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Editorial

As I write the country is enduring a further ‘lockdown’, and though on this occasion public worship has not been forbidden many churches are closing anyway in view of an alarming rise in cases and hospitalisations. Canterbury Cathedral is among them. No doubt things will look more hopeful by the time this appears. But the long-term consequences for the Church of England—let alone for the nation—are harder to read.

Some are very pessimistic indeed. The bishops were already ‘staring into the abyss’ (as someone once put it to me), faced with the financial and structural consequences of declining and ageing congregations. If the pandemic should accelerate these trends, and should this acceleration be accompanied by a severe loss of ordinary income, some expect catastrophic results—parishes unable to pay the diocesan quota, dioceses struggling with growing deficits, massive reorganisation at both the parochial and the diocesan level. There are already said to be dioceses contemplating drastic cuts to clergy numbers, while the House of Bishops had even before the Coronavirus outbreak convened an ‘Emerging Church of England’ group with sub-groups considering ‘Governance’, ‘Strategy and Vision’ and ‘Transforming Effectiveness’. The deliberations of these groups now have greater urgency, though it is difficult to guess what recommendations to expect from the cautious opacity of the press releases. That there will be practical—perhaps radical—proposals seems likely. At any rate there is a commitment to thoroughly assessing ‘what resources, tools and gifts we have, and how best we can make use of them’.¹

‘Resources’ here must cover more than money, and if major restructuring is on the agenda we will need to think carefully about which of the less tangible resources we wish to carry through into a diminished future, being especially wary of the panic strategy of throwing everything overboard in an effort to keep the craft afloat.

And the Church of England is not without resources, surely? Consider theology: in the nineteen-seventies the scene seemed dominated by those who heard only the long, withdrawing roar of the sea of faith—such theologians as Maurice Wiles, John Hick, Dennis Nineham and (of course) Don Cupitt. It was the era of *The Myth of God Incarnate* (1977), of the Doctrine Commission’s *Christian Believing* (1976) and of Geoffrey Lampe’s Bampton Lectures *God as Spirit* (1976)—the latter accused by Eric Mascall

1 The Emerging Church of England, GS Misc 1250, p.3.

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of teaching ‘Anglican Unitarianism’. Of course one shouldn’t lump these writers together as if they all sang exactly the same tune, but the impression looking back is of a doctrinal thinning down, which seemed to make the running at the time not because it was particularly deep or rich but because it was ‘adventurous’ and iconoclastic and supposedly more accessible to the modern mind. But already in the nineteen-eighties a shift was becoming perceptible as a new generation (born c.1950) began to make itself felt. A key figure here has been Rowan Williams, of course, but if one mentions also Oliver O’Donovan, John Milbank, N.T Wright and Sarah Coakley one gives some idea of the new depth and richness of insight made available to the Church². The dialogue with Scripture and tradition has been ‘thickened’ by a variety of means, including a new respect for the preoccupations of the patristic writers as coming within our own horizon of interest, a renewed engagement with the scholastics (especially Aquinas) and their metaphysics, and a less minimal approach to the understanding of Scripture—fed in part by ‘canonical’ and literary approaches.

This, at any rate, is the impression to the untutored lay eye. It seems paradoxical, or ironic, that an age of theological strength in the Church of England (if I am right in thinking this is one) should also be one of relentlessly continuing decline. It must be admitted I think that some theologians (especially of the Radical Orthodoxy school) make rather strenuous demands on the general reader³, but at least some of the writers mentioned have been at pains to express themselves in a way to be understood by ordinarily educated people, and do find readers. It is disappointing then that the ‘resources’ parishes tend to employ for attracting enquirers or instructing the faithful are so lightweight. The Church’s primary concern at the moment is, understandably, to attract the young, but its efforts in that direction seem often to favour the banal, the simple, the undemanding. To my mind there is much to be said for T.S. Eliot’s view, expressed in his ‘Thoughts after Lambeth’, which commented on the report of the Lambeth Conference of 1930:

There is no good in making Christianity easy and pleasant; ‘Youth’, or the better part of it, is more likely to come to a difficult religion than to an easy one. For some, the intellectual way of approach must be emphasised; there is need of a more intellectual laity. For them and for others, the way of discipline and asceticism must be emphasised; for even the humblest Christian layman can and must live what, in

2 One should mention also Andrew Louth’s impressive *Discerning the Mystery* (1984).

3 Sarah Coakley’s warning is to the point: ‘. . . even as systematic theology today undergoes a remarkable revival, it is in grave danger of rendering itself socially insignificant by sheer obscurity of expression’. *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity* (Cambridge 2013), p.xvi.

the modern world, is comparatively an ascetic life . . . Thought, study, mortification, sacrifice: it is such notions as these that should be impressed on the young—who differ from the young of other times merely in having a different middle-aged generation behind them. You will never attract the young by making Christianity easy; but a good many can be attracted by finding it difficult: difficult both to the disorderly mind and the unruly passions.⁴

Fifty per cent of young people now pass through universities, and a high proportion of them achieve what used to be called ‘good honours degrees’. There may be an element of make-believe in this, but an extra three years of education ought to make some difference. ‘There is a need of a more intellectual laity’, Eliot says—no doubt there are numbers of lay people who try to explore their faith, seeking understanding, but the Church does not seem especially to encourage them or try to help them find each other, unless they are seeking ordination or licensed ministry of some kind. Of course the laity are to blame, too. ‘I never cease to be astonished’ wrote the late Nicholas Lash, ‘by the number of devout and highly educated Christians . . . [who] from one year to the next, never take up a serious work of Christian theology and probably suppose *The Tablet* to be something that you get from Boots the chemist’.⁵ As Eliot rightly implies, the question of ‘Youth’ and the need for ‘a more intellectual laity’ are correlative—if Church of England congregations can seem a bit comfortable and dozy it is in part because of the absence of the serious-minded young people whom Eliot had in mind. One aspect of this whole problem was well summed up by a friend of mine: ‘There seem to be plenty of Alpha courses, but shouldn’t we sometimes venture a bit further into the Greek alphabet?’

Where these less material ‘resources’ are concerned the case of liturgy and worship is rather different—here *Common Worship* provides an abundant supply for direct use in the parish. But here too, on the other hand, the lay person, however theologically incurious, is, if not an expert, at any rate an experienced consumer. In the past the ordinary worshipper knew the service well enough to notice if the minister was departing from the approved form, whereas now even a member of the Liturgical Commission might hesitate to declare that a particular service was fully authorised without having to check. Again the question of education enters in differently here—I have known plenty of people with no pretensions to being educated, and no notion of the rationale

4 ‘Thoughts after Lambeth’ (1931) in T.S.Eliot, *Selected Essays* (3rd Edition 1951), pp.363-387, at p.373.

5 Nicholas Lash, *Holiness, Speech and Silence: Reflections on the Question of God* (Aldershot 2004), pp. 4-5. Despite the reference to *The Tablet*, there is no reason to think his strictures apply, or were intended to apply, only to Roman Catholics.

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of liturgical reform, who have expressed a decided, if sometimes apologetic, preference for the ‘old service’ (I remember on one occasion a member of a PCC calling the Prayer Book ‘the best thing since sliced bread’). But where ‘Youth’ is in view the Book of Common Prayer is considered, without any evidence, to be impossibly difficult, and elaborate precautions are sometimes taken to ensure that young people are not brought into contact with it. But Eliot’s dictum may apply here too—‘a good many can be attracted by finding it difficult’, by finding it bracingly resistant, especially when we consider that the Prayer Book offers not only forms for public worship but a pattern of daily prayer and the rudiments of an ascetic rule. There is good reason for the Prayer Book Society’s support for ‘centres of [BCP] excellence’ where the experiment can be tried by clergy convinced of the value of the attempt. If such a centre could attract enthusiastic young adherents the effect on older members of the congregation would be pleasingly astringent.

In the matter of liturgy, then, and in contrast to theology, it is rather a pruning and concentration of ‘resources’ that is required than a wider dissemination. The ever-expanding *Common Worship* provision, in short, has been disastrous, encouraging the idea that every incumbent should be his or her own liturgist—as if everyone has the talent to make a palatable dish out of a miscellaneous collection of ingredients. Think of all the extra time that used to be available to the parochial clergy for the cure of souls when they did not have to give any thought to what the form of service should be! That copious ‘resources’ do not always ensure actual richness is suggested by the ‘Prayers for Use During the Coronavirus Outbreak’ issued by the Church of England last year, which was disappointingly thin.

Discussion about whatever proposals may emerge from the bishops’ deliberations⁶ about the Church’s future will no doubt centre on such matters as pastoral re-organisation, the future of buildings and central costs. But the less palpable things will need to be discussed too. What do we want to carry through as vital to our life as a Church in a future in which we will be living in reduced circumstances? How are we to keep alive the conversation with the past in a culture which seems more and more disposed to see each new year as Year Zero?

John Scrivener

6 In evaluating whatever emerges we should bear in mind a remark of TS Eliot’s in the essay already quoted from: ‘Some of the Report is to me, I admit at once, mere verbiage . . . But it ought not to be an occasion to us for mirth that three hundred bishops together assembled should, on pooling their views on most momentous matters, come out with a certain proportion of nonsense. I should not enjoy having to commit myself on any subject to any opinion which should also be that of any two hundred and ninety-nine of my acquaintance.’ Op.cit. p.364.

The Prayer Book and Pandemics

PHILIP WILLIAMSON

The Book of Common Prayer, in its successive editions from 1549 to 1662, was produced in an age of epidemics and pandemics. The worst of these contagions left enduring impressions in the text of the Prayer Book, which is not only a religious liturgy but also an historical record, retaining evidence of the circumstances in which it was created. I shall consider this evidence in the first part of this article. But the Prayer Book's provisions and prayers were never regarded as adequate for severe outbreaks of disease, any more than they were for other crises or great public events. My main purpose is to consider the reasons for this inadequacy, and to describe the alternative acts of worship which were ordered during these special occasions. Despite the requirements in successive Acts of Uniformity, royal proclamations, episcopal injunctions and church canons that ministers must adhere strictly to The Book of Common Prayer, the Prayer Book did not provide all the services and prayers that were read throughout the Church of England. In practice, the term 'common prayer' had a double meaning—not just 'common' in the sense of collective prayer, of services shared in congregations, but also 'common' in the sense of ordinary prayer, of services for normal use. For extraordinary occasions and sometimes for long periods, the prescribed services were supplemented by special prayers or superseded by special services: the Prayer Book was not the only authorised liturgy used in the Church. For epidemics and pandemics, extraordinary provisions were made for four centuries, ending in the 1860s, which was part of more general changes and an eventual decline in the long practice of national orders for special acts of worship.

