

The Journal

of

The Church of England (Continuing)

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and to day, and
for ever. Heb. 13:8*



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Books for sale

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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.

The Continuing Church publishes a prayer letter, "Intercessions." It is available free of charge to those who would 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 edward@netvigator.co.uk

Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Church of England (Continuing)

From the Presiding Bishop, Edward Malcolm

15, Bridge Street
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Dear Friends,

With sadness we announce the homecall of Dr. Theodore P. Letis, and offer heartfelt sympathy to his wife Susan and children, Grace and Ted Jr. God has taken home the greatest defender of the true text of the Bible, an outstanding scholar, a brave controversialist, and a Lutheran who felt absolutely at one with the Church of England (Continuing), and said so often. He was a boldly outspoken Protestant, and the breach is irreparable. Many did not come to last year's conference when he spoke so superbly. Fleeting opportunities, all gone in instant death in a car crash on 24th June!

It is a pleasure to share good news, after much that has humbled us over the last years. We congratulate Peter Ratcliff and his bride-to-be, Sandra Reynolds, on their forthcoming marriage, and rejoice with them. We are proud of our members and their stand, and for swimming right against, shall I say the tide? no, the very vortex of the mill race! And we are greatly heartened by a massive increase in attendance at our Day Conference at Benson. The speakers were superb, the venue excellent.

Bishop Samuel spoke first on the clash of civilisations in the fifteenth Century, between the whole might of Mediaeval Papal Europe with armies, nations, and religion at the beck and call of the Pope – and on the other side God, working through the conscience of one insignificant man, Luther. God worked so powerfully through one conscience, as to overthrow the vast Papacy. That is just what the Church of England (Continuing) is about.

Canon Patrick Sookhdeo was the main speaker, and it was an eye-opener as he spoke on the clash of civilisations between Islam and what one might call “Christendom” today. He showed that the battle has already been lost. That for all practical purposes Islam is not resisted, but even encouraged, in its take over of the godless, badly-behaved, blind West. You may dismiss that as exaggeration, but Dr. Sookhdeo is perhaps the foremost authority on this subject, sought by the Government, the Home Office, and the Bishops. He was born into a Muslim home, and has given up his all for Christ. He founded and runs the Barnabas

Foundation which deals with the suffering Church worldwide. Indeed he risks life and loss of everything to warn us. We who love our comforts, we evangelicals, have betrayed our brethren struggling in the loss of all things overseas. God knows which is the truly rich and important Church; that here, or the despised, downtrodden poor in Christ, under the oppression of Islam.

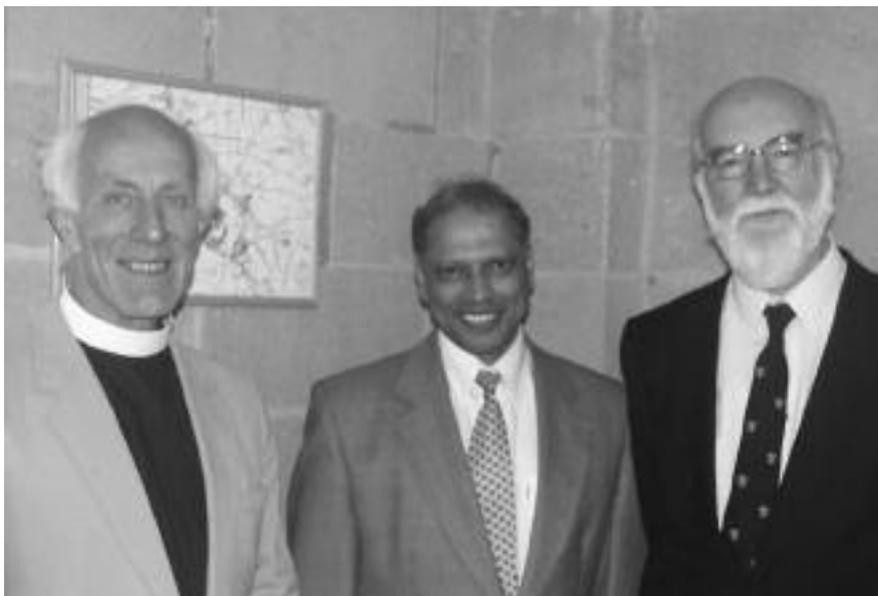
Then why not listen to the conference tapes, obtainable from The Rev. E. J. Malcolm, The Parsonage, 1 Downshire Square, Reading, Berks RG1 6NJ, price £4.

The Lord bless, encourage and hold us together as the Devil counter attacks over these coming days and months. Brethren, watch and pray, for the time is short. We love His appearing, and that is why we joined the Church of England (Continuing),

Your friend and bishop,



Edward Malcolm



The Rt Rev Edward Malcolm, Canon Patrick Sookhdeo, PhD, and the Rt Rev David Samuel, PhD

THE SHUNAMMITE

2 Kings 4:8-37

Edward Malcolm

GOD makes unlooked-for promises to us, calls us to do something for Him, and then apparently fails us. We see here the woman to whom the promise was made, and the man of God faced with an impossible situation, and a dead child. Those three will occupy our thoughts.

THE BELIEVING WOMAN FACED WITH BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT

She was comfortably off, and so are we. Do you deny it? Just see your situation through the eyes of your poor, persecuted, downtrodden brethren in many a nation today. She behaved well, and acted wisely, so let us learn from her.

She knew a man of God when she saw one. Israel was full of prophets wearing hairy mantles to deceive. The prophets of Baal were everywhere, and other false prophets and deceivers must have learned where bread is most easily buttered. Elijah's clothing was no doubt donned by many serving their own bellies.

This woman saw one, Elisha, often passing her door, as we know from the Bible that he lived in Samaria, in Carmel and Jericho, so had business for God requiring him to travel. Most of his journeys, if you look at a map, would have required passing Shunem. Today the town is known, and is called Sulem, and one former traveller described it as situated in the richest cornfields in the world. She recognised that amongst the many false, here was a real man of God. Can you discern?

She tested his claims. She apparently went to Elisha on Mount Carmel on New Moons and Sabbaths on occasion. Note that meant a journey of some twenty miles, showing the early Israelites had no qualms about the intricacies of Sabbath regulations such as plagued the Jews in our Lord's lifetime. Even more it showed she tested Elisha's teaching and did not rest on appearances. He would have taught the Law of Moses, the Bible. Test a man's claims by his Bible teaching! So she "constrained him to eat bread" in her house.

