alone had then been conquered; but in 1069 it extended itself through the whole of England and appeared in all its horror in the newly conquered territories. The inhabitants of the province of York and the country to the north, after feeding on the horses which the Norman army abandoned on the roads, devoured human flesh. More than a hundred thousand people, of all ages, died of want in these countries."

The harrowing of the north was roundly condemned by Ordericus Vitalis: "Nowhere else had William shown such cruelty. Shamefully he succumbed to this vice, for he made no effort to restrain his fury and punished the innocent with the guilty... My narrative has frequently had occasion to praise William, but for this act which condemned the innocent and guilty alike to die by slow starvation, I cannot commend him..."

In the wake of the secular armies came the ecclesiastical. Thus new monasteries were founded by the Conqueror and peopled with Norman monks. Or the monks of the old monasteries were simply slaughtered to make way for the new. For example, at Stone near Stafford on the Trent, as Thierry writes, "there was a small oratory, where two nuns and a priest passed their days in praying in honour of a Saxon saint called Wolfed. All three were killed by one Enisant, a soldier of the conquering army, 'which Enisant,' says the legend, 'killed the priest and the two nuns, that his sister whom he had brought with him might have the church.'"

Professor Douglas writes: "An eleventh-century campaign was inevitably brutal, but the methods here displayed were widely regarded as exceptional and beyond excuse, even by those who were otherwise fervent admirers of the Norman king... 'I am more disposed to pity the sorrows and sufferings of the wretched people than to undertake the hopeless task of screening one who was guilty of such wholesale massacre by lying flatteries. I assert moreover that such barbarous homicide should not pass unpunished.' Such was the view of a monk in Normandy. A writer from northern England supplies more precise details of the horrible incidents of the destruction, and recalls the rotting and putrefying corpses which littered the highways of the afflicted province. Pestilence inevitably ensued, and an annalist of Evesham tells how refugees in the last state of destitution poured into the little town.

Nor is it possible to dismiss these accounts as rhetorical exaggeration, for twenty years later Domesday Book shows the persisting effects of the terrible visitation, and there is evidence that these endured until the reign of Stephen..."

Archbishop Aldred of York died, broken-hearted, on September 11, 1069, in the burnt-out shell of his metropolitan see - but not before he had gone to William and publicly cursed him for breaking his coronation oath...

Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester meekly accepted the Conqueror's rule; and he was now sent to pacify Chester, being the only bishop to whom the people of that north-western province, the last to be conquered by the Normans, would be likely to listen. His surrender, more than any other, signified the end of the English resistance. For while bands of fugitives continued to struggle in different parts of the country, particularly in the Fens under the famous Hereward the Wake, Wulfstan was the last Englishman of nation-wide renown around whom a national resistance could have formed.

Before leaving events in the north, we should not forget to mention the influence of the greatest saint of the north, St. Cuthbert (+687). After the violent death of William's appointee, Robert Comin, in Durham, another expedition was sent by William to restore order. But St. Cuthbert's power, which had terrified unholy kings in the past, had not abandoned his people.

For the expedition, writes C.J. Stranks, "was turned back by a thick mist, sent for the protection of his people by St. Cuthbert, when the army reached Northallerton. Then the king himself came. The frightened monks [led by Bishop Ethelwine of Durham] decided to take refuge at Lindisfarne and, of course, to take the body of their saint with them. When they reached the shore opposite to the island night had fallen and there was a storm raging. It looked as if their way was blocked, for the sea covered the causeway. They were tired and frightened and at their wits' end, when miraculously, as it seemed to them, the sea withdrew and the path to the island lay open..."

"Their stay was not long, for they were back in Durham by the beginning of Lent, 1070. Two years later William the Conqueror himself felt the saint's power. He was staying in Durham for a little while on his way home from Scotland in order to begin building the castle there. Perhaps he had heard of the flight to Lindisfarne, for he thought it necessary to take an oath of the monks that St. Cuthbert's body was really at Durham. But he was still not convinced, and ordered that the tomb should be opened on All Saints' Day, threatening that if the body was not there he would execute all the officers of the monastery. The day arrived. Mass was begun, when suddenly the king was seized by a violent fever. It was obvious that the saint was angry at his temerity. William left the church, mounted his horse and never looked back until he had crossed the Tees and was safely out of the Patrimony of St. Cuthbert..."

Meanwhile, Bishop Ethelwine decided to flee Norman England. He tried to set sail for Cologne, but adverse winds drove his ship to Scotland, where he spent the winter. In 1071, however, he headed for Ely, where the English were to make their last stand...

### *The Last Stand of the English*

In 1071 the last remnants of the English resistance, led by Earls Edwin, Morcar and Siward and Bishop Ethelwine of Durham, sought refuge in the island monastery of Ely in East Anglia. There, under the leadership of Hereward the Wake, they made frequent sallies against William's men. When William heard of this, he invested the island and started to build a causeway towards it. However, Hereward's men put up a strong resistance, and the "most Christian" King William then resorted to a most infamous tactic - he called in a *witch*, put her onto a tower over the fens and ordered her to cast spells on the English. But this, too, failed to work - the English launched a successful counter-attack, and the witch fell from her tower and broke her neck. Finally, it was through the abbot and monks (with the connivance of Early Morcar) that William conquered the stronghold; for, considering it "their sacred duty," as the *Book of Ely* put it, "to maintain their magnificent temple of God and St. Etheldreda", they came to terms with William, and in exchange for promises that their lands would be restored and confirmed, they guided the Normans secretly into the rebel stronghold.

Hereward and his men made their escape; but others were not so fortunate. As Kightly writes, many must have wondered "whether surrender had been such a good idea after all. 'The king caused all the defenders to be brought before him, first the leaders and then anyone else of rank or fame. Some he sent to perpetual imprisonment' - among them the deluded Morcar, Siward and Bishop Aethelwine - 'others he condemned to lose their eyes, their hands or their feet' - William rarely hanged men, preferring to give them time for repentance - 'while most of the lesser folk he released unpunished.' Then, to ensure that Ely would not trouble him again, he ordered that a castle be built in the monastic precinct (where its mound still stands)..."

"Next, going to the abbey, 'he stood as far as possible from the tomb of the holy Etheldreda, and threw a gold piece to her altar: he dared not go any closer, because he feared the judgement of God on the wrong he was doing to her shrine.' And well he might, for though the monks kept their estates and their English abbot, King William soon found an excuse to levy an immense fine on them, so that they were forced to sell almost all the adornments of their church: when their payment proved a few coins short, he increased his demands still further, and they lost the few treasures that remained. 'But even after all this,' mourns the *Ely Book*, 'no one believed that they would be left in peace' - and nor were they."



After further adventures, Hereward was eventually reconciled with William. However, another English leader, Earl Waltheof, was not so fortunate. He had joined a conspiracy of Normans and Saxons which was defeated in battle, and 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. 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...

### 3. DOOMSDAY (1070-1087)

Whatever the consequences of the Battle of Hastings, writes Harriet Harvey Wood, "one fact is undisputed: it wiped out overnight a civilisation that, for its wealth, its political arrangements, its arts, its literature and its longevity, was unique in Dark Age Europe, and deserves celebration. In the general instability, lawlessness and savagery of the times, Anglo-Saxon England stood out as a beacon."

Let us now turn to the consequences of the battle for England.

#### *The Papist Reformation of the English Church*

In the week after Pascha, writes Thierry, "there arrived in England, pursuant to William's request, three legates from the apostolic see, viz. Ermenfeni, Bishop of Sienna, and the cardinals John and Peter. The Norman founded his great designs on the presence of these envoys from his ally the pope; and kept them about him for a whole year, honouring them (says an old historian) as if they had been angels of God. In the midst of the famine, which in many places was destroying the Saxons by thousands, brilliant festivals were celebrated in the fortified palace of Winchester; there the Roman priests, placing the crown afresh on the head of the foreign king, effaced the vain malediction which Eldred [Aldred], Archbishop of York had pronounced against him.

"After the festivals, a great assembly of the Normans, laymen or priests, enriched by the lands of the English, was held at Winchester. At this assembly the Saxons were summoned to appear, in the name (of the authority) of the Roman church, by circulars, the style of which might forewarn them of the result of this great council (as it was called) to themselves. 'Although the church of Rome,' said the envoys, 'has a right to watch the conduct of all Christians, it more especially belongs to her to inquire into your morals and way of life - you whom she formerly instructed in the faith of Christ - and to repair in you the decay of that faith which you hold from her. In order to exercise over your person this salutary inspection, we, ministers of blessed Peter the apostle, and authorised representatives of our lord, Pope Alexander, have resolved to hold a council with you, that we may inform ourselves of the bad things which have sprung up in the vineyard of the Lord, and may plant in it things profitable both for the body and for the soul.'

"The true sense of these mystical words was, that the conqueror, in accordance with the pope, wished to strip the whole body of the higher clergy of English origin; and the mission of the legates from Rome was to give the colour of religion to a measure purely political. The prelate whom they first struck was Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had dared to appear in arms against the foreigner, and had refused to anoint him king. These were his real crimes; but the sentence which degraded him

was grounded on other causes - on more *honest* pretexts (to use the language of the old historians). Three ecclesiastical grievances were found against him, which rendered his ordination null and void. He was turned out of the episcopacy - first, for having taken the archbishopric during the life of the Norman Archbishop Robert, whom the Saxons had driven away; secondly, for having said mass in the pontifical habit or *pallium* worn by the said Robert, and left by him at Canterbury; lastly, for having received his own *pallium* from the hands of Benedict X, who had been degraded, and afterwards excommunicated, by a victorious competitor. As soon as the friend of King Harold and of his country was, according to the language of the time, *struck by the canonical axe*, his lands were seized and divided between the Norman king, the Norman queen, and the Bishop of Bayeux. The same blow was aimed at those English bishops who could not be reproached with any violation of the canons. Alexander prelate of Lincoln, Egelmar prelate of East Anglia, Egelric prelate of Sussex, several other bishops, and the abbots of the principal monasteries, were degraded all at once. When the sentence of degradation was pronounced against them, they were compelled to swear on the Gospel that they considered themselves as deprived of their dignities lawfully, and for ever; and that, whoever their successors might be, they would not protest against them. They were then conducted by an armed guard into some fortress or monastery, which became their prison. Those who had formerly been monks were forcibly taken back to their old cloisters, and it was officially published, that, disgusted with the world, it had pleased them to go and revisit the friends of their youth. Thus it was that foreign power mingled derision with violence. The members of the Saxon clergy dared not to struggle against their fate: Stigand fled into Scotland; Egelsig, an abbot of St. Augustine's, embarked for Denmark, and was demanded as a *fugitif du roi*, by a rescript from the Conqueror. Only one bishop, Egelwin [Ethelwine] of Durham, when on the point of departing into exile, solemnly cursed the oppressors of his country; and declared them separated for ever from the communion of Christians, according to the grave and gloomy formula in which that separation was pronounced. But the sound of these words fell in vain on the ear of the Norman: William had priests to give the lie to priests, as he had swords to ward off swords..."

Ethelwine, who, as we have seen, joined Hereward at Ely but was captured and died of hunger in prison at Abingdon, was not the only bishop to defy the papists. His brother Ethelric, 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", 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. 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."

Having silenced the last true bishops, the papists now turned to the monks. Few

were those, like Frederic of St. Albans, who resisted them. Among the few were three who occupied a dependency of Ely's at St. Neot's, Huntingdonshire. When the Norman Gilbert of Clara came to expel them, they refused to move, and could not be expelled either by hunger or the lash. Finally, they were physically transported across the Channel to the Norman monastery of Bec, where they remained in prison, as far as we can surmise, to the end of their lives.

In 1083 it was the turn of the most venerable of England's holy places, Glastonbury, to suffer the ravages of the "Christian" pagans. The occasion was an argument between the monks and their new Norman abbot, Thurstan, who insisted on substituting a new form of chanting from Dijon for the old-style Gregorian chanting to which the monks were accustomed. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that "the monks made an amicable complaint to him [Thurstan] about it, and asked him to rule them justly and have regard for them, and in return they would be faithful and obedient to him. The abbot, however, would have none of it, but treated them badly, threatening them with worse. One day the abbot went into the chapter, and spoke against the monks, and threatened to maltreat them. He sent for laymen, who entered the chapter fully armed against the monks. Not knowing what they should do, the monks were terrified and fled in all directions. Some ran into the church and locked the doors against them, but their pursuers went after them into the monastic church, determined to drag them out since they were afraid to leave. Moreover a pitiful thing took place there that day, when the Frenchmen broke into the choir and began pelting the monks in the direction of the altar where they were. Some of the men-at-arms climbed up to the gallery, and shot arrows down into the sanctuary, so that many arrows stuck in the cross which stood above the altar. The wretched monks lay around the altar and some crept underneath, crying aloud to God, desperately imploring His mercy when none was forthcoming from men. What more can we find to say except to add that they showered arrows, and their companions broke down the doors to force an entrance, and struck down and killed some of the monks, wounding many therein, so that their blood ran down from the altar on to the steps, and from the steps on to the floor. Three of the monks were done to death, and eighteen wounded."

William of Malmesbury adds that the Glastonbury monks refused to accept the chant of William of Fécamp because "they had grown up in the practice of the Roman Church". This shows that the Old English Church preserved the old traditions of Orthodox Rome, which had now been superseded on the continent.

Again, William writes that one of the arrows pierced an image of the crucified Lord, which suddenly gushed blood. "At this sight the perpetrator of the crime became unbearably confused and at once became mad, so that when he got outside the church he fell to the ground, broke his neck and died. As soon as the others saw this they hastened to leave the monastery lest they should suffer similar punishments. But the rod of Divine justice did not allow them to escape retribution since it knew that they had been accomplices in the perpetration of evil. For some were affected internally

and some externally, either their minds or their bodies being rendered impotent, and they paid a just penalty."

Thus did the Normans dare to do what even the pagan Saxons and Danes had not dared: to defile the oldest and holiest shrine of Britain, the meeting-place in Christ of Jew and Greek, Roman and Celt, Saxon and Dane...

Even the holy relics of the English saints were subjected to desecration. For, as Thierry writes, "the hatred which the clergy of the conquest bore to the natives of England, extended to the saints of English birth; and in different places their tombs were broken open and their bones scattered about." Thus Archbishop Lanfranc refused to consider St. Alphege of Canterbury (+1012) a hieromartyr, although the truth of his martyrdom was witnessed by his incorrupt body; and he demoted St. Dunstan's day to the rank of a third-class feast, and "reformed" certain other feasts of the English Church.

Again, as George Garnett writes, "Warin, abbot of Malmesbury, piled up the relics of many local saints 'like a heap of rubbish, or the remains of worthless hirelings, and threw them out of the church door'. He even mocked them: "'Now," he said, "let the most powerful of them come to the aid of the rest!"' Paul, the new abbot of St. Alban's and Lanfranc's nephew, destroyed the tombs of former abbots, whom he described as 'yokels and idiots', and even refused to transfer to the new church the body of the abbey's founder, King Offa of Mercia."

However, the English saints were not inactive in their own defence. In 1077, the monastery of Evesham passed into the control of a Norman abbot named Walter, who, on the advice of Lanfranc, decided to subject the local saints' relics to ordeal by fire. But not only did the holy relics not burn: the fire even refused to touch them. Moreover, when Walter was carrying the skull of the holy Martyr-Prince Wistan (+849), it suddenly fell from his hands and began gushing out a river of sweat. And when they came to the relics of St. Credan, an eighth-century abbot of Evesham, they were all terrified to see them shining as gold.

Then the monks of Evesham, heartened, went on the offensive: they took the relics of their major saint, Bishop Egwin of Worcester (+709), on a fund-raising tour of the country, during which miracles were reported as far afield as Oxford, Dover, Winchester and the river Trent.

Another such incident is recorded by John Hudson: "Possibly in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a writer at Abingdon, Berkshire, described with great relish the fate of the monastery's first new abbot after the Conquest, Adeelm, a monk from Jumièges. The abbot displayed a marked disrespect for pre-Conquest saints, notably planning to replace the church built by St. Aethelwold. Once, while dining with his relatives and friends, Adeelm was abusing Aethelwold, saying that the church of English rustics

should not stand but be destroyed. After the meal he left to relieve himself, and there cried out. Those who came running found him dead. Clearly the writer saw such a death as fitting."

In the decades that followed, the discoveries of the incorrupt relics of several English saints proved the sanctity of the old traditions, leading to a "restoration" of their veneration in the Anglo-Norman Church. These saints included St. Mildburga at Much Wenlock in 1079, St. Theodore at Canterbury in 1091, St. Edmund at Bury St. Edmunds in 1095, St. Edward the Confessor at Westminster in 1102, St. Cuthbert at Durham in 1104, St. Alphege at Canterbury in 1105 and St. Etheldreda at Ely in 1106.