The pandemic that chiefly left a mark on the original editions of the Prayer Book was bubonic plague, which had been endemic in England for two centuries, since the first appearance of the Black Death in 1348. Outbreaks of varying severity and regional incidence remained a common experience, to such an extent that Cranmer and his associates almost took them for granted. The plague was listed among several other minatory afflictions in a petition in the Litany published in every edition of the Prayer Book from 1549: 'From lightning and tempest, from plague,

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pestilence, and famine, from battayle and murther, and from sodain death, *Good lorde deliuer vs*'.¹

Plague was also mentioned in the preface to the Communion of the Sick, again almost as a matter of course. As people should be 'always in readiness to die', curates were instructed to encourage parishioners from time to time, 'but specially in the plague tyme', to be frequent in taking communion, a phrase changed in 1662 to 'especially in the time of pestilence, or other infectious disease'.² The exhortation in the Communion service contained a phrase which encapsulated what long remained the religious understanding of natural and human crises, drawn from the example of Old Testament Israel. These calamities were God's punishments for the collective sins of the nation or kingdom: 'We kindle Gods wrathe over us, we provoke him to plague us with diverse dyseases, and sondery kyndes of death'.³

Epidemics became a specific subject of prayer in the second edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*, in 1552. New provisions were prompted by an outbreak not of plague, but of 'the sweat' or 'sweating sickness', a viral infection that killed with startling suddenness and which had caused some 15,000 deaths during the previous year. One consequence was a new rubric in the Communion of the Sick, prescribing what ministers should do 'In the tyme of plague, swette, or suche other lyke contagious tymes of sicknesses or dyseases'.⁴ As these words remained unaltered in all later editions of the Prayer Book, this last English outbreak of the 'sweat' in 1551 has had a very long liturgical history. The chief change was a new 'occasional prayer', meaning a prayer for use at particular times. Prayers for rain and for fine weather had been placed at the end of Communion in 1549; now, in 1552, they were moved to the end of the litany and joined by new prayers for further periods of anxiety or crisis, including a prayer 'in the tyme of any common plague or sickenes'. After appealing to the precedent of God sending a plague to Israel under King David that killed 70,000 before he relented and saved the rest of the people (2 Samuel 24:15–16), the prayer asked for God's pity and for his withdrawal of infection.⁵ This expressed the prevailing belief about the remedy for all great crises: that God's punishments might be ended if collective prayers and collective repentance could evoke his merciful withdrawal of the punishment.

1 Brian Cummings (ed.), *The Book of Common Prayer. The Texts of 1549, 1559 and 1662* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 41, 117, 260.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 169, 449.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 133, 398.

4 F.E. Brightman, *The English Rite* (2 vols, 1915; 1921), II, 847; Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 170, 450.

5 Brightman, *English Rite*, I, 189; Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 123.

The success of these petitions, as shown by the end of the crisis, rightly required thanksgivings to God and, as evidence that the lesson had been learned, promises of continuing repentance. But only in 1604 were the occasional petitionary prayers complemented by occasional thanksgiving prayers. These included—after a severe plague outbreak in 1603—two alternative prayers ‘for deliverance from the plague’.⁶ In the more thorough revision of the Prayer Book in 1662, following persistent plague outbreaks during the previous sixty years, the petitionary prayer ‘in the time of any common plague or sickness’ was revised and reinforced by reference to a second Old Testament precedent (plagues sent to punish ‘obstinate rebellion against Moses and Aaron’, Numbers 26: 41–50), and by an appeal for God’s acceptance of the people’s ‘atonement’.⁷ These prayers for particular times were now gathered into a separate section and entitled ‘prayers and thanksgivings upon several occasions’, with a rubric which allowed their use—as was surely already a common practice—towards the end of Morning and Evening Prayer as well as the end of the Litany.

How often and how widely the occasional prayers and thanksgivings were read is unknowable: the surviving records do not yield this type of information. Presumably their use was left to the discretion of ministers, or sometimes to directions by archdeacons or bishops, with the effect (as had perhaps been the intention) that they were read according to the varied geographical incidence of epidemics and other crises across the kingdom. As such, these types of prayer were permitted and flexible departures from uniformity, read as appropriate in different regions or localities as well as at differing times. Nevertheless, the occasional prayers were often regarded as insufficient for the most severe episodes or for the biggest public events that affected all parts of the kingdom, when repentance and supplication needed to be greater, deeper and broader, seeking mercy for the sins of the whole nation.

During the early years of the Reformation, the occasional prayers would certainly have been considered inadequate in comparison with Catholic liturgies. Cranmer’s intention for the Book of Common Prayer was to produce not just a Protestant, vernacular and uniform liturgy, but a less numerous, consolidated, and more convenient set of religious services, contained within one volume. He selected from, translated and transformed core elements from the separate books of the Catholic processional, breviary, manual and missal, and set aside much of the further material. This omitted material included special prayers and

6 *The Book of Common Prayer* (1604, STC 16327), sig. [B7]; Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 270.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 266.

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special masses which had accumulated over the centuries for use during calamities or great public events. The Sarum Missal contained as many as four votive masses for human epidemics, including masses ‘in time of plague’ and ‘to turn away pestilence’, as well as a mass for epidemics among farm animals, ‘in time of murrain’.⁸ With the rejection of these special Catholic and Latin prayers and liturgies, what was to be done if the occasional prayers seemed insufficient during very severe national crises or for great national events?

The answer was being found even as The Book of Common Prayer was created. During the ten years after the break with Rome in 1533, the royal supremacy over the new Church of England was exercised to order special acts of worship for several national events and crises, including drought, dysentery and other diseases in 1540. These at first made continued use of existing processional texts, still in Latin. But military campaigns against France in 1544 and again in 1545 gave Cranmer the opportunity to issue his first liturgy in English: the Litany began as a special service, before it was integrated into the first Prayer Book as a regular service. Then, during the sweating sickness in 1551, the Act of Uniformity and the Prayer Book were set aside with the issue of another English liturgy, a special service that was quite distinct from the services in the Prayer Book.⁹

This practice of temporary suspensions of the prescribed church services and substitution of new texts was developed further during the reigns of Elizabeth I and the early Stuart kings. Special acts of worship settled into three kinds: prayers, services and religious days. *Special prayers* were simply added to the existing daily services. For more serious or greater occasions, *special services* substantially changed these daily services. For the most serious or the greatest occasions, special services were read on *special religious days*, appointed either as fast days or as thanksgiving days, which were appointed in the middle of the week and required suspension of ordinary employment, in the same manner as on Sundays

8 The Sarum Missal in English, ed. F.E. Warren (2 vols), II, 122–4, 202–7, 208–212, 213–7, and for murrain, 124–5.

9 The special liturgies for particular occasions of special worship ordered for all churches in England and Wales can be found, with commentaries, in Natalie Mears, Alasdair Raffae, Stephen Taylor and Philip Williamson (eds), *National Prayers: Special Worship since the Reformation*, volume 1, *Special Prayers, Fasts and Thanksgivings in the British Isles, 1533–1688*, followed by Philip Williamson et al. (eds), *National Prayers ... volume 2: General Fasts, Thanksgivings and Special Prayers in the British Isles, 1689–1870*, and *National Prayers ... volume 3: Worship for National and Royal Occasions in the United Kingdom, 1871–2016* (Church of England Record Society, Woodbridge, 2013, 2017, 2020). Special acts of worship were also ordered in the established churches in Ireland and Scotland (following their distinctive practices), and with increasing frequency from the 1650s, for the same or similar dates in all parts of the British Isles. From the 1680s to the 1950s, some were ordered or encouraged for observance throughout the British Empire.

and holy days. All these special acts of worship, with their insistent appeal to the Old Testament, assumed that, as was shown by the history of the Jewish people, divine providence had a national operation and national effects. England and later the United Kingdom were spiritual bodies, judged and punished or forgiven as a nation, as a modern Israel. Accordingly, special worship was ordered by the nation's rulers for observance by all adults in all churches on the same day, in the belief that collective and simultaneous worship would intensify the force and effect of prayer and repentance.

From 1559 to the 1640s, sixty-seven special acts of worship were ordered in England and Wales, almost all of them observed more than once and some for several weeks or months—not counting special services for royal anniversaries.¹⁰ During these eight decades, The Book of Common Prayer was modified or supplemented for an average of perhaps ten days a year, although this average disguises prolonged periods in which it was effectively superseded. Twelve of the sixty-seven orders were for plague outbreaks, some of which led to the longest replacements of regular with special services, for up to 6 months in 1563–4 and 10 months in 1603–4.¹¹ During the civil wars and Interregnum, special acts of worship became still more common, though now conducted in most churches without the Prayer Book, by extempore prayer and sermons. After the Restoration and after the re-adoption and revision of The Book of Common Prayer in 1662, the practice remained a common act of state, although fast and thanksgiving days were now normally just for single dates. From 1660 to the 1980s, over 440 special acts of worship were appointed—again not counting the anniversary state services, which were increased in number during the Restoration and annexed in 1662 to The Book of Common Prayer.¹²

Except during the 1640s and 1650s, the texts for these special acts of worship were provided by special forms of prayer, published by the royal printer and sent to all places of worship in the Church of England. In contrast to the special prayers and votive masses collected in the earlier Catholic liturgies, the texts of these extraordinary Anglican prayers and services did not become standardised and gathered together within volumes. Each special act of worship had its own form of prayer,

10 For the special liturgies for these anniversaries, see Philip Williamson et al. (eds), *National Prayers ... volume 4: Anniversary Commemorations* (Church of England Record Society, forthcoming).

11 See Natalie Mears, 'Special Nationwide Worship and the Book of Common Prayer in England, Wales and Ireland, 1533–1642', in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham, 2013), pp. 31–72.

12 Commemoration of the Restoration (29 May) and the execution of Charles I (30 January) were added to 'Gunpowder treason Day' (5 November) and the varying accession day of the sovereign. Most were abolished in 1859, leaving only the service for Accession Day.

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either a single sheet for prayers or many pages for services. These several hundred special forms used to accumulate in parish chests, and many are now found in county record offices or in research libraries. Collectively they provide a parallel history of worship in the Church of England, alongside The Book of Common Prayer.

