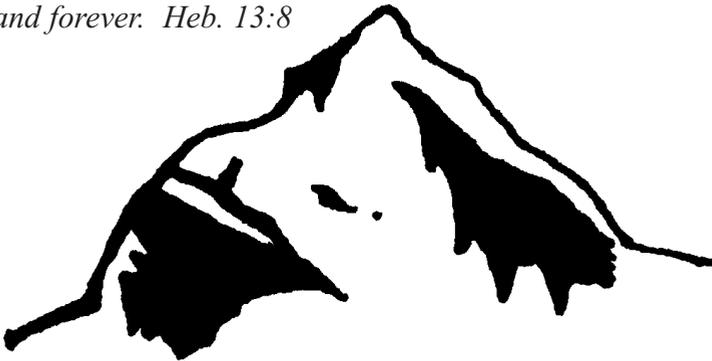


The Journal
of
**The Church of England
(Continuing)**

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and today,
and forever. Heb. 13:8*



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The Association of the Continuing Church Trust. Registered Charity Number 1055010

THE CONTINUING CHURCH

(The Association of the Continuing Church Trust: Charity No. 1055010
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The Right Reverend Albion W. Knight Jr. M.A., M.S., (*Bishop, United States of America*)

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Churches

St. Mary's, Castle Street, Reading. Sunday Services: 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper); 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. Enquiries 0118 959 5131.

Former Congregation of St. John the Baptist with St. Mary-le-Port, Chapel of the Three Kings, Foster's Almshouses, top of Christmas Steps, Colston Street, Bristol 1. Sunday Service: 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer. Enquiries 01934 712520.

Nuffield Congregation meeting with Nuffield Parish Church, near Henley-on-Thames, the Rev. John F. Shearer. Sunday Services: 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer, 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8.00 a.m. first Sunday, 6.30 p.m. third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8.00 p.m. Enquiries 01491 641305.

St. John's Church, South London Meeting at the Shaftesbury Home, Trellis House (Mill Road (off Merton High Street), Colliers Wood, SW19), for 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer and 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. Enquiries 0208 642 7885 or 0208 742 0151

St. Silas Church, Wolverhampton, in Bethany Chapel, Lower Prestwood Road (junction Blackwood Avenue), Wednesfield. Sundays 12.40 p.m. Morning Prayer (followed by Holy Communion 1st Sunday); 4.00 p.m. Evening Prayer (Holy Communion 3rd Sunday). Tuesdays (only in term time): 4.15 p.m. Tuesday Class; 5.30 p.m. Homework Club 7.00 pm. Bible Study with 7.45 p.m. Prayer Time. Enquiries 01547 528815.

* *We apologise to our readers for the word demon which we are obliged to use as it is the name of the internet provider (Demonstration), and has nothing to do with the occult.*

From the Presiding Bishop David N. Samuel

81, Victoria Road,
Devizes,
Wiltshire
SN10 1EU

Dear Friends,

On Saturday 18th March I shall (D.V.) be ordaining to the diaconate Mr. Andrew Price and Mr. Edward Powell. Mr. Price, as you know, assists the Rev. Brian Felce at St. John's, Wimbledon in a lay capacity. He completed a course of study at the London Theological Seminary, and has passed the General Ordination Examinations and will serve as a deacon at St. John's. Mr. Powell is a teacher at the Via Vera Christian School, North Hollywood, California and has also pastored for some time, in a lay capacity, a small church. The church has now adopted the constitution of the Church of England (Cont.) and Mr. Powell will be ordained deacon and continue his ministry at the church. He has already completed his theological training. We thank God for these additions to the ministry, and pray that both men will be given the grace and unction of the Holy Spirit as they seek to minister the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in their different spheres of labour. We also give a warm welcome to the congregation in N. Hollywood to the fellowship of the Church of England (Cont.). The ordination service will take place at 2.30 pm at Worples Road Evangelical Church (by kind permission of the pastor and elders) which is three or four minutes from the Wimbledon tube station, on the District line.

It is not too early, I am sure, to give you notice of the General Assembly to be held again at North Nibley on Saturday 8th July when the main speaker will be the Rev. Gordon Ferguson of the Free Presbyterian Church in London. We look forward to these gatherings in the Gloucestershire countryside. Please come and bring your friends.

You will, no doubt, have read of the disruption in the Free Church of Scotland and the formation in consequence of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). The denomination had in recent years been departing from its own Constitution and Practice and was also seeking to suppress legitimate debate and expressions of concern. The point came, as it did for us in the Church of England, when a stand had to be made to maintain the real identity and teaching of the Church. We value and

respect the action our brethren have taken and the courage and faith they have shown, and assure them of our prayers and support. The vision and spirit of the Reformers is still alive today, when men show that they are prepared to suffer and make sacrifices for the cause of true religion.

I have been reading the works of Bishop Ridley, the Reformation martyr, whose birth is thought to be 500 years ago this year. Before he suffered at the stake at Oxford, he wrote “A Piteous Lamentation of the miserable state of the Church in England.” This was provoked by the way in which it had fallen away from the Gospel after the time of Edward VI and had come back under the papacy, and all the old errors of Rome had been reintroduced. If Ridley were able to see the state of the Church of England today, he would have equal cause to lament. What could he think of the Archbishop who goes to Rome to open with the Pope a door that affords “plenary indulgences” to those who frequent it? And what could he make of all the efforts to bring the Church of England back into the ways of the Church of Rome? “Alas! England, alas!,” he said, “that this heavy plague of God should fall upon thee.” We can only echo his words, and pray as our fathers once prayed to be “delivered from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities.”

With greetings in our Saviours Name,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'David Samuel'.

David Samuel

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE C of E (C)
SATURDAY 8 JULY 2000

Nibley House, North Nibley, Gloucestershire

Enquiries - Dr. N. Malcolm Tel. 01934 712520

THE GOSPEL IN THE PRAYER BOOK

David N. Samuel

When we consider this subject we must remember the situation in which the Book of Common Prayer was compiled. It took shape in the crucible of the Reformation. A new light dawned from the Scriptures and that was the message of salvation.

