

THESES OFFERED BY SM CECILY BUILDINGS

30 APRIL 1985

I. THESIS: SANCTIFICATION IS A PROGRESSIVE, ON-GOING PROCESS THROUGHOUT LIFE.

cf: "Sanctification is the making in the believer of that righteousness & salvation without which no one may see the Lord" (Pleshey *infra*, para. 12)
 "Sanctification...on the other hand...denotes the constant re-appropriation of this consecration by holiness of life" (Pleshey 17)

"The Church as a whole is called...to a responsibility of stewardship. This includes...the provision of what is needed for perseverance in faith and growth in holiness" (Pleshey-Durham I.6.)

"There is a...Moral certitude...that the believer may remain faithful and will always have the desire to use what God has given for the restoration of those who stumble" (Pleshey 25)

"Such confidence does not in any way remove the Christian's responsibility to work out his salvation in fear and trembling" (Pleshey 23)

See also: Pleshey, paras. 12, 13, 16, 20, 21.

QUESTION: IS THERE ANY GROUND FOR ASSERTING THAT THIS PROCESS IS CERTAINLY COMPLETE AT (MEDICAL/PHYSICAL) DEATH ?

cf: "The more distinctively 'Evangelical' tradition has been content to think simply of the faithful departed as being immediately 'in joy & felicity'...On the other hand...the crudity...of some mediaeval conceptions of Purgatory does not rule out the essential idea of a phase of progressive growth, and, it may be, of needed purification of the soul after death...In the judgement of the Commission the Church of England deliberately leaves room for both views" (Doctrine in the Church of Eng. and (1939) Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury & York; reprinted 1982, pp.211-213)

II. THESIS: THE CHURCH IS GOD'S ESSENTIAL INSTRUMENT IN THIS ON-GOING PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION.

cf: "So profound is the link between God and his Church in this *koinonia* that he requires it to be his instrument for the realization of...the salvation of humankind...The Church seeks to share with all people the grace by which its own life is created and sustained" (Pleshey 11)

"The individual...comes to the way of salvation through incorporation by baptism into the *koinonia* of the believing community, the communion of individuals with each other and with God" (Pleshey 8)

"The Church's vocation is to devote itself to the achievement of that goal" (Pleshey-Durham I.5.)

"The once-for-all atoning work of Christ and its continuing actualization in the life of the Church together constitute the free gift of God" (Pleshey 13)

QUESTION: IF THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION/PURIFICATION CONTINUES AFTER DEATH HOW DOES THE CHURCH CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS ESSENTIAL INSTRUMENTAL ROLE IN THAT PROCESS ?

- III. THESIS:
- a) "CHURCH" MEANS MOST ESSENTIALLY THE WHOLE KOINONIA WITH ALL THE ACTIVITY OF ALL ITS MEMBERS.
 - b) ITS INSTRUMENTALITY IS NOT DIRECTED SOLELY TO ITS SACRAMENTAL ACTS.
 - c) A MAJOR FORM OF THAT ACTIVITY IS PRAYER.
 - d) INTERCESSORY PRAYER, LIKE OTHER PRAYER, IS A FORM OF THE ESSENTIAL LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH.

1. QUESTIONS: IS PRAYER ONLY ADORATION & PRAISE OR CAN IT ALSO BE INTERCESSORY?
 cf: "In the Eastern Church...the Communion of Saints is apprehended as a fellowship of mutual intercession...Prayers are offered by the Church on earth even for the Mother of the Lord, and the prayers of friends lately departed in the faith of Christ are asked on behalf of those who seek this help...This fellowship is essentially a fellowship in prayer to God...The way of truth and safety is to remember that our fellowship with the departed is a fellowship in prayer and worship, as living and departed are united in yearning & aspiration towards the consummation of Christ's redeeming work" (C.of S Report, p.214)

