

'Man is a slave,' again says Berdyaev, 'because freedom is difficult, whereas slavery is easy.'

But Berdyaev is not logician enough to see that the absolute pacifism he advocates is not only no remedy, but actually perpetuates the slavery he condemns. Pacifism, at least in theory, is nothing more than a quietistic acceptance. The 'Peace of Christ,' on the other hand, the true Christian pacifism, is a perpetual warfare; a fight against the conditions which make for mass hypnosis, and so make modern war possible. Berdyaev is right when he says: 'Human societies can perish as a result of a militarist psychology, of the endless piling up of armaments, of the will to war, and of the fear of war. It is in reality an atmosphere of increasing madness.' But he is wrong in thinking that we can escape the consequences of allowing ourselves to become mad.

There is, then, a Christian pacifism, but it is more fundamental than the acceptance of the injustice of totalitarianism. It is the waging of war against the power of monopoly and the encroachment of State bureaucracy. It is the defending of the home and the family unit against State planning. We cannot be pacifist about modern war, yet accept the conditions of modern 'peace.' Are we Christian enough to combat vigorously to secure the 'Peace of Christ' in social life, which only can make modern war impermissible because impracticable?

C. J. WOOLLEN.

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## W E L S H S A I N T S <sup>1</sup>

IN a real sense the history of the Church is the history of its saints. For the Church is a living society, and its life is made most manifest through those of its members who are honoured for the integrity of their faith and the holiness of their lives—the saints. If, then, as Leo XIII. said in a famous utterance, the Church has nothing to fear from a truly objective investigation of its history, the lives of

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<sup>1</sup> *St. Illut*, by Canon Doble, D.D. (Welsh University Press; 5s.); *St. Teilo*, (2s. 6d.), *St. Dubritius* (1s. 6d.), *St. Paul of Léon* (2s. 6d.), *St. Oudoceus* (1s.); all by Canon Doble, and obtainable from him at Wendron Vicarage, Cornwall.

its saints can in no way be dimmed by a scientific study of their sources.

But there is a difference. Saints are persons, and persons are loved; round their memory there develops something deeper than documents. The *acta* of popes and councils are generally available for the study of scholars; their appraisal, while demanding an understanding of the circumstances and persons that gave them expression, is primarily a matter of the authenticity of texts, the chronology of events. In the case of the beatification and canonisation of saints in the modern period, indeed, the Roman decrees, arrived at after a scrupulous examination of evidence, provide an exact account of the reasons for public veneration of these holy ones of the Church. Yet even here there are innumerable factors, reflected in popular devotion, which can scarcely be looked for in a legal document. But in the earlier ages of the history of the Church, and especially in its remoter provinces, the cultus of the saints necessarily lacked that careful regulation which nowadays is taken for granted.

While, therefore, the study of what documents remain is of vital importance in hagiography, it is by no means the whole matter. Textual criticism of itself can never restore the persons of the saints, who are venerated for what they were on earth and not for what stray scribes may have said they were. Père Delehaye, the most distinguished of recent Bollandists (and the Bollandists have for over three hundred years enriched the Church with their incomparable scholarship in this field) has some relevant words here. 'It is a great mistake,' he writes<sup>2</sup> 'and one that is very widespread, to suppose that when the "life" of a saint is said to be legendary then all is lost and the personality of the hero is compromised at the same time. In dealing with saints we are not concerned with a Turnus or a Dido. The saints have a visible existence apart from texts. Their memory is perpetuated and lives in the very life of the Church, and there is good reason why the Bollandists, apart from the *acta* of the saints, should gather together with such care those facts which constitute what they call the posthumous glory of the saints.'

Never, perhaps, in the history of the Church has there been such a remarkable flowering of religion as occurred in Britain with the development of the monastic movement of the fifth and sixth centuries. The origins of the movement remain obscure, and the extent of the influence of Eastern monasticism and of the work of such figures in the west as St. Martin of Tours and St. Ninian can only be a matter for conjecture. The fact remains that in Wales we are

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Les Légendes Hagiographiques*, by Père Delehaye. (Bruxelles; 1927.)

confronted with a veritable litany of saints—Samson, Illtud, David, Teilo, Dyfrig (Dubricius), Cadog, Cadfan, Beuno. Nor are these all; twenty thousand saints were said to be buried in Bardsey Island alone, and any gazetteer of Wales with its innumerable *Llans* continues the story. The difficulties involved in any reconstruction of the lives of even the most renowned of these saints are manifold. Reliable documents are few; indeed, apart from the *Vita prima* of Samson written about sixty years after the saint's death (c.565), the 'lives' that have come down to us date mostly from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and are heavily coloured with the (Norman) prejudices of their authors. Hence the work of a modern biographer must go far beyond an examination of the extant *vitae*.

It is the special excellence of Canon Doble's studies that they embrace much material, archaeological and linguistic, which enriches the conventionalised portraits of the Norman scribes. Applying the methods which he has used with such success in his series of nearly fifty monographs on Cornish saints, he discusses their sources and corrects their errors in the light of other evidence, and adds an analysis of the church dedications and of the toponymy of the districts connected with the saints.

