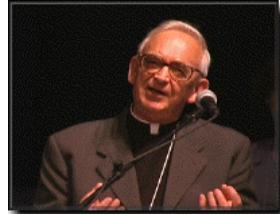


love redeems us by effecting what it does. Love shares flesh and blood with us in this present world, that the eyes which look us through at last may find in us a better substance than our vanity.” (*Crown of the Year*, Advent II)

Originally presented by Dr. Robert Crouse for the Prayer Book Society of Canada, Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island Branch Advent 2002 Institute, held at St. George’s Round Church, November 30, 2002.

The Rev’d Dr. Robert Crouse is Professor Emeritus of Classics at Dalhousie University and King’s College in Halifax. A widely renowned theologian, speaker and preacher, he is also a terrific gardener, a wonderful cook and musician. He lives out his retirement in Crousetown, Nova Scotia, in between the many lectures and seminars he gives around the world. The Honourary Chairman of the Prayer Book Society of Canada for many years



Father Crouse’s mind, heart and presence are so very important to the Prayer Book Society of Canada. A faithful priest and pastor, he remains firm and yet charitable in the midst of the various tempests within the Church.

Prayer Book Institute

November 27, 2004

Genesis & Exodus:

The Advent of the Religion of Israel

led by Dr. Gary McGonagill
Assistant Professor of Classics, Dalhousie University
at St. George’s Round Church, Halifax
10:30 a.m. Holy Communion
11:10 a.m. First Address
12 noon Brown Bag Lunch
1 p.m. Second Address
2 p.m. Concludes

RETREAT February 25 – 27, 2005

Bethany Centre, Antigonish, NS

“The Tabernacle:

**An Allegory of the Soul Redeemed
by Christ”**

Led by
The Rev. David Phillips,
Rector of the Parishes of Petite Riviere and
New Dublin

*For details and Registration contact
Lynn Edmonds at 827-3830; or email
lynnedmonds@accesscable.net*

Cost: \$100. (includes 2 nights’ accommodation &
meals Sat & Sunday)

The NS/PEI Branch of the Prayer Book Society needs your continuing support

All our projects....the printing and postage for the Newsletter, the Prayer Book Institutes, our support for the Atlantic Theological Conference, the Retreats, and our encouragement of both clergy and students committed to Prayer Book worship.... Please help. And remember, receipts for income tax returns will be issued as soon as possible.

THANK YOU!

It is important that we keep in touch Please send us your new postal or e-mail address, or phone number. Know someone we should add to our list? Let us know. See front panel for specifics on how to contact us.



The Prayer Book Society of Canada
Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Branch
PO Box 8292 C.S.C., Halifax, NS B3K 5M1

National Webpage: www.prayerbook.ca

Branch page: www.stpeter.org/pbs.html

Phone c/o Marie Gibson: 835-8210

E-mail c/o Jan Connors: jconnors@hfx.eastlink.ca

ADVENT 2004

Advent Meditations

By Dr. Robert Crouse



Anglican spirituality is essentially liturgical: it is a way of spiritual life founded in worship and fulfilled in worship; a spiritual life shaped by the word of God mediated to us in the cycles of the liturgical year. It is that liturgical pattern of proclaiming the Word of God, day by day, week by week, year by year, which has shaped the mind and heart of Anglican Christianity. And that pattern has remained substantially unchanged for more than a millennium, up until our own generation.

If you consider, for instance, the selection of Epistle and Gospel lessons for the Sundays in Advent, as they appear in the Book of Common Prayer, you will find that they are precisely those appointed in the Sarum Missal of the medieval Church of England, and are in fact the same as those prescribed in the *Comes of St Jerome*, which goes back to the Fifth Century. The only change has been Archbishop Cramner’s addition, in 1549, of a few verses to the beginning of the Epistle lesson and the end of the Gospel lesson for the first Sunday in Advent. Apart from the slight lengthening of those two lessons, the Advent lectionary remains unchanged since early Christian times.

What we have in that series is not a random selection of readings, but a coherent series of texts, in which Epistle and Gospel lessons interpret and supplement each other, and in which there is a continuous, logical development of teachings from one week to the next. Each set of texts builds upon the thought of the preceding set, and points ahead to the one that follows.