2. IS INTERCESSORY PRAYER A LEGITIMATE / DESIRABLE / NECESSARY EXPRESSION OF THAT "YEARNING & ASPIRATION" ?
3. CAN SUCH INTERCESSORY PRAYER BE LEGITIMATELY CARRIED OUT COLLECTIVELY BY THE KOINONIA AS SUCH ?
4. CAN IT BE EMBODIED IN LITURGICAL WORSHIP, SUCH AS REQUIEM MASSES / EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE DEAD ?
5. CAN IT BE EMBODIED AND EXPRESSED IN 'ACTED PRAYERS' (i.e: actions which express the same meaning as verbal intercessions, e.g: candles, incense, or holy water sprinkling round a coffin) ?
6. CAN IT BE DIRECTED TOWARDS THE BENEFIT OF A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF THE KOINONIA (as Requiem Masses/ Eucharistic celebrations commonly are)

- IV. THESIS:
- a) INTERCESSORY PRAYER WOULD BE A WHOLLY IRRATIONAL ACTIVITY UNLESS IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT IT HAS SOME EFFECT.
 - b) THE EFFECT EXPECTED IS THE SAME AS THAT OF ANY OTHER ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH - THE FOSTERING OF THE NEW LIFE GIVEN BY THE SPIRIT - THE ABILITY OF THE CHURCH TO DO THIS IS EMBRACED BY GOD'S GRACE (cf! Pleshey 13)
 - c) HOW THIS EFFECT IS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE CHURCH IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF THE NATURE OF THE KOINONIA.

The activity of the Church consists in the actual "living of the new life of the Spirit" by all the members of the koinonia (cf: Pleshey 13).

The level of this vitality is affected by the level of commitment of all the members of the koinonia.

Members therefore have a positive or negative effect on each other within the koinonia "which is the communion of individuals with each other and with God" (Pleshey 8)

(These three considerations also justify and explain the practice of seeking the intercession of the "saints")

- V. THESIS: IT IS A LEGITIMATE CONCLUSION TO VISUALISE PARTICULAR INSTANCES OF THE "ACHIEVEMENT OF THAT GOAL...THAT WE SHOULD ALL BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON" (Pleshey-Durham I.5) AS THE ATTAINING TO THE FULLNESS OF SALVATION OF PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS.

Crude expressions or pictures of this conclusion ("getting out of Purgatory") however widespread, do not invalidate it.

Such crude expressions or pictures are not claiming that this conclusion is solely dependent on the human activity of the intercessor, since they only arise within the framework of the whole truth as set out here (i.e: in the Pleshey draft.)

VI. THESIS: INDULGENCES "PARDONS" (9 Art. XVII) ARE A FORM OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER (verbal or acted), OFFERED BY MEMBERS OF THE KOINONIA IN BEHALF OF BRETHREN OR OTHER MEMBERS, LIVING OR DEAD.

That indulgences are only to be understood in harmony with the whole truth set out here (i.e. in the Pleshey tract) is demonstrated by the fact that they can only be sought or gained by those who have been absolved from sin, i.e. those who are recognised by the authorities of the Church to be already justified and "in the right before God" (Pleshey cft: "...which treasure...to be mercifully applied...to those who truly repent and confess..." (Clement VI, Unigenitus, 1343))

"Indulgences cannot be gained without a sincere conversion of outlook and unity with God" (Paul VI, Indulgentiarum Doctrina, 1967)

VII. THESIS: THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING OF A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE "GUILT" OF SIN & THE "TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT" WHICH REMAINS AFTER GUILT HAS BEEN FORGIVEN (e.g. Clement VI, Unigenitus, 1343), WHICH IS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PENANCE IMPOSED BY THE PRIEST IN THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION, OR WITH THE PRACTICE OF GAINING INDULGENCES, UNDERLINES THE PRECISE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

"Guilt" and "forgiveness" refer to man's need for justification which can come only from the mercy and grace of God (cft: Pleshey 3)

Remaining "temporal punishment" was one way of expressing belief in the need for, and the fact of, an on-going process of sanctification which would render the believer capable of the vision of God.

VIII. THESIS: THE SAME TRUTHS WHICH APPLY TO INTERCESSORY PRAYER MADE BY THE KOINONIA AS SUCH APPLY, MUTATIS MUTANDIS, TO PRAYER MADE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE KOINONIA.