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Editorial

A recently-published account of the 1927/8 Prayer Book Controversy,¹ brings out with a mass of detail that revision of the 1662 Prayer Book was, eighty years ago, considered a national question. There was an extraordinary amount of interest in the outcome of the parliamentary vote, and MPs had received thousands of letters. The author John Buchan, who sat for the Scottish Universities, reported it as the only occasion during his time in the House of Commons when his constituents were other than docile. There was a torrent of articles and pamphlets, and very full newspaper coverage, and the outcome of the parliamentary vote was awaited with anxiety. The rejection of the proposed Prayer Book by the House of Commons on two successive occasions was a great blow to the leaders of the Church of England at the time, especially in view of the overwhelming support the proposals had enjoyed in the newly-created Church Assembly.²

No question affecting the Church of England would arouse such concern nowadays, of course. The decline in the place of the Church in national life, and the decline in the idea that religion and national identity are vitally related, have been precipitate, and to a younger reader of Mr Maiden's book the outlook of eighty years ago will seem almost as remote as the sixteenth century.

What difference did the rejection of the 1928 make? In one respect probably very little: the Bishops made clear that though the new material had not been fully authorised they could not regard as disloyal the use of a book which the Church itself had approved. Nor does it seem likely that those who wished to go beyond its provision would have held back from doing so because of a vote in the House of Commons.

On the other hand it is sometimes asked whether the full authorisation of the 1928 book would have retarded liturgical change later in the twentieth century. Again, this seems unlikely—as the late Peter Toon brings out in the very useful article reprinted in this issue of *Faith & Worship*, the waves of liturgical change were international. Not only in Canada and the United States, but in Scotland, Ireland and South Africa revised Prayer Books were issued in the 1920s, and the influences bearing on these and

¹ John Maiden, *National Religion and the Prayer Book Controversy 1927–1928*, Boydell Press, 2009. Mr Maiden's book is, as he says, 'not a study of Anglican liturgy', but rather an attempt to explore the Prayer Book debate in terms of English and British identities, and to argue that the idea of the 'Protestant Nation' remained more powerful in the 1920s than some historians have been willing to allow.

² The votes in the Church Assembly had been: Bishops 34 to 4 in favour; Clergy 253 to 37; Laity 230 to 92. The majorities were lower on the second occasion. It has often been observed that if English MPs only had voted there would have been a small majority in the Commons.

later revisions (the Liturgical Movement and developments in liturgical scholarship) crossed denominational boundaries. Similarly, the pressure in the later 1960s (in English-speaking countries) to produce experimental 'modern language' liturgies would hardly have been affected by the existence of an early-twentieth-century Prayer Book in traditional language. In the atmosphere of the time the question was not whether there would be new services, but whether the old services would be suffered to continue in use alongside them. In England the answer to this question would once again involve Parliament.

Many in the 1970s wished for a measure which would give the General Synod complete freedom to authorise and discontinue services. But

disquiet was expressed throughout the country that [in its original form] it gave insufficient safeguards to the 1662 Prayer Book. Steps were therefore taken to increase these safeguards and the final Measure ensured that it should remain in use until the Synod asked Parliament for its replacement.¹

There is a curious symmetry between this debate concerning the Worship and Doctrine Measure 1974 and the debate of 1927/8. On both occasions the measure was introduced in the House of Lords by an Archbishop of Canterbury on the eve of retirement. And in both cases the real test came in the House of Commons. But on this occasion the measure passed. If concessions on the Prayer Book had not been made in advance it would probably not have done.

What emerged most significantly from the debate [one historian comments] was the fact that there appeared to be two 'Churches of England'. One was composed of committed members, who were regular worshippers, who were dedicated to mission and who played their part in synodical structures. The other was the 'vague mass' who attended worship spasmodically, who took no part in the Church's mission, and who held aloof from the synodical structures, but who nevertheless regarded themselves, rather than the first group, as 'the Church of England'. The Worship and Doctrine Measure polarised the two and posed the question: Which of these two is the real Church of England?²

Exactly the same conclusion might have been reached in 1928.

1 Paul A. Welsby, *A History of the Church of England 1945–1980* (1984), p. 221. This 'disquiet' became organised with the formation of a Prayer Book Action Group (later to become the Prayer Book Society). 2 *Ibid.*, p. 223

One Book of Common Prayer in Three Editions

PETER TOON

It is amazing that the King James Version of the Bible of 1611, with or without the Apocrypha, is still in print in various editions from several major publishers. It is perhaps more amazing that the Book of Common Prayer, in its definitive 1662 form, is also in print in various editions from several major publishers. In fact, Cambridge University Press recently launched a new edition of its pew edition of the Prayer Book in a new font, to make it more appealing to the eye.

An edition for the world:

The Book of Common Prayer 1662

The 1662 edition of the Book of Common Prayer is not the first edition of the English Book of Common Prayer, but it is the edition that has lasted to the present day through many printings, been used by the greatest number of Anglicans around the world, and been translated into over one hundred and fifty languages.¹

What was originally called *The Booke of The Common Prayer* was first published in 1549 in the reign of Edward VI. The liturgical and literary genius behind its composition and editing was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. In this book, instead of the variety of books traditionally needed for services in the English Church through the previous centuries, there was one book, within which were printed all the services provided by the Church of England. And it was one book for all people, the monarch and bishop using the same book as the parish priest and the peasant. A second edition followed in 1552, which showed greater signs of reformation of medieval doctrine, ritual and ceremonial.

The Book of Common Prayer 1552 had little time to get established in use before the death of the young Edward VI on July 6, 1553, and the coming to the throne of the daughter of Henry VIII, Queen Mary I, who favoured the Roman Catholic religion. So during her short reign *The Book of Common Prayer 1552* was prohibited and traditional Catholic forms were brought back. However, she was succeeded on November 17, 1558 by another daughter of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I, and, as a part of what is known as the Elizabethan Settlement, she reinstated *The Book of*

¹ For the latter see *The Bibliography of the Book of Common Prayer 1549–1999* by David N. Griffiths, 2002.

Common Prayer, slightly revised from its 1552 edition, and dated for publication 1559. (One change was the conflation of the words of administration of Holy Communion from the 1549 and 1552 editions, and another was the removal of the words, 'the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome' from the Litany.) Then the Book of Common Prayer 1559 became the authorised English Prayer Book throughout her long reign. It was thoroughly explained and defended against criticism from Puritans by Richard Hooker in Book Five of his justly famous *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

Queen Elizabeth I died on March 24, 1603, and was succeeded by her cousin, James VI of Scotland, who was known in England as James I. The Act of Uniformity of 1559 was retained and The Book of Common Prayer of 1559 was authorised after minor revisions had been made. (These included an extension of the Catechism, new prayers for the Litany and modification of the rubrics for Baptism.) The new edition of the Prayer Book carried the date of 1604, thus the Book of Common Prayer 1604. This edition, with modification of the State Prayers, remained the authorised edition after the death of James I on March 27, 1625 and during the reign of his son, Charles I.

In 1636 Charles I gave to the University of Oxford the same privilege previously only enjoyed by the University of Cambridge, the right to print and publish the Book of Common Prayer. To this day both these presses continue to publish the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Version.¹

The last printing of this 1604/1625 edition was in 1644, for on March 13, 1645 an ordinance of the 'Long' Parliament made the use of the Book of Common Prayer a penal offence. This was the period of the English Civil War, and at its close Charles I was executed on January 30, 1649. In the 1650s came the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell and then of his son, Richard. But in 1660 the Parliament requested Charles, the son of Charles I, to return from exile as King Charles II. Only then were printings of the Book of Common Prayer 1604 resumed for use in the parishes and cathedrals.

However, this edition of 1604 was not authorised for use, for the King, seeking national unity, set in motion high level discussions between Puritan and Anglican theologians on what needed to be revised or

¹ In 1637 there was printed and published in Edinburgh for the Church in Scotland a very different edition of the Book of Common Prayer to that of the English Book of Common Prayer 1604. Various false accounts have circulated about this book both as to its composition and its initial, mixed reception in Scotland. What can be said with certainty is that it represents the first authoritative move on the part of the Anglican episcopate (the bishops in Scotland) to set aside the doctrinal and liturgical Eucharistic heritage of Archbishop Cranmer. See for more detail, Gordon Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637*, Edinburgh, 1954.

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improved in the Prayer Book. Since they met in London at the Savoy Hospital, their deliberations have been called The Savoy Conference. They began work in the late spring of 1661 and completed their work by December 1661. The revised Prayer Book was approved by the Convocation of Canterbury and York in December 1661 and by the King in Council on February 24, 1662. Though the Parliament quickly approved the book with only a few minor alterations, its publication was delayed until the new Bill of Uniformity had received the royal assent on May 19, 1662.

Looking back to the year 1662, it is perhaps painful to recall that as the new edition of the Book of Common Prayer was being received by the Church of England, the same Church was expelling from the incumbencies of its parishes 1760 clergymen who in conscience could not accept certain provisions of the new Act of Uniformity. So it was that English 'Dissent' or 'Nonconformity' was created and henceforth some English Christians were called 'Dissenters' or 'Nonconformists' to distinguish them from 'churchmen' of the National Church.¹

The Content of the Book of Common Prayer 1662

The principal changes made in 1661–2 to the Book of Common Prayer 1604 edition included a new Preface; the use of The King James Version for the text of the Epistles and Gospels; the addition of a Baptismal Service for adults; the formal inclusion of both the Psalter and the Ordinal within the Book of Common Prayer; the revision and the addition of a few Collects; the Declaration of Kneeling at Communion from 1552 restored in an edited form; and a service for use at sea added.

It is claimed that there were around six hundred changes; but most of these were of a letter here and a word there, and of a comma there and a semicolon here. There was no major or striking departure from the Book of Common Prayer 1604. Common Prayer rose from its sleep since 1645 to resume its place in national and very soon international life. It has been well said that there was to be no rocking of the ark of the Church of England, whether by High Church (Laudian) pushing or Presbyterian pulling, though their combined efforts took the Prayer Book out of the harbour of 1604 and prepared it to sail the seas of the world. The revision was conservative, middle-of-the-way, safe, prudential, logical, lucid, moderate, and modest—just what was needed after the turmoil of Civil War and Protectorate. And also just what was needed (as Providence would lead) to be used overseas in the British Empire and by British evangelistic missions. However, it is to be noted that the Church

¹ The standard work for studying the various editions of the Book of Common Prayer from 1549 to 1662 remains F.E. Brightman, *The English Rite* (1921, reprinted 1970).

of England opted for uniformity rather than inclusiveness with toleration of Puritan ways, and this meant that by St Bartholomew's Day, 1662, clergy had to conform or lose their parish (and also academic) positions.

1662–2008 in the Church of England

Over the years from 1662 to the present there have been various attempts to revise the Book of Common Prayer 1662. Of these the most important are those of 1689 and 1928.

On the arrival of William and the Mary in England in 1688, the mood seemed right either to give larger toleration and freedoms to Dissenters and Nonconformists or to make an attempt to make the National, Established Church more comprehensive and thus attractive to Protestant Dissenters to return to it. A commission was established in 1689 and a variety of proposals were discussed; but, in the event, there was no final report and no recommendations made to King, Parliament and Church Convocation. However, the Dissenters were given greater freedoms to exist meaningfully outside the National Church.¹

In the period after World War I, the Church of England completed, approved in its Joint Convocation, and submitted to Parliament a revised Book of Common Prayer, bearing the date of 1928. But it was not approved by Parliament since too many members there believed that it had moved too far from the Reformed Catholic/Protestant character of the Book of Common Prayer 1662. Nevertheless, though not officially approved, services from it were used in parishes from 1928 onwards by the permission of local bishops.²

From the late 1960s what is usually called liturgical 'renewal' or 'experiment' has occurred in the Church of England, but not by seeking to revise the Book of Common Prayer 1662. Rather, the Church has been authorising books of services alongside it, and technically under its doctrinal wings. Of such there have been two, first the *Alternative Service Book 1980* (1980), followed by *Common Worship* (2000), with the latter replacing the former.

The Prayer Book in the U.S.A.

The Book of Common Prayer authorised by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. in 1928, and brought into general use in 1929, was not the first edition of the Prayer Book of this Church. It was the third edition and is the most recent, if we recognise that the innovative Prayer Book of 1979 is not a fourth edition,

1 See for more detail, Timothy Fawcett, *The Liturgy of Comprehension of 1689*, 1973.

2 For more detail see R.C.D. Jasper, *The Development of the Anglican Liturgy, 1662–1980*.

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because not in the classic Anglican tradition of Common Prayer. Because the thirteen American colonies were under the British Crown until they broke free after the Revolutionary War, their 'Anglican' parishes were part of the Church of England and under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of London, who had commissaries in each colony. And being so, they used the Book of Common Prayer (1662) together with the King James Bible (1611). Also from the Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776, to the printing of the new American Prayer Book thirteen years later, Americans continued to use the Book of Common Prayer 1662 but, not surprisingly, without the prayers for the British Crown and Parliament.

It is perhaps amazing that after the American republic was born and monarchy was repudiated, many Americans, committed to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', chose to remain Anglican in basic doctrine, worship and polity. It was well known and often said in England that the relation of monarch and bishop was fundamental to the existence of the National, Established Church; but in the former colonies Americans were prepared to retain the office of bishop, even though it proved very difficult to get one consecrated initially; and, further, a bishop in the U.S.A. had to function in a 'democratic' Church, with no legal relation at all to the federal government. In the event, so important were bishops to them that American Anglicans called their Church 'Episcopal'—The Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A.! This was not in imitation of 'The Episcopal Church in Scotland', but, rather, to distinguish the American Church for Anglicans with its Threefold Ministry, including very importantly the bishop (Greek, *episcopos*) as the primary Minister, from other Churches such as the Congregational, Baptist, Moravian and Methodist.

Not only was the office of bishop retained, but so also was the Book of Common Prayer, itself democratic in usage (one edition for all to possess), but not democratic in the way it mapped out the relation of man to God, and God to man. In the 1780s American Episcopal leaders proceeded on the assumption that it was both appropriate and necessary for them to revise the 1662 edition, which they had been using, for use in the new republic. They knew of the revision of the Book of Common Prayer in 1637 for use in Scotland; of the official attempt, after the arrival of William and Mary in Britain in 1688, to make the Prayer Book more comprehensive and thus acceptable for use by Dissenters and Nonconformists (indeed this plan is referenced in the Preface of the American Book of Common Prayer); and of the distinctive Scottish Communion Service of 1764. Further, they had access to various published commentaries on the Book of Common Prayer as well as to

proposed revisions of the Order for Holy Communion from various eighteenth-century English writers. Finally they had experimental services from various missionary agencies.

Revising a much-loved and used book is easier said than done. And the fledgling American Episcopal leadership got off to a bad start with their first attempt of 1785, published in 1786. It was neither acceptable at home nor abroad—e.g., to the English Bishops. It was rather short and too much guided by the latitudinarian or enlightenment spirit of that age. In contrast, the further attempt at revision, approved by the General Convention of the Church meeting in Philadelphia in the fall of 1789, was acceptable to a majority at home and to the English Bishops abroad. However, this Prayer Book still showed the influence of latitudinarianism; but, at the same time it was also profoundly affected in its sacramental presentation by Anglican High Church doctrine and devotion (primarily through the Scottish connection and Bishop Samuel Seabury of Connecticut). It was ordered to come into use by October 1, 1790. (In 1792 was added to it the American edition of the Ordinal; and in 1801 the American edition of the Articles of Religion.)

