

Lancelot Andrewes
and
CREATION

By Dr. Marianne Dorman

*O Lord how wonderful are thy works in all the world,
in wisdom hast thou made them all.*¹

MOST CHRISTIANS are familiar with St. Francis' love and praise of God in His creation, yet Lancelot Andrewes in his lectures on the first chapter of Genesis manifests a similar rapture and enchantment of this cosmos. Out of "the rude masse" the Trinitarian God filled the earth with all kinds of birds, fishes, herbs and grasses, and in the heavens He made the "two great lights the Sunne and the Moon, which are as a great fire, and the starrs as little sparkles: as two great torches, and as many little wax candles."² Although the stars are a guide to mariners at night, and for the husbandman "to sow and reap in season", and for the beasts to retire, they are essentially "heavenly roses" in the "garden" of heaven.³

The word *creavit* is used three times in the creation story to trace the unfolding of the creative process from this "rude" beginning to its perfection. The first time is in the creating of the heavens and the earth—the beginning; the second, in creating living creatures for the waters and the air—

¹ Lambeth Palace Library Ms 3707, henceforth referred to as Ms. 3707, p. 66.

² L. Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra: Or a Collection of posthumous and orphan Lectures: Delivered at St. Pauls and St. Giles his Church by the Right Honourable and Reverend Father in God Lancelot Andrews, Lord Bishop of Winchester* (London, 1657), hereafter referred to as *Apos. Sacra*, p. 75.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.72, 76.

the beginning of life; and the third in creating man, in his own image as “the perfection of creation”—the beginning of understanding. Every artificer has his masterpiece but God had three, the sun in the heavens, the whale in the waters, and man on earth.

Of the first “the sun is the president of the day, and the Prince and Governour of Light.” Although the sun is distinct from light as God created light before the sun, “God causeth the visible Sunne to shine upon the earth.” The sun is likened to Christ as the bridegroom coming forth from his chamber as it shines upon earth. “The Sunne is a signe and as a trumpet to the Beasts, which when it riseth, they doe retire to their dens, and then goeth man forth unto his work By the ascension and descending of the Sunne, we have our hours, our dayes, our seasons; hereby we have dayes shorter and longer: and for that the sunne had so many good qualities, and was so worthy a Creature, men of other nations, and in times past, gave glory and worship to the Sunne, to it they did erect Altars, build Temples, and offered sacrifice.” Yet at night the great sun gives way to the lesser light the moon, and in doing so is an example to us of humility.⁴

Of the second masterpiece, the whale is majestic with its scales “like the strong shields”; “his eyes are like the eyelids of the mornings” whilst from “his mouth goe lamps and sparks of fire.” As well as the whales, the waters are filled with all kinds of fish, each with its own attractiveness. “There is as much admiration in the small shrimp as in the great Leviathan.” Only someone who had studied nature intimately could have described the various creatures of the water and air as Andrewes did. Noting the various fowls, he tells us there are some which are “wild”, some “tame”, some “land, some “water”. As a result they have different features: some with “crooked beasts and sharp talents”, some have “feet broad like an oare; some are short sighted, and others long sighted.”⁵

Of the third master piece, “man is crowned with knowledge and love, the possibility of immortality, and is

⁴ Ibid, pp. 76-7.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 85, 87.

made the Viceregent over the sea, the Aire, the Earth; over all the fishes, fowls, beasts, and creeping things therein, bidding him to rule over them in glory.” “He is as a Theater to behold God, and as a glass to view Gods likenesse: He was created without corruption.”⁶ God particularly garnished the earth for man and then made it a “storehouse” for him. He also adorned it with “beautiful apparrell”. He made rivers “to runne into the veins of the earth”, and “to keep the earth from idleness he caused plants to shoot up to care for “our diet and fare, the flowere of meale for bread, and the grape for the winepresses out of the herbe and plants. Not only from the earth do we have our food and rayment but also our shelter. The great and main timber and beams for buildings and strength, and the fine grained timber for beauty and ornament, to ceale our houses, come from the earth.” “When we are sick, medicine from the earth preserves us. This goodnesse of the Earth is not good and profitable only *filiis hominum*, but even *servis hominum* to our beasts, fowls, and cattel; For us it bringeth herbs and for the beasts grasse and hay. If the Art of the Apothecary and Phisition be good; if it be goodnesse to have health and strength, and to be preserved in it by meat and medicine, then the Earth is good, because the goodnesse of them come from thence. Even for instruments ... of Musick for pleasure come from the earth. Therefore we must praise God for this goodnesse of the Earth Ps.147.8-9.”⁷