Gradually, however, as the pre-revolutionary days of Anglo-Saxon England receded - or rather, were violently blotted out - from the popular memory, the old traditions were lost. William of Malmesbury could still write, early in the twelfth century: "Does not the whole island blaze with so many relics that you can scarcely pass a village of any consequence without hearing the name of some new saint?" But then he added: "And of how many have all records perished?"

Moreover, as Garnett writes, "within fifty years of 1066 every English cathedral church and most major abbeys had been razed to the ground, and rebuilt in a new continental style, known to architects as 'Romanesque'... In a very literal sense, this rebuilding was one aspect of the renewal of the English church to which Duke William appears to have pledged himself early in 1066, in order to secure papal backing for the Conquest. No English cathedral retains any masonry above ground which dates from before the Conquest. Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, was the only English bishop to survive the wholesale renewal (or, differently expressed, purge) of the English hierarchy during the first decade of the reign, and its replacement with prelates of continental - chiefly Norman - extraction. He was said to have wept as he watched the demolition of the old cathedral church at Worcester: 'We wretches destroy the work of the saints, thinking in our insolent pride that we are improving them... How many holy and devout men have served God in this place!' He was not simply giving voice to nostalgia. To an Englishman, it seems, a church was itself a relic, sanctified by those who had once worshipped in it..."

But all this could have been borne if only the English themselves had kept their faith, and their membership of the One True Church. However, on August 29, 1070, the Day of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner and a strict fast day in the Orthodox Church, the first Roman Catholic archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc of Bec, was consecrated in the place of Stigand. Truly the forerunners of Christ, the preachers of repentance, had fallen in England.

Immediately Lanfranc demanded, and eventually obtained, a profession of obedience from the archbishop-elect of York, Thomas, in spite of the fact that York had been a separate ecclesiastical province throughout the history of the English

Church.

The Anglo-Saxon text of the Parker (A) text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ends at this point, continuing in Latin. For truly, the English Church had now become Latin both in language and in theology...

Lanfranc also set about reforming the canon law of the English Church to bring it into line with the new code of the Roman papacy. In this he received the full support of William, who said: "I have ordained that the episcopal laws be amended, because before my time they were not properly administered in England according to the precepts of the holy canons."

These canons, which had already been put into effect in Normandy and other parts of Western Europe, concerned such matters as the respect due to the Roman see, simony, the separation of secular and ecclesiastical courts, and the marriage of the clergy.

It was the latter decree that caused the greatest disturbance, both on the continent and in England; and sadly we find the English Bishop Wulfstan on the side of the uncanonical onslaught on Holy Matrimony. Thus we read that "the sin of incontinence he abhorred, and approved continence in all men, and especially in clerks in holy orders. If he found one wholly given to chastity he took him to himself and loved him as a son. Wedded priests he brought under one edict, commanding them to renounce their fleshly desires or their churches. If they loved chastity, they would remain and be welcome: if they were the servants of bodily pleasures, they must go forth in disgrace. Some there were who chose rather to go without their churches than their women: and of these some wandered about till they starved; others sought and at last found some other provision..."

For his obedience to the king, and strict enactment of the papal decrees, Wulfstan received great honour from the world's mighty ones, and by the 1080s he was one of the very few bishops of English origin still in possession of their sees. But we can only lament the fall of a great ascetic and wonderworker, who was reduced to separating by force those whom God had lawfully joined together. If only he had paid heed to the true canons accepted by the Seven Ecumenical Councils on the marriage of the clergy. If only he had paid heed to the correspondence of the great eighth-century English apostle of Germany, St. Boniface, in which he would have read that Pope Zachariah, in a letter to Boniface, upheld the marriage of priests.

And even if the English Church in its latest phase did at times declare against the marriage of priests, as in Ethelred's code of 1008, at other times it was explicitly permitted, as in Archbishop Wulfstan's *Law of Northumbrian Priests*; and *never* were lawfully married priests forced to separate from their wives in pre-Conquest England. But there was an unbalanced streak in Wulfstan's asceticism which combined an

almost Manichean zeal for chastity with some surprising improprieties. And he had a papist understanding of obedience that ignored the word: "Neither is a wicked king any longer a king, but a tyrant; nor is a bishop oppressed with ignorance a bishop, but falsely so called."

However, it must be said in Wulfstan's favour that once, during a synod held at Westminster in the king's presence, he defied Lanfranc's order that he give up his pastoral staff and ring on the grounds that he was supposedly "an ignorant and unlearned man".

The story is told by Ailred of Rievaulx (in Cardinal Newman's paraphrase) that he rose up and said that he would give up his staff only to King Edward the Confessor, who had conferred it upon him. "With these words he raised his hand a little, and drove the crosier into the stone which covered the sacred body: 'Take this, my master,' he said, 'and deliver it to whom thou wilt'; and descending from the altar, he laid aside his pontifical dress, and took his seat, a simple monk, among the monks. But the staff, to the wonder of all, remained fast embedded in the stone. They tried to draw it out, but it was immovable. A murmur ran through the throne; they crowded round the spot in astonishment, and you might see them in their surprise, approaching a little, then stopping, stretching out their hands and withdrawing them, now throwing themselves on the floor, to see how the spike was fastened in the stone, now rising up and gathering into little groups to gaze. The news was carried to where the synod was sitting. Lanfranc sent the Bishop of Rochester to the tomb, to bring the staff; but was unable to withdraw it. The archbishop in wonder, sent for the king, and went with him to the place; and after having prayed, tried to move it, but in vain. The king cried out, and Lanfranc burst into tears... When the archbishop had withdrawn his deposition, Wulfstan withdrew the staff from the tomb...

### *The Gregorian Revolution*

Who was the real ruler of the English Church at this time - William or the Pope?

In order to answer that question we need to turn to the revolution in Church-State relations that was taking place on the continent of Europe.

At almost the same time that the English autocracy was being destroyed, the Byzantine Empire suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Seljuk Turks, at the battle of Manzikert in 1071. Most of Anatolia, the heartland of Byzantine strength, was conceded to the Turks. In the same year, the last Byzantine stronghold in southern Italy, Bari, fell to the Normans, after which Byzantium was never again able to exert significant influence on events in the West.

As Orthodox autocracy reeled under these hammer blows from East and West, a new form of despotism, Christian in form but pagan in essence, entered upon the



scene.

Canning writes: "The impact of Gregory VII's pontificate was enormous: for the church nothing was to be the same again. From his active lifetime can be traced the settling of the church in its long-term direction as a body of power and coercion; the character of the papacy as a jurisdictional and governmental institution... There arises the intrusive thought, out of bounds for the historian: this was the moment of the great wrong direction taken by the papacy, one which was to outlast the Middle Ages and survive into our own day. From the time of Gregory can be dated the deliberate clericalisation of the church based on the notion that the clergy, being morally purer, were superior to the laity and constituted a church which was catholic, chaste and free. There was a deep connection between power and a celibacy which helped distinguish the clergy as a separate and superior caste, distanced in the most profound psychological sense from the family concerns of the laity beneath them. At the time of the reform papacy the church became stamped with characteristics which have remained those of the Roman Catholic church: it became papally centred, legalistic, coercive and clerical. The Roman church was, in Gregory's words, the 'mother and mistress' (*mater et magistra*) of all churches."

Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII, was a midget in physical size. But having been elected to the papacy "by the will of St. Peter" in 1073, he set about ensuring that no ruler on earth would rival him in grandeur. Having witnessed the Emperor Henry III's deposition of Pope Gregory VI, with whom he went into exile, he took the name Gregory VII in order to emphasise a unique mission: as Peter de Rosa writes, "he had seen an emperor dethrone a pope; he would dethrone an emperor *regardless*."

"Had he put an emperor in his place, he would have been beyond reproach. He did far more. By introducing a mischievous and heretical doctrine [of Church-State relations], he put himself in place of the emperor... He claimed to be not only Bishop of bishops but King of kings. In a parody of the gospels, the devil took him up to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and Gregory VII exclaimed: These are all mine.

"As that most objective of historians, Henry Charles Lea, wrote in *The Inquisition in the Middle Ages*: 'To the realization of this ideal [of papal supremacy], he devoted his life with a fiery zeal and unshaken purpose that shrank from no obstacle, and to it he was ready to sacrifice not only the men who stood in his path but also the immutable principles of truth and justice.'

"... The Bishop of Trier saw the danger. He charged Gregory with destroying the unity of the Church. The Bishop of Verdun said that the pope was mistaken in his unheard-of arrogance. Belief belongs to one's church, the heart belongs to one's country. The pope, he said, must not filch the heart's allegiance. This was precisely what Gregory did. He wanted all; he left emperors and princes nothing. The papacy,

as he fashioned it, by undermining patriotism, undermined the authority of secular rulers; they felt threatened by the Altar. At the Reformation, in England and elsewhere, rulers felt obliged to exclude Catholicism from their lands *in order to feel secure...*

“The changes Gregory brought about were reflected in language. Before him, the pope’s traditional title was Vicar of St. Peter. After him, it was Vicar of Christ. Only ‘Vicar of Christ’ could justify his absolutist pretensions, which his successors inherited in reality not from Peter or from Jesus but from *him*.”

Gregory’s position was based on a forged collection of canons and a false interpretation of two Gospel passages: Matthew 16.18-19 and John 21.15-17. According to the first passage, in Gregory’s interpretation, he was the successor of Peter, upon whom the Church had been founded, and had plenary power to bind and to loose. And according to the second, the flock of Peter over which he had jurisdiction included all Christians, not excluding emperors. As he wrote: “Perhaps [the supporters of the emperor] imagine that when God commended His Church to Peter three times, saying, ‘Feed My sheep’, He made an exception of kings? Why do they not consider, or rather confess with shame that when God gave Peter, as the ruler, the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth, he excepted no-one and withheld nothing from his power?”

For “who could doubt that the priests of Christ are considered the fathers and masters of kings, princes and all the faithful?” This meant that he had power both to excommunicate and depose the emperor. Nor did the emperor’s anointing give him any authority in Gregory’s eyes. For “greater power is conceded to an exorcist, when he is made a spiritual emperor for expelling demons, than could be given to any layman for secular domination”. Indeed, “who would not know that kings and dukes took their origin from those who, ignorant of God, through pride, rapine, perfidy, murders and, finally, almost any kind of crime, at the instigation of the devil, the prince of this world, sought with blind desire and unbearable presumption to dominate their equals, namely other men?”

Hildebrand’s attitude to political power was almost Manichaeism in its negative intensity. Indeed, as de Rosa writes of a later Pope who faithfully followed Hildebrand’s teaching, “this was Manicheism applied to relations between church and state. The church, spiritual, was good; the state, material, was essentially the work of the devil. This naked political absolutism undermined the authority of kings. Taken seriously, his theories would lead to anarchy”.

Of course, the idea that the priesthood was higher than the kingship was not heretical, and could find support in the Holy Fathers. However, the Fathers always allowed that emperors and kings had supremacy of jurisdiction in their own sphere, and had always insisted that the power of secular rulers comes from God and is

worthy of the honour that befits every God-established institution. What was new, shocking and completely unpatristic in Gregory's words was his disrespect for the kingship, his refusal to allow it any dignity or holiness – still more, his proto-communist implication that *rulers had no right to rule* without the Pope's blessing.

The corollary of this, of course, was that *the only rightful ruler was the Pope*. For “if the holy apostolic see, through the princely power divinely conferred upon it, has jurisdiction over spiritual things, why not also over secular things?” Thus to the secular rulers of Spain Gregory wrote in 1077 that the kingdom of Spain belonged to St. Peter and the Roman Church “in rightful ownership”. And to the secular rulers of Sardinia he wrote in 1073 that the Roman Church exerted “a special and individual care” over them – which meant, as a later letter of 1080 demonstrated, that they would face armed invasion if they did not submit to the pope's terms.

Again, in 1075 he threatened King Philip of France with excommunication, having warned the French bishops that if the king did not amend his ways he would place France under ban: “Do not doubt that we shall, with God's help, make every possible effort to snatch the kingdom of France from his possession.” This was no empty threat - Gregory had the ability to compel submission. He demonstrated this when he wrote to one of King Philip' vassals, Duke William of Aquitaine, and invited him to threaten the king. The king backed down...

This power was demonstrated to an even greater extent in his famous dispute with Emperor Henry IV of Germany. It began with a quarrel between the pope and the emperor over who should succeed to the see of Milan. This was the see, significantly, whose most famous bishop, St. Ambrose, had excommunicated (but not deposed) an emperor, but had also declared that Rome had only “a primacy of confession, not of honour”. Gregory expected Henry to back down as King Philip had done. But he did not, no doubt because the see of Milan was of great importance politically in that its lands and vassals gave it control of the Alpine passes and therefore of Henry's access to his Italian domains. Instead, in January, 1076, he convened a Synod of Bishops at Worms which addressed Gregory as “brother Hildebrand”, demonstrated that his despotism had introduced mob rule into the Church, and refused all obedience to him: “since, as you publicly proclaimed, none of us has been to you a bishop, from now on you will be Pope to none of us”.

Gregory retaliated in a truly revolutionary way. In a Synod in Rome in February he declared the emperor deposed. Addressing St. Peter, he said: “I withdraw the whole kingdom of the Germans and of Italy from Henry the King, son of Henry the Emperor. For he has risen up against thy Church with unheard of arrogance. And I absolve all Christians from the bond of the oath which they have made to him or shall make. And I forbid anyone to serve him as King...” By absolving subjects of their oath of allegiance to their king, Gregory “effectively,” as Robinson writes, “sanctioned rebellion against the royal power...”

That Lent Gregory wrote *Dictatus Papae*, which left no doubt about the revolutionary political significance of his actions, and which must be counted as one of the most megalomaniac documents in history: "The Pope can be judged by no one; the Roman church has never erred and never will err till the end of time; the Roman Church was founded by Christ alone; the Pope alone can depose bishops and restore bishops; he alone can make new laws, set up new bishoprics, and divide old ones; he alone can translate bishops; he alone can call general councils and authorize canon law; he alone can revise his own judgements; he alone can use the imperial insignia; he can depose emperors; he can absolve subjects from their allegiance; all princes should kiss his feet; his legates, even though in inferior orders, have precedence over all bishops; an appeal to the papal court inhibits judgement by all inferior courts; a duly ordained Pope is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter."

Robinson continues: "The confusion of the spiritual and the secular in Gregory VII's thinking is most marked in the terminology he used to describe the laymen whom he recruited to further his political aims. His letters are littered with the terms 'the warfare of Christ', 'the service of St. Peter', 'the vassals of St. Peter'..., Military terminology is, of course, commonly found in patristic writings.. St. Paul had evoked the image of the soldier of Christ who waged an entirely spiritual war... [But] in the letters of Gregory VII, the traditional metaphor shades into literal actuality... For Gregory, the 'warfare of Christ' and the 'warfare of St. Peter' came to mean, not the spiritual struggles of the faithful, nor the duties of the secular clergy, nor the ceaseless devotions of the monks; but rather the armed clashes of feudal knights on the battlefields of Christendom..."

This was power politics under the guise of spirituality; but it worked. Although, at a Synod in Worms in 1076, some bishops supported Henry, saying that "the bishops have been deprived of their divine authority", and that "the Church of God is in danger of destruction", Henry began to lose support, and in 1077 he was forced to march across the Alps and do penance before Gregory, standing for three days in the snow outside the castle of Canossa. Gregory restored him to communion, but not to his kingship...

Soon rebellion began to stir in Germany as Rudolf, Duke of Swabia, was elected anti-king. For a while Gregory hesitated. But then, in 1080, he definitely deposed Henry, freed his subjects from their allegiance to him and declared that the kingship was conceded to Rudolf. However, Henry recovered, convened a Synod of bishops that declared Gregory deposed and then convened another Synod that elected an anti-pope, Wibert of Ravenna. In October, 1080, Rudolf died in battle. Then in 1083 Henry and Wibert marched on Rome. In 1084 Wibert was consecrated as Pope Clement III and in turn crowned Henry as emperor. Gregory fled from Rome with his Norman allies and died in Salerno in 1085.

"I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile," said Gregory as he lay dying. But a monk who waited on him replied: "In exile thou canst not be, for God hath given thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This Scripture refers to Christ, not a simple man. But then such distortion and blasphemy was becoming commonplace now; for, as Archimandrite Justin Popovich put it: "Human history has had three main falls: that of Adam, that of Judas, and that of the Pope... The fall of the Pope consists in seeking to replace the God-man with man."

