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Editorial

A correspondent recently expressed the anxiety that some articles in *Faith and Worship* were too redolent of 'Prayer Book fundamentalism', and asked for more recognition of the 'theological shifts down the centuries' which had resulted, for example, in the 'much denigrated' 1928 book, and in the revived interest in Cranmer's first Prayer Book of 1549. As it happened I was able to assure the writer that the forthcoming number of the magazine was giving some attention to these matters, not least because this year (as another correspondent had reminded me) sees the eightieth anniversary of the Deposited Book whose rejection by the House of Commons was a traumatic event for those most closely involved.

The anniversary obviously needed to be marked, and Professor Raymond Chapman has provided a masterly summary of what led up to the Books of 1927 and 1928, and of their character. But it happened, as this issue of *Faith and Worship* took shape, that other pieces came to hand which seemed to shed light on that history from different directions: Dr Heath's 'In Defence of 1549' brings out freshly the characteristics of Cranmer's earlier vernacular Communion rite which made it so attractive to those who sought the Catholic renewal of the Church of England; while Canon Woods' account of the ministry of his distinguished predecessor Edward Harston reminds us of this renewal in an earlier phase, when the priority was not revision of the Book of Common Prayer but the recovery of it in its fullness. (And Canon Woods reminds us too that the enhancement of worship did not take place in a vacuum, but was accompanied, in an energetic ministry like Harston's, by other reforms and renewals.)

As these things came together I happened to be re-reading Cyril Garbett's *The Claims of the Church of England*, published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1947. The book was at one time widely read—there was an abridged paperback edition—but is now, I suppose, forgotten. But it occurred to me that Garbett's chapter on 'The Worship of the Church' would be well worth reprinting in *Faith and Worship*, written as it was some twenty years after the parliamentary debacle of 1928 by one who had participated in the events (Randall Davidson had entrusted him with drafting the controversial rubric on Reservation[1]). Besides offering an historical sketch of the development of Anglican worship which, for all its appearance of ease, is the result of much reading, Garbett paints a picture of the liturgical practice of his own time which perhaps only he *could* have painted.

1 See, for details of Garbett's life, Charles Smyth, *Cyril Forster Garbett* (1959).

He had been brought up in a rural parish in Surrey of which his father was incumbent. His own parochial service—over a period of twenty years—was in the famous urban parish of Portsea, where he had a team of *sixteen* curates and congregations in excess of a thousand. He was successively Bishop of the predominantly urban Diocese of Southwark and of the predominantly rural Diocese of Winchester, before becoming Primate of the Northern Province in 1942. By the time he came to write *The Claims of the Church of England* he must have had as varied experience of the Church's worship as anyone on the bench of bishops. His biographer describes him as 'at heart a High Churchman', but he was by his own account 'no Anglo-Catholic' and, as can be seen from the extract printed here, disliked liturgical waywardness in any direction.

Of especial interest, I think, are Garbett's remarks on the diversity of worship to be encountered sixty years ago, before the modern phase of liturgical revision had begun. It is often said, as Garbett says here, that by the beginning of the twentieth century 'uniformity had vanished as a practical policy'. This is sometimes said as if the degree of liturgical variation which now, in the twenty-first century, exists from church to church were nothing new. But Garbett really did mean *uniformity*—the kind of uniformity one would have encountered in the time of Jane Austen or Parson Woodforde. That degree of uniformity was gone, but Garbett makes plain that the diversity which had replaced it was, eccentricities apart, a diversity within limits; that wholesale departure from the Prayer Book was something he had come across only 'very rarely in a long experience'; and that in the great majority of churches the Prayer Book was 'substantially used'. This limited diversity is a long way surely from what we now have, and it is ironic that even with the very greatly expanded liturgical freedom the Church now enjoys (or endures), the Liturgical Commission has still to complain of those who wilfully ignore the undertaking to use only lawful services. We are told that worshippers in the new 'mixed economy' Church will have to learn to be 'multilingual', but even the most accomplished linguist generally has a mother tongue, and it seems unrealistic to require of lay people a versatility which is, too often, not required of their pastors. The road back to even the qualified degree of uniformity found in the time of Archbishop Garbett looks a very long one.

'Revisions and Deviations': The 1928 Prayer Book

RAYMOND CHAPMAN

Eighty years ago, a revised Book of Common Prayer failed to get Parliamentary approval. It did not burst upon an unsuspecting church, but was the culmination of controversy which had created divisions in the Church of England for nearly a century. The Oxford Movement beginning in 1833 sought to restore the sacerdotal and sacramental quality of the Church, emphasising its place in the unbroken Catholic tradition rather than in the line of the Reformation. The Tractarians were not greatly concerned about ceremonial and the outward signs of worship but their followers in the next generation introduced practices which many in the Church regarded as popish and disloyal to the true Anglican tradition. An Association for Promoting a Revision of the Book of Common Prayer was formed in 1859. It published its report in 1879, proposing such anti-papal amendments as the restoration of the petition against the Bishop of Rome in the Litany, which was added in 1552 and removed in 1559, and the return of the 'Gunpowder Treason' service which had been removed in 1859. The English Church Union was started by Anglo-Catholics to counter such changes, and then the evangelical Church Association set out to oppose any Catholic modifications of the Prayer Book. A Royal Commission investigated what was going on in public services and recommended restraint from 'all variations in respect of vesture' and 'all variations from established usage in respect of lighted candles and incense'. The 'Shortened Services' Act in 1872 brought a revised lectionary and permission for certain omissions in weekday Morning and Evening Prayer. The sad history of what followed is well known. The Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, 'an Act to put down Ritualism', led to the prosecution and even imprisonment of innovative priests.

In all these arguments, both sides appealed to the 'Ornaments Rubric' ordering that 'Ornaments of the Church, and of the Ministers thereof' should be as they were in the second year of the reign of Edward VI. Some claimed that this permitted vestments, and arrangements for worship of the traditional kind, others that the rubric enjoined Reformed and simplified practice. The Convocations debated the Ornaments Rubric in 1879 and came down on the conservative side of interpretation, though admitting the possibility of wearing a stole. Everyone professed loyalty to

the Book of Common Prayer, but Anglo-Catholics were feeling increasingly impatient at its constraints and looking for greater freedom in the conduct of worship. The movement towards revision was at first driven more by ceremonial than by doctrinal demands, but the two soon became inextricable. The revisionists looked for a return to origins rather than innovation. The Prayer Book of 1662, authorised and protected by the Act of Uniformity, was the direct descendant of the Second Prayer Book issued under Cranmer in 1552. This had changed the first book of 1549 in a more Protestant direction, and it was in the 1549 tradition that the Anglo-Catholics placed their hopes. That tradition had produced the Scottish book of 1637 and influenced books in other parts of the growing Anglican Communion.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the bishops were concerned about increasing tensions in the Church, and the steady increase in ritual actions and additional services like the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. A Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline was appointed in 1904. After two years of discussion, it concluded that 'The law of public worship in the Church of England is too narrow for the religious life of the present generation. It needlessly condemns much which a great section of Church people, including many of her most devoted members, value. . . . The machinery for discipline has broken down. . . . It is important that the law should be reformed.' The Commission recommended that Letters of Business on the question of Prayer Book revision should be issued to the Convocations of Canterbury and York. The long process of consideration began, while unofficial explorations like the 1904 *English Liturgy* of Percy Dearmer and W.H. Frere, and the researches of the Alcuin Club into earlier practices, were stimulating new interest in liturgy. Discussions continued in the Convocations, but proceedings were delayed by the Great War, which itself had the effect of producing Army chaplains whose experience brought them home with a desire for change.

The call for revision was far from universal, and those who supported it weakened their case by internal disputes. Provisional books were produced, representing different approaches and shades of churchmanship. They came to be known by the colours of their covers. The English Church Union produced the 'Green Book', strongly Anglo-Catholic with services for such feasts as Corpus Christi and the Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The 'Grey Book' emanated from the 'Life and Liberty' movement, which had influenced the setting up of the Church Assembly where the ongoing debate would take place. It was modernist and liberal in doctrine, based on informed liturgical scholarship. The 'Orange Book' was largely the work of Frere and

attempted a harmony between the other two. The Evangelical wing made no formal suggestions and hoped for a 'no change' decision

In 1919 the measure popularly known as the Enabling Act made it possible to set up the Church Assembly, with a House of Laity now able to debate and vote on ecclesiastical matters together with the clergy. The new Assembly was given wider legislative powers to prepare measures and submit them to Parliament, which could not amend a measure thus presented but could accept or reject it. This was where the trouble over revision came a few years later. Eventually a draft book was written and was presented to the Church Assembly, where it gained substantial, though not unanimous, approval in 1925. The next stage was submission to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament which judged the proposal expedient. It still had to pass through both Houses to become authorised for use. In December 1927 it came before Parliament, to be passed in the Lords by a substantial majority and defeated in the Commons by a smaller one. The debate in the Commons was acrimonious and revealed a remarkable degree of hostility among Members who, whether or not they were committed Anglicans, or even representing English constituencies, sensed a threat to the Protestant settlement which they saw as a bulwark of English tradition. The Home Secretary William Joynson-Hicks was a particularly vocal and influential opponent. After some emendations by the Church Assembly in a more Protestant direction, the book went back to the Commons and was again defeated. It had become clear that there was no immediate prospect of success.

Although not all the bishops had been enthusiastic about the new book, they were not to be beaten by secular legislation. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, had not been a warm supporter of revision, but speaking in the Church Assembly later in 1928 he made a strong statement:

> It is a fundamental principle that the Church—that is, the Bishops together with the clergy and the laity—must in the last resort, when its mind has been fully ascertained, retain its inalienable right, in loyalty to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to formulate its faith in Him and to arrange the expression of that Holy Faith in its forms of worship.

W.H. Frere, the chief advocate of the 'Orange book' was so disappointed at the concessions which had tried to meet objections in the Commons that he voted against them in the Church Assembly. As Bishop of Truro he was subsequently generous in allowing the use of the rejected book in his diocese. The book, known as the 'Deposited Book' was published in full, as *The Book of Common Prayer with the Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928*. There

was a brief statement of the failed negotiations and a warning that 'The publication of this Book does not directly or indirectly imply that it can be authorised for use in churches.' Nevertheless, the bishops would not 'regard as inconsistent with loyalty to the Church of England the use of such additions or deviations as fall within the limits of these proposals.' Permission to use any part of the 1928 book in a parish would need the approval of the Parochial Church Council; variations in the occasional offices would need the consent of the people concerned.

The Revised or 'Deposited' book won support from many parish clergy, who adopted some or all of its variations. It proved in some ways congenial to the Parish and People movement and the growing support for Parish Communion as the principal Sunday service. Some of its provisions were incorporated in the *Shorter Prayer Book* issued in 1947 which provides the basic needs for congregational worship. There was also the unofficial 'Interim Rite' for Holy Communion, following the 1928 provisions, which was popular with catholic-minded clergy and eventually influenced the 'Series 1' order.

The 1928 book contains everything that is in 1662, with additions and permitted variations. The Lectionary approved in 1922 was accepted, and is still authorised today. For Morning and Evening Prayer which at that time were principal services in most parishes, it offers additional opening sentences, shorter alternative forms of the opening Exhortation, Confession and Absolution, and permission to begin the service with 'O Lord, open thou our lips'. An alternative translation of the *Quicunque Vult* is provided. There are a number of additional 'Occasional Prayers and Thanksgivings', including prayers for the Faithful Departed which were unacceptable to some. Additions to the Baptism Service include a prayer for the blessing of the water. The Introduction to the Marriage Service radically modifies the severe 1662 view of sexuality: the warning against 'carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding' goes out, and the purpose of marriage 'as a remedy to sin, and to avoid fornication' is replaced by the hope that 'the natural instincts and affections imparted by God, should be hallowed and directed aright'. An even more telling sign of the times is that the woman is no longer required to promise to 'obey'. The Burial Service provides more readings and prayers, and provision for a related service of Holy Communion. Orders for Prime and Compline are added.

There are other minor changes and additions but the principal and most controversial revision is in the Communion Service. Few would object to the choice of a few alternative Collects and Epistles, without required changes to the Collects, Epistles and Gospels in 1662, or to

additional Proper Prefaces and allowance for more commemorations of saints and for weekdays in some seasons, more Offertory Sentences, or even the shortening of some of the longer Commandments. The real problem for the opposition was the extension of the Prayer of Consecration. Instead of ending with the blessing of the cup, in 1928 it continues with an epiclesis, a calling of the Holy Spirit upon the Bread and Wine, followed by the Prayer of Oblation. This last appears in 1662 as the first of two alternative Postcommunion prayers; the revision restores it to the position it had occupied in 1549 and from which it was displaced in 1552. The Lord's Prayer follows immediately, before the communion of the people, the Prayer of Humble Access having been said after the Comfortable Words.

The issue is that the abrupt ending of the Prayer of Consecration in 1662 removed any possibility of the veneration of the consecrated elements on the altar. Devotion was to centre on, and be completed in, the act of individual reception. Anything suggesting or permitting veneration of the consecrated Bread and Wine in themselves seemed to hark back to the Roman Mass and must be prevented. The same sentiments were felt by some Members of Parliament in 1928: this was not the only objection to the revised book, but it was a major one.

An even more serious contention was about Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. The 1549 book allowed for consecrated bread and wine to be reserved after a celebration in church, for the purpose of sick Communion. This permission was withdrawn in 1552. The strong sacramental devotion which followed the Oxford Movement led to reservation in some churches, for extended Communion and also for a service of Benediction. Many bishops were willing to give diocesan permission for reservation for the sick, but not for adoration. This was one of the issues addressed in the prolonged discussions leading to the 1928 debate. The book presented to Parliament contained an alternative Order for the Communion of the Sick, with a rubric permitting reservation after a communion service, provided the extended communion was administered 'on the same day and with as little delay as may be'. In special circumstances the consecrated elements might be reserved for a longer time, but without any 'service or ceremony' in connection with them. They were to be kept in a 'locked aumbry or safe' in the sanctuary wall, and not 'immediately behind or above a Holy Table'. Even with these severe restrictions the idea of reservation was still anathema to the more Protestant opponents of revision. Nevertheless, altar tabernacles with exposition and Benediction, continued and grew in many parishes and chapels.

The controversy about vestments and ceremonies, which had been the main reason for investigation into church practices, became marginal to the wider debate; Eucharistic vestments were gradually accepted in the majority of churches, with general though sometimes grudging toleration of the simpler ritual practices. The Ornaments Rubric remained in the revised book, with no further comment about its interpretation.

