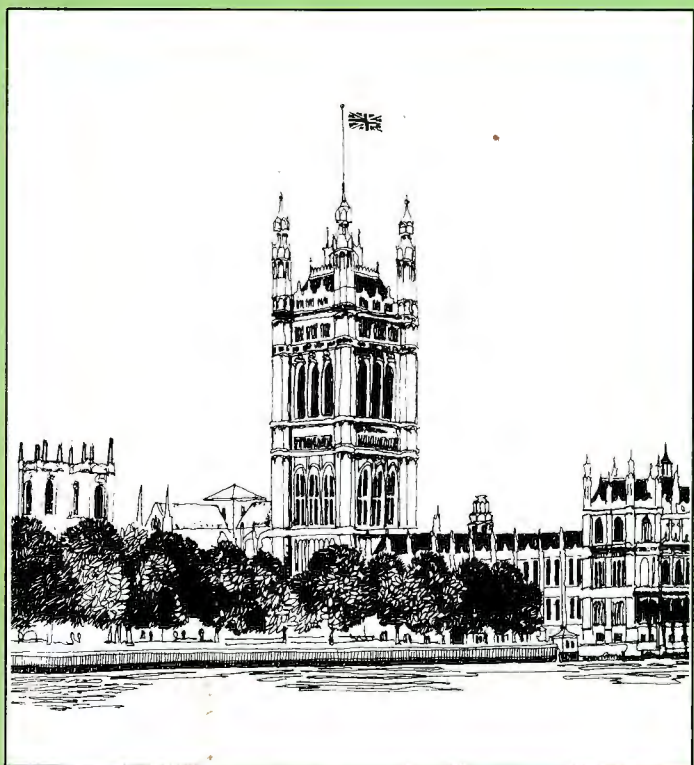


# REFORMATION TODAY



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MARCH-APRIL 1990

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## A tribute to Loraine Boettner — 1901-1990

Born of Christian parents in rural Missouri, Loraine Boettner was brought up in an Arminian revivalist tradition. He could not pinpoint the time of his conversion. He was baptised by immersion in a pond at the age of 18. Soon afterwards, he began studying agriculture but then, feeling a call to Christian service, he transferred to Tarkio Presbyterian College at which time he imbibed his post-millennial views. Upon his graduation he enrolled at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1925 and received the ThM degree in 1929. He wrote his Master's thesis on predestination. While at Princeton he studied under Caspar Wistar Hodge the grandson of Charles Hodge. Among his fellow students were John Murray and Carl McIntyre. It was probably at this time that he embraced the Westminster Confession of Faith. In later years he was a member of the OPC (Orthodox Presbyterian Church).

Boettner engaged in Christian work but he realised that he did not have a call to the preaching ministry. Upon graduation he taught at Pikeville Presbyterian College in Kentucky. In 1932 he married Lillian Henry and published his first book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* which he subsequently expanded five times.

During the years 1937 to 1948 he worked for the Library of Congress but continued to give time to writing. Because of his wife's failing health he moved to California where he lived until her decease in 1958. He then went to live in Rockport, Missouri. In 1962 he published his book *Roman Catholicism*, which surpassed all his other books for popularity and became a best seller. The



Banner of Truth has published English editions for the UK market.

Other books by Loraine Boettner were *The Millennium*, *Studies in Theology*, and *Immortality*. He wrote many articles and smaller treatises. Several of his writings were translated into Italian, Portuguese, Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic.

Loraine Boettner was a very humble and retiring man, a man of true godliness. He was exceedingly generous, gentle and considerate, one of the Lord's jewels. He kept a very low profile.

He was given long life and devoted his time to writing and correspondence. It was only in 1989 that his health rapidly declined. He succumbed to leukemia and in his last days bore a noble and beautiful testimony. He declined all artificial means of prolonging his life. He entered into the Lord's presence on January 3rd.

During his last illness Mrs Esther Wolf, a cousin, tended to his needs and encouraged him spiritually. She testifies to his fervent love for the Lord. Only 35 people attended his funeral service, a tiny number compared to the heavenly throng interested in his passing. Twenty travelled seven miles to Rockport where he was buried within a short distance from the house where he was born 89 years before. (continued on page 1)

# Editorial

*The first time since 1536!*

The subject of justification is one for all Christians to know well. Whenever unity with other churches is contemplated, justification is the primary subject. What is a Christian? How does one become a Christian? How can a sinner be justified?

In the introduction to the article *Justification – the First Article of our Faith*, a brief explanation is given concerning the momentous inauguration anticipated for September this year of the ecumenical initiative called the Inter-Church Process. Over 90 percent of the Christian churches in England, Scotland and Wales will unite at local church level. This will include the Roman Catholic churches.

What will it be like to come face to face with Roman Catholic practice at grass roots level? The article *How Roman Catholicism Functions* provides a description of the main features.

*How should we view modern translations?*

I remember an extremely negative response to the Good News Bible (TEV) when it first appeared. I gained the impression that every orthodox spirit ought to show just how faithful he was to the truth by firing two rounds of a

shotgun at the GNB or at least pelting it with stones! Before criticising ('He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame' – Prov 18:13), I found out that the translators had deliberately limited themselves to a restricted vocabulary in order to provide for a very large constituency in the world who have English as their second language. I then read some of the Old Testament in the GNB and was astonished at the power of the Word of God. The book of Job came alive in a new way for me because the characters were talking in my language fiercely with cut and thrust. For linguistic reasons the GNB NT does not help me but for people whose English is limited it may be the very source of life.

We need to be generous in this subject and avoid being censorious of others. Personal taste concerning the merits and demerits of translations will vary. Every minister if possible should learn NT Greek and seek to prepare for preaching from the Greek text. But if we look at the world as a whole only a minority are going to work in Greek. Think of the majority in the world who only have one translation of the Bible or the NT, and hardly any books to help them. Naturally if a preacher does know NT Greek he will want a Bible in which he can repose his confidence because of its accuracy.

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## A TRIBUTE TO LORAINÉ BOETTNER *(continued from inside front cover)*

Various are the gifts given to the Church. Lorainé Boettner was given the gift of writing which has been used greatly especially over a period of time, 1932 to 1960, when the Reformed theology he represented was in steep decline. Eschatology is not as important as some of the other subjects on which he wrote, but it is worth noting that for many years Dr Boettner was about the

only 'post-mill' writer known. Whatever one's views on that or any other of the themes upon which he wrote, readers will always find his writings clear, informative and edifying. Lorainé Boettner's constant desire was to give God the glory which is precisely what we do as we express our thanksgiving to the Head of the Church who gave him to us for the major part of this century.

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*Front cover:* A drawing by Lawrence Littleton Evans of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster. Westminster provides a focus for front cover pictures for the 1689 Confession.

But that poses a tremendous problem because it is not only accuracy that is needed but dynamism. Jesus not only said accurate things; he said them in a dynamic way. I want a Bible which ripples with power, which is both accurate and electric! It will discourage me greatly if my Bible is accurate but wooden. Also I insist on contemporary English. I love many parts of the KJV but there are too many words like 'bowels' which are unsuitable. I am happy for others to use what suits them best but wish them to allow me the freedom to do the same.

The principle of dynamic equivalence in translation is a matter of degree. All translations have it: some more and some less. Temperament enters into this subject. Luther captured the meaning conveyed by the text of the Greek and then expressed that in German in such a dynamic way that the effect was enduring for generations. Likewise William Tyndale put his own stamp on the translation of the Bible into English. Every translation takes some liberties in striving to convey the message. The new Afrikaans Bible (which has also been grumbled at) takes liberties. For instance for Haggai 2:7 the Hebrew only just permits the addition of the word 'mighty' — 'Ek sal hierdie huis vul met my magtige teenwoordigheid,' 'I will fill this house with my almighty presence!' That is glorious! The LORD'S almighty presence filling his house! But it is a dynamic equivalent. No untruth is conveyed.

We should note really well that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible freely used dynamic equivalents and when the NT cites that Greek translation (the Septuagint) dynamic equivalents are freely used. It is always a dual issue, accuracy and personality. Language is not mathematics only: it is character.

A further factor is that some Greek words cannot be translated with single words and some seem to defy translation altogether. Take the all important *ekenosen* (Phil 2:7, observe the stem *kenos* in Gal 2:2; 2 Cor 6:1; 1 Th 3:5; Eph 5:6). If we insist on being literal we would translate: 'He made himself vain'. That would be ludicrous. So the RSV, NASB and Jerusalem Bible translate, 'He emptied himself'. That is very misleading because we would hate anyone to think that he emptied himself of his deity. The NIV and the NEB use an equivalent, 'but made himself nothing'. If we take that literally it would be ridiculous. But it is now sufficiently used as a modern figure of speech to denote a person of no account. But this does no more justice to the real issue than the equivalent used by the KJV and NKJV, 'he made himself of no reputation'. The vanity or emptiness of *kenos* in the context means that this One who is very God for a while laid aside his divine powers and prerogatives, and lived just as an ordinary man while all the time possessing all the attributes of deity. The powers of deity were there in all their glory but for a while would not be used. And now it has taken at least four lines to explain one word!

To write a satisfactory critique of a translation of the whole Bible would take at least 20 years and would fill several thousand pages.

We need to remember that the future of the Bible does not depend in any way whatsoever upon any one of its translations into hundreds of languages. The future of the Bible rests only upon the manuscripts which have survived. It is extremely misleading to think that if we use the NIV or any other translation which has dynamic equivalence that thereby we are endangering the future of the Bible.

# Justification – the First Article of our Faith!

If Martin Luther was correct in his assertion that Justification is the standing or falling article of the Christian Church then we should regard the Christian Church in Britain as a fallen Church! In the campaign for Christian unity the doctrine of Justification has been ignored.

For the first time since Protestantism emerged under the reign of King Henry VIII (1509-1547),<sup>1</sup> a radically different situation will soon exist. In September this year over 90 percent of churches in Britain will collaborate together at local church level with Roman Catholic churches. This will be a grass roots conferring together in the practical issues of evangelism. It has been agreed by all the parties concerned that evangelism is to be the main catalyst to strengthen unity.