St. Illtud (whom Canon Doble calls 'Iltut,' perhaps because that is the radical form of all the variants; the Latin is *Illutus*) provides a good instance of the difficulties that confront the historian. There are references to Illtud in the *Vita Samsonis*: he is an illustrious teacher, ordained by St. Germanus, and his monastery (probably at Llantwit<sup>3</sup>) is the breeding-ground for the missionary-monastic movement in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. Illtud figures too in the late ninth century *Vita Pauli Aureliani* of Wrmonoc. But it is not till well into the twelfth century that the *Vita Iltuti* appears, the work of a cleric of Llantwit Major (where a collegiate church had succeeded the monastery founded by Illtud). Based on local—and mostly late—traditions of the saint, and containing obvious plagiarisms from similar compilations, this *vita* is, as Canon Doble says, 'an elaborate and pretentious literary effort, disfigured by glaring faults of composition.'

If such a work were the sole source of our knowledge of the Illtud whom the Church honours, we should be left with a stereotyped portrait rather like that of an Academy millionaire—made to please but utterly failing to convince. Fortunately that is not all. Apart from the testimony of topography and local tradition, revealing the

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<sup>3</sup> Canon Doble rejects any connection between Illtud and Caldey. In this he differs, and probably rightly, from Jacques Chevalier and Dom Gougaud.

extent of his cultus and its fervour (there are numerous dedications to Illtud in Brittany, apart from Wales), there is the liturgical reality.

The saints live on in the corporate life of the Church they adorn. And here Père Delehaye's words may be remembered. The inaccuracies of a *vita* such as that of Illtud do not destroy the personality of the saint. Indeed those very inaccuracies have their value. The scholarly integrity of a historian may perhaps blind him to the positive value of elements in themselves of dubious factual worth. The aggregation of estimable virtues, of 'standard' miracles—these were, in the mind of the writer, scarcely inventions. Such saints as Illtud and Teilo were seen as archetypes of a concept of holiness; the biographer felt bound to present them conventionally, and in the process they became something more—though in a vital sense something less—than they really were.

The task of re-establishing the personality of the saints is, then, a composite one. Its point of departure is the living reality of the saint, the power of his intercession; his place in the love and veneration of the faithful. This does not of course preclude the minutest investigation of sources, but it does inevitably orientate the enquiry away from a merely antiquarian outlook. In the case of the Welsh saints, the general history of the period must be carefully understood, for the saints are national figures and around their names has grown a tradition which makes any distinction between sacred and secular impossible. Here the work of the Revd. A. W. Wade-Evans, especially in such books as his *Welsh Christian Origins*, has been of cardinal importance. His gradual unravelling of the tangled threads of Welsh history, and especially the host of misunderstandings that have followed of the conventional interpretation of the writings of St. Gildas, is of great value in showing the saints as the true inheritors of a Roman culture as well as of the Roman faith. Again, there is important literary evidence, such as the Welsh identification of Illtud with one of King Arthur's knights, perhaps with Galahad. Once more this may be false in fact, but it is none the less revealing; indeed the whole Arthurian cycle forms an integral part of that vast background against which the saints must be properly seen.

Canon Doble's studies leave one with a strong impression of the homogeneity of the early Welsh saints. They are truly a school of saints, all inspired by the same intense ascetic zeal allied to missionary fervour, achieving—as it would seem—a balance between contemplative retirement and apostolic action which, later, St. Thomas was to call the most perfect form of living. Their names remain in re-

mote villages throughout Wales and Brittany, and sometimes even further afield (for has not Mr. Wade-Evans made an excellent case to show that the mysterious St. Aldate of Oxford is none other than Illtud, the *Illtud farchog* of Welsh tradition?). And as the careful work of rediscovery proceeds they emerge, with indeed a detail here or there needing modification, but fundamentally unscathed.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

MAN, SOCIETY AND RELIGION. AN ESSAY IN BRIDGE-BUILDING. By W. Russell Brain, D.M., F.R.C.P. Swarthmore Lecture, 1944. (Allen & Unwin; 2s. 6d.)

The problem of the relation of man to society presents itself more urgently, and on a vaster scale, to-day than ever before; the evolution of individualism has involved a weakening 'absolutely as well as relatively' of communal consciousness, and recent attempts to revive the latter have resulted only in the submergence of personality; the problem is to synthesize the growth of personality with that sense of community which is a biological and psychological as well as a religious necessity. This little book tackles the problem from the point of view of one who is both a Quaker and a psychologist; and the result, even though it seems to hint at solutions rather than state them fully, is an extremely interesting one. For Quakerism the sense of membership one of another is fundamental; the author's belief is that 'the same principles which Paul set out as governing human relationships within the Church must be valid for all human relationships, and that they can only spread from within the Church outwards.' From this point of view he discusses the nature of altruism, the meaning of social security, the organization of international order, and the value of the Quaker doctrine of the inner light as forming a bridge between the spirit of christianity and the spirit of our times. There are valuable sidelights on such subjects as education and corporate worship; and of the book as a whole it may be said that though there are necessarily many things with which the catholic reader will not agree, there are few pages on which he will not find useful material for his own analysis of the problem discussed. Two special criticisms suggest themselves: it is odd to find Giordano Bruno, with his conception of an 'ever-self-effectuating God,' (i.e. not God at all), largely identified with the religion of Quakerism; and it is equally odd to read that 'catholicism has not recognised the need to take into spiritual account any developments of thought about the nature of the universe'—a view which perhaps accounts for the apparent equation of belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible with fundamentalism.

GERALD VANN, O.P.