In a sense the 1928 book may be seen as a failure. Its rejection repeated one of the factors which brought about the Oxford Movement: the power of a House of Commons not fully composed of Anglicans or indeed of Christians, to legislate on liturgy against the mind of the Church. It did not fully satisfy the majority of Anglo-Catholics, but it contained enough to maintain suspicion among Evangelicals. Yet despite earlier disagreements within their ranks, it had much which was agreeable to Catholic-minded Anglicans, and partially acceptable to others. Many welcomed the new freedom and the opportunities for richer worship, though others refused to have anything to do with it. In 1974 the Worship and Doctrine Measure gave the Church more freedom to determine its own services. Series 1, 2 and 3 culminated in the *Alternative Service Book 1980*, whose supporters were generally disposed to marginalise or even destroy the Book of Common Prayer. Now the wordy but more comprehensive *Common Worship* has the Prayer Book liturgy, with a few additions, as Order Two for Holy Communion in its traditional language. Unfortunately some priests celebrate it with Epistles and Gospels from the new lectionary instead of those in the Authorised Version which are an integral part of 1662.

Much that was bitter has faded. Many clergy still love and use the 1928 book, cherishing their well-worn copies since it is now difficult to obtain. It is particularly valued for weddings and funerals, softening some things in 1662 without losing the solemnity of the services. It does not threaten or diminish the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. We have the official assurance that this is still accepted as the standard for doctrine and practice in the Church of England, an assurance which is not always fully honoured. In reality, there are probably few if any whose deep love for 1662 impels them to use it without omission or deviation. How many regularly read the longer exhortation to confession before Communion, and how many insist that those who wish to communicate 'shall signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before'? The failure to secure approval in 1928 was not ultimately a defeat for any party, or a victory for another. What happened before the debate and after it can be seen as typically Anglican, respecting both tradition and development; evolving but not superseding the past; accommodating different

interpretations of a basic position, both Catholic and Reformed; offering wide personal choice.

The Preface to the 1928 begins with an affirmation of what already existed:

> The wisdom of our fathers under the good hand of God gave us the Church of England and the Book of Common Prayer in English speech. It is, and we believe that it always will be, one of the great books of the world.

It goes on to say 'We dare not think that a Book of Common Prayer fitted for the seventeenth century can supply every want of the twentieth: the marvel is that it calls for so little change.' This is where the division came, and where for some it still prevails. The present threats to the Book of Common Prayer, to the Church of England, and to the whole Christian faith in this country, should encourage us to regard this anniversary with respect, or at least without hostility.

The Worship of the Church Sixty Years Ago

CYRIL GARBETT (1875–1955)

(Extracted from the chapter on 'The Worship of the Church' in Archbishop Garbett's The Claims of the Church of England, *published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1947. For some discussion of Garbett see this issue's editorial.)*

Worship is the primary duty of the Church. Through it the Church offers to God the best it possesses, and through it God reveals Himself and gives His blessing to His children. Public Worship lifts man from earth to heaven. It is the expression of the Church's faith in God and its response to His sovereignty and love. It is the act of a fellowship. And so that all may join with one voice in prayer and praise, and so that the worshipper of today may be united with the worshippers of the past, the historic Churches have from the earliest days arranged their worship in set forms and in accordance with time-hallowed rules. Only by the use of such forms can the worship of the congregation transcend the idiosyncrasies and limitations of the minister who conducts it; and through the written word the noblest language can be employed in the sacrifice of prayer and praise.

The authorised worship of the Church of England is found in 'The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the Use of the Church of England'. It is no new worship. It is expressly stated it is 'of the church', but it is according to the Use of the Church of England, which has availed itself of the right of every national Church 'to retain, change and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority'. The Book of Common Prayer was at the time of the Reformation substituted for the Breviary, the Missal, the Manual, the Pontifical, the Processional and other less important books which were used for the services of the Church. It was composed at a time when the English language was reaching the height of its splendour. It is a noble example of literature. The beauty of its prose is universally recognised, especially that of the Litany and the Collects. The Bible and the Prayer Book have done more than any other books to form the English language as we speak it today. Phrases and terms from both have passed into common use.

There is an impression in some quarters that the Prayer Book is no longer used in many of our churches. This is far from correct. Here and there are

found eccentric and self-willed men who have practically banished the Prayer Book from their churches and who, contrary to the promise they made at their Institution, have substituted wholesale forms of prayer either invented by themselves or drawn from the service books of other Churches. There are such, but very rarely in a long experience have I come into contact with these individualists. There are changes, additions and adaptations of various kinds in almost every church, but in the majority of them the Prayer Book is substantially used, and a visitor without difficulty can follow the greater part of the service. The most important variations from the Prayer Book are unhappily in the service in which above all there should be uniformity, the Holy Communion: but even there in most of our churches both the order and substance of the Anglican Liturgy are found. In many of the churches in which there is considerable departure from the Order of the Holy Communion, the other forms of service are almost meticulously followed. Nor is it only in the British Isles that the Prayer Book is generally used: in many of the Provinces overseas in communion with the See of Canterbury there have been frequent revisions, but their worship is still substantially if not entirely based on the Book of Common Prayer.

There are three principles which run through the whole of our Prayer Book. (1) It is Scriptural. A great part of Morning and Evening Prayer is taken up with the recitation of the Psalms and the reading of the Lessons. In the opening exhortation one of the purposes mentioned for assembling and meeting together is for the hearing of God's Holy Word. A chief criticism against the mediaeval forms of service was that they afforded no regular and orderly reading of the books of the Bible. This is the complaint of the Preface entitled 'Concerning the Service of the Church':

> That commonly when any book of the Bible was begun, after three or four chapters were read out, all the rest were unread. And in this sort the Book of Isaiah was begun in Advent and the Book of Genesis in Septuagesima; but they were only begun and never read through: after like sort were other books of Holy Scripture read.

So instead of this broken and haphazard reading of the Scriptures it was ordained that in future in the services of the Church there should be nothing read 'but the very pure word of God, the holy Scriptures, or that which is agreeable to the same.' In the holy Communion there were provided readings from the Old and New Testaments, in the ten Commandments, the Epistles and the Gospels. Not only in the Psalms and Lessons do we find the words of Scripture, but they are used for the versicles and woven into the Collects and prayers.

(2) It is open, for the services are drawn up so that the congregation can both understand them and join in them. Part of the older services were in

the vernacular: there was a long Bidding Prayer in English and possibly, as sometimes today on the Continent, the Gospel was read in the vulgar tongue as well as in Latin. But the greater part of these services was in Latin, often recited quickly in a low voice by the priest, and the congregation stood or sat as the case might be without making any attempt to join in them. To quote again from the Preface, 'Concerning the Service of the Church': 'Whereas St Paul would have such language spoken to the people in the church, as they might understand, and have profit of hearing the same; the service in this Church of England these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind have not been edified thereby.' The service of the Prayer Book is read and sung in the English tongue. It is intended to be said clearly by the Minister so that the people can hear it, frequently the direction occurs he shall say or read 'in a loud voice'. Opportunities too are given to the congregation to join in the service; they are to say the Confession and the Lord's Prayer 'after the Minister', and as the service proceeds they are from time to time called upon to take their part in it. 'Praise ye the Lord' is the invitation; 'The Lord's Name be praised' is their answer. 'The Lord be with you' is the call with a loud voice, 'And with thy spirit' is the reply.

(3) It is comprehensive and this in two ways. The sources from which our Prayer Book is derived are many. Much of it consists of translations of the old Latin services and prayers, and a few prayers are translated from the Greek. In addition Archbishop Cranmer did not hesitate to draw upon and to adapt the services used by the Continental Reformers. It has been stated that the representative character of the Book is its most prominent feature:

> It has drawn from many sources: apart from the Bible, the old traditional Latin services of the English Church have provided by far the greater part of the contents: this is not merely true of actual bulk, but it is still more markedly true of the whole spirit and method of the Prayer Book: it has drawn also from other sources—Greek, Gallican, Lutheran and Swiss in their measure.'[1]

When therefore we take part in the Prayer Book services, we are joining our voices to those of a great multitude of worshippers of all lands and centuries; in our own tongue we sing with the ancient Hebrews, pray with the Greek Fathers, recite the offices with our English forbears; and make our own the prayers first drawn up by the Continental Reformers. And this is especially true of the Holy Communion service, in which the devotions of many Churches are assembled round the centre of it all, the very words spoken by our Lord 'on the same night that He was betrayed'.

1 Procter and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 674

But there is another way in which the Prayer Book is comprehensive. It was drawn up to include different religious opinions. It is Catholic and reformed, for it was hoped it would enable both those who clung to the old customs and the Puritans to remain within the same Church. The attempt largely failed, many of the puritans seceded, whilst those who gave their allegiance to the Pope refused to use the Prayer Book or to attend the services of the Church of England. But this charitable and statesmanlike policy has left permanent marks on our worship. There are noticeable examples of this. The Words of Administration combine the Catholic affirmation 'The Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life' with the Reformed 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thine heart by faith with thanksgiving.' It enables those who respectively hold the doctrines of the real objective Presence and the receptionist to kneel side by side and hear these words without any violation of their conscientious beliefs. Within the same book we find the general Confession and Absolution, as well as the private confession with the direct personal absolution. In the Ordination of Priests there is first the great Catholic commission 'Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained', followed by the evangelical exhortation 'And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments', The attempt to include as many men as possible of different religious views in the one Church has given us the most comprehensive Prayer Book in Christendom.

Those who drew up the Prayer Book intended it to supersede all existing books and to become the one used in every church in the land. 'And whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity in saying and singing in churches within this Realm: some following Salisbury use, some Hereford use, and some the use of Bangor, some of York, some of Lincoln; now from henceforth the Realm shall have but one use.' It was plain from this that Cranmer hoped that in every church exactly the same order of service would be followed. This was confirmed by the Act of Uniformity in the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, in which it was enacted that severe penalties should be inflicted on any manner of Parson, Vicar, or other whatsoever Minister who wilfully used 'any other Rite, Ceremony, Order, Form or Manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper, openly or privily, or Mattins, Evensong, Administration of the Sacraments, or other open Prayers than is mentioned or set forth in the said Book.' (By open Prayer in and throughout this Act is meant 'that Prayer which is for others to come into or hear, either in Common Churches or Private Chapels, or oratories, commonly called the Service of the Church'.) It was a great ideal

that in every church throughout the whole kingdom the whole nation should worship God in the same way, using the same prayers, and observing the same rites and ceremonies. If it had been realised it would have been an impressive demonstration of national unity in worship.

But from the outset the policy was doomed to failure. The Papalists and the Puritans refused to join in this worship, the one disliked it as new-fangled and heretical, and the other as superstitious. Coercion failed to crush the opposition. Within the nation there presently emerged different Churches, with their own worship in their respective churches and chapels. The attempt however to secure uniformity was very largely successful within the Church of England itself, for from the Restoration to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, with a few notable exceptions, the same service without additions, variations or omissions would have been found Sunday by Sunday in every church in the land. For nearly two centuries the Anglican Church presented a picture of almost complete uniformity in its worship.

This uniformity was partly the result of spiritual deadness. With the religious revivals which came from both the Evangelical and High Church parties it was soon found that the existing services were not sufficient channels for the new spiritual life. The Tractarians at first were content with the demand that the whole Prayer Book should be faithfully and completely used. They defended their so-called innovations by an appeal to it. Presently they felt the authorised worship of the Church was inadequate and they supplemented it by borrowing from the great treasure houses of devotion which belonged to the Churches of Rome and of the East. The parish priest also needed additional services and prayers. Some of these were provided by authority. But the demand remained far from satisfied. Moreover the revival of liturgical study revealed various defects and dislocations in a Liturgy which once too easily had been treated as incomparable, and the call for revision became insistent. As there seemed no way in which these demands could be quickly met individuals felt justified in taking action to change and modify the services of the Church in accordance with their own views, or those of the party to which they belonged. At the beginning of this century uniformity had vanished as a practical policy. While the Prayer Book was still almost universally accepted as the standard of worship and in most churches its services were faithfully rendered, there was hardly any church in which there were not some departures from it. Sometimes these were of minor importance, the shortening of the Dearly Beloved, the abbreviation or the complete change of the set Psalms and Lessons, the substitution of additional and modern prayers for the second part of the service, the introduction of hymns, the omission of the Longer Exhortation at the Holy Communion and other

changes of a like character. Sometimes however the changes were more important, the omission of one of the Creeds, the transposition of the Prayers in the Holy Communion, sometimes alterations in the canon itself, and the restoration of services deliberately abandoned at the Reformation.

It was extremely difficult for the authorities of the Church to deal with these changes. From a narrow and legalistic standpoint they were probably all equally illegal. According to a judgement of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1868 'It is not open to a Minister of the Church, or even to their Lordships in advising Her Majesty as the highest Ecclesiastical Tribunal of Appeal, to draw a distinction, in acts which are a departure from or violation of the Rubric, between those which are important and those which are trivial.' They added that their Lordships are 'disposed entirely to adhere' to an earlier decision of the Judicial Committee which laid down 'In the performance of the services, rites and ceremonies ordered by the Prayer Book, the directions contained in it must be strictly observed: no omission and no addition can be permitted.' The difficulty of the position is increased by the fact that every person ordained to the ministry has to make the specific declaration that 'in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority'. If the law is rightly interpreted above the Prayer Book must be strictly observed in every respect, on the other hand the clergy who have promised to use the said Book and none other have found themselves compelled by pastoral necessity to make various alterations and additions. The report of the Archbishops' Commission on 'Relations between Church and State', characterises the confusion that has followed:

> No one obeys the law so construed. Not the clergy, since there is scarcely one of them who makes no change in the authorised forms of service. Not the Bishops, who are charged to see that this impossible law is carried out. Worse still, by the Declaration, as interpreted by the Courts, every priest solemnly undertakes to do that which in fact none of them actually performs. No wonder discipline has suffered. No wonder the laity are uneasy. It is difficult to find temperate words to apply to such a state of things. The situation can only be described as deeply insincere.

The statement undoubtedly exaggerates the position, it takes too seriously an opinion expressed in a judgement given nearly eighty years ago, it overstates the difficulties which have arisen, and it loses touch with reality when it describes the situation as 'deeply insincere'.[1] But it affords useful evidence as to how gravely a number of the clergy and laity regard the present position.

1 In a footnote the Commission attempts, somewhat unsuccessfully, to soften the drastic nature of this statement.

An attempt had been made to meet it in two ways. No one is clear what is meant by 'lawful authority', but it is maintained by many of the bishops that inherent in their office is a *jus liturgicum*, the right to allow variations from the existing Order and to authorise additional services. This right is by no means universally admitted. There are some who while they recognise the existence of this *jus* would exclude its operation from all the official services of the Church and hold that it can only be exercised over services which are not included in the Prayer Book. In any case the *jus* is clearly limited, the bishop has no power to authorise rites and ceremonies which are contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the Prayer Book. The permission he grants must be in accordance with the mind of the Church of England. It would be an illegitimate extension of his *jus* for an individual bishop to allow variations from the Prayer Book Canon, still more the substitution of some other Canon for it: though strangely enough some parish priests have no hesitation about their own right to do this. The careful and judicial exercise of a limited *jus liturgicum* has enabled bishops to regulate and control to some extent changes which somewhat euphemistically are described as 'experiments in worship'.