Salvation in the Medieval Church

It is difficult for us today to appreciate what really happened then and how new this all seemed to the Reformers, both on the Continent and here in England. The way of salvation in the Medieval Church was that of good works. Good works, it was taught, made a man good, made a righteous man. Good works enable you to stand before God and to be accepted. In order to do those good works you had to receive grace and grace was thought of almost as a thing of substance that you received through the sacraments, through baptism, through the mass, through penance and through the prayers of the saints. It was unlikely that any one would go directly to Heaven because he was not good enough, and therefore, every baptized Christian would have to spend time, a very considerable time, in purgatory after this life and in purgatory those sins which remained would be purged and answered for by fire.

Justification and the Reformation

That was broadly the scheme of salvation that obtained in the Middle Ages, in the unreformed Church. Then came the dawn of the Reformation and that really came from the great light that shone from the Scriptures. It was as if a bright light illuminated a room that had been formerly dark. The central message of the Scriptures, which the Reformers rediscovered, was this, that we are justified by grace, by the free mercy of God. Grace is not just a thing, not a substance, but it is the mercy of God. We are justified by grace through faith alone.

This is the great emphasis of the New Testament. The Reformers discovered that this very term 'to be justified' is not to be *made* righteous in ourselves, but to be *counted* righteous before God. This is really one of those things that were at the heart of the dispute at the time of the Reformation. To be justified is not to be made righteous in ourselves but to be counted righteous before God, for the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'He is made unto us' says Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians 1:3 'wisdom and

righteousness and sanctification and redemption.’ At the heart of the Gospel was this concept of a great exchange. Christ, as the innocent and righteous One, came into this world to take our place as the guilty, condemned sinner and we, by the mercy and free grace of God, take His place and are seen in the eyes of God as justified and righteous.

Let me quote from a passage from Martin Luther, in his Commentary on Galatians which I think so vividly sets this forth. He says

The doctrine of the Gospel speaketh nothing of our works or of the works of the Law but of the inestimable mercy and love of God towards most wretched and miserable sinners, that our most merciful Father sent His only Son into the world and laid upon Him all the sins of all men, saying, be thou Peter that denier, Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor, that sinner which did eat the apple in paradise, that thief hanged upon the cross, briefly be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men. See, therefore, that Thou pay and satisfy for them. Now cometh the Law and saith: I find Him a sinner, One that hath taken upon Him the sins of all men, and I see no sins but in Him, therefore, let Him die upon the Cross; as so it setteth upon Him and killeth Him. By this means the whole world is purged. God would see nothing else in the whole world if it did not believe but a mere cleansing and righteousness.

Now that is the Gospel as set forth in the Scriptures, especially in the Epistle to the Romans, that is the Gospel that our Reformers, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer also rediscovered in the Bible. ‘The Lord our righteousness’, we have no righteousness of our own. ‘He clothes us with the garment of salvation and covers us with the robe of righteousness’, the robe of Christ’s imputed righteousness, counted to us who are sinners. We are still sinners even when we are saved. We are still sinful in ourselves but we are righteous in the sight of God because Christ’s righteousness is credited or imputed to us by faith.

Now that also is the teaching of our Church in the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Book of Common Prayer. All its doctrines derive from the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. And when Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer and the other Reformers of the Church of England found in the Scripture this doctrine of justification by grace through faith, they wrote it in the

Thirty-nine Articles. Article 11 *Of the Justification of Man* which is one of the critical articles on which hinges the faith of our Church as a reformed and catholic church states, ‘We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not of our own works or deservings, wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily on justification.’ If you get the *Book of Homilies* and you want to find that homily it is actually the homily of salvation. Did the Reformers make a mistake? No, they meant that salvation is justification by faith, justification by faith is salvation, the two things were equated in their thinking.

But this salvation which was effected by our Lord Jesus Christ by a perfectly righteous life of obedience to Gods Law, by His death upon the Cross when He answered not for His own sins, for He had none, but for our sins that objective work of redemption that He accomplished upon the Cross must be subjectively appropriated by us. We must make it our own, but how are we to do that? By repentance, by turning from our sin, by turning from our works, however good we might think them to be, putting no trust or confidence in the flesh, no trust or confidence in ourselves, by putting our trust and confidence in the Lord. ‘Therefore, if any man boast let him boast’ says Paul ‘in the Lord.’ If he thinks he has any good works, he is still trusting in himself. Let him trust in the Lord. So faith and repentance mean turning away from ourselves and turning away from any belief that we can save ourselves. Faith is turning to the Lord Jesus Christ and cleaving to Him and holding fast to Him as our Saviour. We might define faith as a recumbency, that is leaning upon something, leaning upon it with the confidence that it will support you and hold you up. This is what you do when you believe in Jesus Christ. And what is this repentance and faith? It is the work of Gods Holy Spirit in our hearts. He quickens dead souls. ‘You who were dead in trespasses and sins, he hath quickened’ (made alive) ‘together with Christ’. Those who are spiritually dead and cannot exercise repentance or faith because they are spiritually dead, the Holy Spirit gives them new spiritual life. He regenerates them, gives them new life from God. He opens their eyes, the eyes of their understanding. They see the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty and desirability as their Saviour and their Lord and they turn from themselves and they fly to Christ the refuge.

So faith is no mere intellectual assent of the mind. It is that, it is true. But it is more a trust and a confidence in Jesus Christ and His power to save.

If we have this living faith in our hearts then, as Cranmer said, it will express itself in good works. Well, that is not just Cranmer's teaching, that is the teaching of the Bible, because good works are the fruit of this work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Whereas before a man was regenerated, before he was changed in this way by the grace of God, he found the commandments of God to be irksome and tiresome, now he has a desire to please Him and to serve Him and to walk in his ways.

Now that is very briefly a sketch of what the Gospel is according to the Scripture. Where do we find it in the Prayer Book? Well, we find it throughout the Prayer Book, everywhere in the Prayer Book because these men who were Reformers, who compiled the 39 Articles of Religion, were also responsible for compiling the Book of Common Prayer and their great desire was to see that the Book of Common Prayer expressed this Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone, this Biblical teaching about salvation. Dom Gregory Dix, who was a noted liturgiologist, said some years ago that the Book of Common Prayer service of the Lord's Supper or the Holy Communion is the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. There is the testimony of a man who was very knowledgeable about these things, and what we may expect to find in the service of Holy Communion we may expect to find throughout the whole Book of Common Prayer. Let me try to illustrate this great doctrine of salvation in terms of the Book of Common Prayer.

