

6. CHRISTIANITY AND INTOLERANCE

Another thing that I have against Christianity is that it was not taken freely by Europe. It was imposed on us. It was the fault of our princes, for different reasons that have nothing to do with religion. Constantine became a Christian in 313. Before him, ten years before, Tigran II, King of Armenia, became a Christian also.²⁴ And aren't the Armenians proud of that! "We are the first Christian nation," so they say. That is to say, Tigran II was the first Christian king. I don't know whether the Armenians followed him or not at once. Certainly the Greeks did not follow Constantine at once.

There were Christian communities already all over the Roman Empire. There were other communities too: Mithraic communities. Cybele, the mother goddess of Asia Minor, had many followers too. And these other religions were called religions of salvation. They had the idea of a god put to death and resurrected, risen from the dead, for the salvation of mankind. The idea that you have in Adonis, Osiris, and Tammuz, in those cults of Syria, of Egypt, and of Babylonia.

The fact is that Europe did not become Christian at once. First of all, why did Constantine become a Christian? His life was not a Christian life, absolutely not. He had his wife killed, on simple suspicion of adultery, not proof.²⁵ He had his own son killed.²⁶ He had so many people killed. Not Christian. But he was a Roman Emperor, and he wanted the unity of the Roman Empire. Unity of blood, there was none. Unity of language, there was none. And there could be none. There could've been unity in the worship of the Emperor, but the worship of the Emperor only interested the Romans. It didn't interest the Syrians a bit. It didn't interest even the Greeks. I wonder if the Greeks did not even resent a temple to the goddess Rome on the Acropolis. There is a temple of the goddess of Rome on the Acropolis of Athens. A round temple. The ruins are there still. I don't know how the Athenians liked it. Anyhow, there was no unity. The only unity that could be was a

²⁴ It was King Tiridates III (238-314) who introduced Christianity to Armenia after his conversion in 301. The year 303 is also given as the date of Armenia's conversion, perhaps because it was the year of the consecration of the cathedral of Echmiadzin, the holiest site of the Armenian Church. Tigran II (the Great) was born in 140 BC and ruled from 95 BC to his death in 55 BC.

²⁵ Flavia Maxima Fausta (c. 293-326) was the daughter of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus (c. 249-310, reigned 286-305). She married Constantine in 307 and bore him three sons and two daughters.

²⁶ Flavius Julius Crispus (c. 305-326) was the son of Constantine's mistress Minervina. He was likely killed for adultery with his stepmother Fausta.

unity of faith.

Now there were several faiths of salvation. Why didn't Constantine pick Mithraism? Mithraism was already very, very widespread among the Roman soldiers. Even some emperors later on were going to be worshipers of Mithra, the Aryan god, Sol Invictus, the invincible sun represented by a man with a Phrygian cap and a bull sacrifice. Well, the religion of Mithra would have taken centuries to spread because the priests of Mithra were no fanatics. They didn't say, "Outside the cult of Mithra you are all damned." They never said that. It would have taken centuries. The cult of Cybele also. Any cult except Christianity would have taken centuries to forge the cultural and religious unity of the empire. And even Christianity took centuries, but at least under Constantine there was a hope that within a few decades officially the Mediterranean would be Christian. And that was a fact. It was imposed.

There is no manuscript of any of the canonical gospels, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, older than the fourth or fifth century. What was there before? Other gospels, Apocrypha, of which there are pieces to be found now and then, and some of them quite different from the canonical gospels. What happened to the originals? They were collected from all the churches under Constantine, under the supervision of Eusebius of Caesarea, the great court historiographer and Bishop.²⁷ And they were collected by batches of fifty, and new batches of fifty of the gospels we know today were sent out to the churches. There were very many alterations in them for the Roman Empire to have *one* faith.

And then of course the crosses of Christ were found by Helena, Constantine's mother.²⁸ She dug somewhere in Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem was completely destroyed by Titus in the year 70. So much so that there was no trace, according to Flavius Josephus, of its streets.²⁹ One didn't know what was where before. It was completely flat. It was reconstructed afterwards. So in the fourth century, the emperor's mother, Helena, who was a Christian, digs somewhere in Jerusalem and found three crosses, wooden crosses, intact. How did they stay intact? Although the land is dry. I admit the land is dry. But three hundred years, more than three hundred years after the crucifixion, three crosses absolutely intact? That's funny. They put a dead man on each one, and when they put him on the cross that was

²⁷ Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 264-c. 340).