At least six percent of the churches are not involved for they identify with the British Evangelical Council. The BEC stands aside from the Ecumenical Movement. In addition to that there would be several hundred independent churches which have no affiliation. Numerically these would be very small compared even to the six percent just mentioned. Most of the unaffiliated independent churches have small memberships and most are so isolated that they would scarcely know what is going on in wider church circles.

All the mainline denominations are involved in what is called the Inter-Church Process. For instance the Baptist Union with 1,950 churches is fully involved but 15 churches have withdrawn from the BU as a result of this ecumenical compromise and a further 65 churches have, while remaining in the Union, disassociated from the Inter-Church Process.

Most significant is the growing union of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches which has advanced through the work of a commission of Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians working together since 1967 (ARCIC). In bringing the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions together the controversy over the eucharist (the mass) was deemed the most important issue. That doctrine was followed by the subject of the meaning and the function of the ordained ministry, which is closely related to the nature and exercise of authority in the Church.

In a later document, ARCIC II, on salvation, justification is dislodged from its prime position, and its death-knell is sounded (Hywel Jones in *EVANGEL*, Summer 1987).

What we must note is that Justification has been left out at grass roots level. The average person has little idea of what Justification is, or why it is important. Let me illustrate the point by referring to a series of television programmes at peak viewing time in the UK on Saturday evenings called MISSIONARIES. Judging by the first presentation it promises to be a complete caricature of missionaries depicting them, among other dubious things, as agents of British and American imperialism imposing their culture by way of dress etc on other peoples, which is of course exactly what Hudson Taylor did not do. The very first question to be asked (but it never seems to be asked) is, Why are you a missionary? The answer is, 'I am a missionary because I bear the good news that Christ has provided the one and only way of salvation in which we can be justified by God. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15). Everything else is secondary to that.'

How are sinners saved by Christ? How are they saved whether they live in Irian Jaya, in Atlanta, Georgia, or in Birmingham, England? If we believe that Justification by faith is the only way of salvation how can we unite with those who deny that?

At grass roots level Anglicans and Roman Catholics have just ignored Justification. For the Liberals, who form a third part of the unity movement, Justification is irrelevant because they do not believe that anyone will be eternally lost anyway. Furthermore many leaders involved believe in inter-faith unity which includes Hindus and Muslims and so on, so Justification as the only way of salvation is very unpopular with them. They will not wish to see it on the agenda.

Yet we must affirm that Christian Unity is a very great obligation. To achieve Christian Unity a basis of truth is essential. It is after all a unity of Christians. If we cannot define what a Christian is what kind of unity is that?

### **Only two ways of seeking salvation**

Job put the question, How can a man be just before God? (Job 9:2). During the whole history of mankind only two ways of Justification before God have been invented. The first is self-justification in which the sinner goes about to establish his own righteousness in order to justify himself. Of course the methods and approaches used to establish human righteousness vary tremendously. Many, perhaps most, believe that God is too loving and kind to condemn any except outright criminals like Hitler, Stalin and the late Ceausescu. They feel that God is bound to accept all reasonably decent people who attain to about a 51 percent righteousness. Others are not so sure and go to considerable lengths to establish their own righteousness by doing good works. These may or may not include religious observances.

The Roman Catholic way of attaining righteousness before God has always been by accumulating good works with the aid of the sacraments of the Church. At the end of the day this righteousness always falls short of perfection. Hence purgatory is supposed to finish the unfinished work before the soul is ready for

heaven. The Muslim system is one in which a person can earn eternal life by martyrdom for the cause of Islam. In Islam there is no such thing as receiving the righteousness which God himself has provided in his Son Jesus Christ. The whole system is based on human merit.

The Jehovah's Witness who knocked on our door last week made it very clear that only JW's are saved, and only those JW's who fulfil the condition of works prescribed. What happens to all before the JW system of salvation by works came into being is problematic. When we examine the way of salvation proposed by the cults we discover that in every instance the Christian doctrine of Justification by faith is rejected and a system of human merit commended instead. Of them all it can be said, 'Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God they sought to establish their own' (Rom 10:3).

The notion that a man can justify himself before God is ingrained into the fallen human race. Even the most depraved criminal will make the appeal that he has after all some goodness or will claim that there is at least some law that he has not broken. Surely, he reasons, a merciful God will take that into account and accept him after all?

The sentence of Scripture is clear. No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law (Rom 3:20).

Salvation by works is one way, the way universally attempted. There is only one other. That is God's invention. He has created this way. It is unique. It is Justification by faith alone. In this way of Justification the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is put to the account of the one who believes. This righteousness is the sum of the life and death and resurrection of Christ (Jer 23:6), the sum of his active and passive obedience. In this righteousness there is sinless perfection as well as a positive fulfilment of the law (Gal 4:4). In this way the issue of righteousness is settled once and for all. It is not a question of getting enough righteousness as though it were a matter of quantity. It is not a question of quantity but one of perfection. Only perfection will pass. Christ is perfect; his righteousness is perfect; it knows of no increase; it requires no improvement.

### **What can silence the thunders of Sinai?**

God's wisdom is seen in this, that he has given us his Son. By union with him we receive his righteousness, a righteousness which can stand up to the thunders and lightnings of the law of Sinai (1 Cor 1:30). Sinai illustrates the fact that all the curses of condemnation must come on those who violate God's holy law. On the great final day of judgement every person will be tried by God's holy law, and if anyone has not heard of the Ten Commandments then that person will be tried by the dictates of his conscience (Rom 2:12-16). The sinner's conscience which corresponds to the Ten Commandments will condemn him for wrongs committed. God's holy law will be more searching in its application at the Great White Throne than it was in its initial proclamation on Sinai.

Sin is the transgression of God's holy law. The soul that sins must die! The adulterer must die! The murderer must die! The thief must die! The God-hater

must die! The man who has blasphemed God must die! God alone will execute the sentence. It is not for human courts either in Rome or in Iran to try and carry out death sentences on blasphemers. "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord' (Rom 12:19).

Where is a righteousness which not only obtains remission for all sin but actually gives the sinner a right to stand in God's holy presence? Christ is our righteousness. He has stood in the place of condemnation. Every curse deserved by the transgressors of God's law was suffered by him. 'He became a curse for us, as it is written "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree"' (Gal 3:13), and, 'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree' (1 Pet 2:24). Justice will not require that there be a second victim when the first has borne the penalty. In predicting the Messiah Jeremiah beautifully tells of his name. 'This is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD our Righteousness' (Jer 23:6).

### **What is Justification according to Paul?**

Justification is defined for us in Paul's letter to the Romans, the foremost letter of the New Testament. It is first precisely because it provides a formal treatise as to how a man can be justified before God.

Paul's way is to tell of God's righteousness which is being revealed in the preaching of the gospel (Rom 1:16,17). Just as God's wrath is constantly being revealed against godlessness and wickedness in this sinful world so at the same time a righteousness by which men can be saved is also being revealed by God's power. There is nothing passive here. God is active when his gospel is proclaimed. *Apokaluptetai*, meaning 'is being revealed', is a frequentative present, which is to say that God is at work all the time in the present revealing this righteousness through the gospel.

The world of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, is utterly destitute of righteousness. This Paul explains in Romans chapters 1 to 3. In chapter 3:21 he returns to God's provision of righteousness. He explains how this righteousness was established. Justice was satisfied by a sacrifice of atonement. The demands of the law were satisfied. That means that God is just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus (Rom 3:26).

Was this a new way of salvation? Not at all! In Romans 4 Paul demonstrates that there has always been but one way of salvation and that is Justification by faith. Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness (Rom 4:3). David was justified in the same way. There never was or will be any other way of salvation except by imputed righteousness. Justification by faith as the only way of salvation is the truth of the Bible as a whole, not of the New Testament only (Rom 4).

This righteousness is given to the believer once and for all. The outcome in terms of experience is joy and peace in believing. Yes, there will be trials of all kinds but if Christ died for us when we were his enemies, now that we are united to him how much more will he save us and care for us (Rom 5:1-11).



Union with Christ not only brings his righteousness upon us but that same union provides a foundation for holy living (Rom 6:11). By union with Christ now in the present we have his life and his power to overcome our sinful habits. We have spiritual motivation. We are eager to do good works not for our glory but for his praise. This is the exact opposite of all those false systems which puff up the pride of men and encourage them to trust in their own self-merit.

### **What are the main elements of Justification?**

I find it impossible to improve on the definition provided by the Shorter Catechism. What is Justification? Answer:

*Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*

The main elements to note are as follows:

1. *Justification is an act of God the Father.* It is God who justifies (Rom 8:33). If he justifies then who can condemn? Justification is a forensic matter. Forensic means to do with the law and with law courts. We can recall fiercely contested legal cases in which the verdict of the judge has been awaited with great tension. When the accused has been acquitted there have been scenes of ecstatic joy. But God's way of Justification is on a higher plane. The Father actually constitutes the sinner righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. 'Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made (*katastathesontai* – will be constituted) righteous' (Rom 5:19). On the basis of the righteousness put upon the ungodly sinner that sinner is declared to be just. If the Father justifies who can condemn? (Rom 8:33).

2. *Justification is a free gift.* In contrast to every system of human merit Justification has no regard whatever to what we can contribute. 'Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.' This is a great encouragement to those who are bankrupt. Jesus described two men who entered the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a despised tax-collector. The Pharisee congratulated himself on his condition of superiority. The tax-collector was mortified. In fact he could hardly lift up his head. He could only utter one prayer which literally translated reads, 'God be propitiated to me the sinner!' (Luke 18:13). Yes, he went out justified. That is the most suitable prayer for a sinner because it expresses human destitution, complete self-renunciation and yet at the same time faith and trust in God's power and mercy to provide a propitiation, a sacrifice to save from sin. God has indeed provided that propitiation (1 Jn 4:10), and brings with it righteousness which is a gift from first to last.

