

The Journal
of
**The Church of England
(Continuing)**

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and today,
and forever. Heb. 13:8*



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THE CONTINUING CHURCH

(The Association of the Continuing Church Trust: Charity No. 1055010)

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From the Presiding Bishop David N. Samuel

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Dear Friends,

I am writing shortly after our Annual Assembly at North Nibley, and would like to thank those who helped with the arrangements for it, especially Dr. Napier Malcolm, Mrs. Ruth Malcolm and the friends from the Bristol Church, who provided tea for us all. It was a very happy and profitable day, and we were specially pleased to have two guest speakers, the Rev. Melvyn Jervis and Mr. Roger du Barry. We were reminded of the great spiritual need of our country, and of the duty of the church to be faithful to the Word of God. Luthers expression was, “the Word of God will do it.” We must have the same faith and confidence in the power of Gods Word today.

I hope, therefore, you will keep in mind the Day-Conference at St. Marys Castle Street, Reading, on Saturday October 9th, when we shall be seeking, by the grace of God, to address ourselves to this great question of the Mission of the Church in Britain today.

We are a small body with minute resources, but we must take courage from the fact that Paul spoke in similar terms of the early church. Read again the first few chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians and you will see what I mean. What could a few converted slaves and simple, ordinary people meeting in houses in Corinth do in that great and evil metropolis? Yes, but “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things which are.” But why does God choose to work in this extraordinary way? The answer is, “That no flesh should glory in his presence.” Let us not say that we are too small and weak to do anything. It is just such instruments that God chooses, and we must be ready to obey him.

Bishop Malcolm gave us a very challenging address in the afternoon at N. Nibley about the support of the ministry. I hope this will be made available*, and that we shall all ponder the great need to finance full-time ministers of the church, in order that the mission of the church

may be fulfilled.

A tract on the *Millenium*, published by the Church of England (Continuing), which is an address I gave to the United Protestant Council in the Spring, is available free from the Parsonage, 1, Downshire Square, Reading RG1 6NJ. Please send an A5 size stamped addressed envelope. Please use the tracts and pass them on to friends.

Yours in Christ.



David Samuel

**Copies are available from the Editor, 15, Bridge Street, Knighton, Powys LD7 1BT. SAE appreciated.*

THOUGHTS ON THE GENESIS OF THE EARTH (Continued)

By David N. Samuel

2. The Living World.

We continue the theme, God in Creation.

Immanuel Kant said that **creation is a limiting concept** i.e. something that both bounds and transcends human experience. We have experience of making things from existing materials, from wood, stone, metal, but we have no experience of something being created from nothing. This is an idea that we cannot understand, yet it is the concept of creation that is spoken of in Scripture, when we read, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. He called them into existence from nothing. Because we cannot comprehend this act of creation the Bible speaks of it under the form of symbols. 'God spake' and it was done. Yet we can be sure there is some special significance why the Bible associate speech and the act of creation *ex nihilo*.

Herbert Spencer, the philosopher, was fond of saying that it sounds very well to speak of the planets being launched on their way by

the finger of God until we ask what it means. But since we ourselves can create nothing in an absolute sense, it should not surprise us that the act of creation itself should be incomprehensible to us. Indeed, we should expect that the way God created the universe would be quite different from any method of making things that we ourselves are familiar with; and the figure of 'speech' would be quite appropriate here.

But though there is an element of mystery ultimately about the act of creation, it is something we must face, unless we take the view that matter and the universe are eternal. Some people have taken this view; it is a very ancient one. But then they are confronted with another mystery of a different kind, Why should there be something and not nothing? Sir James Jeans the astronomer said, 'Everything points with overwhelming force to a definite creation, at some time not infinitely remote.' This view appears to be confirmed by the 'big bang' theory of the universe put forward by Martin Ryle the Cambridge astronomer. According to this theory the universe came into existence at a definite time in the past. It has not always existed. It originated with a vast explosion which hurled matter into space; and the galaxies which are a product of that explosion still continue to recede into the outer limits of space at immense speed. But this again is speculation. We shall never know what that act of creation was, simply because creation *ex nihilo* is something beyond our understanding.

