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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
e-mail: nama@kpsw.demon.co.uk)*

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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 pm. Tuesday Class; 5.30 pm. Homework Club; 7.00 pm. Bible Study with 7.45 pm. 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,

Most of our lives, particularly that of the older generation, has been dominated by the fear of nuclear war between the East and the West. I remember the sense of dread and foreboding, when it was realized that Russia had discovered the atom-bomb; and the beginning of the cold war, when the major powers confronted each other with their nuclear arsenals, ready for use at any moment, and targeted on each other's cities. When Krushchev sent ships bearing nuclear warheads to Cuba, the temperature internationally rose to fever pitch, as the convoy approached its destination, and President Kennedy issued an ultimatum for it to turn back. Crowds assembled before the American and Russian embassies in all the major capitals of the world, and fear of nuclear war and the destruction of civilization stalked the world.

We continued to live under the threat of that nuclear umbrella for many decades. A precarious peace was kept by what is called MAD - mutually assured destruction, but the fear was that the balance might be tipped at any moment. So people continued to live on a knife-edge, but in time became somewhat accustomed to it.

Then, in the late 1980's, there came about the collapse of the Soviet empire. It had disguised from the rest of the world for many years the internal contradictions that underlay it, but finally they caught up with it, and it crumbled from within. Suddenly the threat of nuclear war was lifted, and the world seemed a safer place. People began to breathe once more, and to feel more secure about the future. But if they had given some thought to the real situation in the world they would have found that they had no real grounds for feeling as they did. Nuclear weapons were proliferating. China, India and Pakistan now possessed them, and the number was likely to grow. The world was, in fact, becoming a more dangerous place. The difficulty of controlling nuclear weapons was becoming greater. Behind the apparent peace and security there has arisen an even more dangerous and volatile situation, which is acknowledged by those who understand what is happening. All of which reminds me of the words of Scripture which state: *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.* (I Thess. 5:3).

The Bible tells us that the world which once perished by water, under the just judgment of God, will one day perish by fire. The Old and New Testaments describe it as ‘The Day of the Lord’. *The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (II Peter 3:10). It will come upon the world like a thief in the night, that is, when it is least expecting it, when it believes itself secure and at rest. The present time of illusory security is one that is much more dangerous, that the one of war-like tension through which we have passed. Also the wickedness and violence of the world has been mounting, while it believes itself safe and at peace.

This, then, is the time when the Christian, and the true Church of God’s elect, which is known only to Him, ought to be specially vigilant and looking for the Lord’s return, as he has promised; for he will not allow his people to be judged and destroyed with the wicked and rebellious world. The Lord Jesus will come for his people to deliver them, and they will be caught up to meet him in the air, as Paul teaches (I Thess. 4:16,17).

He will come for those who belong to him, who by his redeeming blood have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life. Many people think they are Christians because they go to church, or because they have been baptized, or brought up in a Christian home. But none of these things can assure us in that day that we are Christ’s and are safe, but faith in him and the grace of God in our hearts. These are days that call for great vigilance. I hope that what I have written elsewhere in the *Journal* about the nature of the true church will be of help.

I look forward to seeing you, God willing, at North Nibley on 8th July.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'David Samuel'. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text 'Yours in Christ,'.

David Samuel.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

Its Importance and Relevance for the Church Today

By David Samuel

In the New Testament we see the church under two aspects - the temporal and the eternal, the visible and the invisible. The visible church is recognised in its gospel, sacraments and professing members. The invisible church is known only to God, and is composed of those who are truly regenerate and predestined to everlasting life by the eternal decree of God the Father. Thus we have those two statements held in juxtaposition: *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ* (Gal. 3:27) and, *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his* (II Tim. 2:19).

The visible church, according to this teaching, includes all who have been baptized and have made an open profession of faith. It includes Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, Demas, Simon Magus, and Hymenaeus and Philetus. The invisible church includes none but those who are truly faithful and endure to eternal life.

Thus the church is represented not by one circle, but by an ellipse of two different foci. The visible and the invisible church, the outward professors of Christian religion and the elect, are not commensurable. These two aspects and representations of the church have to be held in tension, and must never be separated. It is the invisible church - the New Testament concept of God's elect - that governs and controls our understanding of the visible church, its sacraments, its membership and all its outward manifestations.

For example, when Paul speaks of the efficacy of the Word and the sacraments, it is never divorced from this understanding of election. The Word is only efficacious in God's elect. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them* (2 Cor. 4:3, 4). Likewise, baptism is only efficacious in the elect. It cannot be otherwise. And, by the same token, God's decree to save is not limited to the general means God has provided. He can disclose his saving purpose to Cornelius, a Gentile outside the church, and the baptism that follows is but the confirmation of the saving grace that has already been communicated.

So, then, we find that the eternal decree and purpose of God is the controlling factor which governs every other consideration in the teaching, activity and

orientation of apostolic Christianity. To leave out election and predestination is not merely to leave out something that is incidental or peripheral to it, but to deprive it of its fundamental axiom. It is like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.

In any properly balanced doctrine of the church this element has always been present. Because we are dealing with the overlapping of two circles, as it were, it gives the doctrine a double-sided and paradoxical appearance, which to the minds of some amounts to a contradiction. Paradox, however, is inescapable when we are dealing with the penetration of time by eternity. The phenomenon of the visible church is both continuous and discontinuous with that of the invisible. Like a stick broken in water, the visible church gives the appearance of discontinuity with the visible. Yet there is a real and essential relationship which must be maintained, though the membership of the one is not commensurable with the other.

This paradoxical character of the church has been reflected in every truly great Christian theologian. They have never tried to resolve the paradox by eliminating one side of it, and they have never neglected or rejected the doctrine of election. Where the doctrine of election has been lost sight of the church has invariably fallen into error. An over-emphasis upon the doctrine of election is, if anything, safer than its neglect. But the soundest and best position is that where the Biblical balance and proportion is held.

Saint Augustine's teaching of the church

I shall take two examples from church history. First we find in Augustine (354-430) this double aspect of the church brought out. In his controversy with the Donatists, who had separated from the rest of the church over the question of whether those who had lapsed under persecution should be readmitted, the question he sought to answer was *Ubi ecclesia?* Where is the church? He answered it in two ways. First, he sees the church as the universal institution which embraces all faithful Christians, and is led to the conclusion, "It is the sure judgment of the whole world that they are not good who cut themselves off from the whole world". He attaches such a high importance to the visible, institutional church as to assert in his anti-Donatist treatise on baptism, that there is "no salvation outside the church".

Yet those who think this is Augustine's final word on the church are mistaken, as are those who interpret him one-sidedly. Augustine was too great a man and too profound a theologian to be so limited and circumscribed. This was the mistake of Cardinal Wiseman, who wrote in 1829, that the great Augustine (by his words on schism) was condemning Anglicans in advance.

Augustine has something else to say in answer to the question, Where is the church? which Cardinal Wiseman did not mention. It is found in the key word

‘predestination’, which Augustine derived from St. Paul, and which he hands on to his great disciple John Calvin.

