

A Tale of Two Coronations: Farcical & Real

In opening this article, I find myself penning similar words to the way I opened my article on the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Here we go again!

It's a good job it's 2023. If I'd been writing this five hundred years ago, my next (very temporary) address, I suspect, would have been the Tower¹ on my way to the block (if fortunate) or the scaffold.² But fortunately for me, Charles Windsor is no match for Henry Tudor in the tyranny stakes. Nevertheless, even in these more genteel days I am still breaking one of sternest of stern, but unwritten, commandments: 'You shall not rock the boat!' Or, to put it another way: above all things, be a wise monkey!³

A bit of history. In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a book against Martin Luther, entitled *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, following which, Pope Leo X bestowed upon him the title 'Defender of the Faith'. In 1530, Henry broke with the Pope, and four years later Parliament passed a bill which, while it maintained Roman Catholic doctrine in England, made Henry his own pope. He was so taken with the title 'Defender of the Faith', it had to be included in the pompous but unreal⁴ blurb: 'Henry the Eighth by the Grace of God King of England, France

¹ The Tower of London.

² The block could be fairly quick. A proficient axeman would do the job in one blow. But it might be bungled. The scaffold, however, meant a very short time hanging by the noose, followed by public, crude surgery without anaesthetic – emasculation and disembowelling while still alive, cutting the body into four, and so on. Not a very pleasant way to begin – and end – the day.

³ A Japanese maxim. 'See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil'. In other words, turn a blind eye, look the other way, go along with the pretence, and, above all, don't blow the gaff.

⁴ King of France in 1534? England had lost that throne in 1453.

and Ireland, Defender of the Faith and of the Church of England and also of Ireland in Earth the Supreme Head’.

In 1553, Queen Mary I restored the Pope as the Head of the Church.

In 1559, Queen Elizabeth I chose to become the Supreme Governor rather than the Supreme Head of the Church.

From 1st May 1876 until 22nd June 1948, British Sovereigns were also known as Emperors of India (the first was Empress Victoria).

On 6th May 2023, Charles III will be crowned and duly pronounced to be ‘Charles the Third, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of His other Realms and Territories King, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith’, the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Harriet Sherwood:

[Charles is] perhaps more naturally high church, with a particular affinity for an interest in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The new king has also shown great interest in non-Christian faiths, especially Islam and Judaism.

In 1994, Charles triggered controversy when he said he would be defender of faith rather than Defender of the Faith, in a desire to reflect Britain’s religious diversity. There were suggestions that the coronation oath might be altered.

In 2015, he ‘clarified his position’ in an interview with BBC Radio 2, saying his views had been misinterpreted. He said: ‘As I tried to describe, I mind about the inclusion of other people’s faiths and their freedom to worship in this country. And it’s always seemed to me that, while at the same time being Defender of the Faith, you can also be protector of faiths’.

He pointed out that [his mother] the Queen had said her role was ‘not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the Church [of England] has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country. I think in that sense she was confirming what I was really trying to say – perhaps not very well – all those years ago’.

Now, as he ascends the throne almost three decades after that controversy, most people would agree that Charles should champion the right to religious belief and practice of all his subjects, not just that of the dwindling number of people in the pews of Anglican churches.⁵

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Let's get down to brass tacks. All this coronation rigmarole about the Monarch being anointed 'Defender of the Faith', 'Supreme Head' or 'Supreme Governor' of the Church of England, comes, not from 1521 and all that, but from the time of the Fathers who, acting directly contrary to biblical teaching, had gone back to the old, Mosaic covenant and imported several elements of that covenant (along with paganism) into the new covenant. Having gone that far, the Fathers, in cahoots with the Roman Emperors Constantine and Theodosius, then cobbled together the monstrosity of Christendom,⁶ the union of Church and State into one Commonwealth. The coronation charade of 6th May 2023 is just the latest glaring example of the sort of showy fandangle this disastrous conglomeration has produced this past seventeen hundred years. It may be a spectacular show, yes, but, in the words of Isaac Watts, it is nothing more than 'an empty show'.⁷