She was childless, her husband no doubt being older than her, so her case was hopeless: she was a disappointed, believing woman. However, under God, she chose the best way or remedying it: she entertained and helped a true man of

God. So did Abraham when the four travellers came to his tent in the heat of the day. They promised him and Sarah a son – and so Isaac was born to parents of around one hundred years old. Some have entertained angels unawares. Are you childless? Elisha promised her a son. Then you could do worse than copy this Shunammite.

She acted with her husband. Wise woman! Eve did not, and many modern women do not, both with disastrous consequences. Yet this woman at every stage involved her husband. “Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands”, says Proverbs 14:1.

She said to her husband, “I perceive that this is a holy man of God which passeth by us continually. Let us make him a little chamber.” That could mean a lean-to at ground level on the side, but much more likely a simple room on the roof, approached by outside stairs. Her husband thus had a share in things.

She further showed her wisdom by the way she provided only necessities, a bed, table, chair and a lamp, no fuss. When Bramwell Booth was told by his father, General Booth, that he was to provide overnight shelter and a meal for the hundreds of unemployed men huddling in the bitter winter in the niches of London Bridge, the old General wrote, “And no mollicoddling, mind you”. This is the litmus test of a man of God, contentment with what is provided by God’s children for him.

Her motives were pure. She sought nothing in building the room, but to help a man of God. Elisha, lying on the bed she had given him, called the Shunammite. “Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?” They owed Elisha favours, and he could put in a word and get her off taxes or a place in court, or a house in Jerusalem. “She answered, I dwell among my own people.” Wise woman! If you move, especially late in life, you become a nobody, all pass you in the street without a look. Better to stay where you are known. She met childhood acquaintances every time she went down the road. It proved ambition was not the reason she entertained the man of God.

She was modest. She never compromised herself. She stood in the doorway when the man of God lay on the bed and sent for her, no further in. She was as wise as liberated women are foolish in these things.

Submission did not demean her, unlike what is taught today on the subject. She emerges as the most spiritual, the stronger character, the mover and shaker of the pair, the natural leader of the marriage. Lady, you will lose nothing by copying

her. It is a fact that whichever shows the most wisdom, either man or wife, will lead the home.

She is spiritually and naturally the stronger, and indeed the story shows her keeping an almost superhuman silence under intense provocation. She says not a word, but puts her dead child on the bed of the man of God, and informs her husband she is taking the ass and going to see the man of God in Carmel. She does not act without him. That way, marriages last.

She did the right thing when her world gave way around her. The child was weaned, perhaps seven years old by their custom, when he went reaping in the sun with his father, when he said “my head, my head.” A lad carried him home, and he died on his mother’s knees about noon. The best fitting cause would be not sunstroke, but cerebral meningitis, say commentators quoting medical opinion.

She went straight to the man of God with her troubles. No bottling them up within, like an old wineskin full of new wine, to burst later. No staying home from church when news is bad, as some do. No seeking counselling, either by well meaning Christians who have been on a course or read some books, or by professionals. Get yourself under God’s Word. That is better than Jung or Freud, or the latest opinion. Wise women seek God’s word in the mouth of a man of God when overwhelmed with grief, when they feel God has let them down. She determined to do what the man of God said.

She did not give way to bitterness. Elisha saw her being thrust away by Gehazi, his servant and said “Let her alone: for her soul is vexed within her.” She did not say one word of all her troubles to Gehazi, just one word, “Peace”. She was offered the golden opportunity to pour them all out when the man of God told Gehazi to ask her, “Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? She answered It is well”. Not a lie, as it appears in our translation, but one word in Hebrew, “Peace.” She had faith.

THE MAN OF GOD FACED WITH A DEAD CHILD

When it is your word and reputation at stake, here is what to do. The man of God had promised her, “About this season – according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son.” and here the child is dead, God seemingly having failed. Your word and reputation are at stake, so what should you do? Trust God, so simple to say, so hard to carry out, “Those who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true.”

His actions, faced with the dead child, are remarkable. As we are faced by

a multitude of spiritually dead children of believers, whose boys and girls proclaim loudly by their actions and words that they are dead in trespasses and sins, what should we do? He recognised the child was actually dead, and unless you have a clear sense of the utter ruin and spiritual death of young people, you will be incapable of being a blessing to them. Today many Christian parents move from church to church, seeking a place where the children will be saved. It is a major reason for moving.

Do not be a Gehazi, who when sent ahead with the man of God's staff to lay on the face of the child, came back saying "the child is not waked". Your power can achieve nothing. They are corpses, not sleepers. Be an Elisha, who aimed at nothing less than restoring a dead child to life.

Never rest content with secondary benefits, your children need salvation for their immortal souls. Do not just bring them truths, even Bible truths. Your high calling is to bring life to dead souls. Our aim is resurrection, not Christ's, but a miracle nevertheless, a spiritual resurrection.

We are in something quite beyond our spiritual power, so does the impossibility excuse our failure? No, rather it shuts us out of our own fancied abilities. Like Elisha, we dwell in the realm of miracle. God's man is no common mortal, but called to work miracles by God's Holy Spirit. So do not imagine the work is impossible or too difficult to attempt. God has chosen to work through you.

Elisha's plan failed. For a start, God hid from him the situation, for as he saw the woman afar off, not slackening not her pace, he said "her soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me". That is our usual, even normal, starting point.

Then he made an error, he sent Gehazi with his staff. There are plenty of proofs from the ancient world that this was the way heathen prophets did it. No substitute can raise dead souls for you. It is easier in a sense to give money to provide foreign missionaries than to raise the dead around us, though both are vital. It did not work, the staff was laid on the dead child and yet he showed no sign of life.

Then what should he have done? He should have remembered that his master Elijah had raised a dead child in Zarephath, and copied him. The story is recorded in 1 Kings 17. You have a master, the Lord Jesus, to imitate in detail. The Lord Jesus sent no substitute, but came Himself to wretched human misery and gave Himself, not just on the Cross, but every day, living in contact with the stench of spiritual death, and we must do likewise to succeed.

We are not delivering bare truth, but giving ourselves. Not a doctrine, nor

practical help – they are both Gehazi’s staff. We are to deliver truth we ourselves have experienced and made our own, and sacrifice ourselves for their sakes.

Observe carefully what Elisha did when his first effort failed. He did not give up, but having toiled all the night and taken nothing “nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net”. Tell yourself that every day. The man of God might have concluded that God’s promise had failed, the enterprise was over, and given up. Do not cease the work, even if others grow cold around and, secretly or plainly, show they think the whole enterprise a waste of time.