In making this world, God is not only the “potter” but also the “glass maker” who breathes over His creation, and in turn sanctifies His handiwork. He is therefore the artist and artificer who beautifies and adorns His world in a designed and delightful manner. The garden of Eden is “the Lords planting, garnished with all trees for delight and profit”, the air is full of sounds and “sweet smells and odours which come from the earth (Psal.45:8) [such] as *myrrhe*, *aloes* and *cassia*, *camphire* and *spikenard* (Cant.4.13).” The air is also “the bridge ... by which the light of Heaven commeth to us; it is the pipe through which sounds and voices come to our eares, smells to our

⁶ Ibid. p. 98.

⁷ Ibid. pp.66-8, 70, 96,105.

nostrils, colors to our eyes.” The fruits of the earth are “fair and sightly to the eye, sweet to the smell, pleasant to the taste, delightfull to the eare”, the hills and valleys are “set orderly, with woods, springs and rivers (Num.24: 6-7).” Thus all creation gives a “multiplicity of delight” for our “pleasure and comfort.”⁸

Some of these pleasurable sensations are in “fishing”, “the taste of fishes”, and their colouring such as the *Purpura*. Then “there is a pleasure ... to the eye” in the wings of the peacock and ostrich; pleasure “to the eare” from the birds which “doe sing upon the branches”, and especially that of “the nightingale and the lark”, which “*est naturalis musica mundi*”. “Delicious and delightful” tastes are enjoyed from the fruits of the earth such as “Milk, Wine and Oyle, Wheat and all other grain”. Indeed beauty oozes from all God’s creation as in “the Roses; ... from the leaf, flower, seed, and fruit ... [and] even the gummes which sweat and drop from them.” Andrewes’ admiration for the natural world was summed up in his Creation lecture. How are all “things beautified with variety of partes, strangeness of shapes; how are they furnished with instruments of motions, feet and wings and scales and with weapons to preserve their being.”⁹

It is not only from the world of nature that we are enriched in our knowledge of God, but also from man. He too is a beauty to behold, and therefore he is not the depraved being depicted by Calvinists. In his “exquisite frame” there is no “place, use, form, [which] doth not admit wonder and exceed it. No vein, no sinew, no artery is idle or may be wanting; how carefully and wonderfully is he made.” The world that God made expressed His “great love to Mankinde” because He was not only “mans creator” but also his “Cator”. He provided everything man might possibly need: “grain, seed, corn, pulse, spice, the grape, and other fruitfull trees.” Indeed such was God’s love that He “made all things for man before that he made man” for His lieutenant (a term used by Andrewes many times). He then entrusted the earth to him that

⁸ Ibid. pp. 42, 68, 70, 156—8.

⁹ Ibid., pp.70, 87–8, 667; Ms. 3707, p. 66.

he was to till. It is for that reason that Andrewes once remarked that “amongst all other labors, the exercise of dressing and keeping a Garden or Orchard, is most pleasant and agreeable to our nature [Preach.2.5], and bringeth greatest delight to our experience and senses in seeing ever some new and pleasant herb or plant springing up.” Such are the gifts God has given man.¹⁰

Within God’s act of creation Andrewes highlighted two aspects, orderliness and perfection, which he believed were necessary to live the Christian life. Nowhere was perfection more manifested than in paradise where God placed man for his eternal enjoyment and pleasure. Here were “herbs, flowers, plants and trees, of all sorts, ... speciall to that place alone.” Orderliness was shown when God created the cosmos with “celerity, conformity and constancie”. Accordingly from the chaos of the “foggie gross darkness” He brought order in the making of “the dawning or morning, which is a mixture of some light and some darkness; And after, he made the perfect light.” Then everything else was made in a set order. For example he made “the sea before the Fishes, the Leaves ... after the Tree. The stars were made not “*tanquam in centro* but *tanquam in circulo*, in excellent order”. Like the planets they “could not be placed neither higher nor lower”; “the sunne riseth and goeth down, and draweth to his place where it riseth, the winde goeth towards the south, and compasseth toward the north.” Corn is sown when the sun is at its weakest, it appears with moisture in spring, and it ripens by the heat of the sun in summer. Thus the seasons follow one another, day follows night, whilst even the sea and air have their own orderliness.¹¹

God also “made all things very good”; any “deformity, imperfection or disorder” resulted from man’s sin. In making all things good, God communicated “His goodness to the creatures”, or in the words of Augustine, quoted by Andrewes, “There was no other cause moving God to make the world, but that He being good, might make things that are good.” Andrewes illustrated this in poetic fashion, “the good of the

¹⁰ *Apos. Sacra*, pp. 107, 118, 179.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 51, 81—2, 116; Ms. 3707, p. 62.