The true Biblical complexity of Augustine’s understanding of the church is seen in his recognition of the fact that the church does not consist merely of the visible institution and its members, but in the company of the elect, the unknown company of the predestinated.

On the one side of the church is a visible society, an identifiable homogenous institution girdling the whole world as a unity, the only church of God’s redeeming grace, the one ark above the flood. On the other side the church is invisible, save to the eyes of God alone, and its true members the unpredictable monuments of his sovereign grace. Job, the great outsider from Idumea, is for Augustine, the type of the elect, for he reminds the empirical church as it strides the centuries, that, according to the predestination of God, there are many sheep outside the fold and many wolves inside.

It is this double-sidedness that preserves the balance in Augustine’s teaching and prevents him from descending into error. He never resolves the antinomy of the church which is both visible and invisible. For him, as for Calvin, God’s sovereign grace presupposes all the institutions of the church as its means, and they are ultimately of no significance without it.

Had Augustine succumbed to the temptation to eliminate one side of the paradox, i.e. either election or the institutional church, he would not have been the seminal influence upon subsequent theological thought which he afterwards became, but would have lapsed either into mysticism or sectarianism. This latter was the mistake of Augustine’s contemporaries, who in the controversy with the Donatists appealed to the authority of Rome “...Rome has spoken, the matter is settled”. This famous epigram, falsely attributed to Augustine, misrepresents his position. In his anti-Donatist treatise *The Unity of the Church* there is not a single reference to the Roman see as the divinely ordered centre of Christian unity, or to Rome’s Petrine claims.

Let me here try to illustrate what I mean by error arising from the elimination of one side of the paradox. If, for example, you have undue emphasis upon predestination to the neglect of the visible institution, then you lapse into mysticism regarding the church and the errors commonly associated with it. Some time ago I was at Speakers Corner, in Hyde Park. A large, burly man had set up his stand with the words on it ‘The Invisible Church’. A voice from the crowd said, “And that must be the invisible man”. At which everyone roared with laughter. Throughout the history of the church there have been those who, because of their insistence upon the invisible church, have been led to disparage the visible institution, and in consequence have failed to treat with the seriousness it deserves its ministry, sacraments and discipline.

Likewise, where you have an unqualified emphasis upon the visible church to the neglect of its mystical and transcendent nature, you have a narrow and exclusive sectarianism. Whatever appeal may be made to numbers, the Church of Rome is in fact the Roman sect. Newman argued against this in his *Apologia*, in an attempt to rebut the charge. He argues but does not convince. Rome exalts the institution and eliminates the invisible church by equating it with the visible - indeed eliminates Christ by making him interchangeable with the hierarchy, and so makes the institutional church fantastic and blasphemous in its claims. As Bishop Ryle observed in his tract on *The Church*,

To give to the visible church the names, attributes, promises, and privileges which belong to the one true church, - the body of Christ; to confound the two things, the visible and the inward church, - the church professing and the church elect, - is an immense delusion ... once confound the body of Christ with the outward professing church, and there is no amount of error into which you may not at last fall. Nearly all perverts to Rome begin with getting wrong here.

And Bishop Ryle continues,

Once get hold of the idea that church government is of more importance than sound doctrine, and that a church with bishops teaching falsehood is better than a church without bishops teaching truth, and none can say what we may come to in religion.

His words need to be weighed very carefully in these ecumenical and spiritually perilous days, as well as the wise words of Hooker on the subject. "For the lack of the diligent observing of the difference ... between the church of God mystical and visible ... the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed".

Wycliffe's View of Election and the Church

I come to Wycliffe, the second example I have chosen of a great man who discerned the antinomy or paradox of the nature of the church, and used the doctrine of predestination and the invisible church of God's elect to oppose the excessive claims of the papacy and the institutional church of his time. Great man though he was we would not endorse everything he said. His teaching must be seen as corrective, and not as a norm to be followed. His position pushed to its extreme would tend to dissolve the institutional church altogether. However, he did not press his doctrine that far, and his emphasis was necessary at the time to offset the evil in the church, and quicken men's minds to a higher concept of the true church and its spiritual nature.

There is no doubt as to the importance of predestination in his teaching.

David Hume wrote in his *History of England* that Wycliffe asserted that everything was subject to fate and destiny, and that all men are predestined either to eternal salvation or reprobation. Wycliffe's quarrel with the papacy and the hierarchy was over the powers which they had arrogated to themselves over men's souls, and over their lives and property. Their power was universal and unchallenged. People went in superstitious dread of the Papal curse, and of excommunication. To be denied the sacraments and membership of the institutional church was to be denied salvation.

How could such overweening confidence on the part of the hierarchy, and such narrow exclusiveness in the visible church be combated, but by affirming the character of the invisible church, which consists of all God's elect people. Membership of that church does not depend on the *diktat* of the pope and hierarchy, but upon the decree and command of Almighty God. Set in such a context the place and importance of the institutional church is properly understood. The doctrine of election must at all times be the controlling doctrine of the church.

This Wycliffe showed in his tracts and sermons. On the Lord's Prayer Wycliffe wrote, "When we say, Thy kingdom come, we mean, that all men and women living in this world that shall be saved ... come to the bliss of heaven ... for all men and women that shall be saved be God's kingdom and holy church". None, he said, is a member of holy mother church, who is not a predestined person.

Thus, at a stroke, by the recovery of the Biblical doctrine of election, Wycliffe freed men from the tyranny of an overbearing institutional church, by teaching them that if they were God's elect and saved by grace, then none could exclude them from the privileges of salvation, or from membership of the true church, whatever pretensions they might make to do so.

Concerning the decree of Innocent III making auricular confession to a priest binding for the forgiveness of sins, Wycliffe argues,

And thus it seemeth to many men, that Christian men might be saved without any such confession, as they were before Pope Innocent ... Who is he that letteth (i.e. hinders) God to save men as he hath ordained before the Pope and the law came in, and before the world was made? Also God giveth freely his grace notwithstanding man's law. Why may not God do his grace through his servants, that serve him well, as if there were no such priest or pope? As sometime there was none.

We should note here that the doctrine of predestination is seen in its practical application to a pastoral problem. "Christ had made his servants free, but antichrist had made them bound again". The doctrine was not treated in a

merely speculative manner, but related and applied to the Christian experience of freedom in Christ - the liberty of the Christian man - and it was seen to be indispensable to that end.

Today, many treat the doctrine of election as something purely speculative and irrelevant to the pastoral and practical side of Christianity. When this happens we should be on our guard, for we can be sure that something of the fulness of our salvation in Christ is being lost. The doctrines of Scripture are not given us to afford us academic pastimes and speculative indulgence. They have practical relevance for the Christian's experience and life. None is superfluous. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works* (II Tim. 3:16).

What part of Christian freedom is being lost today by the neglect of, or even contempt for, the doctrine of predestination? I shall return to this. I cannot do better than to sum up this section in the words of Professor Whale.

This doctrine of predestination in the hands of its exponents is fatal not only to hierarchical and sacerdotal, but also to all ecclesiastical pretensions and arrogance: indeed, to all human assumptions of superiority.