NOW I WANT TO TURN WITH YOU TO THE DEAD CHILD

Notice where he was laid – on Elisha’s bed. Elisha went into the room. Now we see the man of God at work. I knew a clergyman in London who stopped to talk to workmen on a site. “I wish I had your job, Vicar”, said one. “Well, I’ll swap” he replied, “I’m on my way to see a woman dying of cancer.” “Oh” said the man, “I wouldn’t know what to say.” “Well”, replied the clergyman, “do you think I do?” There is no more draining, more demanding work than dealing with spiritual death. But how satisfying when a corpse is raised! Bishop Taylor Smith was preaching in a chapel, and after service he saw a young man jumping over a pew. “What are you doing?” he said reprovingly. “Sir,” said the young man, “I’ve just led my first soul to the Lord.” “Then”, said the bishop, “let’s jump over the pews together.”

See what work a man of God is called to do. See him at prayer, believing prayer. The man of God spends nights in prayer, but he does not fail to apply it by work, physical contact with the dead.

Now he is imitating his master, Elijah in 1 Kings 17:18. He shuts the door on the corpse and himself, alone. This is a bare-knuckle fight with the king of terrors, and one will be driven from the field. That is how men of God go about it.

There is an old proverb ‘every true pulpit is in heaven’, meaning in prayer. Then take your own boy or girl, each in turn by the hand, and speak to them alone. Agonise for them, then you will gain spiritual influence over them, for once they are out of your presence and home, the influences of the world and their peers is paramount.

After prayer, he adopted means. There lay the dead child. See him now, breathing into the dead child, overlaying the long-dead corpse. It was a six-hour journey from Shunem to Carmel, so that child had been dead at least twelve

hours. *Rigor mortis* has set in. Never think this is passing life from one human to another! The child's flesh waxes warm because God is answering. It is above human ability.

Never be satisfied with hopeful signs. He gets up and walks up and down. He has imparted his soul, his breath, to the now warm child. The scene points to Christ, who saw us dead, so must die Himself to save us. So we must feel the chill and the horror of a child's death.

He prays, he stretches himself upon the child a second time. How foreign this all is to the laws on contact with children today! What children have lost, now that no grown up dare approach them for fear of evil accusations!

The word used for 'stretch' is full of meaning. In 1 Kings 17:21 there is a different word, although translated by "stretched" both here and there. Here it means he drew himself to his full height in overlaying the child. He used his full grownupness. He does not shrink himself to a child's proportions. It is no easy matter to speak to children, though some clergy regard it as beneath their calling, it is the most vital thing we ever do. For if we cannot explain the Gospel to a child, what hope for an adult? Do not speak down to children, for they are bright, intelligent, and can show you up. Stretch yourself.

Elisha's secret of success was perseverance. He went back and stretched himself upon the child again. His prayer was answered, "and the child sneezed seven times and the child opened his eyes." Sneezing is the most natural, simple, unaffected sign of life. We do not look for any sign but reality, nothing that is not childlike. Sneezing is not a polite thing to do. New souls behave badly, fail to live as Christians should, embarrass us by their lapses. But once the signs are there, you will see the eyes opened. That is a sight you will never forget – beautiful.

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BAPTISM IN THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE REFORMERS — AN ELUCIDATION

David N Samuel

IN order to understand and appreciate the teaching of the English Reformers on baptism, particularly the baptism of infants, as we have it in the Book of Common Prayer, it is necessary to keep in mind certain principles, which controlled their thought on this subject, and which they also held in common with the Continental Reformers.

First, they viewed both the sacrament of baptism and that of the Lord's Supper in the light of the paramourcy of the Word of God. The way that Luther expressed it was, that the sacraments are the "visible Word of God". Therefore, as the Word of God, in order to be efficacious in the life of the individual, must be believed and received, so also must it be in the case of the sacraments. William Tyndale expressed it thus:

"The washing [baptism] without the word helpeth not; but through the word it purifieth and cleanseth us: as thou readest Eph. v, how Christ cleanseth the congregation in the fountain of water through the word. Now, as a preacher, in preaching the word of God, saveth the hearers that believe; so doth the washing [baptism], in that it preacheth and representeth unto us the promise that God hath made with us in Christ. The washing preacheth unto us that we are cleansed with Christ's bloodshedding; which was an offering and satisfaction, for the sin of all that repent and believe, consenting and submitting themselves unto the will of God." (*Tyndale's Works*, Parker Society i, p. 253)

In Hebrews 4. 2 it is stated that "the word preached did not profit them [the Israelites in the wilderness] not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." But faith is necessary also on the part of those who are the recipients of the visible word of God (the sacraments), in order that it should be efficacious in them and have its intended effect.

This understanding of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper as the visible words of God safeguarded and distinguished Protestant teaching from the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacraments as efficacious in, and of themselves, by their own inherent power. The term used to describe this was *ex opere operato*—the work working of itself, independently of the faith of the recipient. If the priest administering the sacraments was validly ordained, and if he used all the

correct forms, and words prescribed, then *ipso facto*, the baptised infant was regenerate, and the bread and wine became the actual body and blood of Christ.

The Reformers both here and on the Continent rejected the teaching that the sacraments worked in this manner. Article 28 speaks of the sacraments being “certain and sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace”, that is, they speak or witness to us of the truth of the Gospel of God’s grace. This is parallel to Luther’s expression ‘visible words of God’, and it serves to make clear that they can only be efficacious or produce the end for which they were ordained when they are ‘mixed with faith’ in those who receive them.

If that is the case, however, it may be asked: Why do we baptise infants, who are not capable of exercising faith, and so of responding to the visible word of the sacrament, any more than they can respond to the spoken or preached Word of God? It is true that they cannot respond immediately, but as human beings they will be capable in time of responding to what has been done. It is not like performing a religious ceremony over an inanimate object. This is a child, who is capable of being taught the meaning of its baptism, and by the grace of God, will be able also to respond in faith to the Word of the Gospel contained in that sacrament.

When we preach the Gospel we preach it to unbelievers. We do not expect them to have made a response before they hear the Word of God and before it is declared to them. They must first be those to whom the Gospel is brought before they can respond to it. Similarly, we do not expect children to come to faith in a vacuum, as it were, but in the context of the Word of the Gospel declared both visibly and aurally to them, i.e. by the sacrament and the Word of God. There is such a thing as the prevenient grace of God, that is, that grace that goes before our ever coming to conscious faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: “Surely, the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not,” said Jacob when he encountered God on his journey, and was not expecting it. And the Christian when he comes to faith experiences the same thing.

It is assumed in the service of infant baptism that the child will be taught the meaning of its baptism and the nature of the Christian faith, so that he may, according to the election of grace, respond to the visible Word of God in the sacrament of baptism. All this is enjoined upon the godparents as their solemn duty. The child is to “hear sermons,” and to “learn the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments... and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health...”