1789

We need to note briefly that the creators of the American 1789 edition, intended it to be more contemporary than the English 1662 edition, with fewer archaisms, a wider range of services, and a recognition of hymnody. Apparently, the team followed the method of beginning with the rejected 1786 American edition, but revising upwards as it were, adding from various sources, of which obviously the Book of Common Prayer 1662 was a major one. The fact that they started from the latitudinarian version of 1786 probably explains why in the Book of Common Prayer 1789 there is no Athanasian Creed with its linking of sound dogma with personal salvation; why there is no explanation of the purpose of marriage in the Preface of the Marriage Service (as in 1662); and why the second half of the original *Venite* (= Psalm 95 in the Book of Common Prayer 1662), which speaks of hardened hearts and divine wrath, is omitted in Morning Prayer.

Additional services not in the Book of Common Prayer 1662 included Family Prayers and Visitation of Prisoners, together with the addition, a few years later, of Services for the Consecration of Churches and the Institution of Ministers in parishes.

That which historians regard as the most important innovation in the Book of Common Prayer 1789 is what is called the Eucharistic or Consecration Prayer. Here, strongly influenced by Bishop Seabury, who had been consecrated in Scotland after failing to achieve this in

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England, the Americans rejected the arrangement and content of the Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer 1662, and adopted instead a form that is found in the Scottish Communion Rite of 1764, where what are called the 'Oblation' and 'Invocation' (= Epiclesis) follow the Institution Narrative. However, the wording of parts of this 1764 Prayer was modified by the wording within the Scottish Book of Common Prayer of 1637 (a revision which makes sense when it is known that this Prayer Book had been used by some Scottish Episcopal clergymen who had emigrated to America.)

However, in the Preface of October 1789, it was claimed that if a comparison is made of the Book of Common Prayer 1662 and the Book of Common Prayer 1789 then 'it will appear that this Church is far from tending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require.' This general assertion was accepted both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and thus the new American Church was immediately in communion with the See of Canterbury and has remained so to 2008. The 1789 edition of the American Book of Common Prayer remained the authorised edition until 1892. During its use in the nineteenth century, it was often bound in the same volume as a collection of metrical psalms and/or hymns.¹

1892

During the second half of the nineteenth century, as the U.S.A. went through many developments, including civil war and expansion west, there were repeated calls from various quarters for revision of the Book of Common Prayer 1789 to make it more 'relevant' to the changing context. However, the General Convention, which debated proposals for revision at successive meetings in the 1880s, could not agree on more than some relatively minor changes. Thus the new edition, the Book of Common Prayer 1892, was a very conservative revision. In fact many of the proposed but rejected changes had to wait for serious consideration for the next round of revision in the 1920s.

Amongst the changes incorporated at this time into the new Prayer Book were: new prayers added to the 'Occasional Prayers'; a new suffrage added to the Litany; a totally new service for Ash Wednesday; new Collects, Epistles and Gospels added for use on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday; a new Feast, that of the Transfiguration, added; three new Collects added to the Burial Service; and a new selection of Psalms for Feasts and Fasts.²

¹ See further, Marion Hatchett, *The Making of the First American Prayer Book*, 1982.

² See further, William McGarvey, *Liturgiae Americanae*, 1907.

1928

Twenty years after the publication of the Book of Common Prayer 1892, there was renewed pressure to return to the revision of the Prayer Book. The General Convention of 1913 appointed a Joint Commission of bishops, priests and laity to consider 'the revision and enrichment' of the Book of Common Prayer 1892; and their work was finally approved at the General Convention in Washington D.C. in 1928, and the Book of Common Prayer 1928 authorised for use from Advent Sunday 1929.

In commending the new Book, its friends claimed that the Book of Common Prayer 1928 had two outstanding characteristics in days when Morning Prayer was a regular public service on Sundays. These were:

(a) that it was much more flexible in its use, with permission to shorten the regular services; especially those of Morning and Evening Prayer; and

(b) that it was no longer compulsory every Sunday to recite the Exhortation beginning, 'Dearly beloved brethren,' which was in danger of losing its force by constant repetition. The shorter invitation, 'Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God' could be substituted. Then a much shorter canticle, *Benedictus es* could be used instead of the longer *Te Deum*. The revision of the Lectionary also provided shorter and more profitable Scripture Lessons; and, further, wide freedom was allowed in the selection of the Psalms. (We may note that another Lectionary, more thematic, was substituted for that of 1928 in all printings of the Book of Common Prayer 1928 from 1944.)

Not only were the services shortened, but rigid uniformity in the services was no longer insisted upon. After the third Collect in Morning and Evening Prayer the minister could now either end the service with the 'Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ', or by the use of a prayer or prayers from any part of the Book, thus giving a much greater variety. The section 'Concerning the Service of the Church', which follows the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer 1928, is a striking illustration of the unprecedented breadth of the liturgical freedom of the new Prayer Book. It rules that the Order for Holy Communion, Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Litany, are the services regularly authorised for use 'in this Church', but with the far-reaching proviso that, subject to the direction of the bishop, other devotions 'set forth by lawful authority' may be used. Further, under carefully defined conditions, 'when the edification of the Congregation so requires', these other devotions may be used instead of the regular Morning and Evening Prayer. All passages of Holy Scripture were now taken from the Revised Version not the King James Version, and in some cases the marginal rendering of the Revised Version was adopted. There was also a new translation of the Psalter correcting many archaic

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words and phrases and putting right perceived errors. While the Book of Common Prayer 1892 had required the recital of the Ten Commandments in full once on each Sunday, the new Book limited this requirement to 'at least one Sunday in each month'.

Then there were many changes of a doctrinal or semi-doctrinal kind. Strong expressions of penitence for sin in the Litany, the Penitential Office for Ash Wednesday, and elsewhere were minimised or removed. In the 'Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church' (no longer 'militant here in earth') a clause was inserted expressing petition for the departed; and in the Burial Service similar petition is found in several prayers. From the Baptismal Service was removed the specific reference to original sin contained in the words, 'all men are conceived and born in sin.' In the Marriage Service the vows and promises of the man and the woman are exactly alike and both undertake the same obligations: hereby the traditional 'headship of the male' is removed. Then in the Visitation of the Sick the sense that sickness is sent by God as a form of chastisement from the heavenly Father is removed, on the view that sickness is not to be normally linked to personal sin, and God does not send sickness but wills healing and good health.

In terms of what was seen as 'enrichment' in 1929 the following things may be noted: (i) a larger recognition of the life of the Nation, e.g., by providing Collect, Epistle and Gospel for Independence Day, and Prayers for the Armed Forces; (ii) new prayers for the Church as the Family of God; (iii) A Bidding Prayer; (iv) new Collects for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week; (v) a service for the Burial of a Child; (vi) the changed tone of the Visitation of the Sick, and (vii) The Office of Instruction as a substitute for the old Catechism.¹

After 1928

After World War II, liturgical renewal, as it was called, was in the air, and all the Anglican Churches of the West/North began to engage in it with varied intensity, given moral authority to do so by Resolutions of The Lambeth Conferences of 1958 and 1968. From the time of the Vatican Council (1962–5) this whole process gained further momentum, as the lead of the Roman Catholics was followed. In the U.S.A., there appeared a series of 'Prayer Book Studies' and then various 'Trial Services', until a new Prayer Book was ready and approved first by the 1976 and then confirmed by the 1979 General Convention. The arrival of the new Prayer Book meant the official end of the classic Common Prayer Tradition of the Anglican Way in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A., now calling itself the Episcopal Church. It also heralded the beginning of over two decades of

¹ See further, E.C. Chorley, *The New American Prayer Book*, 1929.

major innovations in worship, doctrine and discipline, for many of the seeds of the innovations were clearly within the new Prayer Book.¹

The Prayer Book in Canada

In Canada, before any revision began on the Book of Common Prayer 1662, Anglicans nailed their liturgical and theological colors to the mast. In the first General Synod of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada, held in 1893, the bishops and delegates of the clergy and laity made the following 'Solemn Declaration':

We declare this Church to be, and desire that it shall continue, in full communion with the Church of England throughout the world, as an integral portion of the One Body of Christ composed of Churches which, under the One Divine Head and in fellowship of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, hold the One Faith revealed in Holy Writ, and defined in the Creeds and maintained by the undivided, primitive Church in the undisputed Ecumenical Councils; receive the same Canonical Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary to salvation; teach the same Word of God; partake of the same Divinely ordained Sacraments, through the Ministry of the same Apostolic Orders; and worship One God and Father, through the same Lord Jesus Christ, by the same Holy and Divine Spirit, who is given to them that believe to guide them into all truth. And we are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in his Holy Word, and as the Church of England hath received and set forth the same in 'The Book of Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Church of England; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David pointed as they are to be said or sung in the Churches'; and 'The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons'; and in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion; and to transmit the same unimpaired to our posterity.

This was agreed when the British Empire was truly a world empire and where the Churches in the various countries and territories still went by the name of the mother Church, the Church of England. It has not been rescinded and formally still stands today, although few in the Anglican Church of Canada seem to believe that they are bound by its terms.

Since the passing of this Solemn Declaration, there have been two official revisions of the Book of Common Prayer, those approved by the General Synod in 1918/1922 and in 1959/1962 and it is our task to

¹ See further, Paul V. Marshall, *Anglican Liturgy in America: Prayer Book Parallels*, 2 vols, 1989, for all the prayer books from 1662 to 1979 laid out in parallel.

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look at these—particularly the second, which is still the official edition of the Book of Common Prayer for the Anglican Church of Canada. The Preface to the Book of Common Prayer 1962 (which is a revision of the Preface to The Book of Common Prayer 1922) begins with a powerful commendation of the English Prayer Book:

The Book of Common Prayer is a priceless possession of our Church. By its intrinsic merits, as a Book designed for the reverent and seemly worship of Almighty God, it has endeared itself to generation after generation of devout Christians throughout the world. None would desire or advocate any change therein that would impair or lessen this deep-seated affection.

And it ends with a claim that the revision approved in 1959/1962, resulting in the Book of Common Prayer 1962, is in the spirit of the Solemn Declaration of 1893.

When the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church in Canada assembled for the first General Synod in 1893, they made a Solemn Declaration of the faith in which they met together. It is in that faith that this Book of Common Prayer is offered to the Church, with the hope that those who use it may become more truly what they already are: the People of God, that New Creation in Christ which finds its joy in adoration of the Creator and Redeemer of all.

As we shall note, there are certain changes in doctrine in the Book of Common Prayer 1962, which raise the question whether this mid-twentieth-century edition does in fact teach exactly the same doctrine as the Book of Common Prayer 1662, to which the Solemn Declaration refers.

1918/1922¹

But back to the revision at the beginning of the twentieth century. This began after the successful launch of a Canadian Hymn Book and the impetus given by Resolution 27 of The Lambeth Conference of 1908. This stated:

In any revision of the Book of Common Prayer which may hereafter be undertaken by competent authority the following principles should be held in view: (a) the adaptation of rubrics in a large number of cases to present customs as generally accepted; (b) the omission of parts of the services to obviate repetition or redundancy; (c) the framing of

¹ Although the first official revision of the Book of Common Prayer 1662 was very modest, the story of the origin of the Canadian Book of Common Prayer published in 1922 has been told in great detail by W.J. Armitage, who was Custodian of the Canadian Prayer Book and present for the whole revision process. The book's title is, *The Story of the Canadian Revision of the Prayer Book* (1922). In contrast, though the second official revision leading to the Book of Common Prayer 1962 was much more far-reaching in its changes and 'enrichments,' there exists no satisfactory, published account of the principles and process of that revision.

additions to the present services in the way of enrichment; (d) the fuller provision of alternatives in our forms of public worship; (e) the provision for greater elasticity in public worship; (f) the change of words obscure or commonly misunderstood; (g) the revision of the Calendar and Tables prefixed to the Book of Common Prayer.

In the Preface to the 1922 Canadian Prayer Book, what had been achieved was stated in brief:

The chief results of the present Revision will be found to be: the adaptation of rubrics to customs accepted at the present time; the provision of directions for the combined use of the different Offices; the adaptation and enrichment of the Occasional Offices; the supplying of Forms for Additional Services in use throughout the Church though not provided for in the Book of Common Prayer heretofore; the addition of many new Prayers for Special Occasions; the revision of the Calendar, the Lectionary, and the Psalter.

In terms of the radical changes made to received Liturgy later in the century, this was indeed a gentle revision, as is seen in the minimal changes made to the Service of Holy Communion.

However, to think that this revision had no doctrinal implications is to have a narrow view of doctrine. One theme may illustrate this point. Dr Armitage begins his sixteenth chapter on 'The Athanasian Creed' with these words: 'The storm centre of the revision was that ancient symbol, the *Quincunque Vult . . .*' wherein is stated with great precision the Western Christian dogma of The Holy Trinity and The Person of Jesus Christ. Not to have it is to lose a very important link with classic Western doctrine. We recall that it was omitted from the American Book of Common Prayer from 1789 and not a few Canadians wished it omitted from the new Canadian Book of Common Prayer. After intense debate, and the investigation of various possible options, a very simple way was found to allow its use by the minority, and, at the same time, to negate its use for the majority. The rubric in the Book of Common Prayer 1662, requiring it be used on certain days of the year was removed, and this new rubric was inserted: 'Upon any day of the year may be sung and said, at Morning Prayer, instead of The Apostles' Creed, this Confession of our Christian Faith . . .' And this rubric was retained in the Book of Common Prayer 1962.

1959/1962

Since the major 'revision and enrichment' of the Book of Common Prayer 1922 concerned the Order for Holy Communion, it may be wise to begin by noting the differences in this text, when compared with the Book of Common Prayer 1662. Here are some of the major ones:

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- Instead of the Ten Commandments, the Summary of the Law may be used.
- New Offertory Sentences with seasonal provisions
- Biddings used before the Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church, and in this Prayer the remembering of the departed.
- Several new Proper Prefaces.
- A major addition made to the Prayer of Consecration (see below for detail) in terms of a paragraph where the 1662 Prayer actually ends.
- This Prayer followed by (a) The Peace; (b) The Prayer of Humble Access; (c) the Communion; (d) The Lord's Prayer; (e) The Prayer of Thanksgiving; (f) The Gloria, and the Blessing. (In 1662 there is no Peace and the Prayer of Humble Access comes before the Prayer of Consecration.)
- The Exhortations removed from the body of the text, revised and made to be an appendix.

Much time and labour went into the final version of the final paragraph of the Consecration Prayer. Here it is:

Wherefore, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we thy humble servants, with all thy holy Church, remembering the precious death of thy beloved Son, his mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again in glory, do make before thee, in this sacrament of the holy bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation, the memorial which he hath commanded: And we entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, most humbly beseeching thee to grant, that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion; And we pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit, all we who are partakers of this holy Communion may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end.

The paragraph begins with the Addressing of God, and then proceeds into what is called the Anamnesis—the Remembering before the Father the death, resurrection, ascension and second coming of the Lord Jesus. Following the Anamnesis there is the supplication for forgiveness and other benefits of Jesus' passion. Then there is the Epiclesis, prayer for the Spirit to descend, on the assembled people. However, there is no Epiclesis upon the Elements of Bread and Wine (as in Eastern Liturgy and in the American 1928). And, finally, there is no Oblation, presenting the Bread and Wine to the Father (as in Eastern liturgy and the American 1928). Thus even with the enrichment this Prayer stays within the tradition of the Book of Common Prayer 1662.

There were, of course, many 'enrichments' made to all services, most of them without doctrinal import. These included additional and new prayers; Supplementary Collects, Epistles and Gospels; a revised Preface for the Solemnisation of Matrimony; the introduction of the *Sursum Corda* into Baptismal Service at the blessing of the water in the font; and an extension to the Catechism. New optional Services were added—e.g., Prayers at Noon; Thanksgiving for Harvest; Young People's Service; Service for the Burial of a Child; and the Form of Institution and Induction of a New Minister.