Dare we affect to ignore it, or despise such teaching in the church today? If we do so, we do it at our peril.

(To be continued)

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 revjmalcolm@appleonline.net (If sending an actual document, not just an email, send as rtf).

Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

THE REMUNERATION OF MINISTERS

Dear Friends,

We greet you as our brethren in Christ, rejoicing in the calling which is ours by His grace, trusting that you rejoice with us.

At a recent meeting of the Committee we gave much time to the question of the payment and remuneration of our Ministers.

As a first step it was agreed to set up a Ministerial Support Fund in order to pay our Ministers their out-of-pocket expenses, incurred in the exercise of their ministry; expenses which are not otherwise met from local funds. In particular those involved in extension ministry, with the consequent need to travel greater distances, will need such support. Not all of our Ministers will need this help, but if we are to grow, such financial support must be available. We therefore estimate that the amount required would be about £1,500 per Minister per annum.

Beyond that, we must look to the time when we shall be able to pay full stipends to our Ministers, so that their need to take secular work is removed.

In the meantime, any donation, large or small, to **The Association of the Continuing Church Trust** and earmarked for the Ministerial Support Fund, would be gratefully received by our Treasurer, Mr. Dave Mansell, 17, Greenfels Rise, Oakham, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 7TP.

We continue to live in desperate times, when the need for faithful, Biblical ministry was never more urgently needed. That is what we are seeking to promote, as we look to God to provide all our needs of body, mind and spirit.

In Christ Jesus,

Yours sincerely,

John Shearer.

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

A Sermon preached at the ordination of Edward Powell and Andrew Price. Wimbledon, 18th March 2000.

By Roger Beckwith

I Timothy 3:13 (the concluding words of the Epistle appointed) *They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

The Prayer Book service for the ordination of deacons gives very exact instructions to the *preacher* at the service. It states that “when the day appointed by the bishop is come ... there shall be a sermon or exhortation, declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted deacons; how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ; and also, how the people ought to esteem them in their office.” I shall therefore speak this afternoon under the three headings which the service prescribes:

- i) the duty and office of deacons;
- ii) the necessity of the order of deacons in the church; and
- iii) how the people of the congregations ought to esteem them in their office.

A ‘deacon’ is someone who ‘deacons’ - in the original Greek of the New Testament this verb is *diakoneo*, to ‘serve, minister to, or help’; and the deacon, *diakonos* is someone who does these things, a ‘servant, minister or helper’. In the passage to which our collect at this service refers, Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, it is the verb ‘to deacon’, rather than the noun ‘the deacon’, that is used. Stephen and six others are there appointed ‘to serve tables’ (to deacon at tables, that is), to administer poor relief, when some of the needy widows of the Jerusalem church had been neglected in the daily distribution of food. Certain Christian churches have since inferred from this that the work of deacons is *simply* to minister to the bodily needs of people, whereas presbyters or bishops minister to their *spiritual* needs. There is no need to doubt that the work of deacons does *include* ministering to bodily needs: in the list of duties with which Andrew and Edward are being charged in this service, the following words occur, ‘And furthermore it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor and impotent (or disabled) people of the Parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate (that is, to the parish priest), that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners, or others’. But the earlier part of this list of the deacon’s duties

concerns ministering to *spiritual* needs: ‘It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon ... to assist the priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof; and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants; and to preach if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop’. And from the earliest times after the New Testament we find deacons ministering to spiritual needs by helping at services, though ministering to bodily need as well.

The truth of the matter is, I believe, that the deacon is appointed to be a general helper to a senior minister. ‘Helper’ is one of the meanings of the word ‘deacon’, as we saw - a servant, minister or helper. Of course, ‘servant’ and ‘minister’ are not inappropriate translations either: the deacon is a ‘servant’ to God and Christ, and a ‘minister’ to Christ’s church; but these things are true of all church officers, whereas to be a ‘helper’ to a senior minister is specific to the office of a deacon. The six who were appointed with Stephen were indeed appointed to serve tables, but also to help the apostles by doing so. *It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God and serve tables*, the apostles say; *we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word* (Acts 6:2,4). The Seven served tables, therefore to relieve the apostles of doing it. Very soon we find them assisting the apostles in other ways: Stephen in defending the faith against contentious Jews, and Philip in spreading the Gospel to Samaria, to the Ethiopians (in the person of the Ethiopian eunuch) and to the cities of the Philistines. The apostles follow up Philip’s work, by visiting Samaria themselves, but without his help the work would not even have got started.

When a local minister is appointed to the missionary congregations which Paul founds further afield, the deacons evidently become helpers not to the apostles, who are only occasional visitors, but to the *bishops or presbyters* of those churches. When Paul writes to the church of Philippi, he addresses his letter *to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons* (Phil. 1:1). ‘Bishops’ literally means overseers, and ‘deacons’ means helpers, so the overseers are naturally mentioned first and their helpers second. When Paul writes his first letter to Timothy, who is at Ephesus, he lists in chapter 3 the qualifications needed in those who are to be *appointed* as bishops or presbyters and as deacons, and once again the deacons come second, for they are appointed to a subordinate office. The qualifications for both offices are very much the same: they are to be people of good character, of orderly life, able to control their own households, the husbands of one wife (that is, they will normally be married men, but not divorced and remarried); they will not be lovers of money or given to much wine; bishops or presbyters must not be chosen from quarrelsome people, we are told, nor deacons from ‘double-tongued’ or deceitful people, and one imagines that both requirements apply to

both offices (how much grief the church would have been spared if these requirements had been properly enforced!); and the only significant difference is that bishops or presbyters are required to be ‘apt to teach’ (to have teaching gifts), whereas deacons are *not* required to. If deacons do *not* have teaching gifts, they will continue deacons for life, and will help the presbyters or bishops in other ways than by teaching; and this often happened in the early church, and often happens in the East even today. This is the significance of the words used in the list of duties in this service *and to preach, if he be thereto admitted by the bishop*: in other words, a preaching license is not to be taken for granted normally in the case of presbyters. Of course, if a deacon does have teaching gifts, this is a bonus, and in such cases he will probably go on to be ordained presbyter at a later date. St. Paul says in our text that they that have used the office of a deacon well (literally, they that have deaconed well) purchase to themselves a good degree (a good position among Christians) and great boldness in the faith, some of them can appropriately be advanced to the role of presbyter.

Perhaps I have said enough about the duty and office of deacons; now something on the second point, the *necessity* of the order of deacons in the church. Deacons are not often mentioned in the New Testament, from which we can perhaps infer that they did not exist everywhere; but in large congregations they did exist, and where they existed they were often necessary, as helpers to busy presbyters or bishops. The appointment of the Seven at Jerusalem was very necessary, to prevent the apostles being distracted from the ministry of the word and prayer; and in a similar way the appointment of helpers to bishops and presbyters is often necessary today. Help is one of the most necessary things in life, for none of us is independent of others; and this is true also in the church, where the members of Christ’s body are in a variety of ways dependent on each other. The diaconate also has the advantage, as the service says, of providing practical training for those who are to go on to more onerous duties.

