

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

EDITORIAL

The traditionally tranquil Church of England is now engaged in civil war! In voting to create female priests it has broken with the Apostolic ministry which we believe to have come from Jesus Christ Himself. In breaking with the Apostolic Ministry the Church of England has, in effect, become another one of the Free Churches (though more in error because it claims more for itself) or worse, a sect like the Polish Mariavites who created just such a female priesthood in the early years of this century.

Is the Church of England being contemporary and relevant? We do not know what the Spirit of the Age is; let alone what it will be tomorrow. We know it changes rapidly. We know we must "test the spirits", and are not confident that this change is "of God". All too likely, it is the mere following of a dead-end; the collapse or rapid decline of many of the sects which have adopted female priests, including the episcopal body (ECUSA) in America, may be God's judgement on them, as much as the fragmentation of the opposition is His judgement on us.

But what of us? Firstly we dispute the legitimacy and authority of any provincial synod in any church (not merely our own) to assume such powers and decide such a far-reaching issue. Could the General Synod remove a book - such as Romans - from the Canon of Scripture? Or permit butter-short-bread and hot chocolate as an alternative to bread and wine at the Eucharist? Why should the innovation be any less worrying or improper when applied to Holy Order?

It is as if Essex County Council had purported to impose its own speed limit, not merely for its own area, but, by the plain logic of the decision, on every road in Britain. We do not own the Faith, the Whole Church of God, or the Ministry. We simply have them in trust and in common. Of course we can regulate details - like minimum ages for ordination and the marriage of the clergy - but not fundamentals.

We know all this, and have heard these sentiments so often that we could recite them in our sleep. So what of us? We can dispute the legitimacy of what the Synod has done until the End of the World, but if we do not act decisively we will be implicated in the Synod's crime. We may not be the robbers, but if we saw a robbery and failed to report

it and to testify as witnesses if required, we would at least have done wrong, at most committed a crime ourselves.

So what should we do? The most important message is DON'T PANIC. The point of breakage is when the erring canon is passed, or even when the first purported ordination

takes place; not now. Initially, then, all Anglican loyalists must hold fast and support each other by prayer, example and courage. We should not act as isolated individuals by joining different communions or giving up the Faith altogether. Yet, after that breakage, neither can we, for the most part, remain confidently where we are. Calm conviction is needed to form a workable strategy for a Continuing Church of England. It will not happen overnight. We will need places in which to worship, in areas where most of our people can reach them. We will need bishops and clergy.

We will need, fairly rapidly, a Common Prayer, and all the boring details of a constitution and canon law. As yet, we (rightly) do not even have a name!

To this end a Nationwide meeting has been arranged for Saturday 16th January 1993 at the Quaker International Centre, 1 Byng Place (behind Gordon Square), London. The nearest underground station is Euston Square. The meeting will begin at noon and end at 6.00p.m.. Please be there and if possible contact Fr. Whiting or myself so that we may have some idea of how many to expect.

DO not just throw in the towel or become dispirited by voices reiterating that the fate of splinter groups is always to fragment into tiny pieces. If it is a choice of betraying the Apostolic faith on the one hand or parting company with those who have done so on the other, then even if that means being in the tiniest splinter in the world, worshipping

in a front room with two men and a dog in order to preserve what we can of the Anglican heritage in the Church of God, that is where we should be. There is no doubt or hesitation in my mind. For that is where our faith is - in our minds, where no externals can destroy it.

If our faith is out of a book, even the Bible itself, then a book can be burnt. If it is in a building even a Cathedral, the building can be closed or sold. If it is in a living community, that can be dispersed. But if we meet God Himself in prayer-if our faith is in our minds and truly part -would it were all - of ourselves, then no one can drag it down. Only we can destroy what is in us.

Yes, it may be that God has no future for a Continuing Church, and if so. He will make His will known soon enough for us. Only do not assume it. Do not become dispirited at the vast task before us, but look only to our Blessed Lord, the Saviour Jesus Christ, that we may bear our cross with Him, not in great strides, but in painful little steps. Is Anglicanism worth or worthy of such martyrdom? If it has been worth living within it, as a proper expression of the Church of God, then it is worth continuing, even in pain. God has given us something distinctive over many generations, and we must not lightly reject His work in favour of individualistic and indifferent submissions to other communions (though equally part of the Church of God) or a cowardly compromise with a newly created non-Apostolic sect. Even if Anglicanism fails, the Apostolic Faith will continue - yes, but we should not anticipate God's judgement.

Anglicanism may not be the ultimate or perfect realisation of the Catholic Faith, but it is what Almighty God has confided to our stewardship. Is it really His will that we should now shrug our shoulders, saying "Well, Lord, we did try to make the best of the C. of E."? Anglicanism has its place in God's plan, and it may well be that the story is not yet even one tenth told. We do not know what Continuing Anglicanism will be called to do, but we do know that it is already a solid fact of Christian life elsewhere.

In America, Canada, Australia, India, Ireland and New Zealand, with whatever shortcomings, whatever disputes, whatever size, it exists. The time has come to join them. I will do so. "Stand up, stand up for Jesus!"

end of Page 1

I appeal unto Caesar...
The Assistant Editor

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

Decisions of Synod are not enough in our imperfect system. Parliament can accept or reject them (not, without a change of procedure, amend them). Many of us are perhaps accustomed to think of this as a scandal, of which more later. The practical point is that we can write to our Members of Parliament before the decisions of Synod come to them for ratification.

There is no point in a standard letter, so I do not offer one. MPs are reasonably sophisticated in such matters, and twenty copies of the same letter counts for no more, and perhaps less, than one. I do not think there is any point in writing to the Prime Minister (unless he is your constituency MP), as this is not a Government matter and there is little he can do. It is necessary for us to write as individuals; we do not individually have the right to speak for M.C.C.E. and must not claim to do so.

What we put in our letters must depend on the MP. If you know that your MP shares our views, then do write briefly to encourage (don't waste his or her time with arguments). But usually you will not know this. If you know the MP is an active Christian, then you can use Christian arguments, whether based on Scripture or Tradition, as they have been developed in the "Old Believer and elsewhere. But usually, you will not even know that much.

There is no point in using Christian arguments to somebody who does not understand them, and the warning against casting pearls before swine is often interpreted in that sense. So to the general run of MPs you can only use human arguments. This needs careful thought. My ideas (improve them as you can) are as follows.

We are claiming the human right to worship (secured in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), and that the ordination of women to the priesthood renders such worship no longer practical to us, because it negates the priesthood, unless there are comprehensive safeguards. Such safeguards must make it certain that even a small group of Old Believers can continue to worship, led by a valid priesthood, wherever they may be found. The safeguards proposed by Synod fall far short of that.

Therefore, since Parliament cannot amend, the MP should be urged to reject the Synod proposals and to say why, so that Synod can make more sensitive proposals. In urging this, do not deny the human rights of others; if many, perhaps even most, members of the Church of England want women priests, an MP is right to take them seriously - but minorities also have rights. An MP can therefore fairly be asked to take what is a difficult decision whether the present proposals secure both parties (and also many Church members who dislike splitting the Church and wish the issue would go away) in their human rights; and if not, to force Synod to devise better.