But here **we are concerned with the creation of life** - a fact as wonderful, mysterious and inscrutable as the creation of the universe itself. The great division of matter lies between the animate and the inanimate, the organic and the inorganic, that which is alive and that which is not. Organic simply means, made up of functional parts. Living matter is arranged in a particular way, and composed of parts that interact and relate to each other in purposive ways. Take the human body - the organism par excellence; the lungs supply the blood with oxygen, the heart pumps the blood round the body and to the brain, the brain in turn controls the conscious and unconscious functions of the organs the lungs and the heart. So what we have is a reciprocal relationship between the organs of a living body. There is a wholeness of the body which is the sum of the parts. St. Paul points this out as a lesson for the church if one member of the body suffers all the members suffer, because the function of all is impaired. There is an interdependence of all the parts in an organism, which has always impressed the reflective mind.

Thus the nearest thing to an organism is a machine, because a machine too is made up of many different parts all of which are interde-

pendent. Anybody looking at a watch can see that its parts are arranged for a particular purpose, and that it has been designed to serve a particular end, even if the person inspecting it doesn't know what that end is. Similarly, when we look at an organism we can see that the co-ordination and arrangement of all its parts seem to have a purpose and serve a particular end, viz., the efficiency and well-being of the individual.

At one time men were content to regard this organisation of living beings as the special stamp or mark of the Creator upon his creation. As a watch must necessarily have a designer, because all the parts could not fit together by mere accident - it is beyond the bounds of probability - so it was considered that the organisation of living beings could not be explained by chance, or simply mechanically. It must therefore be the product of an intelligent Being, and that being was God. This understanding of things certainly made God seem very near his creation, for in viewing the living world in particular we are viewing the works of God for which he was directly responsible. Every specific organism was a miracle of the creative purpose of Almighty God.

In 1859, however, Chas. Darwin published his *Origin of Species* which brought about a profound revolution in thinking about the living world. The organisation of living creatures he attributed not to special creation, but to development from some primitive form of life. This development had come about by small variations taking place in successive generations, and these small variations were utilised by natural selection into the struggle for existence, so as to change the form and structure of the organism. These variations, Darwin insisted, were *accidental*, there was no plan or purpose in them; they were thrown up by chance, and natural selection, (contrary to the picture that is sometimes suggested of nature carefully selecting the best of its creatures) is *blind*. Darwin's theory of the origin of species by chance variation through natural selection is, therefore, non-purposive and a denial of design in creation. Darwin was very concerned, like Lyell before him, to exclude God and the miraculous from his system*.

It is important we recognise this, because of the implications it carries with it in so many spheres of thought. By its very nature it introduces agnosticism and atheism, and the belief that human life is a-moral

* "*His main object in the Origin of Species was to establish a solution of the species problem that would render superfluous any reference to supernatural causes in their production*", wrote A. Ellegård. Darwin himself states, "*I would give absolutely nothing for the theory of Natural Selection if it requires miraculous additions at any stage of descent.*"

and purposeless, and that might is right. From Nietzsche to Hitler we can trace the influence of Darwinism upon political and moral ideas. It was the official creed of all communist countries, and communist scientists were required to accept it as an article of faith.

This was a very great revolution in thought. **What very briefly were the arguments that were thought to support it?**

1st The Argument from MORPHOLOGY or Comparative Anatomy.

It had been known for a very long while before Darwin that the apparent dissimilarity of the structure of the hand of man, the wing of a bat, the paddle of a turtle and the fore-foot of a frog concealed an anatomical similarity. When the fleshly covering is removed we find beneath a remarkable uniformity of structure; though the bones vary in size their comparative arrangement is similar. This, Darwin argued, (and others since) is proof of descent from a common ancestor. But it is, in fact, only a proof as such to the mind that wishes to see it in this way. It could equally well be employed as an argument for the unity of the Divine Mind that created all things. Unity of plan suggests unity of mind.

Take, for example, the colleges of Oxford or Cambridge. A visitor going round them will notice a remarkable similarity of structure and plan. Each has a library, a quadrangle, a dining hall, corridors with small rooms on either side, a chapel and so on. The pattern is repeated with perhaps slight variations. But this is reasonably interpreted as being indicative of a plan and design on the part of the architect rather than chance development. Similarity of plan is also dictated to a large extent by similarity of function. All the colleges are used for similar purposes, therefore they follow a similar plan. Likewise, all animals on this planet have similar physiological functions, because they share the same environment; they breathe the same air, drink the same kind of water, live upon the same earth. It is but reasonable to suppose that a wise Creator would have constructed them all on a similar pattern, allowing modifications wherever necessary.