These special forms of prayer did not wholly replace the texts in the Prayer Book. For *special prayers*, the forms simply printed the text of the new prayer or prayers, with a rubric stating at which point they were to be read within the daily services, in similar manner to the occasional prayers. *Special services* used much of the daily Prayer Book services, but modified them in sometimes complex and lengthy ways: rubrics, lessons, suffrages, collects and psalms were changed, and new prayers, psalms, collects and sometimes homilies or exhortations were added. From 1625 to 1685, the forms for special services printed the whole text of the service—the retained material from the Prayer Book, together with the modifications and the new material—with the result that such forms could be over a hundred pages in length. In other periods only the modified and new texts were printed, and from the 1680s the forms usually stated that the special service ‘shall be the same with the usual office ... except where it is in this office otherwise appointed’. In these cases, ministers had to use both the prayer book and the special form of prayer, alternating between one and the other while conducting the service.

Special services and special religious days were ordered for numerous causes, including good and bad harvests, earthquakes, royal occasions, plots, invasion threats and, the most common cause, wars.¹³ But the model was established during the severe plague outbreak of 1563, which eventually killed about 80,000 people, including nearly a quarter of the population of London. Special services were held on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays, most extensively on Wednesdays, the weekly fast day. A choice of special lessons was given for Morning Prayer. On Wednesdays, this service was followed by fifteen minutes of private prayer. On both Wednesdays and Fridays, the Litany was extended by a selection of new prayers, each several hundred words long, and on Wednesdays by a new composite or ‘cento’ psalm drawn from verses in the Old Testament and Apocrypha, beginning ‘O come let vs humble our selues and fall downe before the Lord with reuerance and feare’.¹⁴ Also

13 See also Alasdair Raffe, ‘Nature’s Scourges: The Natural World and Special Prayers, Fasts and Thanksgivings, 1543–1866’, in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds.) *God’s Bounty? The Churches and the Natural World*, ed. (Studies in Church History, 46, Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 237–47.

14 For comments on the quality of this special psalm, see Michael Sansom, ‘Liturgical Responses to (Natural) Disaster in Seventeenth-Century England’, *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989), 179–96.

on Wednesdays, there was either a sermon or one of seven homilies, including a new homily on 'the justice of God', nearly 6,000 words in length. The form of prayer also contained an 'order for the general fast', setting out how people were to spend Wednesdays. All persons aged sixteen to sixty were to eat just one simple meal; the wealthy and comfortable were to increase alms-giving to the poor; all labour was to cease; the day was to be devoted to church services, family prayers and study of scriptures and other godly works, with no plays, pastimes, nor idleness or 'lewd, wicked and wanton behaviour'. As the plague subsided during 1564, after some six months of this weekly regime of services and fasts, thanksgiving services were appointed on Sundays, Wednesday and Fridays, with changed psalms in Morning Prayer and a new composite psalm and a new collect of over 700 words in the litany.

Special services and fast days were ordered during further severe plague outbreaks in 1593, 1603, 1625, twice during 1640, and in 1665. Except in 1640, the forms of prayer borrowed extensively from the form for 1563, including the instructions for observance of fast days, but with the emphasis shifted from the Litany to the other services. In 1603, Morning Prayer took material from the earlier special litany, and the composite psalm 'O come let us humble our selues' replaced the *Venite*. Evening Prayer was now modified as well, taking elements from the special morning prayer, with the composite psalm replacing the *Magnificat*. Four new optional prayers were provided, and a 4,000-word exhortation as an alternative to a sermon or homily. Further innovations followed in 1625. Fast and thanksgiving days were from now onwards ordered by royal proclamation, and only weekly fast days were appointed, without special services on Sundays and Fridays. In Evening Prayer, the composite psalm now followed the *Magnificat*. The Communion service was also substantially changed, with addition of the special prayers for the day and insertion of prayers from elsewhere in the Prayer Book, stressing the penitential aspect with the collect for Ash Wednesday and prayers from the Communion service.

Fast days required remarkable stamina. There are descriptions of congregations spending as many as six or nine hours in church, with several sermons as well as the full series of services. To modern minds, ordering people to gather for long periods in churches has an obvious risk; what was intended as the remedy for an epidemic could make it very much worse. Early modern governments and churchmen had some understanding of these risks. The order for the fast in 1563 stated that in infected places, ministers should keep infected people apart from the rest of the congregation. In 1593 and 1603, ministers were instructed

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to shorten their services, because it was ‘dangerous’ to keep people for the whole day in ‘thicke and close assemblies’. In 1625 royal orders to the clergy stated that church services should be held only in places which were ‘free and safe from danger of infection’, that any persons coming from infected areas should be excluded from the services, and that within the infected areas the fasts and prayers should be observed in private houses—anticipating by nearly 400 years the recent constraints on public worship. Other remedies than prayer and fasting alone were acknowledged. In prayers and the exhortation in 1603, God was praised for the provision of ‘other necessary and profitable’ measures: medicines, advice from physicians, and other ‘means of auoiding, remoouing and repressing’ contagion, including ‘good and wholsome orders, and decrees’, meaning the quarantine orders which governments had been publishing during plague outbreaks since the 1570s. During the plague in 1665, the frequency of fast days was reduced, to the first Wednesday of each month, with only a special litany on Wednesdays in other weeks. While the services retained substantial elements from 1563, including much of the composite psalm, they underwent further revision and there was now more systematic attention to material relief. As ordered by the royal proclamation, collections were to be taken at all church services and paid to the bishop, primarily to assist plague victims in their dioceses, but with any surplus sent to the epicentre of the English epidemic, in London, in effect creating a national relief fund.

The epidemic of 1665 was the last serious English outbreak of the plague. But it was not the end of special acts of worship against this disease. From 1720 to 1723, these were ordered to avert the spread of a plague epidemic from France to the British Isles. Two prayers from the Communion service and two special prayers were added to the Litany for use every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday for as long as forty months, over three years; and two fast days were appointed in 1720 and 1721, now held on a Friday, and with completely new special services. From the first fears of a new outbreak, the government imposed a forty-day quarantine on all ships from affected foreign ports followed by further effective preventative measures, so that the thanksgiving day in 1723 marked a genuine success, with a negligible number of deaths in contrast to over 100,000 in France.

For the next hundred years, no human epidemic was so severe as to prompt orders for special worship. But in a still largely agricultural society, diseases in farm animals could have very serious effects for the food supply and economic life. As already noted, the Catholic missal had included a votive mass for use during murrain or cattle plague.

A panzootic of this disease led to the longest-ever period of special worship in the Church of England: a special prayer used in the Litany or at the end of Morning or Evening prayer for almost eleven years from 1748, ending with a thanksgiving prayer in Morning and Evening Prayer on a Sunday in 1759. A further epidemic of cattle plague in 1865 and 1866 was marked by two issues of petitionary prayers added to Morning and Evening Prayer on Sundays, ending after twelve months with a thanksgiving prayer.

The final human pandemic to cause changes in Prayer Book services was cholera, which spread from India to Europe from the late 1820s. The special acts of worship relating to successive outbreaks of this disease have particular significance, because they were marked by changes and decline in the practice. During the first English outbreak from 1831 to 1833, which affected hundreds of thousands of people and killed over 20,000, as many as five orders for special worship were issued. Special prayers for protection from arrival of the epidemic were added before the Litany or towards the end of Morning Prayer, using material from the service that had been read in similar circumstances for plague in 1720. After the government quarantine failed, these prayers were replaced with prayers for use during the epidemic, read for perhaps fourteen months. Only a single fast day was held, on a Wednesday, with the services yet again using parts of the composite psalm from 1563 and again using material from 1720. Later, a thanksgiving prayer was added to Morning and Evening Prayer, in a new style of use in local parishes as they became free of infection, before a general thanksgiving day for the whole kingdom was ordered to mark the end of the epidemic, now held on a Sunday rather than in midweek.

The frequency of these orders for special worship derived not just from fear of the infection, but from wider political and religious crises caused by Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform, popular protest and pre-millenarian evangelicalism—conditions which provoked new degrees of controversy about special worship. Petitions were organised both for and against a general fast, the subject was raised in Parliament, and radical protests took place on the fast day, which was lampooned as a ‘farce day’ and challenged by calls for a ‘feast day’ to celebrate political reforms. The texts for the special worship continued as they had since the 1560s to present mortal infection as God’s punishment for national sins, and prayer and repentance as the principal remedy for contagion. But political and public attitudes towards special worship were now changing, with some becoming sceptical or critical. This was still more evident during the most severe outbreak of cholera, in 1848–9, when

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around 50,000 died. Only with great reluctance did the government order special prayers and it refused to appoint a fast day, which caused such outrage to religious opinion that at the end of the outbreak the government reverted to the traditional practice of a thanksgiving day in the middle of the week. In 1865 and 1866 a further cholera epidemic coincided with the outbreak of cattle plague; but the government again rejected appeals for a fast day and ordered only special prayers, for both cholera and cattle plague in tandem.

The reasons for these changed attitudes are complex.¹⁵ Orders by the state for special acts of worship had become less acceptable among the religious public, certainly to Nonconformists and Roman Catholics who now had full political rights, but also to high-church Anglicans, uneasy with such conspicuous Erastianism. Liberal and philanthropic opinion criticised fast days as depriving poor families of a day's wages. Prevailing religious beliefs were shifting. There was now less emphasis on God as judge and on special providences—on periodic divine interventions in the natural and human worlds—and more emphasis on a benevolent God and on a general providence, which had given humans the intellectual and moral capacities to mitigate, control or avoid crises. Religion, it was now commonly argued, should embrace scientific and medical advances, which were successfully providing natural and medical rather than supernatural explanations and remedies for epidemics. During a cholera outbreak in 1853, which killed around 10,000 people, the home secretary, Lord Palmerston publicly rejected proposals for a fast day because, he argued, the truly providential remedy for infections was improved sanitation and better cleanliness. Queen Victoria, who as sovereign was ultimately responsible for state orders for special worship, held similar opinions. In 1849 she privately dismissed the belief that a general fast would end the epidemic as 'superstitious' and instead urged better health measures. Thereafter she criticised all proposals for fast days and most types of special prayers and services, and in some cases prevented their appointment.