Then there were changes or revisions which may be seen as doctrinal in scope: e.g., the introduction of the idea of 'the Baptismal Covenant' into the Catechism; the tendency in the Confirmation Service to move it along from being a holy rite to being a Sacrament; the removal from the Marriage Service of the biblical doctrine of 'the headship of the male'; the removal from the Visitation of the Sick of the theme of divine chastisement of God's adopted children; general prayer for the departed as optional in the Burial Service and in the Order for Holy Communion following.¹

Epilogue

Not long after the Book of Common Prayer 1962 was in use, the pressure began from within and without for 'liturgical renewal'. That is, for forms of worship which were based on principles different from the Common Prayer tradition. Like the U.S.A. and England, Canada eventually produced its own new prayer book, the *Book of Alternative Services* (1985), regarded by many as a Canadian adaptation of the American 1979 Book. It did not replace the Book of Common Prayer 1962 but existed alongside it, a strange partner in that it contained a different and often contrary doctrinal and devotional approach to liturgy, and, by all reasonable judgement, was not in accord with the Solemn Declaration of 1893.

Whatever the differences between the Book of Common Prayer 1928 and that of 1662, or between the Book of Common Prayer 1962 and that of 1662, or between that of 1928 and that of 1962: is not each one an edition of the Book of Common Prayer? That is, they all belong to the distinctive Common Prayer Tradition of the Anglican Way.

Common Prayer

This goes back to the use from Whitsuntide 1549 in the Church of England of the first English Prayer Book: *The Booke of The Common Prayer and Administracion of the Sacramentes, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church after the Use of the Church of England* (1549). This long title indicates that the contents fall into three divisions.

¹ The only book dealing with the revision of the Book of Common Prayer leading to the 1959/1962 edition is slim and examines solely the Service of Holy Communion: William R. Blott, *Blessing and Glory and Thanksgiving. The growth of the Canadian Liturgy*, 1998.

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First, there is 'the Common Prayer', which in the Preface is referred to as 'the common prayers in the church, commonly called divine service', and which in the Act of Uniformity of 1549 is also called, 'the common prayer commonly called the service of the church'. In other words, this is a reference to Matins and Evensong to which are added the Litany and Suffrages, the latter being referred to as 'the common prayer of procession'.

In the second place, there is 'the Administration of the Sacraments' which refers to the services for Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two Sacraments instituted by the Lord Jesus.

And thirdly, there are 'the Rites and Ceremonies' being Confirmation, Purification of women after childbirth, Matrimony, Visitation of the Sick, Burial of the Dead and the penitential Office for Ash Wednesday. (Ordination Services were published later and separately.)

The expression 'after the use of the Church of England', points to a wholly new liturgical situation in England. There had been several liturgical 'Uses' in the medieval period, based on major Cathedral centres. The differences between the various Rites were not major but they were real nevertheless. With The Booke of the Common Prayer of 1549 came uniformity of liturgy for all cathedrals, parishes churches, college chapels and places of worship in England. This was new and, of course, the invention of printing made it possible and enforceable. The Book of Common Prayer replaced a set of medieval books—Breviary, Missal, Manual, Pontifical and Processional—that were needed for the daily services and yearly worship of the Church of England. But the Book of Common Prayer did not stand alone for it required the English Bible, which in 1549 was The Great Bible in its 1540 edition. When the new edition of the Book of Common Prayer came out in 1552 it was the Book of Common Prayer, the definite article being removed, and it has remained without this article to the present day. However, in general use the expression 'Common Prayer' in England came generally to refer either to the English Prayer Book itself as a distinct book, whose title bore this expression, or to the whole range of services within this Prayer Book, which, of course, included more than the two Daily Offices and Litany, which originally were 'Common Prayer'.

Three amazing facts about the Book of Common Prayer are these:

(a) that this one book contains all the forms of worship and prayer needed for worshipping and serving the Lord our God in spirit and truth, and in the beauty of holiness; (b) that this one book (with the Ordination Services and The Articles of Religion) is a standard of doctrine (a formulary) of the Anglican Way; and (c) that there is one and only one form of this book in terms of content (even though it may come in varying sizes) and the bishop and the parish clerk, the duke and the

peasant, the Prime Minister and the criminal in prison, all use it. There is no special form of Common Prayer for either the wealthy or the poor, the students at Oxford University or the children in the village school, the Houses of Parliament or the Inns of Court. All members of 'the commonwealth' use the same common texts and pray the same common prayers.

From the very beginning in Edward VI's reign the Book of Common Prayer was intended to be inextricably joined to the English Bible, and this Prayer Book obviously needs at least the Minister to have a copy of the Bible from which to read the Old and New Testament Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer. However, the Bible readings for the Order of Holy Communion and the Psalter are printed within the Book of Common Prayer. (Of course what the Book of Common Prayer does not have in it are special anthems for choirs to sing or general hymns for the congregation to sing. Thus if such musical forms are to be added—as they have been increasingly in modern times—to the Order for Holy Communion, and to Morning and Evening Prayer, then music books will be needed.)

The Book of Common Prayer 1662, along with the U.S. Book of Common Prayer 1928 and the Canadian Book of Common Prayer 1962, may be described as not only the Anglican but also the Reformed Catholic Prayer Book.

That is, it differs from both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Books in significant ways in terms of doctrine, ritual and ceremonial. Historically, the English Prayer Book represents a major revision of the medieval services of *Ecclesia Anglicana*, that were in use until the 1540s. Yet, the revision of the medieval services, the Sacraments and the ordained Ministry in England was less radical than in other countries in Europe where reform took place. England paid more attention to what was judged to be good tradition.

The Church of England and Anglican Churches, created by expansion abroad, can also be called Protestant in the original meaning of this term, which is 'protesting on behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as received and understood in the Early Church, especially of the first five centuries'. Anglican Churches are not 'Protestant' in the contemporary sense of this word in America, which relates to being anti-Rome, anti-tradition, and committed to Scripture alone, interpreted by private judgement. In contrast, they do take note of ancient tradition in that they follow long-standing forms of set daily services, pray using written prayers, administer the Sacraments with written forms, and maintain an ancient form of polity with dioceses and the primitive form of the threefold ordained Ministry. Together with the Bible, which they regard as containing everything sufficient for knowledge of God's salvation through Jesus Christ, and from which they read daily, their Prayer Book guides how they worship, pray, administer the Sacraments, perform marriage ceremonies and bury the dead.

The English Language of Prayer

At least until the 1960s, and often until the 1980s, the normal form of the language addressed to God the Father almighty in the Name of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in public worship of all denominations in English-speaking lands was what may be called the English Language of Prayer. Now it is very much the exception rather than the rule, but it still thrives in some West Indian, African American and traditional Anglican congregations. Until the 1960s, the reading from the Bible, the singing of hymns, spiritual songs, psalms, canticles and anthems, and the prayers and praises, confessions and petitions, intercessions and litanies addressed to God, were in the English Language of Prayer and had been so since Latin had been abandoned for common worship in the sixteenth century. However, at least from the eighteenth century, the sermon or homily was given in what we may call regular English, where 'you' functions both as singular and plural.

One major characteristic of this Language of Prayer is the use of Thou (Thee, Thy, Thine) in the addressing each of the Persons (the Father, Son and Holy Ghost) of the one Trinity. This usage allowed and supported the doctrinal affirmation that 'The Lord our God is One Lord,' and, at the same time, allowed the intimate form of speech used in earthly relations by a son to his father within the sanctity of the family. To have called God 'you' would have been to open the door to rendering the Holy Trinity into a plural form, tri-theism! But to call him 'Thou' preserved monotheism and allowed a sense of God's intimate Fatherliness.

Another characteristic of this Language is its ability to render and present the human being as a dependent creature and guilty sinner in a relation to God, in which he is often presented in the Bible. That is, it uses a series of verbs (e.g., to beseech, to grant, to mortify and to deliver) not to mention nouns with adjectives (e.g., perpetual fear) which convey (what is not popular religion today) the standing of the undeserving, meritless, miserable sinner, as totally helpless and without rights before the just and holy, but merciful and compassionate God. This is the LORD God who desires to be feared and adored, revered and loved, but there is no love without first fear.

To appreciate the strength of the case for the retention of the English Language of Prayer, we need to make use of several technical terms. We are all aware that language can be and is used in a whole variety of ways and in differing contexts and circumstances. This is referred to as *register* which may be defined as 'a variety of language used by a particular speaker or writer in a particular context'. And when a number or group of people, who share a common purpose or interest, use the same register in a reasonably

consistent way, register becomes *style*. Here style is not something to be praised or blamed as such for it is descriptive only.

There are many examples of style in English—the addressing of judges in court, describing American football, working with computers, and referring to the divisions and departments of modern medical work. The form of language in each of these examples—and more could be added—is clearly recognisable as belonging to a specific context, and as serving little or no obvious purpose outside of that context under normal conditions.

Is there then a style for public prayer in public worship in English that is recognisable? Yes there is and it is found in (a) the Book of Common Prayer; (b) the King James Version; (c) English Hymnody (Watts, Wesley, Keble etc.) and (d) devotional books. It still is present in 2008 (after fifty years of attempts to remove it) in the preference for the traditional forms of the Ten Commandments, the *Gloria* and the Lord's Prayer and the recognition of such sentences as 'those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder' and 'Thus saith the Lord' along with such phrases as 'And with thy spirit'.

Bearing this in mind, the fact of the matter is that there is no Christian, religious style available as yet in written and spoken contemporary English. That is, there are no appropriate registers to communicate certain basic convictions, feelings and affections. For example: for awe and reverence towards superiors, for earnest petition of what we cannot demand as a right, and for love which we know we are unworthy to express except by permission of the beloved. The fact of the matter is that social structures have changed and contemporary English is naturally disposed towards the democratic, egalitarian, therapeutic and utilitarian and the assumption of human rights. However, there still remains the need within the context and relation of the Holy LORD to his sinful creatures, and of these persons to their Creator and Redeemer, for a fitting language to worship, praise, petition and confess to Him and for Him to reveal himself to them. And the point about the traditional English Language of Prayer is that it has the appropriate registers and style to make possible the reverent and meaningful exchange between God and man. And if there is contemporary need for a special type of English for each one of so many departments of human life and society, why not one for Prayer!

Of course, there are archaic words (e.g., vouchsafe and forasmuch) in the traditional Language, which were, and are, a minor impediment for some people, but the major objection to the received language after World War II was the (false) claim of its inability to communicate the Faith to the radical 1960s and post-1960s generations.¹

¹ For a readable and serious study of the English language of prayer, see Peter Toon and Louis Tarsitano, *Neither Archaic nor Obsolete, the Language of Common Prayer and Public Worship*, 2004.

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In conclusion

The Book of Common Prayer in its original and definitive purpose is intended to be a godly provision—always existing hand in hand with the Bible in English—for each and every day, for the whole of the Year and for the whole of life. That is, it provides Daily Services for Morning and Evening (with required Bible readings, canticles, psalms and prayers)—and there is a godly, spiritual order in these services; the Litany and Suffrages for use on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays; the Order for Holy Communion for every Lord’s Day and Holy Day; the Service of Holy Baptism for entrance into the Church and Kingdom of God; a Catechism to instruct youth; Confirmation for those baptised and instructed in the Faith; Holy Matrimony for those called to this vocation; Visitation and Communion Provisions for those who are sick; the Burial of the Dead for those who die as baptised Christians, and other things.

So the congregation has services for each and every day, and each and every Sunday and Holy Day; and each person is provided the essentials beginning with Baptism for his pilgrimage through life to the heavenly Jerusalem. All this together is intended to provide a godly discipline, leading to sound habits, for public worship, family life and personal discipleship. So all that is truly needed to walk in the way of holiness and to worship the Lord our God in the beauty of holiness is the guidance and structure of the Book of Common Prayer, which is always dependent upon the open Bible. Of course, these two essentials can be supplemented by additions such as a hymn or song book, but if any of these extras is treated as an essential, then the godly discipline is easily lost.

A very real problem in the first decade of the new millennium is that we seem to have a low view of godly discipline and habit, and a high view of freedom and variety. The Book of Common Prayer as the Anglican way of structuring the Christian vocation of worship and service works on the assumption that the daily and/or weekly repetition of that which is good and excellent is more conducive to holiness and sanctification than is constant variety and change. The idea is that the repetition of the good will be retained in the memory (learned by heart) and will be as seed germinating into fruit of the Spirit, godly virtues, and good habits.

(The late Revd Dr Peter Toon was President of the American Prayer Book Society, and a prolific author. This article was originally published in Mandate, Vol. 31, No. 4 (July/August 2008), and is reprinted with grateful acknowledgements.)

Pre-Reformation Streams of Piety in the Prayer Book

WILLIAM HORBURY

The Contemporary Context

Here I am suggesting that the Prayer Book's use of mediaeval and earlier material can indicate ways of piety which complement those we have inherited from twentieth-century liturgical revision.¹ In present-day liturgy we receive impulses still from reaction against mediaeval usage, not simply through the continuing dynamism of sixteenth-century reform but also through the delayed echo or *Nachklang* of the Reformation heard in the Second Vatican Council of 1962–5 and the heavily revised Missal and Breviary of 1970 and 1971. This echo reinforced some parallel liturgical developments in the Church of England at the same time. The years from 1965 saw the issue of three series of Alternative Services, leading to an *Alternative Service Book* in 1980. In these new rites the influence of the liturgical revisions furthered by the Second Vatican Council is clear.

The whole European and wider process of liturgical change, however, seems not without contact with the mood of the broadly Marxian upheavals in western European political and academic life in the late 1960s. Within this process the Prayer Book could have been an example of how to hold in creative tension the continuing Reformation dynamism and the tradition of liturgy, but the mood of the times made that hardly possible. The Prayer Book was perceived as a status quo, or as part of a social status quo, to be rejected. Its ongoing life is not the least remarkable outcome of the years of change.

As this ongoing life of the Prayer Book itself suggests, the broader liturgical atmosphere of course is by no means static. Some aspects of pre-1970, pre-Second-Vatican-Council usage have been encouraged again in Europe and America under the guidance of the present Pope. Here in Cambridge a detailed attempt to recover valuable features of the ideas informing the mediaeval Roman mass was made in Catherine Pickstock's *After Writing* (Oxford, 1998). Yet we are still influenced by an outlook which favours characteristics associated rightly or wrongly with early Christian worship, such as transparency and equal participation, often thought to be symbolised by basic vernacular language and westward-

¹ The word 'spirituality' would cover the 'piety' considered here, but I chose 'piety' for its plainer suggestion of practice, and its link with biblical vocabulary; thus Greek *eusebeia* and Latin *pietas* occur in the sense of 'piety' in the Septuagint and Vulgate, respectively, of Isa. 11:2 (AV 'fear of the Lord'), the passage lying behind the Confirmation prayer for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit discussed below.

Pre-Reformation Streams of Piety in the Prayer Book

facing eucharistic presidency, but dismisses what are regarded as the hierarchical elaborations of mediaeval and later liturgy.

Historically viewed, the worship of the early Church evinces an emphasis on order which goes back to apostolic times, and an inheritance of traditional biblically-inspired formulaic language. It may not always support the appeals which have been made to it in favour of the liturgical changes of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet the appeals at first were strongly confident, and of course they recalled the Reformation appeals to early Christian usage, of which Cranmer's preface to the Prayer Book forms a noble example.

Some more recent antecedents of this liturgical appeal to the early church lie in the Liturgical Movement of the early twentieth century, the efflorescence of patristic study in France and England just after the Second World War, and the concomitant efforts to recover early Christian thought and custom; but the effects have often been unduly negative. In England at least a shadow has been cast over the mediaeval liturgical inheritance in which great pride and pleasure was once taken, whether through special manifestations like Thaxted and its religio-political ethos or through more widely seen books like *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and the *English Hymnal*, with their treasuries of mediaeval hymns, and through familiar furnishings like the so-called English altar, or rites like those recorded in Percy Dearmer's *Parson's Handbook* (1899; revised and enlarged editions, 1903, 1907) and A. S. Duncan-Jones's *Chichester Customary* (1948). This inheritance adorned and suited the architecture of most parish churches, but it was of course also felt to be compatible with, and indeed in many ways to be rooted in, the Book of Common Prayer.