2nd The Argument from EMBRYOLOGY.

This was a very important part of the argument for Darwin, in fact, he regarded it as the most important of all. "Embryology is to me," he wrote to Asa Gray in 1860, "by far the strongest single class of facts in favour of change of forms." But Darwin was himself far from being an embryologist.

Again, it had been known for a long time before Darwin that the human foetus in the course of its development passes through several

stages that are reminiscent of those of other creatures. Thus the fertilised human egg appears to pass through a many-celled stage, comparable to a protozoan colony, a fish stage, a reptile stage, a monkey or chimpanzee stage, till it finds its complete fulfilment in the highest form man. In other words, it was claimed the embryological development of man is nothing but a moving picture of 500 million years of human history: or ontogeny (life history of the individual) is a recapitulation of phylogony (racial history).

Von Baër, the greatest embryologist of Darwin's day, did not support these conclusions, and continued to dispute their validity throughout his life. He wrote, "It has been concluded by a bold generalisation from a few analogies that the higher animals run in the course of their development through the lower animal grades, and, sometimes tacitly and sometimes expressly, they have been supposed to take their way through all forms. We hold this to be not only untrue but also impossible." (*Forerunners of Darwin* p. 301).

Darwin was well aware of the scientific weakness of the argument, but nevertheless hoped that it might be true, and eventually convinced himself that it must be true. After Darwin the argument was taken up by Haeckel who declared it to be a law of biological development. But since the turn of the century its scientific standing has been seriously questioned, "There is a strong suspicion that the embryological record has somehow failed," says Prof. E.B. Wilson, Dean of American Embryologists, "and there are even some embryologists who seem to be almost ready to abandon the recapitulation theory."

Again we see that it is a matter of the assumptions you start with. The facts of embryology do not prove evolution; it cannot be deduced from them. It is rather a matter of fitting the facts into the theory. Except that here the facts have proved difficult to reconcile with the theory. Prof. Adam Sedgwick put it like this, "In the first place it must be noted that the recapitulation theory is itself a deduction from the theory of evolution ... the facts as we know them lend no support to the theory."

3rd The Argument from PALAEONTOLOGY.

We have examined this already, I shall therefore only summarise the main points. If there were such development as Darwin envisaged, of all living forms from one original form, then we might expect to find this development in the fossil record. The record, however, is not complete. The missing links are still missing. Life appears suddenly, not gradually, in what are supposed to be the oldest fossil bearing rocks, and moreover

it arises not in simple but in complex forms with all the different invertebrate forms clearly distinguished.

On what then does evolution rest? It rests upon theory not upon fact. As Hugh Miller said over a hundred years ago, first you take your theory or hypothesis, and then you take your facts and fit them into the hypothesis, but it is not the other way about. Evolution is not deduced from any incontrovertible facts, as such. “Give me your facts,” said the Frenchman, “that I may accommodate them to my theory.” The history of ideas shows that the evolutionary hypothesis existed before the facts of geology, palaeontology, embryology, or any of the ologies. It is as old as human thought, and what we see in the development of the 19th century is the accommodation of the facts to the theory, but not the induction of the theory from the facts.

Let us now turn from speculation to Scripture, and see what the Bible has to say about the creation of living things. Read Genesis, chapter 1.

There is one very important expression used here that requires comment, that is the word ‘kind’. “The living creature after his kind” ... “the fruit tree after his kind” ... “the winged fowl after his kind.” Had this concept of ‘kind’ been adhered to, the confusion that arose over species and development might have been avoided. Kind is somewhat broader and looser in its meaning than species.

Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist of the 18th century, was the great classifier of species. In his enthusiasm for defining species every small difference and variation became grounds for naming a new plant or animal. His students subscribed a portrait of him under which they wrote, “What God made Linnaeus described.” The implication was that all the species that Linnaeus described and distinguished were made by God in that specific form at the beginning of creation. This view was generally prevalent in the early part of the 19th century, but the Bible says nothing of the sort. It does not speak of the fixity of species in this way.