The words of the service for the baptism of infants which state, “seeing now this child is regenerate,” occasion difficulty for some, but it must be borne in mind that the Reformers rejected the doctrine that the sacraments worked *ex opere operato*, as it were automatically. Therefore, it cannot and does not mean

that the child is born again, or made regenerate, merely because it has been baptised. That would be a travesty, and would totally misrepresent what the Reformers were seeking to do in framing the service for the baptism of infants. On the contrary, according to Reformation teaching the visible word of the sacrament must always be mixed with faith for it to be efficacious. Therefore the statement “seeing now this child is regenerate” can only be understood as a statement which is *proleptic*, that is, a statement which takes something in the future, i.e. the anticipated faith and repentance of the subject of baptism, as already existing. If the child, when he comes of age, does not fulfil the conditions stated in the baptism service then these words do not apply to him.

In this connexion, the practice of infant baptism must be set in the context of the doctrines of election and predestination, which were an integral part of the Reformers’ thinking; central to their understanding of grace and salvation; and not something on the periphery or even irrelevant, as is the case with many who make a profession of Christianity today (see Article 17 of the Thirty-Nine Articles).

In this context the means of grace (that is, the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments) cannot be effectual unless and until they are made so by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus, they are subordinate to the sovereign will and purpose of God.

In effecting the salvation of the elect, God appoints and uses various means of grace, by way of conveying his power and grace to the soul. He uses them to act as mediums and instruments to effect his purpose, yet he still reserves to himself the sole efficient operation which makes them effectual in each particular case. Gospel ordinances and sacraments, therefore, however good in themselves, are only instruments and depend for their efficacy and power on the sovereign will of God. Just as the waters of the pool of Bethesda, they possess no healing or regenerative powers of themselves. They only become so when they are commissioned by God, and when they are used in fulfilling his purposes for the elect.

Thus Thomas Becon states in his comment on 1 Peter 3:

“Hereof we may truly conclude that forasmuch as the outward baptism, which is done by water, neither giveth the Holy Ghost, nor the grace of God, but only is a sign or token thereof; if any of the Christian infants, prevented by death, depart without baptism (necessity so compelling) they are not damned, but saved by the grace of God... For if the baptism of water saveth either in part or in whole, so resteth not all our salvation only and alone in the free grace of God; neither is God a perfect and sufficient Saviour” (*Becon’s Catechism*, Parker Society, p. 217).

Finally, let us hear Hugh Latimer on the subject of regeneration and baptism, as he makes the matter perfectly clear. He is preaching before Edward VI and dealing with the importance of preaching.

“Beware, beware, ye diminish not this office [i.e. preaching]; for if ye do, ye decay God’s power to all that believe. Christ saith, consonant to the same... ‘Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ He must have a regeneration: and what is this regeneration? It is not to be christened with water, as these firebrands expound it, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then? St. Peter sheweth that one place of Scripture declareth another. It is the circumstance and collation of places that makes Scripture plain. *Regeneramur autem*, saith St. Peter, ‘and we be born again: how?... Not by mortal seed, but by an immortal.’ What is this immortal seed?... By the word of God preached and opened. Thus cometh our new birth” (*Sermons of Bishop Latimer*, F.C.M. Trust, p. 203).

The theology of the Reformation, in which the Church of England fully participated, is a theology of the Word of God, and God accomplishes his sovereign purposes for the salvation of his elect through both the visible Word of the Gospel sacraments, and the audible Word of the preached Gospel.

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THE MYTH OF ANGLO-CATHOLIC BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

A Review of Titus 3:5

Ian D Anderson

IT is common when the discussion of baptismal regeneration comes up between Protestants and Catholics, the Catholic is quick to point to Titus 3:5 to argue for baptismal regeneration.

As one-time rector of a large Anglo-Catholic Parish the assumption given is that this passage speaks so clearly and evenly about being regenerated by water of baptism that it becomes the hammer in the discussion. Trying to discuss passages that speak of regeneration being an act of God alone outside the context of ritual becomes irrelevant.

The development of an apologetic approach in understanding the true meaning of scripture and doctrine as it relates to salvation becomes the essential dictate.

It becomes, then, an example of arriving at one's conclusion before proving it. Often, various arguments are given to solidify the stranglehold on the passage:

The word for washing can also be translated water, or is used of ritual cleansing.

All the church fathers believed this, and they were experts in Greek, Latin, etc.

At first light, these arguments might sound convincing. I mean, has any Protestant ever checked every reference of the Fathers to see if Titus 3:5 was always interpreted as baptismal regeneration? And, even conceding that point, does that really make a difference on what the text actually says? This article will leave it to others to examine the Early Church Fathers on the issue, as this is primarily concerned with the text itself.

As a clergyman who trained in evangelical Protestant seminaries and even allowing the most liberal of interpretations such that I do not allow my brains to fall out we have to adhere to *Sola Scriptura*, first and for most as plainly that the text does not speak of baptismal regeneration, and that it is a dogmatic tradition forced onto Titus 3:5.

If we allow the text to define its own meaning, and allow it to speak on its own terms, then I believe that we will find an entirely different viewpoint than

what the Catholic will hold to.

Let us look into the surrounding context, then. Titus 3:4-7:

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

When the entire sentence is read, one must wonder where the argument holds ground in the first place. For in the text, several things are certain:

God is the subject. He is doing the saving (v. 5)

God's mercy is given as the motivation for the action

There is an *explicit* denial of human activity, as he has not saved us by works done in righteousness

The agency of the salvation is not of human origin, as both washing of regeneration and renewal have the Holy Spirit as the source

The means by which we received the Holy Spirit upon us was Jesus

So, one has to wonder the basis upon which the Catholic feels justified to argue that baptism done by human accomplishes spiritual regeneration.

The focal point of the argument seems to hinge upon a singular word, which carries with it a great deal of assumption and theological baggage. It is the word "washing." Though it looks to be a verb, it is, in fact, a noun. The verb-like qualities often confuse people as to its meaning. We will deal with that term momentarily.

Titus 3:4. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

The sentence actually begins in verse four. Here, we see a reference to Christ's coming. The word translated "benevolence" or more literally as "love toward mankind". It is as though these two terms, kindness and benevolence, are personified in Christ. One might make this case in that in a previous verse, we are told that the grace of God has appeared, and in 2:13, which certainly seems to be a reference to Christ.

