

THE INN OF THE MARGERIDE

A personal reflection

I stepped out of my cottage the other night to find the moon, now past its full, illumining the valley. The waters of the pond were beginning to freeze and a frost was descending. It put me in mind of an essay Hilaire Belloc had written a hundred years ago about his crossing, one frozen night in autumn, of the Margeride in France's *Massif Central*.

Descending the road from the summit in the dark he had come upon an inn.

The waters of the marshy plain had gathered. They were no longer frozen, and a little brook ran by. As I waited there, hesitating, my fatigue came upon me, and I knocked at their great door. They opened, and light poured upon the road, and the noise of peasants talking loudly, and the roaring welcome of a fire. In this way I ended my crossing of these sombre and unrecorded hills.

I that had lost count of hours and of heights in the glamour of the midnight and of the huge abandoned places of my climb, stepped now into a hall where the centuries also mingled and lost their order...¹

He went on to reflect, as was his wont, on the evidence he found there of the endurance of the good things of men. I was struck as I re-read the text, knowing what had passed in the century that had intervened, by these closing paragraphs.

Though I was here on the very roof and centre of the western land, I heard the surge of the inner and the roll of the outer sea; the foam broke against the Hebrides, and made a white margin to the cliffs of Holy Ireland. The tide poured up beyond our islands to the darkness in the north. I saw the German towns, and Lombardy, and the light on Rome. And the great landscape I saw from the summit to which I was exalted was not of today only, but also of yesterday, and perhaps of tomorrow.

Our Europe cannot perish. Her religion – which is also mine – has in it those victorious energies of defence which neither merchants nor philosophers can understand, and which are yet the prime condition of establishment. Europe, though she must always repel attacks from within and from without, is always secure ; the soul of her is a certain spirit, at once reasonable and chivalric. And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

She will not dissolve by expansion, nor be broken by internal strains. She will not suffer that loss of unity which would be for all her members death, and for her history and meaning and self an utter oblivion. She will certainly remain...

Belloc was not blind to the evils in the world or of the hell to which they could lead. He was to live through—and to lose sons in—the two world wars that followed. It is worthy of note, incidentally, that the sons and grandsons, children and grandchildren, of those men of the Margeride were to be a stronghold of resistance against German savagery during the Second World War.

Belloc was much influenced in his youth by the Catholic prelate who had brought his mother into the faith, Dr Manning, a convert from Anglicanism, Archbishop of Westminster from 1865 and elevated to the office of Cardinal-Priest ten years later. Manning had been a strong promoter (against the

¹ The Inn of the Margeride, *Hills and the Sea*, London, 1906

opposition *inter alios* of Cardinal Newman) of the Vatican Council's definitive teaching on the conditions essential to papal infallibility.² In 1878 Manning's contemporary, Gioacchino Pecci, Archbishop of Perugia, succeeded Pius IX as Pope Leo XIII. He was to condemn the evils of Freemasonry, isolate the heresy peculiar to Catholics of the new world infected by errors of the French Revolution, *Americanism*, set forth eloquently the elements essential to human liberty, and teach on numerous related questions with clarity, economy and authority.³ Belloc was to lament in *The Path to Rome* his failure to gain an audience with Leo whom he described as the greatest pope in 500 years. The Pope had foreseen in a vision in 1884, well-documented, the devastation that would befall the Catholic Church in the century that lay ahead. And what devastation there has been !

Sixty years later bishops of the Church Belloc had loved and defended so assiduously, aided and abetted by successive popes, indulged the Protestant folly and allowed Masonic protocols to compromise Catholic principle. Could any faithful Catholic have foreseen how they would relegate to obscurity Leo XIII's profound and authoritative teachings and—much worse!—by selective quotation fraudulently contrive the great Pope's support for the falsities they embraced ? That is what they did.

The scandals of failure in vocations of priest and religious that followed the close of Vatican II were the chief instruments of the devastation. *Modernism—atheism* by another name—flourished among those who remained, poisoning and rendering them effete, apt instruments for weakening the faith of those with whom they came in contact. The perverse among them went on to work moral harm as well among their charges to the great scandal of believer and unbeliever alike, ravaging the confidence of those otherwise inclined to embrace the Catholic faith.

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The world is going to hell in a handcart and those chiefly responsible for its acceleration down the Gadarene slope are those appointed to save it from perdition, the bishops of the Catholic Church. The vast majority want to live comfortably with the secular world. They will not use their pulpits to contradict publicly the false teachings that surround them. Hardly one of them realises why it is that he wears red.