And finally, I am bidden to say something on the third point, about ‘how the people ought to esteem deacons in their office’. I have stressed the fact that the deacon is in a subordinate office, that of an assistant. It well becomes a deacon therefore to be modest, and submissive to bishops or presbyters whom he assists. It is a mistake, however, which people sometimes make, to think that because of his subordinate position he deserves no respect. A man who has dedicated himself to this work, and after due examination and preparation has been appointed to it, deserves *great* respect, and is entitled to our affection and prayers. If we look back at the passages of the New Testament to which we have referred, we see that these people who served tables at Jerusalem also founded churches (in the case of Philip) or died as the first Christian martyr (in the case

of Stephen). Did *they* not deserve respect? And with the anonymous deacons of the other churches it is no different: Paul treats them with great respect. In addressing the church at Philippi he singles out the deacons, and no one else except the bishops, for special mention. *to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.* And when writing to Timothy at Ephesus, he instructs him about the appointment of bishops or presbyters and of deacons, but about no other ministries whatever. In these particular ministries, there is not only the call of God, but also outward appointment by the church: they are not only ministries but offices. And the effect of this is no one can gainsay your right to minister as a deacon, which the church has publicly acknowledged. A deacon is a public figure: it therefore behoves him to be very circumspect about his walk and behaviour, but he should also remember that he has the protection of his public office against all the opposition which any ordained minister is liable to encounter. God be with you, Andrew and Edward, and the church by this service has recognized that God is with you: so go forward humbly but boldly, in the work that you are called to do.

The Testimony of William Timothy Foley

*The law of the LORD is perfect, **converting the soul**: the testimony of the LORD is sure, **making wise the simple**. The statutes of the LORD are right, **rejoicing the heart**: the commandment of the LORD is pure, **enlightening the eyes**. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. **Who can understand his errors?** cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer (Psalm 19:7-14).*

Background

I was born in Pembury, Kent, England in 1952, and baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. I was given the name William Timothy at my baptism. When I was very young my family returned to Ireland and we lived in Galbally, County Limerick. The family later moved to Co. Tipperary, and there I remained until 1972, when I returned to England.

Providential Care

God's providential care in my life was evident from an early age. God delivered me from drowning in a river as a young boy. Accidents such as being crushed with a tractor wheel, being spiked in the head and caustic soda being thrown into my eyes was terrible.

Irish Life

My early years in Ireland were happy and joyful. But Ireland was very different when I was growing up from what it is today, now it is secularist and materialistic. Roman Catholic Church attendance is falling because of the scandalous behaviour of the clergy, among other things. Many young people have given up on the Roman Catholic Church.

When I was growing up as a boy it was unheard of that anyone who was a Roman Catholic did not practice the Roman religion. The people were friendly and left the doors unlocked in the countryside. The Church's threat of Hell was a reality.

The Priest held sway in the Parish. Externally Ireland was a moral country, swearing was frowned upon. Immorality was seldom heard about. If it was, then it was viewed as scandalous behaviour, and the perpetrator was ostracised.

Roman Catholicism

From an early age I was instructed in the Roman Religion. Often I heard that if one was to go to Heaven it was through the Roman Church. I received Holy Communion at a young age, and I particularly looked forward to that occasion, as I was the recipient of half a crown!

I used to go to 'Confession' to confess my sins. I believed in seven sacraments - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist (Mass), Penance, Extreme Unction, Marriage, Holy Orders (ordination of Priests and consecration of nuns). The Bible only knows of two - Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

I was told that Romanism was the only true religion, and that salvation was through the Church of Rome. I was very religious at various stages in my life, especially when I was in trouble. At one point I used to get up and go to Church early each morning. This happened for some time. I was afraid of going to Hell. However, I had questions about Roman Catholic teaching at a very young age.

Protestants

I seldom came into contact with Protestants. When I did, I always found that they belonged to the Irish gentry with a great deal of money. Of course, there were exceptions, as in the case of the people who helped my father - Cannon Hogg of the Church of Ireland. I remember hating Protestants for they were snobs, and never mixed with us. I remember throwing stones at one particular Protestant. This was a frequent occurrence on my part.

School Life

I was first sent to a national school, and then I attended the so-called Christian Brothers in the Monastery School in Tipperary Town. This is a religious order now in decline.

One particular Christian Brother frequently beat me. However, I must say in fairness, my stubborn nature and my dislike of study may have contributed to the frequent outburst of the teacher's anger. I took up athletics and this Christian Brother took a shine to me. When I excelled in an event and won a race, then I found that I was praised, but woe betides me when I lost. I remember getting severely beaten over my poor performance in mathematics.

Confirmation

I remember being prepared for Confirmation. I memorized Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles' Creed, and the 10 Commandments (different from the Bible). I remember the older boys saying, "Watch out for the slap on the face by the Bishop." That did worry me little, and became my focus.

When I went up the front in the Roman Church I was most surprised that he did not slap me on the face, he simply laid his hand on me and said, 'Receive ye the Spirit.' The only problem for me is that I felt no different, but I was relieved that the occasion was over. I was given another name, Patrick, at my confirmation.

Religious Life

I was much involved in religious life. I used to attend the Stations of the Cross, which are displayed in Roman Catholic Churches. My Father was encouraging me to become a Catholic priest, presumably because I was the eldest son. This was reinforced in the school with the enforced celibacy that came with the package. I believed that some Christian foundations were laid intellectually, so that when I heard the true gospel the language was not unfamiliar, thought there was considerable redefining and clarification of doctrine, to accord with biblical revelation. While in the Roman Catholic Church I believed that I was saved through good works, and this was my focus. I never really understood why Christ died. I just could not link Christ with my salvation.

My Path of Discovery

Discovering the true Gospel Christ was not by my doing, but God revealing the truth to me over many years. I ran away from home and settled in Cork, staying in a youth hostel. I got involved in the nightlife, dancing frequently at the Stardust ballroom and other entertainment venues. Going to the cinema, and clubs was exciting. I really got into fashion, and clothes. I made new friends very quickly, but I got into drinking alcohol, and bad company, showing my great propensity for wickedness.

I went through an array of jobs in a couple of years: builders' labourer, steel fabrication worker in a factory (where I nearly lost one of my fingers on my right

hand in an accident), coal-man, butter factory worker, quality control inspector, and store-man. I well remember buying my first transistor radio, which was quickly stolen. I was heartbroken. I seldom wrote to my parents, I basically forgot about them, and developed my rebellious lifestyle.

I occasionally went to the Roman Catholic Church, and attended a mission. I once heard a sermon on Hell in Cork City, which really caused me to fear. Salvation looked impossible at that stage.

I well remember my first contact with a religious person (I do not know if he was a Christian), he was an American person who befriended me, and we walked about a couple of miles together, talking about spiritual things along the way. However, it went in one ear and out the other. I also remember picking up a Christian tract on a street in Cork, and reading it - I did think about spiritual things, but not seriously. I knew I was in rebellion against God, and was accountable.

My circumstances began to go wrong for me, and I found myself out of a job when I was in Cork City. I had rent to pay, and the prospect of nowhere to stay faced me. I felt desperate. So I rang an American Christian couple who were missionaries in Cork City. They were staying in Douglas, next door to Pastor Shaw, who was the Minister of the Baptist Church in Cork City.