The re-appropriation of aspects of mediaeval liturgy and devotion through the medium of the Prayer Book took place widely in the Church of England. It appealed to a sense for national tradition in ecclesiastical life and in arts and crafts. Within Anglo-Catholicism in particular it perhaps gained in definition through the struggle between its adherents and those who, criticising its seeming antiquarianism, favoured adoption of up-to-date Roman liturgical usage and furnishings. However it is to be assessed overall, in practice it highlighted, I believe, some valuable aspects of Prayer Book liturgy and piety which more recent aversion from the mediaeval inheritance has left under a cloud.

At any rate, I should like now to note some aspects of the Prayer Book which recall ancient and especially mediaeval liturgy and devotion, not for the sake of liturgy alone but because in these places the Prayer Book imparts what I take to be refreshing streams of piety. These may complement the piety encouraged by the liturgical inheritance of the Second Vatican Council and its manifestations in the Church of England, not to speak of those often non-liturgical types of current devotion which look back to aspects of the Reformation itself.

The Prayer Book and its Mediaeval Inheritance

The Prayer Book is indeed a document of the Reformation—and to emphasise this point has been one trend in study during the last fifty years. So Diarmaid MacCulloch calls Cranmer's book 'the public, ceremonial face of Protestant Reformation', and draws attention to the possibly Lutheran rather than Roman Catholic context of what may seem the non-Protestant modifications made to it in 1559, after Elizabeth's accession; he suggests that it was the use of the Prayer Book rather than the intentions of compilers and revisers, specifically its liturgical interpretation in cathedrals and in the context of the threefold ministry during Elizabeth's reign, which helped, by the time of Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes, to create a perception of the continuity of the Reformed English Church with mediaeval and early Christian usage. This perception may not have been wholly absent from the mind of Cranmer and others when the Prayer Book was first compiled and revised, and one might add that it appears in a special way in Matthew Parker's presentation of the Elizabethan settlement as the revival of the teaching and practice of the old English Church before the Norman Conquest; but MacCulloch emphasises that it should not disguise from us the zeal for reform which was a chief motive of Cranmer's work.¹

Yet there is still something in those similarities, which seemed so striking to scholars like F.E. Brightman in the early twentieth century, between the Prayer Book and the Use of Sarum and the late-mediaeval primers of private prayer. Laying emphasis on these similarities, which appear immediately even if you simply compare the Communion Service with the mass, and thinking perhaps too of the appeal to the Church Fathers in Cranmer's preface to the Prayer Book and his discourse *Of Ceremonies*, C.S. Lewis wrote that the compilers 'wished their book to be praised not for original genius but for catholicity and antiquity, and it is in fact the ripe fruit of centuries of worship.'²

Here I am interested not so much in the intentions of the makers and revisers of the Prayer Book, important though it is to try to grasp them, as in the texts that they did give us and the use that was made of them from Tudor times onwards—texts and usage which indeed often emphasised the continuity of the Prayer Book with the centuries of worship which preceded it. Again, I am interested not so much in the undoubted fact that the Prayer Book contains pre-Reformation elements, as in the value of the mainly mediaeval and more neglected portion of these elements, as I take it to be, for the enrichment of contemporary piety and religious sentiment.

1 D. MacCulloch, *Reformation* (2005), pp. 133, 257, 291

2 C.S. Lewis, *Poetry and Prose in the Sixteenth Century*, Oxford (1954, repr. 1990), p. 215

Prayer addressed to Christ

A first instance is provided by the phenomenon of public prayer and praise addressed to Christ. C.S. Lewis rightly emphasised that the Prayer Book has the character of public rather than private prayer, and suggested that this is one but not the only reason for its sobriety and its withdrawal (despite its ardour and depth) from many of those more obviously emotional appeals which you find in the Primers of private prayer. Yet these emotional moments do occur sometimes also in the old tradition of public prayer. Thus when Cranmer was translating the collects, he was also, as Lewis shows, at the same time occasionally restraining their expression of emotion, for example in the Good Friday collect 'Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross . . .' Here the original 'to undergo the torment of the cross', *crucis subire tormentum*, has become simply 'to suffer death upon the cross'. In such places, Lewis suggested, the graver, more deliberative temper of Cranmer and the early Tudor age comes into view.¹

Yet, illuminating though this observation is, there are also texts in the Prayer Book in which revising or new writing does nevertheless appeal more plainly to the emotions, and a group of them is focused on the address of prayer and praise directly to Christ.

This address to Christ has always been a subject of some controversy as regards liturgy and hymnody. Like the less-often-found address to the Holy Ghost, it is typical of hymnody and individual devotion rather than public prayer. It plays a part of course in the Prayer Book in hymnody inherited from the early Church, such as the *Te Deum* in Matins ('Thou art the king of glory, O Christ . . . we therefore pray thee, help thy servants . . .') and *Gloria in Excelsis* in the Communion Service ('O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father . . . have mercy upon us'). Within the early Church, however, such prayer and praise was eventually not taken as the norm in public prayer, despite its clear antiquity and its New Testament antecedents (we may think of the Christians questioned by Pliny in the early second century who said that they sang hymns to Christ as to a god, and of New Testament passages including the acclamations to Christ as he entered Jerusalem, and St Stephen's prayer to Christ 'receive my spirit'). In the third century Origen urges prayer to the Father through the Son (*On Prayer*, xv), and the Third Council of Carthage in 397 prescribes that at the altar prayer shall be directed only to the Father (canon 23). This usage is generally reflected in our Collects although, as we shall see, new Prayer Book Collects could depart from it.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 220–1

Yet perhaps the greatest instance of extended prayer to Christ in the Prayer Book is one of the earliest texts in it, the Litany of 1544. We are approaching its 466th anniversary, for it was published on 27th May. With the Litany we are somewhere between private and public prayer, but historically litanies entered the Eucharist (the ninefold Kyrie of the old mass is a reflection of this) and a litany in the form that Cranmer adapted was in use in the Middle Ages at ordinations and as an independent service just before mass in Lent or on the Rogation Days, and so entered service-books like Pontificals and Processionals, although litanies also had an important place in Primers of private prayer.

Somewhat comparably Cranmer's Litany was incorporated in the Prayer Book and was a definitely public form. Its predecessor began with an appeal to the Holy Trinity, followed by invocations of our Lady and the saints; these introduced a central section of deprecations addressed to Christ, with the response 'Good Lord, deliver us' (*libera nos, Domine*), followed by obsecrations addressed to Christ, with the response 'We beseech thee to hear us' (*Te rogamus, audi nos*), and concluded with appeals to Christ as Son of God and Lamb of God. Cranmer omitted the invocations of saints, but very closely followed the old litany in other respects, from 'Remember not, Lord, our offences . . . spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood . . .', through the series of deprecations including the famous 'By the mystery of thy holy incarnation . . .', all with the response 'Good Lord, deliver us', to the series of obsecrations beginning 'We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God' (here 'Lord God' is addressed to Christ, as in the *Gloria*), down to 'Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us,' and 'O Lamb of God . . .'.¹

This extended address to Christ has received a good deal of attention, being emphasised in the nineteenth century from sharply differing points of view by H.P. Liddon, who notes it in his demonstration of the orthodoxy of Prayer Book formulae in his treatise on the *Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, and on the other hand by Charles Merivale, Dean of Ely, well-known in his time as a Roman historian, who notes with pleasure how much the Litany addressed to Christ recalls the ancient Roman custom of addressing in litany-like prayer not Jupiter but those deities who were thought to be nearest and most accessible.²

For our present purpose I would like to highlight the contribution of the Litany in bringing to devotion to Christ, which will always be a central

1 F.E. Brightman, *The English Rite* (2 vols., London, 1915), i, pp. lviii–lxviii, 174–85

2 H.P. Liddon, *The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (fifteenth edn, 1891), pp. 531–43 Note G 'The worship of Jesus Christ as prescribed by the Authorised Services of the Church of England'; Judith Anne Merivale (ed.), *Autobiography of Dean Merivale with Selections from his Correspondence* (1899), pp. 262–3 (Letter of Dean Merivale, 3 October 1866; on 26 September 1866 *The Times* had published a letter on this aspect of the Litany from Bishop Colenso, and Liddon's Note begins with a rebuttal of it.)

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strand in piety, an almost Roman combination of dignity and tenderness—‘by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial’ (a close translation of the Latin)—‘that it may please thee to preserve all that travel by land or air or water (I quote an updated version!), all women labouring of child, all sick persons and young children; and to shew thy pity upon all prisoners and captives . . .’ (seemingly a combination of various sources).

Cranmer brought this same Christocentric devotion of deep but disciplined feeling into the series of collects themselves, on occasions when particularly heartfelt petition might seem appropriate.¹ One of these is the First Sunday in Lent, where Cranmer continued the theme of abstinence from the old collect, but boldly rewrote it as a prayer to Christ himself: ‘O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence . . .’

Here again we have the clear but restrained emphasis on Christ’s sufferings which was continued from old formulae in the Litany (compare ‘by thy baptism, fasting and temptation’).

Somewhat comparably, just after Christmas, the old Collect for St Stephen, asking that we may learn to love our enemies, because we are keeping the Nativity of him who prayed even for persecutors, becomes a prayer to the Christ to whom Stephen’s prayer was directed (Acts 7:59–60): ‘Grant us, Lord, to love our enemies by the example of thy martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed to thee for his persecutors’—a notably neat and apt rewording which is retained but expanded in the 1662 Prayer Book.

Yet, lest one should make too much of this, the collect for Innocents’ Day, which in its old form beginning ‘God, whose praise this day the martyred Innocents confessed . . .’ was understood as a prayer to Christ, as its ending shows, became in Cranmer’s hands a prayer to God the Father; and for the Sunday after Ascension he comparably moulded an old antiphon addressed to Christ into a regular Collect directed to the Father, as the old Collect for this Sunday had been.

Lastly, however, the revisers for the 1662 book added a new collect addressed to Christ at the Third Sunday in Advent: ‘O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee . . .’, seemingly a specially earnest supplication for the Advent Embertide.

In all, then, the Prayer Book collects second the Litany in boldly placing petition to Christ in public prayer; they keep the old norm of liturgical address to the Father, but they take up a thread in ancient and mediaeval public prayer which was present although not the norm. The Litany and

¹ For the five collects mentioned below see Brightman, *The English Rite*, I, pp. 208–9, 234–5, 294–5, 438–9.

these Collects together tend to accept the forceful devotion which will always spring up in this connection, and to encourage its expression in words of deep but dignified and disciplined feeling—a development of mediaeval piety which deserves consideration for its potential contribution to contemporary praise and prayer. The Prayer Book here suggests how, within the tradition of prayer to the Father, the powerful instinct to address Christ himself can be affirmed with generosity and at the same time expressed with depth and dignity.

Marian Devotion

As a pendant to these words on the cult of Christ one may note briefly the place of our Lady in the piety of the Prayer Book. The pruning of invocation of her name, just noticed in the case of the Litany, can be sensed too when the Prayer Book instructions to godparents are silent on the salutation to the Virgin, *Ave Maria*. Marian devotion is then focused above all in the three great feasts of Christmas, Candlemas and Lady Day.¹

The Collect and proper preface for Christmas remember our Lady with the words (in the Collect) ‘as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin’—a newly created phrase not in the old collects; and (in a newly created Preface) ‘because thou didst give Jesus Christ thine only Son to be born as at this time for us; who by the operation of the Holy Ghost was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother, and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin.’

The two feasts of Candlemas and Lady Day, which follow on 2nd February and 25th March, respectively, are red-letter days in the Prayer Book, and their Prayer Book titles emphasise their connection with our Lady. To quote the 1662 forms, Candlemas is headed in the series of Collects, Epistles and Gospels ‘The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin’, but in the Kalendar is simply called ‘The Purification of Mary the Blessed Virgin’; both the earlier Prayer Books, like their mediaeval source, had used this title (the Purification, without mention of the Presentation) in the series of Collects as well. The 1662 book restored the old Epistle from Malachi 3, on the Lord coming to his temple, and (an incidental outcome of the adoption of the Authorised Version of the Bible) the mention of ‘her’ purification at the beginning of the Gospel (Luke 2:22).² The Gospel was

1 On the provision for these festivals noted below see Brightman, *The English Rite*, i, pp. 59 (Proper Psalms and Lessons), 82–9 (Kalendar), 220–1 (Christmas); ii, 564–71 (Purification), 574–9 (Annunciation), 684–5 (Proper Prefaces); and William Bright (ed.), *The Prayer Book of Queen Elizabeth*, 1559 (1890), p. 25 (Proper Lessons).

2 The earlier Prayer Books (taking the Gospel from the Great Bible) had followed the reading ‘their purification’, which reappeared in modern times in the Revised Version and the New Revised Standard Version.

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then extended, by comparison with the Sarum and earlier Prayer Book provisions, to bring in Simeon's address to Mary, Anna's thanksgiving, the return to Nazareth and the growth of the Child (Luke 2:40).

Lady Day in the 1662 series of Collects, Epistles and Gospels is 'The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary', following both earlier Prayer Books and their mediaeval source. In the 1662 Kalendar it is 'The Annunciation of the Virgin'; here, however, the Sarum Kalendar had 'The Annunciation of the Lord', *Annunciatio dominica*, and the two earlier Prayer Books simply 'The Annunciation'. By 1662, then, we see the Kalendar entry for the Annunciation being conformed to the Collects, and perhaps too a movement towards what was obviously common usage connecting the day with the Virgin, as in the Table of Proper Lessons from Queen Elizabeth (1559) onwards, where it is 'The Annunciation of our Lady'; compare the popular title 'Lady Day'. The Epistle from Isaiah 7 and the Gospel from Luke 1, continued from the old service, both continue to speak of both the Virgin and her Son.

The Christocentric Lady Day Collect in the Prayer Book is that which formed the Post-Communion collect in the mass for the day:

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was also becoming the climactic prayer of the *Angelus*—a devotion which was still in its early stages when the Prayer Book was first compiled, but, in this respect to some extent like the Prayer Book, retained the impress of the double emphasis of the Lady-day provisions, dominical as well as Marian.

Reformation critique of 'Purification and other fond feasts of our Lady', to quote the 1560 *Book of Discipline* of John Knox and his fellow-reformers, had its echo in the Roman Catholic liturgical revisions of the 1960s and 1970s.¹ Now both Candlemas and Lady Day became simply feasts of our Lord (compare the Sarum Kalendar for 25th March). This move was followed largely but not completely in the lists of holy days in the *Alternative Service Book 1980* and then in *Common Worship (2000)*; both give 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple' (followed in *Common Worship* by 'Candlemas' in brackets) and 'The Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary', dismissing the Purification but leaving a foothold for the Marian associations of Lady Day. The change, especially in the context of

¹ *Book of Discipline* of 1560, reproduced in book III of John Knox's *History of the Reformation in Scotland*; see D. Laing (ed.), *The Works of John Knox* (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1895), II, pp. 185–6 ('The Explication of the First Head').

the Roman calendar, had the possibly unintended effect of shifting the liturgical focus of Marian devotion away from scenes described in the gospels to those which occur in the well-loved apocryphal narratives of our Lady's Conception, Nativity and Assumption, remembered in the background of the corresponding festivals. These, apart from the Assumption, are there in the 1662 Prayer Book, but simply as black-letter days.