Your Public Library will have the name of your MP and an address - probably the House of Commons. You will get some sort of an answer. If it gives the slightest basis for writing again, take the opportunity. If you need help, because the answer raises difficult questions, one of the Regional Coordinators may be able to help.

The matter will only come before Parliament in the new year. Think now, but write when appropriate. Church matters are often settled late at night and only a small number of MPs bother to take part. So the present proposals can be defeated in Parliament. It may be

sufficient simply to convert a supporter of the ordination of women into a doubter about the present proposals.

But is it right to appeal unto Caesar? I am not wholly comfortable myself, because St. Paul thinks it wrong that Christians should use outsiders to resolve their disputes (I Corinthians 6). Yet for many years Parliament was the only representation the laity had in the Church of England, and because of the defective electoral systems in the Church of England, we do not accept that even now we are properly represented in Synod. Moreover, because of the proper controls over trusts and charities in this country, often Parliament is the only place to ratify important changes affecting property. Consequently, most Churches here have required private Acts of Parliament from time to time; this is a proper way of protecting the intentions of donors and preventing impropriety. St. Paul also thinks that the State exists under God - see Romans 13. So I believe we can use our rights as electors in this matter.

end of Page 2

The Living Icon of the Priesthood

The Rev. Robert Stackpole, B.A., M.Litt (Oxon) Curate of Kettering Parish Church

Catholics argue that one of the main reasons a priest must be male is because he symbolically represents a male human being, Jesus Christ, the true priest and celebrant at every communion service. A priest is therefore a liturgical icon of Christ. It is surprising that Dr. Ward, to judge from his article in the August 21st issue of the Church Times, does not understand this argument. Of course there are some aspects of Christ's human form which are not essential to his being fully human, and therefore not essential in his human liturgical representatives. One does not, for example, need to be Jewish, or to speak Aramaic as Jesus did in order to be fully human, or to act as his priestly icon. Indeed, we do not argue that the priest must be male because only males are fully human.

We need to remember that what is essential to being fully human has been revealed to us in Holy Scripture, in the first two chapters of Genesis. Both men and women are created fully human, in the "image of God". Human beings come in two fully human forms: male and female. Thus the distinction between male and female is an essential aspect of our humanity. We are essentially a bipolar race, by God's creation ordinance. We would therefore expect to find - and indeed we do find - the male and female poles of the human race used in different ways in God's plan for Creation and Redemption. For example, in the order of creation, females alone are the ones who bear human life within their bodies, give birth to new life out of their own pain, and nurture this life at their own breast. They alone are called both to the privileges and pains of child-bearing in the order of creation.

In the order of redemption, males alone(1) are called in Holy Scripture to the privileges and sacrifices involved in serving as apostles, pastors, elders and presbyters of God's New Israel, the Church. The headship of the human race, from which such leadership in the Church derives, is given to the Son of God, incarnate as a male, who dies for our sins and rose again. In so far as the priest or pastor must symbolically represent the Son of God incarnate at Holy Communion, therefore, Scripture

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

is clear that he must represent one whose office was carried out in male form alone.

Why God chose a male form for his saving work, and gave this symbolic office to male representatives alone is a much more profound mystery than Dr. Ward seems to appreciate, and has been explored in depth by Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter "Mulieris Dignitatem", as well as by Roman Catholic theologians such as Manfred Hauke, Aidan Nichols and Sarah Butler, and also in the report of the Eastern Orthodox Churches from their international conference gathered by the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1989.

If indeed there is an essential distinction between male and female in God's creative plan, and if the mystery of the love between Christ and his church is such that Christ must be called the Bridegroom of the church, and the church His Bride (e.g. Ephesians 5), then how is it that the symbolic representatives of our heavenly Bridegroom at Holy Communion can be female? Surely Dr. Ward is not going to insist (as he hints in his article) that in the heavenly country we cease to be male and female altogether, and become glorified androgens?

Jesus Christ is still called "the Son" in Scripture even after his ascension, and the whole history of Christian art and iconography witnesses against the idea that the distinction between male and female is utterly abolished in the next life. Indeed, many of the greatest saints and masters of prayer in the church, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, John of the Cross, and Theresa of Avila, have ardently proclaimed that the relationship between Christian souls and their ascended Lord continues down through the ages as the supreme nuptial mystery. Then what will it do to our spiritual life to have females acting as liturgical icons of the heavenly Bridegroom, at the very heart of our worshipping life in His church? This is the issue which Dr. Ward avoids, and which (amongst others) is so important in the women's ordination debate. Those of us who find the "representation" argument against women priests convincing, therefore, will argue against Dr. Ward as follows:

- that the distinction between male and female is essential to human nature - we are essentially a bipolar race, in God's ordinances revealed in Genesis;
- that we must be such a race because, to some extent, God intended to use males and females in different ways in His loving plan of creation and redemption;
- that the drift of scripture is that God does in fact use males and females in distinct roles, for example in the creation of new human life and in the pastoral leadership of His New Israel, the Church;
- that one of the reasons such pastoral leadership must be male is that the pastor or priest is called symbolically to represent Jesus Christ, the true and hidden celebrant at every Holy Communion service;
- that the nuptial mystery of love between Christ as Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride lies at the heart of the union of Christian souls with their Lord, foreshadowed by the prophet Hosea, revealed to St. Paul and confirmed in the experience and teaching of many great Christian saints and mystics down through the ages; and
- that to ordain women involves their attempt to take on this role as symbolic representatives of our Lord and heavenly Bridegroom, which is, to say the least,

awkward, and can only serve to distort the spiritual life of His Bride, the Christian community.

end of Page 3

We would argue that the evidence for such inevitable distortion is clear to see in the ever-rising clamour for "inclusive language" worship of God in ECUSA and the Anglican Church of New Zealand, and in other churches which were pioneers of women's ordination. The reasons for this are many. But it is astonishing that Dr. Ward shows no sign of appreciating this - to say the least - alarming ramification of the "representation" issue which he addresses.

Of course Catholics do not argue that God incarnate (and His liturgical icons) must necessarily be male because God is male. But we do see a connection between the covenanted images which God has taught us to use to address Him and worship Him, and the incarnate form in which He has reached out to save us. From the heart of His own prayer life, Jesus invited us to join Him in relating to God as "Abba, Father". God is addressed as "Father" in scriptural prayer and worship, and never as Mother or Queen. For ancient Israel, God was primarily Lord, light, rock, fire fortress, cloud, warrior, husband and king, but never Queen of Heaven. Here and there God is compared to a mother, such as a mother suckling her child - an image of tender caring - but "mother" is never used as a divine title for worship, nor as address in prayer. It is hardly likely that the ancient Jews worshipped God's spirit as predominantly feminine in any modern sense(2), or prayed to God as Mother or Queen, nor did the New Testament writers. In fact, the few references to God as Mother in the Bible occur in the form of similes, a much weaker form of imagery than full metaphor.