What price, then, that Europe will not perish ? Belloc was too sound a thinker not to allow the possibility. *[T]he great landscape... was not of today only, but also of yesterday, and perhaps of tomorrow.* Note the 'perhaps'. He could not have foreseen the insidious way the poison of secularism would be introduced into the minds even of those closest to the soil (and common sense) via electronic media. 'Holy Ireland' has effectively been lost—thirty years ago in truth, though the pudding has only now come to the proof. Having resisted Protestantism for more than four centuries, the Irish have at the last embraced the tyrannical Tudor's principle that marriage is not of nature (and of God) but of human will. And just the other day the Greeks voted to commit national economic suicide.

God's surrogate in this world is reality. If people will not face it they must suffer, just as those who reject God and His revelation face an eternity of suffering for their folly for, as Cardinal Manning taught, “[i]t is a violation of reason not to believe in God. It is a violation of our moral sense not to

2 *Pastor Aeternus*, 18th July, 1870 ; *D.* 1839, *DS.* 3074-5. Belloc was born just nine days later, on 27th July, at La Celle Saint Cloud, 12 miles out of Paris.

3 On Freemasonry *Humanum Genus*, 20th April, 1884 ; on Americanism, *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*, 22nd January, 1899 ; *Longinqua*, 6th January, 1895 ; on human liberty, *Libertas praestantissimum*, 20th June 1888.

believe that God has made Himself known to man, that that revelation is Christianity and that Christianity is Catholicism.”⁴

Meanwhile, the abandonment of Catholic principle by the bishops of Vatican II has removed the barrier that kept the Muslim from Europe. Against the Masonic protocol of 'religious freedom' with its illicit exalting of absolute liberty over moral liberty the Church had taught consistently. There is no more moral freedom to choose a false religion than there is to indulge in pornography. There is only one true religion ; that founded by Almighty God. All others are aberrations. To place any human religion on a par with that founded by God not only degrades the one true religion, but allows scope to all the false. This is what the bishops of Vatican II did in *Dignitatis Humanae*, the 'Declaration on Religious Freedom'. And, of all false religions, that which does the greatest harm to mankind is Mohammedanism.

Belloc was perhaps the most alive of the men of his time to the evils wrought by the Protestant revolt, but even he could hardly have imagined such a betrayal of Catholic principle. In the sixteenth century Pius V had Protestant traitors to contend with, but he could still find faithful Catholics and a prince to keep the Mohammedan at bay. In contrast to his maturity, of which the determinations of *Trent* are a reflection, we have the adolescence of our modern popes who close their minds to the perils of the Mohammedan. Typically of adolescents, they know better than their predecessors.

Europe's soul, once “reasonable and chivalric”, has been subverted. “The loss of unity which would be for all her members death, and for her history and meaning and self an utter oblivion,” is upon her.

Belloc would not, however, have been surprised at Islam's resurgence. He prophesied it.

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Forget the hubris of the theologians, Vatican II's fellow-travellers, the charisma of John Paul II, the occasional euphoria of World Youth Days, the whole sorry charade of 'solidarity' : the Barque of Peter has been effectively rudderless for fifty years. The proof of this is the utter failure of popes or bishops to work any salutary influence to halt the world's slide to perdition. Souls are being lost in their millions to atheism's mindless tenets and never a word is uttered by those appointed to lead Christ's Church to isolate and to condemn its mindless creed.

The Second Vatican Council's ruminations made it inevitable the Church's philosophy would be marginalised. This relegation reached its apotheosis when, in *Fides et Ratio*, Pope John Paul denied its very existence ! It was equally inevitable the formation of seminarians would become defective. The priests so formed are now our bishops. Submerged in a sea of philosophical ignorance and secularism they are quite incapable of dealing with the great issues that afflict the world. The popes themselves regularly commit errors of judgement.

As the world squanders what remains of its Catholic heritage and the chaos grows, the only thing left for faithful Catholics is to pray that the Holy Spirit will raise up in His Church another great pope, another with the character and incisiveness of Leo XIII who will see error for what it is, will condemn it and remove those in the episcopacy who insist on adhering to it. We have said before on this

⁴ *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, 1865.

website and we repeat, until the errors of the Second Vatican Council are isolated and condemned by a pope with the full authority of his office, there will be no return by Christ's Holy Church to her position of authority in the world. There will be no resurgence of a Christian Europe.

Pray then, my dear fellow Catholics for another great pope. Pray that God will send him soon—before it is too late to save Europe and the world from perdition.

All this came to me out of the fire ; and upon such a scene passed the pageantry of our astounding history. The armies marching perpetually, the guns and ring of bronze ; I heard the chaunt of our prayers. And, though so great a host went by from the Baltic to the passes of the Pyrenees, the myriads were contained in one figure common to them all...

Michael Baker

11th July 2015—*St Benedict, the Father of Europe*