### *The King and the Church*

Less spectacular than his struggle with Henry, but no less instructive, was Gregory's contest with King William I of England. As we have seen, William had conquered England with Hildebrand's blessing. And shortly after his bloody pacification of the country he imposed the new canon law of the reformed papacy upon the English Church. This pleased Gregory, who was therefore prepared to overlook the fact that William considered that he owed his kingdom to his sword and God alone: "The king of the English, although in certain matters he does not comport himself as devoutly as we might hope, nevertheless in that he has neither destroyed nor sold the Churches of God [!]; that he has taken pains to govern his subjects in peace and justice [!!]; that *he has refused his assent to anything detrimental to the apostolic see*, even when solicited by certain enemies of the cross of Christ; and that he has compelled priests on oath to put away their wives and laity to forward the tithes they were withholding from us - in all these respects he has shown himself more worthy of approbation and honour than other kings..."

The "other kings" Gregory was referring to included, first of all, the Emperor Henry IV of Germany, who, unlike William, did not support the Pope's "reforms". If William had acted like Henry, then there is no doubt that Pope Gregory would have excommunicated him, too. And if William had refused to co-operate with the papacy, then there is equally no doubt that the Pope would have incited his subjects to wage a "holy war" against him, as he did against Henry. For, as an anonymous monk of Hersfeld wrote: "[The Gregorians] say that it is a matter of the faith and it is the duty of the faithful in the Church to kill and to persecute those who communicate with, or support the excommunicated King Henry and refuse to promote the efforts of [the Gregorian] party."

But William, by dint of brute force within and subtle diplomacy without, managed to achieve the most complete control over both Church and State that any English ruler ever achieved, while at the same time paradoxically managing to remain on relatively good terms with the most autocratic Pope in history. For totalitarian rulers only respect rivals of the same spirit. Thus did the papocaesarist totalitarianism of Hildebrand beget the caesaropapist totalitarianism of William the Bastard...

The absolute nature of William's control of the Church was vividly expressed by Eadmer of Canterbury: "Now, it was the policy of King William to maintain in England the usages and laws which he and his fathers before him were accustomed to have in Normandy. Accordingly he made bishops, abbots and other nobles throughout the whole country of persons of whom (since everyone knew who they were, from what estate they had been raised and to what they had been promoted) it would be considered shameful ingratitude if they did not implicitly obey his laws, subordinating to this every other consideration; or if any one of them presuming upon the power conferred by any temporal dignity dared raise his head against him. Consequently, all things, spiritual and temporal alike, waited upon the nod of the King... He would not, for instance, allow anyone in all his dominion, except on his instructions, to recognize the established Pontiff of the City of Rome or under any circumstance to accept any letter from him, if it had not first been submitted to the King himself. Also he would not let the primate of his kingdom, by which I mean the Archbishop of Canterbury, otherwise Dobernia, if he were presiding over a general council of bishops, lay down any ordinance or prohibition unless these were agreeable to the King's wishes and had been first settled by him. Then again he would not allow any one of his bishops, except on his express instructions, to proceed against or excommunicate one of his barons or officers for incest or adultery or any other cardinal offence, even when notoriously guilty, or to lay upon him any punishment of ecclesiastical discipline." Again, in a letter to the Pope in reply to the latter's demand for fealty, William wrote: "I have not consented to pay fealty, nor will I now, because I never promised it, nor do I find that any of my predecessors ever paid it to your predecessors." And in the same letter he pointedly called Archbishop Lanfranc "my vassal" (i.e. not the Pope!).

On the other hand, he agreed to the Pope's demand for the payment of "Peter's Pence", the voluntary contribution of the English people to Rome which had now become compulsory - for to squeeze the already impoverished English meant no diminution in his personal power. The Popes therefore had to wait until William's death before gradually asserting their personal control over the English Church. In any case, William had already broken the back of the English people both physically and spiritually; and the totalitarian structure of Anglo-Norman government, combining secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies under the king, needed only the man at the top to change to make it a perfectly functioning cog in the ruthless machine of the "Vicar of Christ".

We can express this in another way by saying that as a result of the Norman Conquest, England became a feudal monarchy. For R.H.C. Davies explains that feudal monarchy was in fact "a New Leviathan, the medieval equivalent of a socialist state. In a socialist state, the community owns, or should own, the means of production. In a feudal monarchy, the king did own all the land - which in the terms of medieval economy might fairly be equated with the means of production.

“The best and simplest example of a feudal monarchy is to be found in England after the Norman Conquest. When William the Conqueror defeated Harold Godwineson at the battle of Hastings (1066), he claimed to have established his legitimate right to succeed Edward the Confessor as King of England, but, owing to Harold’s resistance, he was also able to claim that he had won the whole country by right of conquest. Henceforward, every inch of land was to be his, and he would dispose of it as he thought fit. As is well known, he distributed most of it to his Norman followers, but he did not give it to them in absolute right...

The Conqueror’s ownership of the land was firmly established in Domesday Book,” which thereby became the record of the day of doom of the Orthodox Christian autocracy in the West. As Professor Neveux writes, “Like Christ on the Day of Judgement examining the actions of all men, the King of England would know all the inhabitants and all the properties in his kingdom... No other document of this kind has been preserved in Western Europe, nor was any ever made...”

### *The English Diaspora*

What influence did the Norman-Papist Conquest of England have on the destiny of the neighbouring British Orthodox Churches? And what was the destiny of those English Orthodox who fled beyond the seas?

Soon the Norman-Papist malaise spread to other parts of the British Isles. Scotland welcomed many of the English exiles fleeing from William, but it proved to be a temporary and illusory refuge. For King Malcolm's wife Margaret, though a very pious woman and an English princess of the Old Wessex dynasty, became a spiritual daughter of Lanfranc, and hence the chief instrument of the normanization and papalization of the Scottish Church. However, according to Lucy Menzies, “it was not till the time of David I, son of Malcolm and Margaret, that the authority of the Church of Rome was fully accepted in Scotland and the Celtic Church, as such, disappeared from the mainland, the Culdees being driven out.”

Wales did not fare much better. After William's "pilgrimage" there in 1081, a struggle took place between the Gregorian and nationalist parties whose outcome was easy to foresee. It seems likely that the last independent Orthodox bishop in Britain was Rhyddmarch of St. Davids, son of Sulien the Wise, who reposed in 1096 and of whom the Annals of St. Davids say that he was "one without an equal or second, excepting his father, for learning, wisdom, and piety. And after Rhyddmarch instruction for scholars ceased at Menevia..."

Early in the next century the Irish, too, suffered Papist "reformation", and, in 1172 - a Norman invasion. Their reaction to the news that their land had already been granted to the Normans by the English Pope Adrian IV is not recorded. For in his

*Metalogicus* of 1156 John of Salisbury writes of Adrian: "At my solicitation he granted Ireland to Henry II, the illustrious King of England, to hold by hereditary right, as his letter to this day testifies. For all Ireland of ancient right, according to the Donation of Constantine, was said to belong to the Roman Church which he founded."

Thus perished that Church which had been so important in the evangelization of England, and which, in the person of St. Columbanus of Luxeuil, had given a classic rebuke to a heretical Pope: "[If you err], then those who have always kept the Orthodox Faith, whoever they may have been, even if they seem to be your subordinates,.. shall be your judges.. And thus, even as your honour is great in proportion to the dignity of your see, so great care is needful for you, lest you lose your dignity through some mistake. For power will be in your hands just so long as your principles remain sound; for he is the appointed keybearer of the Kingdom of heaven, who opens by true knowledge to the worthy and shuts to the unworthy; otherwise if he does the opposite, he shall be able neither to open nor to shut..."

Fr. Andrew Phillips writes that "Alsin, Abbot of St. Augustine's at Canterbury, took refuge in Norway. Sweden, where English missionaries had long been at work, was another destination and perhaps Finland too. It was, however, Denmark which proved to be the most popular destination. It was from here that King Swein had thought to mount invasions in 1070 and 1075. These were supported in England, especially in the North and the East where Danish sympathies were strong..."

"Many churchmen also fled abroad, their places taken by the feudal warrior-bishops and clergy of the Normans, such as Odo of Bayeux, who fought at Hastings. Scandinavia seems to have been their main destination.

"Other exiles went to the Continent, to Flanders, France and Italy. King Harold's daughter, Gytha, moved further still. She was to marry the Grand-Prince of Kiev, Vladimir, and lived in Kiev, then a great centre of Christian civilization. Here, having been made welcome, she gave birth to several children, of whom the eldest son was named Harold like his grandfather, but also received the Slavic name, Mstislav.<sup>1</sup>

"Possibly the greatest emigration, however, was elsewhere; the Old English were attracted above all by the almost mystical name of Constantinople, fixed they believed, as Constantine had believed before them, at the middle of the Earth, joining East and West (which Kipling wrongly said would never meet). It is certain that from the

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the St. Petersburg historian S.V. Tsvetkov, a Gospel book brought by Gytha to Kiev is preserved in Kiev (private communication to S.V. Shumilo). Tsvetkov also writes, in his book *Trade Routes and Ships of the Celts and Slavs*, there is data indicating that in pre-Mongol Kiev there existed an Irish monastery, and that the Glagolitic script was most likely invented by the Celts. (V.M.)



Conquest on, and especially during the 1070's but right on into the middle of the twelfth century, huge numbers of English emigrated to the New Rome. Moreover, this emigration was an emigration of the elite of the country. The great scholar Sir Frank Stenton has discovered that several noble families simply disappeared after the Conquest and they were not all killed at Hastings - they emigrated. It was particularly the young who left to seek a better future elsewhere. In historical terms this emigration is comparable only to the emigration of the Russian elite and nobility in 1917 when confronted by the Bolshevik terror. So great was this emigration, especially it seems from the West Country, the Fens and East Anglia, and so long did it continue, that we must assume that it occurred with the approval of William I and his successors. It seems almost certain that it was their method of ridding themselves of the rebellious Old English ruling class and their supporters among the people. Exile, organised by the State, was after all a bloodless elimination of those who opposed William and the new order. It is no coincidence that the exodus continued right into the twelfth century. Why did they choose Constantinople? First, because probably already in the Confessor's reign (let us not forget that he was also half-Norman) discontented elements seem already to have left for Constantinople where the Emperor needed men to fight in his armies, especially against the Turks, who posed a threat in the East. Secondly, many Danes and other Scandinavians (such as Harold Hardrada) had formed the elite 'Varangian Guard' there and found fame and fortune; news of this had certainly reached England. Thirdly, what was the future for a young English noble in Norman England? We know that in 1070 a certain Ioannis Rafailis, an Imperial agent or 'prospatharios' came to England recruiting for the Imperial Army. Young Englishmen and Anglo-Danes, especially those of noble birth, would certainly have been attracted. All the more so, since though the Emperor faced the Turks in the East, in the West, especially in Southern Italy, Sicily and Dalmatia, he faced the hated Normans; what better way for an Englishman of avenging himself? Fourthly, there were those who did not like the new order in the Church or in the State under the Normans. Spiritually they could find refuge in Constantinople and the freedom to continue to live in the ritual and the spirit of the Old English Church in the imperial Capital. Perhaps unconsciously their instincts and feelings drew them to that City which symbolised the unity of Christendom through the Old English period and which had had so many connections with the Apostles of the English, Gregory and Augustine..."

The contribution of the English exiles was immediately felt. Thus Stephen Lowe writes: "Nikephoros Bryennios, writing in the first half of the twelfth century, describes a palace coup in 1071. Emperor Romanos Diogenes owed his position to being stepfather to the legitimate Emperor Michael VII Doukas. After Romanos was defeated and captured by Seljuk Turks at the disastrous battle of Manzikert, Michael seized the throne on his own account. Varangian guards were used as bullyboys to over-awe the opposition, and Bryennios implies that these palace guards were Englishmen 'loyal from of old to the Emperor of the Romans'."

In 1075, continues Phillips, "a fleet of 350 ships (according to another source 235) left England for exile in 'Micklegarth', the Great City, Constantinople. The commander of this fleet was one Siward (or Sigurd), called Earl of Gloucester. It is not impossible that he is identical with Siward Barn who had taken part in the Fenland uprising of 1071 with Hereward. With him sailed two other earls and eight high-ranking nobles. If, at a conservative estimate, we accept the figure of 235 ships and place forty people in each ship, this would indicate an exodus of nearly 10,000 people, and this was only one group - albeit by far the largest - which left these shores after 1066... When they arrived in Constantinople they found the city under siege and, we are told, thereupon relieved the inhabitants, scattering the Turks before them. This 'relief', and it occurred, earned the gratitude of the Emperor and the English were granted lodging and places in the Imperial Army. The English were particularly valued since they were mostly young, many were of noble birth and they all loathed the Normans. The elite showed such loyalty that they entered the Imperial Household and formed the Emperor's bodyguard. Their exemplary loyalty to the Emperor of the Romans echoed the loyalty of the Old English to the Pre-Conquest Papacy, to St. Gregory the Great, Pope of the Romans.

"We read of English troops fighting at Dyrrachium (Durazzo) in 1081, where they suffered heavy losses against the Normans. Again in the 1080's the Emperor granted the English land on the Gulf of Nicomedia, near Nicaea to build a fortified town known as Civotus. We are told that from the great fleet of 1075 some 4,300 English settled in the City itself, which at that time was the most populous, advanced and cosmopolitan city in the world. Further we read that the English sent priests to Hungary, which was then in close contact with Constantinople, for them to be consecrated bishops, since the English preferred the Latin rite to the Greek rite of 'St. Paul'. According to the sources, far more English than the 4,300 who settled in the city went further still. With the blessing of Emperor Alexis, these went on to recolonise territories lost by the Empire. It is said that they sailed on from the city to the North and the East for six days. Then they arrived at 'the beginning of the Scythian country'. Here they found a land called 'Domapia', which they renamed New England. Here they founded towns and having driven out the invaders, they reclaimed them for the Empire. Moreover, they renamed the towns 'London', 'York' and called others after the towns where they had come from...

"After painstaking research it has been discovered that medieval maps... list no fewer than six towns with names suggesting English settlements. These settlements on maps of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries are located along the northern coast of the Black Sea. One of the names appears as 'Susaco', possibly from 'Saxon'. Another town, situated some 110 miles to the east of the straits of Kerch near the Sea of Azov appears variously as 'Londia', 'Londin' and 'Londina'. On the twelfth century Syrian map the Sea of Azov itself is called the 'Varang' Sea, the Sea of the Varangians, a name used for the English in Constantinople at this period. It is known that in the thirteenth century a Christian people called the 'Saxi' and speaking a language very similar to

Old English inhabited this area, and that troops of the 'Saxi' served in the Georgian army in the twelfth century. There seem to be too many coincidences for us to think that the Sea of Azov was not then the first 'New England'."

Stephen Lowe writes: "Joscelin's *Miracula Sancti Augustini Episcop. Cantuariensis* tells of an Englishman of high rank from Canterbury who 'obtained such favour with the emperor and empress... that he received a dukedom over wise soldiers and a large part of the auxiliaries'. He married a rich woman of high family, and had a church built in Constantinople dedicated to Saints Nicholas and Augustine of Canterbury. This church was popular with the English in Byzantium and became the chapel of the Varangians. Another report tells of a monk of Canterbury named Joseph, who visited Constantinople in about 1090, on his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He found there a number of his own countrymen, and recognised friends of his own among them. They were now in the Imperial household, and were friends of the officer in charge of guarding holy relics. The *Historia Monasterii de Abingdon* records that in the reign of Henry I, an Englishman named Ulfric (from Lincoln in the Danelaw) arrived on a mission from Emperor Alexios - the purpose is not stated, but it may have been a further attempt to hire mercenaries.

"The Byzantine chronicler Kinnamos, writing about 1180-3 of the actions of Emperor John II at the battle of Beroe of 1122, describes 'the axe-bearers who stood around him (they are a Brittanic people who of old served the Roman Emperors)...' *Inglinoi* [English] were present at the disastrous battle of Myriokephalon in 1185 (?). However, by this late stage these Englishmen, whom Emperor Manuel describes as 'some of the leading men of the nobility of England' were more likely to have been Anglo-Normans than Saxon exiles.

"In 1204 the Frankish army of the Fourth Crusade, diverted from its original aim to attack Muslim Egypt, instead besieged and captured Christian Constantinople. Niketas Choniates was a Roman chronicler of the fighting that led to the City's fall. He writes that an attempted landing near the Palace of Vlachernai was repulsed by Pisan mercenaries and 'the axe-bearing barbarians'.