It is not surprising that Darwin was amazed to find, when he began to breed pigeons, that by selective breeding many kinds of birds could be produced, which in a wild state would be regarded as distinct species. He came to the conclusion, rightly, that all pigeons had descended from the wild rock pigeon, and had not been separately created at the beginning. This to Darwin was a revolutionary idea and seemed to overthrow the stability of species. It did indeed, as established by Linnaeus; but it was not at all at variance with the concept of ‘kind’ in the Bible

which is much broader. The illicit conclusion Darwin came to was that you could extend this idea to embrace all living forms and explain the descent of all animals and plants from one common ancestor. This was and still is unfounded speculation.

What we do indeed see within nature is a certain flexibility or capacity for variation within a particular 'kind.' But to that variation there appears to be definite limits. Take, for example, the dog 'kind' or the cabbage 'kind.' There you have variations, but within limits. This kind of development which we call micro-evolution is perfectly compatible with the Biblical account of Creation. But it is not macro-evolution, which argues the development of all kinds from one. Experiments in genetics tend to confirm this limited variation within a 'kind'.

The examples that have been so often produced by the evolutionist in the past as proof of evolution are, as facts, not at all incompatible with the Biblical understanding. The moths that became spotted during the industrial revolution, the small changes observed in the fruitfly *Drosophila* due to environmental changes - this is only a variation within the created 'kind' as recorded in the Bible.

This means that man and all the kinds of animals in the world, and plants too, were created by God and designed for a particular purpose. This understanding preserves man's moral and spiritual status and place in nature. He is answerable to his Maker. This is not the accidental production of natural selection and chance variation.

We should not forget the fabrication of evidence in the past by evolutionists to try to prove man's descent from animals. The notorious case of Piltdown Man, which deceived the public for over forty years and was a prime exhibit in our museums, should serve to remind us of that. Prof. W.R. Thompson said, "The success of Darwinism was accompanied by a decline in scientific integrity."

The view that man was specially created, and that each 'kind' of organism was created to propagate after its kind and no other, also serves to underline a spiritual truth. As the ourang outang cannot develop into a man in the course of the centuries, and each kind must give birth to its own kind and no other, so, as our Saviour said, there is a profound difference between the natural and the spiritual. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Simply because we are born into this world, it does not follow that we inherit the kingdom of heaven and that which is spiritual. That requires, as Jesus said, a new birth, after

its own kind, from above, of the Spirit of God. "Ye must be born again." That is the great requirement, and we find it to be a truth which is faithfully reflected and borne out by the living world which God has created, each after its own kind. The record of the book of nature reinforces the teaching of the Divine word, showing that God is One and His truth is one.

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THE PRAYER BOOK AND THE LAW

By Roger du Barry

Biblical law has fallen into disrepute, of this there can be no doubt. Whether this is a reflection on the law or modern society is another matter entirely. We live in an age like that of the Judges, in which every man does what is right in his own eyes. Israel fell into this habit because they had no king, and the same reason surely applies to us today.

However, God the Father has appointed Jesus of Nazareth as Christ and Lord, the King of Israel, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He has been seated on the throne of His father David according to the ancient promise made to the fathers¹, and He is waging war upon the peoples of the earth until every enemy has been subdued, every tongue confesses His Lordship, and every knee bows before His throne. Jesus is God's appointed king, and the Most High commands the rulers and the nations of the earth to be reconciled to Him, or be smashed like pottery by His iron sceptre.

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and

1 - Acts 2:30

the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him .²

These texts are not to be spiritualised or abstracted into an allegorical rule. Jesus is the present King and Ruler of the earth, although He is temporarily in a far country to receive the kingdom for Himself.³ This sovereignty will be revealed in its fullness when He returns to establish His never ending kingdom here on the renewed earth, 'world without end.' At that time He will judge the living and the dead in His capacity as chief executive under God, and everyone will stand before Him in the body to give an account of their lives. This is a fundamental axiom of the gospel.