Hence, broadly speaking, the cult of our Lady in the Prayer Book preserves a mediaeval form, rooted in three red-letter days—Christmas, Candlemas and Lady Day—and focused on the Gospels common to the whole church, with the aureole of apocryphal narratives evoked in the black-letter feasts in the background. The Reformation echo in the liturgical developments of the 1960s has paradoxically helped to shift Marian devotion in the west away from Christmas, Candlemas and Lady Day, with their Gospel roots; but there are aspects of the mediaeval and Prayer Book pattern which seem of abiding value, especially its concentration on Gospel texts which are the common property of all Christians, and the emphasis laid thereby on the intertwining of devotion to Mary with devotion to her Son. This emerges especially in the new Christmas collect:

Almighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; grant that we being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy holy Spirit.

The Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments

Having noted much which pertains to feeling and religious sentiment, I should like now to mention what may be called a rational element in Prayer Book piety, once again inherited from the Middle Ages: its emphasis on the teaching and learning of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. This comes out most obviously in the address to the godparents at the end of Baptism on the forms which the child shall learn, taken over from the Sarum address; the Creed and Lord's Prayer are common to both, but the Prayer Book drops *Ave Maria* and adds the Decalogue.¹ Emphasis on the Decalogue as well as the Creed and the Paternoster is nonetheless itself mediaeval, figuring in injunctions to parish clergy to instruct their people in these things, especially in Lent; so for example the teaching of the Decalogue is the first item to be mentioned in the thirteenth-century statutes for clergy in the diocese of Ely—typical of many sets of diocesan statutes and based on Archbishop Peckham's Constitution of 1281; and they go on to mention explanation of the creeds

1 Brightman, *The English Rite*, II, pp. 744–5

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as well, separately from the simple learning by heart of the Creed, Paternoster and *Ave Maria* which is required of children.¹

In the Prayer Book itself the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments are of course the staple of the Catechism and preparation for Confirmation, and the Catechism too, although it is a Reformation composition, is close to mediaeval practice, as the injunctions already mentioned show. The individual application of this general and official practice is seen in a popular mediaeval work of devotion like the early thirteenth-century *Mirror of S. Edmund of Abingdon*, which circulated in English as well as Latin.² Here the exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, with other forms for moral guidance like the lists of the Seven Virtues and the Seven Sins, comes together with personal prayer addressed to Jesus – in a manner uniting what I have called the rational element in piety with an individualised form of that heartfelt devotion to Christ considered at the beginning. The Prayer Book carried on this healthy mediaeval combination of heart and head.

The Holy Spirit

Lastly, this sketch of some streams running from mediaeval devotion into the Prayer Book would be misleading if it did not note the abundance of piety connected with the Spirit. In the Prayer Book as in the wider liturgical tradition, direct appeal to the Spirit is (as already noted) rare, heartfelt and hymnodic, attested in the opening Trinitarian petitions of the Litany and in the *Veni Creator* in the Ordinal. Yet an emphasis on the Spirit is deep and pervasive.

As might be expected, the Prayer Book continuation of ancient and mediaeval emphasis on the Spirit comes to the fore in Baptism and Confirmation. Thus the bishop's prayer before the laying on of hands at Confirmation, simply translated from the Latin of the Sarum rite, affirms the gift of the Spirit in the candidates' Baptism ('Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost'), and asks now for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit promised to the offspring of the stem of Jesse in Isa. 11:2—'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness', ending 'and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear.'³

For the laying on of hands itself, which came to replace the old anointing, Cranmer in 1552 introduced the memorable formula 'Defend

1 C.L. Feltoe & E. Minns, *Liber Vetus Archidiaconi Eliensis*, Cambridge (1917), pp. 9, 215–17

2 A modern English rendering, from Middle English, is given (in view of a possible attribution of the Middle English version to Richard Rolle) in Geraldine E. Hodgson, *Some Minor Works of Richard Rolle* (1923), pp. 94–147.

3 Brightman, *The English Rite*, II, pp. 794–5

O Lord this thy child with thy heavenly grace, that (s)he may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit, more and more, until (s)he come unto thy everlasting kingdom.’ The prayer for the candidates after their Confirmation likewise asks ‘let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them.’ These petitions transferred into new prayers the emphasis on the gift of the Spirit from the old versicles, responses and collect after the anointing.¹

Similarly, the Prayer Book Baptism service retains in a new form the prominence given in the old rite to the gift of the Spirit, for which the congregation now prays corporately (‘give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that (s)he may be born again’). It also includes a thanksgiving that the child is ‘regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ’s church’. This thanksgiving is initiated by the Lord’s Prayer, which is used at Baptism and Confirmation, as in the Communion Service, at the point in the rite when one can be considered as having been brought near to God.

Prayer Book continuation of an old emphasis on the gift of the Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation emerges also elsewhere in the liturgy. Instances appear in varying uses made of the *Miserere*, Psalm 51, in adoption of old usage. Thus this psalm provides the closing versicle and response, taken over from Prime, at Matins and Evensong: ‘O God make clean our hearts within us, And take not thy Holy Spirit from us;’ compare Ps. 51: 10–12:

Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence: and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again: and stablish me with thy free Spirit.

As a versicle and response in the office the quotations from verses 10–11 become a kind of daily reminder of Baptism and Confirmation. Coverdale’s version of verse 12 recalls the New Testament with its renderings ‘comfort’ (compare ‘the comfort of the Holy Ghost’, Acts 9: 31, and the ‘Comforter’ of John 14: 16, etc., and the *Te Deum*); and ‘free Spirit’ (compare ‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,’ 2 Cor. 3: 17).

At the beginning of Lent the *Miserere* with these verses comes in again, said ‘by the Priest and Clerks kneeling’, in the Ash Wednesday prayers which form the second part of the Communion Service and were simply taken over from the Sarum rite.²

Other parts of the network of Prayer Book allusions to the Spirit appear in the Collects. A group of great Collects, nearly all simply translated from the Sarum rite, take up in various ways the Pauline affirmation that ‘the

1 The Confirmation office from a fifteenth-century Sarum Pontifical is reprinted in F. Proctor & W.H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (1911), pp. 603–4.

2 Brightman, *The English Rite*, II, pp. 894–7

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love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us' (Rom. 5:5). This is paraphrased, in combination with the prayer of Ps. 51:10 (the versicle 'O God, make clean our hearts within us'), in the Collect for Purity before the Communion Service: 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee . . .'

Rom. 5:5 is paraphrased again in the petition 'Send thy Holy Ghost . . . ' in Cranmer's new Collect for Quinquagesima, just before Lent, now in connection with 1 Corinthians 13, the Epistle for the day:

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth: Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee.

Elsewhere allusion to Rom. 5:5 brings the Spirit to mind implicitly, as in the Sarum and Prayer Book Collect for Trinity VI:

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire.

Here Rom. 5:5 ('Pour into our hearts . . .') has been combined with 1 Cor. 2:9-10 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit . . . ' The Epistle for Trinity VI which follows (Rom. 6:3-11) deals with Baptism.

A similar allusion to Rom. 5:5 opens the Lady Day collect mentioned already: 'We beseech thee, O Lord pour thy grace into our hearts . . . ' Rom. 5:5 is likewise at the heart of the Sarum and Prayer Book Collect for Trinity VII:

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same.

This Collect begins with allusions to James 1:17; 21 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above . . . receive with meekness the engrafted word;' but it goes on to Rom. 5:5 ('in our hearts the love of thy Name'), and then recalls the gifts of godliness and holy fear ('true religion', 'goodness') from the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit in Isa. 11:2, mentioned in the bishop's prayer before Confirmation as noted above.

All these apart from the Quinquagesima Collect are translations of old collects. Cranmer followed their line of allusions to the gift of the Spirit not

only at Quinquagesima but also in the echo of Baptism and Confirmation in his new Collect for Christmas, asking, as already noted, ‘that we, being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit.’ Here the final phrase on renewal by the Spirit joins 2 Cor. 4:16 on daily renewal (‘the inward man is renewed day by day’) with Ps. 104:30 on the Spirit: ‘When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made: and thou shalt renew the face of the earth’ (Authorised Version ‘Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created . . .’).

These words formed a versicle and response praying for the candidates in the Sarum rite of Confirmation cited above (‘Send forth thy Spirit and they shall be made, And thou shalt renew the face of the earth’).

Finally, the Prayer Book provisions for the Feast of Pentecost itself extend this Spirit-centred devotion. The new Collect for the previous Sunday, adapting an old antiphon as noted already, dramatically turns the Sunday after Ascension and the succeeding days before Pentecost into a time of apostolic waiting (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4) and prayer for the gift of the Spirit, expressed in the terms of Christ’s promise of the Comforter to the disciples, noted already from the Fourth Gospel:

O God the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven, we beseech thee, leave us not comfortless [compare John 14:16–18]; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before.

Preparation for Whitsun is now focused on prayer for the gift of the Spirit, recalling the corporate prayer for the gift of the Spirit highlighted in Cranmer’s Baptism service.

Then the proper psalms for Whitsun, taken over from the Sarum rite, interpret the work of the Spirit. *Exurgat Deus*, Psalm 68, is appointed for Whitsun in the 1662 Prayer Book following mediaeval usage, although in 1549 it had been allotted to the Ascension. With the Epistle to the Ephesians (4:7–11) this psalm was taken to allude to the Ascension—‘Magnify him that rideth upon the heavens’ (Ps. 68:4); ‘Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive . . .’ (Ps. 68:18)—and to the ensuing gift of the Holy Ghost and the apostolic preaching:

Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance: and refreshedst it when it was weary.

Thy congregation shall dwell therein: for thou, O God, hast of thy goodness prepared for the poor.

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers.

(Ps. 68:9–11)

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This association with Ascensiontide and Pentecost, given by the Epistle to the Ephesians, was further encouraged by aspects of the pre-Christian Septuagint Greek translation, rendered into Latin in Jerome's 'Gallican Psalter' which was used in mediaeval liturgy. Thus Ps. 68:4, where these versions have 'him who ascends above the sunset', could readily be linked with the Ascension. Comparably, the day of Pentecost can be recalled by verses 24–7, the glowing description of 'how thou, my God and King, goest in the sanctuary', mentioning the singers, the minstrels, the damsels playing with the timbrels, Benjamin and the princes of Judah, Zabulon and Nephthali. In these versions it is indeed a scene of Pentecostal mystic enthusiasm, felt in particular by Benjamin: 'There is the young Benjamin in a trance' (verse 27).

The Prayer Book version from the Great Bible follows what became the usual Jewish reading tradition of the Hebrew text here, with 'There is little Benjamin their ruler' (Ps. 68:27); but it still keeps the Pentecostal atmosphere, for it has rendered the previous verse (Ps. 68:26) 'Give thanks, O Israel, unto God the Lord in the congregations: from the ground of the heart'. For the last words the Authorised Version has 'from the fountain of Israel', but the Great Bible took 'Israel' as a vocative and 'fountain' in the transferred sense of 'source' or 'origin'. Here 'ground' seems almost like the language of Meister Eckhart or other mediaeval mystics, in which 'ground' can refer to the inward abyss of the soul, the depth of our being.¹

Another of the Pentecostal Proper Psalms is Ps. 104, already quoted for the use of verse 30 'When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made . . . ' as a versicle and response in the mediaeval rite of Confirmation, and for the allusion to it in the prayer for renewal by the Spirit in Cranmer's new Christmas Collect. The use of Ps. 104 as a Proper Psalm replaces this verse on creation and renewal by the Spirit in the context of the whole psalm on the making and maintenance of the world. This magnificent context in turn explicates the work of the Spirit as 'giver of life' and *Creator Spiritus*—two traditional descriptions which themselves look back, through such passages as John 6:63, 2 Cor. 3:6 and Gen. 1:2, 2:7, to Ps. 104:30.

The Spirit-centred continuation of mediaeval devotion in the Prayer Book, now sketched in part, gives an attention to the individual which is rooted in each person's share in Baptism and Confirmation and explores, in Collects and in psalmody, the depths of the individual heart. The passing approximation to mystical language in Ps. 68:26, where Israel is to give thanks 'from the ground of the heart', suits this broader context, notably

¹ B. McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*, New York (2001), pp. 40–1

the reminiscences in the Collects of the love of God ‘poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us’ (Rom. 5:5). The heart’s thanksgiving is then the effluence of the love imparted by the Spirit.

At the same time there is also a recognition of the corporate dimension of devotion to the Spirit; we partake of the Spirit by incorporation into the Church. The versicle and response from the *Miserere*, the Ash Wednesday liturgical use of the *Miserere* itself, and the Collects which evoke the thought of the purification of the individual heart through infusion of the Spirit are all communal—a common prayer in the case of the *Miserere*, expressed in the first person plural in the case of the versicle and Collects. Correspondingly, at Baptism we give thanks, in a new prayer, that the candidate is regenerate, adopted as God’s own child—and incorporated into his holy Church. After receiving Holy Communion we give thanks, again in a new prayer, for the assurance that we are ‘very members incorporate in the mystical body of [God’s] Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people’.

These new developments take up an existing traditional emphasis on the gift of the Spirit in the Church, but, following the New Testament, express Church membership in the typical Pauline terms of incorporation in Christ. The Collects and the petitions from the *Miserere*, all focused on the gift of the Spirit, are earnestly seeking holiness; but the Church in view in the further prayers just mentioned is not a restricted group of the holy, but a universal Church praying to be inspired continually with the spirit of truth, unity and concord. This conjunction avoids some potential Pentecostal perils, perhaps at the expense of tolerating laxity. Yet a deep Spirit-centred desire for holiness is an unmistakable part of the Prayer Book’s mediaeval inheritance, a part which was welcomed and nobly developed by its compilers and revisers.

The work of the Spirit in creation is recognised, but appears most characteristically when the continuity of the Spirit’s creation and re-creation in nature with new creation in humanity is affirmed, as in the use made of Ps. 104:30 in the Christmas Collect asking for our ‘daily renewal’. Overall, the Prayer Book development of the mediaeval piety of the Spirit brings to the fore the individual heart, the gift of divine love, and renewal within the community, rather than the work of the Spirit in creation and nature, although that is certainly not forgotten. In this proportion and emphasis, however, the piety of the Prayer Book is perhaps not far from that of the New Testament itself, where language specifically connected with the Holy Spirit is concerned.¹

1 C.F.D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (1978), pp. 19–21 (‘In the New Testament . . . so far from the Spirit’s being cosmic in scope (as Christ, the *Logos* of God, is), the Spirit is scarcely mentioned except as among Christians and as the agent of the “new creation”—the bringing persons to new life in Christ’).

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In all, then, I should like to contend for the Prayer Book as a guide to piety as well as liturgy, and to highlight the value of its continuation and development of mediaeval devotion. Some instances of this have now been noted in regard to Christ and our Lady, the intellectual and moral foundations of Christian faith, and the Holy Spirit. Their ethos is deeply felt but unsentimental, thought-out and scriptural but touched with warmth and ardour, speaking to the individual heart but surrounded by awareness of the blessed company of all faithful people. Their development according to our individual needs, through the mediaeval liturgical tradition as expressed and renewed in the Prayer Book, can perhaps complement the ways of piety which have accompanied the twentieth-century reforms.

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For Better or for Worse?