"The Frankish eyewitness and chronicler Robert de Clari describing the battle tells of the 'English, Danish and Greeks' defending the towers 'with axes and swords'. The Frankish Crusader de Villehardouin reports the walls being manned by English and Danes - and that the fighting was very violent with axes and swords. One of the negotiators sent to the Emperor, de Villehardouin describes walking past Englishmen and Danes, fully armed with their axes, posted at the gate of the city and all the way along to the Palace.

"There are few mentions of the Varangian Guard after the City's fall, and it is thought they dwindled to a shadow of their former glory. However, traces of the English Varangians still remained. Emperor Michael VIII (1261-1282) who recaptured

Constantinople after the Frankish 'Empire' collapsed, refers to the active and repeated use of his '*Englinovarangoi*' in defending his reduced Byzantine realm.

"The fourteenth-century *De Officiis* of Pseudo-Codinus, states that English was used in the acclamation to the Emperor at the Imperial banquet at Christmas – after the Genoese, Pisans and Venetians, came the *Inglinisti*, clashing their weapons with a loud noise."

Phillips continues: "As for those thousands of Old English who settled in the Great City itself, they may have lived in a quarter known as 'Vlanga' [from 'Varangian'], near the Sea of Marmara..." In Constantinople we know of a church of St. Olaf, though this was probably for Scandinavians, rather than Anglo-Danes.

Perhaps the most lasting image of the English Orthodox in exile is Anna Comnena's description of their last stand against the Normans at the Battle of Durazzo (present-day Albania) in 1081. "The axe-bearing barbarians from the Isle of Thule", as Anna called them, thrust back an attack on their part of the line, and then pursued the Normans into the sea up to their necks. But they had advanced too far, and a Norman cavalry attack threw them back again. "It seems that in their tired condition they were less strong than the Kelts [Normans]. At any rate the barbarian force was massacred there, except for survivors who fled for safety to the sanctuary of the Archangel Michael; all who could went inside the building: the rest climbed to the roof and stood there, thinking that would save their lives. The Latins merely set fire to them and burned the lot, together with the sanctuary..."

Thus did the chant of the English Orthodox warriors, "Holy Cross! Holy Cross!" fall silent on earth. And thus did the Lord accept their sacrifice as a whole-burnt offering to Himself in heaven. "May Michael the standard-bearer lead them into the holy Light, which Thou didst promise of old to Abraham and his seed."

### *The Death of the Tyrant*

Returning, finally, to England, the scene towards the end of William's reign in 1087 is one of almost unrelieved gloom. As Eadmer writes: "How many of the human race have fallen on evil days! The sons of kings and dukes and the proud ones of the land are fettered with manacles and irons, and in prison and in gaol. How many have lost their limbs by the sword or disease, have been deprived of their eyes, so that when released from prison the common light of the world is a prison for them! They are the living dead for whom the sun - mankind's greatest pleasure - now has set. Blessed are those who are consoled by eternal hope; and afflicted are the unbelieving, for, deprived of all their goods and also cut off from heaven, their punishment has now begun..."

"Judgement begins at the House of God" (I Peter 4.17), and God's judgement was

indeed very heavy on the formerly pious English land, especially on the North, which had refused to help Harold and which was devastated with extraordinary cruelty by William. But then God takes His vengeance even on the instruments of His wrath (Isaiah 10.15). Thus when William was dying, as the Norman monk Ordericus Vitalis recounts, his conscience tormented for his deeds: "I appoint no one my heir to the crown of England, but leave it to the disposal of the eternal Creator, Whose I am, and Who ordereth all things. For I did not obtain that high honour by hereditary right, but wrested it from the perjured King in a desperate battle, with much effusion of human blood; and it was by the slaughter and banishment of his adherents that I subjugated England to my rule. I have persecuted its native inhabitants beyond all reason. Whether gentle or simple, I have cruelly oppressed them; many I unjustly disinherited; innumerable multitudes, especially in the county of York, perished through me by famine or the sword. Thus it happened: the men of Deira and other people beyond the Humber called in the troops of Sweyn, king of Denmark, as their allies against me, and put to the sword Rober Comyn and a thousand soldiers within the walls of Durham, as well as others, my barons and most esteemed knights, in various places. These events inflamed me to the highest pitch of resentment, and I fell on the English of the northern shires like a ravening lion. I commanded their houses and corn, with all their implements and chattels, to be burnt without distinction, and large herds of cattle and beasts of burden to be butchered wherever they were found. It was thus that I took revenge on the multitudes of both sexes by subjecting them to the calamity of a cruel famine; and by so doing - alas! - became the barbarous murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of that fine race of people. Having, therefore, made my way to the throne of that kingdom by many crimes, I dare not leave it to anyone but God alone, lest after my death worse should happen by my means..."

But this confession evidently was not enough to expiate his guilt in the eyes of God. For, as Thierry writes, following Ordericus Vitalis, the events surrounding his burial showed that the mark of Cain was on him still. "His medical and other attendants, who had passed the night with him, seeing that he was dead, hastily mounted their horses, and rode off to take care of their property. The serving-men and vassals of inferior rank, when their superiors had fled, carried off the arms, vessels, clothes, linen, and other movables, and fled likewise, leaving the corpse naked on the floor. The king's body was left in this situation for several hours... At length some of the clergy, clerks and monks, having recovered the use of their faculties, and collected their strength, arrayed a procession. Clad in the habits of their order, with crosses, tapers, and censers, they approached the corpse, and prayed for the soul of the deceased. The Archbishop of Rouen, named Guillaume, ordered the king's body to be conveyed to Caen, and buried in the basilica of St. Stephen, the first martyr, which he had built in his lifetime. But his sons, his brothers - all his relatives - were afar off: not one of his officers was present - not one offered to take charge of his obsequies; and an obscure countryman named Herluin, through pure good nature, and for the love of God (say the historians), took upon himself the trouble and expense. He hired a cart and attendants, had the body conveyed to the port on the Seine, from thence on a

barge down the river, and by sea to Caen. Gilbert, Abbot of St. Stephen's, with all his monks, came to meet the coffin; and was joined by many clerks and laymen; but a fire suddenly appearing, broke up the procession... The inhumation of *the great chief - the famous baron* - as the historians of the time call him - was interrupted by fresh occurrences. On that day were assembled all the bishops and abbots of Normandy. They had the grave dug in the church, between the altar and the choir; the mass was finished, and the body was about to be lowered, when a man rose up amid the crowd, and said, with a loud voice - 'Clerks, and bishops, this ground is mine - upon it stood the house of my father. The man for whom you pray wrested it from me to build on it his church. I have neither sold my land, nor pledged it, nor forfeited it, nor given it. It is my right. I claim it. In the name of God, I forbid you to put the body of the spoiler there, or to cover it with my earth.' He who thus lifted up his voice was Asselin son of Arthur; and all present confirmed the truth of his words. The bishops told him to approach; and, making a bargain with him, delivered to him sixty sols as the price of the place of sepulture only, and engaged to indemnify him equitably for the rest of the ground. On this condition it was the corpse of the vanquisher of the English was received into the ground dug for its reception. At the moment of letting it down, it was discovered that the stone coffin was too narrow; the assistants attempted to force the body, and it burst. Incense and perfumes were burned in abundance, but without avail: the people dispersed in disgust; and the priests themselves, hurrying through the ceremony, soon deserted the church..."

## CONCLUSION. THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION

Many have believed that the Norman Conquest was good for England; for it was from that time that the country began her slow ascent to prominence and power in European and world affairs. However, "as Scripture points out, it is bastards who are spoiled, the legitimate sons, who are able to carry on the family tradition, are punished" (Hebrews 12.8). As an Orthodox nation, England had been constantly stretched on the rack of suffering by successive waves of pagan invaders; as a fallen and heretical nation, while suffering what all men suffer through living in a fallen world, the English nevertheless did not suffer what the great Messianic Christian nations - the Jews of the Old Testament, the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire and under the Turkish yoke, the Russians to the present day - have suffered in bearing the cross of the true confession of faith. There were no more catastrophic defeats, no more successful invasions from abroad to rouse the people from their spiritual sleep. For "why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint..." (Isaiah 1.5).

For some time, the more sensitive of the English did indeed feel that they were spiritually bastards who had lost the family tradition of the Orthodox Church and kingdom. Thus an anonymous English poet wrote in the early twelfth century: "The teachers are lost, and many of the people, too." And as late as 1383 John Wyclif wrote: "The pride of the Pope is the reason why the Greeks are divided from the so-called faithful... It is we westerners, too fanatical by far, who have been divided from the faithful Greeks and the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

But no action followed upon this correct intuition. Occasional appeals were made to what was thought to be the faith of the Anglo-Saxon Church. But there was little consciousness of the fact that the Norman Conquest marked an ecclesiastical, as well as a political, revolution. For, as Edward Freeman wrote in his massive nineteenth-century history of the Norman Conquest, "so far from being the beginning of our national history, the Norman Conquest was the temporary overthrow of our national being." Again, more recently R.H.C. Davies has written: "Apparently as the result of one day's fighting (14 October, 1066), England received a new royal dynasty, a new aristocracy, a virtually new Church, a new art, a new architecture and a new language."

England was now part of the great pseudo-Christian empire of the papacy, which, theoretically at least, had the power to depose her kings, close her churches (which it did in King John's reign) and enrol her soldiers in crusades against the Muslims and Orthodox Christians around the world. Little was said or done about returning to union with the Orthodox. Even the visit of one of the Byzantine emperors to England to enlist English help in the defence of Constantinople against the Turks failed to arouse interest in the ancestral faith and Church.

## *The Anglican Reformation*

In the sixteenth century the English Church threw off the yoke of Rome and claimed to return to the True Church of pre-papist times. Now in King Edward the Confessor's deathbed vision, he had been told that the English could hope for a cessation of God's great wrath against them "when a green tree, 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 by its trunk, by itself and without the hand of man or any sort of stake, and begin once again to push leaves and bear fruit from the old love of its uniting sap".

But can we say that the branch which was cut off at the time of the Norman Conquest was regrafted into the tree of Holy Orthodoxy at that time?

This can be affirmed only if: (a) the faith of the Anglican Church was the same as that of the Anglo-Saxon Church before 1070, and (b) the Anglicans sought, and obtained, communion with the trunk, the Holy Orthodox Church of the East.

The Anglican Reformation of the sixteenth century, in conformity with the Protestant Reformation generally, laid great stress on a return to the faith and worship of the Early Church; and there was indeed some recognition of the authority of the early Church Fathers, whose writings had been abandoned in favour of the scholastics in the medieval period. Thus Cranmer based his argument for an increase in the reading of the Holy Scriptures on a quotation from St. John Chrysostom, and some of the seventeenth-century divines, and William Law in the eighteenth, made use of the patristic writings. However, the official confession of faith of the Anglican communion, the 39 articles, was far from patristic, especially in the area of sacramental theology (only two sacraments, baptism and the eucharist were recognized, but not the priesthood!). Moreover, other practices of the Early Church, which were also accepted and practised by the Anglo-Saxon Church, such as fasting, monasticism, the veneration of saints, prayer for the dead, etc. - were rejected. Again, instead of the papocaesarism of the medieval period there was a return to the caesaropapism of William's reign, the monarch and parliament being placed over the bishops of the church.

Moreover, the events that accompanied the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII made it clear that the English Reformation was more akin, through its violence and destruction of sacred things, to the "reformation" of William and Hildebrand, than to the restoration of Orthodoxy accomplished by St. Augustine.

Of particular significance were the ravages of England's holiest shrines. In the north, the king's commissioners came in 1537 to Durham to destroy the shrine and relics of St. Cuthbert. "After the spoil of his ornaments and jewels, they approached near to his body, expecting nothing but dust and ashes; but... they found him lying



whole, uncorrupt, with his face bare, and his beard as of a fortnight's growth, and all the vestments about him, as he was accustomed to say Mass... When the goldsmith perceived he had broken one of his legs, in breaking open the chest, he was sore troubled at it, and cried: 'Alas! I have broken one of his legs'; which Dr. Henley hearing, called to him, and bade him cast down his bones: the other answered he could not them asunder, for the sinews and skin held them so that they would not separate. Then Dr. Lee stepped up to see if they were so, and, turning about, spake in Latin to Dr. Henley that he was entire, though Dr. Henley, not believing his words, called again to have his bones cast down: Dr. Lee answered, 'If you will not believe me, come up yourself and see him': then Dr. Henley stepped up to him, and handled him, and found he lay whole; then he commanded them to take him down; and so it happened, contrary to their expectation, that not only was his body whole and uncorrupted, but the vestments wherein his body lay, and wherein he was accustomed to say Mass, were fresh, safe, and not consumed. Whereupon the visitors commanded him to be carried into the vestry, till the King's pleasure concerning him was further known; and, upon receipt thereof, the prior and monks buried him in the ground under the place where his shrine was exalted."

Thus the English Reformation both witnessed involuntarily to the holiness of the Anglo-Saxon Church and promptly buried that holiness in the ground of earthly thoughts and unbelief!

Still worse were the outrages committed at Glastonbury. There the Old Church built by St. Joseph of Arimathea and dedicated to the Mother of God had been burnt in a fire in 1184; but the other holy things associated with St. Joseph had been preserved by the Catholic monks, making Glastonbury one of the greatest sites of pilgrimage in Western Christendom. But the Protestants destroyed the icon of the Mother of God painted by St. Joseph of which Richard Pynson, the royal painter, had written about in his *Lyfe of Joseph of Arimathia* in 1520.

The Protestants also destroyed the famous Glastonbury Thorn planted by St. Joseph; but cuttings were made, and a descendant of the original thorn still exists. This remarkable tree bears witness to another apostolic tradition which Orthodox England guarded, but which Protestant England discarded. John Greed explains: "It is said that when he [St. Joseph] began to preach the good news of Jesus Christ at Glastonbury he met opposition which varied from common heckling to stone-throwing. Undaunted he persevered, but one Christmas Day on Wearyall Hill, when he spoke of the King of kings as being born humbly in a stable and laid in a manger, the crowd shouted derisively for a sign. Then Joseph heard a voice tell him thrust his dry staff into the ground. He did so, and *within a few minutes* it put out branches, budded, and burst into blossom. The people, seeing a sign, accepted the message...

"Botanically, Rev. L.S. Lewis describes the species as a Levantine thorn, while Mr. Geoffrey Ashe in his book 'King Arthur's Avalon' says that it is a freak hawthorn or

applewort, *Crataegus oxyacantha*. It cannot be struck but can be budded. There is no fruit, but it blossoms in May and also on old Christmas Day.

"In 1752 the calendar was changed by eleven days to bring Britain into line with Europe.. where the calendar of Pope Gregory XIII was in general use. At Christmas, crowds gathered to see what the trees would do. To the delight of some and chagrin of others, the trees refused to follow the Papal calendar, and blossomed on 5th January - a practice which they continue to this day. Since 1929, gifts of the January blossom have been sent to the reigning monarch."

This tradition goes back at least to the reign of Charles I, who, on receiving it, remarked:

"Well, this is a miracle, isn't it?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, a miracle peculiar to England and regarded with great veneration by the [Roman] Catholics."

"How?" said the king, "when this miracle opposes itself to the [Roman] pope? You bring me this miraculous blossom on Christmas Day, Old Style. Does it always observe the Old Style, by which we English celebrate the Nativity, at its time of flowering?"

"Always."

"Then the pope and your miracle differ not a little, for he always celebrates Christmas Day ten days earlier by the calendar of the New Style, which has been ordained at Rome by papal orders for nearly a century..."

### [The Non-Jurors](#)

However, icons, the veneration of relics and the Church Calendar were not the only apostolic traditions which the Protestants destroyed. Soon the very dogma of the Church and the concept of hierarchical authority in Church and State was under fire. "For the breach with Rome," writes Christopher Hill, "and especially the radical measures of Edward VI's reign had opened up hopes of a continuing reformation which would totally overthrow the coercive machinery of the state church. The Elizabethan settlement bitterly disappointed expectations that a protestant church would differ from popery in the power which it allowed to bishops and clergy. The episcopal hierarchy came to be seen as the main obstacle to radical reform."