We cannot simply write off this Biblical tradition as arrogant self-projection onto the divine realm by the patriarchal leadership of Israel. After all, there were several ancient patriarchal societies with predominately feminine imagery for the divine, such as the Shinto civilisation of Japan and the ancient culture of Minoan Crete. Thus there is no simple link between the gender of social leadership and the gender ascribed to the divine. The constant Biblical witness arises from God's chosen people, whose faith the Lord fashioned for generations to bear witness to Himself. And this Biblical tradition was accepted and deepened by God incarnate, who taught his disciples to pray "Our Father, who art in heaven".

Just as each human being has a "masculine" and "feminine" side to his or her personality, so God expresses His loving nature in different ways which may by analogy be described as masculine or feminine. The masculine side of each human personality is "independent, rational and initiating" and the feminine side is "responsive, nurturing and compassionate". The "masculine" aspects of divine love however are the very precondition and logical ground of His feminine love. For example, if God had not taken the masculine initiative, and for good reason and purpose brought the world into being in the first place, then we would not exist at all, and He could not relate to us in feminine ways, by responding to our prayers or nurturing us in faith.

Moreover, if God had not taken the masculine initiative with us by becoming incarnate in human flesh for our salvation, then we would not have a saviour God who

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

was able to feel true feminine compassion for us, for He would never have suffered or been tempted as we humans are. Finally, if God was not independent and distinct from the world as its transcendent Creator, then He could not relate to it and love it as "other" at all. His feminine, nurturing love for creation would then be self-love, rather than self-giving love. He would merely be nurturing a part of Himself - as if the created world were God's own body!

The Harvard mythology scholar Joseph Campbell has argued that throughout the ancient world the universe was held to be the very body of the mother-goddess and identical with her. But clearly, any remotely Christian understanding of God requires us to say, not that God is more masculine than feminine, but that God's masculine love is logically prior (in relation to us) to his feminine love. Perhaps that is why St. Clement of Alexandria once wrote that God Himself is love and out of love became feminine. For he wrote "In his ineffable essence He is Father, in his compassion to us He became Mother".

Many of the churches which have ordained women now openly encourage prayers to God as Mother "God our Mother, you hold our life within you, nourish us at your breast" (Methodist church) and "Eternal Spirit, Maker, Pain-bearer, Father and Mother of us all (Anglican Church of New Zealand, alternative(!) Lord's Prayer). The danger with such language is that prayer to God as a Mother who in some way gives birth to us seems to imply that we emanate from God and are of the same and equal nature to God. By analogy, if human mothers give birth to human beings, then a divine mother must give birth to divine beings. There is an implicit pantheism or panentheism in such devotions. Surely that is why prayers to God as Mother are strictly avoided in Scripture and by our Lord in particular. Scripture tells us not that God gives birth to us but that we are reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Church (Rev. 12) and that we become God's children by adoption and free grace.

Jesus Himself is the "Word" or "self-expression" of God the Father in human flesh. Through Him we see the eternal wisdom and loving purpose of God who, though independent and distinct from this world, yet of His own initiative and free grace plunged into our human condition, taking human flesh, and lived and died and rose again for our salvation. This is primarily a loving "masculine" approach to humanity, which calls for a loving, primarily "feminine" response.

Surely this is the underlying reason why St. Mary is given to us in the Catholic faith as the first and archetypal Christian saint. For the heart of Christian discipleship is to be humble, to recognise that we are earthbound, dependent creatures, to be responsive to the leading of our shepherd, Jesus Christ, and nurturing and compassionate toward our fellows. We each have a calling, like St. Mary, to bring the love of Jesus Christ to birth in our hearts and lives.

end of Page 4

Thus human sanctity is primarily a feminine role in our relationship to God. Even Jesus, who expressed God's loving masculine approach to humanity, also lived out this loving, feminine response to His heavenly Father, by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps all this is why St. Paul taught us that a holy relationship between a man and a woman is analogous to the relationship between Christ and His

Bride the Church. If Christ is for us our heavenly Bridegroom, as God the Father's gracious approach to us, then how can His symbolic representatives at Holy Communion be other than male?

As Anglican Catholics, our concern is that this whole nuptial mystery, which lies at the very heart of our relationship with God, will be (and in many lands has been) distorted by the ordination of women to the priesthood. It is high time the learned proponents of women's ordination actually began to address this concern. We do in any case insist that such issues be understood and addressed before we are implicitly and uncharitably labelled as heretics by Archbishop Carey and Dr. Ward.

(1) *In the order of redemption, Mary occupies a central place as the Second Eve.* (Ed)

(2) *Grammatically, we call "Spirit" female in Hebrew and Aramaic (neuter in Greek). But grammarians' classifications are a poor substitute for meaning.* (Ed)

English Old Catholicism

Paul G. Kitchenham St. Chad's College, Durham. Feast of Saints Protus and Hyacinth, 1992

Readers of the "Old Believer" may be interested to know of the existence and availability of a useful little booklet on the subject of "English Old Catholicism". If one considers the mess of continuing Anglicanism in the United States to be a reproach to our movement, then the disunity and scandal which has attached over the years to attempts to foster the ideal of Old Catholicism in this country must be accounted many times worse.

Several minuscule jurisdictions exist at present, and one has only to look at the works of Fr. Brandreth and Peter Anson on "episcopi vagantes"(1) to see how easily the narration of their history can turn into a catalogue of human foolishness and, in some cases, sinfulness.

Yet this booklet would prove relevant reading for traditional Anglicans; though our outlooks differ in some ways, the author (of whom more anon) has a pleasing honesty and sincerity of tone. He admits that the "foolishness and crass stupidity of certain non-Papal Catholic Christians has done more to impede the advance of the (Old Catholic) Church in England than any critic" and even draws a valuable moral from one of the more ridiculous features of the movement.(2)

The preoccupation of some Anglicans with details of liturgical practice might well be "a symptom of the same disease which has prompted many Old Catholics to collect impressive titles - a feeling of inadequacy and instability" and could thus be better channelled into pastoral and missionary endeavour.

On the subject of missionary endeavour, the author quite rightly points away from the old temptation to "poach" members from other sects, instead drawing attention to the fact that most of our fellowcountrymen are completely unchurched (more so today than when the booklet was first written); something vital for traditional Anglicans, however embattled we may be, to have before our minds.

By submitting this article, I am not meaning to suggest that traditional Anglicans should seek to be "poached" to the cause of Old Catholicism. Indeed, there are aspects of the doctrine of the Catholic Episcopal Church, for one, with which I am unhappy - their non-reception of the "Filioque" clause of the Nicene Creed as "at variance with the ancient teaching of the Church", and their

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

substitution of "paradise" for the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. But I am drawing attention to the fact that Old Catholicism is there, has a coherent vision and (at least the Catholic Episcopal Church) is sincerely striving to fulfil it. We may be glad of their existence at some point.