3. *Justification includes the forgiveness of ALL sins.* Justification presupposes faith and repentance. The Scriptures assure us of Justification if we repent toward God and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). There are always sins that lodge more firmly in our consciences and memories than other sins. There are deeds for which we hate ourselves, acts in which we may have deprived others or harmed others which we would dearly like to remedy, but

now it is too late. It may be 'that one sin' is sticking in our conscience like an arrow, firmly embedded. Most of all we feel the guilt of that sin against God. We identify with David entirely when he declares, 'Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight' (Ps 51:4). We think, 'My sin is against heaven, and therefore it is beyond forgiveness.' Of course Satan is more than alive and active at my right hand to press home the idea that I am beyond forgiveness. I say to myself, my sin is deplorable! Satan affirms the same with the loudest AMEN and then presses his point that there can be no forgiveness!

But if Justification does not remove all condemnation (Rom 8:1), then it is not Justification at all. Justification allows of no degrees. It is either yes or no. Justification is the pardon of all my sins, past, present and future. I hope never to sin again but if I do that sin too is covered. The question of possibility of sin in the future should never make an excuse to sin. If it does it shows I do not understand the genius of union with Christ. Union with him means I live only to please him (Rom 6).

4. *Justification is based on the righteousness of Christ alone.* The word 'only' is vital, 'Only on account of the righteousness of Christ.' It is not on account of a mixture of my goodness and God's gift that I am justified. Nor can my faith be taken as the reason for my Justification. Faith is only the instrument by which Christ is received. Faith is one thing; righteousness another. Paul goes out of his way to clarify this issue in Romans 3:17 where he asserts that this way of salvation is by faith so as to uphold the principle of grace and exclude boasting. Faith simply receives and accepts the gift but in itself contributes not an iota to Christ's righteousness.

5. *Justification is received by faith alone.* There is no other way of salvation for there is no other method by which we can be joined to Christ and so receive his righteousness apart from faith. Hence the words of Jesus, 'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him' (Jn 3:36).

### **Justification cost God everything he had**

Is Justification in the first rank? Is it the most important truth of Christianity? The answer must be in the affirmative since Justification alone tells us how a man can be saved. That is one way of expressing its importance. Another way is to point to the fact that our Justification cost God everything he had! God so loved us that he gave us his one and only Son. How much does Christ mean to the Father? The Father loves the Son with an eternal, unchanging, perfect love. To give him up to be a man to live in a fallen world was an enormous undertaking involving humiliation for his Son. But to make him a sin offering, to burn him alive as the burnt offering; to have to go to such lengths is to give everything he possessed. Human language cannot adequately describe what it meant for the Father to be separated from the Son at Calvary.

Our Justification cost everything that Christ had. We only have to see Jesus writhing in the garden of Gethsemane in his blood, to see that he was being

taken to the utmost extremity of his being. The agonies of his betrayal and death lay before him. The appalling spiritual desertion of the Cross loomed before him. The torments of hell were coming upon him. Our sins began to cling leech-like to him on every side (Ps 40:12). There was no other way forward if we were to receive a free pardon and be justified by the Father. If there was another way why did not God reveal it then?

### **Justification and Union with Christ are inseparable**

A fourfold wonder is declared by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21 which may well lay claim to being the most profound statement in the Bible.

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

The first wonder is the fact of a sinless life. Whoever heard of such a thing? Whoever of note in history has laid claim to such a thing? But Christ by his very nature as God cannot sin and did not sin even when provoked to the extreme. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate' (1 Pet 2:22,23).

The second wonder is that the only one who had no sin was made to be sin by a reckoning. Our sins were reckoned to his account. That is a lot of debt to bear! Only a divine person, that is the God-man could possibly take so much guilt and bear it away.

The third wonder is that we can be one with him in the closest possible spiritual and brotherly union. The preposition chosen in the Greek language is *en* which means inside. We cannot be inside another person, but believers are so bonded and so closely knit to Christ that this figure of speech 'in Christ' is used about 160 times in the New Testament.

The fourth wonder is that I the sinner can actually be constituted as perfectly righteous in God's sight once and for all (Zech 3:1-5).

### **The world's worst grammatical mistake!**

How can we explain the morass into which the Christian Church sank prior to the Reformation? The answer is that due attention was not given to the Greek language. We should never depend on any one translation of the Bible. The accuracy of the Bible depends on the original languages in which it is written and on them alone. The Church followed the Vulgate which is a Latin translation. The word in Latin for the verb to justify is *justificare* which can be taken to mean *to make righteous*. Now there is a world of difference between *to declare righteous*, and *to make righteous*. *Dikaioo* in the Greek means to declare righteous. That word on its own should guarantee the meaning of Justification. There could hardly have been a worse accident in grammar than the confusion that directed generations on the vain quest of trying to find Justification on the basis of accruing human merits and getting better on the inside. It was out of that dark tunnel that Martin Luther was rescued. He became a very prototype of

what Justification is in its realisation. And he was rescued by grammar! He was rescued by his discovery of the meaning of imputed righteousness, first in the Hebrew (in the Psalms) which led him in turn to the Greek (in Romans).

Following the Reformation the Roman Catholic Church instituted the Council of Trent which met at various times between 1545 and 1563. In all seven months were devoted to dealing with the doctrine of Justification. Sixteen decrees were given endorsing the concept of reward and merit and 33 anathemas (clauses ending with the phrase 'let him be accursed!') proclaimed against those who embrace Justification as it has been set out in this exposition.

Here is something of which we must take good note. The only time in the New Testament that we read of a fiery anathema is a twice repeated 'let him be accursed' in Galatians 1:9. There the apostle declares of anyone who perverts Justification by faith 'let him be accursed!' It does not matter how important a minister is, even if he is like an angel from heaven, if he perverts Justification he is accursed! The Council of Trent reversed that and heaped 33 anathemas upon those who embrace Justification by faith alone as God's way of salvation!

### **Justification by Faith and the problem of the mass**

In their work on unity the Roman Catholics and Anglicans (ARCIC), have put the mass (eucharist) in the place of prime importance and consideration. Every time the mass is performed a real and literal sacrifice of atonement is supposed to take place. This by its very nature denies the completeness and perfection of what Christ achieved in his work of the Cross. When he said, 'It is finished!' the work of atoning sacrifice was finished. We need no more atoning sacrifices of any kind. The message of the letter to the Hebrews sums up the issue like this: 'By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy' (Heb 10:14). His one sacrifice has been accepted by the Father (Rom 4:25).

If further sacrifices are needed then we can never be sure about our Justification. The making of further sacrifices denotes that there is an inadequacy: more is needed. In other words the issue has not been settled. But Hebrews 10:11-18 tells us about Christ who has offered once and for all a completely satisfactory sacrifice. Having achieved that he now sits at the right hand of God waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool (Heb 10:13). As a result our sins are remembered no more because where these have been forgiven there is no more need for any sacrifice for sin (Heb 10:18).

### **Is Justification by Faith out of date?**

A great obstacle in Western society is unwillingness to think. Like foodstuffs thinking is packaged for us. The trend is to let other people do that painful work. The notion is popular too that the majority must be right. The majority think that the Reformation and its doctrine of Justification is out of date!

We must insist that Justification is not out of date. If Justification is out of date then salvation is out of date. Luther referred to Justification not only as the

*(continued on page 11)*

# Review

**Don't Cry for me**, Katharine Makower, Hodder & Stoughton, 197 pp. £2.95.

Shedding light on an issue of increasing public concern, namely the impact on primitive peoples confronted by modern civilisation, this book comes as a refreshing contrast to some of the criticisms which are currently being levelled at missionaries. It is the inspiring story of spiritually rich though materially poor Indian Christians in Argentine and the selfless dedication of those missionaries who from the early part of the century have laboured in the arid, intensely hot and remote Gran Chaco region to bring the gospel to the tribal peoples. The policy has always been to retain the local languages and to prepare and hand over leadership to indigenous people. The author shows how, contrary to much popular opinion 'the missionaries did not destroy the tribal way of life. Rather their presence acted as a buffer, and helped to strengthen the Indian community as it adapted to inevitable change.' Records are quoted showing the warm appreciation of anthropologists who welcomed the sensitivity and courage of the early pioneers who through their labours and interposition prevented the destruction of the indigenous people.

The writing style is not vivacious but the subject matter is impelling and the love of Christ so shines through the lives of those who took and those who have received the message of good news that the reader is both challenged and inspired to a fresh commitment to the wholehearted service of such a Saviour.

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## JUSTIFICATION – THE FIRST ARTICLE OF OUR FAITH!

*(continued from page 10)*

standing and falling article of the Church, he also said, 'Justification is the head and cornerstone of the Church, which alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves and protects her'. That is true as much for the Church as it is for every individual believer. It is a disaster for the Christian to lose hold of Justification by faith, and it is a calamity that the contemporary Church has already lost her grip on Justification and is now heading back in the direction of medieval darkness. Urgently needed are new and vital ways of presenting Justification; new tracts, new initiatives in communication and evangelism, fresh starting points, relevant and challenging presentations, daring confrontations, not only with the pen, but in debate. In our petitions for revival we need to pray that clear, faithful, courageous, gospel spokesmen will be raised up for the mass media which in the UK on religious affairs is devoted almost entirely to that which defames and misrepresents biblical Christianity.

Justification must be seen again across all the world for what it really is: a stupendous donation coming out of union with Christ; a dynamic salvation which makes us completely right before God; an irresistible force setting him who receives it on the right track once and for all; a glorious and infallible guarantee of eternal life! For such an amazing gift may our eternal Creator be forever honoured with our joyful praises!

<sup>1</sup> Protestantism can be said to have begun in England with the passing of the Act of Supremacy in 1536. *RT91* was devoted to the doctrine of Justification by Faith with excellent work by Barry Shucksmith in four parts: the biblical doctrine; the history of Justification; Justification in the Church of England; and, Justification and modern rapprochements. A biography by Gwynne Williams of Thomas Cranmer, who played a crucial role during the reign of King Henry, was also included in *RT91*.