However, it appears that the Father is the subject in the following verses, since God is described as our saviour, and then we are told that he saved us. And, since Jesus Christ is mentioned as the means by which we have been given the Holy Spirit, it is not likely that Jesus is the subject of the verbs following, else we would expect a reflexive pronoun.

Titus 3:5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

It is important to note that at no point in this sentence are humans mentioned, nor is human activity ever the subject or means of any verb. But, humans *are* the objects of the main verb in this clause. He saved us. In looking into this passage, observing these things is important:

Who saved? God saved.

Saved whom? God saved us.

Why did he save? Because of his mercy.

By what means did he save? By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Spirit.

We observe from the very outset that human activity is *explicitly* denied in this passage. Certainly, if baptism were in view, we would see some reference to at least our obedience (if, perhaps someone wishes to separate obedience from an act of righteousness). There would at least be some reference to our activity.

There is not, however. The phrase translated above as, “not on the basis of deeds” is a negation of human works. To further separate the work of salvation from human effort, Paul uses a strong adversative (Gk. *alla*). Thus, a strong contrast is given here. It is *not* on the basis of works (not just any works, but those done in righteousness) but it *is* on the basis of his mercy. Thus, God was not motivated to save because of a work of man, even those deeds that are righteous (of which baptism is certainly one), but because of his mercy. Even still, baptism is not listed as a parallel activity, since the “washing” is not given as a separate function from the Holy Spirit.

In other words, if it were possible for one to be able to show that baptism does regenerate a person in other passages, it still does not affect the meaning of *this* passage. The meaning of *this* passage is that in every respect, we are saved by God, and not by any action on our part.

It is entirely unilateral here. Therefore, even if a person baptised another, and regeneration happened at the same time, one could not say that the baptism performed in anyway resulted in regeneration. Otherwise, the meaning of the passage would be on its head, and the motivation for God to save would, indeed, be a work done in righteousness.

If, truly, “all our righteousness is as filthy rags”, then even the greatest of our deeds does not merit eternal life. Surely, one could never make the case that anything less, or anything other than a righteous deed would be worthy of merit. But, Paul denies even the righteous deeds.

A great deal of weight is placed upon the word “washing.” It is the Greek term *loutron*, which certainly bears that meaning. The idea of the word is a ritual

cleansing, rather than simply a cleansing from dirt, though that meaning is there. The practice of ritual cleansing before service is not at all uncommon, as this was the rite the sons of Aaron were required to practice. Thus, many have gone through great lengths to somehow tie rituals of cleansing to *loutron* in this context. But, this is an example of what is often called “one-word exegesis”. This is another way of saying that the people are practicing eisegesis, or reading into the text their assumptions.

Let me explain. A single word with no context has no meaning, since it has no defining parameters to limit its meaning. To put it another way, a word with no context bears every possible meaning that a dictionary might give it, including poetic and metaphoric usage. I have often used the word “fire” as an example. With no context, the word fire can be a command (Fire!) as in an execution, an exclamation (Fire!) as in the warning of a fire, it can mean passion (heart of fire) or anger (heart of fire). Without context, it is simply impossible to know truly the meaning of a term.

In this passage, there is no difference. Simply connecting the lexical meaning of *loutron* to ritual cleansing without observing what the context is telling us about that term is irresponsible exegesis. In the context, we must note that though the word is rich in meaning regarding ritual cleansing, and has been interpreted as baptism (being a Christian symbol of cleansing), *loutron* is the work of the Spirit, and not of men.

In context (v. 1-3), Paul tells us that we need to be kind, respectful, and benevolent to others, “we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.” In contrast to that, God’s undeserved kindness and benevolence toward us resulted in our salvation.

The sins and attributes that Paul uses to describe our lost state are grim, as Paul pulls no punches. But, works done in righteousness will not offset the ugliness of that sin. Therefore, in accordance with his mercy, he saved us, by pouring His Spirit upon us. He is the one who cleansed us, by His Spirit, as the passage clearly states.

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

So, flowing into this next thought, having seen the meaning, we now see exactly the means of “washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” Again, this next verse further denies human activity in that it is not the Spirit being poured out upon us in baptism, for it is not the work of man by which the Holy Spirit is poured out. God is the subject here. He poured out the Holy Spirit upon us. And, once again, neither man, nor the activity of man is the means of this activity, for it is Christ that is the means by which we have the Spirit.

What we see, then, is that this passage is not speaking of water, or physical baptism. It is in fact using such language to refer to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is poured, not water, God does the pouring, not man, and water or ritual is not given as the means by which such is done, but either the Holy Spirit, or Jesus is the means, motivated by God's mercy alone.

This concept does not exist in a theological vacuum. Indeed, the background of this passage can be found in the Old Testament. One can easily see the parallel with Ezekiel 36:23 "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. 24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 *"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (emphasis mine)*

Despite the rebellion of this people, and their "filthiness" and idolatry, God promises to redeem them, to "sprinkle clean water on" them. Surely no one can see a parallel to Baptism in this, since it is not men who pour this water. This unilateral working of God is truly awe-inspiring. In the vindication of his holiness, again, actions of men are not the motive for His action (indeed, their deeds should be cause for judgment, rather than mercy), He cleanses his people, gives them a new heart and spirit, removes the heart of stone, and gives them a heart of flesh. He will put his Spirit within us and cause us to walk in his statutes. This is the heart of the message of Titus. God saves men, and he does so perfectly. Who can stand within his presence and, however subtly or pretentiously humble and declare their own helping hand? This water came from God. He sprinkled pure water on us. He cleansed us. How could this be made clearer?

Of course, other passages can be brought into the discussion, such as Isaiah 44 and Joel 2. But I think Ezekiel makes the point clear: God saves. It is not by the washings or rituals of men wherein salvation is found, but in the mercy and grace of our Lord. But, there is more that can be seen in this. There is perfect and complete unity within the Godhead in the redemption of humanity. There is no confusion, no dissension, only the Almighty Trinity working toward the redemption of men, to the glory of his Grace.

Indeed, when one looks very closely at Titus at this point, one sees that magnificent sight: The blessed Trinity involved in our salvation, a complete agreement within the Godhead, promised long beforehand, regarding the

redemption of man. God saves, the Spirit regenerates, the Son provides the Spirit. It is beautiful to see the perfect works of God, united in Trinity, rather than the errant works of men.

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It cannot be emphasised enough that we are the objects of salvation, we are objects of justification, and our efforts are utterly denied. The only verb that has man as the subjects (the exception being “we have done” in verse 5, where the works we have done are denied as the motivating factor in our salvation) is “we should be made.” However, this does not do anything to the denial or the negation of human activity since this is a passive verb, and as such we are receiving the action of being made heirs.