These changed attitudes affected special acts of worship in general, and those for epidemics in particular. From the 1870s state orders for special worship became rare, and appointment of special acts of worship became increasingly a matter for decision by the archbishops. National acts of special worship did not cease altogether. During the First World War, as closer relations between the various British churches developed, new types of interdenominational occasions of special worship were

¹⁵ Philip Williamson, 'State Prayers, Fasts and Thanksgivings: Public Worship in Britain 1830–1897', *Past and Present*, 200 (2008), 121–74.

created. These included the creation of 'national days of prayer'—national because involving all religious denominations, and because publicly approved (not ordered) by the sovereign and, during the Second World War, facilitated by the government. But state involvement in nation-wide acts of special worship eventually ended in the 1950s, for two reasons.¹⁶ Divine providence was now regarded as truly universal, without favour towards particular nations; and as church attendance and public belief in God seemed to be in sharp decline, the archbishops as well as the government concluded that it was no longer realistic to ask the whole nation to join in prayer. Special acts of worship were now narrowed to regular church attenders, and even when these occasions were sometimes called 'national days of prayer', as recently, they were national only in being interdenominational occasions with a wide geographical spread of observance.

National calls for petitionary worship during epidemics ended earlier. When governments had been reluctant during the nineteenth century to appoint special prayers and fast days for cholera and cattle plague, the bishops had been prepared to act alone. Before the government conceded special prayers in 1849 and 1866, many of them instructed their clergy to use the occasional prayer 'in the time of any common plague or sickness', or issued their own prayers. Many also appointed mid-week days of humiliation in their dioceses, in 1866 usually recommending that during the services the clergy should use the Litany, the Communion service and the special prayer which the government eventually conceded. These occasions of independent action by the bishops became the precedents for coordinated appointment of special prayers and services by the archbishops after the decline of state orders, and which became common during the early twentieth century for numerous types of crises, causes and celebrations. But these occasions no longer included epidemics. During a severe flu epidemic in 1892, the archbishops wanted to appoint a national day of humiliation but were discouraged by the Queen, even though her eldest grandson, the Duke of Clarence, had been a victim. No coordinated appeals for special prayers were issued during the influenza pandemic of 1918–19, which killed over 200,000 in Britain. In part this was because pandemics were now regarded as having medical rather than religious causes, and although much more severe than usual, influenza was a familiar illness. But the chief reason was almost certainly because the pandemic was eclipsed by the crisis of the First World War, with over three-quarters of a million

16 Philip Williamson, 'National Days of Prayer: The Churches, the State and Public Worship in Britain 1899–1957', *English Historical Review* 128 (2013), 323–66.

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British dead, for which the archbishops had already multiplied the issue of special services, including prayers included for doctors and nurses.

These wartime special services were increasingly independent of the structure and text of the Prayer Book, and bishops also began to encourage ministers to extemporise their own prayers. The First World War was decisive in the long departure of the Church both from uniformity and from conformity to *The Book of Common Prayer*,¹⁷ contributing to the movement that led to the revised prayer book of 1928, *The Alternative Service Book* in 1980 and *Common Worship* from 2000. Calls for special prayers during epidemics in recent times—for example, foot-and-mouth in 2001, and the Covid pandemic in March 2020—have been distinct from the special acts of worship of earlier centuries. They were not appeals for divine intervention to end the disease, but for support for those affected; and they no longer, of course, include directions for modifying the use of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

(Philip Williamson in *Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Durham, and chief editor of National Prayers: Special Worship since the Reformation in 4 volumes* (Boydell), which are also available at discounted prices through membership of *The Church of England Record Society*, <http://www.coers.org/join.html>)

17 *National Prayers* 3, pp. xcii–xcix.

The Early History of the Book of Common Prayer in Ireland, 1551-1647

KENNETH FERGUSON

In Ireland the first reading of the liturgy in English occurred in 1551, a year which also saw the establishment in Dublin of a printing press, the first fruit of which was an edition of the Book of Common Prayer. These events are recorded *sub anno* 1551 in the Annals of Sir James Ware:¹

In this year also the Liturgy was read to the People in English; it was printed in Dublin by Humph. Powell, by the Command of the Lord Lieutenant Sentleger and the Council, with Rules annexed concerning the Vestments permitted them to wear at Church, as well the Bishops as the other Clergy.

The name of Sir James Ware (1594-1666)² will recur in this article, not only as an annalist and antiquary, but as an actor in the cause of the Prayer Book in 1647, the year in which its use in Dublin was suppressed by the Commissioners for the Parliament of England. This is Ware's account of the events of 1551, his Latin text having been 'Englished' for publication by his son Robert:³

1 *The Antiquities and History of Ireland, By the Right Honourable Sir James Ware, Knt.* (Dublin: A. Crook, 1705) [hereafter Ware, *Antiquities*], 'The Annals of Ireland during the reign of King Edward the Sixth' (pp 115-129). Anno 1551, at pp 124-5. The volume is made up of multiple components with independent pagination.

2 The Ware family were parishioners of St. Werburgh's, the parish church of Dublin Castle. Sir James is buried there, and the name of his second son Robert, the translator of this portion of his father's Annals, appears on an alms board on the south wall. Robert Ware (1639-97) while possessing learning of a high order, was a flamboyant figure, and not the scrupulous scholar that his father had been. Indeed, he was a forger, whose technique was to interpolate invented matter into authentic texts, a process to which his employment as a translator lent opportunity. Robert Ware was a prominent political Protestant, with a disdain for Catholicism and the Irishry. The period during which he was translating his father's manuscripts coincided with the febrile years of the 'Popish Plot'. He would later leave Dublin for London on the day that Tyrconnell arrived as viceroy. With his literary flair, ultra Irish protestant background, and putative London connection with Thomas Wharton, he is a strong candidate to have had a hand in the composition of the words of Lillibullero, the tune with which Wharton claimed to have sung King James out of his three kingdoms [Cf. *A true relation of the several facts and circumstances of the intended riot and tumult on Queen Elizabeth's birthday* (London, 1711). p. 5.] Robert Ware's hand in the 'Purgatorium Hibernicum' poem that became *The Irish Hudibras* (London, 1689) is suspected by Andrew Carpenter, whose chapter, 'Lawyers and the circulation of scurrilous verse in Restoration Dublin', appeared in Coleman A. Dennehy (ed.) *Law and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin 2020), pp 289-301, at pp 299-301.

3 Ware, *Antiquities*, pp 147-64, 'The Reformation of the Church of Ireland, in the Life and Death of George Browne, sometime Archbishop of Dublin, being the first of the Romish Clergy that adhered, here in Ireland, to the Reformation of the Protestant Church of England; being then reformed within this

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King Henry the Eighth deceasing, and his hopeful Offspring King Edward the Sixth succeeding within a short space after his Royal Fathers Death, that hopeful Prince (by the Advice of his Privy Council) began to consider what good Effects the Translation of the Holy Bible had done, also how much it had enlightened the Understanding of his Subjects, they altered the Liturgy Book from what King Henry had formerly printed and established, causing the same to be printed in English, commanding the same to be read and sung in the several Cathedrals and Parish Churches of England, for the common benefit of the Nobility, Gentry and Commonalty; and that his Subjects of Ireland might likewise participate of the same sweetness, he sent over Orders to his Vice-Roy Sir Anthony St. Leger, then being Lord Deputy of that Nation, that the same be forthwith there in Ireland observed within their several Bishopricks, Cathedrals and Parish Churches; which was first observed in Christ Church at Dublin, on the Feast of Easter 1551,⁴ before the said Sir Anthony, George Browne, and before the Mayor and Bayliffs of Dublin, John Lockwood being then Dean of the said Cathedral.

The 450th anniversary of these events was marked in Dublin in 2001. On Easter Sunday the 1549 version of the Eucharistic Prayer was heard again in Christ Church, the place where it was first read. There were brief notices of the occasion in the *Irish Times* and in the *Church of Ireland Gazette*. Of wider significance was the circumstance that the Irish Post Office issued a commemorative stamp.⁵ The image on the stamp is necessarily small, but the title page of the book is faithfully reproduced. Within a decorative wood-cut border can be read, in Gothic type, in attractive alternate lines of red and black, the words:

THE BOKE / of the common praier and admi- / nistracion of the
Sacramen- / tes, and other rites / and ceremonies of the / Church
af- / ter the / use / of the Church of / England.

This first book printed in Ireland contains 140 pages, and (with some variations of spelling and one significant additional prayer, considered below), is a copy of the book first printed in London by Edward Whitchurche in 1549. The Dublin book followed five London editions by the rival printers Whitchurche and Grafton and two provincial editions,

Realm of Ireland', at pp 153-4. The sermon which George Browne preached at Christ Church on the first Sunday after Easter [4 April 1551], the text of which is given by Ware on pp 159-62, supported the change from Latin to English. Based on Psalms 119, v. 18, 'Open mine Eyes, that I may see the Wonders of thy Law', Sir Richard Cox [*Hibernia Anglicana* (2 vols., London: 1689-90) i, 290] would later praise it as an 'excellent sermon'.

4 29 March 1551: C.R. Cheney, *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History* (Cambridge, 1945; 1995), p. 98.

5 The stamp did not escape the notice of the *Prayer Book Society Newsletter*, where a short paragraph with a monochrome illustration appeared in No. 101 (Autumn 2001).

at Worcester and Shrewsbury.⁶ It represents the eighth and last printing of the original edition of the first Edwardian Book, which in the following year (1552) was superseded in England by the second Edwardian Book. The Dublin volume is naturally rare and precious. Only three copies, and a fragment of a fourth, have survived. In Dublin the Library of Trinity College has the copy shown on the stamp, and the Royal Irish Academy possesses the fragment. In England the British Library and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, have the other copies.⁷

From the perspective of the Church of Ireland, it is a source of pride to have a link with the first edition of Cranmer's Prayer Book, and it is gratifying that the literary glory of the English Reformation was the first book to be printed in Ireland. Local pride is right and proper, but also the better for being restrained. The bibliographical side of the 2001 celebration must necessarily be modest, for printing came late to Ireland, and the date 1551 is of purely local significance. The invention on the continent of a system of printing employing moveable type had occurred a full century previously; Gutenberg's Bible (1456) had appeared at Mainz ninety-five years earlier; and Caxton, in 1476, had given printing in London a head-start of seventy-five years. It is the measure of the technological backwardness of Ireland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the island whose scribes had once set the European standard in illuminated manuscripts can boast no incunabula, viz. no books whatsoever printed before 1500, and a mere handful—the tally of surviving specimens is eight—of sixteenth-century productions, most of which were produced on the single printing press set up in 1551.⁸ By contrast the book trade on the continent in the sixteenth century was already vast. A private collector of modest means, if he is prepared to strain his eyesight and practise his Latin, can still acquire copies of early continental printings of the classics or devotional works. Every well-instructed schoolboy is

6 Whitchurch (7 March 1549) [STC 16,267]; Grafton (8 March 1549) [STC 16,268]; Worcester: John Oswen (24 May 1549); Shrewsburye [STC 16,271].