# News

## Nairobi, Kenya

Following the opening of their new church building (largely funded by RBMS in the USA) the Trinity Baptist Church under the leadership of Keith Underhill and Naphthally Ogallo report increasing attendance (up to 180) and the demands and encouragements which accompany the care of members, adherents and enquirers. Building work has begun on a manse on the church site for closer proximity to the many opportunities. For the present financial constraints have necessitated a temporary halt at ground floor level.

The hope is that the established congregation in Nairobi will become a spiritual base for the outreach opportunities which are beckoning from further afield. Already there have been calls for help in training church leaders in Tanzania while some aspire to secular studies in Nairobi which will enable them to be at hand for spiritual training at Trinity. Of the widely scattered groups in Kenya regularly visited by Keith and Naphtally, the congregation at Thimlich has now formally set aside Paul Oyomno to be its pastor.

In his recent newsletter Keith Underhill raised a cry for help. 'Although countries like Kenya and Tanzania are basically 'Christianized' a few isolated Muslim-dominated areas still need to hear the gospel. Churches of all types are found everywhere else, mostly evangelical in name but less so in practice. This, says Keith 'is due to great ignorance of the Word that prevails; the desire for church authority and money; and an increasing emphasis on social issues. We believe there is a crying need for churches that take the whole Word of God seriously in every part of their existence. With so many opportunities within and outside Nairobi, there is a great danger that I spread myself too thinly and nothing gets done as it ought. How shall I respond practically to the very serious call that has come from

the coastal area for help amongst people largely untouched by the gospel? How do we give guidance and encouragement to the three groups in West Kenya? What of the opening doors in Tanzania? We know that when the Lord opens doors he also gives the necessary grace and wisdom to deal with them. We believe that the time has come for definite and specific help.'

'First we need someone to oversee the theological course, for the paramount need is for the training of future pastors. Then we need help in ministry at the coast and in West Kenya. Please make it a matter of urgent prayer that the Lord will raise up labourers for this part of his harvest-field.'

Keith Underhill is due to be in the UK from mid-March until the end of June 1990 and may be contacted via Pastor Geoff Thomas, The Manse, Buarth Road, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 1NB, tel. 0970 617982.

## Puerto Rico

Noble Vater leads a church in Puerto Rico and co-operates with Larry Secrest whose picture recently adorned the front cover of *Reformation Today* together with his wife.

Together with the work of building up the local church and evangelism there is a desire to circulate much needed sound literature in Spanish and the bookstore work is prospering. Mr Vater believes that many Spanish speaking people in the US (and elsewhere) could profit from the excellent books now available in their language.

Some recent titles include translations of: Walter Chantry's *The Shadow of the Cross*; E. F. Kevan's *The Lord's Supper* and *The 1689 Confession of Faith*. Several hundred copies of the latter have already been sold both in Puerto Rico and in the Dominican Republic, Spain and the USA.

Noble Vater is ready to send books or lists of Spanish titles available (with English headings). Enquiries should be directed to: N. D. Vater, Siena, 289, College Park, Rio Piedras, PUERTO RICO 00921.

Because of shipping problems and high costs involved Mr Vater encourages co-operation so that larger printings may be made locally in other countries. For example a printing of the 1689 Confession is being arranged within Colombia and is (or should be soon) available in that country at prices suited to their economy. Contact address: Stanley Line, Apdo. Aereo 100063, Bogota 10, D.E., COLOMBIA.

### **Palma, Majorca**

The sudden homecall in August 1989 of Pastor Joaquin Ranero was reported in *RT112*. Aspects of his work in his own church and with the Gypsy church in Palma had been described in *RT108*.

After a period of bewildering anguish in the Palma church, the Lord has kept, comforted and provided wonderfully for his people there. This is also an encouragement to Joaquin's widow, Armana. One of the church members reports: 'Our new pastor, Juan Bascunana with his wife Mari-Carmen worked in Beas de Segura, mainland Spain, with the EMF. He started coming over fortnightly to preach and eventually came over to stay with his wife and the youngest of their four children, in November.' We are thankful that God has answered our prayers and that Juan is so strong in the Doctrines of Grace. Also Juan has a strong interest in work amongst gypsies (which is encouraging to know), and is carrying on where Joaquin left off, preaching at the Gypsy church and visiting the prison. He has worked very hard to achieve unity in the church and is pleased with progress. Juan Bascunana has expressed his interest in circulating a Spanish translation of the 1689 Confession.

The induction service was on February 11th. The church ask us to join them in praying for the need of accommodation for the family Bascunana and that the new era of life for the church will be to the glory of God.

### **EMF — The new General Director**

Daniel Webber who has contributed as a speaker at the Carey Family Conference has just taken up the appointment of Director of the European Missionary Fellowship. For 18 years he has served as pastor of the Waterford House Evangelical Free Church, Strood, Kent. Omri Jenkins whose book *Five Minutes to Midnight* (EP), which describes the revival under James Stewart in Eastern Europe from 1934 to 1939, and then outlines the history of the EMF, is retiring after many years of leadership of the EMF. At present Pastor Webber is working two days a week at the EMF headquarters: 'Guessens', Welwyn, Herts. On May 1st the work will become full-time and will include editing the quarterly newspaper *Vision of Europe*. Hopefully by September the Webber family (Mrs Webber is of Portuguese background) will settle in Welwyn. Southern Europe is one of the great mission fields of the world and we need to pray that revival will come to these lands.

### **Caring for the homeless and despairing in Paris**

The Christian Literature Crusade who operate a Christian Bookshop not far from Notre-Dame as an evangelistic outreach report the spiritual worth of the project over six years. In the New Year edition of their magazine *Floodtide* they give the following stirring report:

'An estimated 10,000 Parisians are homeless and no-one understands their plight better than Christophe Bounard who used to sleep in cardboard boxes near the "Pont Neuf", begging his living from passers-by. Christophe is now director of the mission that showed him the way to God eighteen years ago. The "Mission Evangélique parmi les Sans-Logis" (Evangelical Mission to the Homeless) opens its doors to homeless people every evening at 5 pm to communicate the gospel message, provide food and care and offer help.

'About 48% of Parisians live alone in small studio flats . . . they find life lonely and

empty with little opportunity to make friends in such a huge, impersonal city. The high proportion of immigrants in Paris (including over 1,000,000 N Africans) is yet another area of challenge to the Church as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

### **Romania**

The revolution in Romania and the overthrow within a week of the hated Ceausescu régime has been the most dramatic event in the series of astonishing changes that have come to Eastern Europe. The situation is far from settled. There are enormous problems to be faced. Mature Christian leadership is stretched to the limit. The Church is suffering from all the effects of repression, one of which is the lack of training resources for the ministry.

Josif Ton left Romania for the USA in 1981. There he has been engaged in preparing materials for training Romanian pastors and preachers. We hear that considerable progress has been made in literature work for Romania. Josif Ton is now back in Romania and with other leaders is beset with the difficult decision of where to concentrate resources of time and energy. There is the call to enter the political realm motivated by the pressing need for Christian principles to be interwoven into future administration. In 1974 Josif wrote a manifesto describing the place of a Christian in a Socialist state. He sent a copy to President Ceausescu. Soon afterwards eight policemen arrived at his house at 6 am. They searched the house for eight hours and took away his library and all his papers (see article by Josif Ton *RT58*).

The most encouraging feature in Romania is the evangelical revival that has been continuing there since 1974 according to Ron Davies, a lecturer at All Nations Bible College, who has made a close study of the work in Oradea in particular. Trevor Harris of the Slavic Gospel Mission reports that congregations are massive in comparison to those we have in the UK. The important feature for us to note is that revival came

after many years of persecution and oppression. One of the outstanding characteristics of the revival is an intense appetite for hearing the Word of God preached. Ron Davies said on the last day of a recent trip he was required to preach four sermons, one after another, before they would let him go!

Our most urgent prayer is that the coming of freedom will not arrest the progress of revival but rather that many who have been hindered by fear will now be free to hear the gospel and that the Holy Spirit will bring an even greater harvest home. The lesson for us is that we have discouragements to wrestle with every bit as disheartening and enervating as atheistic Communism. We often face indifference and situations of lifelessness. The Romanian believers prayed and persevered through their afflictions even when the situation seemed impossible. Let us note their example and persevere with resolution in the belief that the Lord will hear our prayers and give us times of awakening and spiritual harvest.

### **RMI and The 1689 Confession of Faith — Polish edition**

The publishing of the 1689 Confession of Faith in Polish is highly significant at this time and the team of enthusiastic young men who have already shown their aptitude in publishing in the production of an excellent magazine are evidencing discernment in their priorities of teaching materials urgently needed by the churches and an ability to distribute these materials. RMI has funded the printing of the 1689. Some funding should be available as the book is sold but we do hope to help our Polish brethren with funding for further titles. Gifts for this work may be sent to Mr Tony Dennett, 9 Farlington Close, Haywards Heath RH16 3EH, UK. (Tony is the treasurer for the Cuckfield Baptist Church) or RMI, c/o Pastor Dennis Hustedt, Kenmore Baptist Church, 7504 NE Bothell Way, Bothell, WA 98011, USA.



# Criticisms of the NIV

*A review article by Bob Sheehan*

## **Accuracy of Translation and the NIV**

Robert Martin, Banner of Truth,  
88 pages, £2.95.

Since its publication the NIV has suffered at the hands of both its friends and enemies. Its friends have praised it to the sky as if unthinking enthusiasm were a virtue. Its enemies have anathematised it as if prejudiced hostility were a grace. Few have sought to present a reasoned critique. Dr Martin's book is, therefore, to be welcomed as a means of highlighting the issues that need to be considered in evaluating translations.

Unlike so many of the critics of the NIV, Dr Martin does not attack it because he is committed to the AV, nor because he follows the Received Text. Dr Martin's preferred version is the American Standard Version, and his chosen textual basis for the New Testament is eclectic (see pp. 75-82). The basis of his criticism is quite different.