Verse seven constitutes a clause of purpose/result. What this means is that in the mind of the author, the purpose of the main verb in the clause not only indicates the intention of the action, but also its sure accomplishment. The nature of the construction, even though the mood of the verb (a subjunctive) is called the verb of doubt, in the context of the purpose/result clause, there is no doubt in the mind of the author as to whether or not the action will be accomplished.

Therefore, we can conclude very easily that our regeneration and salvation is brought about as a work of God, and not in correspondence to our actions. The text simply will not allow it to be so. Further, since there is no effort, cooperation, or rituals of men in this context, then the responsibility of salvation and its sure completion therein, is based solely and completely on the work of God. His honour and integrity are placed on the line.

It is here, where we need to be humbled, and not arrogant, as to the sovereign working of God. May our hearts be softened so as to praise his glorious grace.

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THE GIFT OF CHRIST

Brian Garrard

WHEN our Lord Christ ascended, we are told that he ‘gave gifts unto men’ (Ephesians 4.8). What were these gifts? The Apostle Paul tells us in verse 11: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...” Most of these gifts were temporary and were imparted in order to establish the infant church, but others are to remain until Christ comes again. We refer to ‘pastors and teachers,’ and although spoken of in the plural, they usually combine in the one office of minister. A vital part of a minister’s calling is to preach and teach, as verses 12 to 16 would suggest. This is supported by many other parts of the New Testament. See for example, Acts 6:4 where the Apostles declared that they would “Give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word”. Throughout the life of the church, preaching has been one of the main ways that God has added to the company of believers and also strengthened and built up the spiritual lives of the faithful. Sadly, this has not always been the case, especially in days of decline and apostasy. Yet in a good day, when the truth of God is loved and sought after and scriptural worship is employed, then preaching and teaching is highly valued, whether in the Sunday worship services or the midweek meetings. In each public ministration there is the preacher, the preaching and the people. Let us look at each of these in turn.

THE PREACHER

Those who faithfully bring us the Word of God ought to be regarded as Christ’s gift to us and as such, should be listened to and their scriptural teaching heeded. As said above, a significant and essential part of a minister’s calling is to preach and teach and he should give himself wholly to this. He must not be distracted, either by domestic or parish duties but work hard in the study and discipline himself to that end. The congregation must also see to it that he is not diverted from this heavenly occupation by things legitimate or otherwise. Why should the minister go to such great lengths in sermon preparation? Because he is about God’s business and that should never be done half-heartedly. Secondly, the minister has a concern for the souls of his hearers and loves each one of them, so that they may be brought to salvation and grow in holiness. That is why he will have to say some searching and unpopular things at times. It is not that he is suffering a bout of indigestion and is taking it out on the congregation. On the contrary, his heart aches for his hearers and he longs that each of them will be

united to Christ and know the joy of walking daily with him. The Lord's servant will soak each sermon in prayer so that it will be the Lord's word and not his own. In addition, he will seek to have the power, unction and help of the Holy Spirit as he stands in the pulpit. To minister to the same people week after week is no easy task and requires the special grace of heaven, especially when he remembers his own sins and failings. That is why he preaches to himself first of all. For those called of God, this is the finest and highest service that anyone can render to the King of kings. May God give us a great company of preachers in these evil days!

THE PREACHING

What should be the content of the sermon? We have already stated that the aim of preaching is two-fold: that of bringing others to faith and then teaching and edifying the faithful. The Apostle Paul goes into more detail in Ephesians 4.12-16. In these verses we see that the work of the godly minister, especially in his pulpit duties, is one of perfecting and correcting all that is not right in us. In addition, he is to edify and build up the believer in Christ, warn of false ideas and teach sound doctrine. Indeed, that is his great work and he must never tire of instructing his flock. As ever, it requires much patience, toil, wisdom and grace, but he must be constantly about this duty, for without it, the church dies. Good biblical exposition can be a unifying factor in any congregation (see v13&14) and is a means of bringing us all to spiritual maturity. At the heart of the Bible is the Gospel and the faithful preacher will also see to it that this theme of Good News runs throughout all he says. There will be times when the sermon may be specifically aimed at the unbeliever, while on most occasions it is directed more to the believer. Every emphasis is needed and the preacher soon learns that his exposition is deficient if it does not relate to Christ in some way or other.

There are no short cuts to preaching and the modern fashions of drama, overhead projectors, power-point presentations and the like only detract from the glory of Christ and his Word. Prayerful study and reliance upon the Holy Spirit are still the means that God blesses and honours. When men have long tired of all these modern methods, the regular preaching of the Word of God will still stand.

THE PEOPLE

Great responsibilities rest upon those who hear the preaching and they ought not to be overlooked.

We are answerable to God as to how we hear. The minister must give an account to God one day of his earthly stewardship. Was he faithful in what he said or did he hold back out of fear of the people? Similarly, those who listen must remember that they have the privilege of living in a land and attending a church where they hear Gospel doctrine. Many millions are denied this blessing

so God will require more of us who have heard and enjoyed his truth. How do we hear and what are we doing with the doctrines?

Preachers are flesh and blood like us. This must be remembered and borne with patiently. Therefore, pray daily and earnestly for the minister. He needs our prayers and we sin against the Lord and him when we fail to pray. Turn grumbling and criticism to prayer and we shall be amazed at how much the minister has grown spiritually and improved as a preacher!

Forgive the repetition, but what kind of hearers are we? Are we attentive and doing our utmost to concentrate? Consider that the Lord himself is speaking through the minister to us and stands in our midst. That being so, should we not take careful heed to what is said, even to the point of taking notes if we find it hard to remain alert? The sermon is not the time for the congregation to relax and switch off. We are still at worship even as we listen and can give of our best if we listen well.

Doers and not just hearers. In our hearing we must also prayerfully receive the Word and apply it to ourselves. Never resent what is said even if the conscience is pricked and we feel uneasy. God may be chastening us and that is no bad thing. It is an evidence of his love and abiding care. What if God always gave us sweet things or worse still, remained silent? We would be no better than the unbeliever.

Be thankful. Some would love to be at a church where the Gospel was regularly preached and Evangelical doctrine expounded but they are prevented. Others inwardly weep that they cannot be at *both* services and the weekly Bible study because of circumstances. Therefore, be glad of the blessing of often hearing the Word and make good use of it. Above all, look to that time when we shall be in a state of perfection in heaven and always able to worship God without interruption.

