

The Journal of The Church of England Continuing

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” Hebrews 13:8.

Issue No.2

February 1996

**From Bishop David Samuel
Parsonage,**

**The
1, Downshire Square,
Reading,
RG1 6NJ.**

Dear Friends,

A very extraordinary thing has been done by the Church of England. Half way through its decade of evangelism it has decided to abolish the doctrine of eternal punishment, so clearly attested in the Holy Scriptures, and substitute the age-old heresy of annihilationism, defined in Blunt’s Dictionary of Sects and Heresies, as the belief that the wicked will, sooner or later after death, cease to exist altogether. In a sense this does not surprise me, because as I have thought now for some time, the brakes have been taken off the church by its departure from Holy Scripture as its standard of doctrine and in that situation anything can happen. The church of England gathers speed and momentum in its career into error.

When I lived in Lincolnshire, near the market town of Louth, I observed two rather unusual street names. One was Breakneck Lane and nearby was Gospel Gate. Breakneck Lane was no doubt so named after the accidents that took place when vehicles lost their brakes and careered out of control. I would like to think that if the Church of England has now become Breakneck Lane, that nearby is still Gospel Gate, i.e. the Church of England (Continuing) where we still seek by God’s grace to present the whole counsel of God.

Paul said to the Ephesian elders, Watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. He kept nothing back. I am pure from the blood of all men. Surely, that is the duty of the church of God, not to minimize and hide from men the truth of Gods Word, but to declare it plainly. And we do so, because

we have a Gospel which is able to save men from hell and to bring them to heaven. A Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost. If there were no such remedy for sin, no such message of deliverance from hell, I suppose there might be some excuse for pretending there was no such thing as eternal punishment, and for doing what the Church of England has done in its latest report. But that is not the case. There is full and free salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, from sin and death and hell. If we are serious about evangelism we shall hold nothing back.

I am encouraged that men are feeling the call, in the Church of England (Continuing), to enter the ministry and to preach the Gospel. It must be “the whole counsel of God.”

Yours sincerely,
David N. Samuel, Bishop.

The Church in Crisis

Why the Witness of The Church of England (Continuing) is needed.

By Bishop David N. Samuel

Many people identify the crisis in the church today with the ordination of women and also with the impending acceptance of practising homosexuals for the ministry. I remember a large group of people from the Lesbian and Gay Christian (sic) Movement outside Church House, after the debate in General Synod when the Measure for the ordination of women was passed, chanting, Women today, our turn next! Well informed observers say that the ordination of practising homosexuals is a foregone conclusion.

That debate revealed the root cause of the crisis in the Church of England. It has to do with authority in the church. What is our authority? Is it the Bible or human opinion? Do we obey revealed truth or do we follow the customs of the age and the supposed wisdom of the age? Archbishop Carey said, during the course of the debate, "We shall lose all credibility in the eyes of the world if we do not pass this measure." So where do we take our direction from? From God or man?

The Bishop of Sheffield also said in that debate, "The church is adopting an a-revelational position", that is, it is behaving as if there were no word from God. As if it were left to make up its faith as it went along. Now I fear that is the case, and that is the root cause of the crisis.

Contributory causes

Its recent history can be traced to two official reports produced by the Doctrinal Commission of the Church of England. The first appeared in 1976 entitled *Christian Believing* and the second in 1987 called *We Believe*. They both contributed directly to this crisis. The first said, in effect, the Bible is a very difficult book and we cannot really under-

stand it. The second said, we must make up our faith as we go along; revelation is neither finished nor complete; we are continuing the unfinished business of the Bible, doctrine is evolving. Both of these lead directly to an agnostic church; which does not know where it is going, which has no definite message to teach, no fixed points of doctrine. It is not at all surprising that the Church of England has arrived at this position. The conditions for it were created by its own official reports.