He asks, 'What is the pre-eminent trait of a good Bible translation? The answer must be accuracy of translation' (p. 2). Quite so! Surely this is the desire of every godly translator. He wants 'to communicate the content of the biblical texts . . . in the native language of the readers. . . . The translator is concerned with equivalence, that is, he is concerned that his finished translation translates accurately what the original author wrote' (p. 6).

The key question, however, is how that accurate equivalent is to be achieved. Is the translator to impose the structure, grammar and exact wording of the original language on the receptor language? This is the method of formal

equivalence. Or are the structure, grammar and expressions of the receptor language to be used to convey the meaning of the original language? This is the method of dynamic equivalence. Which method of translation is most accurate for the New Testament? Should we conform contemporary English to first century Greek, or express first century Greek in modern English forms?

Dr Martin recognises that no two languages are exactly parallel. Therefore, every translation is a mixture of formal and dynamic elements. No translation is absolutely literal. However, some translations are more formal, others more dynamic in methodology.

Where does the NIV stand on this issue? It explicitly claims to occupy 'middle ground' (p. 11), taking an eclectic approach to translation policy as it does to textual variants (p. 12). Dr Martin's charge is that whatever the NIV claims its theoretical position is, its practice means that it chooses dynamic rather than formal equivalence on most occasions (p. 13). The examples he has selected in the remainder of the book are aimed at proving this charge.

(It is, of course, true that Dr Martin provides many examples consistent with his charge. However, it has to be recognised that only a discussion of *every* translation choice could prove Dr Martin correct in asserting that the NIV is more of a dynamic equivalence than a formal equivalence translation. The NIV claims to have chosen some dynamic equivalents and some formal. Merely to list off examples of the

dynamic equivalents does not prove or disprove their proportion in relation to formal equivalents.)

Before proceeding to demonstrate that there are dynamic equivalents in the NIV and without having proven that formal equivalence creates greater accuracy, Dr Martin prejudices the mind of his readers against dynamic equivalence.

He affirms his own position to be that of verbal and plenary inspiration and sees his commitment to formal equivalence as consistent with that. He explicitly relates the dynamic method of translation to the 'dynamic view of inspiration' which argues that God inspired the thoughts but not the words of the Bible writers (p. 13). In giving examples of adherence to this view he contends, 'the general tendency has been to find dynamic equivalence associated with heterodox views of inspiration and authority' (p. 15).

In other parts of the book Dr Martin asserts his confidence in the orthodoxy of the NIV translators and disclaims that he is accusing them of heterodoxy (pp. 4, 69). In the chapter under consideration he adds the disclaimer, 'though direct correspondence cannot be demonstrated in every case' (p. 15). However, the effect of chapter three is to associate dynamic equivalence with heterodoxy and thus to prejudice the reader as he comes to the evidence of dynamic equivalence in the NIV. I am not suggesting that Dr Martin deliberately adopted this unworthy, prejudicial tactic. I am simply saying that it is the effect of the positioning of this chapter, and the insertion of disclaimers mainly in other parts of the book.

What is more, if the argument is valid, Dr Martin is hoist with his own petard. If dynamic equivalence is to be rejected because the heterodox generally prefer

it to formal equivalence, then an eclectic approach to textual criticism must be rejected on the same grounds! Few of the heterodox ever defend the Received Text! Yet Dr Martin wants an eclectic text notwithstanding its enthusiastic support by the heterodox!

The basis for a critique of the NIV must not be that some of its translation principles would be accepted (although often in a far more radical form) by the heterodox. Rather, the NIV must be criticised on the basis of its accuracy or inaccuracy, its own merits or demerits.

Dr Martin argues for the inaccuracy of the NIV on seven grounds:

*1. It is inaccurate because it eliminates complex grammatical structures*

Anyone reading the Greek New Testament will notice that Paul, in particular, wrote complex sentences often containing a number of dependent clauses. Should sentences of similar complexity be produced in the English translations or should they be broken down into shorter, simpler sentences? Short, simple sentences are more acceptable in contemporary English usage.

The decision is a difficult one. Inevitably, if the grammatical form of the original sentence is changed for a simpler form, words will need to be added in the translation. Some of the force of the original will be lost. The reader will also have difficulty in knowing which words are translations and which are additions.

The NIV choice is often for short, simple sentences with the resultant problems. It does, therefore, inevitably increase its tendency to inaccuracy. Of course, we must not assume this is a problem for every sentence of the NIV!

As valid as Dr Martin's main criticism is at this point, his use of 2 Peter 3:16 in this context is, frankly, ludicrous! To suggest that Peter's reference to things which are hard to understand in Paul's writings has reference to his complex grammatical structures is novel! Surely it was not to grammar that Peter referred but rather 'some of the doctrines' . . . 'the mysteries of the Kingdom'.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. It is inaccurate because it adds words in translation

We have already referred to additions and the possibility of indicating this by italics. (Of course, we should not assume that the presence of italics solves all problems. I heard an interesting study on italicised words in the AV entitled, 'The words Paul emphasised'!!).

Dr Martin confesses that both formal and dynamic equivalent translations add words (p. 22). Often these words are added not because they are necessarily required, but because the translator's interpretation of the passage requires them. In the Greek of Matthew 1:1 *biblos*, *geneseos* and *huiou* are without the definite article 'the'. How many translations reflect that?

The NIV is not alone, therefore, in having additions, and, therefore, must not be particularly condemned for this tendency. All translations, no doubt, have their own list of unwarrantable additions.

### 3. It is inaccurate because it omits words in translation

We can feel Dr Martin's indignation as he protests that the NIV 'frequently treats conjunctions, participles, pronouns, articles, adjectives, adverbs and even phrases as surplus verbiage' (p. 28). How much more grand and sinister 'surplus verbiage' sounds than 'unnecessary words'!

Again, Dr Martin has a valid point. Some of the NIV omissions are hard to understand or justify. But he also overstates the case and oversimplifies it.

In translating Greek into English there is 'surplus verbiage'! Commenting on Philippians 3:8, Dr Hendriksen states, "The sentence begins with the piling up of particles: *alla menoun ge kai*. . . . A word for word, literal, rendering, so that the English sentence would start as follows: 'But indeed, therefore, at least, even' would make little sense. . . . It is a question whether 'ge' is translatable at all. It could be equivalent (in English) to a tone of voice rather than an actual word."<sup>3</sup>

Dr Martin's argument is again ludicrous when he laments the failure to translate 'kai' from Mark's gospel because it is 'one of Mark's most distinct literary features' (p. 28). How can an English reader know whether the 'and' that appears in the English text translates 'kai' or 'de' or some other word for 'and'?

The attack on the omission of conjunctions in translation fails to come to terms with the fact that in Greek 'conjunctions are used to bind one sentence to another more frequently than in English. It is the exception rather than the rule to start a sentence without one . . . kai and de in particular are lavishly used and sometimes with very little force'.<sup>4</sup> Good Greek allows for numerous 'ands'; good English does not!

It is impressive to attack the NIV for omitting 'words given by inspiration' (p. 28) but all translations do it. The Greek of Matthew 1:2-16 is a genealogy in the form 'A fathered B'. The name that appears behind the verb is preceded by the definite article, as Greek allows.<sup>5</sup> No English translator, however, would translate 'Abraham fathered *the* Isaac', etc.

Dr Martin protests against 'the widespread elimination of idou' (p. 28) — 'behold' — as though there was no problem. Dr Hendriksen, however, recognised a difficulty. 'The very frequent use of such an interjection, by many considered to be archaic, is probably not the best solution. Yet the translation loses some of the vividness of the original if it is simply ignored.' He then suggests a variety of translations and literary devices to mark its presence on some occasions.<sup>6</sup>

Dr Martin's indignation at omissions is *in some cases* misplaced. He just fails to appreciate the complexity of the problem.

#### *4. It is inaccurate because it erodes the Bible's technical terminology*

I confess myself amazed and unimpressed by this lengthy but insubstantial attack. I, like Dr Martin, would prefer the retention of 'propitiation' and a more judicious translation of 'sarx'. However, apart from these blemishes, Dr Martin produces little substantial support for his argument.

Apparently the NIV is eroding the Bible's technical terminology because in two of its forty translations of 'dikaioo' 'justify' is not used, and in seven of its forty times of translation 'musterion' is not translated 'mystery'. These may be inconsistencies and blemishes but there are too few bricks to build a house here!

#### *5. It is inaccurate because it levels cultural distinctions*

Dr Martin again recognises the NIV does not consistently level cultural distinctives. His eight examples are not particularly impressive. As so often with critics, he gives no guidelines as to correct procedure. Are biblical weights and measures to be retained in translation or not? Should we translate Revelation 6:6 a 'choenix of wheat for a denarius' or transculturise? He gives no answers.

#### *6. It is inaccurate because it presents the interpretation of Scripture as Scripture*

At last, I find myself in general agreement with Dr Martin. The NIV too often allows the context to have too much control over the translation. This is a practice fraught with danger and tends to convey the theology of the translator rather than the original writer. I have elsewhere already criticised this practice at length.<sup>7</sup> A revised NIV should take a closer look at this and minimise the interpretive element in the translation. (I recognise, as does Dr Martin, that all translation decisions involve some interpretation [p. 41].)

#### *7. It is inaccurate because it paraphrases the biblical text*

Dr Martin gives a surprisingly large number of examples of paraphrase in the NIV in the light of his somewhat soft conclusion. 'In the examples just cited, the interpretive intrusion of the translator is less serious (at least in my judgment) than the examples given in the preceding section. In some cases, the paraphrastic rendering does help make the text clear to the modern English reader' (p. 66). So, at last, Dr Martin acknowledges that the clear understanding of the modern reader matters!

His second conclusion is also valid. The more paraphrase a version has the less it is useful for close study of the text. However, if we really are determined to study the text closely the original languages are necessary.

#### *Conclusion*

Dr Martin has done us a service. He has made some legitimate criticisms of the NIV, criticisms that are adequate to burst the enthusiast's bubble and to raise the need of a further revision. The NIV is not as good as the hype has suggested in some circles. However, his case is not as substantial as he suggests.