There is one further rather odd reason why readers of the "Old Believer" may care to peruse this booklet: the author is no longer an Old Catholic himself. The thought-provoking section on the allegedly doubtful validity of Anglican Orders (based on the lack of intention to ordain sacrificing priests at the Reformation and thus highlighting the very real problem that our only claim to be Catholic has been inherited via undoubted heretics) reads strangely if it is realised that the author is now Archbishop Clavier of the Anglican Church of America.(3)

"English Old Catholicism" by A. F. M. Clavier is available at £1 plus 36p postage and packing (cheques payable to "The Catholic Episcopal Church") from Matthew Publications, Top Flat, 100 Avenue Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4SA.

(1) "Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church", H. R. T. Brandrcth and "Bishops at Large", P. Anson. (*For those without Latin, the words mean "wandering Bishops" - prelates purporting to ordain outside their see and proper jurisdiction. Ed.*)

(2) For instance the founder of St. Chad's Hostel, Hooton Pagnell, who later styled himself titular Bishop of St Pancras.

(3) See, for example, "Old Believer" issue 2, page 11. end of Page5

Archbishop Lefebvre - an Appreciation Margaret Smythe

Be Thou my Judge, O Lord, for I have walked innocently: my trust hath been also in the Lord, therefore shall I not fall.

France has never been my favourite land for saints, but in Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre I think I have found an exception. He was what Bishop Edward King might have called a "quiet saint". The motto of the Tractarians, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength", describes perfectly this irreproachable, honourable man, who at the end of a long career of unswerving devotion and obedience had the courage to defend the Old Mass against the innovations of the Pope and the Vatican Council.

The Archbishop, as he never ceased saying, was not the leader of a movement, and certainly not as some malicious people suggested, a traditionalist "anti-Pope", but a real continuing catholic. His fellow-Bishops and even the Pope seemed to slip their moorings but he simply continued doing what he had always done - teaching the faith and protecting the faithful. He was perhaps more moderate and less traditional than some would have liked, but everyone who loves the liturgy and has suffered the ravages of Vatican II must admire his calm, judicious behaviour when confronted with the insanely confused world of modern liturgies and doctrine in which most Roman and Anglican Bishops seem so very much at home.

Lefebvre's argument, liturgically, was with Paul VI and not Pius XII, and he cannot fairly be criticised for not being more traditional. The 1955 and 1962 reforms might not have been popular but they were accepted by

the entire episcopate. The Pius X revision of the Breviary was not universally welcomed but it was accepted by all those who had the Breviary obligation. As a friend from St. Philomena's in Edinburgh pointed out to me, the laity can do what it likes about the canticles at Lauds or the cursus of the Psalms, but for obvious reasons it cannot do what it likes about the Mass.

And Lefebvre could not do what he liked about the reforms of Pius XII. Had he rejected them fifteen or twenty years later he would have been failing as a churchman when the one thing needful was the preservation of the Church's greatest treasure, the Mass of the Roman Rite.

The difference between the reforms up to 1962 and the New Mass is not one of degree but of kind. The reforms of Pius XII are distressing but the New Mass is destructive. The "Vexilla Regis" is exquisite and its disuse greatly regretted; evening Masses are, to my Anglican mind, abominable but no-one is forced to attend them; fasting before Communion is an ancient hallowed custom which no-one can be prevented from following when they know it is right - but the ghastly modern liturgy is unavoidable unless one is fortunate enough to live in a town where, thanks to Archbishop Lefebvre, there is a Mass Centre.

The Society of St. Pius X does not exist to restore the Church to a liturgical golden age, but to hold the front line against the gates of hell. The Mass itself is the vital issue because it is our attachment to our historic form of worship that will prevent the western Church from vanishing into the abyss of liberalism.

I hope Archbishop Lefebvre will not be remembered as a rebel or even as the most controversial churchman of our times because he was neither rebellious nor controversial. Others rebelled against Catholic faith and order, others created controversies over simple self-evident truths; but Marcel Lefebvre persevered in righteousness. He persevered amidst ridicule, coercion and the disloyalty of friends because he knew in Whom he had believed and therefore in what he believed. I never intend to become a Roman Catholic, but I am convinced that this man, this retired missionary from Dakar, with his sheer courage and integrity, is the model par excellence of continuing faith and churchmanship.

Marcel Lefebvre - may your memory be eternal!

Note from the Editor

The background to this article is the criticism of the reforms of Pius XII (and of Archbishop Lefebvre's acceptance of them) by Paul Cavendish in an earlier "Old Believer" (Volume 3).

Margaret Smythe is our representative for Scotland. Like many of us, she treasures the ancient Western Liturgy, of which the Tridentine Mass is an example, and in current circumstances the most accessible. That Liturgy is the main background to the Book of Common Prayer and is, in the words of a former Principal of St. Chad's, Durham, "our inalienable heritage" (S. Mouldsdales, Anglo-Catholic Priests' Convention Report, 1921, page 69).

I suspect that quite a number of our readers attend masses organised by the Society of St. Pius X because they value the Western tradition, and because there is no traditional Anglican Eucharist available in their area.

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

The determined stance of Lefebvre and his followers has by the mere effect of competition caused more Latin to survive in use within the Church of Rome, which is in itself a convenience and blessing for many of us abroad. We do therefore owe Lefebvre a real debt of gratitude, even if we do not accept his specific theological position. Certainly I depend on the Society of Pius X to save me from really hideous services when travelling in France.

end of Page 6

On changing Worship

A comment by the Assistant Editor

"No, no, never fear him, we are better established than so; he can do no harm, we know the Common Prayer-book hath been ever since the Apostles time, and is lawful to be used in the church." (Justice Keelin in Bunyan's "A Relation of My Imprisonment")

Marcel Lefebvre - and equally in his day John Bunyan - were signs of division. It is not our place as Anglicans to judge, but it is our place to learn from the controversy. There are several patterns of thinking which either do or might be thought to derive from Lefebvre; to which of them should we be committed?

"The old is good". Probably we all believe this - at least that the old is better. I do not imagine many of us talk of our "incomparable liturgy", but it does seem easier for others to believe that about the Tridentine form of the Mass - or the equally old liturgies in Orthodoxy. But what do we mean by "good"? Not just that we prefer it (aesthetically, for instance). Perhaps we do, but worship is not a concert or any other kind of artistic event. It may be desirable that worship should satisfy us aesthetically, but that is not the most important requirement. No; "good" surely means that it is more appropriate to God, a worthier offering or a better disclosure of the Mystery (for plain words may hide what they seem to convey). In this sense, the Church of England Prayer Book never was in ordinary language - it is far too rich and indeed rhetorical for that. Nor are modern liturgies in ordinary language, partly because there is no one such thing, but many different ones, partly because they are all (rightly) compromises with the past. If they genuinely did help many people to worship God better, not just the first time they were used, but the thousandth, we might still know ourselves impoverished but we would more readily accept that the change was to the benefit of the Church. But where is the evidence?

Our problem is very different to the problem of a Latin liturgy. Personally, I can pray fluently in Latin. Most cannot; and the Church of Rome changed from Greek to Latin in order to be understood by the people, so the case for changing from Latin to some form of more current language is tolerated by tradition. The problem is not that the principle of change was wrong, but that the change itself was insensitive to tradition and to many Christians.