It begins first of all with Holy Scripture.

This light of truth dawned upon the minds of our Reformers from the Bible and therefore, they were confident of this, that if salvation was to be expressed through the liturgy, through the Book of Common Prayer, then the Book of Common Prayer had to contain a great deal of the Bible, indeed all of the Bible as far as that was practicable, because, 'we are born again' as Peter says, 'not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.' Our Reformers wanted to see a living Church of England, one that was spiritually alive. How could they bring that about, but through the instrumentality of the Word of God, the Scriptures? Those Scriptures had to be incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer. Now in the Middle Ages not much attention was paid to the Scriptures in worship, and I think we are all familiar with this from Cranmer's introduction to the Book of Common Prayer, Concerning the Service of the Church. In that essay he wrote this; 'But

these many years passed, this godly and decent order, (of reading through the books of the Bible) of the ancient fathers hath been so altered, broken and neglected by planting in uncertain stories and legends with multitudes of responds, verses, vain repetitions, commemorations and synodals, that commonly, when any book of the Bible was begun, after three or four chapters were read out all the rest were unread.’

Then he went on to say, as you will remember, that rather amusing thing. ‘Moreover the number and hardness of the rules called pie and the manifold changing of the service was the cause that to turn the book only were so hard and intricate a matter that many times there was more business to find out what should be read than to read it when it was found out.’ Such was the intricacy of the medieval service! Such was their neglect of the Scriptures! But Cranmer said ‘No, we must bring back the Bible into the Liturgy’. So he arranged that the Old Testament should be read through once in the course of the year, the New Testament twice, and the Psalms should be read every month. Besides that the Canticles which we sing in Morning and Evening Prayer, the verses and the responses are virtually all taken out of Holy Scripture.

Therefore, we might say that the Book of Common Prayer is as full of the Bible as an egg is of meat. In this way the Reformers thought to ensure that the living Word of God was brought to the people in the parishes; because ‘faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God’ Perhaps there is no better and more lovely collect than that of Advent II, which I am sure you are all familiar with which brings out this truth.

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy Holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

So that was the first object of the Reformers. Let the Scriptures be there in the Liturgy because any other Liturgy which does not give the Scriptures the paramount place is of no use to the people. Through the Book of Common Prayer our Liturgy is Bible centered.

Secondly, Repentance.

As we have mentioned, repentance is so important in the Gospel, because

we must understand the sin and wickedness of our own hearts. We must not minimise our sins before God. We must not cover over them lightly. If we are superficial in the way that we deal with ourselves and our own hearts and if we do not understand the gravity, the seriousness of our sin in the sight of God, then, of course, there is no hope for us being saved by the grace of God. And so the Liturgy, if it is to be a Gospel Liturgy, if it is to be a Biblical Liturgy, must set out our sins in their true colours so that we can clearly see what sort of people we are before God. That indeed the Prayer Book does most faithfully, especially of course in the Confession that we have in Morning and Evening Prayer. ‘We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have offended against Thy Holy Laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.’ Then it concludes with this great expression ‘And there is no health in us’ that is no salvation, no soundness, no wholeness in us at all. That is what we confess when we come before God and that is our true condition, morally and spiritually, before God as it is depicted and described for us in the Scriptures. That is what our Prayer Book does.

There are those who say, and I think they say rightly, that the Alternative Service Book is far too brief, far too superficial in its dealing with sin and seems to skate over it very lightly. The Prayer Book does not let us off lightly because the Bible does not let us off lightly. Now this was something new in our Prayer Book. Again, in the preceding services of the church there was no confession of sin. In, for example, the first reformed book of the Church of England of 1549 there was no confession of sin but it was introduced by Cranmer in 1552 and we have the same confession now and absolution in the 1662 book. And this theme, of course is continued in the Service of Holy Communion.

How does the Service of Holy Communion begin? Well, it begins as we all know with the great Collect for Purity ‘Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid’. So it invites us immediately to look within our hearts, to see ourselves spiritually in the sight of God, how He views us. And then, of course, we go on in the Confession in the Communion Service to say ‘that the burden of our sins is intolerable’. There are people today who say ‘Well, I don’t feel the burden of my sins is intolerable.’ The answer to that is ‘Well, you should. That is how you should truly feel if you understand your condition and see the gravity and seriousness of your offence in the sight of God’.

And these confessions that we make in the Services of the Prayer Book are intended to be no mere formality. The words in which we are invited to confess our sins make that very clear. We are bidden to do so with a humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart and if the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts, if He has opened our eyes to see ourselves as we really are and the truth of all this dawns upon us, then we shall understand that we are lost, miserable, helpless sinners in the sight of God and we must turn to Him for His grace and for His salvation.

Thirdly, the Declaration of the Forgiveness of Sins.

This, too is clearly seen in our Reformed and Biblical Liturgy and it is done by setting forth for us the Lord Jesus Christ in all His attractiveness, in all His beauty, as the all-sufficient Saviour of men and women, who by His death has purged our sins and reconciled us to God. We find all this most gloriously set out for us in the Holy Communion Service in the Prayer of Consecration where the priest says ‘Who made there’, that is upon the cross, ‘by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world’. An all-sufficient Saviour who meets every need of sinful men and women.

We find this truth also again compellingly set forth for us in the comfortable words in the Holy Communion Service. After the Absolution there four quotations from Holy Scripture called the Comfortable Words, as you know, and those words are there in order to reassure us, to impress upon us that this is the Word of God absolving us from our sins. When we have come and have truly repented, and when we have turned to God with all our hearts, then we hear these words of comfort which give confidence to us that God has indeed blotted out our sins and has set them as far from us as the east is from the west.

Listen to one of these sentences ‘This is a true saying, and worth of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’. These words are forever associated in my mind with Thomas Bilney. He was called Little Bilney. He was a man from Norfolk and he was a Fellow of Trinity Hall in Cambridge at the time of the Reformation, in the early days of the Henrician Reformation. He was a man who was not at peace with God, but he found peace. He found it through reading the New Testament, through reading the elegant translation of the New Testament into Latin by Erasmus. His eyes lighted upon these words ‘This is a true saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus

came into the world to save sinners'. The truth came home to his heart. He was at peace. He was saved and he was instrumental in bringing about the conversion also of Hugh Latimer, the greatest preacher of the English Reformation, indeed possibly of the English church of all time.