As the Church tottered, so did the Monarchy become weaker. Thus in the seventeenth century we see a repetition of the pattern we noted in the eleventh: a decline in faith and morals, followed by the overthrow of the monarchy. For, as

Archbishop Wulfstan wrote in 1023, "It is true what I say: should the Christian faith weaken, the kingship will immediately totter." For the Divine right of kings is established, and prevented from becoming a mere despotism, only through its being sanctified and checked by the Church. If the Church is true and exercises her full authority, then, as Shakespeare wrote in *Richard II*,

*Not all the water in the wide rough sea  
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose  
The deputy elected by the Lord.*

But if the Church falls, then the Monarchy, too, will fall, bringing still more degeneration in its wake.

Thus when King Charles was beheaded in 1649, it quickly turned out as Denzill Holles, a leading opponent of the king, said: "The meanest of men, the basest and vilest of the nation, the lowest of the people have got power into their hands."

The beheading of King Charles elicited a reaction on the part of the so-called Non-Jurors which came close, for the first time, to reuniting at least part of the English Church to the Tree of Holy Orthodoxy.

"The canonical position of the Non-Juror group," wrote Fr. George Florovsky, "was precarious; its bishops had no recognized titles and but a scattered flock. Some leaders of the group took up the idea that they might regularize their position by a concordat with the Churches of the East. Non-jurors maintained in theology the tradition of the great Caroline divines, who had always been interested in the Eastern tradition and in the early Greek Fathers. The Greek Church had remonstrated strongly against the execution of Charles I; the Russian Government had acted to the same effect, cancelling on that occasion the privileges of English merchants in Russia. Among the original Non-jurors was Bishop Frampton, who had spent many years in the East and had a high regard for the Eastern Church. Archbishop Sancroft himself had been in close contact with the Eastern Church a long time before. Thus there were many reasons why Non-jurors should look to the East."

In 1712 some of the Non-Jurors seized the opportunity presented by the visit of a Greek metropolitan to England to enter into negotiations with the Orthodox. Describing themselves as "the Catholick Remnant" in Britain, their intention, writes Florovsky, "was to revive the 'ancient godly discipline of the Church', and they contended that they had already begun to do this." However, the attempt failed, partly because the Archbishop of Canterbury opposed it, and partly because the Non-Jurors rejected several Orthodox doctrines: the invocation of saints, the veneration of icons, and the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ - all three doctrines which the Orthodox of Anglo-Saxon England had embraced without reserve. However, it seems

that the real problem, from the Non-Jurors' point of view, was the Patriarch of Jerusalem's confession that "our Oriental Faith is the only truth Faith", so that, in Florovsky's words, "there is no room for adjustment or dispensation in matters of doctrine - complete agreement with the Orthodox Faith is absolutely indispensable."

The Non-Jurors' rejection of this revealed that they did not have a real understanding of what reunion in the Church means - that is, the *conversion* of those who have been in disunity and schism to the Faith and Church of the Orthodox. Instead, they approached ecclesiastical reunion in a political manner, through the offering and demanding of concessions and compromises. They believed in the perfect correctness of all the beliefs which they had held till then. They would not accept that in certain matters - perhaps not through any fault of their own - they were wrong. They would not bow down before the heavenly wisdom of the Church, "the pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Timothy 3.15), but rather sought to make the Church change her faith to accommodate them.

The failure of the Non-Jurors' initiative seems to have had a negative effect on religious life in England; for it is at this time that we find the beginning of that "heresy of heresies", Ecumenism, whose devastating effects are so evident now.

Thus in 1717, as William Palmer records, "a controversy arose on occasion of the writings of Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, in which he maintained that it was needless to believe in any particular creed, or to be united to any particular Church; and that sincerity, or our own persuasion of the correctness of our opinions (whether well or ill founded) is sufficient. These doctrines were evidently calculated to subvert the necessity of believing the articles of the Christian faith, and to justify all classes of schismatics or separatists from the Church. The convocation deemed these opinions so mischievous, that a committee was appointed to select propositions from Hoadly's books, and to procure their censure; but before his trial could take place, the convocation was prorogued by an arbitrary exercise of the royal authority..."

Again, in 1723 Ecumenism was placed among the basic Constitutions of Craft Masonry in the newly founded Grand Lodge of England. For "though in ancient Times Masons were charged in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet, 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves."

Thus once again did the secular power trample on the strivings of the English towards truth and freedom in Christ; for not since 1066 had England experienced that true "symphony" between Church and State which is the foundation of the truly Christian - Orthodox Christian - society.

### [The Branch Theory](#)

Contacts between Anglicans and Orthodox were resumed in the early nineteenth century, thanks particularly to the efforts of William Palmer, who met several Russian prelates and conducted an extensive correspondence with the famous Russian Slavophile, Alexis Khomyakov. However, the same obstacle presented itself here as in the time of the Non-Jurors: the Orthodox Church's insistence that she is the one true Church. The "Branch Theory" of the Church proposed by the Oxford theologians, according to which the Orthodox, the Catholics and the Anglicans were all different branches of the single Tree of the Church, was anathema to the Orthodox (and the Catholics).

Thus "the Russians were staggered, as Palmer himself stated, 'at the idea of one visible Church being made up of three communions, differing in doctrines and rites, and two of them at least condemning and anathematizing the others.'"

For, as Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky said in reply to an American Episcopalian initiative early in the next century: "What happened in 1054 was a falling away. Who has fallen away is another question; but someone did fall away. The Church has remained one, but either only in the East or only in the West."

This was a challenge to the Anglicans to re-examine the history of their own country, and especially the history of the Norman Conquest, when, according to the Orthodox, the English branch was cut off from the True Vine. Palmer, however, reacted by joining the Catholics; and many followed his example. In this way he, and they, confessed their belief that the True Vine to which the English Church should return was not the Orthodox Church of the East, with which the English Church had been in full communion until the Norman Conquest, but that "Church" which William the Bastard and Pope Gregory VII had imposed on the land by fire and sword, and which Edward the Confessor had foreseen as being the execution of God's wrath on an apostate people. In this way they confessed that the fundamental schism in English Church history was not that which took place in the eleventh century between England and the Orthodox Church, but that which took place in the sixteenth century between England and Papal Rome. And tragically, whenever the Anglican Church has taken yet another step down the road of the apostasy - in recent times, these have included especially the ordination of women and the recognition of sodomy, - the characteristic reaction of dissenters has been to return to the Pope.

Most recently, however, the beginnings of a different, and healthier reaction can be discerned. Following in the steps of early pioneers in the movement of Anglicans returning to Orthodoxy - for example, Frederick North, fifth earl of Guilford, who was baptised into the Greek Church in 1792 with the name Demetrius - several Anglicans, including over many Anglican priests, have joined the Orthodox Church. Although most, unfortunately, have joined churches that are members of the apostate World Council of Churches, the movement in general must be welcomed as an implicit recognition of the fundamental fact: that reunion with the True Church means reunion

with *Orthodoxy*, the Faith and Church of England before 1066.

What, then, is now required to help this movement to gather strength and give it that firm foundation in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church which alone can save England?

The Psalmist says: "Depart from evil, and do good" (33.14). Before embracing the good of Orthodoxy, therefore, it is necessary to depart from all the evil of the last nine hundred and more years since the fall of Orthodox England: first of all, the papist heresies of the Middle Ages, many of which were discarded by the Reformation, but some of which remain; then the Protestant heresies of the 39 articles; then the ecumenist "heresy of heresies" of today, which renounces objective truth in matters of faith and morals in favour of an acceptance of every kind of error and abomination.

Are these three stages of heresy - Papism, Protestantism and Ecumenism - the "three furlongs" along which the branch of the English Church must travel before returning to her ancient trunk, according to St. Edward's vision? We do not know. But that each of them has to be traversed again in the opposite direction - that is, explicitly and publicly renounced - is certain.

For it is impossible to go with confidence into the future if one has not thoroughly repented of the mistakes of the past. Only after such repentance will the English people be ready to embrace the good of Orthodoxy in the fullness of the Orthodox doctrines and traditions, not excluding those traditions, such as the veneration of icons and saints, and those doctrines, such as those of the Eucharist and of the One and only One True Church, which have proved to be particular stumbling blocks in the past.

### *"He that Restraineth"*

A good starting point would be the establishment of the veneration of the last Orthodox king, Harold II Godwinson, not simply as a national hero, but as a defender of the faith - to which title he has much greater right than any of the Anglican monarchs. Even now a feeling for the sacredness of the Christian monarchy has not been entirely lost in England. No democratic politician has enjoyed for more than fleeting moments the popularity and reverence felt for the monarch.

Only a few years ago, the relics of the first canonized king of all England, St. Edward the Martyr, were discovered and returned to the Orthodox Church. The body of his fellow royal martyr, St. Harold, should now be given an honourable public burial to right the wrongs committed against it by William and Hildebrand. In this way it would be recognized that in his short reign of nine months and nine days King Harold fulfilled the function of "him that restraineth" (II Thessalonians 2.7) the coming of the Antichrist for the English and Western peoples.

In this act the English people would do well to draw on the experience of the Russian people, who have also, after a period of captivity and martyrdom at the hands of atheists, come to realize what they lost in their last Orthodox Tsar. His relics, too, have been discovered after an attempt to destroy and dishonour them. Indeed, the nearest historical parallel to the fall of Orthodox England in 1066 must surely be the fall of Orthodox Russia in 1917. And just as Russian Christians today hope and believe in the resurrection of Holy Russia, so English Christians must hope and believe in the resurrection of Old, Holy England, not in her physical and material features, but in her spiritual countenance, in her *faith*.

Such resurrections have taken place before. Thus in the late second century, when the Apostolic faith had all but died out, King Lucius sent to Pope Eleutherius for missionaries, who came and rekindled the flame. Again, in the sixth century St. Augustine restored the faith that had been driven west by the pagan Saxons. Again, in the ninth century King Alfred restored Orthodoxy when almost the whole land was in the hands of the pagan Danes...

Resurrection, then, is possible - but only if we honour the memory of these saints who resurrected England in the past, and consciously join ourselves, in faith and life, to their faith and life. The attempt to resurrect England by ignoring her history and her saints who intercede for her before the throne of God, is doomed to failure. We cannot reverse almost 1000 years of apostasy if we do not reach back beyond it to the 1000 years of True English Christianity - the "dark ages" of English history that were in fact filled with the most glorious light.

In this respect a hopeful sign was the establishment, in the year 2000, of a feast of the saints of the British Isles, on the Third Sunday of Pentecost, by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church...

### [The Return of the Branch](#)

So if we would love God as the saints of our land loved Him, then, as an English priest of the Russian Church Abroad, Fr. Andrew Phillips, writes, we would, firstly, "love God *through* the saints. They would be familiar to us, literally familiar, part of a family to which we would belong. And not only the universal saints, such as Sts. Peter and Paul, the patrons of London, but also the local saints. The long litany of their names would be known by us by heart, we would feast them on high days and holy days; there would be national festivals in their honour. Instead of absurd 'Bank Holidays' (as if banks could be holy, or worthy of feasting), there would be national holy days on the Feasts of the Apostles of England, on 12 March (Feast of St. Gregory the Great) and on 26 May (Feast of St. Augustine of Canterbury) and no doubt on other saints' days. We would name our children after these saints and children would know their lives when still small. How could we forget Sts. Mellitus and Laurence and Paulinus, the patron of York and all the North? Long ago we would have asked the

French authorities to give back the relics of St. Peter of Canterbury [and St. Edmund of East Anglia]. St. Oswald of Heavenfield would be venerated amongst us; St. Benedict Biscop, that lover of icons and holy books, would be patron of Church art; the great Theodore, the first Greek Archbishop of Canterbury (may God send us a second), and his faithful companion Adrian, would have their icons hung in our schools and seats of learning. The Wonderworker of Britain, St. Cuthbert, would be known to all, Sts. Wilfrid and Bede and Aldhelm would intercede for us at the Throne of the Most High. We would read the life of the great fen Father, Guthlac, the English Antony, as we read the lives of the ascetics of Egypt and Syria and Russia. Women would find their place in living according to the examples of Audrey [Etheldreda] and Hilda, Mildred and Edith and that host of holy women who were drawn to the great Abbesses. St. Erkenwald, 'the light of London', would be commemorated in the Capital, St. John of Beverley would stir Yorkshiremen. The altruism of young people would be stirred by those greatest of missionaries and Englishmen, Boniface of Crediton, Apostle of the Germans, and Clement [Willibrord] who brought the light of Christ to the Frisians and much of Holland, who went out like elder brothers and sacrificed themselves for the love of the Gospel. Edmund the Passion-Bearer would be the patron of East Anglia, the humble Swithin would heal the sick in our hospitals. The Feast of King Edward the Martyr would once more be a day of national penitence as before, and the town of Shaftesbury would again be called 'Edwardstowe'. At our end we would utter the same words as St. Oswald of Worcester: 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost'. Or perhaps we would think of St. Alfwold of Sherborne who so loved the Saints of England that at his end, before an icon of St. Swithun, he could only repeat the words of his favourite hymn from the service to St. Cuthbert. And what can we say of St. Ethelwold, 'the Father of Monks', or of St. Dunstan whose Byzantine coronation rite is still essentially that used by our monarchs today. And we would ask the prayers of St. Neot, who together with St. Neot appeared in a vision to King Alfred the Great and blessed him to victory against the pagan Danes. And of the martyred Archpastor of England, Alphege... And we would keep the customs of old - the calendar of our forebears. At midnight at Christmas would some not take their children to farms to see the cattle kneeling in their sheds and stalls in honour of the new-born King? Is that not what our forefathers and foremothers believed? And at Holy Easter would there not be some to go at sunrise to see the sun dance to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection?...

"Secondly, with all our souls we would love God through places. We would know a spiritual geography of England, a geography where the English Earth would meet an English Heaven and an English Heaven meet the English Earth. On Thanet, were that wonderful Apostle of Christ, Augustine came ashore, there would today be a great monastery, a centre of pilgrimage and there we would kiss the earth as holy, for Christ trod there through His servants. And we would honour Canterbury as our spiritual capital, the Mother-City and cradle of the English Faith, the spiritual birthplace of England and its 22 sainted Archbishops. London would remember the Holy Apostles, Paul, in the East, and Peter, in the West. Westminster would once again



be the monastery in the West. The Holy Mountain of the English Church, the Athos of England, would not be a mountain, but an island, Holy Island, Lindisfarne. There would be a pilgrimage to Glastonbury, the English Jerusalem with its traditions.. There would be a great monastery in the fens at Crowland, to honour St. Guthlac, to whom the holy Apostle Bartholomew gave a scourge against the Devil. There we would remember all the martyrs, Theodore, Sabinus, Ulric and the others, slaughtered like lambs by the heathen. We would go on pilgrimages, 'from every shire's end of England' to Winchester and Worcester, Wimborne and Winchcombe, Jarrow and York, Whitby and Hexham, Ely and Evesham, Lichfield and Wilton, Dorchester and Hereford, the Buries of St. Alban and St. Edmund, the great cities and little hamlets where visions and saints have been seen. And all along the roads there would be crosses and wayside shrines, where lamps would shine in the darkness to show the way. And thus there would be isles and havens of peace in this land.

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

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

But one relic of St. Augustine's mission has been preserved - his Gospel-book. And it is significant that when the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury prayed together in Canterbury in 1982, neither of them sat on the throne of St. Augustine, but instead his Gospel-book lay there. For only one who has the faith of St. Augustine is worthy to sit on his throne and take up his Gospel-book, the Gospel of that "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (I Peter 2.25) Who does not twist and turn like today's false hierarchs, but remains "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13.8).

Then the branch seen by St. Edward in his prophetic vision, instead of fruitlessly continuing to attempt a life independent of the trunk of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and withering away until it bears not even an external resemblance to the tree from which it was severed - for, as the True Vine said, "if a

man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15.6) - will joyfully return to her and "begin once again to push leaves and bear fruit from the old love of its uniting sap".

## APPENDIX 1. WHEN DID THE WEST FALL AWAY FROM HOLY ORTHODOXY?

The recent discovery of the relics of the last king of Anglo-Saxon England, Harold II Godwinson, who was killed fighting a papist army at Hastings in 1066, has again raised the question: when did the West fall away from Orthodoxy? and consequently: which of the kings and bishops of the West can be considered Orthodox?

This is an important question, not only for Orthodox Christians of western origin, but also for the Orthodox Church as a whole. The Orthodox Church is now again (as it was in the first millenium) a Church of both East and West, so it is necessary for her to claim her inheritance in both East and West, to show that the saints of the West were and are precisely her saints, having the same faith as the saints of the East. But this can be done in a theologically well-founded manner only if it is clearly shown when and where the West fell away from Orthodoxy. Otherwise the double danger exists either of embracing pseudo-saints who were in fact heretics, or of rejecting some true saints and intercessors out of a zeal which is "not according to knowledge". In the first case, we find the "madman" Francis of Assisi (the description belongs to Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov) placed on the same level as a genuine saint such as Seraphim of Sarov. And in the second case, whole centuries of Orthodox history and sanctity are slandered, which cannot but anger God Who is jealous of the honour of those who honour Him and Who intervened to stop St. Cyril of Alexandria from dishonouring the memory of St. John Chrysostom.