This position was however far from satisfactory. An attempt was made to improve it by incorporating a large number of the changes most desired in a new Prayer Book, the use of which would be entirely optional and which was not intended to supersede the Prayer Book so familiar to Churchmen. For many years bishops and clergy worked at this revision. At last it was complete and accepted by large majorities by Convocation and the Church Assembly. But the Book was in 1927 and 1928 rejected by the House of Commons, principally on the grounds that the new Revision authorised Reservation for the sick and provided a new Canon as an alternative to our present Consecration Prayer. The house was also impressed by the opposition to the proposals from both Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics. The prospects of their bringing peace and order seemed very remote. It is easy to be wise after the event, but probably the decision to proceed by Measure was a mistake, this means a debate in Parliament and the submission of members to the pressure of organised opposition. It might have been wiser to have asked for the Royal Assent to a Canon containing the proposed changes, though the King in giving or refusing this would have acted in accordance with the advice of his responsible ministers, and a resolution still might have been moved in either House asking the ministers to advise that the Assent should be withheld.

With the rejection of the measure the bishops were in a most difficult position. It was impossible for them either to suppress or to treat as inconsistent with the teaching of the Church of England rites and

ceremonies which they had just approved and for which they had found a place in the new Prayer Book. On the other hand deliberately to authorise the rejected Book would have been regarded as an act of defiance both to Parliament and the Law of the Land. Some would have wished for the Church to have asked for Disestablishment so that it might control its own affairs, but within the Church there would have been at that time little support for such a drastic demand. The bishops therefore fell back on their *jus liturgicum* and resolved that in the exercise of it each bishop would be 'guided by the proposals set forth in the Book of 1928 and will endeavour to secure that the practices which are consistent neither with the Book of 1662 nor with the Book of 1928 shall cease.'

English common sense has prevailed and no attempt has been made to wreck this policy by an appeal to the Courts. By acting in accordance with it some practices which were inconsistent with the teaching of the Church of England have been brought to an end. Most of the forms of prayer in the new Book are widely used, especially the additional prayers, the new collects and the occasional offices. The regulations on Reservation have been largely, though by no means universally, accepted. Very few parishes have adopted the whole of the 1928 Order of Communion, though considerable use is made of the new Prayer for the Church. But the position is not satisfactory and cannot be regarded as permanent. If at any time an appeal to the Courts resulted in the decision that the clergy were acting contrary to the Law in using additional Prayers and Offices and the bishops in sanctioning this, a grave crisis would at once arise which probably would only be solved either by Disestablishment or by the State acknowledging that the Church has the inalienable right to arrange its own worship. But while we are waiting for some method satisfactory both to the Church and the State by which the Church can provide new services or vary the old, the demand for enrichment and alterations in its worship becomes irresistible. Men of all ecclesiastical parties are making changes in the services to meet pastoral needs. Under these circumstances it appears that the only course will be for the diocesan bishop to authorise services for optional and temporary use which previously have been approved by both Houses of Convocation. If experiment proves their value, later on steps should be taken either by Canon or by adopting the procedure proposed by the Church and State Commission to give them legal sanction. In the meantime though they would lack statutory authority, they would have behind them the spiritual and moral authority of the Convocations.

[*There follows in the original text a section on 'ceremonial' in which Garbett outlines the controversies which ensued on the desire for enhanced ceremonial arising from the Oxford*

Movement, and concludes that the movement's results 'have been very great. There is hardly a church which has not been influenced by it. The whole standard of worship has been raised.' He comments on the acceptance even in Evangelical churches of changes which 'sixty years ago . . . would have caused a storm.' But he remarks, too, that changes have sometimes been made against the wishes of parishioners and caused 'great bitterness', and that:

> many of the changes made have been without intelligence or principle. Often they have been due to the personal prejudices of the incumbent rather than to his liturgical knowledge. Fresh ceremonial, incredibly foolish, has sometimes found its way into the Church services; possibly because the incumbent on a visit to the Continent was attracted by some custom which he did not understand, but thought he would like to reproduce it at home; or possibly through some energetic and imaginative layman introducing some strange practice which he regarded as edifying. I had once to order a ceremonarius wearing court dress to desist from drawing a sword and pointing it at the Host during the Elevation! But with further knowledge and research absurdities have been dropped, and the personal inventiveness of an imaginative incumbent plays a smaller part in the arrangements of Divine Worship. . . . It is of vital importance if ceremonial is to attract and not to repel that it should not be forced on unwilling congregations, that it should be intelligible and not 'dark and dumb', and that it should not be so elaborate and fussy that it distracts instead of helping the worshipper.

He concludes the section by suggesting that the creation of 'a permanent committee of liturgical experts and parish priests, representing all schools of thought might do much by advice to prune eccentricities and to encourage ceremonial on sound lines.']

Worship Today

It is now possible to give some description of the worship which is found in the Church of England today. The most striking of all changes which have taken place in the last sixty years are to be found in connection with the Holy Communion. At the time of the Reformation Masses were frequent, but Communion was rare. The average layman only received Communion at Easter: even the lay brothers of various Orders communicated at considerable intervals. The Reformers aimed at the abolition both of private Masses and of non-communicating attendance and at the substitution of frequent Communion. 'At least three times a year, of which Easter shall be one', was an advance on the Mediaeval practice and was intended as a minimum. But the Reformers did not succeed in this, in most parish churches there were large numbers of communicants on Easter Day and often on Good Friday, but the opportunities given for

Communion decreased and before long it became a rare act, reserved for some great festival. In the beginning of the nineteenth century celebrations of the Holy Communion were infrequent both in cathedrals and parish churches. Usually they took place after Matins and were popularly known as 'the Second Service'; they were attended by a handful of devout people. There was no ceremonial, and often the Prayer Book service was seriously abridged, the priest omitting all that came before the Invitation. Today it is very rare to find a church without a Sunday celebration, in many churches it is daily. There has been a remarkable increase both in the number of communicants and in the frequency of reception. The service is conducted almost everywhere with marked reverence and devotion: usually with some symbolism, from the coloured stole to complete vestments, and from the two lighted candles to incense, to distinguish it from other services of the day.

Celebrations of the Holy Communion can be divided into two great groups, those which are solely or mainly intended for purposes of Communion, and those at which there are few or no communicants. The former are held in the morning, sometimes at noon, or now rarely in the evening. In the country the congregations are usually small, though they are often large in the town. These celebrations are conducted simply, with a minimum of ceremonial. The other group has its earlier services for Communion, and later in the day a High or Sung Celebration at which the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist is emphasised, music and vestments with a rich ceremonial are used to make the service a great offering of praise and thanksgiving. The congregation may be large, but there are very few communicants, possibly only the priest or at the most the three demanded by the Prayer Book. Many of those present have already communicated at the earlier hour, and use this later service as an opportunity for thanksgiving and for the pleading of the great Sacrifice and Oblation once offered for the sins of the whole world. While this choral Eucharist with few or no communicants is an attempt both to make the Eucharist the chief service of the day and at the same time to bring out aspects of it which are not so apparent at a quiet service of Communion, there are many who are doubtful if this is a desireable development. Two quotations in support of this statement may be given from writers who are in sympathy with the Anglo-Catholic movement. In *Liturgy and Worship*, a publication of the Literature Committee of the English Church Union, Dr Srawley writes 'The separation of the Sunday Eucharistic worship into two distinct services, one for Communion early in the day, and another for worship and oblation (without communicants) at a later hour, is a compromise with which, however expedient it may be as an attempt to

meet various stages of religious development and the conditions of modern life, many are beginning to feel that they ought not to rest content as a final solution.'[1] Father A.G. Hebert of the Society of the Sacred Mission is even stronger

> The late sung Eucharist, lacking the communion of the people, is a maimed rite: however beautiful and moving the service may be, the people are spectators at the liturgy, and not in the full sense partakers in it. . . . It can never be anything else till it becomes also a communion. The adoption of this arrangement may be pronounced without hesitation to be the great blunder of the Anglo-Catholic movement.[2]

An attempt has been made to meet this defect by a parish Celebration at 9 or 9.30. This is choral, sometimes sung by the congregation without a choir, and it has all the ceremonial which would have been used if the service had been at a later hour. The whole congregation communicates. It is in a real sense a parish Communion and much more akin to the service described by Justin Martyr, than either the Celebration with only a tiny group of communicants, or the choral Eucharist at which communion is forbidden or discouraged. In many parishes this arrangement has been successfully adopted, but so far only by a minority of the churches which aim at making the Liturgy unmistakeably *the* chief service of the day.

There is another line of cleavage which tends to divide the manner of celebrating the Holy Communion into separate groups, though in most cases communicants can pass from one church to the other without any sense of inconsistency. There are the churches, by far the larger number, in which the canon of the Prayer Book is strictly followed: there are others in which there are departures from it of minor or major importance. Liturgical correctness and devotion, it is contended, require the enrichment of our Canon as the supreme act of corporate worship, and to bring it more into line with the great Consecration Prayers of both the East and the West. Some advocate the use of the 1549 Liturgy of Edward VI: there are others who would like to borrow the Scotch Laudian Liturgy: there are others who desire in whole or in part the canon of the Roman Mass, instead of our Prayer of Consecration. A few are not content only with asking for these changes, as they are perfectly entitled to do, but they have introduced them on their own authority and use them openly or secretly when they are celebrating, notwithstanding the solemn promise they repeatedly made 'to use the form in the said Book prescribed and none other, except as so far shall be ordered by lawful authority'. Most of those however who ask for some revision or enrichment of the Canon are men thoroughly loyal to the Church of England, and keep strictly the

1 p.331 2 *Liturgy and Society*, p.210

promise they have given. They cannot fairly be described as 'extreme' men. Their desire for a revision comes from their knowledge of liturgical principles and from the devotional needs of themselves and their people. In the 1928 Prayer Book an attempt was made to meet this wish. But there was strong opposition to the new Prayer of Consecration on the ground that it involved a serious departure from Western tradition. Comparatively few churches use it, and there is now no likelihood that it will ever be widely accepted. As this proposed Canon has been so severely criticised it is well to recall the statement of a distinguished continental liturgical student 'if it should come into general and authorised use, the Church of England will possess one of the noblest of all evangelical liturgies.'[1] The most practical immediate solution would have been the re-arrangement of our Canon without the change of any words, so that the Prayer of Consecration, the Prayer of Oblation and the Lord's Prayer follow one another without interruption. Archbishop Lang had been assured by leading Anglo-Catholics that this would be welcomed. So in 1942 this change was proposed by the bishops in the Upper Houses of Convocation for optional use. But unfortunately the lower House of both Provinces rejected this slight revision on the ground 'that the present time is not opportune for raising a question which might cause controversy in the Church'. The bishops accepted this advice, but the archbishops, speaking for the Upper Houses, naturally replied: 'If it is inopportune for the convocations to take this matter into consideration, it is clearly inopportune for any parish priest to introduce variations into the Holy Communion on his own authority.'

For the great majority of Anglicans, Matins and Evensong are still the chief services of the Sunday, and have by far the largest congregations. The Prayer Book services are substantially followed, though the Psalms are sometimes shortened, and in the second part, after the third collect, special prayers and intercessions are introduced. The older custom of combining Matins with the Litany and Ante-Communion has been widely abandoned. Evensong is often adapted to make it a popular evangelistic service. Music has an important place both at Morning and Evening Prayer. The standard of Church music has been improved, many of the more sentimental tunes have been abolished, choirs have become more conscious of their limitations and care is taken over the selection of both music and hymns, so that often even in small country churches the singing is both simple and good. These offices, often unduly disparaged, are a noble contribution of penitence, praise, Bible reading and prayer. Rightly used they build up the spiritual life of the faithful, but much must

1 Y. Brillioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, p.227

always depend upon the reverence and care with which they are conducted by minister, choir and people.

If we may go back in imagination to our foreigner visiting England for the first time and including in his investigations a comprehensive tour of our churches and their services, he would probably carry away two main impressions of Anglican worship.

He would have been struck by the great variety of ritual and ceremonial. At times he would feel he was present at the Roman Catholic services with which he was familiar on the Continent, at other times he would think the services closer to those of the Reformed Churches. In one church he would find the service conducted with the utmost simplicity, in another with rich and elaborate ceremonial. If he had been accustomed to the more orderly systems of Rome or Geneva he would have been bewildered and perplexed as to how within one communion such differences in worship could be possible. If however it is once admitted that strict uniformity in our Church is an impractical ideal, there is much to be said for the frank recognition within it of various types of worship. God has made his children very different from one another, He has deliberately avoided the dull monotony of uniformity in their appearance, temperament and disposition, is it therefore probable that He would wish them all to worship Him in exactly the same way? He accepted the simple adoration of the shepherds and the rich offerings of the Magi. And does not human nature itself need to express itself naturally in different ways? One man is cold and logical, another warm-hearted and emotional: one rational and critical, another impulsive and imaginative: one colour-blind to all beauty, while another has the poet's insight into all that is lovely. It is not possible that all these should express their devotion to God in one way. Spontaneity in worship would be crushed and devotion driven into narrow channels if uniformity was enforced. Where there is true love of God combined with reverence and humility, it is a minor matter as to how this love shows itself in worship. God who has made His children so different from one another will allow them to approach Him in prayer in the manner they find most natural. It is the glory of the Church of England that with all its many failures it has its door wide open to Christian men and women who wish to worship God in very different ways and thus enables them to make it their spiritual home.

And our foreigner would be impressed by the quiet and orderly reverence of our Anglican worship. There would be much he would dislike in it. He would find it hard to follow the long Psalms and Lessons. He would find our pews and fixed chairs cramp-giving after the moveable seats and open spaces of a continental church. He would consider the

service cold and formal both on the part of the officiating minister and of the congregation compared to the freedom of movement and postures to which he had been accustomed at home. He would often miss the colour and sense of mystery, 'the blessed mutter of the Mass' and the taste of 'good strong thick stupefying incense smoke'. But he would feel and admire the reverence and quiet of the service. This at any rate was what struck most of all some Italian Roman Catholics who said to me that when they had the opportunity they came to our services 'for they were so quiet'. In the same way an educated Swiss Roman Catholic told me that he thought our services were 'more reverent' than those of his own Church: and an Orthodox bishop once told me he envied our reverence and the way in which the congregation takes part in the service. Some may miss from our worship the highest notes of adoration and emotion, but many others find in it a quiet and solemn reverence which is natural to their temperament and helps them to make their offering of prayer and praise. It strengthens their trust in God, bringing rest and comfort to their souls, and gives them a clearer vision of the Majesty, Holiness and love of the most High.