I am reminded of the story which Spurgeon tells in his *All Round Ministry* of the churchwarden whose church spire was being repaired. When the good man saw the weathercock lying on the ground, he was alarmed at the size of it, and asked the builder, would it not threaten the safety of the spire, since it presented such a large face to the fierce winds. But the builder reassured him by telling him that the weathercock turned round in the wind and created no danger to the spire. The churchwarden then noticed the great brass letters of the four points of the compass also on the ground and felt some misgiving regard them. "Would it not," he said to the builder, "be a good idea if they turned round too!" If the church has no fixed or cardinal points of doctrine all is lost, and that is now

sadly the state of things not only in practice but in principle in our great national church. And it is of course, the fundamental reason for the stand we have been constrained to take in the Church of England (Continuing). A witness to the divine authority and teaching of the Word of God is needed today in the face of the widespread defection from it. This, of course, is no new thing in the history of the Christian Church.

Scriptural Catholicity

Archbishop Cranmer was, under God, the architect of the Reformation of the English Church in the sixteenth century. He bequeathed to it a Scriptural catholicity. Catholic truth, he declared is Scriptural truth. On that principle he fashioned the doctrine and worship of the Church of England. It is enshrined in the 39 articles and the Book of Common Prayer. But Cranmer warned of the dangers of the loss of Scriptural Catholicity. He foresaw just such a possible development as that of our day, when the church would turn from the Bible and begin to formulate its own doctrines. Let me give you his actual words. The visible church, he said, is only the church of Christ in so far as it adheres to Scripture. But-

if the church proceed further to make any new articles of the faith, beside the Scripture, or direct not the form of life according to the same; then it is not the pillar of the truth, nor the church of Christ, but the synagogue of Satan, and the temple of antichrist which both erreth itself, and bringeth into error as many as do follow it. (*Works of Archbishop Cranmer*, Parker Society I, p377.)

If the church so errs, it ceases to be the Church of Christ. And further-

more Cranmer shows how this situation comes about. He reveals just what is the cause of it. It is uncertainty about Gods Word, uncertainty about its message and its truth. Again let me give you Cranmers own words on the subject.

If we be uncertain of Gods word, the devil might bring in among us a new word, a new doctrine, a new faith, a new church, a new god, yea himself to be god, as he hath already done in the popish kingdom. (*Ibid.* II, 52)

Such is the perilous condition of the church that is uncertain of Gods Word, which is the present state of the Church of England, and which overthrows the supreme authority of Scripture.

Need for faithfulness

Now having spoken about the crisis in the church, let me say something about the witness of the Church of England (Continuing). There are those of us who believe that in such a situation something must be done. If the Church of England is proving to be unfaithful to its great inheritance it is our duty to be faithful to that inheritance. We believe in the Scriptural Catholicity of the 39 Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer. We wish to continue with them, to perpetuate them. And so the only thing to do is, in fact what has been done, to form a body, the Church of England (Continuing), in which it is possible to be faithful to the true orthodox position of the Church of England, which is now little more than a memory in the Church of England itself.

Imagine the picture. You have the mainline going straight ahead, but the General synod switched the points, with

the result that the Church of England has sped off on a side line. But we are determined to continue straight on, on the mainline, and are doing so. (Interestingly Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones always objected to the term mainline churches being used of the liberal churches, and you can see why).

Very soon the Church of England will hit the buffers. The present crisis has created a situation for Christians in which they must choose where their allegiance lies; whether they are content to be sidelined or wish to take a stand for mainline truth and orthodoxy. A situation has arisen not unlike that in Israel at the time of Elijah, when he challenged the people to choose whom they would serve, the true God or Baal. The people were not used to having to decide in that manner. Ahab had allowed a *laissez faire* situation to develop with regard to religion. He allowed the worship of Baal alongside the worship of Jehovah. People thought they could worship their idols and serve the Lord. Elijah came along with a different message. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal then follow him." This is the kind of situation in which we now find ourselves.

The real Church of England

I once wrote an article with the title, "Will the real Church of England, please, stand up?" I think the phrase comes from an American game show, in which several different people impersonate the real character and at the end the host says, Will the real Mr. Jones please stand up? It is time now for us to identify ourselves. Where do we really stand? I think if you belong to the real Church of England you will want to be in the Church of England (Continuing).