The point to be grasped from all this of is that there is only one standard of judgement recognised by Him, and that is the Torah, the ancient law of Israel. The laws of the church and of men are irrelevant in this final accounting. Every king rules according to a law, and the law of the kingdom now as always, is the law of Moses. This means that the law is not only the standard of judgement on the day of the Lord, but the rule for life in the present age. Those who call themselves His subjects can demonstrate their loyalty to Him only by obeying Him. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

This may come as a tremendous surprise to many who call themselves faithful Christians, because they may have been taught all their lives that that the gospel is 'law free.' After all, someone will say, we are under grace and not under the law. It is true that we believers are no longer under the condemnation and power of the law, having been justified by His death and raised with Him through union into His life, but we are very much still under an obligation to live according to the law of God. Indeed, it is only those who are filled and led by the Spirit of God who are able to keep the law.⁴ Looking at it from another angle, the purpose of the New Covenant is to cause Gods people to have a new heart and mind, so that we will walk in His law.

2 - *Psalm 2:8-12*

3 - *Luke 19:12ff*

4 - *Romans 8:7*

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.

As far as we are concerned, the law is not a requirement of justification, but God still demands that the law be satisfied as a condition of salvation. What we were unable to do, therefore, God Himself has done by offering Jesus Christ on the cross as a full, perfect and sufficient satisfaction for our sins. This is basic Christianity, and is understood by most. The point of mentioning these things is to point out that the law is at the heart of our salvation by grace, and that apart from it there can be no redemption. The gospel is apart from the law, but is not without it.

The satisfaction of the law is the basis of our acceptance, and justification is achieved by the judicial act of carrying out the curse of the law upon Jesus. This covenantal understanding of justification is unique to the Reformed faith, as can be seen in the fact of its rejection by the Arminian, liberal and Roman Catholic theologians. They deny the satisfaction of the law as the efficient cause of the remission of sins. The best they can do is to say that Christs obedience and satisfaction on the cross create a situation in which our acceptance by God becomes possible, but ultimately dependent on some act of ours. The Arminian adds freewill, and the Roman adds sacraments, good deeds and submission to the Pope. The liberal is more confused, and may even deny that a loving God requires any kind of punishment to meet the demands of justice.

Thomas Cranmer was a fully Reformed man, and he understood the relationship between law and grace better than most. This insight is woven into the fabric of the various services, and they cannot be properly understood apart from it. What follows is a representative selection from the Prayer Book to illustrate the place of the law in worship.

Morning and Evening Prayer

Morning and Evening Prayer begin with scripture sentences that emphasise the law of God, and the fact of our disobedience.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him: neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, *to walk in his laws which he set before us.* (Italics mine) Dan. 9. 9,10.

These are followed by an exhortation to confess our sins, “to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same.” Sin is of course another word for lawbreaking.

Dearly beloved brethren, the scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart.⁵

The confession that follows sets it out in more detail.

We have offended against thy holy laws. (Italics mine). We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.⁶

We beseech God to have mercy upon us, and then we ask Him for grace to live a godly, righteous and sober life. What can this mean except that we are asking for power to live according to the law?

The assurance of forgiveness addressed to those who truly repent of their sins includes a command to ask God for the Holy Spirit, to enable us to please God now and in the future, being pure and holy, without which we will not enter into His eternal joy. We can only please God by trusting Him for justification and resurrection in the last day, and we demonstrate the reality of this faith by walking in His law.

The Litany

The Litany is a plea to God to overlook our many sins, and to have mercy upon us. If God were indifferent to our observance of His law, this liturgy would be pointless.

O holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, Three Persons and one God: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.⁷

The Communion

The Communion starts with the Lords Prayer, followed by the collect.
Then shall the priest, turning to the people, rehearse distinctly the

5 - BCP p 2

6 - BCP p 3

7 - BCP p 31

TEN COMMANDMENTS (Upper case in the PB): *and the people still kneeling after every Commandment ask Gods mercy for their transgressions thereof for the time past, and grace to keep the same for time to come.*⁸

The Ten Commandments is a summary of the Mosaic Covenant that was written on the tables of stone by the LORDS own hand, and kept in the Ark of the Covenant. “Each tablet contained the full text, one tablet belonged to Israel and the other to God, so that both parties to the covenant had a copy of the legislation.”⁹ It is traditional in the Church of England to have the Ten Commandments in a prominent place on the walls of the church building, along with the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. Many churches place them near the table, thus connecting them to the proper celebration of the Supper, in the true spirit of the BCP.