Prayer Book Revision

But however much the regular Churchgoer may admire the Prayer Book services there is a growing conviction that some revision is necessary. It should have two aims, which are supplementary and not contradictory. First, greater simplicity is needed in many of our services. This is especially true of the Occasional Offices. The Forms for Baptism, Marriage and the Burial of the Dead are not simple and direct enough for those who only attend the services of the Church on these occasions. Simpler alternatives to Matins and Evensong should also be provided for use when the congregation is likely to consist largely of non-Churchgoers. The amateur services drawn up by local incumbents for special occasions sometimes secure simplicity at the cost of dignity and reverence, though too often, indeed, they are liturgical jungles through which both regular and occasional worshippers find it hard to make their way.

Secondly, enrichment of our services is necessary. In their desire for plainness the reformers lost much that is rich and splendid in the liturgies both of the Western and Eastern Churches. We should draw more freely on the treasure houses of devotion found elsewhere in the Catholic Church; this would help to unite us with both the West and the East without any compromise of our distinctive position. This is especially to be desired in the Order of the Holy Communion, where it would be a great gain to include in the Canon thanksgiving for our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension as well as for his Passion and Death, and a direct invocation of

the Holy Spirit. More Collects, Epistles and Gospels are required for use on special occasions, though the 1928 Prayer Book has already done something to meet this need. Our public worship is also noticeably weak in its commemoration of the saints 'who have been the chosen vessels of Thy grace and lights of the world in their several generations.' The commemoration of the departed of all centuries with praise and thanksgiving would bring home the reality of Paradise and of the Communion of Saints.

Through ordered and regulated experiment the Church will gradually reach the form of worship which will best enable it to make its sacrifice of praise and prayer, and the worshipper to gain some clearer vision of God in His glory. But to leave such experiments at the complete discretion of the parish priest who is not necessarily a liturgist, will lead to hopeless confusion. The authorisation of such experiments must come from the diocesan bishops, but behind them there must be the concurrence of the Convocations. They should be asked to approve any proposed new forms of service. Only after these new forms of prayer have commended themselves by experience to the mass of Church people should formal sanction be sought for their inclusion in the official Prayer Book.

In Defence of 1549

C.D. HEATH

In Chapter XVI of *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945), Dom Gregory Dix printed substantial extracts from Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's controversial works on the Eucharist, and showed conclusively that the order of service authorised in the Second Prayer Book (1552) is the precise liturgical equivalent of the views he expressed there in opposition to Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester. Dix also asserted that the First Prayer Book (1549) is to be interpreted in the same way (as Cranmer himself claimed), and that it should be seen as a transitional rite for short-term use. This assessment of the 1549 rite has since become widespread. Louis Bouyer, in *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (1968; French original 1966), takes an even stronger line on the alleged ambiguity of the Canon ('so much skill and so much devotion is in the long run merely the skill of speaking piously in order to say nothing'), and pities those Anglicans who have been supposedly taken in by it and found 'their disillusionment with it most painful'.

But the 1549 rite itself is not at all consistent with such an interpretation. It is a finely crafted whole which shows little sign of being intended for dismemberment within three years. The best evidence for this claim is that, when the service was drastically remodelled in 1552 (clearly in haste, for why else was an entirely different rite not composed?) it was necessary in places to do violence to the language and turn straightforward sentences into tortuous ones, sometimes barely grammatical. Because it is the altered versions that survived into the 1662 Prayer Book and so were once familiar to all Anglicans, it is easy to overlook how convoluted some of them are (see below for examples).

The only possible explanation of the discrepancy between the 1549 service and the controversial works is to assume (though it cannot be proved) that it reflects an earlier stage of Cranmer's thinking, when his views were less radical than they later became, and that he had composed the Canon, if not the rest of the order, up to ten years previously, in any case well before the death of Henry VIII. We know that he was working on a revision of the Breviary at that time because his drafts have survived, while the English Litany was actually published and authorised (1544): it would be surprising if he had not also drafted an 'English Mass' in the same period and filed it away to await an opportune moment.

The 1549 liturgy, like any other, should be judged by what its text and rubrics actually say, not by the presumed views of its compiler, and certainly not by what came after it. In particular, it should be considered *in its context*, which is entirely different from that of 1552, as the rubrics of both orders of service clearly show: the earlier was to be celebrated in the traditional manner (only the elevation was forbidden) by a priest standing in the eastward position at the old altar wearing the usual vestments; the presence of a choir was assumed, the Epistle and Gospel were to be chanted (the rubric was printed in the order for Matins), as was the entire service including the Canon (this term occurred in the order for the Communion of the Sick), as is evident from Merbecke's *Book of Common Prayer Noted* (1550), though one may doubt whether it happened much in practice. All these features suggest the conservative atmosphere of Henry VIII's later years, rather than the iconoclastic days of Edward VI.

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After the *Sanctus* the 1549 Canon continues with a general intercession. At first sight this may appear to have been designed for eventual transfer to another position as it has its own bidding (*Let us pray . . . Christ's Church*) and conclusion (*Grant this . . . Advocate*), though without *Amen*; and except for one sentence in the middle does not refer to the Eucharist at all. But this is not necessarily significant: whenever Eucharistic prayers (e.g. the Alexandrian St Mark) include extended intercessions, they tend to develop forms of words which could also be used at non-sacramental services. And when in 1552, this section of the 1549 Canon was separated off, all of the following was simply dropped (between *any other adversity* and *Grant this*):

> And especially we commend unto thy merciful goodness this congregation which is here assembled in thy Name to celebrate the commemoration of the most glorious death of thy Son. And here we do give unto thee most high praise and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all thy saints from the beginning of the world; and chiefly in the glorious and most blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of thy Son Jesu Christ our Lord and God, and in the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, whose examples (O Lord) and steadfastness in thy faith, and keeping thy holy commandments, grant us to follow. We commend unto thy mercy (O Lord) all other thy servants which are departed hence from us with the sign of faith and now do rest in the sleep of peace. Grant unto them, we beseech thee, thy mercy and everlasting peace and that, in the day of the general resurrection, we and all they which be of the Mystical Body

> of thy Son may all together be set on his right hand, and hear that his most joyful voice: 'Come unto me, O ye that be blessed of my Father, and possess the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world.'

Is it credible that this carefully worded text was intended from the outset for merely temporary use? Was this elegant prayer for the Christian dead composed in order to be completely lost? Even at a time when such explicit prayers were being eliminated from funerals it is extraordinary that the faithful departed are not mentioned at all in the 1552 general intercession (their commemoration in the 1662 Prayer Book being of course an addition of that year): the 1552 burial service itself includes the indirect petition that *we may rest in him as our hope is this our brother/sister doth*. The brutal truncation of the Prayer for the Church suggests that at this time Cranmer was working in haste and under pressure, and was obliged to mutilate his own work in order to accommodate his later views.

Another indication that the 1549 intercessions were planned as an integral part of the Canon is the fact that the thought of the opening (quoting 1 Timothy 2:1)

> Almighty and everliving God, which by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make *prayers and supplications*, and to give thanks, for all men: we humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers which we offer unto *thy Divine Majesty*

is resumed as a coda just before the doxology, with some of the precise wording repeated:

> And although we be unworthy (through our manifold sins) to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service and command these our *prayers and supplications*, by the ministry of thy holy angels, to be brought up into thy holy tabernacle before the sight of *thy Divine Majesty*, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences.

When in 1552 the intercessions were shifted to an earlier point, *and command . . . Divine Majesty* disappeared—unlike the rest of the 1549 Canon, these words were not restored in the Scottish Liturgy of 1637 and its successors.

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It may be a reflection of human nature, but Eucharistic prayers (in spite of the name) find the expression of **Thanksgiving** exceptionally difficult. They tend to begin with a subjunctive *Let us give thanks* and continue *It is very meet . . . that we should . . . give thanks*, but usually then avoid actually saying 'we

give thanks' in the indicative, or do so in a perfunctory manner. Outside the Institution Narrative the Roman Canon does not mention thanksgiving at all after *gratias agere* in the Preface, and neither do the Prayer Books of 1552–1662 except in the words of administration which are not addressed to God. But the 1549 Canon takes up the note of thanksgiving after the *Sanctus* (see above), and then at the climax of the Memorial following the Institution Narrative carries out the *bounden duty* in singularly fulsome words: *rendering unto thee most hearty thanks* (see below for the full text).

(Modern Roman Prayers II and III give thanks briefly at the same point, with *gratias agentes* ('giving thanks') in II and *gratias referentes* ('rendering thanks') in III. Prayer I, a revised version of the traditional Canon, includes *praise and thanksgiving* in the English paraphrase of *Te igitur* etc., but it is not in the Latin. Prayer III is intriguing in that, if it were translated into 16th-century English, parts of it would sound very like 1549 which presumably is *not* one of its sources.)

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The 1549 Canon is vague about the manner of the **Presence** of Christ in the Eucharist, but no more so than the Roman Canon which long predates the philosophical debates of the later Middle Ages and which, as a prayer, could not express the doctrinal precision of catechisms and conciliar decrees. The only relevant passage is the consecratory preamble to the Institution Narrative (*Quam oblationem* etc. in the Latin). Cranmer's equivalent is

> Hear us (O merciful Father) we beseech thee; and with thy Holy Spirit and Word vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that *they may be unto us the Body and Blood* of thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ who, in the same night . . . .

the Priest being directed to make the sign of the cross twice at bread and wine.

The italicised words render the Latin *ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat* (singular because the subject is *oblatio*). *Unto us* might have suggested a merely subjective view of the Presence if there had been no petition to *bless and sanctify* the elements, and if *nobis* had not been in the Latin already. Was the use of *be*, rather than *become* or *be made*, intended to modify the meaning of *fiat* (as if it were *sit*), or was the shorter word chosen as sounding less clumsy in English, a distinction without a difference? Such things mattered in the 16th century when holding the wrong opinions could have fatal consequences, but are, one would hope, of doubtful relevance today.

The changes made in 1552 removed any idea of blessing and sanctifying from what was left of the Canon (the title 'Prayer of Consecration', first

introduced in the Scottish Liturgy of 1637, was not added until 1662). That the alterations were felt to be necessary is evidence that the 1549 service was seen to have a different meaning, no longer fitted current thinking, and required such drastic modification that linguistic clarity had to be sacrificed. The petitionary part of the prayer now became

> Grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood; who, in the same night . . . .

These changes came at a heavy cost in linguistic complexity. The 1549 text is clear and straightforward: in particular, the relative pronoun (*who*), as in the Latin, follows its antecedent (*Christ*) immediately as good style demands. The reworked version of 1552 is overloaded by the incorporation of some of the material omitted from later in the 1549 Canon (but without the rendering of thanks), with the result that the relative pronoun is separated from its antecedent by no fewer than nineteen words; and the antecedent itself (*Christ's*, now inflected) is confusingly embedded in another phrase. The result is barely grammatical, if at all. Is it really conceivable that the later version is what was intended all along, and that the earlier was conceived as a transition to it?

The opening of the post-Communion prayer (which became optional) was similarly changed:

> (1549) Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou hast vouchsafed to feed us in these Holy Mysteries with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and hast assured us (duly receiving the same) of thy favour . . . .

> (1552) Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us which have duly received these Holy Mysteries with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and dost assure us thereby of thy favour . . . .

The bracketed phrase from the 1549 text has been brought forward in a modified form to complicate the straightforward reference to being fed in the Holy Mysteries. Can the earlier version, with its significantly different tenses, really have been intended as a first draft of the later?

The 1549 Words of Administration are simply translated from the Latin with the addition of *which was given/shed for thee*: the Sarum Manual ordered that if a bishop was present at a Baptism, he was to confirm the child and give it Communion if old enough, saying *Corpus Domini nostri Iesu Christi*

custodiat corpus tuum et animam tuam in vitam æternam. Amen ('The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life').The same words were prescribed for Communion of the Sick. (The Missal, notoriously, made no provision for anyone other than the celebrant to communicate during the Mass itself, and gave him quite different words.) As the context of the 1549 English formula is the act of giving Communion, it must be assumed to mean the same as the Latin original did. By 1552 such language was evidently thought to be inappropriate, the traditional formulæ disappeared altogether and were replaced by words which referred only to the mental state of the communicant: *Take and eat . . . with thanksgiving / Drink this . . . and be thankful.*

*

Memorial (Latin *memoria*, Greek *anamnesis*) has a range of possible interpretations.

It could be a simple mental remembering, an individual matter even when a group has gathered for the purpose, which (as in a silent tribute) strictly requires no words or external action at all. It could also be used as in 'memorial service', involving a symbolic ceremonial act of some sort with or without a solemn form of words. (A familiar secular example is the laying of poppy wreaths on Remembrance Sunday, and the responsive text: *They shall grow not old* . . . . *We will remember them*.)

In connection with the Eucharist 'memorial' has traditionally been seen as involving more than this. 'Showing the Lord's death' (1 Corinthians 11:26) could be interpreted as a proclamation to the world in a sort of acted parable, parallel to the Gospel reading in the Liturgy of the Word (though the evidence suggests that before the fourth century the Eucharist proper was normally held in private). But in the fullest sense the Eucharistic Memorial is conceived as a solemn act made *before God*, not only in words but with the use of bread and wine according to Christ's command, the Christian equivalent of Passover. Louis Bouyer says both of Passover and the Eucharist: 'It in no way means a subjective, human psychological act of returning to the past, but an objective reality destined to make some thing or some one perpetually present before God' and 'Not only will the memorial assure the faithful subjectively of its permanent effectiveness, but above all it will assure this very effectiveness through a pledge which they can and must represent[1] to him, a pledge of his own fidelity.'

1 This word occurs in a proposed additional phrase found in a draft for the 1662 revision which, if adopted, would have restored the 1549 structure: *by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ now represented unto thee, and by faith* etc. One wonders which of the possible pronunciations of *represented* was intended.