But you might say, "I love the

Church of England, and I don't want to leave it." If you feel like that ask yourself this question: Where is the Church of England? It is no longer there, where you think it is. The Church of England is the Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic faith; it is the Holy Scriptures, the 39 Articles, the Book of Common Prayer, a believing people, a godly ministry. Article 19 *Of the Church* puts the matter clearly and succinctly:

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christs ordinance...

Where are the 39 Articles today in the Church of England? Where is the Prayer Book? Where for that matter is the Bible? They are no more now than the smile on the face of the Cheshire Cat. But you will find all these in the Church of England (Continuing), so if you love the Church of England, that is where you should be. You will only find the Church of England where its faith is confessed, not just in buildings, in bricks and mortar. Bishop Ryle said, "A church which does not have the Gospel is not worth preserving." Such a statement is surely incontrovertible.

Discernment needed

Does it not come down to this in the end, with many people, a love of buildings, and the habit of a life time. I love old buildings too! Yet they are not the be all and end all. And there are times when we should positively flee them. We can so easily fall into the trap the Jews fell into when they said, The temple of the Lord are these, and worshipped the stones. Listen to these words of Hilary,

Bishop of Poitiers, quoted with approval by John Calvin:

Beware of antichrist; for unhappily a love of walls has seized you; unhappily the church of God which you venerate exists in houses and buildings; unhappily under these you find the name peace. Is it doubtful that in these antichrist will have his seat? Safer to me are the mountains and the woods.

Where is the Church of England to be found today? Surely where its faith is truly confessed. Catholicity is to be judged not by places, not by numbers, but by doctrine. Where was the one, true faith of Scripture to be found in the days of Athanasius? Amongst the majority? Amongst the Arians who denied the true divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or with Athanasius? *Athanasius contra mundum*, who was driven into exile by the rest of the visible church, but who fought intrepidly for the orthodox faith we now confess.

The story has been repeated over and over again in the history of the church. It is happening now. God sometimes withdraws the external manifestations of the church from the view of man, and strips it of its pomp and circumstance. We have arrived at a watershed in the history of the church. Choose you this day whom you will serve.

We in the Church of England (Continuing) are committed to four great orthodox texts: the Authorised version of the Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, the 39 Articles of Religion and the Ordinal. We are resolved to maintain and perpetuate the full doctrinal and spiritual heritage of the Church of England. We believe that God raised up the Church of England to be an instrument of blessing to this nation. We believe with Christians of previous generations, that the English Reformation produced a pure and Scriptural church. But that church is now fatally flawed. Other means must be found for the conservation of its heritage. Hence the need for the witness of the Church of England (Continuing).

“THE CHURCH THAT WOULD NOT DIE”

The story of *St. Mary’s Episcopal Chapel, Castle Street, Reading*, founded in 1798 by dissatisfied members of the Church of England, licensed for Church of England worship in 1836 and which joined the Church of England (Continuing) in 1995 under the Rev. Dr. (now Bishop) David N. Samuel.

Illustrated hardback. Send £15.50 (plus £1.45 p.& p.) to Mr. J. B. Dearing, 27 Sherman Road, Reading, RG1 2PJ. Cheques to be made out to The Trustees of St. Mary’s Castle Street.

Bishop Handley Moule on Christian Moderation

Philippians 4 v.5. - Let your moderation be known unto all men.

The Word here rendered moderation in our Bible is connected by derivation and usage with ideasof yielding. Let your yieldingness be known unto all men; the Lord is near. It is a positive grace of the Spirit; it flows from the fullness of Jesus Christ.

What is it? We shall find the answer partly by remembering how, from another point of view, the Gospel enjoins, and knows how to impart, the most resolute unyieldingness. If anything can work the miracle of making a weak character strong it is the Gospel. Like nothing else, it can make the victim of sensual temptation turn his back decisively upon it. It can make the weak spirit which has habitually saved itself trouble by falsehood (and the mere avoidance of trouble is the motive for numberless falsehoods) immovably loyal to truth. It can make the regenerate will say "no" to self on a hundred points where never anything but yes was heard before. Nothing in the moral world is so immovable as the will of a living Christian, sustained by the power of God the Holy Spirit, on some clear case of principle.