*(continued on page 19)*

# Edwin H. Palmer

This tribute by David R. Bruins first appeared in *OUTLOOK, U.S.A.*

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18).*

Tucked away behind the cover page of the New International Version (NIV) Study Bible is a page entitled 'Tribute to Edwin H. Palmer'. It briefly recounts Palmer's service as Executive Secretary of the NIV Committee on Bible Translation and as coordinator of all translation work on the NIV. It also notes that, prior to his death in 1980, Palmer was serving as General Editor of the NIV Study Bible.

Both the translation project and the Study Bible were extraordinary endeavours. The translation project extended over a period of ten years and involved over one hundred scholars who worked directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek biblical texts. The Study Bible was the result of a subsequent five-year project involving many of the same scholars. The now widely-used NIV translation of the Bible was published in 1978. The NIV Study Bible, with its comprehensive study notes, was released in 1985.

In the early 1970s, my classmates and I had the privilege of witnessing this history in the making. Dr Palmer would

read to us from the typewritten manuscripts of completed portions of the NIV when he often led our high school chapel services. In April of 1979, the year before his death, I had the opportunity to interview Dr Palmer in connection with a college journalism project. During our talks, he reflected on many things, including his life and his work with the NIV.

Palmer grew up in Quincy, Massachusetts, where he attended — as he put it — 'the state schools'. While in high school he was converted to Christianity through the influence of his father and Boston's historic Park Street Church. Following Harvard College and World War II, in which he served as an officer in the Marines, Palmer attended Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He then went on to earn his doctorate at the Free University of Amsterdam. He served as pastor of three Christian Reformed churches and taught at Westminster prior to his work with the NIV, which began in 1968. In addition to raising four children with his wife, he was an advocate for children in his 'extracurricular activities'. He served as a leader with the Right to Life movement for several years both on the state and national levels as well as with Citizens For Educational Freedom (an organisation seeking to have 'our own

## CRITICISMS OF THE NIV

(continued from page 18)

The NIV is nowhere near that bad! It is time to take the NIV off the list of canonised versions, but it is not time to send it off to be pulped!

### References

<sup>1</sup> M. Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol. iii (1969), p. 928.

<sup>2</sup> J. Calvin, *2 Peter* (St Andrews Press, 1963), p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> W. Hendriksen, *Philippians* (Banner of Truth, 1973), p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> J. Wenham, *Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> W. Hendriksen, *Matthew* (Banner of Truth, 1974), p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> R. J. Sheehan, *Which Version Now?* (Carey Publications), pp. 21-27, 30.

school taxes pay for our own schools'). In addition to numerous articles, he authored *The Five Points of Calvinism* and *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit*.

It was, though, his work in coordinating the NIV translation and Study Bible which primarily occupied the last twelve years of his life here, until he went to be with the Lord at the age of 58.

The goal of the NIV translation project was to produce a new translation of the Holy Scriptures in contemporary English that 'would be an accurate translation and one that would have clarity and literary quality and so prove suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorising and liturgical use.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1967 the New York Bible Society (now the International Bible Society) undertook the financial sponsorship of the project.

The biblical scholars who worked as translators were from many different denominations. This helped to safeguard the translation from denominational or theological bias. Despite denominational differences, 'the translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form'.<sup>2</sup> The scholars were from a variety of colleges, universities and seminaries and came from several different countries.

The translation process began with the assignment of each book of the Bible to a team of scholars. The initial translation of each book then underwent a thorough process of review and revision through three levels of committees, being examined at each level for its faithfulness to the original languages and for its English style.<sup>3</sup> Uniformity of style was maintained by having individuals serve on different committees at

the different levels, by having a top committee which did not change and by using the completed sections as models for the translators.

The various committees of translators would convene their meetings at various times and locations throughout the year. Locations for these sessions included the United States, Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Greece and Spain.

One of the summer sessions was described as follows: 'In 1974 forty scholars, some with wives and children, lived for ten weeks in David Russell Hall at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Beginning at six-thirty each morning, Mondays through Fridays, the committees worked till eight-thirty. Then after breakfast and an assembly of all committee members for devotions and announcements, work continued for three more hours till lunchtime. At two o'clock committees reconvened and worked till the dinner hour at six o'clock. Nine-hour days often extended into the evenings, when many prepared for the next day's sessions. Weekends were for travel or rest. It was a summer during which fellowship in the common task greatly enhanced the quality of what was done. If, as has often been said, a college faculty is a community of scholars dedicated to seeking the truth, the translators of the NIV were a community of Christian scholars dedicated to the clear and faithful rendering of the truth of God's written word into contemporary English. Their association became in the beautiful New Testament sense, a *koinonia*, a vital fellowship in the Lord. Out of this came deepening insight into the demands of faithful translation and a surer feeling for the nuances of the NIV style.'<sup>4</sup>

Since its publication in 1978, the NIV has been widely received in the U.S. and abroad. Before his death, Palmer was already able to witness the beginnings of the NIV's acceptance from many

quarters: the Gideons, the Navigators, Billy Graham, as well as many different denominations and churches of many different theological stripes. A few weeks following our talks that spring, Palmer would go to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to preach at a service where the NIV would be officially installed as the pew Bible at the family church there.

In addition to the contagious love and excitement for God's Word, Palmer exuded an enthusiastic love and excitement for all of life — from backpacking to political involvement. He edified many with his emphasis on sound doctrine and uncompromising adherence to the Bible as the infallible, inerrant Word of God. In his preaching and teaching he would invariably pull the eyes of his onlookers away from himself as he would hold up in his hand the 'Basis', the 'Absolutes' for all of life — the Word of God. He was a scholar who was not at all embarrassed by the designation 'born-again Christian', as so many intellectuals are. Rather, he was a contender for the faith. And though it was his task to work with the Scriptures daily, he took a quiet time for personal devotions each day as well.

I've met individuals from many walks of life whose paths have crossed with Dr Palmer's and who consequently harbored a deep respect for him — a respect

which transcended the divisions of Christendom. To be sure, there were also those who opposed him.

There were others, too, who seemed to miss the significance of the work to which he had dedicated himself.

During our talks Palmer recalled some other interviews he had had in connection with the making of the NIV. It wasn't the television interviews he was recalling, though there were those. It was, rather the interviews by some of Britain's school-children about which he was speaking — school-children who grasped the significance of an event which too many other people didn't notice at the time.

His story is shared neither to glorify a particular individual nor a particular calling. It is shared in the hope that all of us will be challenged and ennobled, by God's grace, to yield ourselves as shining reflections of His glory.

<sup>1</sup> The Committee on Bible Translation, Preface, June 1978 (Revised August 1983)

The Holy Bible, New International Version.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The Story of The New International Version, Copyright 1978 by The New York International Bible Society. (Quotations of Dr Palmer are slightly edited for grammar.)

*Mr David Bruins is an attorney and is currently serving as a deacon in the Christian Reformed Church of Midland Park, New Jersey.*

*We must be optimistic in our prayers for spiritual awakening. Time and time again God has displayed his power in dark and distressing situations. John S. Ross writing in CWI ('Christian Witness to Israel') for March/May this year uses a quote from Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' to drive home the point that we must recognise our opportunities and seize them, 'there is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune'. Gideon, in a situation with parallels to our own, turned the armies of the aliens to flight.*

# Carey Conference 1990

Mike Matthews



*Edwin Caruana (Malta), Henry Krabbendam (USA) and Steve Worth (Scotland)*

## *Wanted – revival!*

The search for revival goes on! The Carey Ministers' Conference, held for the second successive year at the College of Ripon and York St John, North Yorkshire, on January 2nd-4th, had as its theme 'In Search of Revival', and sought to discover why revival has been absent from our land for so long, and what – if anything – we can do to hasten it. A frequent cry; but, in the view of many of those attending (about 140 in total), this was somehow different from many other examinations of revival. Not that there was complete agreement over the definition of revival, or even the human means, but this was overshadowed by the unanimity in recognising our desperate need and longing for a fresh outpouring of the life-giving Spirit of God; and a renewed spirit of fervent prayer was evident.

All corners of the UK, even to the Channel Isles, and several nations were

represented, including Luxembourg, Brazil, USA, and Eire; but the greatest joy was to hear from Edwin Caruana, the pastor, of the establishment of the first Maltese Baptist Church in the island. It was also good to see a number of our Anglican brethren, to add to the Presbyterians and 'Free Churchmen' who join with us; there is nothing that unites us more than a love for God's truth. News was received from many in the valuable sharing session, and there was a desire to help our newly-liberated brethren in Eastern Europe; would it not be wonderful to see some of them with us in 1991? This and other prayer sessions exemplified the warm and united spirit throughout.

## *The secret of effective preaching?*

Geoff Thomas began with his now traditional biographical paper, this year on A. W. Tozer. Whilst Tozer is best known to us through a number of his writings. Geoff clearly felt that his greater talents lay in preaching, and



treated us to a snippet of his fluent and effective style on tape. But in spite of widespread blessing on this ministry, there was nothing essentially unusual in his content or delivery. Perhaps one of the most significant insights is that Tozer refused Billy Graham his support because of the evangelist's involvement with doctrinally mixed churches – but this was in the early 1950s, before Graham had come to Britain for the first time!

The need for holiness in all aspects of the Christian life was one of Tozer's constant themes, and this was also prominent in the paper on 'Revival and the Unity of the Churches', from Alan Gibson, BEC General Secretary. He regretted that many churches are still preoccupied with the smaller issues. He dealt faithfully with the complex divisions that beset British evangelicalism and made positive suggestions for the improvement of our Reformed and evangelical unity. Historically, he said, Christian unity has often been a precursor to revival but in other instances it was revival that restored unity to the Church.

Revivals in history were represented by those in the Isle of Lewis, and in the early 19th century in England. Revivals on Lewis had continued to occur for the last 150 years, said John J. Murray, minister of St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh. In some cases it was difficult to determine the appropriateness of the title; can the initial evangelisation of a pagan society be called a revival? (cf quote from E. Sauer, *RT113*, p. 4). The apparent absence of any human first cause, in the way of concerted prayer or outside mission, was striking.