In our case, most of us believe that the Prayer Book can be improved as a means of worship. Yet we also know that anything beyond the most careful development of the Prayer Book has tended to be an impoverishment.

The new changes doctrine. Quite possibly; for orthodoxy is not so monochrome that two different formulations are impossible, and tradition is often a repertoire of different possibilities, which may suit

different circumstances. Doctrinal change is only important if either the old or new is *wrong*.

Our perceptions as Anglicans are different to Lefebvre's, because there is a residual element of dubious doctrine in the Prayer Book. Though much of the error in 1552 was destroyed by 1662, some change could be an improvement - and arguably the "Series 1" Holy Communion was just that. Certainly, if error is introduced, or even obscurity which may encourage error, then this should be demonstrated and corrected; but I am not happy with a scrupulous search for such problems, which seems to owe more to magic than faith. The New Testament does not give precise formulae itself!

The new is forbidden. The "strong" version of the Lefebvre position is that the Counter-Reformation determined the liturgy for ever, with no provision for change, just as Archbishop Laud determined the statutes of the University of Oxford. If I remember correctly, the Tridentine liturgy originally banned the "Stabat Mater", and certainly suppressed many innocent rites. To that extent, it was as intolerant of tradition as the Vatican II liturgy. This "strong" formulation rests on a version of papal infallibility - that a pope can prevent any successor from changing something. Popes resisted that doctrine when it was first invented, and are wisely reluctant to make much use of it even now.

There is no obvious parallel in the Church of England. We do not think the Prayer Book is incapable of change; neither to the Convocation nor to the Parliament of the time do we give such authority. We say that it has authority, and rightly because many good Christians have lived with it and even died for it. But that authority cannot be absolute.

Rebels - or those who resist doubtful changes - are important in the life of the church. We learn - as indeed did the early church - far more from Hippolytos (anti-pope and martyr) than from the lawful pope of the time - and that is true whether the liturgy attributed to him is genuine or not. Similarly, Tertullian (schismatic) and Cyprian (at times in vehement dispute with Rome) are vital to the development of Western doctrine, and Origen (condemned as a heretic centuries after his death) to our knowledge of the Bible and to Eastern doctrine. It may seem curious, but tradition is often built on such disputes.

Archbishop Lefebvre, like John Bunyan, may well prove a blessing to the Church in spite of immediate appearances. If some wish to value him in this way, they should be given a careful hearing. But his is also a human tragedy. Partly, it arises from specifically Roman circumstances; so our Articles still do well to assert that "the Church of Rome hath erred". Partly, it is the consequence of that Church doing a defensible thing badly, and with insufficient consideration for at least some Christians. On that score, the Church of England has little or nothing to boast. Bunyan's reply: *"Shew me the place in the epistles, where the Common Prayer-book is written, or one text of Scripture, that commands me to read it, and I will use it. But yet, notwithstanding, they that have a mind to use it, they have their liberty; that is, I would not keep them from it..."*

end of Page 7

Law and Authority

A sermon by Fr. Moss

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

Understand this today and take it to heart: the Lord is God indeed, in heaven above as on earth beneath, he and no other. Keep his laws and commandments as I give them to you today. (Deut.4:39-40).

On the sixth Sunday before Christmass, the Alternative Service Book manages to commemorate Moses almost without mentioning the Law and Authority, something of an Indian Rope Trick by anyone's reckoning! Today, however, it is these two things - law and authority in the Church - that I want to speak about. Far from being bland and entertaining - if my sermons have ever been - this is an appeal from the heart.

As you know, the Law of Moses has always had and still has binding unquestionable authority for all religious Jews. Prove it to yourself by walking through an orthodox Jewish neighbourhood like Hendon or Golders Green between four and five on a Friday evening in winter! But law and authority have always been a problem for the Church.

On the one hand, the New Testament tells us that "Christ is the end of law"; and some Christians have taken this to mean that rules and disciplines have no part to play in the lives of mature disciples of Jesus. Theirs is the "freedom of the Spirit"; they are guided not by "fussy" rules but by the principle of love, and they work out what Christ is calling them to do in each situation as it crops up. But the New Testament says other things. St. James speaks of "looking into the perfect law, the law of freedom", of an obedience to the words of Jesus that, if it is unquestioning and sincere, will set us free. St. Paul also speaks of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" and he tells the Christians in Rome that, far from being free to do as they see fit, they are en-lawed to Christ. That is, they have exchanged one obedience for another, obedience to Christ who is their New Law instead of obedience to Moses. And if we look carefully at the Gospel stories we see Jesus condemning certain Pharisees, not for trying to obey the Law of Moses, but for making their outward obedience grounds for boasting before others, and for making claims to the Father's favour as their right. It is the pride and hypocrisy that sidesteps God's call to be "holy as He is holy" that Jesus attacks, not the obedience.

Jesus is the "end of law" because he fulfils it(1), and because He provides better guidance and disciplines than the law gave. Both freedom and law, then, enter into the Christian life. There must be a balance in our lives between them; and it is vital for the health of our souls and of our life that we get that balance right.

This is something that I believe Anglicans today are not doing. In much of what I see written and hear said by Church people, I detect a rejection of authority, a refusal (to borrow a phrase of Martin Luther) to "let God be God". In the course of the twentieth century among Anglicans there has been a major erosion of belief in the fundamental - the absolutely basic - teachings of the Christian faith.

"If Jesus was simply a human being singularly in tune with God, there is no reason to elevate him to the Godhead... Christianity should be seen as a myth... that God created the world, humans fell, he sent his Son, who dies, rose and will come again should be seen for what it is - a story... (Christians today) are interested in persons coming into their own... it is only when we overcome the patriarchal, transcendent God that our religion will be

real." Thus a modern theologian. Her God is no longer the God who calls, challenges, forgives and makes us new, but user-friendly, tailored to fit in with our - or at least her - thoughts and wishes. Christ is like any other man (except that his goodness and wisdom are raised to a higher power) and his word is thus open to question and debate(2). We are encouraged to think not of a God who acted and still acts in life, but of a God who "underlies" things - whom we discover as we search for meaning in life - if we are lucky. In the new way of thinking (it would be wrong to call it a theology), the world is seen as a tight network of causes and effects that leaves God no chance to influence what happens in it - a world closed to God from the beginning. The thought of His "interfering" is an outrage!

To accept such a view of things, whether by deliberate choice or almost without knowing it, is to turn away from God - what the early Christian centuries called "apostasy". Here we have a new kind of legalism or smallmindedness - just as lethal as that of those Pharisees who cut God down to their size, who "strained out gnats, but swallowed whole camels". Such a pseudo-Christianity demands that everything that does not fit in with what are thought to be modern "scientific" explanations or today's idea of justice (which may change tomorrow) must be reinterpreted until it does - or else be thrown out(3). In the middle 1960s, when this view of things first became widespread, there was a sharp rise in the casualty rate among those training for the priesthood. How could you pray to this God? Numbers of students - of whom I was one - lost faith; others gave up their ministry within a year or two of ordination, to go into teaching or social work. Many have never returned.