There may seem to be a simple solution to this problem: those Western saints who died before the anathematization of the Roman papacy in 1054 are to be reintegrated into the Orthodox calendar, while all those "saints" who died after that date are to be counted as heretics. However the matter is not as simple as it appears. On the one hand, the argument is often heard that the West had in fact fallen into heresy well *before* 1054 through acceptance of the *Filioque* heresy, which was anathematized in 880, so that only those pre-1054 saints who clearly rejected the *Filioque* should be accepted in the menology. On the other hand, there is the argument that communion between parts of the West and the Orthodox East continued until well *after* 1054, and that the West cannot be considered to have lost grace completely until the Fourth Crusade of 1204. Thus we arrive at very different dates for the fall of the West depending on which of two major criteria of Orthodoxy we consider more fundamental: freedom from heresy, or communion with the True Church.

The truth is, of course, that both criteria are fundamental; for communion with the True Church is determined precisely on the basis of freedom from heresy. The apparent conflict between these two criteria arises from the fact that the seeds of a heresy may be present in the Church for a long time before it is formally condemned and the heretics are expelled from the Church. And even after the heretics have been expelled, there may be some who remain in communion with them out of ignorance.

Conversely, there have been many occasions when it is the confessors of the truth who have been expelled from the main Church body. Thus the question must not be approached in a formalistic manner, but only by calling on the Holy Spirit to reveal by other means - for example, by direct revelation (as in the case of St. John Chrysostom), or through miracles or the incorruption of relics - who His chosen ones are.

Let us consider some specific examples from the history of the English Church.

**1. St. Edward the Martyr.** Some years ago, the question arose whether the martyred King Edward of England, whose relics had been returned to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, should be recognized as a saint of the Universal Church. One hierarch queried the decision to recognize him in view of the fact, as he claimed, that the heresy of the *Filioque* was entrenched in England at the time. However, a Synodical decision declared in favour of St. Edward, and the doubting hierarch "agreed with the former decision after having been acquainted with the historical information compiled by His Grace, Bishop Gregory, who cited a list of names of Western saints of the same period who have long been included in our list of saints (among whom are St. Ludmilla, St. Wenceslaus of Czechia, and others)."

The present writer has argued that it is far from clear whether the *Filioque* was in general use in England at the time of St. Edward (late tenth century), and that in any case no less rigorous a theologian than St. Maximus the Confessor had declared, when the Roman Church first adopted the *Filioque*, that she did not in fact understand it in a heretical sense *at that time*. Thus the possibility exists of a heresy being accepted at an early stage out of ignorance, while those who hold it remain Orthodox.

Again, the very saint most closely associated with the condemnation of the *Filioque*, Photius the Great, wrote with regard to certain Fathers, such as St. Augustine, who were suspected of being tainted in this respect: "If [these] Fathers had spoken in opposition when the debated question was brought before them and fought it contentiously and had maintained their opinion and had persevered in this false teaching, and when convicted of it had held to their doctrine until death, then they would necessarily be rejected together with the error of their mind. But if they spoke badly, or, for some reason not known to us, deviated from the right path, but no question was put to them nor did anyone challenge them to learn the truth, we admit them to the list of Fathers, as if they had not said it - because of their righteousness of life and distinguished virtue and faith; faultless in other respects. We do not, however, follow their teaching in which they stray from the path of truth... We, though, who know that some of our holy Fathers and teachers strayed from the faith of true dogmas, do not take as doctrine those areas in which they strayed, but we embrace the men. So also in the case of any who are charged with teaching that the Spirit proceeds from the Son, we do not admit what is opposed to the word of the Lord, but we do not cast them from the rank of the Fathers."

The Roman Patriarchate in the early Middle Ages encompassed a very large area in which communications were very slow and difficult, and where the general level of education was low. This must be taken into account when considering whether an outlying province, such as England, was in heresy or not. The *Filioque* did not become an issue in England until the time of Anselm of Canterbury in about 1100. The only Englishman who even discussed the matter before that date, to the present writer's knowledge, was the famous Alcuin of York, who lived in France in about 800 and expressed himself strongly *against* the heresy in a letter to the brothers of Lyons: "Do not try to insert novelties in the Symbol of the Catholic Faith, and in the church services do not decide to become fond of traditions unknown in ancient times."

**2. King Edward the Confessor.** Thus the Russian Church Abroad has decided in favour of the sanctity of King Edward the Martyr, who died in 979 at a time when the *Filioque* may or may not have been in common use in England. In this case, apart from the miracles and incorrupt relics of the martyred king, the witnesses in favour of his sanctity include: (a) his freedom from heresy in the sense of open defence of it against Orthodox opposition (see St. Photius' words quoted above), and (b) his full communion with the Orthodox Church in the East. But what are we to think of his nephew, also called King Edward, and also renowned for miracles and incorruption, but called "the Confessor" to distinguish him from his martyred uncle of the same name?

Two facts make it more difficult to accept Edward the Confessor as a saint of the Universal Church. The first is the fact that, from 1009, the Roman papacy, from which the English Church had derived its faith and to which it was canonically subject, again introduced the *Filioque* into the Symbol of Faith, which was followed in 1014 by its use at the coronation of the German Emperor Henry II. And the second is that Edward the Confessor died in 1066, twelve years after the Roman Church had been officially anathematized by the Great Church of Constantinople.

It has been argued that the use of the *Filioque* in the German emperor's coronation service may have been derived from its use in the English rite. However, this is highly unlikely. Although Germany had been largely converted to the Faith by English missionaries in the eighth century, it was never canonically subject to the English Church. Even her apostle, the Englishman St. Boniface, carried out his missionary work as a representative of the Roman Papacy, not of the English Church. Moreover, it is almost inconceivable that "the Holy Roman Emperor", as the German emperor called himself, should have derived his Symbol of faith and the rite of his coronation from anywhere else but Rome.

The English coronation service, on the other hand, was worked out independently of Rome and on a Byzantine model by St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury (+988), who was St. Edward the Martyr's spiritual father and who crowned both him, his

father Edgar and his half-brother Ethelred, Edward the Confessor's father.

It is, of course, possible that the *Filioque* was introduced from the continent into the English coronation service after 1014. It must be remembered, however, that at least one son of the English Church from the period after 1014 was recognized as a saint in both East and West very shortly after his death. We are referring here to Martyr-King Olaf of Norway, who was martyred in 1030, who was glorified after an official investigation of his incorrupt relics by the English Bishop Grimkell of Nidaros (Trondheim), and to whom churches were dedicated in many other places, including Novgorod. Moreover, it was in connection with a miracle attributed to St. Olaf in about the reign of Alexis Comnenus or a little earlier that a chapel was dedicated to him in Constantinople and he was included among the saints of the Imperial City. If Olaf is accepted as a saint of the Universal Church, then it is difficult to see how at least the possibility of sanctification can be denied to the other members of the English Church - at any rate until 1054.

In 1054, however, the final and complete break between Rome and Constantinople took place, and was sealed by a fearful anathema on the part of Patriarch Michael and his Synod. "By the fourteenth century, the Greeks were acknowledging that the schism had taken place from the time of Patriarch Michael. They came to believe that he responded correctly to the papal attack by excommunicating the Pope and telling the eastern Patriarchs to recognize him in future as senior Patriarch." From that moment, therefore, it became imperative for all members of the Roman Patriarchate to separate from their cursed head on earth if they were to remain members of the Body of Christ Whose Blessed Head was in heaven. One is therefore struck to learn - and the believer in Divine Providence can hardly consider it a coincidence - that from 1052, two years before the anathema, until the completion of the Norman Conquest of England in 1070, the English Church was in fact *not* in communion with Rome, and was only reintegrated after the most bloody genocide of the English people!

The reason for the break in communion, it must be admitted, was not the *Filioque* or any other dogmatic question. The last archbishop of Canterbury before the schism had fled from England after the failure of a political cause which he had supported, and had dropped his *omophorion*, the symbol of his archiepiscopal rank, in his haste to escape. King Edward had then allowed the *omophorion* to be bestowed on Bishop Stigand of Winchester, and continued to support this new, but technically uncanonical archbishop in spite of the Pope's fulminations against the "schismatic" English. In fact, it was the papacy which fell into schism and under anathema only two years later, and the English who escaped anathema - temporarily, at any rate - by their non-communion with Rome. From this time, however, the Popes attempted to undermine support for the English king and archbishop.

This they failed to do in King Edward's lifetime because of his popularity among the people and manifest gifts of healing and prophecy (it is also asserted that he

remained a virgin to the end of his life). Among other things, he prophesied that the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus had changed over from sleeping on their right sides to sleeping on their left - a sign of disaster to come which was verified by a commission sent by the Byzantine Emperor.

Still more important was the revelation he received on his deathbed from two holy monks: "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."

This prophecy was fulfilled exactly when, on January 6, 1067, one year and one day after the death of King Edward, the papist William of Normandy was crowned king of England, which was followed by a terrible devastation of England that resulted in the deaths of one in five Englishmen, the razing of most of the churches and the destruction of the whole fabric of English life. Then, on August 29, 1070, Archbishop Stigand was officially deposed in the presence of papal legates at the pseudo-council of Winchester.

This would appear to give two cut-off points for the death of English Orthodoxy: January 6, 1067 and August 29, 1070. (The last English Orthodox bishops were the brothers Ethelwine and Ethelric; the former solemnly anathematised the Pope before dying of hunger in prison, and the latter also died in prison "in voluntary poverty and a wealth of tears", his tomb being glorified by miracles.) But King Edward died before either of these dates...

**3. King Harold II.** Every English schoolboy has heard of the most important date in English history, 1066, even if hardly any knows its real significance. In that year, after a short reign of nine months in which King Harold II accomplished almost superhuman feats in defence of his country, he finally died at the battle of Hastings on October 14, at the hands of the Catholic usurper William of Normandy. His terribly mutilated body was then buried secretly in his family church at Bosham until its discovery on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1954. However, it was recognized to be his only last year.

Was King Harold Orthodox? If Edward the Confessor was Orthodox, as we have just argued, then it is difficult to deny the same to his successor. And the fact that he was formally anathematized by Pope Alexander II, who blessed William's invasion of England, only speaks in the English king's favour insofar as Alexander was certainly a heretic and an enemy of the truth. Also in his favour - although only indirectly - is the fact that his daughter Gytha fled, not to Rome, but to Orthodox Kiev, where in about 1070 she married the right-believing Great Prince Vladimir Monomakh, thereby

uniting the blood of the Orthodox autocrats of England and Russia. Nor did most of his followers who refused to accept the new political and ecclesiastical order in England flee to any western country, but to - Constantinople, where they entered the bodyguard of the emperor and were allowed to erect their own English Orthodox basilica.

Was King Harold a saint? This is much harder to establish, since he was glorified neither in the East nor in the West. However, if it can be established that he died as a martyr in defence of Orthodoxy, further proof of sanctity is not needed, according to the tradition of the Orthodox Church.

This question cannot be discussed further here; in any case, only a Synod of Bishops can decide such controversial cases. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that in the opinion of many historians, the transformation of English life that took place as a result of the battle of Hastings in 1066 was so great as to constitute an ecclesiastical, as well as a political and national revolution. In which case, King Harold II can truly be considered to have been "he that restrained" the Catholicisation of England, just as his descendant, Tsar Nicholas II, was "he that restrained" the Bolshevisation of Russia.

Finally, the parallel between England in 1066 and Russia in 1917 reminds us that official glorification of saints usually follows, rather than precedes, the unofficial veneration by the believing people. Just as the believing people of the West in the first generation after the schism instinctively knew who the real heroes of the faith and nation had been and venerated them, even when their new masters forbade it, in the same way the believing people of Russia venerated the new martyrs even while their new political and ecclesiastical leaders called them "political criminals". It therefore belongs to later generations, who come to the true faith in freedom from tyranny, to re-establish the veneration of the last champions of the faith before the (always temporary) triumph of heresy, remembering that "it is good to hide the secret of a king, but it is glorious to reveal and preach the works of God" (Tobit 12.7).



## APPENDIX 2. A SERVICE TO ALL SAINTS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

### Introduction

The writing of services for Western Orthodox Saints was first encouraged, in modern times, by the recently glorified St. John Maximovich, while he was archbishop of Western Europe for the Russian Church Abroad (see Blessed John the Wonderworker Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1987, pp. 99-102). This service was composed in response to a request by St. John's successor, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, when he was in London in October, 1976. It is modelled on the Service to All Saints of Russia.

The land of Britain produced Saints to the glory of God for an approximately 1000-year period, from the apostolic age to the Norman Conquest in 1066-70, when the traditions of British Orthodoxy were overthrown, the relics of many of the saints were destroyed, and Roman Catholicism was imposed on the British peoples at the edge of the sword. According to a prophecy of the nineteenth-century Greek Saint Arsenios of Paros, the Church in the British Isles will not prosper again until her native saints are again venerated. This service is therefore offered as a humble mite towards the rebuilding of the Church of Christ in the British land. It was blessed for use in the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church by the Holy Synod on September 3, 2000. At the same time the Feast of All Saints of Britain was set for the Third Sunday after Pentecost, as was announced in *Suzdal'skiye Eparkhial'niye Vedomosti*, N 10, April-November, 2000, p. 2:

“On September 3, 2000, in the city of Suzdal, in the Synodal House, there took place a session of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. The following were present: the President of the Hierarchical Synod, his Eminence Valentine, Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir; Chancellor of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, his Grace Theodore, Bishop of Borisovskoye and Sanino; Members of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church: his Grace Seraphim, Bishop of Sukhumi and Abkhazia; Bishop Anthony, Vicar of the Suzdal Diocese.

“The following questions were examined: the glorification of the holy women of Diveyevo and the veneration of Elder Theodosius of the Caucasus, and also the petition of the parish in Guildford (Great Britain) concerning the day of the memory of the English saints.

“The participants noted that in our age of growing apostasy, when amidst many believers who are under the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate, arguments continue in connection with the glorification of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia, the holy ascetics, both men and women, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been undeservedly forgotten by many Russian people. Among these are the holy women of Diveyevo, the beginning of whose veneration as saints was laid

already by St. Seraphim of Sarov. It was decided to prepare materials for the glorification in the ranks of the saints of the women of Diveyevo: the first abbess Nun Alexandra, Schema-Nun Martha, Nun [inokina] Helen, Nuns [monakhini] Capitolina, Eupraxia, Abbess Maria, Blessed Pelagia, Blessed Paraskeva, Blessed Natalia, and also to compose a service and akathist to the holy women of Diveyevo.

“It was also decided to establish a day for the commemoration of all the saints who have shone forth in the British Isles on the Third Sunday after Pentecost. The saints of the British Isles were glorified in the period before the Catholics separated from the Church. They were glorified both by many miracles and by the incorruption of holy relics... In the course of time heresy, having become enthroned in the British Isles, rooted the Orthodox teaching out of the consciousness of believers and strove to destroy the memory of the holy God-pleasers of ancient times.”