Spring, which is herbs and flowers; the good of the Sommer, which is shadows; the good of the Harvest, all fruits; the good of Autumn, the seed which is sown, all come from the earth, which sheweth that *it is good.*” And the “goodnesse in Winter” is shown in “our fire and fuel” from the earth.” The earth is thus God’s “treasure house ... the ornament of the Heavens.”¹²

From creation we can learn too many religious truths. Fish “goe in shoals “ and teach us “unity” which above all things we ought to follow. “The kingdome of heaven is like a draw-net cast into the sea, that gathereth of all kinde of things. The world is as the sea; his word is the net; his Churche is the ships, the apostles are the fishermen. Mankinde are the fish, the heaven is the shore, Christ is the pilot.” The great sea is like “a great Cathedrall Church, and the Arms, Streams, and Rivers to be as it were Parish Churches to that Sea or Diocesse; so that ... all inferiour Parishes are ordered and depend on their Mother Church.”¹³ That “great Leviathan” of the water, “the whale is *symbolum resurrectionis*, ... for as Jonas was 3 dayes and 3 nights in the whales belly, so shall the Sonne of man be 3 dayes and 3 nights in the heart of the earth.” “An eagle or any other bird, in sitting on the egges to hatch their young”, is a continual reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit hovering over

¹² *Apos. Sacra*, pp. 58, 70; Ms. 3706, p. 62. His creative theology was predominant in his devotions. One example is this morning devotion:

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who createdst the two lights,

The Sun,

The Moon;

The Greater;

The Lesser;

And the stars;

For Light,

For Signs,

For Seasons;

For Spring, Summer,

For Harvest, Winter;

For Days, Weeks,

For Months, Years;

And to rule over

The Day,

The Night. Andrewes, Vol. 11, p. 281.

¹³ *Apos. Sacra*, pp. 59, 87.

creation. Brooding birds also teach us that God having brought forth us as “his young”, the Spirit now sits and spreads “his wings over” us, and thus gives us our “vital life and power.”¹⁴ Birds or as Andrewes calls them “fowls of the air” teach us about repentance and more specifically the season for it. “They have a time ... [and] place”, according to the climate. When the cold weather is over “they fail not but find a time to turn back thither again.” They teach us who are “less careful and more senseless than they” and who many times, “take our flight from God, occasioned by no cold or evil weather for commonly we do it when times are best and fairest”, to find a time to return. These birds keep “their appointed season”. It will not be long, but you will see the swallow here again.” The season of spring, also teaches us repentance as it represents “the turning of the year. In heaven, the sun in his equinoctial line, the zodiac and all the constellations in it, do now turn about to the first point. The earth and all her plants, after a dead winter, return to the first and best season of the year. ... Everything now turning that we also would make it our time to turn to God in.”¹⁵

With the coming of summer the orchard trees bearing its fruit teach us our repentance is nothing unless it brings forth fruit. Just as Christ axed the unfruitful tree, so will ours if they do not bear fruit, and be cast in the fire for fuel, “the end of all unfruitful trees.” Thus the fruit from the trees remind us “it is the fruit of repentance; not repentance itself,” which is necessary in the life of a Christian.¹⁶ Then the gathering of the sheaves at harvest time denotes that the season has come full cycle by giving up her products, and so it teaches us to meditate on the kind of harvest we shall bring in to the “the great ‘Steward of this great household’ on Judgment day. What kind of “gathering” we bring in depends on how much “fruit” we have yielded during our lives. Just as there are “seasons for the things on earth and their fullness”, so are there “seasons for the things in Heaven, and for the filling of them.” The “fullness of the seasons of the natural year” also leads to Christ in the

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 48; Andrewes, Vol. 2, p. 384;

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Vol. 1, pp. 350—1, 357.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 417—18, 439.