We find this Declaration of the Forgiveness of Sins set forth for us so clearly and plainly, so authoritatively in the words of Scripture in the Book of Common Prayer, and also we find it in the Litany. There are some beautiful words in the Litany which set out the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation 'By the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation, by Thy Holy Nativity and Circumcision, by Thy baptism, Fasting and Temptation, Good Lord, deliver us. By thine Agony and bloody Sweat, by Thy Cross and Passion, by Thy precious Death and Burial, by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us'. When those words were read out in the Parish Church of Llangeitho in the eighteenth century by Daniel Rowland there was an intense feeling, almost something that was electric in the congregation and there came a sense of the grace and the mercy of God upon the people. Daniel Rowland, as he was at the desk reading the Litany, broke down, and so did the people in the congregation. That was part of the great awakening of religion in this country, particularly in Wales in the eighteenth century.

Charles Simeon, the Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, said that he was never nearer to Heaven than when he was at the reading desk reading the Liturgy of the Church of England. So you see how its sets out the fullness of the Gospel of grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the declaration of the remission of sin.

Fourthly, Faith

We have said that although Christ has worked a objective salvation for us upon the cross, we need to appropriate it, we need to make it our own and that is by the response of faith, by laying hold upon the promises of Scripture in the Gospel, by appropriating through faith the benefits of Christ's death for us upon the cross. Our Lord, when He yielded up His Spirit upon the Cross, did not die in the sense of dying involuntarily, in the sense that He was compelled to die, He died as an act of priestly offering. He was active in His death. He did not die passively on the Cross. He was active as a Priest offering up Himself. When he died He said *it is finished*. He offered Himself for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world. We must respond to that in faith by casting ourselves upon Him;

upon His perfect and sufficient sacrifice for sin and we can do that, of course, in the Liturgy. We are given ample opportunity to express our faith. Notice the point in the service in which they came, after hearing the lessons of the Old and New Testaments, when they have been read to us.

The Word of God, His Salvation has been declared, then the congregation stands upon its feet and makes the response of faith and says ‘I believe I believe this truth, I believe in God the Father, I believe in His Son Jesus Christ, I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life.’ By faith we appropriate, take to ourselves, claim all the blessings that Christ has achieved for us by His death and by His Resurrection.

Also, if you go through the Canticles you will see in the Canticles too there is the opportunity for the response of faith, particularly in the Nunc Dimittis, the song of Simeon. I think of Simeon, who was an aged man who had been waiting in the Temple for the consolation of Israel. He has been looking for the coming of the Messiah who would redeem God's people and Mary and Joseph came into the Temple with the Christ child. He took the Babe in his arms and said ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people’. Here was a man who took Christ in his arms and received the Redeemer, the Saviour. Now think of it, when we have heard the New Testament lesson, that is what we do when we come to the Nunc Dimittis and when we sing it together or say it together, we can make that response of faith which Simeon did and receive Christ as our own.

The last point is this

Good Works.

Good works are essential to the Christian life but as I said at the beginning, their place is in the Gospel, in the order of Salvation is after repentance and faith. They are the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Jesus says ‘First make the tree good and its fruit will be good. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit neither can a good tree bring forth corrupt fruit.’ So when we have experienced the grace of God, when we know what repentance and faith in Jesus Christ mean, then in the order of salvation there is a place for good works, not to justify us before God, because that they cannot do, but to be the expression of the grace of God in our hearts and the evidence to others of the justification that we have received through Jesus Christ. We find this throughout the Liturgy.

Take, for example Morning and Evening Prayer and the words of the Absolution. ‘Grant us true repentance, and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him, which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy’. And in the Litany ‘That it may please Thee to give to all Thy people increase of grace to hear meekly Thy word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit’. And at the conclusion the post-Communion prayer of the Holy Communion Service we pray ‘that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in’.

Conclusion

So you see the Book of Common Prayer is full of the grace and salvation of God. It expresses the Biblical Gospel, the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone. The Book of Common Prayer is no random sequence of prayers and devotion, but through it all, undergirding it, informing it and structuring it is the Gospel of the grace of God to us in Jesus Christ. As a body is supported by its frame, by the bones, by the skeleton which we do not see, which is not visible, yet gives to the body a grace, a beauty and a strength, so it is with the Book of Common Prayer. You cannot divorce it from its doctrine. You cannot divorce it from the Bible. Its words, its English, its language are beautiful, but the real beauty, the lasting beauty, is to be found in the doctrine that supports it, that informs it and gives it strength and power and glory. Such is the teaching of Justification by grace through faith alone, that Salvation which guides and informs all the thinking of the Liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer.

Please note that the Continuing Church publishes a prayer letter, *Intercessions*. It is available free of charge to those who should like to receive news and to pray for the various needs.

Please write to

Rev. E. J. Malcolm, The Parsonage, 1, Downshire Square, Reading, RG1 6NJ.

Would contributors please note that they can send their news via email, to revejmalcolm@appleonline.net (If sending an actual document, not just an email, send as RTF).

Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

BOOK REVIEW

A.D. 2000 Year of Jubilee by Papal Indulgence or Reformation Gospel. Prof. David J. Engelsma. Evangelism Committee, First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, 1999 16pp.

The Roman Catholic Church views the year 2000 as a Jubilee year, and one of Rome's purposes with the Jubilee is the achievement of the unity of all Christians.

Professor Engelsma says that ecumenical cooperation and full communion with Rome are not possible for true Protestants, particularly Reformed churches and people. They are forbidden by God. The controversy that we had with Rome at the time of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century has not been resolved.

The controversy with Rome is fundamental: on the one hand, justification by faith alone according to grace alone on the basis of the redemption of the cross of Christ alone versus, on the other hand, justification by faith and human works according to grace and human merit on the basis of Christ's cross and the deeds of humans themselves. The Bible says that it is a difference between the one true Gospel of Christ and 'another gospel: which is not another' (Galatians 1.6-7).

The question is, How will the children of God enjoy the blessings of Jubilee? Will it be by papal indulgence, as Rome says, or by the gospel recovered at the Reformation?