The Marriage Service in Prayer Book Tradition

GORDON JEANES

Introduction

When I was asked to make a contribution to this conference I cast around for a subject and took my cue from the speakers who have preceded me: William Horbury's exploration of continuity and Angela Tilby's¹ discussion of spirituality with the hint of the darker side of humanity in their various ways led me to consider the marriage service which famously contains distinctive elements of both these themes. Of the ambivalent human heart more later, but the Form of Solemnisation of Matrimony is of course the service in which Thomas Cranmer followed most closely the traditional ceremonies of the medieval rites and is also the one which has changed least, not only in the various editions of the Book of Common Prayer but also in the modern alternatives. If imitation is the highest form of praise, then the marriage service is worthy of high praise indeed. The simplification of the medieval ceremonies has given us a shape which has remained intact and an object of affection to the present day: the opening Preface setting out the reasons for marriage, the declarations and vows and the ring (or rings), followed by the marriage blessing; then the prayers. The scriptural and theological underpinning has remained fairly constant (Cana of Galilee and the union of Christ and his Church remain in the Preface; there is less about the Patriarchs but more about God as Trinity). The celebration of Holy Communion which had originally been obligatory seems to have quickly faded from practice and the final sermon finds few takers nowadays, but they have left a service with integrity and power. Such is the continuity of this pattern that it makes good sense to include in the tradition of the Prayer Book not only the revisions of 1928 and the 1965 Series One but also the modern language versions of the *Alternative Service Book* and *Common Worship*. I do not expect members of the Prayer Book Society to applaud the modern services, but they may take considerable pride in the way in which Cranmer's creation has been followed so closely and, as we shall see, issues that he confronted have been explored further. Members may even take a mischievous delight in the way in which later 'improvements' have turned out to be problematic in their own right.

Inevitably with so much continuity, detailed discussion comes down to particular details. And within the time of this paper I can hardly talk about

¹ It is hoped that the Revd Angela Tilby's paper from the 'Hallowed Expressions' conference will be available for a future issue of *Faith & Worship*.—Ed.

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every aspect of the service, but I want to concentrate on those parts which have elicited most comment and even variation over the years, though I shall not discuss the legitimacy of the wedding ring, which exercised the Puritans enormously but I think is widely accepted now, or the question as to whether the husband should 'worship' or merely 'honour' his wife, a distinction which has caused the spilling of much ink but ultimately is a matter of 'you pays your money and you takes your choice.' Larger issues have been played out in the questions whether (or how) the bride should obey her husband, whether she should be given away, and over the appropriateness of various sentiments in the Preface.

The Vows

But I want to begin with the wording of the vows, partly because they go to the heart of the marriage service but partly also because they mark such continuity with the liturgy of the Middle Ages. Thomas Cranmer knew, and was once married by, the medieval rite of Sarum which was, compared with its continental contemporaries, one rich in content and symbolism.

In particular the vows spoken by the couple have been described by Kenneth Stevenson as the 'masterpiece of medieval vernacular liturgy'¹:

I John, take thee, Mary
To my wedded wife,
To have and to hold,
from this day forward,
For better for worse
For richer for poorer,
In sickness and in health
Till death us depart
if holy Church will it ordain
And thereto I plight thee my troth.

I Mary take thee John
To my wedded husband,
To have and to hold
from this day forward
For better for worse
For richer for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To be bonaire and buxom
In bed and at board
Till death us depart
if holy Church will it ordain
And thereto I plight thee my troth.

¹ Kenneth Stevenson, *Nuptial Blessing: A Study of Christian Marriage Rites* (1983), p. 83

Words that are as full of meaning to us today at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and carried enormous significance to generations before us. How far back do they go? The Sarum Manual and its sisters, the rites of York and Hereford, go back to the fourteenth century but the vows might well have been steeped in tradition long before.

‘To have and to hold’ is a phrase used in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, albeit for owning possessions rather than the context of matrimony¹ (who would have wanted to marry Grendel?). And the vows in general are marked by the same old English love of alliteration: ‘to have and to hold’ . . . one version has ‘for fairer for fouler’ . . . and of course there are the famous words of the bride: ‘to be bonaire and buxom in bed and at board’, and then the final ‘till death us depart’.

The rhythm of the vows was based on poetry, following the traditional English patterns of lines broken into two, each with two stressed syllables.² Are they meant to be read as full lines? The groom’s words would suggest so:

To have and to hold, from this day forward
For better for worse, for richer for poorer
In sickness and in health, till death us depart

However the bride’s extra line: ‘To be bonaire and buxom in bed and at board’, would then interrupt the last line, so perhaps we should not be dogmatic about the precise form. But the legal small print is added in prose—of course: ‘If holy Church will it ordain’. The final line ‘and thereto I plight thee my troth’ does not fit into the pattern of the main part of the vow but at least retains something of its rhythm.

How did Cranmer respond to this material? Four-beat alliterative verse had disappeared, at least from the written tradition, by his day, and the cadence of the lines in the marriage service may have seemed even quaintly archaic. However he clearly recognised the strength of the phrases as well as the deep affection in which they were held, and, like a good sculptor, he was more concerned with what to leave than what to chip away. But ‘if holy Church will it ordain’ had to go, on ideological grounds. For in Cranmer’s theology marriage was an ordinance of God to be governed by scriptural precepts, not by the Church’s rules. He had not campaigned for years against the Papacy over the King’s Matter just to give way on that principle now. And so marriage is subject to ‘God’s holy ordinance’. But

¹ *Nuptial Blessing*, p. 80 and note 52, p. 226

² A line of Anglo-Saxon verse is made up of two half-lines. Each of these half-lines contains two main stresses (or lifts). Alliterative verse was important up to the fourteenth century, the last major works including *Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Piers Plowman*, the latter written by the end of that century. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the four-beat alliterative line had completely vanished, at least from the written tradition: the last poem using the form that has survived, *Scottish ffieldie*, was written in or soon after 1515 for the circle of Thomas Stanley, 2nd Earl of Derby, in commemoration of the Battle of Flodden. (*Wikipedia*)

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what to do with the bride's extra line: 'to be bonaire and buxom in bed and at board'? By Cranmer's day 'bonaire and buxom' were hallowed words indeed but they were losing their original meaning. Soon notes would have to be applied explaining that they meant 'meek and obedient'.¹ And this is one of the perennial problems of traditional texts: for how long can one explain and at what point does one replace? Here Cranmer opted for the latter, avoiding also the suggestive 'in bed and at board'. Instead he added a line to both the man's and woman's vows, thereby managing a little bit more equality. In the case of the man there is the very fine drafting: 'to love and to cherish', thereby maintaining the traditional metre of the vow and the double verb, in effect echoing the opening 'to have and to hold', though he could not continue the alliteration. And in this way he could insert something of warmth and affection into the vows—after all, 'to have and to hold' had once been simply a statement of ownership! The bride's version has the same affection, but obedience to one's husband was still very much of the essence of marriage, challenged only by Anabaptists and similar radicals. But the result, the triplet 'to love, cherish and to obey', is less happy stylistically, a triplet intruding among doublets. Cranmer was very much a man of his day and would have seen the subordination of the wife as proper according to the rules both of Scripture and of society, but at the same time he placed it within the reciprocal relationship of mutual loving and cherishing. And he did not dwell on the matter. He has stated it, and that is enough. (Years before he had stressed the same importance of husband and wife flourishing in their relationship together—he had counselled against Henry marrying Anne of Cleves on the basis that it would be very strange to be married to someone you could not share a conversation with.)²

What did obedience signify? There is no clear answer. David Cressy outlines much of the social reality of marriage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and describes a situation in which the rank of the newly married woman changed in several different ways. On the one hand the wife was subordinate to the husband, and within the household she commanded those under her through 'a mediated extension of patriarchal power'. On the other hand both husband and wife on marriage experienced a new role in their society in which, in effect, they came of age and achieved a higher status. The man was no longer subject to his father but would be head of his own household, and eligible for office and liable for taxes. The woman entered into social networks from which the unmarried were excluded, allowed now to attend lyings-in and 'gossipings'

¹ Stevenson, p. 79 and note 51 referring to the Douai version of the Manual

² D.MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (1996), p. 258

and sitting in a more privileged place in church. Don't pretend these things don't matter! As a Puritan writer observed, 'By [marriage] men and women are made husbands and wives, . . . masters and mistresses.'¹ And within the affection of married love, the generalised notion of male superiority could undergo many twists and turns, such as we hear in the account of William Lilly, a servant, who proposed to his mistress. She accepted the offer and 'next day at dinner made me sit down at dinner with my hat on my head, and said she intended to make me her husband.'² Who was in charge of whom? So even in a society which accepted the theory of male superiority and female obedience it was only one aspect of a relationship within a whole network of competing ranks and orders, of property, household, age and gender.

The bride meant to obey

But society has not stayed unchanged since Cranmer's day, nor have the vows, though they have indeed changed remarkably little, and where they have been changed it has been in a direction already signalled by his redrafting of the medieval set. Just as the Prayer Book played down the difference between the man's and woman's vows, reducing the obedience of the wife from a full clause to a single word within a line which emphasised the relational and affectionate aspect of marriage, so the subsequent history of the vows is that they have moved further towards equality; however I have to say I was surprised to discover how stilted and awkward the move has been, and I am not at all sure that we have reached a settled position yet!

The most obvious move was made in 1928 when the service simply omitted the bride's promise to obey, making her vows identical to those said by her husband. That might be thought to have solved the matter. However there was still the fact that the bride was given away (of which more in a moment), and also the words of the man when he puts the ring on the bride's finger and says, 'And all my worldly goods with thee I share' (slightly different there from 1662). Lowther Clarke's commentary reveals the problem, at least as it was seen afterwards:

The woman in civilised countries is the man's equal in the eyes of the law. Her consent is as full and free as the man's. Yet our service supposes that she must be 'given away' by her father, or his substitute. The man 'weds' her in a sense other than that in which she weds him. In particular, the English formula, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow' is grossly one-sided. True, it represents the facts of the law, for a rich wife can claim support from a husband whom she in her turn, if he incurs misfortune, can leave to starve. The 1662 service keeps the

¹ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death* (1997), p. 287 ² *Ibid.*, p. 288

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balance fair by making 'obedience' part of the contract. A revised service may one day provide for equality of the sexes. But the present revised form of the office, whereby the wife retains the advantages of being the weaker vessel and repudiates the accompanying obligation, is a concession to sentiment which cannot be logically defended, The husband's safeguard is the public opinion of women, notoriously severe in judging their own sex; legally he gets the worst of the marriage contract.¹

Later the same writer returns to the subject with a slightly moderated opinion:

Is this a triumph of feminism? The bride no longer promises to obey, receiving in return her husband's all. She now receives a promise from him that he will share everything with her and will work for her as the lady of the house (if this is the meaning of 'with my body I thee honour'). She has already promised complete devotion in heart and soul, but in respect of property she undertakes no reciprocal obligation. This accords with the present state of the law, by which a poor man is responsible for a rich wife's debts, and for maintaining her whatever her personal income, while a rich woman has no such obligation towards her husband, The new Service cannot satisfy the advocate of equality between the sexes. However, no serious grievance is felt by either side and public opinion in these matters is rightly averse to change.²

Once again I wonder how far this notion of a reciprocal relationship of husband and wife, rather than a relationship of equals, was a projection or rationalisation based on the text rather than a studied observation of how marriage actually functioned in people's experience.

The alternative provision in 1928 made no provision for the wife to obey. If she was to do that, she had to use the 1662 service, brute beasts and all. The Series 1 version, which is the generally used traditional marriage service today, makes obedience totally optional for the bride. (I always tell my grooms there is no provision for the husband to obey: that is taken for granted.) But Series 1 retained the tradition whereby only the husband promises to share his worldly goods. As far as the bride was concerned, 'What's yours is mine, and what's mine my own'! The principle of full equality in the marriage vows is found only with the ASB and *Common Worship* where, whether one ring or two are used, both groom and bride declare: 'All that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you.' Not the most elegant phrasing, perhaps, but certainly clear and egalitarian. I can only trust that the imbalance in the law by which the

1 W.K. Lowther Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship* (1932), pp. 469–70

2 W.K. Lowther Clarke, *The Prayer Book of 1928 Reconsidered* (1943), pp. 57–8

husband is liable to support his wife, but she carries no such responsibility to him, has been done away with. But with English law it is always hard to tell!

When brides choose to obey, the ASB was very keen to maintain a sense of equality in the phrasing of the vows, and so 'love, cherish and obey' was reciprocated by 'love, cherish and worship'. However that has not found lasting favour and in *Common Worship* the 'worship' has fallen out again, leaving slightly asymmetrical vows as they had been in the Prayer Book. I'm not convinced we have seen the end of this one!

How many brides still choose to obey, and why? From my own limited experience I would guess about one in twenty, perhaps a few more, but London brides are likely to be among the less conventional. While happily fitting in with their request, I sometimes ask why they want to obey, and one answer spoke, I think, for many. This particular bride was not interested in obeying as such. But her mother had used the vow to obey, and the daughter wanted to use the same words as her mother had—regardless of their actual content and meaning. That could be derided as mere magic or superstition, but I think the bride had realised an important truth: that the marriage vows are bigger than their verbal content and meaning. They impart a way of life, a whole world. They are, to use the title of this conference, 'Hallowed Expressions'.

The bride being given away

I don't know how many brides think about the controversies over being 'given away'. The *Common Worship* service has softened the priest's words to 'Who brings this woman to be married to this man?' but I don't think it will change the popular title of the ceremony. No one is going to talk about being 'brought' by their father or whoever! Tradition and the warmth of relationship between father and daughter will keep the practice going. I don't think many even think about what it means in any abstract or rational way, and they certainly don't subscribe to any idea that the bride was her father's chattel. And was she ever? Or is this one of those false rationalisations, a projection of our own demons back onto a former age?

David Cressy records some writers in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, including the great Richard Hooker, supported the custom with a strongly gendered interpretation: women by their very nature need that extra protection and guidance. Cressy wonders whether their laboured justifications point to contemporary objections. But he himself reads the service as implying 'permission rather than possession'.¹

The Prayer Book has the priest say: 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?' We do not find that question in the medieval Sarum

1 Cressy, pp. 339–40

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rite, but it is included in the York rite. Of course that does not mean that priests using the Sarum rite did not say it. A lot of liturgical custom was and is communicated orally rather than by books. I would be confident that Cranmer saw himself as observing traditional custom rather than making any innovations here.

Although he does not quote him, Cressy's understanding [of permission rather than possession] is supported by Bucer's explanation of this rite in the *Censura*: 'only those marriages should be consecrated in church which are contracted with the consent of the people in whose power and confidence the people who come to be married have lived; similarly the law should carefully provide that marriages contracted otherwise are not valid.' Notice that there is nothing about a girl being her father's property, or even that she in particular needs protection. What Bucer states about the role of those with power and confidence really applies to bride and groom equally, and he is worried about weakness, not of the fairer sex, but of youth. This is clear in his general comments on matrimony where he picks up the same theme of the important role of the parents:

If it were proclaimed by law that those promises of marriage were to be regarded as invalid when those who come to be married (ii . . . *conveniunt*) come without the consent of those in whose power they are . . . how many disgraceful situations would be avoided into which young girls, and sometimes poor ones, are enticed by a false promise of marriage? And how many acts of perjury would be avoided by which men falsely abjure their promises of marriage when they have been overtaken by regret?¹

Perhaps the role and responsibility of parent or guardian was taken more seriously on the bride's side, but the situation was seen by Bucer as applying to both. And the evidence of the time suggests that indeed men as well as women took the advice of their elders extremely seriously, and it was a matter of grave concern if they did not consult them.² And the length to which Bucer goes on this subject suggests it was a real and common issue. English marriage law was not in a good state. He blamed the laws inherited from the Papacy for the situation in which promises to many were treated as absolutely binding³ (Bucer was concerned also to allow the possibility of divorce, subject to scriptural norms.)

But the story of the marriage service must also take into account the new material Cranmer added, in the new Preface.

¹ *Censura*, p. 118

² Cressy, pp. 255–60

³ The situation did not change—see Cressy, pp.267–76.