I had been courting their daughter, who was a professing Christian. She put in a good word for me. Well this missionary was kind and enthusiastic; he began work on me straightway. There is no point in letting the bird out of the cage unless you have tamed him!

He gave me a crash course on the Bible, and introduced me to Bible prophecy. I remember he showed me many passages from the book of Hebrews, and Galatians and every argument I put up, he was well able to answer it. I was impressed.

This missionary got me to kneel down and say a prayer - I said an Act of Contrition (part of the confessional) - I did not know anything else. He told me I was saved. I started to take a Bible course, and look at the Bible.

This family gave me a copy of the RSV Bible (today I believe that the AV Bible is the best and most accurate translation of God's Word in the English language). I really wanted to prove Roman Catholicism wrong, because of my strict upbringing. I was victim to 'easy believism', but the seed was being sown nevertheless. I did not become a Christian then.

The American Missionary spoke to the Personnel Manager of the Railway Station, in Cork City, and got me a job on the railway as a porter. The American Missionary family provided accommodation and they laid down the rules and I kept them.

By this stage I was a competitive swimmer, and very keen on lifesaving. I had got second in the all-Ireland in lifesaving. I really loved those American Missionaries. They were good to me, showing practical Christian love. I stayed with this family for some time. They went back to the United States. I frequently

went to Church, but I never really prayed, because I did not know God. I was baptized because others were being baptized, and mixed with the Salvation Army, and the Brethren, the Baptist, and the Methodist. Pentecostal folk got me to speak in tongues. To all intents and purposes I appeared to all that I was a Christian, but I do not believe I had saving faith, nor had I repented of my sins. I became moral and I did reform outwardly for a time. I purchased an amazing collection of Christian books, and read Dr D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones on Romans - Justification by Faith. I believed the Five Points of Calvinism, and became Calvinistic in my theology, and fully understood the errors of Rome, and had done battle with the cults, yet I was not saved.

Children of God Cult

I met the Children of God cult and joined them. I got involved with Arthur Blessett, who told me that I was going to be a preacher some day. I admired his courage when he spoke to the students at Trinity College and in the YMCA in Dublin. I thought he was a great character. I gave the Children of God all my money and possessions, and lived in Dublin (Blackrock). I spent many hours in Phoenix Park witnessing with a chap called *Parable* to people. My name in the Children of God was *Mel-chis-ed-ec*.

England

Then I came with the Children of God to England, and went to a Pop Festival in Wigan, then to Lincoln, then down to Crystal Palace, and finally on to Bromley, the headquarters of the Children of God in the UK. I remember carrying around with me Christian books on Theology. I witnessed a strict regime in the Children of God. I left the Children of God and went to a Pentecostal Conference in Minehead, and Derrick Prince, was the preacher. However, I returned for some time to Bromley. Then I left the Children of God and returned to Ireland. Later I returned to England and lived in Oxford, where I got into a very sinful lifestyle.

Prison in Oxford

From time to time I made contact with Christians in the Brethren and the Assemblies of God. I attended Westminster Chapel in London and heard Dr Glynn Owen preach. Meanwhile I worked as a fence erector for a company in Oxford. I ended up in prison on remand for violence and breaking up a nightclub, whilst being drunk, with other people. Prison life was miserable.

A Pentecostal Minister visited me, and he appeared to give me up as a hopeless case. I went to see the chaplain, who was unable to help me spiritually. I tried making amends to God. But no sooner was I out of prison I returned to my wicked lifestyle. When the case came to trial I was left off because I had served 3 months on remand and was fined £60.00, to be paid in installments. This was a bad crime.

St Albans

After I was released I lived in St Albans with my uncle and his wife. Having been obnoxious I was asked to leave. I found a flat, and lived a most wicked life of sin. St Albans Council employed me as a pool attendant in 1973. I even made an attempt to reform by going to a Brethren Church now and again, but I finally gave up Christianity, but Christians were praying for me. I went to the Roman Catholic Church on occasions even though I knew it was wrong in its doctrines. I became a body builder, and worked in a nightclub in Watford. My life got so unspeakably wicked. I got involved a little with the Seven-Day Adventist Church. My soul was sick.

Accidents

I was involved in a car crash, I fell off a racing bike on another occasion and broke a collarbone (same one I broke as a boy), I also fell off a motorbike, and each time I escaped death.

Near Death

The worst time in my life was when I was living in St Albans with people who were wicked like myself and taking drugs, and I became dangerously ill, and developed peritonitis and almost died, but I was rushed to St Albans Hospital, and operated on and lived. I was told that I was not far from death. Once again, God kept me alive. However, I did not repent. The American Missionaries, who I had known in Cork, had been to see me when I was living there. (They had got my details from my father, who I had disgraced.) I put on a show of religion for them on that and other occasions.

Rebellion Against God

I returned to my life of terrible wickedness, and gave up on God. There are many things that were very wicked which I did, and it would not be glorifying to God to rehearse them here. In particular, I remember closing the door of the kitchen in my flat in Wheathampstead in Hertfordshire, and making a conscious decision to sin as much as I could. I was keeping track of my sins and thriving in my wickedness. I remember thinking on the road from Wheathampstead to St Albans, very near where the dead body of the Australian heiress was found, that *God will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie*. That was describing me, running away from God. I was hardened in my sin, wreathed, and blind to the gospel of God. Every overture of grace I simply rejected. I hurt a lot of people, and sinned greatly against God.

Greater and Deeper Wickedness

From about 1976 to 1981 I hardly gave God a thought, living a life of terrible rebellion against God. The hunger strike was happening in the North of Ireland and I began to think about those men who were dying, and where they were after

death. I saw the hopelessness of the situation. I was working by day and mixed with the wicked by night. I was living the fast life with a flash car, but I got bored of committing my sins against God. Grace began to dawn in my soul. The Holy Spirit was working. I was not looking for God. No one had spoken about God to me for many years.

Conversion to Christ

I was lying on my bed on 27th December 1981, and I remember being restless with life. I thought about eternity. I never gave a thought to my Roman Catholic teaching or background. The verses of Scripture, which I had memorized in the Children of God cult, came back to me. They were from the Authorized Version. I had a debate in my mind. If I repent now then I will miss all the sinning, but the answer came, 'What if you were to die tonight, where would you go?' 'Hell' was the reply. I was aware of my awful state, I could no longer fight against God. I said, 'I will repent at the end of life when I am 70 years or so.' The reply came, 'You may not be able to repent then, it is now or never.' There was urgency in the situation.

I was convicted of my sin, my eyes were being opened to the danger, and I was concerned about the judgment. I wanted to live. I said, 'I would like to make a new start, and give up all my sin, and live for Christ.' The prospect seemed exciting. I turned to God, and I got out of bed and I went back suddenly to the kitchen and gripped the door handle of the kitchen door, where I had decided some years ago that I was going to live a most awful life of wickedness. That was the turning point. It was then I repented. God had come down to me and pulled me up from the mire. I was like a stone in the mire, fast sinking, and I could not help myself. It had to be sovereign power, and God grace working. I was not searching for God, He was searching for me. He inclined me to respond to His love in Christ.

