

# The World, the Nation and the Cloth with the answers

Andrew Willie

Most people in Britain seem to ignore Christianity nowadays and at certain moments church members, as they look at the institutions to which they belong, might be moved to ask, "Who can blame them?" In our secular society, now with a variety of religions brought from abroad, (an excuse rather than a real reason) even simple morning school assembly seems to have fallen by the wayside. My old school used to have a school prayer: this contained the words, *for our school is a Christian School, not in name only but in deed and truth*: when I spoke to some current staff concerning it, they wondered what I was talking about!

I have in front of me the Shroud Newsletter no. 75 for June 2012. In it, art historian Thomas de Wesselow's *The Sign*, received a deservedly enthusiastic review from our past Editor, Ian Wilson. It had sold well, even though de Wesselow, believing that the Shroud was genuine, did not believe in the resurrection. Wilson led us in looking forward to de Wesselow's second volume, which still has yet to appear. What characterised Ian Wilson's approach was general Christian good manners. This is what I would like to see in all Shroud debate. It is there in the Editorial Team which David Rolfe has gathered together and on which I am privileged to serve. We are pleased to know that our working together gives him space to concentrate on the new Shroud film. It also feeds into our own appreciation of the Shroud.

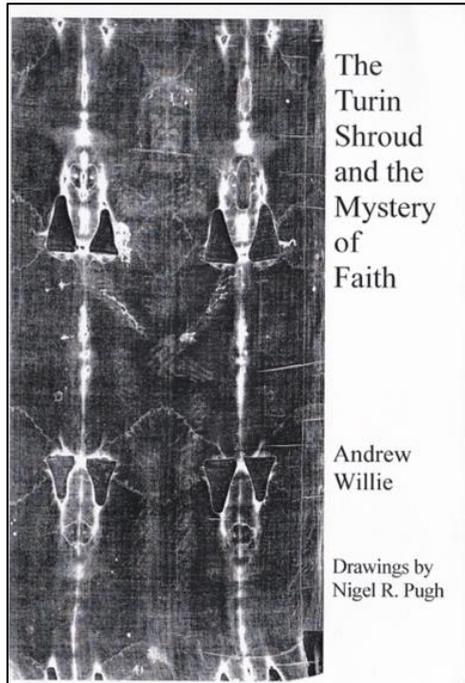
Shroudies come in three classes, those who see the shroud as carrying proof of Our Lord's death and resurrection, sceptics who see it as simply an artefact from medieval or early renaissance Europe and those who see it as genuinely Our Lord's Shroud, as described in St John's Gospel [20. Vs 5-8] but carrying the marks of His death only.

There is nothing wrong in clarifying differences of opinion, but we must be careful to avoid personal attacks. To attack people because of company occasionally kept is to echo the Pharisees' attack on Jesus [Matt 9 vs 11]; our research should be aimed at discovering Truth (a concept, John 18 vs 38, Pilate failed to understand) not at distorting Truth to support a pre-formed theory; and above all, we should always show a loving Christian tolerance towards others, attacking wrong ideas, rather than people who have them. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that many other people do enjoy intense debate which sometimes does take on a very personal quality. One only has to look at the Academia website to observe this and it was something from which Our Lord did not flinch when needed. In fact, neither Love nor Truth are necessarily served by censorship.

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Canon Willie has also published his own book, *The Turin Shroud and the Mystery of Faith*, which is fulsomely endorsed by Dr. Rowan Williams and others. It is available through the BSTS for just £10 including postage within the UK. Send a cheque for £10 made out to British Society for the Turin Shroud to:

The Treasurer, BSTS, Brewood Vicarage, Sandy Lane, Brewood,  
Stafford, ST19 9ET



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