To gain benefits from this Jubilee year we need to go on pilgrimage to church buildings in Rome, Jerusalem or our own country, says Rome. The main means of blessing is through indulgences, especially those obtained on pilgrimages. Indulgences are the Roman Catholic Church's application to a sinner's account of the meritorious good works of Mary and other saints, to satisfy the justice of God concerning the temporal punishment of the sinner's transgressions. Otherwise, we suffer for our sins in purgatory. During the year of Jubilee complete deliverance from purgatory is available.

Professor Engelsma expounds the real teaching of Numbers 25 and the New Testament about the Jubilee. The truths of the Gospel of Christ are put across well. This is a valuable booklet. Quotations from the Bible are from the Authorised Version.

B.G. Felce

This article was published in the ET January 2000 edition. A shorter version was published in the EC.

JUSTIFICATION

A former Roman Catholic looks at the Common Statement signed recently by the Vatican and Lutheran Churches.

The Vatican has, we are told, resolved its historical rift with certain Lutheran churches. Victoria Combe, Religious Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, writes; One of the principal causes of the Reformation, which divided the Christian Church, has been resolved in a historic statement to be signed by church leaders this month [October 1999]. After thirty-two years of discussions, the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation will sign an Official Common Statement on the issue which drove them apart in 1517 - the doctrine of justification. The Common Statement is accompanied by a Joint Declaration on the subject.

However, as a former Roman Catholic, I believe that Martin Luther, if he were alive today, would have seen this action by the Lutheran Church as an act of treachery, both to God and truth.

Minimalism

Rome rightly understands that the cardinal doctrine of the Protestant Reformation is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Undermine that, and the Reformation is undone. This irresponsible action by Lutheran Church leaders demonstrates that they have moved toward Rome, rather than the reverse. Rome never signs anything unless there has been significant movement in her direction. What in fact has happened is that apostate Protestants have signed away their birthright for a mess of pottage.

The Joint Declaration, in essence, presents a minimalist position on the issues that divide Protestants from Rome. It ignores such matters as the blasphemy of the 'Sacrifice of the Mass' (Transubstantiation) and all the other baggage of Rome's teaching, most of which is inextricably linked with her understanding of justification.

Surely, if a true Reformed theologian were to enter into negotiations with Rome about the doctrine of justification, it would soon become clear that, in the light of Scripture, Rome is wrong at many related points.

The Roman Catholic Church is wrong in its views on the authority of Scripture, the place of free will and merit, purgatory, indulgences, the distinction between mortal and venial sins, papal infallibility, the worship of images and relics, and other matters. It is only when Rome leaves these errors, that we will know she is really seeking light from Scripture concerning justification. Otherwise we must see her pronouncements as a mere accommodation, an

attempt to delude liberal Protestant theologians with clever words.

Body of divinity

The doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone, lies at the heart of the 'body of divinity'. It is the key that unlocks the Bible's teaching on sin, grace, the Law, substitution, and imputation of righteousness. Justification is the foundation of assurance for the Christian believer.

It would seem to me that the thrust of the Joint Declaration has more to do with sanctification than justification. For example, it states that justification is the forgiveness of sins, the liberation from the dominating power of sin and death... It is the acceptance into communion with God.

It is true that the negative element of justification is the forgiveness of sin and guilt. But the above statement ignores the positive element of justification—the imputation of Christ's righteousness to sinners, and their restoration to God's active favour.

Rome has failed to understand that the redeemed sinner is at the same time a sinner and righteous. The true Christian is always a sinner, but always righteous in Christ. Justification is an instantaneous act of God for the sinner, while sanctification is a work of grace in the sinner.

Justification puts the sinner in a right relationship or standing with God. Sanctification manifests the fruit of God's Spirit, conforming the character and conduct of the sinner to the image of Christ. Very simply, sanctification means that the believer is set apart for the service and glory of God. But before he can fulfil that role, he must be pronounced fit to do so. That is, he must be justified in the sight of God.

What is justification?

Justification is the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to undeserving sinners. There are three key factors. 1) The source of justification is God's free grace. 2) The whole basis of justification is Christ's righteousness and shed blood. 3) The acquisition of Justification is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

By contrast, Rome's consistent position is that baptism is the primary instrumental cause of justification, and that the sacrament of penance is the secondary, restorative cause. Rome believes that justification can be lost through committing mortal sin, and therefore penance must be performed, namely, 'works of satisfaction' by which a person achieves 'congruous merit' for justification.

The Roman Church agrees that justification is by faith, but does not accept that faith alone is sufficient, adding good works as a necessary condition. Rome arrives at her opinions to suit herself, rather than subjecting those opinions to the Word of God for correction and illumination.

Rome's idea of justification is co-operation with God. But this is

Pelagianism, a doctrine that attacks the heart of the gospel. She fails to acknowledge that justification is the very essence of the gospel. Remove the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith, and Christianity is no different from heathen religions, which teach that man must do something to merit salvation.

The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545) clearly stated in Canon IX: ‘If any one shall say, that by faith alone the impious is justified ... let him be anathema’. Again, in Canon XI: ‘If any one shall say, that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace by which we are justified, is only the favour of God; let him be anathema.’

Thus if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been ‘justified by faith alone’, you are still under the curse of Rome (even if you are a Lutheran!).

Declared righteous

The Church of Rome fails to understand that justification consists in the righteousness of Christ credited to the sinner. She believes that righteousness is infused, but the Bible teaches that righteousness is imputed. In justification, God does not impart righteousness to the sinner so that he may then be justified by works, but declares righteous those who believe.

The righteousness that justifies is a passive righteousness. It is not of works, but is the free gift of God. It is not inherent in us, but is alien to the sinner. The righteousness that justifies is from God, for it is God that justifies (Romans 8:33).

This righteousness is revealed to faith in the gospel (Romans 1:17). This was the great truth rediscovered during the Reformation, namely, that justification is obtained through faith in Christ alone.

Above all, justification is a work of God. We are ‘justified by faith’ (Romans 5:1), ‘justified by his blood’ (Romans 5:9), ‘justified by his grace’ (Titus 3:7), ‘justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God’ (1 Corinthians 6:11). Justification is not by our righteousness at all. It is conferred upon the Christian by the sovereign free grace of God.