The Memorial section of the Roman Canon (*in mei memoriam facietis. Unde et memores* etc.), which immediately follows the Institution Narrative, is of course to be interpreted in the fullest sense like any ancient liturgy. Dix showed that in the 1552 order *memory* was intended to bear only reduced meanings, and claimed that this applied to the 1549 rite also. (*Perpetual memory* is easier to say than *perpetual memorial* and presumably means the same.) But the 1549 Canon, being modelled on its predecessor, makes its Memorial in the sentence which follows *in remembrance of me*, most of which disappeared altogether in 1552. Although extremely long, it is grammatically straightforward, with four participial phrases dependent on the main clause (*we . . . make . . . the memorial*):

> Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son our Saviour Jesu Christ, *we* thy humble servants do celebrate and *make* here before thy Divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, *the memorial* which thy Son hath willed us to make;
>
> (1) *having* in remembrance his blessed passion, mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
>
> (2) *rendering* unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same;
>
> (3) entirely *desiring* thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving;
>
> (4) 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.

This use of participles, rather than a series of *ands*, is the most important characteristic of this section of the 1549 Canon. They make the whole sentence the expression of a single, integrated act in which *having in remembrance*, *rendering thanks*, *desiring* God *to accept our sacrifice* and *beseeching* him *to grant* the grace requested are part and parcel of the making of *the memorial* and not to be distinguished from it as additional acts supplementary to it. It is understandable that, in liturgies where the 1549 structure was restored, attempts were made to break this long sentence up, first in the Scottish Liturgy of 1637 which put a full stop after *the same* and restarted with *And we entirely desire*; but this has the effect of suggesting the beginning of a new theme at this point, which the 1549 wording avoids. (Later revisions in the Scottish-American tradition, including the English alternative order of 1928, increased the separation by interpolating an Eastern-style Invocation in this place.)

In the 1549 Canon considered in its context, it is not natural to interpret *memorial* in any reduced sense: as in the Roman Canon, it is a corporate act

made before the *Divine Majesty* with the *holy gifts*, the bread and wine, lying on the altar. Whether it was the intention or not, *having in remembrance* cannot therefore be taken to be purely mental, as the unfortunate phrase *calling to mind* used in some modern prayers (Roman III, *Common Worship* B) might suggest, but must be assumed to have the full meaning ascribed to Latin *memores* and Greek *memnemenoi* in the ancient liturgies.

*

There is a notable difference between the 1549 Canon and its Latin predecessor in their treatment of **Sacrifice/Oblation**. The Roman Canon either offers sacrifice or prays for its acceptance no fewer than seven times, though only once does it say what is offered (*panem sanctum vitæ æternæ et calicem salutis perpetuæ*; 'the holy bread of eternal life and the cup of everlasting salvation') and then without specifying what is meant by it. (Once again the doctrinal precision of catechisms and conciliar decrees is not to be found in a prayer dating from the 5th century if not earlier.) By contrast modern Roman Prayer II contents itself with making the Oblation only once (*panem vitæ et calicem salutis offerimus,* 'we offer the bread of life and the cup of salvation').

As the Reformers consistently opposed the 'sacrifice of the Mass', one would not expect a liturgy composed by Cranmer to offer the elements at all, and the 1552 rite certainly does not. Dix and Bouyer claimed that the concept is also excluded from the 1549 rite, but that clever use of traditional-sounding language disguises the fact: for example *gifts* is used twice (both occurrences removed in 1552) just as the Latin uses *dona*, but not in a Godward sense. Again, where the Latin prays vaguely that *hæc* ('these things') may be conveyed to the *sublime altare* ('heavenly altar': Revelation 8:3) by angelic ministry, the 1549 Canon in the passage quoted earlier specifies that it is *prayers and supplications* that are *brought up into* the *holy tabernacle*.

The significance of this last difference may have been overstated: the tabernacle in question is *up* in heaven, and the image is still one of sacrifice, for the earthly tabernacle was the precursor of the Jerusalem temple. In any case an Oblation of the elements is actually *implied* by the 1549 Canon, even if that was not its author's intention: in the main clause of the text given above, the Memorial is made before the *Divine Majesty* with the *holy gifts* of bread and wine, and the third participial phrase desires the acceptance of the (capitalised) *Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving* which is an integral part of it. God cannot accept what has not been 'offered', even though that word is not used at this point. *Sacrificium laudis* ('sacrifice of praise') is a traditional way of referring to the Eucharistic Oblation, as in the Roman Canon. In his controversial works Cranmer drew a distinction between a purely verbal

'sacrifice of praise', which he accepted, and an Oblation of the elements, which he excluded. He achieved this in 1552 by abandoning most of the 1549 Memorial altogether and by postponing the *sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving*, together with what he retained of the remainder of the Canon, to a non-essential optional prayer after Communion. None of this surgery would have been necessary if an Oblation of the elements had not been present, though veiled,[1] in the 1549 Canon.

The one place where the 1549 Canon uses explicitly sacrificial language is in connection with the self-oblation of the communicants:

> And here we offer and present unto thee (O Lord) our self, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee, humbly beseeching thee that whosoever shall be partakers of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with thy son Jesu Christ that he may dwell in them, and they in him.

The first part of this passage has been condemned by some as Pelagian, and by Dix as a 'substitution of the oblation of the sons of men for that of the Son of Man'. But the wording is biblical, being quoted from Romans 12:1; although it refers there to the Christian life in general rather than to worship, it seems perverse to suggest that the Eucharist is the one occasion in that life when the thought cannot be expressed. If the words really were heretical, saying them after Communion (as in 1552/1662) does not make them any less so, but they have retained that position in all the Church of England's revisions of the last forty years, even in those prayers (*ASB* A4 and B1, *Common Worship* C) which otherwise partially restore the 1549 structure. In any case, self-oblation in union with Christ is a feature of many Eucharistic prayers, as in modern Roman Prayer III, with its remarkable echoes of 1549: *concede, ut qui Corpore et Sanguine Filii tui reficimur, Spiritu eius Sancto repleti, unum corpus et unus spiritus inveniamur in Christo. Ipse nos tibi perficiat munus æternum*, officially translated 'Grant that we, who are nourished by his Body and Blood may be filled with his Holy Spirit and become one body, one spirit in Christ. May he make us an everlasting gift to you.'[2]

*

Dix and Bouyer were justified in judging the 1552 rite in the light of the views expressed by Cranmer in his contemporary controversial works, but mistaken in applying them to the 1549 Canon, which shows every sign of having been composed much earlier than its publication and none of

1 It could if necessary be unveiled by the addition of a single comma: *this, our sacrifice*; and more explicitly by expanding *this* to *these holy things*, i.e. the *holy gifts* already mentioned.

2 The 1549 version could be made to depend more clearly on the Memorial by changing *And here* to *Through him*.

being originally intended for merely transitional use. Most of their criticism of it is therefore misplaced. Its alleged ambiguity is no greater than that of the Latin prayer on which it was somewhat surprisingly modelled, given that the Reformers tended to reject the Roman Canon altogether. On the manner of Christ's **Presence** in the Eucharist the 1549 rite says no more and no less than the Latin does; its **Memorial** is more fully developed than in the original, and in its explicit **Thanksgiving** it remedies a major deficiency. Only as regards **Sacrifice** does it differ much from its rather obsessive model, but not to the extent of eliminating the theme altogether. Gardiner's assessment (quoted in Procter and Frere's *New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 1901), that 'the true faith of the Holy Mystery . . . in the Book of Common Prayer is well termed, not distant from the Catholic faith in my judgment' must be considered accurate, in spite of Cranmer's protests.

The Prayer Book as Cranmer left it was in use only from 1st November 1552 until the overthrow of Lady Jane Grey on 19th July 1553. When it was restored in 1559, the meaning of its Words of Administration was transformed by placing them in the context of those of 1549—which is why the perceived problem of the length of the formula cannot be solved by the once common practice of saying the first half to some communicants and the second half to others. The section on the Sacraments added to the Catechism in 1604 and the expanded rubrics of 1662 are also consistent with the ethos of 1549, even though the text remained almost unchanged, probably for political reasons.

The Scottish liturgy of 1637 began the revival of the 1549 Canon itself (outside England), though changes intended to improve it are not always successful, as in the case of the attempts to break up the long Memorial sentence. The Scottish liturgy of 1764 and the American of 1790 also made the Oblation explicit by adding (after *these thy holy gifts*) *which we now offer unto thee*. As well as being arguably superfluous, this introduces a dissociation, absent from the 1549 Canon, between Memorial and Oblation, together with further linguistic complexity.[1]

The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass in the Prayer Book of 1549 is not only the fountain-head of Anglican liturgy: it is one of the greatest Eucharistic rites ever devised and *the* finest in English—it deserves to be more widely known, cherished and *used*.[2]

1 Perhaps more successful is the change of the now obscure *the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same* to *the wonderful redemption which thou hast wrought for us in him* in the West Indian liturgy of 1959.
2 With some minor amendments, mainly consisting of the application to 1549 of the changes made to 1552 in 1662, e.g. *which* to *who*, *be* to *are*, *our self* to *ourselves*.

With Altar, Bible and the Book of Common Prayer:

the Achievements and the Disappointments of a Victorian Incumbent

ERIC WOODS

In 2007 I was invited to give a lecture under the auspices of the Sherborne House Arts Centre at a symposium entitled *The William Charles Macready Decade, 1850–1860: The Making of the Modern Town*. Sherborne House is one of many impressive buildings in Sherborne, Dorset. It has a Tudor wing but the principal part of the House dates from 1720. Its chief glory is the mural in the hall and staircase painted by Sir James Thornhill, himself a Dorset man.

The future of the House currently hangs in the balance. Dorset County Council wishes to sell the building but it is hoped that a sympathetic purchaser can be found who will allow the continuation of its arts programme and a home for the sculptures and archive of Dame Elisabeth Frink.

William Charles Macready was probably the House's most famous tenant. He leased it from 1850–60. He was the leading actor manager of his day but decided, at the height of his career, to leave the stage and retire to the country. Whilst at the House he was visited by friends from London including Thackeray and his closest friend of all, Charles Dickens. The latter gave public readings including *A Christmas Carol*. Macready was also much occupied with the re-founding of the Sherborne Literary Institution, the equipping of a Reading Room and the creation of an evening school.

Our symposium covered all the principal personalities and developments in this delightful Dorset market town in that most energetic 19th-century decade, 1850–1860. A series of speakers explored the impact of the coming of the railway (quite late in this part of the world) and developments in education, industry, sanitation and medical care. But my task was to investigate the life of a remarkable predecessor of mine, the Reverend Edward Harston, Vicar of Sherborne from 1854 to 1868. His achievements in just fourteen years were astonishing, and would have been even greater had he not had a confrontational style which inevitably created opposition from others and exhaustion for himself. Let the reader understand!

The more I researched the life and ministry of Edward Harston, the more I admired his achievements, armed only with Altar, Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. In one of his published sermons he asks how the 'faithful Communicant' would reply if asked how his soul is fed. His answer is simple, but profound: 'He would point to the Altar of God, and to his Bible and Prayer-book, and say—"These are the means by which my spirit has been strengthened and kept from fainting: this I know because I am conscious of strength secretly received to enable me to bear my burdens; but the mystery of the process I cannot explain." '[1]

I suspect that this story was being echoed up and down the country in the middle of the 19th century. It suddenly has great relevance in the ecclesiastical turmoil of 150 years later. With Altar, Bible and the Book of Common Prayer we can still change the world. That is why Edward Harston's story is retold here in *Faith & Worship*.

From *The Dorset County Chronicle and Somersetshire Gazette*, 13 February, 1868:

> **SHERBORNE: DEPARTURE OF THE VICAR—**From the notice in our impression of a few weeks ago of the resignation of the vicar of Sherborne, the Rev. Edward Harston, our readers will be prepared for the announcement of the departure of the reverend gentleman, which took place, on Monday last, under circumstances of no ordinary character, and it is only due that such should be faithfully recorded. An early hour was fixed for the departure by train; but, long before the time had arrived, the platform was crowded by parishioners of all classes in deepest sorrow that the moment had come of parting with their beloved pastor and his excellent lady. Not a man, woman, or child present but whose hearts were too full to put into words even the commonest expressions of farewell; their hearts were filled with grief, their sorrow deep and silent, and the muffled peal from the abbey bells alone spoke loudly the grief that had fallen upon the parish. The removal of their devoted, faithful friend from their sight, to be no more seen doing his Master's work amongst them (which but for his failing health and strength he would not have yielded except with his latest breath) would, even under ordinary circumstances, be sad and trying to the feelings of both pastor and people; but, as we have said, this was no ordinary leave-taking, and the late vicar was a man amongst us of no ordinary standard; his great ability, his untiring energy, his earnest, unflagging endeavours to promote the good of the people of his parish, his manly advocacy of the claims of the poor, his careful and respectful attention to the aged, his personal attendance upon the sick, his independent, unflinching, zealous assertion of the duties of the rich; his endearing and gentle method of dealing with the

1 Edward Harston, *Parish Recollections* (Sherborne 1868), p. 12

> young amongst the poor class of his parishioners, had endeared him to all. Truly, if a friend is one who cuts our griefs in twain and makes one joy double, we lose such in him.[1]

And so on, and so on, over many column inches.

As we shall see, Sherborne had not always been so devoted to The Reverend Edward Harston, who had arrived as Vicar in 1854.[2] He had previously been Incumbent of another noble church, the Collegiate and Parish Church of St Editha at Tamworth in Staffordshire, to which he had been inducted in 1845. It is possible that his new parishioners in Sherborne knew nothing of the turbulent times he had endured—or provoked—in his former parish. For example, in 1853 he had introduced by the main door of the church a fine and elaborately carved font by Sir Gilbert Scott. Some of his parishioners took great exception to this, and had it moved elsewhere in the church by a local stonemason, provoking a fierce row. In the same year, many members of the congregation were outraged when the Gentlemen of the Choir appeared at morning service dressed in surplices. By the time of Evensong the surplices had disappeared. They were later found next to the vestry in a rainwater tank, to which was affixed this notice: 'Jesus wept, as well he might, to see twelve devils dressed in white.'[3]

Harston had graduated from Clare Hall (as Clare College was then called), Cambridge, in 1834.[4] He was therefore in his early forties when he arrived in Sherborne fresh from his battles at Tamworth. He was to find the town—as The *Dorsetshire County Chronicle* was to recall—'50 years behind the times'.[5] Soon the battles were raging again.

Before exploring them, it is worth investigating Harston's pedigree. The surname Harston is associated particularly with East Anglia, though Edward himself was born in Tiverton in 1812, son of Samuel Robert Harston. He was educated at Blundell's School. The County of Devon has strong links with Exeter College, Oxford, and Blundell's itself with Balliol. Harston himself preferred to go up to Cambridge, and it is possible that links with the East Anglian branch of the family may have influenced his choice.

Similarly, it could have been a family connection which twice took him to Staffordshire and the Diocese of Lichfield. The Tamworth incumbency was his second position there, and we know that there was a firm of organ

1 *The Dorset County Chronicle and Somersetshire Gazette*, 13 February 1868, pp.6–7

2 Presented by the Crown. In the late 1870's Mr George Digby Wingfield Digby effected an exchange, whereby the Crown became patron of the living of Mappowder, and the patronage of the Abbey Church was transferred from the Crown to the owner of Sherborne Castle.