This drift away from the living God of the Scriptures and the early Fathers, from God as he has revealed Himself to us, is no new thing. "Why must we be different? Why can't we be like the other nations?" is a cry that rings out time and time again in the Old Testament. Nor has the drift yet run its course. New examples of it are not hard to find. Resistance is growing among some who call themselves Anglicans to the use of the title "Lord" in prayer and worship. Why not "friend" instead? For to liberal-minded people "Lord" with its overtones of power, authority and hierarchy is unacceptable. It must therefore go. Yet, according to the New Testament, "No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit".

Again, in the name of justice to women and of new insights into human nature and into God, some are determined to introduce priestesses into the Church of England. Yet the Old Testament prophets fought strenuously against this development, at a time when the easiest thing would have been to conform to the practices of the surrounding countries and to take it on board.

end of Page8

It was a step, too, that the apostles chose not to take as the Church expanded into parts of the Greek world where the idea would have been freely accepted. But what Church now can claim (in the absence of consensus among those churches that have retained the priesthood) the necessary authority and higher wisdom than that of the apostles to make such a change?

Then there is "inclusive language" - the tip of a spiritual iceberg that threatens to do for the ship of the Church in

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

our time what a physical iceberg did for the Titanic in 1912. What could seem more innocent and reasonable than tidying up the oddities of biblical and liturgical language by replacing "men" by "people" and "man" by "human-kind" in cases where it is clear that all human beings are meant? But what happens when we come to the Creed, which refers to the Incarnation of Christ(4) in the words "And was made man"! What are we changing if we change that? And what about "His only Son our Lord"! By a short step or two we are face to face with demands for a complete overhaul of the idea of God - in the interests of "fairness" and "equality". Yet to call upon "the Creator, the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit", much less upon "the mother, the daughter and holy love" is not and never can be the same as calling upon God as "Father, Son and Holy Spirit". To step beyond Father and Son - Jesus' own way of speaking of the mystical union on the Godhead - is to move into strange, uncharted territory. It is entering the spiritual world of a new religion which is not the Christian faith and would not have been recognised as Christian by those of earlier ages with whom we are united by the faith of the Church in the Communion of Saints.

For Catholic Christians, Christ has always been the supreme authority, the Son of God and Son of Man, witnessed to by the Holy Spirit in Scripture, in Christian Tradition and in the mind of Christ's people in the Church of the living. But among Anglicans today - some in high places - Scripture and Tradition have been marginalised and the "mind of the Church" has become an excuse for each person or group to do what seems right in his own eyes. We have a crisis of authority; a substitution of our own for Christ's.

We need, I believe, to win back something of the spirit of the orthodox monk who wrote: *"The words of the hymns and the prayers have been given to us, handed down to us by our fathers among the saints, by men and women who had advanced while still on earth far beyond us in the love and contemplation of God... As we pray with the Church we are like children listening to grown-up's conversation. We understand perhaps very little, but one day we shall be able to take part. Already there are some words, some phrases, we can make our own."*

Father Ephreim's words apply just as much to the doctrines and disciplines of the Church as to prayer, and they sum up the true spirit of Anglicanism, as it showed itself in Michael Ramsey, John Keble, Thomas Ken, George Herbert and countless others.

The certainties at the heart of "our most holy faith" hold a promise of life and healing. We are like children who feel protected by their father's authority guiding them and, when they need it, declaring where the limits are. This reassures us as we face the tests of life and is to us the clearest proof of God's love.

In our weakness, we need the doctrines, disciplines and sacraments which Christ has given to His Church in trust for all mankind, if sin is to be overcome in us... if we are to become like Him and one day see Him as He really is. Those whose words and actions undermine these certainties and take away God's gifts bear a heavy responsibility. Do not be tempted by what you sometimes hear to dismiss the teaching of the Church where it seems difficult. It is your duty and mine as members of God's people to explore it for ourselves and make it our own.

(1) "End" is not a completely reliable translation of the Greek, which could with equal honesty be rendered "goal", "perfection" or "completion". And while "law" is the natural translation of the Greek, it is not a very safe translation of the underlying Hebrew word, which is better rendered "teaching". Too much modern thinking starts from a lack of basic knowledge about the original languages. (Ed.)

(2) At best such a Christ can be a flawed example, not a Saviour.

(3) There are Anglican bishops in the U.S.A. today speaking openly about "obliterating from the minds of church members all memory of what the Episcopal Church once believed and lived".

(4) *The original Greek of the Creed (and the Latin translation which our English more closely reflects) are both using inclusive language - "made man" and not "made male" (completely different words). If it were not so, would women be saved? So far forth, if "man" no longer seems inclusive, change were plausible. Yet when Jesus is "made man", He is male and not female (or some abstract humanity which is neither and so not human in any sense we can understand it), and this is by the Father's will; so attempts to avoid the masculinity of Jesus are fundamentally flawed.* (Ed.)

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Mr. Silver,

How very kind of you to send us the "Old Believer" so generously. Bishop Mercer has been a great supporter in our hour of need, when so few persons here are prepared to do anything or to take a stand. His advice and the literature we have received have been so very encouraging.

However in the short run we are going to pass through a dark and often discouraging road. We have no priests and no bishops to support us, while so many of our own supporters grow faint-hearted and find it difficult to leave the Church of the Province. Sadly, this indecision reaches into our own committee and makes taking firm decisions so very time-consuming and difficult. This son of situation cannot be unique to us here in South Africa and must have troubled other continuing Anglicans.

We take comfort and strength from the advice of Bishop Connors, that we, plus God, make a majority. Also, as a historian, I am well aware that the history of the world is to a large extent the history of determined minorities rather than that of wishy-washy majorities: and we have in our midst one or two very determined persons who will fight for their faith. However, if we stay without a priest for any length of time, our position will become grave.

I was particularly pleased to read about the Continuing Churches in America and to find that I was in complete agreement with everything written in your magazine. I was disturbed that the Bishop of London, now retired, had apparently no qualms about ordaining deaconesses for taking part in the Eucharist. Quite clearly the proponents of women's ordination used the notion of ordaining women as deacons as the thin end of the wedge. And it has worked! It has drastically altered the composition of the House of Clergy.

Recently we had a visit from the Archdeacon of York who did great harm to our cause. He went around the country, at our expense, denouncing the Continuing

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

Churches in America, saying they had failed, and that this was not an option for Anglicans in this land. He started this approach within hours of landing here, when he went on the radio. Tutu et al. must have been laughing. He was ill-informed about our situation, yet he felt able to go around the country telling Anglicans that they must stay in a heretical Church.

At the moment we are awaiting a visit from Archbishop Falk, when we hope to be admitted into the Traditional Anglican Communion. We cannot expect miracles - we can hope - but we can expect to be placed in a diocese and perhaps to have a lay reader appointed to regularise our Evensong. We are prayerbook people.