The Preface

One of the things that struck me is the enduring popularity of the lengthy preface. Reformation era liturgies are prone to long monologues of explanation or exhortation, and nowadays they tend to be abbreviated or passed over altogether. (Those who are totally at home with the Prayer Book Communion service can be identified by the assurance with which they flick past those pages.) But the Preface remains in the marriage service, and later versions have included pieces of similar length and construction. Even the civil registration ceremony opens with a statement of what marriage is in the eyes of the law (and it is hard to imagine a more barren portrait of the relationship). Once again, imitation is the highest form of praise. The general principle has been admitted, and discussion comes about the detail.

(i) 'like brute beasts that have no understanding'

That matrimony might be undertaken 'unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly' is a surprise to no one. But Cranmer's rather lurid description, 'to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding' has often been thought to have taken it a bit far. In fact it is based on the book of Tobit in the Apocrypha, a rather romantic story which evidently appealed to writers of marriage liturgies and to celibate clergy (often the same people) in that the true loves meet up, the bride's father says a lovely prayer, and the couple refrain from consummating their marriage until they have prayed to God, the groom affirming that he did not marry for lust. In the Latin Vulgate version of the book (which is very different from the one you will find translated in modern Bibles) the angel Raphael instructs the would-be bridegroom Tobias, 'Hear me, and I shall show you who they are over whom the demon can prevail. For those who undertake marriage in such a way that they shut God out of their mind and give way to their lust like horse and mule who have no understanding, the demon has power over them. But you, when you receive your bride, go into the bedroom and for three days refrain from intercourse with her, and spend your time only in prayer with her.'¹ (Jerome admitted that he translated the book of Tobit in only one day, using a text which a Jewish scholar had translated for him from Aramaic into Hebrew. But the creative variations in his version may well owe more to his imagination and prejudice than to the dodgy double translation.) So that is where 'brute beasts that have no understanding' come from, but unless a sixteenth-century bride was going to suffer multiple bereave-

¹ Tobit 6:17-18; qui coniugium ita suscipiunt ut . . . suae libidini ita vacant sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectus.

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ments on honeymoon it was not going to impress. I would imagine that the only thing that kept the phrase in the Prayer Book was the clumsy political rather than pastoral processes of revision that the Book of Common Prayer suffered over the years. In the *Durham Book*, one of the suggested revisions leading up to 1662, 'like brute beasts that have no understanding' was deleted but then restored and so indeed it was retained in 1662. The whole clause was deleted from the proposed *Liturgy of Comprehension* of 1688, and so we can see that it was problematic for many at the time. No doubt it brought many a raised eyebrow and wry smile to wedding congregations then as it would now. But the 1688 proposed reform was still born, and the clause remained for another two and a half centuries. 1928 excised it altogether, followed by Series 1. It has not reappeared, and one would think that it has been decently buried without trace.

However I was interested to read a modern, not defence of the phrase, perhaps more an appreciation of it, in Robin Gill's work on pastoral liturgy, *Only Connect*. Gill comments:

The marriage liturgy is a ritualised celebration of sexual union, although one might not always think so when listening to many church debates about marriage. The threatening, mysterious power of human sexuality is avoided with many ambivalent words... The new Anglican marriage liturgy has clarified the celebration of sexual union: 'It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.' What the new liturgy has sacrificed is an honest recognition of the ambiguity of human sexuality. Although the 1662 Anglican liturgy was at fault in many ways, it did show a more realistic grasp of the destructive, as well as creative, power of sexuality: '... to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding'. The new Anglican liturgies have an aura of middle-class respectability about them. But you do not have to wander far in any city to recognise that the 1662 liturgy also had part of the truth. Can liturgy care for people if it does not recognise honestly the ambiguous nature of human sexuality?¹

Tough words, but Gill's criticisms of the ASB were not taken up by the revisers who produced *Common Worship*. It is easy to see why. The Church is often, rightly, accused of an obsession with sex and a refusal to accept it as a gift of God, so why fall back into that old trap again? And, above all, why cast a shadow over a wedding? Perhaps there is a time to verbalise the problems of lust, as indeed of greed, sloth, pride and all the other natural instincts and affections which we do not see as implanted by God in us, but a wedding is not the occasion.

¹ Robin Gill, *Only Connect: Worship and Liturgy from the Perspective of Pastoral Care* (1987), pp.101-2

(ii) 'the reasons why matrimony was ordained'

So Cranmer exhorted us to look beyond our lust to God's plans for humanity, and the 1549 Prayer Book went on to list three reasons for marriage:

One was the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and praise of God.

Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as be married, might live chastely in matrimony, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

Thirdly for the mutual society, help and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

The three reasons were based on the commonplaces of scholastic theology. But the order in which they were presented produced comment right from the very beginning. Martin Bucer, the Strasbourg reformer in exile in England, said in his contemporary critique of the 1549 Prayer Book that:

Three causes for matrimony are enumerated, that is children, a remedy, and mutual help, and I should prefer that what is placed third among the causes for marriage might be in the first place, because it is first. For a true marriage can take place between people who seek neither for children nor for a remedy against fornication... And so it is that in the first institution of marriage, to which the Lord Christ taught us always to look back, God did not say that its purpose was children, or a remedy, but this: 'It is not good for man to be alone, let us therefore make a help for him, to be with him.'

As so often Bucer's pleas went unheeded. Indeed in 1552 the second reason was strengthened in a negative manner, so that 'such persons as be married' were now described as those who 'have not the gift of continency'. This is valid in itself— as St Paul said, it is better to marry than to burn — but there is no concession to Paul's more positive evaluation of the sexual instinct.¹

It is only in 1928 that we find a more positive wording of the sentence: 'that the natural instincts and affections, implanted by God, should be hallowed and directed aright; that those who are called of God to this holy estate, should continue therein in pureness of living.' And Bucer's plea for a change in the order was heard only in the late twentieth century by the authors of the ASB, though they totally reversed the order and had help first, then the proper enjoyment of sexual intercourse and children last of all. (Perhaps it was no coincidence that Charles Whitaker, the editor of

¹ There is a suggested emendation in the Durham Book: 'that such as be married might live chastely in Matrimony.'

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Bucer's *Censura*, was also one of the main architects of the ASB.) But by 1980 we were in the generation which was post-pill and also psychologically more aware. Lambeth Conferences had allowed for the use of artificial contraception, at first reluctantly, then more confidently, but still regarding the procreation of children as the primary object of sexual intercourse;¹ but more recently the acknowledgement of the role of intercourse in the psychological bonds of the relationship has qualified that notion of priority, and the ASB is at least honest and positive in proposing that 'by the joy of their bodily union they may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives.'

Conclusion

Yesterday evening I had a meeting with two couples who are getting married later this year, and I found myself wondering what sense they would make of this kind of discussion of the service. They were, I think, genuinely impressed by the idea that the marriage vows went back so many generations and centuries—doing what your parents and grandparents did does count for something; they joked about the bride obeying — neither bride was going to — but the small print discussion of the text would have glazed their eyes. Of course the reasons why matrimony was ordained is read for the benefit not of those getting married that day but for the congregation: for those contemplating marriage and for those who are reflecting on their own married lives through the prism of the couple in front of them. But I think my couples also understood the role of the words of the marriage service as performative texts; that just as the words 'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord,' marks and makes a death; and 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust', cannot be analysed for theoretical meaning without crushing the significance they bear for each and every one of us; even so 'to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer' carries even in its casual reminiscence such a weight as mere words cannot contain. All human life is there, and also the light of the divine.

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1 F.A.Iremonger, *William Temple* (1948), pp. 450–1, re the Lambeth Conferences of 1920 and 1930

Traditional Wisdom

ARTHUR MIDDLETON

On the Edge is the title of a film I enjoyed watching on television in July 2001. It told of three men whose plane had crashed in Alaska. They are stranded, lost, confused about what to do. Two of them have their own ideas. The third, Anthony Hopkins, has a number of ideas which are not his own. On the plane he had been reading a book about the fundamental principles of survival. It was a digest of traditional wisdom from the experience of those who had survived similar situations. 'Put away our own ideas and follow these principles from people who have done it,' says Hopkins. He makes a compass from a paper clip on a leaf and floats it on water. In response to the earth's magnetic field it points them southwards, the direction they seek. The secret is not to stop thinking says Hopkins. So when a bear eats one of them and stalks the other two, the book advises them how to lure the bear into a situation where leaping towards them it impales itself on their prearranged wooden spears. Eventually the other man betrays Hopkins and dies but Hopkins survives by remaining faithful to these principles and his own integrity, taking note of the wisdom of those who had been through the same experience.

Molly was blind and lived in the confused world of Alzheimer's. With husband Billy she had been a weekly communicant all her life until it was impossible to attend church. Billy said it was a waste of time taking her Communion because of blindness and memory loss. I protested and went. Without a book, from the Collect for Purity from the Book of Common Prayer, Molly joined in without hesitation. It was a numinous experience. She knew what was happening and what she was doing and asked Billy to telephone and tell me it was the most wonderful experience of her life. These Communions became moments of reality in her confused world, because for decades her life had been immersed in the Church's common prayer and common tradition. The Book of Common Prayer had remained her compass in the confusion of Alzheimer's. In Newman's words, those who adhere to it are people who 'receive the gospel literally on their knees, and in a temper altogether different from that critical and argumentative spirit which sitting and listening engender.'

Our compass

The unity, authority and principles of Anglicanism are preserved in the genius of the Book of Common Prayer. This is our compass amid the confused voices of our contemporary Anglican Babel. The loss of this

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compass has severed Anglicanism from its moorings. Consequently, we are pushed by movements whose concern is not reformist but revolutionary—the reconstruction of Christian doctrine. It is about an Anglican identity crisis.

Words of warning and encouragement come to mind. In Revelation 3:2, Our Lord addressed the angel of the Church in Sardis. ‘Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die.’ Nowhere was there a greater example of the depressive contrast between past splendour and present decay. Sardis was a degenerate city. It was wealthy but decadent. Its life was debased and without spirit. The once great people of Sardis were soft, and twice they had lost their city because they were too lazy to watch. In that enervating atmosphere the Christian Church too had lost its vitality and was a corpse instead of a living Church.

These words might well apply to ourselves in England at the present time. We have, thank God, ‘things which remain’. We have in the Prayer Book magnificent ideals of worship, doctrine and life; but we find ourselves in an atmosphere that is strange in our twenty-first-century culture. The Prayer Book ideals do not square with everyday experience inside and outside the Church. One of two solutions seem to lie before us: 1. We may try to alter the ideal to suit the facts or 2. We may try to find our way back to the ideal.

Proposals about the Church’s future make us painfully conscious of the fact that the underlying principle is the adjustment of the ideal to fit contemporary movements. Ardent reformists and revisionists have made up their minds that the former of the two courses above mentioned is the one that is best for them to follow. Marry the Church to the spirit of the age and as Dean Inge said the Church will be a widow in the next. It is what I call genetically modified theology and as with crops sight is lost of where we come from and where we are going. The mind is destroyed and life becomes uncontrollable.

Is this the method of God?

In the Old Testament God constantly sends His prophets in times when the children of Israel had corrupted their ways but the prophet never suggests a new departure. His message is always to recall the people of God to the ideal that they had forgotten, and to show them that it was turning from the ideal that was the root and source of all their troubles. The same Lord GOD Who spoke to our fathers by the prophets spoke in these last days by His SON; and his message to Sardis was, ‘Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.’ GOD’s method is to recall people to the ideal, and as with Him there is ‘neither variableness neither shadow of turning’ so we are quite sure that in twenty-first-century England he calls

us back to the old ideal and cautions us to be watchful and strengthen the things that remain. We are to adapt our life and culture to the ideal not the ideal to the life and culture.

That ideal is authoritatively set before us in the Book of Common Prayer. So what I preach is not 'personal opinion' or 'my view' but the faith and practice of undivided Christendom. That is a fundamental principle on which the Book of Common Prayer stands. The Church of England's mind as embodied in her Prayer Book mirrors the tradition of the wider historic Church. Why do you believe in the Nicene Creed? Or why do you practise Infant Baptism? Is it because you have elaborately thought them out and made an 'opinion' about them? I think not. You take them for granted on the authority of undivided Christendom.

As it is with these things, so it should be with everything else. If, on any point of doctrine people find themselves at variance with the body of undivided Christendom, they are responsible, before God and their fellow Christians for having thus isolated themselves from the main body. It is no good claiming 'that is my view,' as if that made an end of the matter. It is not important what your 'view' is, or what my 'view' may be. God is the Judge; and 'views' will fare badly in the judgement to come. Today I am merely putting before you the faith and practice of undivided Christendom. Take it, or leave it! But remember that, if you follow your 'view', or anyone else's 'view', instead of bowing to the authority of undivided Christendom, you will have to justify yourself before God for so doing. Membership of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church means that we are bound by the Christian Creed to believe in the universal faith of the universal Church as we are bound to believe in the Holy Trinity or in the Incarnation. The vision of the ideal implies a judgement.

Individual conscience

My history master, who was a Scot, once said to me, 'The Scots keep the Sabbath and everything else they can lay their hands on. The Welsh pray on the Sabbath and on their neighbours during the rest of the week; and the Englishman is a self-made man and worships his creator.'

Englishmen often think that their individual conscience is the sole referee; that if individually they think something right, it is right, and similarly if they think something permissible, it is permissible. For practical purposes they ignore any standard outside themselves, which ignores the ultimate judgement of God. Yet whatever an Englishman may think or say, it still remains that our Lord is the Judge because he is the Son of Man. English Christians then, must cease to 'do that which is right in our own eyes' and conform our lives to the authoritative standard of life set

out by God in his Holy Church. If we persist in following our own standard of life we must accept the consequences of our disobedience in the judgement to come.

Is there an authoritative standard of human life?

In the Church and in our culture people do not seem to be very clear about this. 'Individualism' is the spirit of our times. People do not want any restraining power on them either in thought or behaviour. In the climate of political correctness, which originated in atheistic Marxism and reduces faith and life to human rights, they think that if they do that which is right in their own eyes they are adopting the high ground; because, of course, it is possible for them to do that which is wrong in their own eyes. They acknowledge a standard but the standard is a purely individual and personal one. In thought or action, faith or morals, their individual conscience becomes Judge, Jury, and Court of Appeal. Their creed is that which they think they see to be true and their morality is that which they think to be right. It is crucial to face the question whether every person is to be a standard for himself, or whether there is an absolute standard of right and wrong outside ourselves. Is this the secular mind of twenty-first-century people?

The secularisation of the Church

Our culture has become more and more distant from its Christian roots. It no longer depends upon Christian symbols, morals, principles, or practices. It has become secular like most of Europe. The secularisation of the church is another threat. The Archbishop of York has proposed a secular vision of the church in an article. He calls for the Church of England to represent people of all faiths, and those of no faith at all. The Church of England deserves its place as the Established Church because it now serves as a 'public utility' serving the common good and should be open for use by people of any religion or none, like a hospital. Thus the Church is a public body and not more properly to serve believers. Regular attendance at church is irrelevant.

What a strange and pathetic vision of the Church! No longer is it the assembly of believers, the Body of Christ, but is now defined as a public utility in order to provide services such as education, funerals, and a context for important national events—such as, he suggests, the funeral of Princess Diana. This has to be the most bizarre and the most unbiblical concept of the Church ever. His final point is that the Church provides 'faithful capital' for the society at large, building community and relationships and social cohesiveness. All this is supposed to come without any emphasis on actual Christian beliefs or teachings. He assumes that

most people will never attend church anyway which is no longer a problem.

This is the end result of liberal theology—a thoroughly secularised Church that celebrates multiculturalism, religious diversity and political correctness. There is no place for evangelism, for the belief is that it is unnecessary. It effectively erases the boundary between belief and unbelief. The saving message of the Gospel—the message of salvation from sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—is replaced with a social function. The Body of Christ is transformed into a public utility.

In Matthew 16, Jesus states that his Church is built on the confession that he is ‘the Christ, the Son of the Living God’. But in the church of liberal theology, any belief (or no belief at all) will eventually do. Furthermore, no one actually needs to come. Nothing of eternal significance is happening anyway.