3 For this information I am greatly indebted to Mr Stanley Parry, historian of St Editha's.

4 The Revd Canon C. H. Mayo, *The Official Guide to the Abbey Church of St Mary the Virgin, Sherborne* (Sherborne, 1925), p.85

5 *The Dorsetshire County Chronicle*, 9 January 1868

builders active in that area at the time called Harston's, of Newark and Tamworth.[1] But already on his ordination as deacon in 1835, at the earliest canonical age of 23, Edward Harston had served his Title—his assistant curacy—in Staffordshire, at Holy Trinity, Burton-upon-Trent. Three years later he achieved his first incumbency at the age of just 26, moving back to East Anglia as Rector of St Stephen's, Ipswich.[2]

I have been unable to discover if Harston had any family connections with Ipswich, but it was there that the young Rector became a firm friend of the Ingelow family, and an episode in their relationship deserves mention as a footnote both in his life and that of a minor Victorian poet. The Ingelows were originally from Boston, Lincolnshire. In 1820 the future poet Jean Ingelow was born there, her father being a banker. But in 1834 his bank failed, and he and the family were forced to move to Ipswich, where he took a new banking job. But in 1845, the year that Harston left Ipswich for Tamworth, that bank closed too, and the Ingelows had to move once more. Jean had meanwhile been writing poetry, and was to become a celebrated, if minor, Victorian poet. She was optimistic that the publication of her poems might ease the family's growing financial burdens. Her parents gave her scant encouragement, but from Staffordshire she received stout support from Harston, who edited her first published volume, *A Rhyming Chronicle of Incidents and Feelings,* which appeared in 1850. Included were verses dedicated to three of Harston's children, who had died in rapid succession. He was no stranger to sadness, and his loyalties were steadfast.[3]

Meanwhile, if Oxford had been, since the publication of the first *Tracts for the Times in* 1833, the centre of revival of interest in the Catholic doctrines of the Church of England in the seventeenth century (giving rise to the so-called 'Oxford Movement'), Cambridge had developed a parallel concern for the restoration of that ritual in worship which had survived the Reformation. The Cambridge Camden Society had been founded in 1839, just five years after Harston's graduation, to propagate this new enthusiasm for Catholic ecclesiology, which covered every aspect of liturgy, church architecture and furnishing. Given his subsequent concerns, there can be little doubt but that Harston kept in touch with his old university, and was much influenced by the Camden Society there.[4]

1 *BIOS*, the Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1988, p.11

2 I am grateful to Elizabeth Stratton, Archivist at Clare College, for information in this paragraph.

3 Source: the Gerald Massey website, <www.gerald-massey.org.uk>. Massey was another Victorian 'minor poet'.

4 One of the Society's founders was John Mason Neale, the great hymn writer and translator. Interestingly he himself was an Old Shirburnian. I am grateful to Dr Huw Ridgeway of Sherborne School for the information that the *Sherborne Register (4th Edition: 1550–1950)*, p.38, shows Neale enrolled at Sherborne in 1833 and 1834, winning prizes for Latin and an English Essay in 1834. It is interesting to speculate how far, if at all, the paths of Harston and Neale crossed.

Harston certainly descended upon Sherborne with the energy of a tornado. The Abbey needed it. His predecessor, John Parsons, had died in office on 1 July 1854 at the age of 74, having been appointed Assistant Curate at the Abbey fifty-one years earlier, at the youngest possible canonical age of 23. From 1811 he had served as Vicar of Oborne and Perpetual Curate of Castleton, and the Abbey was added to his responsibilities in 1830.[1] That was only two years after Mr William Wilkins, architect of the National Gallery, had produced a report on the state of the tower vault and the settlement of the tower arches, which should have given any new Incumbent cause for alarm. Wilkins produced some sensible but expensive proposals for strengthening the tower, but the Vestry took fright at the cost and decided to do nothing. Two years later, in the year that Parsons became Vicar, there was a fall of masonry from the Quire that occasioned some palliative measures, but the real danger had been quite forgotten when in 1843 Parsons decided to undertake the restoration of the Abbey. Nothing much happened until 1848, when to his eternal credit Parsons appointed an extremely able architect, R. C. Carpenter, to undertake the work. The restoration began in earnest in 1849, but in 1850 hit a major snag when Carpenter discovered the 'dangerous state of one of the diagonal rib stones in the south-east side of the second bay of the choir-groin'.[2] Every effort, and most of the remaining funds, had to be channelled into major structural repairs to the Quire and the piers of the tower. This swallowed much of what had been raised for the more cosmetic aspects of the restoration, which is why a cut-price, mass-produced and generally unsatisfactory west window was all the parish could afford in 1851. After that, with funds exhausted, the restoration ground to a halt.

Now, historians should never, ever, suggest in any way that something might have happened long ago which they cannot demonstrate did happen. But as a priest myself I suspect I know what was going on in Edward Harston's mind shortly after he arrived here in 1854. If he was worth his salt—which he evidently was—at the very least he would have drawn up a list of what needed to be done. And to judge by his performance over the next four or five years, that is exactly what he did, and an extraordinary list it was.

First, he made it clear that his first priority was prayer: prayer and the spiritual life and the devotional practice of the Christian faith. His first sermon in the Abbey, preached on 8th October 1854, was clear: 'With the strongest possible conviction of the absolute necessity of prayerfulness to

1 Mayo, *op. cit.*, p.85
2 Edward Harston, *A Handbook to the Abbey Church of S. Mary, Sherborne*, (1st Edition, Sherborne & London, 1858) p.73

the life and health of the soul, we, my brethren, propose to give ourselves continually to this holy practice, in which we hope that you will join us.'[1] Three pages on (in the printed text) he added 'Nor, we trust, will you be displeased with us, if in the exercise of our office, we use great plainness of speech . . . .'[2] The die was cast. The only question was, which item on his list of priorities would he tackle first?

The answer was, the Abbey Close—about which he was not the last Incumbent to have strong feelings. Just one week after his first sermon to his new parishioners, he preached another, which was subsequently printed with the catchy title *The Grave, and the Reverence due to it*. He printed the sermon two years later, when his plans for the Close were coming to fruition, and his 1856 *Preface* deserves to be quoted in large part:

> The following Sermon was not written for publication, but with the sole object of enlisting the interest and sympathy of my flock in the improvement of the condition of the Abbey Churchyard at Sherborne.
>
> That condition was formerly disgraceful. Clothes were hung out to dry—carpets were shaken and beaten against the tombstones within it—a trespass-path over the graves was in daily use—and children made the graves and tombs the place of amusement, as though it were a playground.
>
> The parishioners have cordially responded to the appeal made to them—the above desecrations are no longer suffered; the linens and the carpets have disappeared (though not without some resistance), the trespass-path, through the exertions of my valued churchwardens, has been stopped, and the children have learned to reverence the resting-place of the Christian dead.
>
> I refer to these circumstances here, because anonymous statements have been recently made in a local Paper, accusing me of a wish to desecrate the Churchyard because, with the re-opening of the western door of the Abbey Church, I advocate the making of a direct path to it—without which I foresee that the graves near it will be subject to frequent desecration.
>
> No one can be less concerned than myself for the misrepresentations of those who sneak into the columns of a newspaper, for the purpose of personal attack, without their names; and the only reply I give to their charges is the publication of a Sermon expressive of my true sentiments on the subject . . . .

Harston then nails his colours to the mast, for now and for the rest of his Incumbency:

> I wish to add that while I shall always receive thankfully the opinions of any avowed members of my flock, I do not consider myself called

1 *Parish Recollections*, p.3 2 *Ibid.*, p. 6

> upon to take further notice of the charges of persons who, for reasons best known to themselves, shrink from publicly guaranteeing the truth of their statements by their names.[1]

But what of the sermon itself, just one week into his time in Sherborne? Once again, Harston was not the man to beat about the bush:

> If, as I trust, there may be some present who feel with me that our churchyard is not respected and tended as it ought to be, I venture to solicit their help to put a stop to that painful desecration of the graves which any casual passer-by may witness daily. No simple voice will suffice to put down the indecencies which occur there. But public opinion can do it; and may properly demand that whenever this parish shall be called together to consider the question of a new cemetery, stringent measures should at the same time be taken for preserving in rigid sanctity the spot which has been the ancient resting-place of our fathers in past generations, since, more than a thousand years ago, the Saxon King laid the foundations of this holy pile.

It was clear that already Harston knew what he wanted: a new cemetery, so that the Close could be formally closed to new burials and made a place of peace and tranquillity. And within six months or so he had found two possible sites for a new burial ground. By April 1855 Earl Digby had offered to sell four acres of land at Coombe, called the Quarry Field, for the price of £350. How suitable that would have been one wonders, given the steep sides of the Coombe. Fortunately the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist were also willing to sell four acres for a cemetery, this time 'situate in Middle Ridgeway or Lower Lenthay'. They put no price on their offer: it was to be sold at full value to be properly ascertained. The Vestry duly chose the Lenthay site, even though it had to pay £200 more for it than Lord Digby would have charged for Quarry Field. The Sherborne Vestry *Order Book* records that on 15th November 1855 the purchase was agreed, together with provision for the building of two chapels (one for Anglicans, the other for Dissenters), a Receiving House, a Lodge, an Office, entrance gates, fences, the draining, laying-out and planting of the new cemetery, and the widening and improving of the road leading to it. All of this added £2,450 to the £550 cost of the land itself: the Town Cemetery was an established fact for the outlay of £3,000, and on 26th July 1856 Harston preached at a special service in the Abbey to mark its opening.[2] The consecration itself had taken place on

1 Edward Harston, *The Grave and the Reverence Due to it* (Oxford, 1856)
2 'The Consecration of the New Cemetery' in *Parish Recollections*, pp.70–6

July 22nd, with 'two-thirds of the ground being assigned for the use of the Church, and one-third being left unconsecrated, for the use of Dissenters.'[1]

In all of this, Harston was aided by the fact that from 1852 Parliament had begun to pass a whole group of laws known as the Burial Acts, to bring order into the chaotic state of provision of burial grounds throughout the country. The Act of 1853 favoured his plans in two ways. First, it enabled the Vestry to petition the Privy Council to have the churchyard closed for future burials, on the ground that it was full. After a thousand years or more of use, that was not difficult to achieve, and responsibility for the maintenance of the closed churchyard duly passed to a newly constituted Burial Board, funded from the public purse. The same Act also authorised the provision of publicly-funded cemeteries across the country, which ushered in a boom in the construction of public cemeteries run by the self-same Burial Boards. These in turn were administered by the Parish Vestries. It is sometimes forgotten that until 1894 the Parish Vestry's remit covered many areas now administered by local government. Thus the ecclesiastical parish was responsible for the education of children, the administration of the Poor Laws, the provision of burial grounds and much else besides. By a judicious use of the 1853 Burial Act Harston therefore won his first victory, though clearly his closure of the Close for burials and then re-ordering it to produce something like the greensward we see today had met with some opposition. As subsequent Incumbents have discovered to their cost, those who seldom venture inside the Abbey feel correspondingly more passionate about the Close outside it, and find in every cobble, path, tree or railing (or absence of same) a cause for which they will willingly send the Vicar to the stake.

But Harston was now more concerned with what was going on inside the Abbey—or rather, with what was not going on. One urgent problem was the lack of an organ. The old organ had failed completely in 1849, and for the next seven years 'the only means of accompaniment at divine services was that of a barrel organ, manipulated by the head verger.'[2] Action had been delayed during the declining years of Vicar Parsons by a dispute as to where the new organ should be situated, with a strong body of opinion wanting to erect it at the west end of the nave, where it would hide much of the unpopular new west window.[3] But it is actually a very bad idea to erect an organ up against a window which will allow sunlight

1 *Handbook*, 4th Edition 1878, p.9. This Fourth Edition was published five years after Harston's death. It reveals no clue as to the identity of the Editor.

2 D.C. Hunt, *Music Making in Sherborne Abbey* (Sherborne 1987), p.4

3 *Sherborne Order Book*, 15 May 1854

to pass directly into its inner workings, and the Diocese rightly made objections to the Vestry's proposal. Harston cut through all that, and on 3rd November 1854 the Vestry

> Resolved unanimously that this Meeting, learning from the communications now made that considerable difficulty and further delay in the erection of the organ will arise out of the attempt to carry out the resolution of the 15 May, and regarding it as highly desirable that no further time should be lost, is of opinion that the suggestion now made to lower the North Transept gallery considerably and to place the organ thereon should be accepted unanimously.[1]

Harston's sermon on the new organ, preached on Easter Day 1856, hints that even this had not been achieved without controversy. 'Henceforth,' he pleaded, 'may there be fewer discords in the Church to mar the sweet tones of Christian love.'[2] But he had got what he wanted, together with a new Choir of men and boys, the formation of which he had announced within a few weeks of his arrival in 1854.[3] The organ itself was built by Messrs. Gray and Davison at a cost of £1,106. 'The first performer upon it before it left the manufactory was His Royal Highness the late lamented Prince Consort, who pronounced it a very fine instrument.'[4]

At the same time Harston was anxious to complete the restoration of the Abbey's interior, which had stalled back in 1851 when funds—and the old Incumbent's energies—had both run out. And now he was the beneficiary of an extraordinary stroke of luck. Earl Digby of Sherborne Castle died without issue, having never married, in 1856. The Earldom, and the Viscountcy of Coleshill in Warwickshire (where the Digbys also had great estates) died with him. But his two baronies, Irish and English, passed to his cousin, Edward St Vincent Digby of Minterne. However, Earl Digby bequeathed his Sherborne estates to his sister's elder son George Digby Wingfield, while the Warwickshire estates went to the younger son The Reverend John Digby Wingfield. The two fortunate brothers, whose father William Wingfield was a lawyer, both added a final 'Digby' to their name, and thus the Wingfield Digby dynasty was created.[5]

The old Earl had been a great benefactor of both the Abbey and the town. He had paid for the lion's share of the restoration of the nave and transepts of the Abbey and, as we shall see, gave the land for the new National Schools. But the new Mr Wingfield Digby, once he had taken

1 *Ibid.*, pp.336–7

2 *Parish Recollections*, p.49 3 *Ibid.*, pp.16–23

4 *Handbook*, 4th edition 1878, pp.17–18

5 For completion's sake we should note that The Reverend John Digby Wingfield Digby's son John Digby Wingfield Digby inherited his father's Warwickshire estates on the latter's death in 1878, and the Sherborne Castle estates when his uncle Edward died in 1883. Thus were the two holdings united. In 1883 they totalled 26,355 acres.