We must never forget that justification is forensic, which means we are legally declared (counted or reckoned) to be righteous, as God imputes the perfect righteousness of Christ to our account. The only condition is faith, which is a gift.

A robust view

To add insult to injury, the Joint Statement was signed in Germany on October 31, Reformation Sunday. I would call upon all true Christians to

remember this date, when Luther nailed his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenburg in 1517.

The gravity of the situation cannot be overstated, as apostate Protestant churches turn their backs on the Reformation in their search for union with Rome. We need to pray that God would visit his church again, before the gospel of God's free grace in Christ is submerged in false religion, as it was in mediaeval times.

We need to return to a robust view of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. There can be no unity or reconciliation with Rome as long as she persists in robbing Christ of the glory of his grace. Righteousness can only be acquired through his glorious work of substitution, his free redemption.

Only Christ can save. No one can save himself, even with God's assistance. Any Church, which teaches that works and grace together can save the sinner, is perverting the gospel, and is under the curse of God (Galatians 1:1-9).

Billy Foley
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THE MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS : Anniversary of Christ's Birth or Confusion and Compromise?

The Daily Telegraph writes: "The lack of direction has left the British nation with architectural monuments of confusion. Nobody seems to know exactly what it is we are celebrating and it shows in too many of the architectural schemes. We certainly do not seem to be celebrating the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's birth... Instead Christianity barely features among the Millennium's activities..." (Giles Worsley, 28th December 1999, p.8). Of course this statement is symptomatic of the spiritual condition and confusion that reigns in our nation both in the Royal household, in the Government, and the religious establishment.

However, do we need to remind ourselves that the millennium is about the celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, or is the Church enamoured by the spirit of the age? The fact that our calendar is based on Christ seems to be a forgotten reality. History, we should maintain is His-Story.

Truths of Christianity

Indeed, it is necessary to remind the world of the simple truths of

Christianity, and its founder. For thousands of years the Jews awaited the Messiah to lead them. God kept his promise to the prophets and His people. Christ came, and conquered hell, death, Satan, and permanently dealt with sin. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in about 4 BC in the Roman province of Judea. He grew up in Nazareth, where he worked as a carpenter. For thirty years He live in relative obscurity. Then He commenced His public ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. He announced the Kingdom of God. Many miracles characterised His ministry. He criticised the religious establishment of His day. He claimed equality with God, which was regarded by the Jews as blasphemous. He was arrested, tried by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, and put to death on a cross. At Calvary some people would like to think it ended for Jesus, and the remainder they regard as fiction, and unbelievable. But three days after His crucifixion He rose from the dead, and appeared to His disciples over 40 days before ascending back to Heaven. He was seen on many occasions and of 500 disciples at once. The fact is that Christ was incarnate, and that His Resurrection is an attested fact of history seems to be a detail ignored. The prophecies of the Coming Messiah recorded in the Bible find there complete and accurate fulfilment in Christ. Likewise, there can be no doubt that all the prophecies in relation to His Second Coming will be fulfilled.

Devaluing of Christ

However, we have been sadly witnessing a devaluing of the momentous event of His first Advent, that God became man in the ‘Anointed One’. The concept prevails that man has become God, an idea that has been around since the Garden of Eden. For example, mankind has chosen to focus on man's achievements rather than on God's achievement of sending His Beloved Son. Other personalities of both the past thousand years and in this century have received the highest accolades. Marx is considered to have been the greatest thinker of the century. This is because of his work with Engels: “Communist Manifesto”, published in 1848. Yet, the world has a short memory, it has forgotten that communism was one of the greatest scourges of the 20th Century. (The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.)

The manifestation of Christ to the world for salvation seems to be a thing forgotten by society. God became a man, and humanity was taken into God 2000 years ago. This is the mystery of all mysteries, and the miracle above all miracles. The Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, and the Saviour of the World became a man. Believe that fact and there are glorious prospects. Deny that fact and there is no hope.

Toleration

The energy of the media has centred on de-emphasising Christ, presumably for two reasons, one being the desire not to offend and the other, not to marginalize other religions. Where will compromise and toleration lead

mankind? Love is now equated with toleration. This is indicative of the muddled thinking of the age in which we live. What are we more likely to see in the seventh millennium? Heretics and unbelievers will abound. People will attend less to their souls, and more to their bodies. More pleasure will be the pursuit of the human race. Obsession with sex will be the primary focus in the media. There will be denial of guilt, and wrong. Personal development and self-actualisation without God will be encouraged. Human earthly happiness will be vigorously pursued. Christians may be outlawed as narrow-minded, and persecution will return. Unless, of course, God sends revival.

Queen' s Christmas Message

Even the Queen's Message on Christmas Day placed Christianity on the same level as the other religions of the world. This is toleration in its worst manifestation. But Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam can never be on the same level as Christianity, for they are man-made religions. Christianity is in direct conflict with these religions. On the other hand, Christianity is a 'revealed' religion, and its founder is the historical Jesus, the incarnate God, Crucified, and the Risen Christ. It is blasphemy to consider God, a God among Gods. Has the Queen and the Royal Household forgotten that Christianity is true, and the first duty of man is to 'Love the Lord thy God.' To focus on 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', though it is a pleasant thing to hear the Queen quote from the Authorised Version, is only possible if one loves the Lord God of the Bible.

The Queen has adopted the council of her 'politically correct' advisors. Religious pluralism is the now accepted alternative. It is considered too narrow minded and restrictive to think Christianity is true. The Queen's Speech was certainly that opportunity lost as millions should have heard the Gospel from the Defender of the Faith, even in its simplest form. To compare Christianity to other world religions is to add insult to injury. Careful analysis of the message the Queen delivered will note that a 'minimalist strategy' was adopted because of the diversity of the religions that are now characteristic of our western society. The world recognises what is going on. For example, William Rees-Mogg writes that the foolish, shallow celebrations of the millennium demonstrate the West's weakness. He said, writing in the Times (January 3, 2000), "We were celebrating the 2,000th anniversary of what is for Christians the most important event in the history of mankind. The people of Tonga understood that, and sang Handel's Messiah... But the new global village could think of no better way to celebrate than letting of tons of sparklers, some of different colours. The poor Archbishop of Canterbury was not even allowed to say a Christian prayer at midnight, in case it offended non-Christians or conflicted in the television schedules with the rockets. If they had not been so meaningless, one might have thought these celebrations were a statement of neo-paganism..Christianity ... is seen by producers as a quaint minority interest... The millennium celebrations

could be regarded as a tribute to global electronic hedonism.”