Sacrament. The harvest of corn gives bread while the wine-press yields her wine. These remind us that our Lord compared Himself with “the wheat-corn” when He declared that He is “the living Bread that came down from heaven.” However this, “the true Manna” can be gathered at any season. “And again, of Him, the true Vine as He calls Himself.” He is “the blood of the grapes of that Wine.”¹⁷

Gardens of “herbs and flowers” also are teachers of the Faith. Here we see “how they decay and die to rise again and flourish, and in the fields we “see how the same corn that lay dead under the clod, sprouts forth, first the blade, then the ear, after that full corn.” After observing the resurrected life of withered flowers and corn we can be assured that our dead bodies will also be resurrected. This is also learnt from the sky, “each night is but the last dayes funerall, and whats the morning but a Resurrection?” Even the more “sensitive” creatures: “Phoenix flies, grasshoppers, and silkworms” are instructors. After “they have been changed into the formes of diverse other creatures, at last resume their own shape again. ... From the raising of these low inferiour creatures, we may confidently conclude a liklihood and probability of rising” ourselves.¹⁸

Gardens also remind us that the true gardener is Christ who planted that first garden, “the fairest ... that ever was” in Paradise. Yet more fair will be the heavenly paradise, full of heavenly pleasures and spiritual delights, where “nothing fades, but all springs fresh and green.” He who “makes all our gardens green, sends us yearly the spring, and all the herbs and flowers we then gather” is also the gardener of our souls who “weeds out ... [the] unsavoury by sowing and planting them with true roots and seeds of righteousness, waters them with the dew of His grace, and makes them bring forth fruit to eternal life.” He is also the gardener of our bodies who will “turn all our graves into garden plots”.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 267—8, 281.

¹⁸ Ms. 3707, p. 149.

¹⁹ Andrewes, Vol. 2, p. 379, Vol. 3, pp. 15–6.

The Ascension could be learnt from the heavenly stars. “In heaven the stars, they be no sooner risen above the horizon, but they are in their ascendant *eo ipso* and never leave ascending till they be in the highest point over our heads, in the very top of the sky.” The appearance of the stars is similar to “the little spires that peep out of the ground, now at this time, nature’s time of her yearly resurrection, they be no sooner out but up they shoot, and never leave to aspire till they have attained the full pitch of their highest growth they can ascend to.” The heavens are also an inspiration for worship and private prayer as the sun, moon and stars remind us with the host of heaven to praise God. Furthermore the heavens set the example of humility when the sun, the greater of the lights gives way at night to the lesser light and with “the rule of the Moon the sunne doth not murmur”.²⁰ Andrewes confessed that when he viewed the glorious heavens “with my eyes and contemplate those far more glorious spirits, beyond the power of my sight, the inhabitants of the heavens and attendants on Thy throne; I cannot but break forth in that admiration of the prophet, ‘What is man that thou art mindfull of him? What is that offspring of the earth, that dust and ashes?’”²¹

Unlike man, the universe was tuned in to Christ’s agonizing suffering and death as it responded to His cry of forsakenness. “In their kind [they showed] their regard of it”, and so “the sun in Heaven [shrank] in his light, the earth [trembled] under it, the very stones [cleaved] in the sunder, as if they had sense and sympathy of it.” Indeed “the very face of Heaven, [was] ... all black and dark at noon-day yet no eclipse.” This contrasted with His birth when the night was filled with light announcing the Saviour’s coming, while “the glory of His changing in the Mount, and ... His glorious Ascension” to heaven were also celebrated by the whole cosmos.²²

Andrewes’ teaching on the wonders of all creation was succinctly summed up in one of his prayers:

²⁰ Ibid. p. 48; *Apos. Sacra*, pp. 77, 80.

²¹ Ibid. p. 83; Ms. 3707, p. 69;

²² Andrewes, Vol. 1, p. 95, Vol. 2, pp. 155, 356.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord,
Who didst create the firmament of heaven,
The heavens and the heavens of heavens,
The heavenly hosts,
Angels and archangels,
Cherubim and seraphim:
Waters above the heavens,
 vapours,
 exhalations,
 whereof [come]
Clouds from the end of the earth,
Lightnings, thunders,
Winds out of treasures,
 storms
 rains,
 dew,
 hail,
 snow like wool.
 hoar frost like ashes,
 ice as morsels:
 waters under the heavens
 for drinking
 for washing.²³

²³ Ibid. Vol. 11, p. 266.