7 The Dublin book bears the number 16,277 in the Short Title Catalogue. The Trinity College copy, shelf mark BB.d.3, is now kept in the safe. The British Library copy is 1879.c.3 (50). Of the fragment in the Royal Irish Academy, 3½ leaves survive: E. R. McC. Dix, *Printing in Dublin prior to 1601* (2nd edition, Dublin: 1932).

8 Dix, *Printing in Dublin prior to 1601*, found evidence of ten items printed in Dublin in the sixteenth century, for eight of which copies survived: the B.C.P. [1551]; A Proclamacyon against Shan O'Neal [8 June 1561]; Proclamation against the O'Connors [16 August 1564]; A Brefe / Declaration ... [1566: STC 14259, viz. The 11 Articles of 1559, printed at St Nicholas Street]; Duan ann so o Pilip mac Cuinn Crosaig [1571] Aibidil Gaoidheilge, & caiticiosma. : i. forcheadal nó teagasg Criosdaighe, maille lé hairtiogluibh dhairidhe don riaghal Criosduighe, is inghabhtha, dá gach aon da mbhé fómánta do reachd Día & na bannríoghan sa ríge so, / do tairngeamh as laidean, & as gaillbhérla go gaoidheilg, lá Sean O Kearnaigh. ... Do buaileadh so á gcló ghaidheilge, a mBaile Atha Cliath : ar chosdas mhaighisdir Sheón Uiser aldarman, ós chionn an dhroichid., an 20. lá do Juín. 1571. Maille lé prmhgiléid na mórrioghna. [1571]; An Almanack for Ireland [?1587; no copy extant]; [Wm Kerney], Proclamation against the Earl of Tyrone [1595]; [John Franke], Proclamation touching the restraint of powder and arms [1600; mentioned in *Cal. S.P. Ire.* 1600, p. 450, but not extant]; Proclamation against Hugh Neale [22 November 1600].

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supposed to know that the invention of printing greatly facilitated the progress of the Reformation. Taking into account the late start and halting course of printing in Ireland, and the small success of the country's Reformation, that nugget of school history has to be regarded ruefully. We might reflect too that, while Dublin afterwards produced a creditable number of editions of the Book of Common Prayer, especially in the eighteenth century,⁹ the Bible was not printed in Ireland until long after the Book of Common Prayer. The bibliographer Dix observed:¹⁰

... there is no trace whatever of any attempt, even in Dublin, to print Bibles or Testaments prior to 1699. In fact, the earliest extant Bible printed in Dublin bears date 1714. There are believed, or alleged, to have been earlier editions, but no copy exists or can be traced, as far as is at present known.

He adds (and this observation is relevant also to the Prayer Book, which, after the edition of 1551, was not printed again in English in Dublin for seventy years):

Bibles for the Irish market were supplied from London by the Company of Stationers. Ware's Annals, under the year 1559, say that 7,000 Bibles were sold in the two years beginning in 1566.

Ware's reference for 1559 reads:¹¹

Doctor Heath Arch Bishop of York, sent to the two Deans and Chapters of Dublin, viz. of Christ's-Church and St. Patrick, a large Bible to each, to be placed in the middle of their Quiers; which two Bibles, at their first setting up to the Public view, caused a great Resort of People thither, on purpose to Read therein, for the small Bibles were not common then, as now; and it appears by the Account of John Dale a Bookseller, that he Sold Seven thousand Bibles in two Years time, for the Booksellers of London, when they were first Printed, and brought over into Ireland, in the Year, 1566.

9 Dublin-printed Prayer Books of the seventeenth-century are few, and some editions are as scarce as the 1551 book. The bibliography in J. R. Garstin, *The Book of Common Prayer in Ireland: its original and history* (Dublin, 1871), p. 38, mentions editions of 1621, 1637, 1666, 1680 and 1700, together with a Psalter with Morning and Evening Prayer printed by William Bladen in 1644. W.K. Clay's article, 'The Irish Prayer-Book', in *The British Magazine*, vol. xxx (1 December 1846), pp 601-629, includes a postscript by J.C. Crosthwaite, which carefully identifies the differences between the Prayer Book printed in Dublin by the Company of Stationers in 1637 and English editions of the reign of Charles I. In the rubrics in this Dublin printing 'Minister' is often, though not invariably, substituted for 'Priest', a reflection of sensitivities that still endure in Ireland.

10 E.R. McC. Dix, *The earliest Dublin printers and the Company of Stationers of London* (London, The Bibliographical Society, 1904), p. 6.

11 Ware, *Antiquities*, 'The Annals of Ireland, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth', p. 3.

The printer of 1551 and his book

The Dublin printing press was the tool of Humphrey Powell, whose name appears on the first and last pages of the book of 1551. At the foot of its title page occurs the imprint (in Latin):

DUBLINIAE IN OFFI-
CINA HUMFREDI
POVVELI Cum privilegio ad impri-
mendum solum.
ANNO DOMINI
M.D.L.I

On the last of its 140 pages is found this colophon (in English)

Imprinted by Humfrey Powell, printer to the Kings Majesty, in his Highnesses Realme of Ireland, dwelling in the cittee of Dublin, in the great toure by the crane.

Humphrey Powell,¹² who flourished during the years 1548-1567, had printed in London at Holborn Conduit, before coming to Dublin to be the first King's Printer. The 'great tower by the crane' where he dwelt was one of the towers in the city wall, the site of which is thought to be at the rear of the Clarence Hotel, opposite the end of the street called Crane Lane. Powell's subsequent Dublin output includes two Proclamations, copies of which are in the State Papers.¹³ In January 1566/7 he printed another religious work, a copy of the 11 Articles of 1559 printed in a pamphlet of eight leaves entitled *A Brefe Declaration of certein Principall Articles of Religion; set out by order and authoritie as well of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Sidney ... as by Tharchbshops, & / Byshops, & other her majesties Hygh Commissioners for causes Ecclesiasticall in the same Realme.*¹⁴ The title page of this work is printed within a wood-cut border, the sides of which are the same as those used in the title-page of the Prayer Book of 1551. Nothing is heard of Powell after 1567, but his type passed into the possession of William Kearney, his successor as King's Printer, and was used by the latter in 1571 in

12 D.N.B. article by Albert Frederick Pollard (1869-1948), 'Humphrey Powell (fl. 1548-1556)'. The D.N.B. entry was superseded by E.R. Mc.C. Dix, 'Humphrey Powell, the first Dublin printer', in *Proc. R.I.A.*, vol. xxvii (1908), Section C, pp 213-16.

13 *A Proclamacyon againt Shan O'Neal* [8 June 1561]; and *Proclamation against the O'Connors* [16 August 1564].

14 *A Brefe / Declaration of certein / Principall Articles of Religion; set out by order and auctoritie / as well of the right Honorable Sir Henry / Sidney Knyght of the most noble order; / Lord preside[n]t of the Coun[n]cel in the Prin / cipalltie of Wales & Marches of the / same, and general deputie of this Realme / of Ireland, as by Tharchebyshops, & / Byshopes, & other her maiesties Hygh / Commissioners for causes Ecclesistaical / in the same Realme* [T.C.D. DD.gg. 65 No. 6]. Dix, in *Printing in Dublin prior to 1601*, observes, p. 6: 'The page title is printed within a wood-cut border, the sides of which are the same as those used in the title-page of the Prayer Book of 1551, and the top and bottom consist of two flowered initials'.

producing the *Aibidil*, the first work to be printed in the Irish language. The *Aibidil* is the Catechism in Irish, with a Gaelic alphabet prefixed. This work is as scarce as the 1551 Prayer Book, and there was no copy in Ireland until 1995, when Trinity College Library bought at auction the copy that had belonged to the Marquess of Bute.

The Prayer for the Lord Deputy

The Dublin-printed copy of the first Edwardian Prayer Book exhibits some insignificant minor typographical variations from the English original, but has a unique addition after the colophon: 'A praier for the Lord deputie, (to be saied) betweene the two last Collectes of the Latenie'. The original beneficiary of this prayer was Sir James Croft[s], who in April 1551 succeeded St. Leger as deputy. The inclusion of a form of prayer for the deputy is significant as the precursor of a feature afterwards found (in different words) in Irish editions of the 1662 Prayer Book,¹⁵ and is a feature still represented for Northern Ireland in the current Prayer Book under the style 'A Prayer for the chief Governours in Ireland'. It is not known who composed the 1551 form of prayer for the lord deputy, but the archbishop of Dublin, George Browne, is an obvious possibility. The general style of this prayer is in harmony with the prose of the rest of the Book, save that there are places where it has a strident political tone, as when it enjoins people 'to leaue off[f] their olde abhominable errorrs' and 'their accustomed, most frowarde and delivishe sedicions', and prays that the Deputy may be 'defended from the priuie craftes of those, whiche shall go about maliciously to let or hynder his good and godly procedynge'.

A praier for the Lord deputie, (to be saied).
betweene the two last Collectes of the Latenie.
Most mercifull and everlastyng God, whiche amongest other thy sundrie and manifold giftes, (by geuvng of good and rightuous ministers in earth) dooest declare thy fauourable mercie and excedyng goodnesse: We most humblie beseche thee, that thou wilt so lighten the herte of thy seruant (Sir James Croft) now Gouvernour ouer this realme, under our most dread and souveraigne Lord, Edward the sixt: that he maie by the might of thy power, gouerne and guide the same in thy most holy lawes: grauntyng hym grace (by purenesse of life and feruent zeale to thy trueth) to be an example to all other, to leaue of their olde abhominable errorrs: And that he maie (hauing stedfast confidence in thy helpe) not onely bring the people to liue in thy feare, and due obedience to their

15 See Garstin, *The Book of Common Prayer in Ireland*, pp 23-8.

kyng: but also by ministring of Justice, may kepe them from their accustomed, most frowarde and diuelishe sedicions, in rest, peace and quietnesse. And graunt Lord we beseche thee, for thy sonne Jesus Christes sake. that through thee he be defended from the priuie craftes of those, whiche shall go about maliciously to let or hynder his good and godly procedynges: and that his dooynges alwaies and in all thynges, maie, tende to thy glorie, the kynges honour, and the common wealthe of this lande. That thou wilte helpe hym, mainteyne hym, strengthen him, and in thy waies direct hym, and appoinct iust and faithfull dealyng officers and seruauantes about hym, we most humblie praie thee good lord: who with thy sonne and the holy ghost, liuest and reignest, worlde without ende. Amen.
**
*

The circumstance that Sir James Croft[s] was the subject of this prayer allows us to date the printing of the Dublin Prayer Book to the later part of 1551, or even to the pre-25 March portion of what we now reckon as 1552, and establishes that the Book was not ready in time for the first employment of the English liturgy in Christ Church. On Easter Day (29th March 1551) Sir Anthony St. Leger was still Deputy; and we may deduce that the officiating clergy used a book printed in England.