*March 20 / April 2, 2002.*

*St. Cuthbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, Patron of the English Orthodox Church.*

## Vespers

*At Lord, I have cried... four verses of the Sunday, then of the Saints:*

### **Tone 1:**

*Come, let us praise the Saints of Britain: holy Monks and Nuns, Hierarchs and Princes, Martyrs, Hieromartyrs and Wonderworkers, both named and unnamed. For by their deeds and words and various gifts, they became truly holy, and God has glorified even their tombs with miracles. And now as they stand in the presence of Christ Who glorified them, they pray earnestly for us who with love celebrate their radiant feast.*

### **Tone 2:**

*With beautiful chanting let us praise the divinely wise holy Hierarchs of Britain, bright adornment of the Church of Christ, crowns of the priesthood, models of piety, unfailing sources of divine healing, channels of spiritual gifts, rivers abundant in miracles gladdening the land of Britain with their flow, fervent helpers of pious Christians, for whose sake Christ subdued the uprisings of enemies and bestoweth on us great mercy.*

### **Tone 8:**

*Earth exulteth and heaven rejoiceth, O holy monastic Fathers, as we praise your labours and spiritual struggles, your moral courage and purity of mind, for ye were not defeated by the law of carnal nature. O holy company and divine army, ye are truly the strength of our land.*

### **Same tone:**

*Blessed, divinely-wise Princes of Britain, shining with Orthodox wisdom and radiant with the brightness of the virtues, ye illumine the gatherings of the faithful and dispel the darkness of the demons. Therefore we honour you as partakers of unfailing grace and untiring guardians of your inheritance.*

*Most blessed Martyrs of Christ, ye gave yourselves up as voluntary sacrifices, and have sanctified the land of Britain with your blood, and illumined the air by your death. And now ye live in the heavens in the unwaning Light, ever praying for us, O seers of God.*

*Ye enlightened the hearts of the faithful with your virtues, O righteous Martyr-Kings of Britain. For who will not be amazed on hearing of your infinite patience and humility, your meekness and gentleness to all, your mercifulness to those in sorrow and suffering, your speedy help to those in trouble, the calm haven you were to those at sea, and Godspeed to*

*travellers. Ye beautifully anticipated every need, O wonderful Saints. And now ye have been crowned with unfading crowns by the hand of the Almighty God. Pray that our souls may be saved.*

**Glory... Tone 5:**

*Rejoice, wonderworking holy Hierarchs of Britain. For ye are the first of all our intercessors with the Lord, leaders of Orthodoxy and guides to the true Faith. Rejoice, every place and land and city that has reared citizens for the heavenly Kingdom. These Saints have appeared as lights for our souls, they have shone spiritually with the glow of miracles and works and portents to the ends of the earth, and now they pray to Christ for the salvation of our souls.*

*Both now...*

**Dogmatikon** of the tone.

*O Joyful Light.*

**Prokeimenon:** *The Lord is King...*

Readings: (1) **Isaiah** 43.9-14; (2) **Wisdom** 3.1-9; (3) **Wisdom** 5.15-16.3.

**Litia. Tone 8:**

*Rejoice with us, O all ye choirs of Saints and Angels, and let us be spiritually united. Come and let us chant a song of thanksgiving to Christ our God. For behold, a countless host of our kinsmen who were well-pleasing to God standeth before the King of glory, and intercedeth in prayer for us. These are the beauty and pillars of the Orthodox Faith. These glorified the Church of God by their struggles and the shedding of their blood, by their teaching and by their works. These strengthened faith in Christ by signs and miracles. These shone from all parts of our land, and strengthened the Orthodox Faith there. And they emulated the Apostles and penetrated to other lands. Some adorned deserts*

*and cities with holy monasteries, and lived the angelic life. Many suffered insults and injuries from the sons of the world and experienced a cruel death. And many undertook other labours of every kind. And all pray to the Lord to deliver our country from adversity, having given us an example of patience and the suffering of hardship.*

**Glory... Both now... Same tone:**

*All the noetic orders rejoice with us, and, united as a spiritual choir, they see the Lady and Queen of all, who is glorified by the faithful under many names. The souls of the righteous also rejoice, seeing visions of her praying in the air, stretching out her all-pure hands and asking for peace for the world, for the conversion of the land of Britain, and for the*

salvation of our souls.

### **Apostikha as for Sunday.**

**Glory... Tone 4:**

*As we celebrate today the annual commemoration of our holy kinsmen, let us worthily bless them. For they truly passed through all the Lord's Beatitudes: When stripped and poor, they became rich in spirit; being meek, they inherited the land of the meek; they wept, and were comforted; they hungered for justice and righteousness, and were satisfied; they showed mercy, and obtained mercy; being pure in heart, they saw God as far as it is possible; having been peacemakers, they were granted Divine adoption; having been tortured and persecuted for the sake of righteousness, they now exult and rejoice in heaven; and they pray fervently to the Lord to have mercy on our land.*

**Both now... Tone 5:**

*Let us now blow the trumpet of song, let us chant in harmony to the defender of our land, our Queen, the Mother of God: Rejoice, thou who hast crowned our country from ancient times with thy favour and showered thy grace upon it! Therefore our British Church brightly celebrateth thy most precious Protection and the memory of thy miracles. Take not thy mercy from us also now, O Lady. Look down on our sorrows and afflictions and raise us up by thy mighty intercession.*

**Nunc Dimittis.**

*Holy God... Our Father...*

**Troparion to the Saints of Britain, tone 8:**

*As a beautiful fruit of the sowing of Thy salvation, the land of Britain offereth to Thee, O Lord, all the Saints that have shone in it. By their prayers keep the Church and our land in deep peace, through the Mother of God, O Most Merciful One.*

## Matins

*At the Lord is God, **Sunday Troparion** twice.*

*Glory... **Troparion to the Saints of Britain.***

*Both now... **Theotokion:***

*O Thou Who for our sakes wast born of a Virgin, and suffered crucifixion, O Good One, and despoiled death by death, and as God didst reveal the Resurrection: Despise not those whom Thou hast created with Thine own hand; show us Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One; accept the Theotokos who bore Thee and who intercedeth for us; and save Thy despairing people, O our Saviour.*

*After the **Polyelaion**, the **Magnification:***

*We magnify, we magnify you, O all ye Saints of the land of Britain, and we honour your holy memory, for ye pray for us to Christ our God.*

*Select Psalm: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that dwell upon the earth.*

*Then the **Evlogitaria** and the **Hypakoe** of the tone.*

*The **Kathisma** of the Saints, **tone 8:***

*Illumined by the lightning-flashes of the Saints, as if entering a beautiful Paradise, we enjoy torrents of delight. And seeing their wonderful courage, we emulate their virtues, crying to the Saviour: By their prayers, O God, make us sharers in Thy Kingdom.*

***Tone 1:***

*Like a bright sun, like a brilliant morning star, the precious memory of the Saints who shone in the land of Britain has dawned, enlightening all of us, and warming our hearts to imitate their life and emulate their zeal.*

*Glory... **Tone 8:***

*In memory of Thy Saints, O Lord, all British believers keep festival, the heavens are glad, and the ends of our land rejoice. By their prayers grant to our souls great mercy.*

*Both now... **Same tone:***

*O All-Merciful Lord, Who lookest down from the heights and receivest the poor, visit us who are bedevilled by sin, and by the prayers of the Mother of God and all the British Saints, grant to our souls Thy great mercy.*

**Anabathmoi** of the tone.

**Prokeimenon** of the tone. *Let every breath...*

**Sunday Gospel.**

**Psalm 50.** *Glory... Through the prayers of the Apostles... Both now... Through the prayers of the Theotokos... Jesus, having risen...*

**Canon to the Resurrection in the Sunday tone.**

**Canon to the Mother of God.**

**Canon to the Saints of Britain, tone 8:**

**Ode 1.**

**Irmos:** *Let us, O people, send up a song to our marvellous God, who delivered Israel from slavery, and let us chant a song of victory and cry: We chant unto Thee, our only Lord.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*Rejoice, O holy Apostles, who planted the staff of faith in our land! Rejoice, for the blood of your martyrdom has become the seed of Christian generations! Never cease to look with favour on us, your children. R.*

*Not fearing the tyrant's threats, thou wast scourged and beheaded for Christ's sake, O holy Protomartyr Alban. Together with Julius and Aaron and all the Martyrs of Britain, pray unceasingly for our souls. R.*

*O blessed Hieromartyr of Christ Augulus, together with your noble company, forget not thy fatherland: banish famine and oppression, and deliver all who hope in thee from civil war and all manner of sin. R.*

*Trained by the great Martin, thou didst emulate his missionary zeal in the Scottish land, O holy Bishop Ninian. And in Whithorn didst thou build the first stone church in Britain in his name, shining with the purity of the virtues. R.*

*Carried to Ireland by pirates in thy youth, thou didst return as her blessed Apostle, O Patrick, glorious fruit of the British Church. Pray that we who honour thee may be granted great mercy. R.*

*In Man wast thou the first to sow the Word, O holy Hierarch Germanus, bringing forth a rich harvest to Christ. With your fellow bishops Maughold and Dachonna, pray that we who honour thee may be granted great mercy.*

*Glory...*

*Thou wast a chronicler of the deeds of the martyrs, and chastiser of the sins of thy people, O wise Gildas. And as from sacred Glastonbury thou didst preach repentance, so now pray that we be granted remission of our sins.*

*Both now...*

*With the ranks of Angels and Archangels, O Lady, with the venerable and glorious Prophets, with the supreme Apostles and Martyrs, and with all the Saints, pray to God for us sinners who glorify thee in the land of Britain.*

**Ode 3.**

**Irmos:** *There is none holy as the Lord, and none righteous as our God. And all creation chants to Him: There is none righteous but Thee, O Lord.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*Abandoning thy princely father's home, thou didst seek a hermit's life in the Devonian land, O Nectan, blessed Martyr of Christ. And with thy holy brothers and sisters thou dost reign now with Christ in glory. R.*

*A rock of faith wast thou, O Petroc, rejoicing of the Cornish Church. With Constantine, King, Monk and Martyr, and with all the Saints of Cornwall, do thou intercede for our souls. R.*

*Thou didst traverse the western lands, amazing all by thy virtue, O holy Samson. Filled with the Holy Spirit, thou didst drive out evil spirits from the hearts of men, and dost intercede for all who honour thee. R.*

*Thou didst assemble a great company of Monks, O David, glorious archpastor of Menevia. And raising thy voice on high thou didst silence the ragings of Pelagius' followers. Together with the holy Bishops Dyfrig, Teilo and Deiniol, pray that we too may be delivered from all heresy. R.*



*From Ireland didst thou come, O dove of the cells, most glorious Columba, and all Scotland didst enlighten with thy miracles. And to England's Oswald didst thou appear after thy repose, promising glorious victory. With thy friend, the holy Hierarch Kentigern, do thou pray for our souls.*

*Glory...*

*O righteous Princes, Martyrs, Monks and Hierarchs of the Celtic lands! Ye did make the western desert a city, and by your wonderful lives ye have taught us to take the cross upon our shoulders and to follow Christ.*

*Both now...*

*Behold the time has come for the intervention of the Most Holy Mother of God, for scandals and temptations abound. Now is the time to offer our sighs to her, O brethren. So let us cry with all our heart: O Lady, our Queen, help thy people.*

**Kontakion to the Saints of Britain, tone 3:**

*Today the choir of Saints who pleased God in our land standeth before us in church and invisibly prayeth for us to God. With them the Angels glorify Him, and all the Saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them. And they all pray together for us to the eternal God.*

**Oikos:**

*Ye have proved to be fruitful and beautiful trees of the Paradise of Eden, O Saints, producing fragrant flowers of teachings and the fruit of good works, by which our souls are nourished and our spiritual hunger is allayed. Come, then, let us have recourse to their protection, and let us bless them as the joy and adornment of our land, and as an example and model for our lives, for they have received incorruptible crowns from the eternal God.*

**Kathisma, tone 4:**

*Christ the Sun of Righteousness sent you as rays to enlighten the land of Britain, O servants of God who have sprung from our stock. So enlighten my darkened soul by your divine prayers, O blessed Saints of God.*

*Glory... Both now... Same tone:*

*Let us run, O ye faithful, to the divine and healing Cross of God our Saviour, Who was pleased to ascend upon it and by His Blood redeem us from slavery to the enemy. Then let us thankfully cry to Him: Save our Hierarchs and spiritual leaders, and protect all Thy people by thy precious Cross, and save our souls, for Thou are the Lover of men.*

#### **Ode 4.**

**Irmos:** *The Prophet with divine insight saw Thee, O Word, desiring to become incarnate of the overshadowed mountain, the only Mother of God, and with awe he praised Thy power.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*Rejoice, O Augustine, great Gregory's most worthy son! Rejoice, Apostle of the English land! Rejoice, first Bishop of the Church of Christ at Canterbury, and our intercessor before the Throne of God! R.*

*Your sound hath gone out into all the land, destroying the worship of idols and planting the true Faith in the hearts of the English, O holy Hierarchs of Canterbury and York Laurence, Mellitus, Justus, Honorius, Deusdedit, Paulinus and John. R.*

*Armed with the power of the Cross, thou didst conquer Christ's enemies, O holy King Oswald. And remaining constant in prayer and almsgiving, thou didst merit a Martyr's crown. With the holy Martyr-Kings Edwin and Oswin, pray for our souls. R.*

*From Iona's blest isle didst thou come, O humble Aidan, and with the milk of thy teaching didst nourish the hearts of the English. With all the Saints of Lindisfarne, pray that we be granted remission of our sins. R.*

*Thou didst spurn a mortal bridegroom for the Immortal Bridegroom of our souls, O Eanswythe, first fruit of women's monasticism in the South. And now with your holy brothers Ethelbert and Ethelbriht, thou dost rejoice for ever in the heavens. R.*

*Of hell's dark abodes wast thou granted visions, and with fear didst thou confirm the faith of the people, O our holy Father Fursey. And with the holy Fathers Sebbi and Botulph and the righteous Bishop Felix, thou didst plant the monastic life in East Anglia's land.*

**Glory...**

*Thou wast raised from the dead, O Virgin Winefrid, and to all didst show the Way and the Life. Together with the holy Fathers Beuno, Illtyd, Cadoc, Seiriol and Cybi, and all the Saints of Wales, cease thou never to pray for our souls.*

**Both now...**

*O Virgin Mother of God, hope of Christians, grant us also thine ancient mercies which our fathers enjoyed, and protect and keep us from all evil.*

**Ode 5.**

**Irmos:** *Having redeemed us from the darkness of the passions as from deepest night, grant that my spirit may greet the dawn of the daylight of Thy commandments, I pray, O Christ.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*Strengthened in thine old age by the grace of God, from Tarsus didst thou come like a second Paul, O holy Hierarch Theodore. With thy companion, the holy Adrian, pray that Orthodox Christians may be preserved in unity. R.*

*Even after thy sacred repose, thine incorrupt body gushed forth healings for the faithful, O glorious Cuthbert. For thou wast great in asceticism and a faithful shepherd of thy flock, O bright light and intercessor for our land. R.*

*Like a pillar of fire thou didst shine in fen-girt Ely, O royal Virgin Etheldreda, wherefore thy body dost remain incorrupt even till now. With the holy priest Huna and thy holy sisters Sexburga, Withburga and Ermenhilda, pray for us all. R.*

*O holy Abbesses Hilda, Ebba, Osith, Ethelburga and Werburga, having acquired abstinence and humility, wisdom, faith and perfect love, ye attained the Kingdom immovable. R.*

*A peacemaker wast thou, and glorious peace didst thou obtain from the King of Peace, O Erkenwald, great London's boast and holy hierarch. With your fellow Hierarchs Chad and Cedd, do thou intercede for our souls.*

**Glory...**

*Thy tears in the wilderness brought forth fruit an hundredfold, O holy Father Guthlac, and by the weapon of thy prayers thou didst conquer demons and receive from heaven the grace to heal the diseases of those who honour thee. With your holy sister Pega, pray for our souls.*

**Both now...**

*The choir of the holy ones and the souls of all the faithful bless thee, O most pure one, for above mind and understanding thou didst give birth to the Divine Word. And now again, O Lady and Queen, be a protection and defence for the land of Britain, and save us from all attacks of our enemies.*

**Ode 6.**

**Irmos:** *Receive me, O Lover of men, oppressed by many falls. And save me as I fall down before Thy compassion like the Prophet, O Lord.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*O holy Mildred, coming from France thou didst impress thy seal on Thanet's shore, and wast taken up as a seal on the heart of the heavenly King. With thy holy sisters Mildburga and Mildgytha, pray for our souls. R.*

*Thou wast adorned with beauty of speech, O venerable Bede of Jarrow, for thou didst appear as a divinely writing scribe. As thou didst glorify the English Saints by thy words, so now has the Lord glorified thee. With thy holy Fathers Benedict and Ceolfrid, intercede for us now. R.*

*Thou didst contend well for the sacred canons, and didst enlighten the pagan darkness of Sussex, O Wilfrid. Wherefore, with the holy Hierarchs Egwin and Aldhelm, Acca and Alcmund, we all honour thee. R.*

*To the Dutch thirsting from the drought of polytheism thou didst bring the Living Water to drink, O divinely wise Willibrord-Clement. Pray that to us may be given the sweet wine of contrition. R.*

*Having destroyed the temples of the idols, thou didst bring a multitude to the Faith of Christ, O Boniface, Enlightener of Germany. Wherefore with the holy Eoban and a company of thy disciples, thou wast counted worthy of a Martyr's crown. R.*

*Harkening to the cry of your benighted kinsmen, ye did abandon all and go to the lands beyond the sea, O holy siblings Willibald, Wunebald and Walburga. Wherefore with the divine Leoba and Tecla, ye now rejoice in the heavens.*