Growth

I trusted Christ, the Roman Church and the Children of God cult were now meaningless. Christ was real in the Bible, and Christianity was about a relationship with Christ. I began to pray, read and study my Bible. I found it really exciting. The words had new meaning. I was enlightened. I was cleansed. My conscience was relieved. There was a beauty about the Word of God. God was speaking to me. I loved it. When I came home from work I would read and study the Word of God. I was a like a little child, grasping at its mother's breast for milk. I was feeding on the Word. It had a cleansing effect. I began to read other Christian books.

I found a book that really helped - *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. I said I better not contact Christians this time because I thought they might think I was a fraud. Some weeks passed. I went to the Council's rubbish dump one Lord's

Day on my way to Church, and destroyed about £2000 (1982) worth of records. I poured my bottles of whiskey down the kitchen sink. I left all my old associates.

I remember going to a Brethren Church, and because I was honest about my sins, they put me on probation. I left that Brethren Church, and I was baptized later as a believer in a Brethren Assembly.

I broke with my entire past wickedness. I was changed. I returned to work and immediately my employer knew that I had changed. He said, "You are different, what is it? May be it is for me?" I told him what happened to me. I said that I was a Christian, many people did not like it. I was filled with joy. I felt peace. I prayed. I believed the Word, and the promises of Scripture. I laid special hold of Proverbs 3:5,6. I made contact with Christians. They were excited.

Dark Days

After my conversion, I experienced a terrible dark period in my soul for many months. I remember shouting at the devil in terrible temptation. My joy seemed to disappear and doubt emerged. But this made me stronger. I searched and researched, studying Christian works that would help me. I read two out of the three volumes of Matthew Henry. God meant the darkness and temptation for good, though God did not tempt me to sin. I was however, tested by the Lord. This made me stronger.

Prayer

God only knows who prayed for my salvation. One incident I can relate. According to Mrs. Dennis, her husband who had gone to be with the Lord, had me on his prayer list for many years, having many years before met me in a Brethren assembly. He had faithfully prayed for me and continued to pray for me until he died. He never saw this side of eternity the answer to his prayers, but he will one-day, when we meet in glory in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never underestimate the value of prayer. God answers the prayers of His people for His glory.

Marriage

I met my lovely Christian wife, Elizabeth, in 1984 and in 1986 I married her after seeking permission from her father, Mr. Browne. We have six children, comprising 5 boys, Tiomoid Liam (6/1/88), Iosaef Aindrias (6/4/90), Daineil Eoin (12/6/91), Samueil Daivi (27/4/93), Ezara Doiminic (11/4/99), and one girl, Eilis Anna-Rois (20/4/96). What a blessing to be married to a lovely wife, and have the gift of children from the Lord.

Education

I decided that I needed a proper education, so I commenced studying in 1986. I have achieved with the help of God the following: CMS (BTEC, 1997), DMS

(CNAAB, 1989), MA (CNAAB, 1991). I have studied theology at Oxford University (1991) and carried out PhD research part-time at Loughborough University from 1991 to 1994. Currently I am completing a BA (Hons) degree in theology by distance learning with Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (South Africa). These are accredited qualifications.

Ordination

I was ordained to the Christian ministry on 4th November 1992. This was performed under the auspices of the Evangelical Church Alliance (ECA) in the United States. The Chairman of the Ordination Committee who ordained me was the Revd. Preb. Dr Victor Pearce, he was the Chief Executive of the Hour of Revival.

Going On in the Faith

My life is hid in Christ now. The former life is dead and gone. I am a new man in Christ, but I still have the old nature, which I do battle with. I am going on by God's grace in The Faith, and I am reconciled to my parents. My affections are on things above, though I have many weaknesses as a sinner. I love preaching, and witnessing. I remember when I first stood up in public to preach - I had butterflies in my stomach. I still get them today sometimes. I preach in the Open Air and Churches.

I have dark days in my Christian life. People have taunted me about my past life of wickedness, and I am ashamed of this, as I am the Chief of sinners. But this one thing I know, Christ has died for my sins, and is risen for my justification, and all my sins have been forgiven and forgotten.

I do not live in the past; I live in the present waiting for that great day of His Coming. ... *for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day* (II Timothy 1:12).

I obtained mercy, and for that I shall be always indebted to the grace of God in Christ. Thank God for the imputed righteousness of Christ, this is the foundation of my assurance before God. I dare not trust my sweetest frame of mind, or any action, which I do; I simply surrender to Christ, and trust Him for all, because He is my mediator between God and man. I have been stripped of my righteousness, and clothed in the eternal, and incomparable righteousness of Christ. Alleluia, what a Saviour!

Finally, I thank the Lord for His goodness in providing me with a wonderful Saviour, wife and family. Pray for me that I will continue to follow the Lord. I look for mercy in that day, and that I will have a good and faithful testimony to the end for His Glory.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen (II Timothy 1:17).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (CONTINUING)

**NIBLEY HOUSE, NORTH NIBLEY,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

SATURDAY 8 JULY 2000

- 10.30 am** *Coffee*
- 11.00 am** *Devotions* - the Presiding Bishop, Dr. David N. Samuel
- 11.30 am** "Protestantism and the Work of the Holy Spirit" - Rev. G. Ferguson
- 12.30 pm** *Picnic in grounds.* No food or drink provided - we bring our own
- Group photo. A party will visit the Tyndale monument. Please bring waterproof shoes, coat, and if you wish to ascend the monument, a torch. There are wonderful views from the top.
- 2.00 pm** *Business Meeting* for representatives, if notice of business is received, followed by
- General Meeting* - Motion to support stand taken by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) proposed by the Rev. John F. Shearer
- Presentation of Accounts* - Mr. David K. Mansell, Treasurer
- 2.45 pm** *Address* - Mr. Stephen Green of 'Christian Voice'
- 3.30 pm** *Closing Devotions*, tea and disperse. A retiring collection for expenses.

Travel directions and enquiries - Dr. Napier Malcolm Tel 01934 712520

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

The Atonement and our Salvation

By Edward J. Malcolm

The doctrine of Justification by Faith is, without question, the central doctrine of the Christian church. Martin Luther was perfectly correct in stating that it is the mark of a standing or a falling church. But if Justification by Faith is the central, or first, doctrine of the church, the second is the doctrine of the Atonement. Were it not for the Atonement it would not be possible for us to be justified. And since Easter is (hopefully) still fresh in our minds, now seems a good time to reflect a little on the Atonement, and consider some of the benefits we are brought by it.

We shall by no means cover every aspect of this great doctrine, nor shall we look at all the errors that have been and are perpetrated in connection with it. Instead we shall look at three areas that are central to the Atonement, all of which are subject to some misunderstanding today. We shall consider

1. The Necessity of the Atonement
2. The Effect of the Atonement
3. The Extent of the Atonement

However, we must first define what we mean by the Doctrine of the Atonement.