The coronation itself is a blatant aping of the anointing of Solomon by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet. Now that old-covenant coronation shadowed a reality to come; this latest coronation, however, is nothing but a symbolic performance, a copy of that earlier shadow; it is, in truth, a showpiece pantomime. A splendid spectacle, lavish, gaudy, opulent, glittering, dazzling, it may be – indeed, it is – but from the so-called sacred building itself – 'the house of God' – to the glittering trappings on the so-called altar, from the multi-

⁵ Harriet Sherwood: 'King Charles to be Defender of the Faith but also a defender of faiths' (*The Guardian*, 9th Sept. 2022).

⁶ See my *The Pastor: Does He Exist?; Infant Baptism Tested; Battle for the Church: 1517-1644*; Appendix 2 'Christendom' in my *Relationship Evangelism Exposed: A Blight on the Churches and the Ungodly*.

⁷ Taken from Isaac Watts setting of Psalm 17.

coloured vestments of the so-called priests to the smearing of a drop or two of so-called sacred oil on the chest of a mere mortal, pronouncing him to be a virtual god, the spiritual Supreme Governor of millions, the entire pretence is nothing but a piece of religious-political theatre, a pretence that the State and the Church like to connive over. It is Christendom gone mad! Or, in truth, Christendom as it really is! From Hubert Parry's setting of Psalm 122: 'I was glad when they said unto me: "Let us go into the house of the Lord"' to George Frederic Handel's 'Zadok the Priest', and beyond, the old-covenant, embellished by a Greek Orthodox chant, governs everything.

Come back Hans Christian Andersen: we desperately need your little lad to point out the obvious.⁸ Well, I say 'obvious', but Christendom, I fear, has so long been in the driving seat, only a tiny minority – an ever-diminishing, minority – can see the obvious. In lieu of Andersen's lad, I have penned this article.

Going back to the original, Solomon's coronation was from beginning to end symbolic, designedly so: it foreshadowed and represented the one true King – the Lord Jesus Christ – and his coronation, his reign, his rule. Scripture makes it absolutely clear that all the old-covenant symbols were ineffective shadows, mere pictures of a coming reality – whether tabernacle or temple, priesthood or sacrifice, altar or sabbath – all were shadows, but the reality, substance, fulfilment would be Christ himself:

These [elements of the old covenant] are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Col. 2:17).

[The symbols of] the law... serve [as] a copy and shadow of the heavenly things (Heb. 8:4-5).

⁸ In the folk tale: 'The Emperor Has No Clothes', two comen persuade an emperor that they can clothe him in a magnificent suit that is invisible to the ignorant. Everybody goes along with the pretence – the emperor is, of course, naked – until a lad in his innocency points out what everybody knows, but nobody wants to admit – or dares to admit.

The law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities (Heb. 10:1).

As Christ himself declared at the start of his earthly ministry:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished (Matt. 5:17-18).

Well, Christ has come. And Christ has fulfilled the old covenant and its shadows. Moreover, Christ has established the new covenant. And in fulfilling the old covenant, and setting up the new and thus accomplishing the everlasting realities, Christ has rendered the old covenant and all its symbols obsolete:

In speaking of a new covenant, [God by Christ] makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away (Heb. 8:13).⁹

Charles III will be a crowned-king, yes, but he will be merely a constitutional king, and that of a faded nation; he will be acknowledged as Supreme Governor of the Anglican State-Church, yes; but all will be brought about by a ritual based on an old, obsolete covenant. But the real King, the only King, the only Head of the elect, is the Lord Jesus Christ. And only he.

As a consequence, the entire shebang conducted at Westminster on 6th May is, from start to finish, not only a pretence; it is a spiritually diabolical – I use the word advisedly – nonsense, bolstered by a Christendom State-Church.¹⁰ It is nothing less than the latest episode in centuries of corruption. I can understand the unregenerate going along with it, but how any genuine believer can get involved with such a Church utterly defeats me. Some scriptural passages spring to mind.