The Prayer Books of 1549, 1552, 1559 and 1604

The history of the liturgy in Ireland, subject to a time lag and to nuances, was an echo of developments in England. Chief among the nuances were legal differences. In England the use of the Prayer Book was enjoined by four successive Acts of Uniformity — passed in 1549, 1552, 1559 and 1662.¹⁶ In Ireland there were only two such Acts, passed in 1560 and 1666.¹⁷ The Act of 1560 contained a notable provision, considered later, for the conduct of worship in Latin. The Act of 1666 prescribed by law the use of the 1662 Book, a status that it held until Disestablishment.

16 2 & 3 Edw. 6, cap. 1 (1549); 5 & 6 Edw. 6, cap. 1 (1552); 1 Eliz., cap. 2 (1559); 14 Cha. 2, cap. 4 (1662), explained in 15 Ch. 2, cap. 6 (1663).

17 2 Eliz. cap. 2 (Ir.) [(1560) *An Act for the Uniformitie of Common Prayer and Service in the Church, and the Administration of the Sacraments*; 17 & 18 Charles II (Ir.), c. 6 (1666) *An Act for the Uniformity of Publique Prayers and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies; and for establishing the Forme of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the Church of Ireland.*

The Irish statutes were repealed in the Republic by 29/1962. The four English statutes as well as the two Irish statutes were repealed in Northern Ireland in 1950: S.L.R. 1950.

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The Prayer Book that Cranmer launched in 1549 and that achieved its final form in 1662, reached that destination after intermediate stages in 1552, 1559 and 1604. Of the four earlier versions, the works of 1549 and 1552 show the most noticeable differences, ones that also chart the rapidity of doctrinal change.

The first Prayer Book (1549) of Edward VI was novel in representing in one volume, in English, the substance, condensed and abbreviated, as well as revised, of the four chief ancient service books in Latin: the Missal, Breviary, Manual and Pontifical. The influences on the work, and on its principal author Archbishop Cranmer, included the pre-Reformation Sarum Use and the reformed Latin Breviary (1535; 1537) of the Spanish Cardinal Quignon [Francis de Quiñones], along with elements from the Mozarabic Missal of Toledo, and from the Eastern and Lutheran liturgies.¹⁸ It had evolved by way of an English Litany that Cranmer had issued in 1544, a Prymer (the King's Prymer) for morning and evening prayer issued in 1545,¹⁹ and an Order of the Communion prepared in 1548.

The chief ways in which the first Book differed from its successors were that Matins and Evensong were shorter, beginning with the Lord's Prayer and ending with the Third Collect. The Litany, instead of following the Order for Evening Prayer, is printed after the Communion Service, which, significantly, was entitled 'The Supper of the Lorde and The Holy Communion, commonly called the Masse'. The rubrics to the Communion office envisaged that the priest would wear an albe and cope, and 'stand afore the middes of the altar'. The Ten Commandments were not read; the prayers, differently arranged, included a mention of the Virgin as well as prayers for the dead. There was an invocation of the Holy Ghost before consecration. The words used in giving the elements were only the first of the two clauses now in use, i.e., 'The body of our Lorde Jesus Christe whiche was geuen for thee, preserue thy bodye and soule unto euerlasting lyfe'. Water was mixed with the wine. In the Baptismal Service a form of exorcism was used. Trine immersion was directed, and the child was arrayed after baptism in a chrisom, and anointed with oil on the head. The Burial Service contained prayers for the dead, and provision was made for Communion at burial.

The second Prayer Book of Edward VI, published in 1552, added the

18 See title 'Prayer, Book of Common', in *Encl. Britannica*, 11th edition (1910) [article by Revd Fred. Ed. Warren], and the article by the Revd Mandell Creighton, in Sydney J. Low and F.S. Pulling, *The Dictionary of English History* (1889), pp 833-4 which refers to Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*; Wheatley, *On the Book of Common Prayer*; Procter, *History of the Book of Common Prayer*; *Liturgies of King Edward VI and of Queen Elizabeth* (published by the Parker Society). Cranmer compiled the Litany (previously published in 1544) and was 'probably responsible' for most of the original collects. Archbishop Whitgift (1530?-1604) wrote the collect for the royal family; Archbishop Laud (1573-1645) that for the high court of parliament; and Bishop Peter Gunning of Ely (1614-84) that for all conditions of men.

19 This contained the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and several canticles and collects, as well as the Litany in English.

introductory portions of Morning and Evening Prayer, appointed the Litany to be used as at present, added the Decalogue to the Communion office, omitted mention of the Virgin and the prayers for the dead, and directed the priest to stand 'at the north side of the table', and to wear no vestment save the surplice. The 'black rubric' at the end of the Communion office declared that communicants, by kneeling, did not mean 'that any adoration be done'. The tendency of the alterations is also seen in the omission of 'The body of our Lorde Jesus Christe whiche was geuen for thee ...', the clause of 1549 that is now the first of the two used at the administration of the elements, and its substitution by the present second clause, 'Take and eate this, in remembrance that Christ dyed for thee, and feede on him in thy hearte by faythe, with thankesgeuing'. The word 'mass' disappeared, and the word 'table' was used throughout in place of 'altar'.²⁰

The second Book of Edward VI scarcely had time to come into use before it was swept away by the return of Roman Catholicism under Queen Mary. So complete was the return to the old order that when Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, she was crowned according to the rites of the Roman Pontifical. But early in 1559 a committee was appointed to compare the two Books of Edward VI. The commission, of which the chief mover was Edward Guest, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, decided in favour of Edward VI's second Prayer Book, with a few alterations. These were adopted by Parliament, and the revised Prayer Book came into use in England on 24 June 1559. By the standards of the other statutes governing uniformity, to which copies of the relevant Book of Common Prayer were annexed, the draughtsman of the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity was extraordinarily lazy. He got away with referring, with complete vagueness, to 'the said book so authorised by Parliament, in the fifth and sixth years of the raigne of King Edward the 6. with one alteration or addition of certain lessons to bee used in every Sunday in the year, and the forme of the letanie altered and corrected, and two sentences onely added in the delivery of the sacrament to the communicants, and none other or otherwise'.

These alterations were not numerous,²¹ but the statute is a poor guide to what they were. An unfriendly petition in the Litany—'From the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, Good Lord deliver us'—was

20 In November 1550 the Council had ordered all altars to be removed throughout the land: J.D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors 1485-1558* (Oxford, 1952), p. 519.

21 J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth*, (2nd edition, Oxford, 1959), p. 16, observed: 'A spirit of compromise is noticeable in the prayer book. The rubric declaring that by kneeling at the sacrament no adoration was intended to any corporal presence of Christ was expunged; and in the delivery of the sacrament to communicants the Zwinglian wording of the second Edwardian compilation was tempered by the addition of the catholic wording of the first. These were undoubtedly concessions to those who were attached to the old order; and it may be questioned whether, in view of the queen's moderation, the average Englishman was conscious at first of any marked change in the ministration of religion beyond, perhaps, the use of English in the service in place of Latin, and the Communion in two kinds.'

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omitted, and the two clauses in the administration of the elements at the Communion were put together as they are now. To these changes in the Book may be added an express statutory provision that the ornaments in use in the second year of Edward VI might be retained.

The Book issued in 1559 served for the rest of Elizabeth's reign, and thereafter, in a slightly altered form, until the Restoration. After the accession of James I, following the conference held at Hampton Court early in 1603, slight changes were made, the chief of which was the addition of the Thanksgiving Prayers, and of the latter half of the Catechism. Rather more noticeably, a wordy 'Declaration on Uniformity' was prefixed to the Book. The Book in its 1604 form endured until the Civil War, after which, in 1662, following the Restoration and the conference at the Savoy, the Book was established in its present definitive form.

Reception in Ireland of the Prayer Book of 1549

1551 was the year in which the Reformation commenced in earnest in Ireland. While the breach with Rome, and the suppression of the monasteries, had occurred in the reign of Henry VIII, and been marked by legislation in 1536,²² there had hitherto been no attempt in Ireland at doctrinal reform, and there were few (if any) autochthonous stirrings in that direction. The first English Act of Uniformity of 1549 (which gave legal sanction to the introduction of Cranmer's Prayer Book in England) did not apply to Ireland;²³ and the introduction to Ireland of the first Edwardian Book of Common Prayer was effected, not by a statute, but by a royal order, dated at Greenwich on 6 February 1551, and addressed to St. Leger, whose task it was to notify the clergy to carry out the royal will. What is said to have been the text of this Order was printed by Robert Ware in 1681,²⁴ and is given below.²⁵ A passage that attracts suspicion as a possible interpolation of Robert Ware has been underlined.

'The Translation of the Copy of the Order for the Liturgie of the
Church of England to be read in Ireland'

E D W A R D by the Grace of God, &c.

Whereas our Gracious Father, King Henry the 8th. of happy memory,
taking into consideration the Bondage and heavy Yoak that his true

22 Cf. the Irish legislation of 1536. Act of Supremacy, 28 Henry VIII, cap. 5; abolition of appeals to Rome, *ibid.*, cap. 6; first fruits, cap. 8; authority of the bishop of Rome, cap. 13; the twentieth part, cap. 14; suppression of abbeys, cap. 16.

23 2 & 3 Edw. 6, cap. 1. It is a curiosity that the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Draughtsman thought the English Act of 1548 worthy of repeal [S.L.R., 1950]. The Parliamentary Draughtsman in the Republic, who ignored both English statutes, seems to have assumed that they did not apply in Ireland.