I lately read of the uncompromising decision of a Christian man, in high military command in India, fifty years ago. He had accepted office and £10,000 a year, being far from rich in private means, on the condition that he should not be asked to give official countenance to idolatry. The condition was not observed. He was required to sign a grant of money to an idol temple. The East India Company would not give way, nor would their distinguished servant. He resigned his command promptly, and

came home without a murmur and without compensation.

Here was a conspicuous case of the unyieldingness of the gospel, a mighty grace which, thank God, is being daily exemplified in his sight in a thousand smaller instances.

Yet this very case equally well illustrates from another side the yieldingness of the Gospel. From the point of view of principle this admirable Christian was fixed as a rock, as a mountain; from the point of view of self-interest he was moveable as air. That it was a sacrifice of self's gain and glory to resign was nothing in his path. His interests were his Masters. Jesus Christ was in him where by nature self is. He was jealous and sensitive for the Lord; indifferent, oblivious, for himself. If I understand aright, he did not resign with a flourish of trumpets so to speak. He did not do it sullenly or bitterly. He did not come home as that most unhappy and inglorious character - a man with a personal grievance. Quietly and in the way of Christian business, he withdrew from a post where he could not be loyal to his King and Saviour; this was all.

(From *Thoughts on the Spiritual Life* by H.C.G.Moule 1891)

Why Liturgy?

“They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is” Acts 4.24.

Why do we use written prayers from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in our services of public worship in the Church of England (Continuing)? Why do we have a liturgy? Some other churches believe that written prayers ought not to be used. Their ministers use only unwritten or extempore prayers.

Which of these two different ways of public worship is best?

We believe that it is far better to have written prayers than to have unwritten prayers, as long as the written prayers are Scriptural and of the highest standard, especially spiritually. We are not saying that without the Prayer Book it is impossible to worship God acceptably. But there are good reasons why written prayers from the Prayer Book are preferable.

First of all, extempore prayer makes the worshippers entirely dependent on the health and circumstances of the minister. He may not be well. He may be low in spirit because of his own difficulties and disappointments. If he prays extempore, his feelings colour his prayers. But this could not happen if he used prayers from the Prayer Book.

Secondly, extempore prayer makes the worshippers entirely dependent on the memory of the minister. He may forget to pray for many things which he ought to pray for. Memory can and does fail. But this could not happen if he used prayers from the Prayer Book.

Thirdly, extempore prayer makes the worshippers entirely dependent on the soundness of doctrine of the minister. Unknown to himself, he may be unbalanced in holding to the truths of the Bible. He could be adding to or taking

away from the doctrines of the Bible. If so, the people who listen to his praying are bound to suffer also. They are being led away from the Bible. But this could not happen if he used prayers from the Prayer Book.

Fourthly, extempore prayer makes it almost impossible for the worshippers to join in public worship. They do not know beforehand what the minister is going to pray for. They may sometimes not be able to agree with what the minister is praying. They may sometimes not understand what he is praying. But this could not happen if he used prayers from the Prayer Book.

Fifthly, extempore prayer after a time becomes as much a form as written prayer. In other words, over the months and years the minister makes up his own liturgy. He tends to use the same words and the same sentences week by week as he prays for the same subjects.

It is easy to say that the use of the Prayer Book is legal and formal. It is easy to say that extempore prayer is more spiritual. But in the end extempore prayers and written prayers are really not different from each other, except that written prayers are almost always of superior quality because they have been more carefully composed over a long period of time.

A few general remarks should be

made before leaving the subject of the reasons for using a liturgy in public worship. Firstly salvation does not depend either on the use of the Prayer Book or on the use of extempore prayer in worship. Each individual who worships Almighty God must be born again, repent of sin, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and live a holy life.

Secondly, as John Charles Ryle (Bishop of Liverpool, 1880-1900) says, If all men prayed always as some men do sometimes, there would be nothing better than extempore prayer. (Principles for Churchmen, Thoughts on the Prayer Book, page 206. London 1884). But all ministers do not have the same gifts. The question is, what type of worship is likely to be led by an average minister week by week and year by year that will profit worshippers the most? The answer must be prayers from the Prayer Book.