²⁸ Flavia Julia Helena, later Saint Helena (c. 250-c. 330).

²⁹ Flavius Josephus (c. 37-c. 100), *Wars of the Jews*, 7.1.1.

Christ's cross, the dead man became alive again.³⁰ So they say. That's how they found the real cross. And when you go to Jerusalem as a pilgrim, you can buy a piece of the real cross. There are so many pieces of the real cross to be sold that if they were all genuine, the cross would have been kilometers long and kilometers wide. Anyhow, that was Christianity for the Mediterranean people.

"No jobs of high significance unless you are a Christian"—Constantine. And then came Theodosias, long after Constantine.³¹ You have in between the attempt of Emperor Julian to give another chance to paganism, to the Greek or Latin paganism.³² Unfortunately that failed. That failed in the year 363. Julian only ruled from 360 to 363. He was probably murdered on the battlefield, because he received a spear from behind. And they said it was a barbarian captive that did that. Since when were barbarian captives taken into cavalry charges and given spears in their hands? It's a story. He was murdered, probably by some Christian. Anyhow, after him Christianity was again the religion of the Empire. Then comes the Emperor Theodosias who died in 395. He shut the temples. He forbade as much as he could forbid. He forbade the Oracle of Delphi. Already in Julian's day, Delphi was an abandoned place. Now, in the sixth century, under Justinian, the last philosophical schools were forbidden, the Greek philosophical schools.³³ You were not to teach anything but Christianity. Antiquity was forbidden.

Naturally it continued on the sly. They say there was still worship of the gods in Greece in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In those days Prussia, land of Frederick the Great, land of Bismarck, was still pagan. Prussians were Christianized in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and so were the Lithuanians. They were pagans. Scandinavia was Christianized in the eleventh century under Olaf II of Norway and Erik of Sweden.³⁴ They were Christianized by fire and sword, just as

³⁰ Saint Helena toured Palestine circa 326-328. There is no mention, however, of the discovery of the cross either during her lifetime or that of her son Constantine. By the middle of the fourth century, however, a number of stories of her discovery of the cross were in circulation.

³¹ Flavius Theodosius (c. 346-395) reigned from 379-395.

³² Flavius Claudius Julianus (331-363).

³³ Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Justinianus (c. 483-565) reigned from 527-565. Justinian prohibited the teaching of pagan philosophy in 529.

³⁴ Olaf II of Norway, later Saint Olaf (995-1030), King of Norway from 1015-1028, converted to Christianity in 1010. Erik ruled Sweden from 966-995. He returned to paganism at the end of his life. The process of Christianization was taken up again by his son Olof, who reigned from 995-1022.

Germany was under Charlemagne.³⁵

Charlemagne fought the Saxons for thirty years to make them Christians by force. Widukind defended Germany and defended the old faith.³⁶ He was vanquished. Well, the Franks were better organized. They had better weapons. They were efficient as warriors, and they were perhaps more united. They had the schooling of the Byzantines. They were very much in touch with the Byzantines. In fact, they speak of a prospective marriage between Charlemagne and the Empress Irene of Constantinople, of the Eastern Roman Empire.³⁷ It didn't come through anyhow. But the Germans were Christianized by fire and sword.

In 782, forty-five hundred German chiefs were put to death, beheaded one after the other after a solemn mass and a lot of pomp on the banks of the Aller in Verden in North Germany because they didn't want to take the new faith. They refused it. They were all beheaded. The river Aller must have been red with blood. That was 782.

In 772, ten years before, the old high place of the sun for all North Europe, not for Germany alone, the Externsteine, was stormed by Charlemagne, and the sun room destroyed. The roof was blown off. He had no dynamite of course, but he put ice in a kind of little channel. He dug a channel all around and he put water there. It was in the middle of December. The water became ice. Ice is bigger. It takes more volume than water. The roof was shot off. You can see the ruins of it now.³⁸

And in 785 you have the famous Capitulary of Paderborn, the rules and regulations that Charlemagne imposed on Germany, or on the part of Germany he had conquered. He didn't conquer eastern Germany, of course: "Whoever runs away to the woods in order not to be christened is to die, penalty of death. Whoever burns the dead instead of burying them according to Christianity's new rules: the death penalty. Whoever reads the runic scriptures is to be killed. Whoever listens to runic

³⁵ Charlemagne (c. 742-814) was King of the Franks from 768 on and Roman Emperor in the West from 800 on.