possession of the Castle, was not to be outdone. He immediately offered to pay for the restoration of the Quire, from top to bottom, together with the Quire Aisles and all the chapels. That meant not only repairs to the vaulting, but the decorating and colouring of the roof and walls by Messrs Crace of Wigmore Street, London, new windows, new choir stalls, a new High Altar and reredos, and the restoration of the misericords in what today are known as the Castle and the Vicarage pews. Harston did not go back to Hardman's of Birmingham, the makers of the Great West Window, for the Quire glass, but to the young new firm of Clayton & Bell. John Clayton of London and Alfred Bell of Dorset had only formed their company the previous year, 1855, so the Abbey Quire was one of their first big commissions, and a very good job they made of it. The colours are superb, and unlike Hardman's glass, the new windows were properly fired, so have kept their detail. The work began on 18 August 1856, and two years later to the day the Bishop of Salisbury 'accompanied by about two hundred Clergy, in their surplices' attended the restoration festival to mark the completion of the project.[1]

Meanwhile, Harston had been growing increasingly dissatisfied with the education, such as it was, available to the children of the poorer classes in the town. Within a few months of his arrival, he had persuaded Earl Digby to give him and his Churchwardens (in the words of the conveyance) 'All that piece of pasture ground containing by admeasurement one acre and one rood (more or less) being part of a Close called Westbury Field or Millers Ground', on the condition that all buildings thereon erected should 'be for ever hereafter appropriated and used as and for a School or Schools for the education of Children and Adults or Children only of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes in the Parish of Sherborne.' Furthermore, the education offered there 'shall always be in union with and conducted according to the principles and in furtherance of the ends and designs of the National Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church.'[2]

One would have thought that, apart from the fundraising necessary to build the new schoolrooms and teachers' accommodation, Harston would not have had much difficulty in establishing the new National Schools once he had Earl Digby's gift and moral support behind him. And it is certainly the case that he was able to congratulate those assembled in the Abbey for a special service to mark the opening of the Schools in February 1857 that

1 For a full account of the restoration, see *Handbook*, 4th edition, 1878, pp.20–37.
2 Conveyance dated 4 July 1885, in the Abbey archive at the Dorset History Centre, Dorchester

> By a vigorous and united effort, you have at length succeeded in providing an excellent set of buildings, furnished with every educational appliance, for the purpose of enabling our poorer neighbours to obtain a sound Church education for their children, and by your liberality in contributing to their future annual support, you have put it in the power of the School Committee to admit children on the easiest possible terms to their parents. The total outlay, including the value of the land given by the late Earl Digby for the site, is estimated at £2,500, of which more than half has been contributed willingly by yourselves, the remainder being supplied out of the Parliamentary Grant for National Education. For this amount, you have provided a set of school-rooms, with class-rooms, play-grounds, and teachers' residences, as complete (I venture to think) as any in the kingdom, and capable of receiving six hundred children.[1]

But clearly not everything had gone smoothly. He told the benefactors of the new schools that their generosity had been 'at some little sacrifice of popularity'. And why? No doubt because

> Not very many years ago, an opinion prevailed that education was not required for poor people at all. It was then alleged—and to some extent it was a true allegation—that they did not want it. It was also asserted that they were better off without it, for that if they had it, it would only turn their heads, and by unfitting them for their worldly station, would make great social mischief among us.[2]

Clearly there had been another battle. It was one he was to recall in his Farewell Sermon on 9th February 1868:

> Then again, on the important question of the Education of the Children of our poor, I have regretted to find some parishioners and Churchmen standing aloof, or (which is worse) trying to disparage our Schools in the eyes of their fellow Churchmen, and to deprive them of their sympathy.

And he delivered a broadside against those

> who neither support your Schools, nor visit them, nor take any trouble about them whatsoever, except once a year perhaps to scrutinize the printed accounts . . . who never enter the Schools, never enquire for their condition, and indeed know very little, except by hearsay, of what goes on within them.[3]

1 *Parish Recollections*, pp.80–1

2 *Ibid.*, p.81

3 *Ibid.*, pp.154–5. There is a good account of life in the Abbey Schools during Harston's incumbency, and beyond, in Christopher Brown, *Godly Education* (Sherborne), 1977.

Edward Harston had arrived full of energy in that most energetic decade, the 1850's. He had told his congregation in May 1856 that 'we think no stronger contrast could be found, than is presented between the Church as she was fifty years ago, and the Church as she is now. That was a period of torpor, this of energy'[1]—and his own energy reflected that. But there had been a battle to clear the Close and found a new cemetery, a battle to build his beloved schools, and now he was to face the most protracted battle of all, that of his 'High Church' or ritualistic leanings against the general 'Low Church' views of his parishioners.

As we have already seen, Harston was imbued with the spirit of both the Oxford Movement and the Cambridge Camden Society. As Owen Chadwick puts it in his magisterial study of the Victorian Church, the latter

> nursed the ritual solemnities which survived the Reformation. The churches most conservative of a solemn ceremonial were cathedrals and college chapels. Therefore the new fight for reverence meant that parish churches should be made like cathedrals. Their chancels, hitherto used as storehouses or even as schools except on the rare occasion of the sacrament, must be cleansed and filled with a choir in surplices.[2]

All of that Harston had achieved by 1858. In that year he secured daily services in the Abbey, all of course using the Book of Common Prayer.[3] He never evinced the least desire to use any other liturgical text, unlike some of his contemporaries. He saw no need to do so: his quest now was not about text—for him the Prayer Book was bedrock—but about enhancing the backdrop to that text. This was a project common to many like-minded priests in this period. Chadwick describes it thus:

> The newly cleaned chancel needed ornament. Thus the quest for reverence, and the restoration of churches and the opportunity of building so many new churches, threw up the ritual question; colour of altar frontals, lighting of candlesticks, wearing of surplices or stoles, use of pews or benches, posture of ministers. The ceremonial of the Church of England had been governed by custom slowly decaying. As with the Oxford doctrines, the innovators appealed from present custom to past authority.[4]

As Christmas 1858 drew near, the many innovations hurried-in by their energetic Vicar led simmering discontent to boil over. At a meeting of the Vestry on 23 December, it was 'Resolved unanimously that the recent alterations in the mode of performing the services in Sherborne Church

1 *Ibid*, p.64
2 Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, Part 1, 1966, p.213
3 *Parish Recollections*, p.3
4 Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.214

and the placing Candlesticks on the Communion Table are entirely disapproved by this Parish.' Thus emboldened, Mr Henry Coate put another motion to the meeting. The *Order Book* records:

> Resolved by a considerable majority that the Resolution just agreed to, be sent to the Lord Bishop of the Diocese and that his Lordship be respectfully requested to use his influence and authority to remove the Candlesticks and to restore in Sherborne Church a form of worship agreeable to the usage in Parish Churches.[1]

Appealing to the Lord Bishop of Salisbury was not likely to do Harston's opponents any good. Walter Kerr Hamilton had once been an evangelical preacher, but was now so Tractarian that Queen Victoria was to complain that the Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, had deceived her in nominating him to the See of Salisbury in 1854. He was, says Chadwick, 'the first disciple of Dr Pusey to be an English bishop; the first English bishop to carry a pastoral staff; the single Tractarian bishop until Gladstone became prime minister later in the century.'[2] We hear no more of the affair of the candlesticks, but the ringleader at the Vestry meeting, Henry Coate, was elected Churchwarden the following year, and no doubt continued his campaign against Harston's ritualistic innovations. That, too, was to give the Vicar much pain, as he mentioned at length in his final sermon.

Harston never wavered in his principles. As late as October 1867 we find him hosting a gathering of the English Church Union (one of the Catholic societies in the Church of England) at which the Reverend W. Perceval Ward, Rector of Compton Valence, preached a rallying sermon on behalf of the Catholic cause, calling for the 'reuniting to the Church' of those 'separated bodies of Non-conformists who in our land stand aloof from us, too often in an attitude of hostility'.[3] Harston himself preached a sermon on the E.C.U.'s behalf at Little Langford Church in Wiltshire on 31st July 1867.[4]

But it was as though all the achievements of the years 1854 to 1858, and the opposition he had encountered on so many fronts, had knocked the stuffing out of him. Thereafter he attended fewer Vestry meetings.

1 *Sherborne Order Book*, 23 December 1858

2 Chadwick, *op.cit.*, pp.468–9

3 W. Perceval Ward, *Love the Truth and Peace*, 1867, p.6. That must have struck a chord with Harston: the members of the Nonconformist Churches (especially the newly-built Methodist Church in Cheap Street), had been unable to disguise their glee at the troubles that had beset the Vicar, and had been glad to welcome defectors from the Abbey congregation.

4 *Parish Recollections*, pp.142–50. The very next year Harston's successor (William Lyon, Vicar of Sherborne 1868–1907 and son of Ralph Lyon, DD, former Head Master of Sherborne School) was speaking warmly at a meeting in Sherborne of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, which reflected views very different from those of the E.C.U., representing as it did the evangelical wing of the Church.

When he came to publish some of his sermons he chose fourteen from those first five years, and only six from the eight years that followed. He supported the founding of the Yeatman Hospital and worked hard for it, preaching at a service in the Abbey at the beginning of 1866 to mark its opening.[1] He continued to campaign against 'the unequal distribution of our Church accommodation, which gives to the middle and upper classes of this parish, the monopoly of more than a thousand comfortable sittings, and gives the working classes a few chairs only, or the seats in the remotest corners of the aisles.' but in his Farewell Sermon had to admit defeat.[2]

It was defeat of a more personal kind which caused him, at the beginning of 1867, to leave Sherborne for six months. A year later *The Dorset County Chronicle* recalled the reason. Announcing Harston's decision to resign, it commented:

> For 13 years he has laboured and toiled in our midst, and no-one who knows how hard he has worked will be surprised to hear that his health is now completely shattered. A year ago, it will be remembered, he left Sherborne for six months in the hope of recruiting his strength. For a time we thought that the rest had been efficacious; but a return to parochial labours soon showed that the cure was not complete. Feeling, therefore, that he was no longer capable of carrying on his work at Sherborne, he sent his resignation to the Bishop. . . . We understand that efforts are being made, in influential quarters, to induce the vicar to reconsider his determination, and it is said that the Bishop has actually refused to accept his resignation; but we fear that all efforts will be unavailing, as it is not without full deliberation that the step has been taken.[3]

The Chronicle's correspondent was correct in his assumption. Harston preached his last sermon on Sunday 9th February 1868, and he and Mrs Harston departed the following day, weighed down with gifts, testimonials, a purse containing one hundred pounds, and the love and devotion of a great many—but by no means all—of his parishioners. They retired to Devon, where Harston died just over five years later, on 11th July 1873, aged just 61.

According to the Clare College archive, Harston appears to have accepted the Living of Holcombe in Somerset in 1869, holding it until his death. Whether or not he was ever resident there I have been unable to discover. Certainly at the time of his death he and his wife were back in their native Devon. He is buried at Collaton St Mary, where the local

1 *Parish Recollections*, pp. 130–5   2 *Ibid.*, pp.155–6
3 *The Dorset County Chronicle*, 9 January 1868

landowner, The Reverend J.R. Hogg, had given the land and paid for the erection of the Parish Church, the Vicarage and the school, and the creation of a churchyard, only a few years earlier. The energy that had ensured the building of that church from foundations to tower in the years 1864 to 1868, would have appealed to Harston, while the pointed Gothic and soaring chancel spoke of everything he held dear.[1] May he rest in peace, and rise in glory.

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1 Harston's wife, Anne, remained in Collaton St Mary and died there on 24 August 1890. She was buried with her husband in the churchyard. By strange but happy coincidence, the Vicar of Collaton St Mary from 1993 to 1999 was my good friend The Reverend Robert Prance, currently Chaplain of Shiplake College, who for ten years previously had been Chaplain of Sherborne School. I am grateful to him, and to the current Churchwarden Mr Paul Blight, for information for this final paragraph.

Who is ‘Who’ and Who is ‘He’?
a note on the Syntax of the Absolutions

ANDOR GOMME

‘Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live . . . .’ The opening of the morning and evening Absolutions is so familiar to me that it was only quite recently that I suddenly realized that there is, or seemed to be, something odd or problematical about the phrasing. The nearest noun to ‘who’ is the noun phrase ‘our Lord Jesus Christ’, and by the normal rules of English syntax, it is to that phrase that the relative should relate. To a Christian this seems natural and fitting enough: what follows on ‘who’ is so characteristic of the Jesus of the Gospels. Furthermore, it was he who explicitly gave ‘power, and commandment, to his Ministers’ to absolve and remit the sins of the people: ‘he breathed on them [the disciples gathered together after the Resurrection], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them . . . .’ (John 20: 22–3). And when the Absolution proper begins with ‘He pardoneth’, the grammatical instinct is equally to see the pronoun as in apposition to that same noun phrase which appeared to govern ‘who’ in the opening descriptive clause. Is this not confirmed when we come to the reference to ‘his holy Gospel’? ‘The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ’ is compellingly familiar. And so it goes on to the end: ‘let us beseech him . . . his holy Spirit . . . his eternal joy.’

Until we are brought up short with the doxology, which again is so familiar that very often we must fail to see its particular significance: it is almost in danger of sounding merely like a conventional signing off. But what is it doing here? How does it work? Have we not since (almost) the start been thinking of our Lord and *his* acts of remission and forgiveness? If the Minister has been pronouncing our Lord’s absolution of us, how is it that we now learn that it comes *through* him? So of course we return to the start, realising that our ‘grammatical instincts’ and the syntactical rules may have led us astray—led us indeed to overlook, or at least to put on one side as if it were simply a formal act of piety like a genuflexion, the specific invocation of God the Father. Is it an invocation, however? In the Absolution before Communion there is no doubt about it: ‘Almighty God, our heavenly Father . . . . Have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ The subordinate clause—

'who of his great mercy hath promised . . . .'—is necessarily in the third person, and this therefore implies that the opening words are in the nominative case, not the vocative; the main verbs ('have mercy', 'pardon', etc.) are therefore not straight imperatives, not orders to the Almighty! We may of course, like the publican standing afar off, make direct appeals to Him in what is technically the imperative mood: 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' But by the use of jussive subjunctives, in which an elided 'may' must be understood—'may He have mercy . . . .'—the Communion Absolution enables the all-important subject of the sentence to be also an address, an invocation, an appeal for mercy as well as the granting of it.