Craigie’s understanding of the law deserves notice:

The commandments must be interpreted initially within the context of the Sinai Covenant, which was in effect the constitution of the state in process of formation during the time of Moses and his successor Joshua. Because God was the one who enabled Israel to move toward statehood, as a consequence of his liberating the chosen people from slavery in Egypt, he was also to be Israels true king. As such, he had the authority to establish Israel’s law, as is made clear in the preface to the commandments. Thus, the commandments were initially part of a constitution and served as the state law of the emerging nation of Israel.

The fundamental principle upon which the constitution was established was *love*. God had chosen his people and freed them from slavery only because he loved them. In turn, he had one fundamental requirement of Israel, that they love God with the totality of their being.¹⁰

The Christian church is the true Israel of God, and the only heir of the covenants. We are the chosen people, and the heirs of the kingdom, and as such, we are under the rule of the King of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of David. Those things which were specific to the Jews and the land of Canaan have been abolished, but the body of the law, as law, remains in full force. One has only to read chapter upon chapter of commands in

8 - BCP p 237

9 - *The Ten Commandments, Evan. Dict. of Theol. P. C. Craigie, p 1074*

10 - *Craigie, Elwells Dictionary of Theology, p 1074*

the New Testament to see we are not free to choose our own ethical paths, or interpret the law in a way that is contrary to the Scriptures.

Parliament would do well to take note. The church as a legal entity must also be governed by this law in every area, or forfeit the right to be a church at all. Every church necessarily makes laws for its government, but if their laws are contrary to the Royal Law, they are in open rebellion against their Lord. Law must be God's law, or it is lawless. And lawless Christianity is a contradiction in terms.

The law of God forbids women to take authority over men, because it is an inversion of the order of creation. It is for this reason that women may not become priests or presbyters. The accusations of sexism, misogyny, and patriarchy, must make way for the will of God. That is the end of the matter.

Public Baptism of Infants and the Catechism

During the baptism, after the sureties have confirmed the Apostles Creed, the minister says:

Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

The sureties then say on behalf of the child:

I will.

The reason that the service should be held on a Sunday is that as many people as possible can witness the ceremony, and thereby put "in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his baptism."¹¹ All present are thus reminded of the laws of God, and their promise to live according to them.

In the Catechism, the catechist says to the confirmation candidate:

You said that your Godfathers and Godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's commandments. Tell me how many there be?

Answer. Ten.

Question. Which be they?

Then follows the rehearsal of the Ten Commandments, and an explanation of the same. This shows that the knowledge and understanding of the Ten Commandments is both essential and basic in the Christian life. After this, the Catechist reminds the child that it is impossible to keep the

¹¹ - BCP p 263

law without special grace from God, thus inhibiting any idea of the possibility of salvation by them:

My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer. Let me hear therefore if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is therefore understood to be an appeal to God for grace to live according to the law, amongst other things.

The Churching of Women

The law of Moses required a woman to keep apart from the community for forty days after childbirth, after which time she was to make an offering to God in thanksgiving. The Churching of Women, whilst not obligatory, is a relic of this godly, ancient legal custom.

A Commination

This is "a denouncing of God's anger and judgement against sinners." It reads out the "sentences of God's cursing against impenitent sinners" taken from Deuteronomy twenty-seven, and other places of Scripture.

What is fascinating is the understanding of the PB that the Old Testament curses are applicable to all those who refuse to repent and turn towards God, just as if we were living in the time of Moses. This is correct of course, but completely out of step with the current consensus that avoids divine wrath as theologically suspect. There are many ministers who deliberately avoid all mention of sin and judgement, because they are held to be off-putting and alienating. I am informed that the Alpha Course takes a similar line.

The truth is that all who do not put their trust in Jesus remain under the curse of the law, which is death. This Old Testament reality was confirmed by Jesus in conversation with Nicodemus when he said:

He that believeth not is condemned already,¹² because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.¹³

12 - emphasis mine

13 - See John 3:16ff

Everyone who has not come to Jesus by faith is already condemned, because in refusing to come, they refuse to receive the remission of sins and eternal life.