THE LORD'S KINDNESS

Many people appear to give the impression that listening to sermons can be an irksome duty or a necessary evil! Perhaps they have had the sadness of listening to preachers of an inferior kind and this is a challenge to ministers that they always give of their best in the pulpit. But when we enjoy a sound Evangelical ministry we ought to view it as an evidence of the Lord's favour and kindness towards us and learn to delight in the preaching. What can we do that will help us to profit from the sermon?

Pray before and after, especially that the preacher will have the unction and utterance of the Spirit. Pray too that the Lord will open our eyes and ears.

As said above, make notes if concentration is difficult. Besides, it is not possible to re-call everything that is said.

Meditate on what has been set before us and use it as a basis for further

conversation during the Lord's Day. Meditation is a lost art amongst us, but Christians of years gone by regularly thought upon some part of the Bible, or a sermon, and turned it over in their heart and mind. Meditation is a vital thing, for as we reflect upon Scriptural truth, God is dealing directly with our conscience and drawing us closer to him. May we become like the Psalmist who could exclaim: O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day (Psalm 119:97). Unlike him, we do not possess just the first 5 books of the Old Testament, but the whole Bible. If those books delighted his soul, how much more should the complete Bible delight ours!

Consider what duties need to be fulfilled and errors and sins to avoid and guard against.

Do I need to improve and amend my life and even repent of some sin?

Do I understand all that has been said or need a point clarified? Speak to the preacher who would be delighted to help and amplify. This interchange between minister and people can lead to great blessing.

Ask yourself: do I love the Lord more than I did before? Is he speaking to *me*?

Before we actually hear the preaching, there is need to prepare the heart. How is this done? We prepare our hearts mainly through exercising the grace of repentance. Failure to do this may be the reason why we obtain so little from the preaching. Is it possible that we sit with hearts that are not contrite or broken on account of sin? In order to obtain the maximum blessing from the Lord, we ought to make our sincere, heart-felt confession and forsake anything that hinders us from hearing, receiving and obeying God's Word.

Lastly, thank God for his Word and the faithfulness of his servant who has declared it. Let this thanksgiving be turned into obedience, as we become doers and not hearers only.

NO OPTIONAL EXTRA

Preaching is not an appendage to a worship service, but a necessary part of it. As we have already said above, the congregation still worships even as it listens, especially if it does so with reverent attention. The minister is also at worship, for every word of his sermon is not just directed to the people but has heaven as its ultimate destination. He praises and glorifies God who faithfully expounds the Scriptures and applies them to the people. Be thankful, then, for the gifts of pastor-teacher by our ascended Lord to his church. We are a privileged folk indeed!

MARY — GRACE AND HOPE IN CHRIST

The New ARCIC Report Considered

Edward J Malcolm

IT is likely that most readers will be aware of the publication earlier this year of the latest ARCIC Report. It is equally likely that, while most could guess at its contents and conclusion, few will have read it, or know the nature of the arguments employed by its various authors. Some may ask, why bother? We are Reformed, and so we have no interest in these things. Unfortunately the Church of England has given herself an interest in them, and they will help to shape the future of relations between the Anglican Communion and the Church of Rome. Others may be aware that Synod has no plans to debate this Report, giving the impression at least that it does not consider it to be sufficiently important. However, the comments in the media about the way in which our Government is expected to act over the European Constitution may be instructive. We were promised a referendum, but this has been abandoned following the Constitution's rejection in France and Holland. It has been pronounced dead, and so there is no need to vote on it. However, this does not mean its constituent parts have been thrown out; rather, we are warned to expect the piecemeal implementation of the various parts, but now without the opportunity to make our voice heard on the matter. In the same way, the fact that Synod has no plans to debate it need not mean that it is unimportant, or that the Church of England will take no notice of it. Rather, we may see its conclusions permeating the forward direction of the national Church in the months and years ahead.

What, then, are the conclusions of this Report, and how have they been reached? What is the rationale behind Rome's attitude to Mary, and what justification has she for her views? We shall attempt to answer these questions by looking at the Report, and trying to understand what is going on.

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

This Report has not appeared out of nowhere. It is instead the next stage on a journey begun years ago. The journey may be slow. It may at times have been sent on a diversion, or brought to a halt. It may have lost some travellers, but it has gained others. Come what may, the destination has not changed. The aim of this journey is to bring about the subjugation of the Anglican Communion to the spiritual powers of the Pope. If, as the Reformed churches and theologians have believed for more than five hundred years, the Pope is Antichrist, then this

is a most serious matter, because this would mean the denial of the truth. If the Pope is not Antichrist, as the modern evangelical maintains, then, if we are faithful to the Articles of our Church, it is still a serious matter, for Rome and the Articles are at loggerheads. Either way, only the false ecumenists can derive any joy from this journey.

The reason for mentioning this is that the Report begins by referring to the journey so far. Every step, every 'Agreed Statement', every document produced, is accepted as authoritative and binding. Thus whatever has been agreed by the ARCIC process is viewed, for the benefit of the process itself, as settled. There is no more debate, no going back; merely a pressing on the destination, which is drawing ever closer.

A GUIDE FOR THE JOURNEY

Every journey needs a map or a guide, if it is to avoid the potential for disaster. ARCIC sees the Christian experience as no different; we would agree, though in a very different manner. For Rome, and for those who have signed up to this Report, Mary provides us with such a guide. She is, in the words of the Report, a "trajectory of grace and hope".

What this means in practice is threefold.

First, Mary is to us an example of how salvation works. Those who are without sin, who are obedient to the will of God, look forward to their eternity in the presence of God. Mary, being born sinless because of the Immaculate Conception, and having lived obediently to God, as witnessed by her *fiat* ("be it unto me according to thy word"), was raised to heaven at death, by-passing purgatory – the doctrine of the Bodily Assumption. Mary, therefore, shows us what to expect, and so is a source of hope to all who are Christians.

Secondly, Mary is a source of grace for those who are seeking to follow this same trajectory. That is, all who follow the same path as Mary not only have her for a guide, but are also given grace by her example. What Mary did was to receive in her own body the Word of God – the Word made flesh. She did so as a virgin, and as one who remained a virgin to her dying day. Those, then, who offer adoration to Mary offer it to one who is able to share what she has done, and the grace of it. Prayers to Mary will cause the one who prays to receive a measure of the grace she was given in these things. That individual will then be aided to receive the Word, to live in obedience, and to remain pure.

Thirdly, Mary is one who has actually opened the way for believers. By her receiving the Word in her flesh she has made salvation possible. By being the mother of our Lord she has become the head of the Christian family, from whom all derive their life; she is the new Eve.