It has long been a puzzle to your reviewer that between the eighteenth century revival and the 1859-65 revival the whole of Britain seems to have become 'Christian', and yet this change is largely undocumented in our revivifi-



*Roger Weil and Peter Goulding*

cation literature. Paul Cook, minister of Kingston Reformed Church, Hull, threw some light onto the 'forgotten' revivals all over the British Isles in the 50 years from 1790, with a vast increase in the churches, some very dramatic. He drew on some remarkable records imprisoned in ancient and now unread accounts in Methodist archives, of events in Cornwall in particular. Perhaps, he suggested, our Reformed spectacles have made us blind to a great work of God, because the recipients were the Arminian Methodists? In describing these revivals, Paul Cook pointed to the Concert of Prayer in the late eighteenth century, inspired by transatlantic examples, as the spring-board. Clearly there was a widespread chorus of prayer in the British Isles prior to these great blessings.

#### *The time of revivals past?*

Is revival to be prayed down, worked up, or are we powerless? Is it a co-operative, 50/50 venture between God and man? The main speaker, Hendrik Krabbendam, from Covenant College, Tennessee, in his first address on 'Revival in its Essence' gave us a lesson in biblical mathematics with his assertion that '100% God + 100% man = 100%'. In other words, whilst we are totally responsible, it is nevertheless all



*Peter Howell of Folkestone and David Sharpe of Hoylake, the Wirral*

of God; and this he set over against Jim Packer's idea of antimony, two ideas held in tension. (Does this do justice to Packer's statement that there is only an apparent contradiction; that the two are indeed friends?) Working out this principle, he said that all that was necessary was given at the great revival at Pentecost, and adduced many OT scriptures in support, while at the same time showing the superiority of the New Covenant in every way. Some would suggest that his eschatological viewpoint predisposes him to this essentially 'linear' view, which might seem to minimise the sovereign outpourings of the Holy Spirit. More time for discussion would have been useful, and as it was informal discussion went on in many rooms late into the night.

There was greater agreement over his next two papers on the following days on Revival and Prayer, and Revival and Preaching. Prayer and preaching, he said, were the tools that the Lord has given for us to lay hold of Pentecost; prayer, historically, came first, but preaching was a tool specific to the New

Testament. We do not have because we do not ask; and our lack of reality, perseverance, and earnestness in prayer, and also in preaching, were clearly exposed, leading to a desire amongst all to return and call upon the Lord until he answers! This was echoed by Erroll Hulse speaking on 'Revival and our Responsibility', and he called on us not only to preach with a renewed conviction, but to unite once again in a Concert of Prayer for revival. Are we serious? Do we really desire the heavens to open? Surely, whatever our view of the future, we must recognise that a visitation from God is the only hope for this country, and of Christ's church! We have seen his hand demonstrated most recently in the amazing overturning of Eastern Europe, and even the possibility of the impossible — Peaceful progress in South Africa. Our God is still on the throne. Who then will join in beseeching him to work in might once again?

*Mike Matthews is a member of Deeside Evangelical Church, North Wales, and is Editor of Origins, the journal of the Biblical Creation Society.*

# How Roman Catholicism functions

*It is important for Christians to have a clear understanding of how Roman Catholicism functions. The explanation which follows combines the virtues of brevity, clarity, accuracy and charity.*

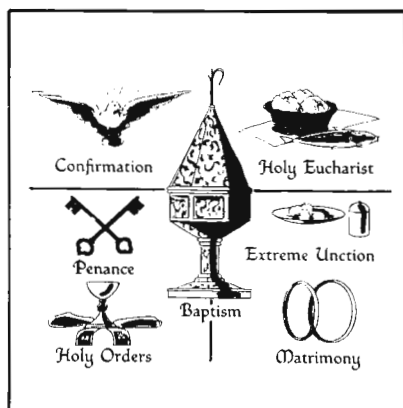
Priest, bishop, pope. To understand the supernatural powers which these Church officials are said to possess and which distinguish them from each other is to understand the basic theology and structure of the Roman Catholic Church. The foundation of the Catholic Church is its dogma that supernatural powers are conveyed in the rite of ordination or consecration. These supernatural powers are for the most part sacramental, that is, the efficacy of most of the sacraments of the Catholic Church is dependent on the due ordination of the one administering them.

There are seven sacraments recognised by the Catholic Church. Baptism, mass, penance, and extreme unction are generally administered by the parish priest. Confirmation and orders are generally administered by the diocesan bishop. The sacrament of matrimony, which conveys grace to fulfill marital responsibilities, is considered to be administered by the bride and groom to each other though the priest officiates and witnesses their vows.

When the parish priest baptises an infant or an adult convert, the sacrament of baptism is said to regenerate and bestow the Holy Spirit upon the one baptised. There is an actual conveyance of life and of the Spirit in this rite, as long as the priest intended that regeneration and the bestowal of the Spirit should occur. For in Catholic theology *any* sacrament administered, even by duly ordained Church officials,

is ineffectual and invalid if their intention is not to do 'what the Church does'. In an emergency anyone may administer baptism as long as he does so in the name of the Trinity and intends to do 'what the Church does'.

The priest is also said to possess the supernatural power of transforming the bread and wine of the mass into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. This transformation occurs when the priest utters the sacred formula '*Hoc est enim corpus meum*' ('For this is my body'). The body, soul and divinity of Christ is on the plate and in the chalice. If the priest had not received such power in his consecration, he would have been powerless to perform this miracle. As a priest he has offered up to God a bloodless, yet a real, sacrifice which is 'propitiatory' and is offered 'on behalf of the living and the dead', according to the Decrees of the Council of Trent and the Creed of Pope Pius IV to which every one of the 850 million Roman Catholics of the world is responsible to subscribe, if asked. The effect of the mass upon a communicant is the remission of venial (minor) sins. The virtue and finality of Christ's one sacrifice is thus denied sacramentally by the repetitious sacrifice of the mass. Because the transubstantiated elements are believed to be the real body and blood of the redeemer, they are said to be worthy of adoration and worship. So they are carried in religious processions, as men and women kneel before them and speak to them as 'my Lord and my God'.



Seven Sacraments



Infant Baptism

Absolution, or the forgiving of mortal (serious, damning) sin, is another supernatural power reputedly conveyed to priests upon ordination. This priestly forgiveness is not the declaration that sins are forgiven by God through faith and repentance in a sinner's heart. Rather priests grant actual remission of sins upon confession to the priest and contrition. No one guilty of mortal sin is to observe mass before he has first confessed to the priest and received absolution. Absolution is said to negate the eternal punishment due to mortal sins, but since it does not negate the temporal punishments due to them, the priest assigns to the confessing sinner works of penance, such as prayers, fasting, or works of mercy. Whatever temporal punishments for sin remain unpunished by penance are, at death, endured in purgatory.

Related to the sacrament of penance is the sacrament of extreme unction. When a Roman Catholic is in danger of dying, perhaps due to age, sickness, or mishap, he is anointed with oil by the priest. If the person is conscious and able to confess to the priest, he does so. In such a case, extreme unction remits at least a portion of the temporal

punishments due to him for his sins. So it acts as a substitute for works of penance. If the sick person is not conscious, hence unable to confess to the priest, then extreme unction remits the eternal punishment due to mortal sins as well as some of the temporal punishment, as long as the sinner had at least an imperfect sorrow for his sin before lapsing into unconsciousness.

Thus, priests have the powers of regeneration, propitiation, and absolution by virtue of their ordination, according to the Roman Catholic Church.

Historically, the diocesan bishop has administered the sacrament of confirmation, although since the Vatican II Council (1962-65) more allowance is made for parish priests to possess this supernatural power. Confirmation is the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon a baptised Catholic who has attained sufficient understanding of Church teaching to desire formally to be a Catholic and to be a communicant member of the Church of Rome. This grant of the Holy Spirit is effected by the anointing of the recipient's forehead with holy oil in the sign of the cross while the bishop declares him to be now



The Mass



The Confessional

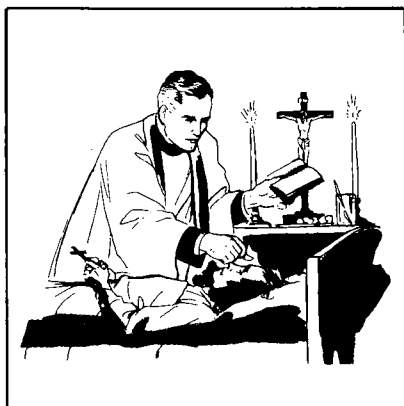
sealed with the Holy Spirit. This additional grant of the Spirit, exceeding the previous grant received in baptism, is to enable the Church member to live as a good Catholic and to bear witness for Christ in the world. But once again it is to be noted that this power of conveying the Holy Spirit to others for holiness is the result of the priest having received due ordination.

The sacrament of orders pertains to the supernatural power that a bishop has to convey the sacramental powers to those being ordained or consecrated into the priesthood or into the episcopate (the office of bishop). In other words, priests receive their supernatural powers from a bishop, and bishops receive their supernatural powers from their fellow-bishops. All supernatural powers descend from bishops, who are regarded as the successors to the original twelve apostles. Here we come to the unifying principle of Catholicism, its dogma of apostolic succession. Bishops are regarded as present day apostles who have, through the laying on of hands in their ordination, descended in an unbroken succession from Christ's apostles. Today there are many bishops, but each is said to have received his

orders through a legitimately ordained bishop in the apostolic line.

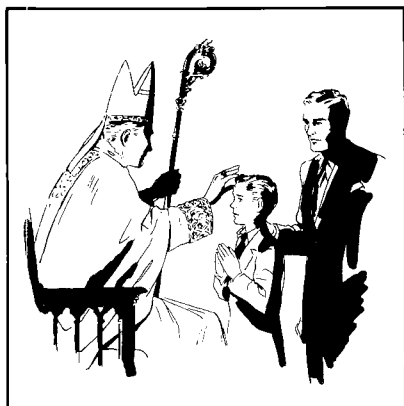
Papal superiority is another aspect of the dogma of apostolic succession. The pope is the bishop of Rome. He is considered to be the direct successor of the first bishop of Rome, who was, professedly, the apostle Peter. The Catholic interpretation of Matthew 16:18, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church' is that Peter is the foundation of Christ's Church and is endowed with a headship over the other apostles. Hence Catholic theologians conclude that Peter's successors have final authority over the other apostles' successors.