The purpose of the Commination is to make men aware of “the great indignation of God against sinners,” and to move people to earnest and true repentance. The people in the course of the service will affirm with their own mouths that the curse of God is due to sinners, just as Israel did in the wilderness.

Cursed is the man who maketh any carved or molten image, to worship it.

And the people shall answer and say

Amen.

Minister. Cursed is he that curseth father or mother

Answer. Amen. (etc) ¹⁴

In keeping with the doctrine of human inability and divine sovereignty, the people ask God to turn them truly, so that they may be enabled to keep the law:

Turn us, O good Lord, and so we shall be turned.¹⁵

The Law in Liturgical Worship

We are ignorant, and ungodly by nature, and we often presume too much in the things we say in public worship, and in the way we say them. The BCP helps us to approach God in the correct way of putting the right words into our mouths, and in teaching us the correct attitude to adopt before his face. This is not to say that non-liturgical services are necessarily ungodly, but it is true that too often they suffer from poverty of expression, and an over-familiar and inappropriate manner.

In saying and hearing the decrees and precepts of God, we are moved to adopt a godly and reverent attitude, to turn away from sin, and commit ourselves to pleasing him through the diligent keeping of the law. The liturgical public worship of God therefore teaches us the right way to speak to him, to help us to understand his nature and requirements better, and it moves our hearts to a warm and lively faith and repentance.

¹⁴ - BCP p 339

¹⁵ - BCP p 346

Conclusion

There are many issues that spring to mind when dealing with the law, but the purpose of this piece is to show that the law of God, understood as the biblical law of Moses, has a central and vital place in true theology, and its expression in public worship. From the beginning man had to demonstrate his allegiance to God in keeping His decrees. The principle of law was enshrined in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the Garden of Eden it was made clear to Adam that obedience was the road to bodily immortality. He sinned, and brought death to himself and to the whole creation. This was written to teach us that obedience-and-life are an inextricable pair, as are sin-and-death.

The rest of the Bible sets out this fact in ever increasing detail. The only way to survive in this world, and to prosper in it, is by submission to Gods precepts. The Israelites could only live in the land as long as they obeyed, or the earth itself would vomit them out.¹⁶ When God had had enough of their rebellion, he destroyed them and sent the remnant into exile from himself and from the land. Their return to Canaan likewise depended upon their continued repentance. However they rejected and killed the King whom God had appointed to be their ruler, and so God brought a final end to the nation of Israel when Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

However, the final restoration and return from exile still awaits both Jew and Gentile those who have come to Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and resurrection on the last day of the age. At that time everyone who believes will enter into a renewed promised land, which is the new heaven and earth, the home of righteousness.¹⁷

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.¹⁸

He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.¹⁹

16 - Lev. 20:22

17 - 2 Peter 3:13

18 - Rev 22:14, 15

19 - Rev 22:20, 21

REVERSING THE FALL?

By Edward J. Malcolm

We have been hearing a lot about Genetically Modified foods (GM Foods) of late. There are those who say that such foods will bring great benefits, while others say that there is a danger of introducing some potentially very dangerous problem into the food-chain. Some say the whole project should be abandoned, while others say there needs to be extensive testing before any decisions are made. It has been stated that testing itself could be a danger, in that GM seeds would inevitably contaminate neighbouring fields, and so there would no longer be non-GM seed anywhere. Clearly the argument is far from over.

However, behind this debate lies a philosophical one. It is the ongoing debate of evolution versus creation. An individual who holds that we have become what we are as a result of evolution, will have no problem philosophically in accepting the concept of GM foods. After all, since man is the highest expression of evolutionary advancement, surely he has the right (and now the ability) to change anything around him to suit his own needs and desires.

On the other hand, anyone who believes that God made the world, as recorded in the first chapters of Genesis, will know that all things came into being in obedience to the command of God, for God said, let there be...and there was. At the end of the six days of creation God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. (Gen 1:31). Some have tried to explain this as meaning 'very suited to the purpose intended for it', but that is unsupportable from the language. Since all the created order came into being through the spoken word of God's command, and since it was all very good in His sight, we have to accept that it was exactly as He intended. Therefore we cannot accept that man has any right, even if he does now possess the ability, to alter what God has done. Those who believe in creation by God cannot agree with plans to modify the genetic structure of foods.