Again in the Times Mick Hume (January 3, 2000), writes about the Dome, a wonderful structure that stands for nothing, a stunning shell with a hole where its heart should be, “The moral vacuum was captured by the banal ‘Millennium Resolution’, which dropped any mention of God in favour of eco-pieties about respecting the Earth.”

In case anyone fails to remember: Christianity is different from all world religions. Its founder rose from the dead, and that is what makes His claims unique and true. World religions seek to earn salvation; Christ has earned salvation for sinners on the Cross. The righteousness of Christ is a gift imputed to the sinner in Christianity. Other religions promote the notion that we are righteous by our own efforts. We should be rejoicing and marking the first advent of Christ and His Incarnation with the deepest reverence.

Fair minded historians and commentators of the future will write that these were the millennium celebrations, which forgot Christ, and exalted man. What went wrong? Well, there were many factors, which contributed over a period of time, some of which are as follows:

1. Denial of the existence of God. This is subtle. People say they believe in God, yet in word and deeds deny Him. ‘God is Dead’ theology has not helped matters. The growth of higher criticism and the advent of liberalism have done much damage to the modern mind. People are managing to live without God. This has become more of a feature today than perhaps we appreciate. People are happy with vague notions of God’s existence, and superficial religion. Western society has made many advances technologically, but spiritually it is bankrupt. Mankind is exalted and God is dethroned. Without God the prospects are very bleak indeed for mankind.

2. Evolutionary theory. This has been treated as fact, rather than a theory. In 1859 Darwin published ‘The Origin of Species’, which has been the curse of mankind. Modern science has done much good, but it has led to the creation of new Gods. The more society develops educationally, and grows in materialism; it blinds itself to the reality of God. Though many people do acknowledge the existence of God, they prefer that He remain at a distance. They only want God when things go wrong in life. Immanuel, God with us, is more of a nebulous concept rather than a historical fact in the person of Christ.

3. The acceptance of alternative morality. Homosexuality is widely accepted in the different strata of society as an alternative lifestyle. Even though, Sodomy has proved to be the downfall of societies in history. Gay adoption is promoted. The fact that the Queen is subjected by her subjects to have to watch ‘a troupe of near-naked dancers’, and the London Gay Men’s Chorus perform before her in the Dome is indicative of the moral degeneration of our society (Telegraph editorial, 3 January 2000). The moral

fibre of our national life is taking some battering by the enemies of darkness. What happened in the Dome is an indicator of the spiritual battle that Christians will face with the alternative morality of tomorrow's world. This whole event must surely have been a complete embarrassment to any self-respecting individual. How low are we prepared to stoop? This should be a cause of great prayer and concern that God would stop the flood-tide of iniquity.

The evidence indicates we will continue to witness the undermining of marriage. Respect for the orthodox family unit as a building block in society is not taken seriously. People are encouraged to think that the marriage bond can be easily broken by divorce. Where are the voices that cry for the stability of the marriage bond, and the institution of the family? Millions have been murdered through abortion. In 1960 the pill was introduced in the US, and this promoted the 'permissive society'. For example, 'One third of all pregnancies outside of marriage end in abortion. 70,000 children a year are subjected to sexual abuse. 40% of doctors say they would be prepared to commit euthanasia. British teenagers take more drugs than those in any other European country. 12, 476 pupils are permanently excluded from school each year.' (English Churchman, No. 7512). Experiments on human embryos are on the increase. The death penalty has been abolished. There is an increase in lawlessness as foretold by Christ (Matthew 24:12)

Morality is no longer absolute. Everything is relative. We are told that civilisation must love and accept people who are perverts. If we do not, we are discriminating. God's commandments are no longer relevant we are being led to believe. Every person must be allowed to do his or her own thing. Self-centred philosophy is encouraged. Biblical morality is an outdated concept. Once again, man is exalted and God's commandments are relegated to insignificance.

4. Ecumenism. Ecumenical activity among churches has led to confusion and doctrinal compromise. The rejection of the fundamentals of Christianity and the undermining of the Word of God have been the chief sin of the ecumenical movement. Major initiatives between the Rome Catholic Church and evangelicals in reforming historical doctrinal disagreement are an indicator of the level of compromise we have reached. There is a weakening of resolve on the part of many evangelicals toward Rome's teaching. The lowest common denominator in doctrine seems to have been the motivating influence for the rapid and immense decline into apostasy. The notion exists that we must seek to understand other faiths. They say that faith is a good thing in all religions, but to be dogmatic about Christianity is not being tolerant. The edifice of false religion will come tumbling down under the wrath of God.

Church leaders say that divisions are bad. This idea must be left behind. Dialogue, acceptance and respect for difference are the philosophies of the times. Divisions are necessary to maintain God's Word and the cause of

truth. We do not witness the Bible arguing for God to get along with the Devil. Never do we see the Lord God sitting down with the Devil and negotiating truth away. Never do we find the Lord God complimenting the Devil or encouraging false religion. Never do we see the Lord God celebrating with the Devil. It is unthinkable. What fellowship had light with darkness? Today the tendency is to call evil good, and good evil. What foolish reasoning pervades our society! Confusion reigns in many churches.

That is why the Church of England (Continuing) has chosen to separate from the national church, which is like a ship having lost its rudder. The established Church has forgotten its Book of Common Prayer (1662), the 39 Articles of Religion, the Creeds, and its Authorised Bible (1611). The Virgin Birth, and Divinity of Jesus, His work of atonement on the Cross, and His triumphant Resurrection are disbelieved. Atheism is a growth industry. The disestablishment of the national Church appears to be a real prospect given what is happening in Sweden with the Lutheran Church.