24 For Robert Ware, see footnote 2 above, and the note by G. V. Jourdan, 'Concerning the strictures on Robert Ware's 'Life of Archbishop Browne', and other documents', in Walter Alison Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland* (3 vols., Oxford: 1933), ii, pp 599-603.

25 Ware, *Antiquities*, pp 154-5, in the section [pp 147-64], 'The Reformation of the Church of Ireland, in the Life and Death of George Browne'.

and faithful Subjects sustained under the Jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, as also the Ignorance the Commonalty were in, how several fabulous Stories and lying Wonders misled our Subjects in both our Realms of England and Ireland, grasping thereby the means thereof into their hands, also dispensing with the Sins of our Nations by their Indulgences and Pardons for Gain, purposely to cherish all evil Vices, as Robberies, Rebellions, Thefts, Whoredoms, Blasphemy, Idolatry, &c. He, our Gracious Father King Henry of happy memory, hereupon dissolved all Priories, Monastries, Abbies, and other pretended religious Houses, as being but Nurseries for Vice and Luxury, more than for sacred Learning: He therefore, that it might more plainly appear to the World, that those Orders had kept the light of the Gospel from the People, he thought it most fit and convenient for the Preservation of their Souls and Bodies, that the Holy Scriptures should be Translated, Printed and placed in all Parish Churches within his Dominions for his Faithfull Subjects to encrease their Knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Chrif. We therefore, for the general Benefit of our well-beloved Subjects Understandings, when ever assembled or met together in the said several Parish Churches, either to pray or to hear Prayers read, that they may the better join therein, in Unity, Hearts and Voice, have caused the Liturgy and Prayers of the Church to be translated into our Mother Tongue of this Realm of England, according to the Assembly of Divines lately met within the same for that purpose. We therefore Will and Command, as also Authorise you Sir Anthony St. Leger Knight, our Vice-Roy of that our Kingdom of Ireland, to give special notice to all our Clergy, as well Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, as other our Secular Parish Priests within that our said Kingdom of Ireland, to perfect, execute, and obey this our Royal Will and Pleasure accordingly.

Given at our Mannor of Greenwich the 6th. of February in the Fifth Year of our Reign,

E.R.

To our trusty & well beloved Sir Anth. St. Leger Knt.
our Chief Governour of our Kingdom of Ireland.

On receipt of this Order, Sir Anthony St. Leger convened a meeting of the clergy, which was held at Christ Church on the Kalends of March (1 March 1551). Ware's *Antiquities* contains a very full account of this meeting, derived (it is stated) from materials that had been in the possession of Anthony Martin (d. 1650), successively Bishop of Meath and (1645) Provost of Trinity College, a man who in his last years defied the law to take services in the College according to the Prayer Book form. The account of the meeting, at which there was a great dispute, is remarkably vivid and circumstantial, and

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one naturally ponders how it was handed down. Robert Ware, who published the account, obtained it from his father, Sir James the antiquary, who at Trinity College had been a pupil of Anthony Martin.²⁶ Anthony Martin may have had the account from James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, who was well-connected, being the nephew of Henry Ussher (1550?-1613), previously holder of the same see. The Ussher connection is supported by the fact that manuscripts of James Ussher dealing with another meeting about the liturgy held in the following year between Sir James Crofts and George Dowdall are in the British Library [Add. MS. 4784], and were published by G.V. Jourdan as an appendix to his chapters in volume ii of Allison Phillips's *History of the Church of Ireland*.²⁷

As appears from the account below, the dispute at the meeting of the clergy was characterised by a spirited exchange between the Lord Deputy, St. Leger, and the Archbishop of Armagh, George Dowdall, who led a walk-out of his suffragan bishops.

'Several Collections from Anthony Martin, formerly Bishop of Meath'²⁸

Before Proclamations were issued out, Sir Anthony St. Leger, upon his Order, called an Assembly of the Archbishops and Bishops, together with other of the then Clergy of Ireland, in which Assembly he signified unto them as well His Majesties Order aforesaid, as also the Opinions of those Bishops and Clergy of England, who had adhered unto the Order, saying, that it was His Majesties Will and Pleasure, consenting unto their serious Considerations and Opinions, then acted and agreed on in England as to Ecclesiastical matters, that the same be in Ireland so likewise celebrated and performed.

Sir Anthony St. Leger having spoken to this effect, George Dowdall,²⁹ who succeeded George Cromer³⁰ in the Primacy of Ardmagh, stood up, who (through his Romish Zeal to the Pope) laboured with all his

26 Anthony Martin was born at Galway (?), and educated partly in France and partly at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He became a Fellow of Trinity College (where he lectured James Ware in philosophy), and was consecrated Bishop of Meath, 5 July 1625. Having been expelled from his diocese by the rebels, he was in 1645 appointed Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. d. July 1650. [Ware, *Antiquities*, 'A Commentary of the Prelates of Ireland ...', p. 26] Robert Ware says (Ware, *Antiquities*, p. 159; also *Harleian Miscellany*, vi, p. 604), that Browne's sermon, on the text 'Open mine eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law' preached unto the people in Christ-church, upon the first Sunday after Easter, anno 1551' was reproduced from 'a copy of the same given to sir James Ware, knight, by Anthony Martin, late bishop of Meath, who formerly was tutor to the said sir James Ware, when he was a student of Trinity-College, Dublin'.

27 W.A. Phillips, *History of the Church of Ireland*, ii, pp 593-9.

28 Ware, *Antiquities*, pp 155-6, in the section [pp 147-64], 'The Reformation of the Church of Ireland, in the Life and Death of George Browne'.

29 Consecrated December 1543. Deprived (and succeeded by Hugh Goodacre, consecrated on 2 February 1552/3). Restored 12 March 1553/4. Died in London, 15 August 1558.

30 d. 16 March 1542/3.

power and force to oppose the Liturgy of the Church, that it might not be read or sung in the Church; saying, then shall every illiterate Fellow read Service (or Mass) as he in those days termed the word Service.

To this Saying of the Archbishops, Sir Anthony replied. No, your Grace is mistaken, for we have too many illiterate Priests amongst us already, who neither can pronounce the Latine, nor know what it means, no more than the Common people that hear them; but when the people hear the Liturgy in English, they and the Priest will then understand what they pray for.

Upon this Reply, George Dowdall bad Sir Anthony beware of the Clergies Curse.

Sir Anthony made answer, I fear no strange Curse, so long as I have the Blessing of that Church which I believe to be the true one.

The Archbishop again said, Can there be a truer Church than the Church of St. Peter, the Mother Church of Rome.

Sir Anthony returned this answer, I thought we had been all of the Church of Christ; for he calls all true Believers in him his Church, and himself the Head thereof.

The Archbishop replied, and is not St. Peters the Church of Christ.

Sir Anthony returned this Answer, St. Peter was a Member of Christs Church, but the Church was not St. Peters neither was St. Peter, but Christ the Head thereof.

Then George Dowdall the Primate of Ardmagh rose up, and several of the Suffragan Bishops under his jurisdiction, saving only Edward Staples then Bishop of Meath, who tarried with the rest of the Clergy then assembled, on the Kalends of March according to the old stile, 1551,³¹ but if we reason as from the Annunciation of our Lady, which was the 25th. of March, it was 1550.

Sir Anthony then took up the Order, and held it forth to George Browne³² Archbishop of Dublin, who (standing up) received it, saying; This Order, good Brethren, is from our gracious King, and from the rest of our Brethren, the Fathers and Clergy of England, who have consulted herein, and compared the Holy Scriptures with what they have done; unto whom I submit, as Jesus did to Caesar, in all things just and lawful, making no question why or wherefore, as We own Him our true and lawful King.

After this several of the meeker or most moderate of the Bishops and Clergy of Ireland cohered with George Browne the Archbishop of Dublin, amongst whom Edward Staples Bishop of Meath, who was put out from his Bishoprick, for so doing, in Queen Mary's days, on the twenty ninth of June 1554. John Bale, who on the second

31 The date (New Style) was Sunday 1 March 1551: Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, p. 98.

32 Augustine Friar of London. Consecrated Archbishop of Dublin, 19 March 1535/6. Deprived as a married man, 1554. Died 1556. D.N.B. (Robert Dunlop).

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of February 1552[/3], was Consecrated Bishop of Ossory for his Fidelity, and afterwards by Queen Mary expelled. Also, Thomas Lancaster Bishop of Kildare, who was at the same time put from his Bishoprick, with several others, of the Clergy, being all expelled upon Queen Mary's coming to the Crown.³³

John Bale and the second Edwardian Prayer Book

It may be assumed, in what remained of the reign of Edward VI, that the Book of Common Prayer introduced at Christ Church on Easter Sunday 1551 was not used outside the dioceses of the Pale, and within those dioceses probably not much beyond the Dublin city churches and wherever the Bishops of Meath and Kildare had influence. We know that when John Bale arrived at Waterford in January 1553 it was not in use there, for he complains:³⁴

In beholdynge the face and ordre of that cite, I see many abhomynable ydolatryes mainteined by the epicurysh prestes, for their wicked bellies sake. The communion, or supper of the Lorde, was there altogyther used lyke a popysh masse, with the olde apysh toyes of Antichrist, in bowynges and beckynges, knelinges and knockinges; the Lorde's death, after S. Paule's doctrine, neyther preached nor yet spoken of. There wawled they over the dead, with prodigyouse howlynges and patteryges, as though their sowles had not bene quyeted in Christe and redemed by hys passion; but that they must come after and helpe at a pinche with requiem eternam, to delyver them out of helle by their sorrowfull sorceryes. When I had beholden these heathnysh behavers, I seyed unto a senatour [p. 447] of that cytie, that I wele perceyved that Christe had there no bishop, neyther

33 The account concluded thus:

When these passages had passed, Sir Anthony was in a short time after recalled for England, and Sir James Crofts of Herefordshire Knight, placed Chief in his stead; who began his Government from [Wednesday] the twenty ninth of April 1551.

Sir James Crofts, upon his coming over, endeavoured much for the perswading of George Dowdall to adhere to the Order aforesaid; but Dowdall being obstinate, his Majesty and the Learned Privy Council then of England, (for his perversness) upon the twentieth of October following, took away the Title of Primate of all Ireland from him, and conferred the same on George Browne then Archbishop of Dublin, and to his Successors, by reason that he was the first of the Irish Bishops who embraced the Order for Establishing of the English Liturgy and Reformation in Ireland; which place he enjoyed during the remainder of King Edward's Reign; and for a certain time after; as you shall know further in its due course and place.