But what lies behind the desire to modify in this way? We are told by supporters of GM foods that we shall see great benefits. It will be possible to manufacture a peanut that produces no allergic reaction. We shall have foods that stay 'fresher' much longer. Various grains could be made to be drought and disease resistant, thereby improving the harvest in parts

of Asia and Africa. Life will be better for many millions of people as a direct result of GM foods.

And herein lies a big problem for Christians. When God made the world He saw that it was very good. When He made man He gave him the fruit of every tree in the garden to eat, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen 2:17). We know that Eve allowed herself to be beguiled by the serpent, and she took and ate, and gave to her husband, and he did eat. In that moment the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they were ashamed. The result was that they were cast out of the garden, out of God's presence. Adam would no longer tend the garden, but would instead would eat the herb of field, in the seat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. (Gen 3:19). The ground became cursed for man's sake, 3:17, so that it would not naturally bring forth the things he needed, and so he would have to work to clear and tend the ground, ploughing, sowing, reaping, and threshing. We know further that sickness and death are all results of the Fall, and that the whole of creation groans as a result of it. So, when scientists come along and tell us that it is now possible to make seed from which we can grow foods resistant to blights and drought, and when we are told that this seed could be very productive, and that some of the side-effects suffered by some people could be done away with, are we not seeing an attempt to reverse the consequences of the Fall? All that man has suffered in the physical realm seems to be solved by GM foods. Man has conquered God, is the apparent claim of such an idea.

But if this is true, then only some of the physical aspects have been touched. Who has cured death? And who has made us right again with God?

ORDINATIONS IN THE CONTINUING CHURCH

By John Dearing

St Mary's Castle Street, Reading, which has been closed for essential repairs for several months, was especially reopened on Sunday 18th July (Trinity 7) for a Service of Ordination to the ministry of the Church of

England (Continuing). Although several pews were out of bounds a sizeable congregation was somehow accommodated. The ordinations were made by the Presiding Bishop, the Rt. Revd. Dr David Samuel, and the Assistant Bishop, Rt. Revd. Edward Malcolm. The Revd Fen Robson from Abingdon also took part in the service.

Mr Ian Budgen, who was ordained Deacon, hails from Cuckfield in West Sussex, and came to a saving faith in Christ in 1980, while attending University College, Swansea (Abertawe). He worked as a volunteer for a year with the London City Mission and after a period in industry moved to Wolverhampton, where he worked as a Maths teacher and worshipped at St Lukes. Following his ordination, Mr Budgen will serve as Honorary Curate to Bishop Malcolm at St Silas, Wolverhampton, continuing his teaching work in the meantime.

Mr Edward John Malcolm, who was made a Deacon in June last year, was ordained to the priesthood (presbyterate). He will continue to serve as Assistant Curate at St Marys, Castle Street. Educated at the French school in Morocco and at Monkton Combe, he was converted at the age of 14 during a Childrens' Mission in Birmingham. He came to Reading in 1987 to work in the printing industry and began to worship at St Mary's, Castle Street, where his uncle, the late Revd. Allan Bowhill was then Minister.

The sermon was delivered by his father, the Rt Revd. Edward Malcolm, on John 5. 35: 'He [John the Baptist] was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' He spoke of the present dire state of the nation and ascribed this largely to the failure of the churches to preach Blood Atonement. Even though pagans from both primitive and sophisticated societies recognised the principle that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sins, modern man in his enlightenment had largely rejected these truths. The two young men ordained today were being sent out essentially to preach the message that the Father had sent his sinless Son into the world as an atonement for sin. In words addressed especially to the candidates he reminded them that, just as John the Baptist was set apart to prepare the way for Jesus, they also were set apart to prepare the way for his Second Coming. They needed to read the Scriptures diligently and to ensure that their conduct of life and management of their family was such that nobody could point the finger at them.

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Please send the names and addresses of anyone to whom you would like the Journal sent. It is free, but donations are welcomed. Would you also please say if the Journal is no longer required.

CONSTITUTION

- 1 **Doctrine:** The doctrine of the Continuing Church shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.
- 2 **Worship:** The worship of the Continuing Church 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 Continuing Church.

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