**Glory...**

*From Ireland didst thou come, O holy Hierarch Fergus, bringing the grace of the Divine Word to the Scots. And with the righteous Fathers Adomnan, Drostan, Fillan and Maelrubba, thou didst bring forth a rich harvest of souls.*

**Both now...**

*O most holy Virgin, fervent intercessor for those who have recourse to thee and hope of those who trust in thee, see the oppression of thy people and show us a sign of thy mercy, O most pure one.*

**Kontakion for the Sunday.**

**Ode 7.**

**Irmos:** *On the plain of Deira, the tyrant once placed a furnace to punish the God-bearers, in which the three children praised the One God, crying: O God of our Fathers, blessed art Thou.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*Wearing the purple of your own blood, ye exchanged your sceptres for the Cross, O holy Passion-Bearers Ethelbert, Kenelm and Wistan. Wherefore the miracles at your tombs proclaim your innocence. R.*

*When the savage Northmen appeared off Britain's shores, ye offered yourselves as sweet-smelling sacrifices to Christ, O holy Hieromartyrs Adrian and Stalbrand. With Blaithmaic of Iona and all the Martyrs of the Viking yoke, pray for our souls. R.*

*In Winchester's royal city thou didst shine with the grace of humility, O holy Hierarch Swithun. Wherefore the Lord did exalt thee on the summit of high miracles many years after thy repose. R.*

*With the great Swithun ye appeared in glory, O holy Hierarchs Birinus and Birnstan. Wherefore the land of Wessex doth ever enjoy your protection. R.*

*Although the heathen transfixed thee with arrows, thou didst not renounce sweet Jesus, O King among Martyrs Edmund. Wherefore thy tongue did still speak after thy repose, and thy body was resplendent with the grace of incorruption. R.*

*On witnessing thy brother's heavenly glory, thou didst renounce the glory of the world, O blessed Edwold, and by thine ascetic struggles in the wilderness thou didst attain the Kingdom on high. Wherefore with the holy hermit Cuthmann, do thou intercede for our souls.*

**Glory...**

*In England's darkest hour thou didst reprove the righteous King Alfred and comfort him with thy sage counsel, O great among Priests Neot. And with the holy Grimbald, thou didst guide him in the restoration of Orthodoxy in our land, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.*

**Both now...**

*Thou art the boast of Christians, O Lady, thou art a weapon against our enemies and a wall for those who have recourse to thee, O Queen. Let not thine enemies who praise not thee nor thy Son, O Mother of God, rise up against thy people. Do thou conquer them and save our souls.*

## Ode 8.

**Irmos:** *Victors by Thy grace over tyrant and flame, the youths clung fast to Thy commandments and cried: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and praise and exalt Him above all to all ages.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*As emulators of the apostles in labours and vigilance, ye have presided over the people of the Church, O holy Hierarchs Alphege and Oda. Wherefore we magnify you in psalms and hymns. R.*

*Counting all the splendour of thy royal inheritance as dung, thou didst press forward to the mark of a heavenly calling, O Virgin Edburga, perfect exemplar of the monastic life. R.*

*Having first mortified thy flesh by abstinence and labours, and having assembled a multitude of monks by thy teaching, thou hast appeared as a divine and all-sacred intercessor before the Trinity, O holy Hierarch Dunstan, rock of Orthodoxy. R.*

*Being obedient to thy spiritual father Dunstan, thou didst win the prize of obedience in an innocent death, O holy Passion-Bearer King Edward. Wherefore thy shrine dost gush forth miracles of healing. R.*

*Ever guarding thyself with the sign of the Cross and pierced by Divine love, thou, O sacred Virgin Edith, didst wound with the arrows of abstinence him that wounded Eve. With your holy grandmother Elgiva and the Virgins Wulfhilda and Ethelfleda, pray for our souls. R.*

*Taking up prayer as a sword and shield, thou didst vanquish the pagan darkness, O Lide, blessed ascetic of the Scilly isles. And Norway's King Olaf didst thou convert by thy wisdom.*

## Glory...

*Like unto Moses, the holy Hierarchs Ethelwold, Oswald, Yvo and Wulsin have ascended the cloudy mountain of passionlessness and have obtained the noetic law of grace, crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all to all ages.*

## Both now...

*Grant us help by thy prayers, O all-holy Mother of God. For troubles come upon us, sorrows multiply, and our enemies are arming themselves. But intercede for us and deliver us, O most pure one. Lay low the arrogance of our enemies and grant us victory, that all who*

*do evil to thy servants may be put to shame.*

## **Magnificat.**

### **Ode 9.**

**Irmos:** *O Mother of God, perfection of virginity, thou exaltest with glorious chants the feasts that celebrate thy graces. And now even more on this day in thy virginal memory thou adornest with the mystic enlightenment of thy Word those who magnify thee.*

**Refrain:** *O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to God for us!*

*For thy flock and country didst thou lay down thy life, O holy Hieromartyr Alphege. Wherefore from the Chief Shepherd didst thou worthily receive the highest accolade. As thou now rejoicest in the heavens, pray that our souls may be saved. R.*

*From sacred Glastonbury didst thou set out, O holy Hierarch Sigfrid, and didst make the savage Swedes gentle lambs of Christ by thy teaching. With the Martyr Ulfrid and thy martyred nephews, pray for our souls. R.*

*Having been bound and tortured, thou didst surrender thy pure soul into the hands of thy Creator, O holy Prince Alfred. Wherefore thy tomb was illumined by the grace of miracles. R.*

*As darkness descended upon the West, thou didst shine with the light of wisdom, O chaste King Edward, warning thy people of the wrath to come. Wherefore God preserved thy body in incorruption. R.*

*O holy Martyrs of the Latin yoke, ye did not fear the false pope's threats, nor bow your necks to the tyrant's rule. Pray that we ever remain steadfast in the Orthodox Faith. R.*

*O great Fathers and Mothers, named and unnamed, known and unknown, who have attained the heavenly Zion and have received great glory from God, ask for comfort and strength for us who are in trouble, raise up our fallen country, and receive from us as our gift this chant of thanksgiving.*

*Glory to Thee, O God, Most Holy Trinity!*

*O Most Holy Trinity, accept all the Saints who have pleased Thee in the land of Britain, receiving them as first-fruits and choice incense. And by their prayers keep our land from all harm.*

*Both now...*

*O Virgin, full of grace, the icons of whose countenance have enriched our cities and villages with signs of thy favour and goodwill, accept our thanksgiving, and deliver our homeland from all violent adversity. For we all magnify thee as a mighty protection of all Orthodox Christians.*

### **Exapostilarion for the Sunday.**

*Glory... Then of the Saints:*

*Let us praise and extol in chants the unwaning lights of the land of Britain, the mystics and initiates of the Divine Word. And let us glorify Christ Who enlightened and loved them, and Who gave them as our helpers in trouble.*

*Both now...*

### **Theotokion of the Sunday.**

*For the Praises, four of the Sunday, and four of the Saints,*

#### **Tone 1:**

*Thou didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit, O Lord, into the intelligent soul of Ethelbert, to know Thee, the One God in Trinity. Then, having enlightened the people entrusted to him, Thou didst bring them by faith into Thy Church: O our Redeemer, glory to Thee!*

#### **Tone 2:**

*Let us who have gathered together bless the lights of the land of Britain, the glorious Martyrs and holy Hierarchs, Monks and Righteous, and let us cry out to them: O all ye Saints of Britain, pray to Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.*

**Verse:** *The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them.*

*O holy Fathers, ye were spiritual flowers of the land of Britain, our praise and strength and a calm haven for all. For of you our land boasteth, having acquired you as an inexhaustible treasure. And now though your bodily tongues are silent, yet miracles bear witness to the Lord Who glorified you. Pray to Him to grant our souls His great mercy.*

**Verse:** *Blessed are all they that fear Thee, O Lord, and walk in Thy ways.*



#### **Tone 4:**

*Having heard the call of the Gospel, and burning with apostolic zeal, ye rushed to instruct the unbelieving pagans, O divinely blessed hierarchs Patrick, Samson, Willibrord, Boniface and Sigfrid, pioneers of the enlightenment of the lands beyond the sea. Therefore with all the rest who laboured in the Gospel of Christ, ye are rightly called blessed.*

*Glory... **Eothinon.** Both now...*

*Most blessed art thou...*

#### **Great Doxology**

#### *Liturgy*

**After the Entry, Troparia of the Sunday and of the Saints, Kontakion of the Sunday.**

*Glory... **Kontakion of the Saints.***

*Both now... O unfailing intercessor of Christians.*

**Prokeimenon of the Sunday, and of the Saints:** Tone 7: *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints.*

**Apostle of the Sunday and of the Saints:** Hebrews 11.33-12.2: *Brethren, all the Saints by faith...*

**Gospel of the Sunday and of the Saints:** Matthew 4.25-5.12.

**Communion hymn:** *Praise the Lord... and of the Saints: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.*

### APPENDIX 3. SERMON IN PRAISE OF THE BRITISH SAINTS

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Congratulations, dear brothers and sisters, on our new feast of all Saints of the British Isles! Our numbers are relatively few, and yet our church today is full as at no other time. For, as we sang in the kontakion of the feast: *Today the choir of the Saints who pleased God in our land standeth before us in church and invisibly prayeth to God for us.* As we heard in the litany that we chanted yesterday, there are many hundreds of such saints whom we know by name. And many hundreds more whose names are known to God alone.

Let me say a few words about how this feast came into being.

Holy Orthodoxy came to our land at the time of the holy apostles: St. Peter, according to Greek tradition, was in England when he received the command from an angel to go to Rome to suffer for the faith; St. Simon the Zealot preached in England before being martyred in the Caucasus; and Righteous Joseph of Arimathaea with twelve companions founded the first church dedicated to the Mother of God at Glastonbury.

In the Roman period, the Church developed relatively slowly in Britain. However, by the early fourth century there was a large basilica in London, and we already had our first martyrs – St. Alban, protomartyr of Britain, SS. Julius and Aaron of Caerleon in Wales, and St. Augulus, bishop of Augusta (probably London). Moreover, it was from Roman Britain that Christian statehood took its origin, when St. Constantine was proclaimed emperor by the Roman legions in York in 306, exactly 1700 years ago.

When the Roman legions left Britain in 410, the Church entered a very difficult period, with invasions of barbarians from the north, the east and the north-west. Many British Christians fled to the west, where “the last of the Romans”, Ambrosius Aurelianus, and his successor, the famous King Arthur, fought a stubborn rearguard action against the pagan Saxons. It was in the West that we see the flourishing of the Celtic Church, which in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries produced so many of our most famous monastic and missionary saints: Patrick and David, Nectan, Samson and Columba.

Meanwhile, however, not wishing that the Angles and Saxons of Eastern Britain should perish, the Lord enlightened the heart of St. Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, to send a missionary expedition to “the land of the Angels”. He wished to lead this expedition himself, but was forced in the end to send St. Augustine, first archbishop of Canterbury. By Christmas, 597, he and his band of forty monks, preceded by an icon of the Lord, had converted many thousands, including King Ethelbert of Kent, to the Orthodox Faith.

With the help of foreign missionaries from Ireland, France, Italy, Greece and North Africa, the Anglo-Saxons were soon producing great saints of their own: Cuthbert, Bede, Chad, Cedd, Guthlac, Aldhelm, Egwin, Wilfrid, Eanswythe, Mildred, Etheldreda and many others. And in the eighth century, a great wave of English missionaries led by St. Boniface, Archbishop of Mainz, undertook the conversion of their kinsfolk in Holland and Germany. The invasion of the Vikings in the ninth century produced a great number of martyrs and the near-extinction of Anglo-Saxon Christian civilization. But under King Alfred the Great and his successors, the Church recovered all the ground she had lost to the pagans. By the time of King Edgar the Peaceable (+975) and St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (+988), the English Orthodox kingdom embraced Saxons, Celts and Danes in a multi-ethnic state that was a model of what a Christian kingdom can and should be.

However, the murder of St. Edward the Martyr in 979 signaled the beginning of the end of English Orthodoxy: a second wave of Viking invasions led to the conquest of the kingdom by the Danish King Canute in 1016. Although he and much of his Scandinavian empire embraced English Christianity, and although King Edward the Confessor restored the native English dynasty in 1042, corruption from within and the pressure of the now-heretical Roman papacy from without was undermining the foundations of English piety. On October 14, 1066 – the most tragic day in English history – the last English Orthodox king, Harold II Godwinson, was killed at Hastings by Duke William “the Bastard” of Normandy, who had been blessed to conquer “schismatic” England by Pope Alexander II. During the next four years English Orthodoxy was destroyed by fire and sword: all the bishops were removed and replaced by French papists, the cathedrals were destroyed to make way for Norman ones, the relics of the English saints were abused, and perhaps 20% of the population was killed. The cream of the aristocracy fled to Constantinople and Kiev, where the daughter of King Harold married Great Prince Vladimir Monomakh of Kiev.

And so the thousand-year history of English Orthodoxy came to an end. The next thousand years were to see the rise of England to world power and the most extensive empire the world has ever seen. But “what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul?” England had lost her soul, her Orthodox faith. And now, at the beginning of the third millennium of Christian history, she is morally and spiritually as low as she has ever been.

An illustration of how far we are from the traditions of our ancestors can be found in today’s newspapers, where it is reported that the Synod of the Anglican Church has decided to “demote” St. George from his status as patron saint of England because his existence is supposedly doubtful. Some want to make St. Alban our patron saint instead. While St. Alban is a most worthy candidate, the Anglicans appear to have forgotten that already in 758 Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury and his Synod appointed three patrons of the English Church and land: Saints Augustine of

Canterbury, Cuthbert of Lindisfarne and Boniface of Mainz...

Nevertheless, in the twentieth century there was the beginning of a return of Orthodoxy to the English land. In 1922 the diocese of Thyateira and Great Britain was founded under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And a few years later Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) handed the archpastoral staff to the Russian Bishop Nicholas of London (+1932).

After the Second World War Archbishop John (Maximovich) of Western Europe appointed Bishop Nikodem to look after the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, and himself restored St. Alban and St. Patrick to the calendar of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Renowned missionary that he was, Archbishop John (who was canonized in 1994) knew that the renewal of the veneration of the Western Saints was a vital first step to the renewal of Orthodoxy in the western lands. And in September, 2000, following a petition of our English Orthodox parish, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church in Suzdal blessed the creation of a new Feast of the Saints of the British Isles on the Third Sunday after Pentecost, together with the service to the saints that we used today.

Why is the restoration of the veneration of the British Saints so important for us?

The first reason is that the British saints, having been appointed by God to intercede for their native land, are an indispensable source of strength and grace. What builder would set about building a house while ignoring the fact that its foundations have already been laid, solid and true, in the only place fitting for construction? And if the Church as a whole is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2.20), the Church in the British Isles has already been built upon the foundation of her apostles and other saints. Of course, the saints intercede for us even when we do not ask for their prayers. But by honouring them and asking for their prayers in a conscious, reverend and ardent manner, as we have today, we attract the waters of salvation to our parched land and further our personal salvation and regeneration.

Secondly, our faithfulness to the British saints is a criterion of the correctness of our struggle in Orthodoxy. The British saints warred against paganism, Arianism, Pelagianism, Monothelism, Catholicism and other heresies; and the Russian missionary bishops who have worked in Britain in our time have warred against the contemporary heresies of Protestantism, Ecumenism and Sergianism. By venerating them, we affirm their faith and protect ourselves against falling into the heresies they condemned.

Thirdly, by venerating the saints of our native land we give expression to an ecclesiastical patriotism which is not only not nationalistic in a pejorative sense, but actually reinforces the unity of the Church of Christ throughout the world and in all nations. For the true object of worship of all the saints is the same: God, Who "is

wondrous in His saints” of all nations, sanctifying them all with the same Holy Spirit. And so by venerating the saints of our native land we come closer to understanding and loving the saints of other lands; in venerating them we come closer to the God Who unites all in one Body and one worship, in the one “Church of the saints” (Psalm 149.1) and in the one “hymn of all His saints” (Psalm 148.14), so that we are now “no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2.19).

Therefore let us be unstinting in our praise of the British saints, and untiring in our efforts to imitate their faith and love of God, their single-minded devotion to “the one thing necessary”, “the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6.33). Then we will have good hope of joining them in the choir of all the inhabitants of heaven, in that unity-in-diversity which God the Holy Spirit created when He descended in tongues of fire on the apostles at Pentecost. Then the prayer of the Great High Priest will be one step closer to fulfilment: “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17.21).

*Third Sunday After Pentecost, 2006.  
Feast of All Saints of the British Isles.*