Our Anglican Reformers saw no need to alter that ancient pattern; they insisted only that it be better understood by all the faithful: read, marked, learned and inwardly digested; that it be more deeply understood and more perfectly obeyed, that by patience and comfort of God's Holy Word, we might all embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope which is ours in Christ Jesus. Anglican spiritual nurture is basically a matter of hearing that proclamation, following that pattern, year after year, understanding perhaps a bit more each time, and each time conforming our lives a bit more closely to its truth.

Because our spiritual life is basically liturgical, because it is formed and shaped and sustained by that pattern of proclamation of God's Word, it makes little sense, I think, to try to consider it abstractly, as though spiritual life were an activity somehow off by itself. The problem is rather to see and understand the spiritual dimensions of the Church's liturgical proclamation week by week, and season by season, throughout the year. And therefore, as we prepare for Advent (as we prepare, that is to say, for preparation!), it seems to me that our best course is to try to prepare ourselves to understand more deeply the spiritual dimensions of the Advent lessons.

The Advent season is multi-dimensional. It looks backward in time to the coming of the Son of God as the Infant of Bethlehem two thousand years ago; it looks forward to the end of time, to the consummation of history in the coming of the Son of God as Judge. But there is yet another dimension of the most vital importance for our spiritual life: Advent is about God's coming now, and our Advent lessons encourage our hope and expectation of his presence in our life here and now.

St. Thomas Aquinas, in the Prologue of his commentary on Isaiah, speaks of these three dimensions of Advent: the coming of the Son of God *in carne*: in the flesh, historically; his coming *in mente*: in our souls, now by grace; and *ad iudicium*: at the judgement, at the end and as the end of history. Paramount in our Advent lessons is that second dimension: Christ's Advent *in mente*, the present coming of the Word of God in our souls by grace. If you were to look at the lessons from that standpoint, you would notice how in each case the Epistle lesson underlines the present reference of the Gospel lesson.

This point can be illustrated with reference to the lessons for the First Sunday in Advent. The Gospel lesson recounts as historical incident the coming of Jesus to Jerusalem and his cleansing of the Temple. But the historical reference is broader than that: the Kingdom of Israel is God's city and his Temple; he comes to claim the throne of David,

and his coming is a judgment upon that Temple, both immediately and ultimately. Thus the Gospel speaks of Christ's Advent *in carne* and *ad iudicium*. But on another level, the Temple of God's presence in the human soul, and Christ, the Word of God, comes to the soul to awaken it from its futile dreams and purify its desire. It is that dimension of the Gospel lesson that the Epistle lesson draws out: "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep." The Word of God approaches, "the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. This, you see, is Christ's Advent *in mente*."

I suggest we consider the themes of the four Advent Sundays in a three-dimensional way. The themes are there:

- I. *The Awakening and Cleansing of the Soul*
Gospel: Mtt. 21.1: Jesus arouses Jerusalem and Cleanses the Temple
Epistle: Rom. 13.8: The Soul (God's Temple) is to be awakened and cleansed of works of darkness, and armed with light.
- II. *The Passing World and the Enduring Word*
Gospel: Lk. 21.25: Heaven and earth pass away, but the Word of God endures.
Epistle: Rom. 15.4: The Word of God in the believing soul is the ground of patience, comfort and hope.
- III. *Witnessing to the Word, in Hope*
Gospel: Mtt. 11.2: John the Baptist in prison, the prophetic messenger.
Epistle: 1 Cor. 4.1: The Christian soul as faithful steward of the revealed mysteries.
- IV. *Recognition of the Word and Rejoicing in His Coming*
Gospel: John 1.19: Behold the Lamb of God.
Epistle: Phil. 4.4: Rejoicing, thanksgiving and peace in heart and mind.

Advent is the proclamation of God's three-fold coming: *in carne*, *in mente* and *ad iudicium*. And notice how those three dimensions are connected: Christ's coming in the flesh, historically, and his atoning work, is the basis of his coming to our souls in grace; and his coming in judgement is nothing other than the summation of all his comings in grace and what we have made of them. "This is the judgement, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light..." (Jn. 3.19) And so this season urges us to wake up, to cast off darkness and clothe ourselves in light.

As Austin Farrer puts it, "Advent brings Christmas, judgement runs out into mercy. For the God who saves us and the God who judges us is one God...what judges us is what redeems us, the love of God...But while love thus judges us by being what it is, the same