Thirdly, prayers from the Prayer Book can be spoilt if they are read badly. But if

they are read reverently, carefully and clearly, with the worshippers joining in it is a different matter. Written prayers from the Prayer Book may be read spiritually, by a minister who is spiritually alive, just as much as extempore prayers may be said formally.

The words of Bishop Ryle give us a fitting conclusion:- The church that has good, sound, Scriptural, fervent prayers, in my judgement does well. But the church that has a well composed well arranged Scriptural liturgy, in my judgement does far better. The way of forms in public worship is better than the way of extempore prayer (p.207, op. cit.).

(Based on the words of Bishop Ryle, rewritten by the Rev. B. G. Felce, formerly Vicar of All Saints, Preston).

Coming Events (DV)

Bishop David Samuel will visit the **Bristol Congregation** on Sunday 21 April 1996 when he will conduct a Communion Service at 11 am.

Bishop David Samuel will visit the **Wolverhampton Congregation** on Trinity Sunday 2 June 1996 for their second anniversary and will conduct a Communion Service at 4 pm.

The first **General Assembly** of the Church of England (Continuing) will be held at North Nibley Congregational Church, Gloucestershire, on Saturday the 29 June 1996. Plans include a business meeting, talks, picnic lunch at the Tyndale monument and a brief service of Evening Prayer.

Church of England (Continuing)

The Right Reverend Dr. David N. Samuel, M.A., Ph.D. *Presiding Bishop*

The Right Reverend Albion W. Knight, M.A., M.S. *Bishop*

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Churches

St. Mary's, Castle Street, Reading. The Rt. Rev. Dr. D. N. Samuel. Sunday Services 11 a.m. Morning Prayer (First Sunday, Lords Supper), 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (Third Sunday Lords Supper). Enquiries 01734 595131.

Former Congregation of St. John the Baptist with Mary-le-Port, Chapel of the Three Kings, Fosters Almshouses, top of Christmas Steps, Colston Street, Bristol 1. Sunday Service 11 a.m. Morning Prayer. Enquiries 01934 712520.

Nuffield Parish Church, Nuffield, near Henley-on-Thames, The Rev. J.F. Shearer. Sunday Services 11 a.m. Morning Prayer, 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Lords Supper 8 a.m. first Sunday, 6.30 p.m. third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8 p.m. Enquiries 01491 641305.

South London Congregation, St. Johns Ambulance Hall, Kingston Road (Opposite Palmerston Road), Wimbledon. The Rev. B. G. Felce and Mr. Andrew R. Price. Sunday Services 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer, 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Enquiries 0181 642 7885.

Wolverhampton Congregation. Bethany Chapel, Lower Prestwood Road, at junction with Blackwood Ave., Wednesfield. The Rev. E. Malcolm. Sunday Services 12.40 p.m. Morning Prayer, 4.00 p.m. Evening Prayer. Enquiries 01547-528815.

Treasurer

Mr. D. K. Mansell, 17, Greenfels Rise, Oakham, Dudley, DY2 7TP.

Journal

Any communications or enquiries in connection with this Journal should be addressed to the Secretary, Dr. Napier Malcolm, Kingswood House, Pilcorn Street, Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 4AW. Phone (01934) - 712520.

Constitution

1. Doctrine: The doctrine of the Church of England (Continuing) shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.

2. Worship: The worship of the Church of England (Continuing) shall be generally according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Authorised Version of the Bible shall be the only version used in the lectern and the pulpit and in public readings and expositions at all meetings of the Church of England (Continuing).

3. Ministry: The consecration and ordination of ministers shall be according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Church of England (Continuing) believes in the ministry of women according to Scripture which does not permit them to teach or exercise authority, particularly as bishops, priests, and deacons.

4. Discipline: The church shall be episcopally governed.

A general assembly shall be held not less than once a year consisting of the bishop and the ministers of the church and representatives of the local congregations to transact the business of the denomination and for mutual encouragement and edification.

5. Membership: New churches may apply for membership of the Church of England (Continuing) on the basis of their agreement with the doctrine, worship and discipline of that body. Membership of the local church shall be on the basis of baptism and confirmation and approval by the local presbyter.

Any matters incapable of resolution shall be referred to the Ordinary.

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