If a split occurs in England next month, we shall benefit, as some of the faint-hearted here will follow an English bishop. Our own bishops are of course appalling - like the Episcopal ones in the States. But our greatest selling point, that sounds awful, is the Book of Common Prayer, the world's greatest liturgy in a living language. It is extraordinary how the trendies cannot see this and think that they can solve the problem of declining church attendances by trying to be popular and making things ever easier. The Jews don't try to do away with Hebrew! And the English church leaders get up and say the silliest things about the language of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorised Version. Pope John seems to have opened Pandora's box with a vengeance. Ironically the churches that had pop masses here and packed their churches did not put down deep roots. I don't know of a single person who came to Sung Eucharist because of the guitars etc. who stayed when the guitars left. But the prayerbook people stayed.

Remember us in your prayers. We need them and accept our grateful thanks.

Yours faithfully and truly,
Stuart Jones.

Johannesburg, 19 October 1992.

Note from the Editor

When the Church of the Province of South Africa voted to ordain women to the priesthood earlier this year, there was a motion passed asserting to the minority "that there would be a place for them in (our Lord's) Church, which would be impoverished without them". Evidently this "place" is itself sadly impoverished!

All the right sentiments were expressed, but "sensitivity" and such like is no substitute for the maintenance of the faith and practice of the Church.

As so often, the issue is not just the ordination of women; all the wider themes of liberalism and the rejection of tradition are to be found in the South African Church according to the Archdeacon of York, who was certainly not hoodwinked for long about that Church.

As for the right choice in preserving membership of the Church of God, between separation (especially when that has sometimes led to divisions which are slow to heal) and staying within an increasingly heretical body, one can only acknowledge, with regret, that good men differ as to timing and tactics.

In our opinion, the Continuing Churches in the U.S .A. have not failed - they have preserved the faith and practice of the Church which they were forced to leave because of its growing errors, and God has blessed them with increasing numbers. Failure as yet to achieve a single united body, given their disparate origins, is not quite the same as deliberate schism, and schism is much

less an evil than heresy. Nevertheless, we should pray that they will grow together.

Page 11

Papering over the Cracks

From the Assistant Editor

On 1 October, the two Archbishops issued a News Release which indicates some of the attitudes they and the rest of the House of Bishops hold. It is too long to quote in full, and mostly contains unexceptional sentiments, virtuous in a better cause. However, the meat of the document is as follows.

"The House of Bishops has made clear the principles on which it will proceed. All its members have pledged themselves to seek:

to remain in communion with one another as Bishops of one Church;

to maintain the unity and integrity of the Church of England;

to uphold lawful authority within the Church of England;

to continue to provide episcopal oversight and pastoral care for all members of the Church.

Immediately after the Synod vote, Bishops will hold themselves at the ready to listen to any in their dioceses who wish to express a view about the result and the way ahead. They will meet in January to share what they have heard and to decide together how best to proceed."

This text of course antedates the result, and so does the following commentary on it. The basic problem is that the House of Bishops collectively (not entirely individually) has forfeited its claim to our trust and allegiance by not being "*ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same*". We cannot be other than wary of them.

A "pledge to seek" falls far short of a commitment to achieve. How fully are they committed, when they use such weasel words?

In so far as they have voted, or encouraged others to vote, for error, what value attaches to their communion? How securely is it a participation in the Body and Blood of Christ? This puzzle has been discussed before in the "Old Believer", and it is not worth repeating the debate now. But it is very difficult for us to be whole-hearted.

Given the fact of fundamental disagreement, what "unity" or "integrity" exists in the Church of England? Where is the common faith? Much more, doubtless, in the ordinary parishes than in Synod, but the need is to restore this; you cannot "maintain" what does not exist.

To "uphold lawful authority" sounds like a threat to persecute. Frankly, that authority is either mere legalism (and is close to being a paper tiger in the present circumstances) or it depends on legitimacy, which is the

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

very point at issue. Some traditional Anglicans have in the past given too little respect to lawful authority; indeed, the strength of liberalism owes not a little to a past rebelliousness which would have scandalised the leaders of the Oxford Movement. We must be serious about our duties as Christians to true Bishops; otherwise we are merely liberals of a different kind, not traditionalists.

Again, "oversight" and "care" depend on trust. Would that it could be restored!

What should we do about their kind offer to listen? Clearly we must take any opportunity to rescue the Church of England from error, if it will work. That must depend on our view of the Bishop of our own Diocese - of his integrity as much as his opinions. If we do not write (it might be better to avoid personal meetings) then we give the field to the supporters of women's ordination and the rest of the liberal agenda. To do nothing is therefore to admit we have lost all faith in the Church of England. Rather, with Bishop Lancelot Andrews, we must pray and seek "for the British (Church), the supply of what is wanting in it, the strengthening of what remains in it".

M.C.C.E.

The need to produce press releases to respond to the synod vote required us to produce this definition of our purpose. You may find it useful in communicating with your Bishop and indeed others.

The MOVEMENT FOR A CONTINUING CHURCH OF ENGLAND (M.C.C.E.) is a group of members of the Church of England determined to maintain its traditional faith and practice, if possible by leading the Church back to its past as the proper starting point for careful change and development, but also prepared for the worst, namely the possibility of the Church of England losing its faith and order. Therefore we would, if necessary, rebuild the Church and join with others (known as the Traditional Anglican Communion) who have had to do the same years ago.

end of Page 12

At the Name of Jesus...

By the Assistant Editor

A few notes about the Names and Titles of Jesus may be helpful. It is only a few weeks since a major national newspaper was convinced that the title "Son of God" (found in a new Dead Sea Scroll) was only ever used of Jesus, so that a single counter-example would be disruptive of faith, and had to be brutally corrected by both Christian and Jewish scholars. Obviously there is nothing new in these notes; but it is often hard for those who are not scholars to discover what is old.

A first warning; no language relevant to us had the distinction we make by Capital Letters - they had not been invented. There are also problems with "a" and "the" - so that you simply cannot make the distinction in Hebrew between "The Son of God" and "a son of a god". This is a typical example of the problems of translation, that the translation has to be more definite than the original. It is already a problem for New Testament writers, who produce some very ugly Greek as a result, and it becomes worse for translators into English.

"Jesus" is a perfectly straightforward name. It is the way the Greek Old Testament renders "Joshua" (hence the

apparently odd reference to Jesus in Hebrews 4.8). It means "God saves".

"Christ" is not basically a name at all. It is a Greek adjective meaning "anointed" and translates correctly a Hebrew adjective with the same meaning. Many people could be anointed in the Old Testament - priests, kings, prophets, and ordinary people like the guest of God in Psalm 23 - so there is nothing inherently unique about being anointed. There is a dangerous habit of transliterating the Hebrew and giving it a capital letter as "Messiah". Sometimes, there may be a precise meaning in the original to which this is appropriate; more often, not. In the New Testament, Christ has sometimes become a name, without consciousness of its meaning, but we should always be alert for the possibility it does mean "anointed" and so recognises an Act of God in Jesus - of which more later.