⁹ ‘Ready to vanish away’ means it was rendered obsolete. See my *Christ Is All: No Sanctification by the Law*.

¹⁰ See my *The Pastor Does He Exist?* See Appendix 2 ‘Christendom’ in my *Relationship Evangelism Exposed: A Blight on the Churches and the Ungodly*.

Paul's words to believers who were listening to false brothers who wanted to bring the law of Moses, the old covenant, into the new, apply directly to this latest fandangle, and the State Church which sanctions it. The apostle declared:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ (Gal. 1:6-10).

I wonder just how many distortions of the gospel are played out in Charles' coronation! If Paul were alive today, I know what sort of thing he would say about such a blatant exhibition performed by professing believers, all in the name of Christ:

Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in – who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery – to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) – those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me (Gal. 2:4-6).

As he commanded the Corinthian believers:

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said: 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will

be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty' (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

God has made the position unequivocal:

Come out of her [that is, Babylon], my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues (Rev. 18:4).

In light of such black and white scriptures, how can any evangelical be tangled up in the Anglican system? Let's not beat about the bush. As I have said, we are talking about a State-Church founded on a system devised by the Fathers based on the old covenant adulterated with paganism. Moreover, this State Church holds to baptismal regeneration for infants, with a so-called Supreme Governor who is a mere man, one who is almost certainly not regenerate and can see virtually no meaningful difference between the gospel and Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or any Eastern religion (indeed, he might even prefer some of the latter to what's he actually ended up with!), a system which has supplanted Christ by human priests, and so on? If this is not a Babylonian farrago, what is?

C.H.Spurgeon spelled it out in his infamous 1864 sermon 'Baptismal Regeneration':

'But', I hear many good people exclaim, 'there are many good clergymen in the Church who do not believe in baptismal regeneration'. To this my answer is prompt. Why then do they belong to a Church which teaches that doctrine in the plainest terms? I am told that many in the Church of England preach against her own teaching. I know they do, and herein I rejoice in their enlightenment, but I question, gravely question, their morality. To take an oath that I sincerely assent and consent to a doctrine which I do not believe, would to my conscience appear little short of perjury, if not absolute downright perjury; but those who do so must be judged by their own Lord. For me to take money for defending what I do not believe, for me to take the money of a Church, and then to preach against what are most evidently its doctrines, I say for me to do this (I judge others as I would that they should judge me) for me, or for any other simple, honest man to do so, were an atrocity so great,

that if I had perpetrated the deed, I should consider myself out of the pale of truthfulness, honesty, and common morality.¹¹

And, for my purpose here, for ‘baptismal regeneration’ read ‘acceptance of, and submission to, any man as the pretended Supreme Governor of the *ekklēsia*, and all the other trappings of the State Church’!

King Jesus is King Jesus still. He alone sits on the real throne, the throne of the universe; and, especially the throne of his *ekklēsia*. No man. No Archbishop. No Pope. Not even Charles III. Whatever the tradition! Whatever the flummery! Whatever the TV coverage! Whatever the viewing figures! Above all, of course, Christ is no cardboard Monarch! As everybody will find out:

God... commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

And as we know:

God has highly exalted [Christ] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

As John, in vision, saw:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the

¹¹ Spurgeon sermon 573.

fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).¹²

Figurative language? Yes. But that figurative language bespeaks an awful – literally, full of awe – reality. *Christ is the real KING.*

As the psalmist reminded all who are in authority, so I remind Charles and Camilla:

You are gods [that is, princes, rulers], sons of the Most High [that is, by God's will, in high office], [both] of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince (Ps. 82:6-7).

And as the psalmist urged his readers, so I urge you, reader:

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him (Ps. 2:12).

¹² See my 'The Real King' on my sermonaudio.com webpage.