It was not until Vatican Council I (1870) that the dogma of papal infallibility was defined. This doctrine states that when the pope speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, from his chair as the supreme apostolic authority, his definition of faith or morals is infallible, irreformable, and binding on the Catholic (Universal) Church. In 1950 Pope Pius XII let it be known that even the *Papal Encyclicals* are to be considered as demanding the consent of the Catholic hierarchy and congregation.



**Extreme Unction**

The Catholic Church declares its authority to be the Holy Scriptures, including the Apocrypha and the unwritten apostolic traditions. The true interpretation of these Scriptures and traditions is to be found in the decrees of Church Councils approved by the pope, such as the Decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-63). The Reformation slogan *sola scriptura* was a protest against the contradiction of the Scriptures by means of the Apocrypha and unwritten tradition. Roman Catholic worship of Mary is one example of this unwritten tradition progressively taking the form of written papal decrees. In 1854 Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that is Mary was born without original sin. In 1950 Pope Pius XII declared the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, that Mary's body ascended into heaven shortly after her death. When the Anglican clergyman John Henry Newman transferred to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, he indicated that believing in transubstantiation was no problem for him once he came to accept the Roman Catholic Church to be the oracle of God, which had declared that dogma of the mass to be true.



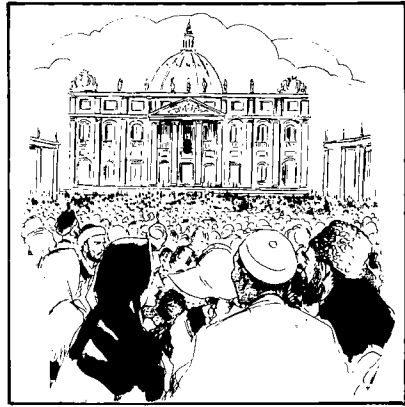
**Confirmation**

The Roman Church's doctrine of justification is not that of Paul's Epistle to its city. It rejects Paul's teaching that justification consists, in part, of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the trusting sinner. It conceives of justification to be not an act but a process, not the precedent to a holy life but the consequence. A Catholic is justified if he makes good use of the grace bestowed upon him in the sacraments, that is, if he lives a holy life. But when he commits a mortal sin, he is no longer justified. Yet, he may renew his justification through confession and the absolution of the priest.

According to the Roman Church, Catholics who die in mortal sin perish, but those who die in a justified state (even popes) go to purgatory. To reduce their sentence of temporal punishment for their sins, prayers and masses are said for the dead and indulgences may also be granted. A pope can grant a plenary (full) or a partial indulgence for sins committed up to the time of his grant. In 1961 Pope John XXIII granted a plenary indulgence to all who attended the Easter services held in St Peter's Square in Rome. A thirty-minute devout reading of the Bible or



**The Sacrament of Orders**



**Papal Authority**

adoration of the 'Blessed Sacrament' qualifies one to receive a plenary indulgence.

If our Catholic friends throughout the world are to be delivered from the grievous eternal consequences of their theological system, they must be implored to transfer their dependence on the priests to dependence on the one heavenly High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Kermit L. Minnick**

*In 1870, the Vatican Council declared and defined the doctrine of the pope's infallibility. 'Ex cathedra' statements by the popes have been very rare.*

*This article by Kermit L. Minnick was first published in MISSIONARY UPDATE, the quarterly newsletter of the Reformed Baptist Mission Services which is edited by David Straub who acts as Missionary Coordinator. MISSIONARY UPDATE is highly commended and can be obtained by writing to P.O. Box 289, CARLISLE, PA 17013, U.S.A.*

The mass contradicts Hebrews 10:14: 'By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.' The anathemas heaped by the Council of Trent upon those who believe in justification have never been rescinded. Declares Trent: 'If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving — but not a propitiatory sacrifice — let him be anathema.'

At the end of the day it is the unchangeable nature of Roman Catholic doctrine that will impede and check the current amazing progress of the Ecumenical Movement in Britain. The nature of the mass as a real sacrifice by the priest who is supposed to be standing in Christ's place forbids women priests. It is incongruous for a woman to stand in Christ's place for he is a man and not a woman. Today women can do most anything. They can be hammer throwers, truckers, coalminers, astronauts and prime ministers. But they cannot transform their femininity into masculinity in order to be Christ before the altar of sacrifice. The issue of women priests is crucial.

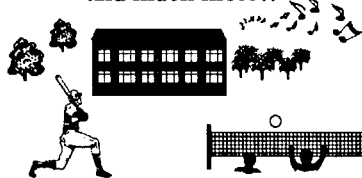
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# Spurgeon and Plymouthism

*Our Reformed tradition is one in which the call to the ministry is recognised, and with it due esteem, support and authority is given to those who have forsaken all to follow Christ in the work of the ministry. This concept is very little appreciated today and it is common to break down the distinction between those who are called to the office of the ministry and those who are not so called. If there was no call and if there is no difference why is such stress laid on the matter in the Scriptures? Why was Moses called, and Isaiah? — and Jeremiah? — and Amos? Why were the apostles specially called and trained by our Lord? and why was Paul set apart in so distinctive a manner? If all could be achieved without leaving secular employment, and if there is no difference, why persist with the office of the minister?*

*In some countries and some denominations such is the high rating of the Christian ministry that pastors are trained academically for seven years in preparation for their vocation. Their gifts are then further developed on the anvil of experience. By nurture and encouragement godly, trained, experienced ministers can become a great asset not only for the churches they serve but in their communities, and as we see in a time of crisis in Romania today, a great asset to their nation. If we look at the books on our shelves we can ask how much training went into the lives of ministers like, Owen, Flavel, Thomas Boston, J. C. Ryle, Warfield, or James Montgomery Boice of our generation? Even in the case of Spurgeon, the greatest exception of them all, how amazing was his retention of knowledge and skilful his application of the truth! Today we have too many assemblies in which the esteem for the ministry is abysmal, where the rating of the pastoral office is esteemed as less valuable than any other calling in society. Spurgeon spotted this tendency and breathes out fire about it:*

Every now and then there creeps up in the Church a sort of striving against God's ordained instrumentality. I marked it with sorrow during the Irish Revival. We constantly saw in some excellent papers remarks which I thought exceedingly injurious, wherein it was made a subject of congratulation that no man was concerned in the work, no eminent preacher, no fervent evangelist; the whole was boasted to be conducted without human instrumentality. That was the weakness of the Revival, not its strength. You say it gave God the more glory. Not so. God getteth the most glory through the use of instruments. When God worketh without instruments, doubtless he is glorified; but he knows himself in which way he getteth the most honour, and he hath himself selected the plan of instrumentality as being that by which he is most magnified in the earth. We have this treasure. How? Alone? Without any earthly accompaniment? No; but in earthen vessels. What for? That God may have less glory? No; but in the earthen vessels on purpose 'that the excellency of the power may be of God', and not of us. God maketh the infirmity of the creature to be the foil to the strength of the Creator.

He taketh men who are nothing in themselves and worketh by them his splendid victories. Perhaps, we should not admire Samson so much if he had dashed the Philistines in pieces with his fist, as we do when we find that with

such a weapon, so unadapted to the work, as a jaw-bone of an ass, he laid on heaps the thousands of his foes. The Lord takes ill-weapons, that with them he may work great deeds. When he said, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' without any instrument, he showed his glory; but when instead thereof he takes the apostles and says again, 'Let there be light', and sends *them* forth who were darkness in themselves, and makes them the medium of lighting up a dark world, I say there is a greater glory; and if the morning stars sang together when they first saw light upon the new-made earth, surely the angels in heaven rejoiced yet more when they saw light thus streaming upon the dark earth through men, who, in and of themselves, would only have increased the blackness and made the gloom more dense. God worketh by means of men whom he specially calls to his work, and not as a rule without them.

The Plymouth-ist strives to get rid of the pastorate, but he never can, for the Lord will ever continue to give pastors after his own heart to feed his people, and all attempts made by the flock to dispense with these pastors will lead to leanness and poverty of soul. The outcry against the 'one man ministry' cometh not of God, but of proud self-conceit, of men who are not content to learn although they have no power to teach. It is the tendency of human nature to exalt itself which has raised up these disturbers of the peace of God's Israel, for they will not endure to submit themselves to the authorities which God has himself appointed, and abhor the teachings of the apostle, where he says, by the Spirit of God, 'Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable to you.' Brethren, I warn you, there is a spirit abroad which would pull down the men whom God himself has raised up, that would silence those into whose mouths God has put the tongue of fire, that foolish men might prate according to their own will to the profit of no one, and to their own shame.

As for us, we shall, I trust, never cease to recognise that agency by which the Lord works mightily among us. We would check no ministry in the Church of God. We would but be too glad to see it more abundantly exercised. Would God that all the Lord's servants were prophets! But we enter our solemn protest against that spirit which, under pretence of liberty to all, sets aside the instrumentality by which the Lord especially works. He will have you still keep the fishermen to their nets and to their boats; and your new ways of catching fish without nets, and saving souls without ministers, will never answer, for they are not of God. They have been tried, and what has been the result of the trial? I know not a church in existence that has despised instrumentality, but it has come to an end within a few years either by schism or decay. Where upon the face of the earth is there a single church that has existed fifty years where God's chosen instrumentality of ministry has been despised and rejected? 'Ichabod!' is written upon their walls. God rejects them because they reject God's chosen way of working. Their attempts are flashes in the pan, meteoric lights, will-o'-the-wisps, swellings of proud flesh, bubbles of foam, here today and gone for ever on the morrow.

*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Volume 8, page 195 (sermon 443).*

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