5. The ascendancy of the Roman Catholic Church. This is noticeable in Europe and has led people to forget its terrible past. I have yet to witness Rome saying sorry for the people she burnt in the fires of persecution. I have not heard that Rome has revoked the Doctrines of Trent, especially the 16 decrees and 33 canons against the doctrine of justification by faith. The Council of Trent's doctrines are unaltered and bolstered in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (1992). Where Rome rules there will be regression into darkness and the Bible will be put on the same level as tradition. The Doctrine of Transubstantiation is still promulgated by the Church of Rome. Mary is venerated, and worshipped as the Mother of God. The questioning by the Pope of the reality of Heaven and Hell as revealed in the Word of God are indicators of the spiritual destitution of the Catholic Church. In November 1998, the Pope of Rome, John Paul II, issued a papal bull called the Mystery of Incarnation. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (a handbook of indulgences) declares that the Church of Rome will offer plenary (full) indulgence from 24th December 1999 to 6th January 2001. The Church of Rome is usurping the place of God with men's souls and their eternal salvation. Rome seeks to justify herself in every situation. This is evidenced in the case of salvation. Rome blasphemously continues to trade in the error of a works Gospel, and part of its package is penance and indulgences.

6. The modern charismatic movement. This phenomena has also confused matters. We have witnessed the doctrinal confusion here on an unparalleled scale. Weird and unscriptural principles have gained prominence. The quest for some new thing seems to be the passionate plea of its followers. The primacy of preaching and the sufficiency of scripture seem to be forgotten.

The 6th Millennium

- **War** Unfortunately, at the beginning of the 20th century we have had the

dreadful First World War. Not many years were to pass before we had the Second World War. Millions of people were thrust into a lost eternity without Christ. Yet these two world wars and the many wars since should have humbled man.

- **Nationhood and Babylon** Instead of Britain forging its own identity and maintaining its own sovereignty, it is choosing to get more entangled in Europe, but hopefully the English, Scots, and Welsh share common interests, and therefore this link may prevent total absorption into Europe. The model of the competing sovereign nation-states outside of a Roman Church dominated Europe is the correct approach.

Mankind will try to build his ecclesiastical and political Babylon. The European union appears to be the political beast of Revelation 17. The Papacy will feature prominently and will seek to embrace all the so called 'great religions of the world'. Rome is promoting a united Europe. The conversion of England represents a real prospect. The Government is under pressure to change the Act of Settlement of 1701, which prohibits a Roman Catholic from succeeding to the throne. However, the lessons of the past have not been taken seriously. The Bible is ignored. The fragility of human life and the loss of the Princess of Wales, together with train disasters, etc. have failed to bring the British nation to its knees in true Godly repentance. The warning lights have been ignored and Divine judgement will come.

- **Wonderful Discoveries** However, in the last two millennia wonderful things have happened. The Birth of Christ, one of His names is "Wonderful", was the major event, which has been submerged, in pursuit of pleasure and religious toleration, particularly in the 20th Century, which, incidentally, has been the century of unprecedented progress. This shows that knowledge without God leads to foolishness, and worldly wisdom is vanity. In 1450 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press by movable type, and the Reformation made great progress in Europe. The rediscovery of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, or the Imputed Righteousness of Christ unshackled the Reformers from Rome, and liberated them from guilt and condemnation. The Reformation rocked the foundations of Europe, and resulted in light and excellency for mankind.

Incredible economic prosperity has been achieved. Medical science has made vast strides such as the discovery of the antibiotic, penicillin in 1928. Recently the completion of the first stage of the Genome project, decoding human DNA offers great promise. The advance of new technology appears to make geography an irrelevant issue. The world is a village. But how will humanity use this information or knowledge? Well, Einstein's theory of relativity led indirectly to the atom bomb! Inventions are a good thing if rightly used. Homelessness and poverty may be reduced even further. Cures may be found for AIDS, cancer and such disease. Life expectancy may be prolonged even further.

- **Storms are Rising** Jesus said, wars, famines, earthquakes, etc., will continue (Luke 21, Mark 13, Matthew 24). Global warming, and tampering with the food chain may be hazardous for mankind. Cloning represents a major danger to mankind.

The storms are rising over Europe, and indeed the world, which indicates that terrible days are ahead. There will be peace treaties, but they will be broken. Israel is back in the Land of Palestine, but is insecure. The recapture of Jerusalem was a significant event in Biblical prophecy in 1967. However, mankind is still characterised by sin: injustice, envy, pride, and covetousness reign within the human heart. Christianity is the only alternative to the ills of humanity. After all where would the world be if Hitlerism, Stalinism, Maoism reigned?

The 7th Millennium

The glorious prospect is that Christ may return during the seventh millennium, and that is an event that will be celebrated by the Church, and rejected by the world. Christ will judge the world in righteousness.

In particular, the millennium year 2000 should be one in which we as Christians should renew our commitment and surrender to Christ. It should be one of witnessing, and living in loving discipleship. My aspiration for the millennium is that God would stem the tide of iniquity, and send revival, and demonstrate His Most Holy Hand in the affairs of men. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope for the world. Freedom, truth and peace are in Jesus Christ. If we are to make a millennium resolution, then let us remember the Lord Jesus Christ's reply to a question: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment (the Queen needs to quote this one next year and in context) and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39)

Pray for the Royal family, the Government, and the whole nation, that God would heal our land for His glory. Christ will be vindicated in His Church. Six thousands years of God revealing Himself to mankind will result in multitudes being in the Kingdom of Christ. Let us pray that God will bring in even more souls into His Kingdom in the seventh millennium, through the Gospel of the Crucified and Risen Saviour of Sinners.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men"
(Luke 2:14)

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CONSTITUTION

- 1 **Doctrine:** The doctrine of the Continuing Church shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.
- 2 **Worship:** The worship of the Continuing Church shall be generally according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Authorised Version of the Bible shall be the only version used in the lectern and the pulpit and in public readings and expositions at all meetings of the Continuing Church.

- 3 **Ministry:** The consecration and ordination of ministers shall be according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). The Continuing Church believes in the ministry of women according to Scripture which does not permit them to teach or exercise authority, particularly as bishops, priests, and deacons.
- 4 **Discipline:** The church shall be episcopally governed. A general assembly shall be held not less than once a year consisting of the bishop and the ministers of the church and representatives of the local congregations to transact the business of the denomination and for mutual encouragement and edification.
- 5 **Membership:** New churches may apply for membership of the Continuing Church on the basis of their agreement with the doctrine, worship and discipline of that body.

Membership of the local church shall be on the basis of baptism and confirmation and approval by the local presbyter.

Any matters incapable of resolution shall be referred to the Ordinary.