What we see in this view of the Church is what happens when the interests of the state are all that remain. We will end up like the Episcopal Church in America that has reduced the meaning and mission of the Church to social capital and public utility. This is ultimately where liberal theology leads, and where the Church meets its end. The gates of hell will easily prevail over anything reduced to the status of a ‘public utility’.

In the wastelands of secularism, multiculturalism and political correctness, remember that the Tower of Babel reminds us of the confusion in a community that looks to the spirit of man for the guarantee of success. So where do we go from here? It was the question of Anthony Hopkins in the wastelands of Alaska. He found his answer not in his own view or in the views of those he was with, but in that digest of traditional wisdom he had been reading on the plane, an authoritative standard outside himself. For Anglicans that authoritative standard outside ourselves is embodied in the Book of Common Prayer where the Church of England is claimed to be continuous in identity with the Primitive Church. In the Preface, Canons and Formularies it claims the Primitive Church as its model. Canon A5 stipulates that the doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal.

Look to the Prayer Book

If you want to know what the Church is then go to the Preface to the BCP. If you want to know what Bishops, Priests and deacons in the Apostolic Succession are, go to the Ordinal. If you want to know what Christian Marriage is go to the Marriage Service. If you want to know what

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sin is, go to the Book of Common Prayer. If you want to know what Sacraments are, go to the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer. If you want to know what holiness is look at the commemoration of saints and you will find yourself in the communion of saints. What more do we need for the way of salvation? We have the Word of God, the Faith of the Apostles, the Creeds of the Primitive Church, the Articles of the four first General Councils, a holy liturgy, excellent prayers, perfect sacraments, faith and repentance, the Ten Commandments, and all the precepts and counsels of the Gospels.

This is the 'faith once delivered to the saints' the Christian faith as proclaimed, taught and lived through grace and forgiveness within the community of faith, by the members of the Church of England. We cannot have the language of the Prayer Book or its liturgy without commitment to its doctrine which language and liturgy articulate, otherwise they become empty words. To accommodate this doctrine to the spirit of the age is to destroy it and with it the means of our salvation. So being 'Prayer Book people' takes us very deep indeed as it embodies in us an authoritative standard of life which is the historic faith and practice of undivided Christendom. If we allow the spirit of our secularised culture to turn us away from that standard, we shall certainly one day have to answer for having done so.

(This sermon was preached at the Prayer Book Society National Conference 2009, and was intended to be published with the Conference papers in Faith & Worship 65–66. The Revd Canon Arthur Middleton is an Honorary Fellow of St Chad's College Durham and Patron of the Society of King Charles the Martyr. Canon Middleton is the author of Restoring the Anglican Mind (2008).)

Review

Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, James Clarke & Co, 2010. ISBN 978 0 227 17292 6 £19.50

Evelyn Underhill (1875–1941) is better known for her earlier study *Mysticism* (1911) and as a pioneer of the retreat movement in the Church of England, but this second long work, first published in 1936, equally shows that she was ahead of her time. Though out of print for many years, it has remained part of the core bibliography for Anglican ordinands. Here is a generosity of spirit to the full breadth of traditions, and a recognition of the essentially corporate and social nature of the liturgy, which we take for granted today.

The book is beautifully written and full of deep insight and sound instruction. It falls into two equal parts, the first comprehensively outlining the general principles of worship, including its ‘theocentric yet incarnational temper’, ritual, symbol, sacrifice, word, silence, corporate action, prophecy, miscellaneous other liturgical elements, and an extended discussion of the Eucharist. The second part describes particular historical embodiments of these principles, beginning with Judaism and the Early Church, and moving on to a more critical commentary on Western and Eastern Catholicism, and the Reformed, Free Church and Anglican traditions.

As an example of the latter I choose, of course, the verdict on the Prayer Book. It misses both ‘that intimate relation of every soul to God which is the heart of Evangelical worship’ and ‘the realisation of an enfolding supernatural world as the environment within which the Church worships . . . which is fundamental to a full Catholicism.’ ‘We have only to open a Missal or an Orthodox service book, to realise how much spiritual treasure the Anglican reformers threw away . . .’ Yet for all this, ‘it meets the average needs of the English soul,’ and, ‘to have restored the Divine Office to its true position as the daily prayer of the whole “household of faith” . . . is a chief glory of the Anglican rite.’

There is a tendency throughout to judge each tradition for what it lacks, by which rule no one can win, for many elements are mutually exclusive. It is a mark of Underhill’s catholicity that she admits the full range of religious expression, helpfully recognising, for example, that a Quaker meeting room devoid of symbol is thereby a ‘witness to the Holy; as exceeding all symbol and image’ though at the same time disapproving of such exclusivism as inadequate to an incarnational faith. But worship cannot be expressed as an all-embracing ideal, only in a particular, earthly, limited form, and the point could have been made that a *Via Media* is helpful towards maximising the available treasure.

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I was left puzzled as to the value of the everyday life of the household of faith. There is constant reference to the ‘supernatural’, creation being divided in two by a line which runs through humans which are ‘half-animal, half-spiritual’. Since God is repeatedly named ‘the Supernatural’ or ‘the Reality’, it is easy to read this superficially as Platonic dualism, but at the same time Underhill’s theology is deeply incarnational. Worship is always directed towards the sanctification of all of life, and the whole of a Christian’s existence is sacramental material.

If the quotidian and ‘natural’ is devalued here it is not by denying that it can be a source of worship, but by denying that it can be anything else. Worship is not placed in the wider context of a theology of creation because it is ‘conterminous with life itself’. The saint’s ultimate goal is to be a ‘tool of God’, with the whole personality subdued to his total demand. The second part of the Great Commandment is a special case of the first, for God is the ‘sole object of love’. Underhill avoids the danger of pantheistic ‘absorption mysticism’, but we are given little sense of the freedom and integrity of creation recognised by Aquinas and emphasised in more recent times by Jacques Pohier and Rowan Williams. This book remains a valuable student’s text even today, but I suggest that it fails to see that the best liturgy is made for the people, not people for the liturgy.

Mark Hart

*(The Revd Dr Mark Hart is Rector of Plemstall & Guilden Sutton, and Rural Dean of Chester. His book *Straight to the Pointlessness: A Christian Account of Life and the Universe* will be published by Continuum in November 2010.)*

Letters

The place of the Apocrypha in the Prayer Book

From the Revd Dr John Hartley, Eccleshill, Bradford

During my time on General Synod, *Faith and Worship* has dropped through my letter-box regularly. I’m not a subscriber, for I don’t support wholeheartedly the Prayer Book Society’s agenda: but it has been a great blessing to me in provoking me to think and giving me new things to think about. From next summer, if I’m not re-elected, I might not receive it again—so it is only right that I express my thanks. I’m very grateful, and your publication has opened my eyes in a very helpful way.

I am prompted to write by John Scrivener’s thoughts on the ‘pillar lectionary’ (pages 4–6 of the Easter 2010 edition). The lectionary tries to make the Bible readings for daily services ‘thematic’, by cherry-picking the

best parts of the Testaments, and by choosing pairs of readings from the two Testaments that are linked in some way by theme. A thoroughly 'ASB 1980' kind of approach, and one I personally find very helpful.

But, of course, there are flies in every ointment, and the fly I noticed in particular was in the use of the Apocrypha. If you look at the broad sweep of the New Testament, there are quite a lot of passages in it about the importance of good conduct, being sensible, being led by the Spirit into acts of righteousness, and other aspects of good sound common sense. Searching for matching passages from the Old Testament, one naturally turns to the Wisdom literature—and that's where the trouble starts, for the eye is next drawn to various parts of the Apocrypha in which Wisdom is also a major theme. And so it was that the proposed lectionary included 17 readings from the Apocrypha in the year. Unlike the continuous daily lectionaries, no canonical Old Testament alternatives to the Apocryphal readings were initially proposed.

So I wrote to the Revision Committee asking three things. First, at the very least, please could we always have a canonical alternative to a proposed Apocryphal reading? It isn't that hard to think of suitable readings, and I provided a list of alternatives. Second, does the Liturgical Commission believe in principle that the Apocrypha should form part of our bible-reading scheme? For although Article VI says that 'the Church doth read' the other books, it also takes care to state that these are only 'for example of life and instruction of manners' and are not 'to establish any doctrine'. And third, isn't there a case for reducing the number of readings from the Apocrypha? For the purpose of the pillar lectionary is to showcase the best parts of the Scripture, aimed as it is at the casual visitor to church rather than the person who comes regularly and should hear the whole counsel of God.

I was very pleased that the Revision Committee accepted the first of these points without a fight—and the new 'pillar lectionary' now has sensible canonical alternatives to all its Apocryphal readings (mostly drawn from my list!). My other two points were heavily defeated, and the press portrayed me as a beaten man—but let's not forget the advance I (and others) did achieve.

The arguments about my other points really hinge on what the Prayer Book is saying about the Apocrypha, and I'd appreciate hearing some responses to them in your magazine. Here are a few:

It was argued that seeing as the Prayer Book has no shyness about Apocryphal canticles like the *Benedicite*, neither should we be shy of Apocryphal readings. I suggest this is a mistake. The exhortation ('Dearly beloved . . .') in Morning and Evening Prayer contains a quick summary of why we have come together: 'to render thanks for the great benefits . . . ,

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to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, and to ask’ (a summary incorporated into the ASB’s ‘We have come together’). Cranmer has no hesitation in including non-canonical items in setting forth (God’s) praise, so *Te Deum Laudamus* features in Morning Prayer, and *Gloria in Excelsis* in the Communion Service—both Christian hymns of the early centuries with scriptural allusions but no claims to any kind of canonical authority. The Creed is another example of a non-scriptural responsive item at the heart of the service. It’s not surprising that canticles from the Apocrypha should make appearances too as part of our response to God’s disclosure of himself—but that’s entirely different from putting them in the ‘hearing his most holy word’ slots in the service. Let me put it this way: I have no objections to the Prayer of Manasseh as a response we make to God’s call to holiness at the beginning of Lent, but I have many objections to its use as an Old Testament Lesson. For it obviously expresses contrition well: its problem is that it purports to bear witness to a deathbed conversion which is historically very dubious.

It was argued that Cranmer had no shyness about including the Apocrypha in his original ‘Calendar with Table of Lessons’, so neither should we. Again I suggest this is a mistake. Looking through Cranmer’s strategy for writing the Old Testament column of his Table of Lessons, it is immediately obvious that he chose Isaiah to be read during Advent, and then apart from that he simply started at Genesis in January and worked through the biblical books in order, chapter by chapter, reaching Malachi at the end of October. The fact that he had twenty-one days left to fill is a mere accidental phenomenon caused by the Old Testament having fewer chapters than the number of mornings and evenings in a year! He obviously didn’t think that the Apocrypha was to be included in principle, otherwise he would have re-jigged his scheme to include the other eleven Apocryphal books mentioned in Article VI, and not contented himself with only Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and one chapter of Baruch.

It was argued that modern Christians need to be familiarised with the background of inter-Testamental literature in order that they might better understand the context of the New Testament readings which will follow. There are two mistakes here. Firstly, Cranmer had the opportunity to use readings from the Fathers in the service if he had wished to do so: Morning Prayer was an amalgam of elements from the different morning monastic offices, and he could have included a range of patristic material which featured in the Vigils—material which would have shed light and commentary on the way the early Church viewed and interpreted the New Testament. But he didn’t: he felt it was more important to let Scripture speak for itself. And second, in fact the readings from the Apocrypha often don’t shed positive Christian light on the New Testament passages so much

as misconceptions which the Reformers felt were responsible for the errors in the mediaeval Church. One might almost say that the Apocrypha is the first step down the road which eventually led to the dead end of Pharisaic Judaism, against which Jesus and the Apostles had to take a stand and the early Church had to struggle. (An instance of this was the suggestion of Ecclesiasticus 44:19–23 to match James 2:15–24—Ecclesiasticus shows the way the Jews thought Abraham’s keeping the law qualified him for entering the covenant, whereas Christians thought the covenant came before his deeds of righteousness.)

It was argued that the qualifying phrase in the rubric ‘Then shall be read distinctly with an audible voice the First Lesson, taken out the Old Testament as is appointed in the Calendar, . . .’ made it quite clear that the Church did in fact not stick solely to the Old Testament for the First Lesson, for the Calendar set parts of the Apocrypha in its ‘Old Testament’ column. I think there’s an arguable point here. My opponents are arguing that the phrase ‘Old Testament’ needs to give way to the Calendar’s use: I’m arguing that the Calendar ought to conform to the requirement for an ‘Old Testament’ reading as defined by Article VI, and that Cranmer had made a technical mistake in his calendar—a mistake he seems not to have noticed, for there is no further writing about the subject. Instead of persisting with his mistake and calling it a virtue, I think we should have grasped the nettle and taken the opportunity of correcting it.

It was argued that the congregation would be familiar with the Article VI distinction, and would be quite capable of taking the Apocryphal readings purely for examples of how to live godly lives, and not establishing any doctrine on them. Really? The General Synod debate showed that actually there were many long-standing Anglican Christians who agreed with the representative of the Orthodox Churches when he said that in his Church there never had been any difference between the Apocryphal and non-Apocryphal parts of the Old Testament: it was all Scripture and all read as such, always had been and always should be. On this view the distinction in Article VI was simply a mistake. But if it wasn’t a mistake—if Cranmer and the other Reformers had felt it important enough to draw a distinction—then why is the modern Church so resistant to respecting that distinction?

And perhaps most perversely, it was argued that the Article VI phrase ‘the church doth read the other books’ meant that the church *should* read the other books, and read them in the place appointed for the Old Testament in Morning and Evening Prayer. But, of course, ‘the literal and grammatical sense’ of the words is that they are purely descriptive. They describe what was going on in the Church in Cranmer’s day, not what should go on in our generation.

I wanted to test the mind of the General Synod about the place of the Apocrypha in the Church of England, and the heavy defeat I suffered has made me go back and question each of these points. And yet, it still seems to me that the Church of England, following the faith set out in its historic formularies including the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles of Religion, should have minimised its use of the Apocrypha. Brothers and sisters, am I right? If I'm not, please correct me!

The 'Pillar Lectionary'

From the Revd Canon M.C. Paternoster, Wells, Somerset

In discussing the principles that should govern revision of the lectionary, we should bear in mind that Cranmer's insistence on reading the whole Bible through continuously from day to day throughout the year belongs to an era when most people were illiterate, and those who were literate probably could not afford a Bible of their own; hence they would only become familiar with the text by hearing it read. Nowadays, those who are serious about Bible reading do it at home. The lessons at Church services no longer perform the function intended by Cranmer. Furthermore, whatever the Prayer Book intends, it is nowadays only in cathedrals and a very few other churches that there are daily services attended by members of the public.

Judging by what happens in the cathedral I know best, Matins is said at an early hour, attended by the clergy and a handful of regulars; Evensong is sung, and on an average weekday a fair proportion of the congregation, especially in summer, are not regulars; for some, it may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It looks therefore as though we need two lectionaries: for Matins, *lectio continua*, since most of those present will have heard yesterday's instalment and will hear tomorrow's; but the readings at Evensong should be such as make sense by themselves. This does not mean leaving out the difficult bits, but it recognises that each evening's readings have to make their own impact on people who probably do not know the Bible very well; lessons which are obscure or meaningless out of their context are a wasted opportunity.

Devising a lectionary is never easy and no one is ever entirely satisfied with the results, but I suggest that something along these lines would be a definite improvement on what we have at present.

(It is only fair to the Liturgical Commission—and to the cathedrals which have asked for a 'pillar lectionary'—to say that their intention has been exactly that expressed by Canon Paternoster. —Ed.)

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