The Bible teaches that Christ obeyed and suffered in our place, to satisfy the demands of divine justice, and so remove an obstacle from God in order that pardon for the guilty may be granted. Let us consider this briefly.

The Bible is saying that God would be unable to pardon any guilty sinner unless Jesus Christ had first suffered in the place of that sinner to take on Himself the wrath of God toward that sinner. So we are looking, as we do in the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, at a law-court scene. God the Father has two roles; He is both Judge and Plaintiff. God the Son has two roles; He is both Advocate and Substitute. The individual sinner has one role to play; he is the accused who has been found guilty. So, in the Doctrine of the Atonement we enter the court after judgment has been declared. The sinner has been found guilty, and the Judge has declared the sentence of death against the one who has wronged Him. However the Advocate offers up Himself to bear the penalty of sin, owed by the guilty party. He will suffer in his place. He will satisfy the demands of divine justice in a way that allows God to show mercy without being inconsistent in His nature. For God could not remain true to His nature and forgive sinners unless the penalty for sin were paid, as is shown in Exodus 23:7, *For [God] will not justify*

the wicked; and Exodus 34:7, [*God*] *that will by no means clear the guilty*. For God has said *The soul that sinneth, it shall die*. Unless He can find a Substitute to die in the place of the soul that sinned, that soul must pay what God demands. He has found a Substitute in Jesus Christ, Who willingly lays down His life for His friends (John 15:13).

1. The Necessity of the Atonement

By this we mean that the only way open to God to be reconciled to sinners was by the sacrificial and substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We see this in the Old Testament in Genesis 15. Here God made a covenant with Abraham. Abram took no actual part in ratifying the covenant; it was God alone, as represented by a smoking furnace and burning lamp, who passed between the divided sacrifice. Abram was asleep, so it was God alone who promised blessing on Abram and his seed *through faith* (Galatians 3:14), if the covenant were kept, God taking on Himself alone the responsibility of repairing the covenant if its terms were broken.

We see this most clearly in various things said by the Lord Jesus. He said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?* (Luke 24:26). He prayed in the Garden before His arrest, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me* (Matthew 26:39). Even Caiaphas the high priest gave unwitting support, saying *...it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people* (John 11:50).

So the teaching of the Lord Jesus is that He had to die. Why?

From the beginning God made it plain to man that the penalty of sin is death (Genesis 2:16, 17). This is repeated in various places in the Old Testament. From the beginning God made it plain that the only satisfaction for sin is through the shedding of blood. Thus Abel sacrificed of *the firstlings of his flock*, and God provided skins of animals, as the first blood sacrifice to cover the sins of man (Genesis 4:4 said in Hebrews 11:4 to be *a more excellent sacrifice*, and Genesis 3:21).

Space forbids us going into the Mosaic Law and Abraham's life further, but the only way to propitiate the wrath of God is by blood atonement, for *without shedding of blood is no remission* (Hebrews 9:22).

However the matter does not end there, for animal sacrifices never actually atoned for a single sin! For in Hebrews 10:11 it speaks of *offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins*. Rather the offering of animals was a type and shadow of what was to come, *a figure for the time then present*, (Hebrews 9:9) that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, concluding in verse 14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* He is the One they point to.

Now, why should God fill the Old Testament with instructions concerning the sacrificing of animals to atone for sin, if it bore no relation to the reality? If He were actually planning to deal with sin by a completely different method, what would these instructions teach anybody? Therefore the fact this was God's appointed means under the Old Covenant tells us that it was His appointed means under the New, though in an effective manner.

There are some who say that God had at His disposal any number of ways of effecting reconciliation. He chose a particular method out of them. The Bible does not speak this way. Some, of Socinian and Arminian convictions, say there is no such 'justice' in God which demands satisfaction, and that He could have set aside the Law and its demands, as and when He chose. They say that God could have chosen any substitute or none. This view fails to take account of what the Lord Jesus said Himself about His death. Others have said that God made it the only way, but until that point he could have chosen a different way. While this view exalts the free will of God in salvation, it also fails to take adequate notice of the justice of God, for it denies that God's justice *had* to be propitiated. The only consistently Scriptural view is that Christ had to die as a Substitute, and that it had always been so.

Now, if the Atonement is necessary we must expect it to be effective.

2. The Effect of the Atonement

We have seen that the Atonement was necessary - unavoidably so. It would seem strange, then, to think that this unavoidable act might not prove effective. Rather, we must think of the Atonement as a potent act, one actually effecting an outcome. This outcome is twofold, where the two parts add up to the whole.

The first outcome concerns the relationship between God and sinners. The problem is not, as some maintain, that we need to be reconciled to God, but that He needs to be reconciled to us. After all, we have sinned against Him, not He against us. In the Old Testament the tables of the law were kept in the ark of the covenant. This box did not have a lid as such. However, there was the Mercy Seat. This was a board, covered in gold, on which were two cherubim. God was represented as sitting between the cherubim. The Mercy Seat was the place the high priest went to once a year to make the sacrifice for atonement. It acted as a shield, for the law was a silent and impartial witness to the truth of God and the sin of the people. Were God to see the law, as it were, if He were to hear its words, then His justice would demand satisfaction. The Mercy Seat acted as a shield, covering the sins of the people, so that God could instead be propitious. The Puritans often referred to the Lord Jesus as the Mercy Seat, for He has done the same thing by His blood. His blood has covered our sins, so that they are blotted out, no longer visible. Since those sins are no longer visible, God no longer has a case against us. Since the Bible also speaks of the wrath of God

being revealed against sinners we must also pay attention to the word ‘propitiation’. By this we understand that the blood of Christ, and His Substitutionary sacrifice, actually stand in the place of the sinner when the wrath of God is poured out. By this means reconciliation takes place, so that God is turned toward those whose sins are covered.

The second, related, outcome, is that sinners are redeemed, Mark 10:45. The atoning death of Christ has actually paid the ransom for sinners. Acts 20:28 speaks of those *he hath purchased with his own blood*. Jesus Christ has cleared them from the penalty of divine justice, so that nothing more is owing on their part. For this to be true two things are required. First, we need to be in a right standing with God. This is Justification by Faith. Second, we need to be in union with Christ, through regeneration and sanctification. This is all that is included in ‘the new birth’. Both of these come to us through the death of Christ; they are actually ours by his death. Some say that His death opens the way to make it possible for us to receive these things. In fact His death gives us these things as certainties. Colossians 1:13 tells us that we have been *translated into the kingdom of his dear Son*. In other words, by the death of Jesus Christ all that we lacked to enter into the kingdom has come to us. His death has actually made us the inheritors. The effect is not just the opportunity to enter, but is the actual right to enter the Kingdom.

So the Atonement turns aside the wrath of God, and allows Him to be propitious toward us. It deals with the demands of divine justice, and opens the way for divine mercy. It is not the beginning of divine love, for that was the cause of sending Christ in the first place, John 3:16. Rather it is an expression of divine love.

3. The Extent of the Atonement

Since the Atonement actually achieved something we need to examine the extent to which the results are made available. After all, this potent act has actually granted something to some people. Who are those people? Again we must turn to what the Lord Jesus said.