The apparent invocation at the start of the morning and evening Absolutions may sound very much the same (and any prayer starting with the words 'Almighty God' carries with it the implication of an appeal to the Highest); but it isn't. The whole first sentence, down to 'Gospel', is indicative and descriptive of the subject, which is 'Almighty God': the normal rule doesn't precisely apply, or rather it leads us to misunderstand the function of the appositive phrase which follows, which is, so to speak, in invisible brackets. If Cranmer had literally bracketed the phrase, it would give the unfortunate impression that Almighty God needs to be specified ('you know, the one who is Father of our Lord'). Why then does the 'bracketed' phrase need to be there at all? Surely because, at the beginning of morning and evening prayers, it is of the first importance to us that the Father and Son—and, a few phrases later, the Holy Spirit—should be identified with one another in status and purpose: they are together in pardoning, but it is *through* Jesus Christ that the Father has most particularly chosen to reveal Himself to us. Though not grammatically, they are semantically the joint subject of the double sentence which makes up the Absolution—in the singular because the Trinity is undivided, is God.

The Colonel's Dead

PAUL GRIFFIN

The gradual alienation of much of the Church of England from the Prayer Book services can probably be traced back many decades. For many of us, it came to a head, like so much else, in the Sixties, when the new services were being issued, and when youth was in a strange mood.

One Sunday evening during that time at the school I was trying to run, I invited Canon Dobson, my father-in-law, to join me in taking Evensong, which at that time in the Sixties was compulsory to all our boarding school boys. The atmosphere in those days was not easy, and I was taken aback to see that the Director of Music in his innocence had chosen only hymns that used military metaphors, 'Fight the good fight', 'Soldiers of Christ', 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus', and the like. Any excuse would do to stir protest among the urbanised pupils we attracted, and I felt the need to comment, saying that the choice was deliberate, and stressing the nature of the battle these hymns referred to. I doubt if it worked in that frenetic atmosphere. I do know that some time later one of the staff wives, who had not been present, asked me to explain to her why she was expected to say in the responses: 'Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.' Surely, she predictably said, God didn't fight, or want us to do so.

For her sake, and that of others, I eventually preached a special sermon on the subject, in an attempt to sort out sadly muddled souls. Did it achieve anything at all? One of the boys present at the time was arrested after he left for putting a bomb in a political party office, but that could be taken either way! At least my dear father-in-law said it had been a pleasure to join in such a well-organised Evensong, and to hear some sensible remarks about the good fight.

Military metaphors did mean a lot to my generation, who had mostly been in the Services; and I expect we projected them on to Church affairs more than was reasonable, thinking of priests as company commanders under their C.O. the Bishop, with his unpopular Adjutant, the Archdeacon. We were in fact the last sort of persons to want to glorify war, having seen some of it. It was peace and order that we sought; and if that involved lifting high the banner in some just cause and hacking heads off dragons, so be it. We too had read the words of John on Patmos.

The Church had in fact been more of a military style of organisation, in the days when a priest went where he was posted and did as he was told—if there ever *were* days quite as simple as that. There were of course always

men like the Perpetual Curate of Hogglestock, who saw himself in the image of the P.B.I. rather than as a sword-waver; but the norm was more like Archdeacon Grantly. Now there was a man who would not have paused to pity dragons as a gravely endangered species.

I have seen true-life Grantlys, and especially in this age they are not a pretty sight. If I regret the older, simpler days, it is more for the sake of the rank and file than of the less helpful officers. All of us look now and again at the P.B.I. in the pews, and ask ourselves: 'Why are they here? What do they think they are up to?' Looking at individuals, we realise again that there is no such thing as an average Anglican, nor any such thing as an unmixed motive for churchgoing. On the face of it, Mr A may come because he was brought up to do so, and always has; but somewhere inside him may be a genuine spirituality, even greater, perhaps, than that of the convert lady who tells us how much she grows in Christ when she hears our sermons. Or not.

Mr B was fired long ago by some charismatic cleric, and has been looking for more of the same ever since. Mrs C is from a parson's family, and follows a well-loved routine. Many others have had much less instruction than she has, but feel an even stronger thirst for truth. Some of them, finding this or that doctrine, fix on it as something *not* to believe in, feeling that this shows a real grasp of the situation. 'I'm afraid I have never been able to accept the bit about the Virgin Birth (or Hell, or the Resurrection),' they say, quite proudly.

Of such souls is composed the Anglican congregation, and in the long run it is the fight that can unite us. It was possible, in the first half of last century, for the priest who lived in and was attached to an individual parish to get alongside each person, and offer to supply the gaps in knowledge or upbringing. All in the space of 70 years we have now arrived at a completely different situation, in which stipendiary clergy are heaped with parishes, even unto double figures, visiting is rare, and if a lay person has a continuous contact it is with the wretched N.S.M., L.O.M., Reader, Elder, you name it, who has to fill the gap that too many senior churchmen pretend does not exist, and who has nothing like the time, the training, or often the spiritual understanding to do the necessary. There is a sermon every Sunday, sometimes a very helpful one, but seldom geared exactly to particular needs. A person needing detailed help may join the P.C.C., where there might be time to talk out problems; but the problems of today generally turn out to be about risk assessment, or finance, nature conservancy, disabled policy, damp, or the lighting in the chancel. There are certainly fights, against damp, rot, bureaucracy, shortage of funds, and the rest, going on. Now and again, from his own observation, the puzzled

person becomes aware that there is also a fight against evil. The newspapers tell him happily that it is already lost, and the television people, since more than half of what they put out is fighting on the wrong side, say little about it 'in the interests of impartiality'.

Impartiality? Bah! humbug! Good soldiers—and here I return to the military metaphor—are not impartial: on the main issue: they are strong on the right side. I remember reading the words of a reporter, in the high days of the I.R.A., lying under cover, watching a terrorist sniping at British troops, and being content to remain neutral 'in the interests of good reporting'. That word 'good' had come a long way since I first heard it.

Christian lay people are not reporters: they are soldiers. There is a fight, and they ought to be fighting it. A terrorist at least knows that, but has made the same mistake as my boys did in the Sixties: he thinks that like him we all want to win the spiritual fight by material means. Suicide bombers have conviction; we need what Yeats called their 'passionate intensity', without their battiness.

If we cannot acquire that in today's Anglican Church, an affair of Sheffield allocations, and shortage of callings, and team ministries, and chaps who can only exercise a limited pastoral ministry, were we wrong to stay in it when the upheavals came? If we were right to remain and carry on the battle from within, how can we overcome these structural defects? To pursue the military metaphor, how can soldiers best fight when they are in penny packets over the countryside, led by lance-corporals, with the nearest officer several fields away?

As a lance-corporal myself, I offer this as a formulation of our main problem. It is tempting but misleading to quote D.H. Lawrence, not normally a favourite of mine: 'Retreat into the desert and fight, fight, fight against the ghastly kisses and poison bites of the myriad evil ones.' Lawrence was a loner. In one sense, so is any human soul; but our ultimate strength is and must be in Christ and his Church, with other people, so that our battle can follow the calmer advice of another spiritual expert: 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life' (1 Timothy 6:12).

You may be asking what all this has to do with the Prayer Book Society. Simply that the time when we had our School Evensong was the very one when the new services were being introduced, and when the New English Bible was being published. How do you think that text from Timothy about fighting the good fight was translated? 'Run the great race of faith and take hold of eternal life.' You can see the dark shadow of political correctness there in 1970. This was the spirit in which the new services were being made. It never seemed to have occurred to the makers that if the Prayer Book needed amending, it might be better to amend what had been

valued by generations, as we tried to do in 1928, than to have a complete revolution that cuts off our link with a valued past: a revolution with whose effects and developments we are all living.

So, we find, the Colonel's dead, and the Gatling's jammed . . . .

Do I have to tell you what follows? It is on the young that we must eventually depend, and to them that our fiercest efforts should be directed. The fight goes on, and our task now, as it was forty years ago, is to convince the young that it exists, and requires their participation.

Review

Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England*, Cambridge University Press, 2007. ISBN 9780521877749 £50

When we commend the Book of Common Prayer to the present world, we are usually concerned primarily with its doctrine and ordered liturgy, and also with the beauty and reverence of its language. Rosendale takes a different approach, examining the Book of Common Prayer as a foundation document for Tudor England, and consequently for much of our later national development. In recent years the historiography of the Reformation has produced polarised opinions about exactly what happened, what opened the way for it and how it was received by the majority of people. The thesis of this book is that, despite the move to more radical Protestantism between 1549 and 1552, its suppression under Mary I and its judicious restoration after the accession of Elizabeth I, the Book of Common Prayer was a stabilising influence which helped to create a new confidence and sense of national unity during the second half of the sixteenth century. It was a period when central authority and individual response were both developing in a creative tension. Common worship throughout the country brought people together in a shared experience, while there was a new emphasis on the response of the individual worshipper, seen most clearly in the changes to the communion service. Church and State were joined in a symbiotic relationship quite different from the old tensions between papacy and monarchy, and equally from the theocracy of some of the Continental churches. Certainly the Book of Common Prayer did not please everyone; Jewel, Hooker and others had to defend it against those who thought that it was not reformed enough and still retained popish errors, but in most parish churches there was peaceful conformity.

The Prayer Book is firmly based on Scripture, and worship in the vernacular went together with the English Bible. Now every parishioner, whether literate or not, would hear substantial biblical passages, working each year through most of the Old Testament, and more than once through the New. The result was not only an increase in knowledge and private judgment. Hearing and responding to words in the common tongue increased the suspicion of Latin as the language of the Roman Church and a new respect for English. Despite the insistence of some scholars that English was changing and ephemeral, and that Latin was the only proper language for serious writing, the way was opened for the great literary activity of the

Shakespearean age. Even Richard Mulcaster, erudite High Master of St Paul's School, would say 'I love the Latin, but the English more.'

In the second part of the book, Rosendale takes up his assertion that the Prayer Book has been neglected by literary critics. Four writers are here studied to suggest that literature was influenced not only by the content of the book but also by its linguistic approach. Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* is an important source for Elizabethan criticism, though today mainly of historical interest. Although Sidney explicitly does not take religious considerations into account, he has much to say about the power of poetry as a force in improving our moral condition. Both the Book of Common Prayer, and poetry as Sidney assesses it, insist that figural language is essential in the approach to ultimate truth. Both were challenging the literalism which had limited religious perception for late medieval Roman Catholic as well as extreme Protestant thinking. Shakespeare is seen as presenting the changing and often ambiguous attitudes to authority which the Church had revealed in balancing conformity and individual response; *Richard II* is taken as the paradigm.

After the Civil War, the temporary suspension of the Prayer Book, and the Restoration with the production of the 1662 book, the relationship between liturgy and literature continued. Milton took a poor view of the Book of Common Prayer, but Rosendale suggests, with examination of parts of *Paradise Lost*, that he was influenced by its use of representation and interpretation. Thomas Hobbes falls into the category of writers—Burke is another—who have contributed both to political thought and creative prose. His regard for absolute authority may have caused him to approve the Anglican assertion of conformity but not its regard for individuality, though Rosendale concedes that he does not explicitly mention the Book of Common Prayer. The argument for these two seems less convincing than for the earlier writers.

Although not all its specific claims will be universally accepted, this is a scholarly and valuable work. Its running theme that the Book of Common Prayer represented and helped to form a new balance between the collective and the individual is a strong additional claim for the importance of the reformed liturgy. We can all commend and find hope in Rosendale's words towards the end, 'Although few could have known it at the time, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer was destined to become in effect the permanent liturgy of the Church of England up to our own day and into the foreseeable future.' We pray that the last phrase is a true prophecy.

Raymond Chapman

Letters

From the Revd Dr John Bunyan, Campbelltown North, New South Wales

Andor Gomme's review in *Faith & Worship* 61 of the *Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer* refers to King's Chapel, Boston. For the record I should note that neither the present elegant eighteenth-century church nor its seventeenth-century predecessor has ever been a 'meeting house', unlike the early Puritan churches of New England. King's Chapel was the first Episcopal church established in Massachusetts, in the face of much Puritan opposition. It became Unitarian Christian just after the Revolution. Its Book of Common Prayer was based on a revision of 1662, and has been revised at various times since, most recently in 1985. Its main service is a dignified and reverent Sunday Morning Prayer followed by Holy Communion on the first Sunday. All of its services remain in the traditional language of the Prayer Book (as do the services of some other New England Unitarian Christian churches and also, for example, those of Harvard Memorial Chapel).

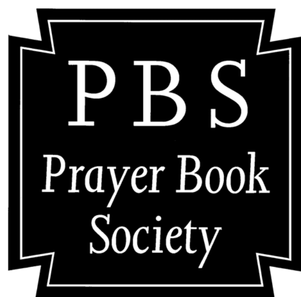
From Mr Frank McManus, Todmorden

I am a member of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship—of doubtful purity!—because war has become too total to tolerate. Yet I wholeheartedly agree with Miss Hole (*Faith & Worship* 62) that the Christian faith is 'dumbed down' if we 'evade the conflict' by singing words such as 'Onward Christian pilgrims'. Ruskin, in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 48, asks why in Advent we pray for the 'armour' of light instead of industry. He then supplies the answer that the earthworms in God's Garden 'are big—and have teeth and claws, and venomous tongues. So that the first question for you is indeed, not whether you have a mind to work in it—many a coward has that—but whether you have courage to stand in it, and armour proved enough to stand in' (i.e. as per Ephesians 6:11ff).

This accords with our Prayer Book liturgy of Baptism where the signing with the Cross is a token that the new Christian will fight 'manfully' (here I draw the line at 'personfully' although I am in favour of inclusive language provided it doesn't disrupt!) as 'Christ's faithful soldier and servant . . . . .' It is a pity that Alice Bode's Confirmation hymn 'Once pledged by the Cross' which amplifies this commitment, is all but lost to today's Church.

For all this I think we should amend our language to show that we deal with primary spiritual reality, and are not poodling behind temporal armies. Rather than sing 'Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war', we should sing 'marching in our war'; and similarly 'Like a mighty army moves the Church of God' needs amending, perhaps to run: 'In the holy Spirit's might moves the Church of God.'

The Objects of the Prayer Book Society



The objects for which the Prayer Book Society is established are the advancement of the Christian religion (according to the doctrine of the Church of England and of other churches in the Anglican tradition) and, in furtherance of this object, but not otherwise the charity shall seek to:

- **Uphold the worship and doctrine of the Church of England and of other churches in the Anglican tradition as enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer**
- **Encourage the use of the Book of Common Prayer as the norm for all principal services throughout the Church of England and churches in the Anglican tradition**
- **Encourage the use of the Book of Common Prayer in the training of Ordinands at Theological Colleges and other similar institutions**
- **Encourage the use of the Book of Common Prayer in schools and colleges and for the training of candidates for Confirmation**
- **Spread knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer and the doctrine contained therein**
- **Ensure that the Society s views are effectively represented in synods and councils and among the clergy and laity at large**

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