"Lord" is a title of respect - but how much respect can vary enormously. Both the New Testament and we do well to speak of the "Lord Jesus" but this is not a title which of itself says that Jesus is divine. (Contrast "THE LORD" which is not a translation, but an indication of the presence of the Name of God in the original Hebrew; "Jehovah" is another such indication. To say that Jesus is "THE LORD", that is, completely the same as God the Father, is heretical.)

"Son of God" is tricky. "Son of" is not necessarily biological. It can be merely a means of asserting a classification. For example, in Isaiah 5.1 there is a "fruitful hill" which in Hebrew is a "son of oil". "Son of God" similarly refers to powerful people (even wicked) in the Psalms (and the new Dead Sea Scroll mentioned above). They are not divine, they merely claim a high status. In Job, Satan is numbered among the sons of God. Of course, God does not have biological sons like Zeus, so if we rightly take the stories of Jesus' conception and birth to mean that God is his Father, the sense is not biological.

Karl Barth was orthodox when he said "the male is excluded here", and similarly our Articles are orthodox when they remind us that God is "without body, parts or passions". When the New Testament calls Jesus "Son of God" therefore it is not by the inherent meaning of the words saying Jesus is divine. The New Testament is the reason for the doctrine of the Trinity - as we shall see later - but it contains the evidence rather than the statement of the doctrine.

"Son of Man" has caused even more confusion. It quite often occurs in the Old Testament in the plural (and in Ephesians 3.5), and just means "people". God speaks to Ezekiel in this way; what is stressed is precisely how human he is. Even in Daniel 7, the "son of man" is human rather than a beast. So it seems likely that in the New Testament Jesus does not make strong claims for Himself by using this name. Yet it was obviously typical of Him to use it, which is why Stephen uses it in his dying vision. It has been suggested that "Son of Man" had become (from a misreading of Daniel) an expected heavenly figure - but the evidence for this is weak and such a figure would be horribly useless to us - neither Man nor God, and as such, no more capable of saving us than Jonah's whale.

A very important group of titles, not all used of Jesus, is "Word", "Wisdom", "Spirit" (or "Breath") and even "Angel". These all start from the recognition in the Old

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

Testament that God may be unreachable in Himself, but He reaches out to us by these means, which are to greater or lesser extents an extension or form or expression of Himself. Please do not take this too precisely; concentrating on any one of these ideas leads to heresy, but balancing all of them is the way of tradition. Contrast angels, apostles and prophets which are all external messengers or delegates; they have authority from God but no closer identity with Him than that. It is from this group of titles that the understanding of Jesus' person is begun by Saint John and Saint Paul, and continued by the Church Fathers.

But of course we want to call Jesus "perfect God and perfect Man", and we do well; for that is the end of their reflection on Jesus (the Chalcedonian Definition). The warning I am giving in this note is merely that the titles used in the New Testament do not individually prove this, and were never intended to do so. The New Testament is the record of Jesus* actions and therefore the start of discovering Who He is. Tradition tells us how that start was worked out and expressed in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. We can never hope to know the whole truth - to comprehend God, one would have to be God. Tradition however brings the evidence to us, makes sense of it and points out what disasters have followed errors. It thus is a vital aid to true prayer and worship. For this is not a game with words; it is about **how God loves and saves us**.

Scripture is not simple, and it is deep. But we are not such fundamentalists as to evade understanding the Bible. And that means starting from what the words meant to the writers, but then following the legitimate reflections on them and on our salvation in Christian tradition.

end of Page 13

We need you

The fourth "Old Believer" had a very wide circulation, because many of you were generous with donations and it was important to make our case known in advance of the Synod vote. Obviously this fifth volume ought to reach even more people. Your help is vital. Please photocopy it and pass it on to other people.

We are deeply grateful to those who sent donations. We must invite others to take up the good work. As was explained in the fourth volume, the cost of printing, postage and packing a single copy must come to nearly a pound; we cannot cope with a subscription or purchase system, so everything depends upon readers making donations from time to time sufficient not only to cover their own copies, but also to enable the "Old Believer" to be sent to others. We have nothing to hide, and everything to gain from being seen in our true colours.

This has been an unusually difficult volume to produce. The editors knew you would want and need a speedy response to the Synod vote. So almost everything had to be written in advance, for hasty correction in the light of events. You will never see the alternative articles, ready if the result had been different!

We are also deeply grateful to our contributors. The editors confess that they are "full of words" (Job 32), but the "Old Believer" is your journal, not ours. We have no monopoly of traditional wisdom, and indeed we do not have time to think deeply as well as edit!

The more thought-provoking material we have from others, the better the journal is likely to be. If you are

diffident about writing, please write nonetheless; if we receive material early, there is time for us to make suggestions and help you to improve it. Since we try to publish around Whitsun, here is a Lenten discipline for you!

We must also thank those who place advertisements with us. They are showing confidence in our ability to reach people; they provide services which traditional believers are likely to need. Please give them your support.

Keep on letting us know what you think of our work. Praise delights; but constructive criticism enables us to improve. The "Old Believer" is produced by amateurs and on the proverbial shoe-string, but it needs to look professional so as to be taken seriously- not to satisfy any editorial vanity but as a means of holding us all together and of making the M.C.C.E. case to others.,

St. Matthias' Day

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection. *Acts 1:21-22*. (Keble: The Christian Year)

Who is God's chosen priest?

He, who on Christ stands waiting day and night,
Who traced His holy steps, nor ever ceased,
From Jordan banks to Bethphage height:

Who hath learned lowliness

From his Lord's cradle, patience from His Cross:

Whom poor men's eyes and hearts consent to bless;
To whom, for Christ, the world is loss;

Who both in agony

Hath seen Him and in glory; and in both

Owne Him divine, and yielded, nothing loth,

Body and soul, to live and die,

In witness of his Lord,

In humble following of his Saviour dear:

This is the man to wield th'unearthly sword,

Warring unharmed with sin and fear.

THE OLD BELIEVER 5

But who can e'er suffice
What mortal - for this more than angels' task,
Winning or losing souls. Thy life-blood's price?
The gift were too divine to ask,
But Thou hast made it sure
By Thy dear promise to Thy Church and Bride.
That Thou, on earth, would aye with her endure
Till earth to Heaven be purified.
Thou art her only spouse,
Whose arm supports her, on Whose faithful breast
Her persecuted head she meekly bows,
Sure pledge of her eternal rest.
Thou, her unerring guide,
Stayest her fainting steps along the wild;
Thy mark is on the bowers of lust and pride,
That she may pass them undefiled.
Who then, uncalled by Thee,
Dare touch Thy spouse, Thy very self below?
Or who dare count him summoned worthily,
Except Thine hand and seal he show?
Where can Thy seal be found
But on the chosen seed, from age to age
By Thine anointed heralds duly crowned,
As kings and priests Thy war to wage?
Then fearless walk we forth,
Yet full of trembling. Messengers of God:
Our warrant sure, but doubting of our worth,
By our own shame alike and glory awed.
Dread Searcher of the hearts,
Thou who didst seal by Thy descending Dove
Thy servant's choice, O help us in our parts,
Else helpless found, to learn and teach Thy love.
end of Page 14 and last