³⁶ Widukind (d. 807) was a Westphalian nobleman and leader of the Saxon resistance against Charlemagne until he accepted baptism in 785.

³⁷ Irene of Athens (c. 752-803) ruled the Byzantine Empire from 797-802 after blinding then murdering her son, the emperor Constantine VI (770-797). She was deposed and exiled in 802. Since it was not legal for a woman to rule the Roman Empire, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Roman Emperor in the West in 800, marking the final severance of the Eastern and Western Roman Empires.

³⁸ Savitri recounts her visit to the Externsteine in *Pilgrimage*, ch. 9, "The Rocks of the Sun."

teachings is to be killed.” There’s a list like that of I don’t know how many things you mustn’t do. “Whoever refuses to do this or to do that, whoever doesn’t have his children christened: penalty of death.”

That’s how Germany was Christianized. That’s how Scandinavia was Christianized. That’s how, in fact, all the countries of the North of Europe were Christianized. Christianity was not liked by the Nordic race. The Nordic race didn’t like it. There were certainly things in the Bible that shocked them. Even if nothing else, the story of Lot and his daughters.³⁹ That was shocking enough. And then the polygamy of the old Semites. The Nordic race is by tradition monogamous. They probably didn’t like that. There were so many things. And of course stories like how Jael killed her enemy during his sleep. That was so anti-Aryan, so shocking. How could they accept that?

The result was that the Catholic Church very wisely forbade the faithful reading the Bible. It was not allowed to read the Bible in the Middle Ages. Of course it was not allowed. I can understand the Catholic Church. And what I can’t understand was when the Bible was allowed to be read, after Luther, after the Reformation, how did people remain Christian? It’s the Bible that put me against the Jews. It’s not anything else. It’s not *Mein Kampf*. I didn’t own *Mein Kampf* in those days. When I was a child I was made to read the Old Testament and the New Testament by my pious aunt. There were so many things that shocked me.

And that’s what I have to say. Christianity was not taken by Europe spontaneously, at least not by the Nordic race. And even the Mediterranean people had their own beliefs. They had their own superstitions. They carried those superstitions into Christianity. There’s nothing more superstitious than a southern European even today, among the masses. The Marian cult, the cult of the Virgin Mary, is nothing but the cult of the Great Mother of antiquity, transposed. They stuck to it. They gave it another name, that’s all. They made Christianity according to themselves.

But what is awful is that it is a religion that inherited, from its Jewish origin, intolerance. A typical Jewish product. Although the Jews never did these things, because their policy was not conversion or death, but death in any case if you are not a Jew and if you stand in the way of the expansion of Jewry, like the Canaanites. In Europe there was not that. You could save your life by becoming a Christian. If you don’t want to become one, or if you work against it, in the Middle

³⁹ Genesis 19:30-38.

Ages, it's the stake. You're burnt at the stake. So many people were. It was not done in the Greek Church. I must say, to be just, in the Orthodox Church you have no burnings. You get it in the Catholic Church. You get it in the Protestant Church. They're no better. One is as good as the other. Some burnt Catholics, others burnt Protestants, or heretics, or whatever you like. You have the awful story of the Cathars from the South of France, early thirteenth century.

I much prefer our old, old European religions. European or non-European, anyhow, all religions of antiquity, of that free antiquity of which Adolf Hitler speaks on page 507 of *Mein Kampf*, the German edition of 1935, in which he says, "The Ancient World, which was much freer than it is today, became unfree with the entrance of Christianity."⁴⁰ He's perfectly right. You don't get persecution of religions for the religion's sake in antiquity. You get persecutions for political reasons. That's quite different. Socrates was killed because he was an Athenian who did not believe in the gods of Athens.

⁴⁰ See ch. 1, §12, n. 84 above.