He said that He lays down His life for His friends, John 11:15. He said that He was sent to none but the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matthew 15:24. He calls those who *labour and are heavy laden*, Matthew 11:28. He said, *My sheep hear my voice*, John 10:27. He is described as saving *his people from their sins*, Matthew 1:21.

We can also see what the apostles said. One key verse here is I Corinthians 15:22, *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. By Adam came death, and it descended upon all his seed. Any who are not the seed of Adam are not under death. Only Jesus Christ is not of the seed of Adam in this way. By Jesus Christ comes life. All who are of the seed of Christ shall live. Only

those who have been given to the Son are His seed, John 17:9ff. These are they whom Paul describes as the *elect of God*, Colossians 3:12. He says they are ‘predestined’, Ephesians 1:11. Peter uses similar language, I Peter 1:3.

The argument is straightforward. Given that the Atonement was necessary it has to be effective. Given that Scripture teaches it is effective that effect has to be realised. Given that it is only realised in some, the extent of the Atonement must be limited to a group, for whom Christ died, whom Scripture calls ‘the elect.’

Some object to this teaching. There are some who say that the death of Christ atones for all sin. They say that Christ died for everybody. They take such texts as I John 2:2, that speak of Christ’s dying for the sins of the whole world, and they expect as wide an application of the benefit as they find in those words.

But we have to ask a question here. If Christ truly died for the sins of the whole world, why is not the whole world saved? All are agreed that countless millions go to their deaths never having trusted in Christ as their Saviour. All who hold to this view and who are evangelicals all readily admit that unless a person comes to faith there will be no salvation. So in what sense did Christ die for them?

The answer lies in a correct understanding of the expression, ‘the whole world.’ There are really only two ways of understanding it. We must either take it as a circular expression, or as a linear.

If it is a circular expression then John is saying that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of all around, Christian and non-Christian. He is speaking to a group he refers to as ‘you’, 1:3, and he speaks from a group known as ‘we’, 1:1ff. In 2:2 he links the two groups together, making an ‘us’ or ‘our’ group. He then contrasts this group, which we understand to be all Christian believers, with ‘the whole world.’ So the circular expression refers to all living at the time of John, and, subsequently, living at every time in which this epistle is read.

This cannot be the meaning. It cannot be the meaning because John has said, 1:7, that ‘the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.’ There the ‘us’ refers to the two groups combined, to the body of Christians. There is no suggestion here that Christ died for any but the Christians. Furthermore John is contrasting those who sin, and who confess their sin, and who seek not to sin, with those who sin, and do not recognise the fact, and so do not confess it, and never seek to not sin. One is a description of Christians, for whom Christ’s blood was shed; the other is a description of the ungodly who have no interest in the fact that the Son of God died.

If it is a linear expression then John is saying that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of all Christians living at that time, and also of all true believers who ever have lived and who ever will live. So rather than seeking the interpretation by looking around us we should seek it by looking forward and backward, along a line. Thus Abel, Seth, Abraham, Moses, David, and so on, to name but a fraction of the Old Testament saints, find Christ to be the the propitiation for their sins. Similarly all who live between John’s writing and the return of the

Lord Jesus Christ have the blood of Christ as the propitiation for their sins.

This, I believe is the correct interpretation of this phrase. It fits all other passages of Scripture that speak of the way of salvation without being 'repugnant' (to quote Article XX) to any part of Scripture. This is vital. After all, who among those on the broad way that leads to destruction can be seen as beneficiaries of the atoning work of Christ?

Those who wish to look for a 'universal atonement' must say that the death of Christ achieved less in the unbeliever than in the believer. They must say, as some have, that God appointed all men to salvation, provided they repent and believe. In order that some do God then sends His Spirit to those He would have saved. Thus grace is universal in that all could, theoretically, come to salvation, but is particular in that God must still chose whom He will save. This view was first proposed by Amyraldus, a French Protestant theologian, in 1634. The result of this was that the Edict of Nantes, which granted toleration to the Protestants of Catholic France, was revoked. The reason? This theology was seen as being fully compatible with Rome's Pelagian teaching. It is interesting to note that all those countries that took in large numbers of Huguenot refugees absorbed, to some measure, this error. England took many refugees, and this form of universal atonement was to become something of a feature in Anglican Protestantism in later years. (See Marcus L. Loane *John Charles Ryle* p 57).

Consequences

The consequences of this view are divided between believers and unbelievers. For believers we have assurance of salvation by this doctrine, for it teaches us that all things necessary to our salvation come to us as a direct result of the death of Jesus Christ. He has bought for us an inheritance that is incorruptible, and that none can take from us. Therefore we need never fear for our souls.

This is not to teach that we can live as we please. Such should be our awareness of the sinfulness of sin, seeing that the only way it could be dealt with was by the death of Jesus Christ, we should flee all sin. We should hate it as God hates it, so far as we are able to. This doctrine should encourage and promote holy living.

This doctrine should also encourage preaching, and witness to unbelievers. Since Christ has done all that is required, and since He gives to His people all they need for salvation, we need to be sure that all know this. The fact that Christ has done all does not take away from human responsibility; we must still repent, Mark 1. 15. Since Christ has done all, those who seek salvation may be told that they can and must leave their efforts, and may receive all they need. It should encourage them to come, and us to preach. It should be for us a cause of everlasting praise and thanksgiving to God, as we see the extent of His love for us, that He sent His only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Clergy in UK & USA

The Rev. E.J. Malcolm, The Parsonage, 1, Downshire Square, Reading RG1 6NJ.
Tel. 0118 959 5131. Email. revejmalcolm@appleonline.net

The Rev. I.R. Budgen, B.Sc., Dip Th (ITA), 159 Castlecroft Road, Wolverhampton,
W. Mids, WV3 8LU. Tel. 01902 656514

The Rev. A.R. Price, B.Sc. (Econ.), 17, Weston Road, Chiswick, London, W4 5NL.
Tel. 0208 742 0151

The Rev. E.A. Powell B.Sc. M. Div., 7615, Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA
91605 Tel. 818765 00716

Associate Clergy

The Rev. J.N. Reed B.A., B. D. (United States of America)

Licensed Preachers

The Rev. F. Robson Dip. Ed., 71, Springfield Drive, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1JF Tel.
01235 533421

Mr. W.L. Foley M.A., D.M.S., The Cottage, Park View Road, Tottenham, London
N17 9AX. Tel. 0208 808 4936

Mr. P. Karageorgi. Contact on 0208 742 0151

Treasurer

Mr. D. K. Mansell, 17, Greenfels Rise, Oakham, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 7TP
Tel. 01384 259781.

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Secretary

Dr. N. Malcolm, M.A., M.B., F.R.C.P. Kingswood House, Pilcorn Street, Wedmore,
Somerset BS28 4AW. Tel. 01934 712520.

Editor of Journal

The Rt. Rev. E. Malcolm, 15, Bridge Street, Knighton, Powys LD7 1BT. Tel. 01547 528815

Editor of Intercessions

Rev. E.J. Malcolm (*See under Clergy*)

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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.