One need hardly mention that none of this will ring true to those who know the Scriptures. To suggest that somehow Mary is provided as the example of how God saves is to take away from our Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised from death. His resurrection shows us the certainty of ours, if we are in him. His intercession in heaven and his imputed righteousness serve as the guarantors of our redemption. Mary is a recipient of that salvation, just like any other redeemed individual. Again, to suggest that Mary is a source of grace is to detract from the unique place afforded by God to Jesus. It is Jesus who has sent his Spirit upon the church. St Paul tells us that we are “strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man”. Mary is not the source of that strength. Again, the notion that Mary somehow contributed to our salvation by bearing Jesus, and so becoming the new “mother of all living” is to deny Jesus’ own glory and might. For he is the head of the body, and we are members of Christ. Our baptism is into his death, and our forgiveness through our being covered by his blood. Mary stood as much in need of his shed blood as any do today; she is no more the mother of all living than Rome is the mother of the faithful.

LANDMARKS ON THE WAY

The Report’s authors recognise that the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Bodily Assumption have raised a “special problem for those Anglicans who do not consider that the precise definitions given by these dogmas are sufficiently supported by Scripture” (para. 2). Lo and behold, a way has now been found by which Scripture *can* be shown to support these dogmas! A large part of this document is given over to a consideration of various portions of Scripture, and interpretations of the passages concerned are set out, so that the general position of Rome in these matters can be declared to be biblical.

Much is made of the covenantal relationship between God and his people Israel. According to the evidence of Scripture God has called certain individuals from time to time and set them apart in the furtherance of his covenant promises. Since Matthew, for instance, draws clear attention to the fact that Jesus is a descendant of David, we should read this (correctly) as being part of the covenant fulfilment promised by God. The prominence given to Mary by Luke “emphasize[s] that Mary is in a unique way the recipient of God’s election and grace” (para 15). The statement by her that “all generations will call me blessed” “provides the scriptural basis for an appropriate devotion to Mary, though never in separation from her role as mother of the Messiah” (para 15).

It is this mixing of the acceptable with the unacceptable, true exegesis with false, that colours the whole of this section. Statements are made with which the biblically-educated will not disagree; these then lead to conclusions with which only the biblically-challenged or the downright superstitious will accept. Perhaps

the authors hope that only the latter will read this document, and be impressed by their ‘faithfulness’ to the Bible. Many passages are mentioned, and all are given new and liberal readings – that is, readings that owe their rationale to a liberal agenda, where such things as the doctrine of the Church have been superseded by notions of an ‘ecclesial community’, where the motif of ‘woman’ must be applied corporately to the Church. Needless to say, typology plays a big part, being one of the mainstays of the old philosophical reading of scripture which was rejected by the Reformers.

Mention is made of the Reformers, especially of those who held to the perpetual virginity of Mary, and who called her ‘ever-blessed’ and similar phrases. This is supposed to enable all Protestants to accept the conclusions of this Report, by showing that we are doing nothing that the Reformers did not do by so accepting. However, the idea that those who called Mary ‘ever-blessed’ also thought of her as somehow being a mover in our salvation is false. If nothing else, the Reformers knew the uniqueness of Christ’s place, and would have nothing that would detract from the glory due to him alone. Statements that might make us a little uncomfortable do nothing to comfort those who are seeking to establish error.

THE PAUSE BEFORE THE SUMMIT

It would seem that the authors are satisfied with their conclusion. Their conclusion is that now, in light of the document, no Protestant can reasonably object to the Roman Catholic who wishes to adore Mary. He has seen the scriptural proof for this practice. He has the testimony of the Reformers. He has the evidence of the tradition of the Church.

They go beyond this. If this conclusion is valid, and no objection can be raised, then those who do these things are being as faithful as those who do not. If those who do these things are being faithful, then those who do not do them must be being less faithful. Therefore, in the final analysis, all professing Christians must take up devotion to Mary. Not to do so is to deny the testimony of Scripture. That is the Report’s conclusion. It leaves no room for a ‘dual integrity’, but rather denies the Protestant position. We do not seek a dual integrity. We seek only a fair and unforced exegesis of Scripture. This Report does not provide such exegesis, because those who have produced it have had their target in view – the justification of Mariolatry – and have plotted a path, or trajectory, by which they can reach it, while exposing as many ‘Protestant’ objections as possible. It is not Rome that is required to justify its position, but Protestants who must now defend their refusal to accept this piece of specious arguing. If we would remain true to our Articles, to our Prayer Book, to Scripture, and to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must not only reject the argument, but the counterfeit Church from which it comes.

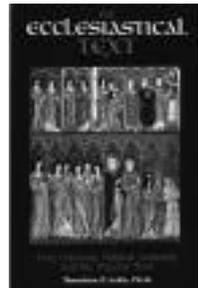
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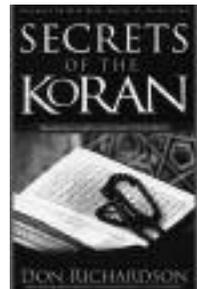
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**MATERIAL FOR NOVEMBER ISSUE OF *THE JOURNAL*
AND *INTERCESSIONS* BY OCTOBER 20 2005, PLEASE**

We thank all those who sent the names and addresses of others requiring the Journal, or whose names needed deleting. We are very grateful to all who sent donations. Please note that all address details supplied to the Editor for mailing purposes are treated as confidential. We do not pass on addresses to anyone.

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CHURCHES IN UK

Nuffield Congregation meeting with Nuffield Parish Church, near Henley-on-Thames, the Rev John F Shearer. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer, 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8.00 am first Sunday, 6.30 pm third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8.00 pm. *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 am Morning Prayer and 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. *Enquiries* Rev Peter Ratcliff, 020 8417 0875.

St. Mary's Castle Street, Reading. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper), 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. *Enquiries* Rev EJ Malcolm 0118 959 5131.

St. Silas, Wolverhampton, meeting in St. John's Cloisters Chapel, St. John's Square (A-Z p29 H2). 11.00 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday Holy Communion); 6.00 pm BST Evening Prayer (4.00 pm GMT) (3rd Sunday Holy Communion). Tuesdays in term time 7.00 pm Bible Study; 7.45 pm Prayer Meeting. On-street parking. *Enquiries* Rt Rev E Malcolm 01547 528815. Hon Curate Rev IR Budgen, 01902 656514.

Holy Trinity Church, Frinton-on-Sea. Sunday 11 a.m. Morning Prayer The Frinton Community Centre, Soken House, The Triangle, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. Sunday 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer, Tuesday 8.00 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting 1, Chaplins, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. For more information please contact Mr Philip Lievesley Tel: (01255) 679572. www.holytrinityfrinton.org.uk

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