The controversy over the primacy went back to the Synod of Kells, 1152: see J.A. Watt, *The Church and the Two Nations in Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 1970), 108, 112, 114, 209; C. MacNeill, *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register*, c. 1172-1534 (Dublin, 1950), p. 217.

34 *Harleian Miscellany* (London: 1810), vi, 437-464, 'The Vocacyon of Johan Bale to the Bishoprick of Ossorie in Irelande, his Persecutions in the same, and finall Delyverance. Imprinted in Rome, before the Castell of S. Angell, at the Signe of S. Peter, in December, Anno D. 1553'. [in Twelves, black letter; containing 98 pages], at p. 446. Bale's warrant of appointment was dated Southampton, 16 August 1552.

yet the kynge's majestie of england any faythfull officer of the mayer, in suffering so horryble blasphemies.

The colourful career of John Bale as Bishop of Ossory would be a digression, were it not for the fact that the only use in Ireland of the second Edwardian Prayer Book is associated with him. John Bale's remarkable autobiography, *The vocaycon of Johan Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Irelande his persecucions in the same / & finall delyveraunce*,³⁵ a blackletter book of 49 sheets that bears the mendacious but witty imprint of Rome: 'Before the Castell of St. Angell, at the Signe of St. Peter', is evidence that John Bale, by force of argument, overbore the reluctance of the lord chancellor and of his metropolitan, George Browne, to have himself consecrated in Christ Church according to the second Book of King Edward. Bale's account of his consecration is revelatory of the liturgical confusion that obtained in Dublin in the spring of 1552/3:-³⁶

Upon the Purificacion daye of our Ladye, the lorde chauncellour of Irelande, Sir Thomas Cusacke, our special good lorde and earnest ayder in all our procedinges, appoynted us to be invested or consecrated (as they call it) by George, the archebishop of Dublyne, Thomas, the bishop of Kyldare, and Urbane, the bishop of Duno, assistinge him. I will not here describe at large the subtyle conveyance of that great epicure the archebishop, how he went about to diffarre the daye of our consecracion, that he might by that means have prevented me, in takinge up the proxyes of my bishoprick to his owne glottonouse use, and in so deprivinge me of more than halfe my lyvinge for that yeare. As we were comminge fourth, to have receyved the imposition of handes, accordynge to the ceremonye, Thomas Lockwode (Blockheade he myght wel be called) the deane of the cathedrall church there, desired the lord-chauncellour very instauntly, that he woulde in no wise permyt that observacion to be done after that boke of consecratinge bishoppes, which was last set fourth in Englande by acte of parlement; aleginge that it wolde be both an occasion of tumulte, and also that it was not as yet consented to by acte of their parlement in Irelande. For whie; he much feared the newe changed ordre of the communion therin, to hindre his kychin and bellye. The lord chauncellour proponed this matter unto us. The archebishop consented thereunto, so ded the other ii. bishoppes. Maistre Goodaker wolde gladly it might have bene otherwise, but he wolde not at that time contende there with them.

35 1553. 8°. The British Library catalogue [for shelfmark: C.37.b.5] suggests that the printer was Hugh Singleton of London. Others suggest that the book was printed at Wesel. The tract is reproduced in the *Harleian Miscellany*, vi.

36 *Harleian Miscellany*, vi, p. 447. Bale concludes the account of his consecration with the sentence: 'In the ende, the lorde [p. 448] chauncellour made to us and to our frendes a most frendly diner, to save us from excedinge charges, which otherwise we had bene at that day'. The first Book of Common Prayer (as published in 1549) lacked an Ordinal.

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When I see none other waye, I stepped fourth, and sayde: “If Englande and Irelande be undre one kinge, they are both bounde to the obedience of one lawe undre him. And as for us, we came hyther as true subjectes of his, sworne to obeye that ordinaunce. It was but a bishoppricke (I sayde) that I came thydre to receive that daye: which I coulde be better contented to treade undre my fote there, than to breake from that promyse or othe that I had made. I bad them, in the ende, sett all their heartes at rest; for, came I ones to the churche of Ossorie, I wolde execute nothings for my part there, but accordinge to the rules of that lattre boke.” With that the lord chauncellour right honourably commaunded the ceremonie to be done after the boke. Than went the assheaded deane awaie, more than halfe confused: neyther folowed there any tumulte amonge the people, but every man, savige the prestes, was wele contented. Than went the archbishop about that observacion, very unsauerly, and as one not much exercised in that kinde of doynge, specially in the administracion of the Lorde’s holy supper.

When Bale reached Kilkenny to take up his episcopal duties he required his clergy to use the second Book, but, as shown by the following account, revelatory of the grounds of resistance, his directions were not heeded:³⁷

An other thinge was there, that mucche had dyspleased the prebendaryes, and other prestes: I had earnestly, ever sens my first comminge, requyred them to observe and folowe that only Boke of Commen Prayer, whych the kynge and hys counsell had that yeare put fourth by acte of parlement. But that wolde they at no hande obeye; allegynge, for their vayne and ydle excuse, the lewde example of the archebishop of Dublyne, which was alwayes slacke in thynges perteyninge to God’s glorie; alleginge also the want of bokes, and that their owne justices and lawers had not yet consented therunto: as though it had bene lawfull for their justices to have denyed the same; or, as though they had rather have hanged upon them, than upon the kinge’s autoritie, and commaundement of his counsell.

Bale’s stay in Kilkenny was short. His tenure of the see of Ossory, and the first attempt to introduce the Book of Common Prayer in Ireland, were both brought to an end by the death of the young King Edward and the accession of his sister Mary. It was galling for Bale that news of that event reached everybody else in Kilkenny before it reached him, as we learn from these sentences:³⁸

37 *Harleian Miscellany*, vi, p. 449.

38 *Ibid.*, vi, p. 450. Mary was proclaimed at Kilkenny on 20 August. Bale never came back to Ireland,

On the xxv daye of July, the prestes were as pleasauntly disposed as might be, and went by heapes from taverne to taverne, to seke the best rob davye and aqua vitae, which are their speciall drinckes there. They cawsed all their cuppes to be filled in, with gaudeamus in dolio; the misterie thereof only knowne to them, and, at that time, to none other els. Wich was, that Kynge Edwarde was dead ...

With Edward's death the history of the Book of Common Prayer goes into abeyance. The years of Mary's reign, 1553-8, may be passed over in silence, noting to her credit only that nobody went to the stake in Ireland. Ware says that 'in all this time, the Publick Service had not been read in English, since the decease of King Edward, till the Second coming of Thomas Earl of Sussex ...'. Then, on 30 August 1559, already a year into the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the story resumes in song, and with a fanfare of trumpets, as we learn from Ware's 'Annals of Queen Elizabeth':³⁹

August the 27th [1559], Thomas Earl of Sussex ... Landed at Dalkey ... On the 30th day he came to Christ's-Church, where Sir Nicholas Dardy Sang the Litany in English, after which the Lord Deputy took the Oath, and then they began to sing [We Praise thee O God, &c] at which the Trumpets Sounded

Disrespect shown to the Book of Common Prayer at Balrothery, 1608

After 1559, and for the ensuing 88 years, until the Puritans prohibited its use in 1647, the Book of Common Prayer flourished within the walls of Dublin. Establishing it elsewhere, however, even within a few miles of Dublin, and even among people whose language was English, proved uphill work. George Browne, Archbishop of Dublin at the time of the Reformation, wrote a prescient letter in May 1538, in which he noted that 'now both English race and Irish begin to ... lay aside their national old quarrels'.⁴⁰ By 'English race' the Archbishop meant the inhabitants of

and died in November 1563, aged 68.

³⁹ Ware, *Antiquities*, 'The Annals of Ireland, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth', pp 1, 2.

⁴⁰ *Harleian Miscellany* (London: 1810), v, 595-606, 'Historical Collections of the Church of Ireland, during the Reigns of King Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Queen Mary ...', at pp 598-9, George Browne to Thomas Cromwell, May 1538:

'His Highness's viceroy of this nation [St. Leger] is of little or no power with the old natives, therefore your lordship will expect of me no more than I am able. This nation is poor in wealth, and not sufficient now at present to oppose them. It is observed, that ever since his Highness's ancestors had this nation in possession, the old natives have been craving foreign power to assist and rule them; and now both English race and Irish begin to oppose your Lordship's orders, and do lay aside their national old quarrels, which I fear will, if any thing will, cause a foreigner to invade this nation. I pray God [p. 599]

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Fingal and the south Wexford baronies, and the townsfolk, people who were English by descent but increasingly Irish in interest. The indications are that Cranmer's prose had little appeal for those whose speech was the then-quaint language of Chaucer. And just as they preserved their archaic speech, the Old English clung to the forms of religion to which they were accustomed. This is the report of a law suit of 1608, preserved in the Egmont Papers:-⁴¹

1608, June 1. Thomas Meredythe, clerk, vicar of Ballrotherie, co. Dublin v. James Barnewell, Nicholas Bellew, William Stoakes, John Wogan, Robert Barnewell, Nicholas Phillipps, William Kenan and others.

Upon complaint of the plaintiff that on All Saints' Day last, being Sunday, he attended at his church both to say divine service and also to bury the corpse of James Barnewell's mother, but that the defendants, having resolved 'to bury the said corpse after a superstitious and idolatrous fashion, and not according to the King's Majesty's injunctions and ordinances', riotously entered the church, assaulted and wounded him—pulling away a great part of his beard and causing his nose and mouth to gush forth with blood—struck the Book of Common Prayer from his hand and trod it disdainfully under foot, and that James Barnewell did moreover beat his (the plaintiff's) wife and threw her to the ground, she being great with child:-

And upon full hearing and deliberate discussing of the case:-

Decree condemning James Barnewell to pay a fine of 100l. sterling, with 20l. damages to the plaintiff besides his costs and charges, and to be imprisoned in Dublin castle; Nicholas Bellew to pay a fine of 100l. and to be committed to the Marshal, and Stoakes to pay 20l. and also to be committed to the Marshal. The rest of the defendants to be discharged upon payment of the fees of the Court, there being no pregnant proof against them.

The report goes only to the pregnancy of the evidence, and does not reveal the outcome of the parson's wife's pregnancy.

The case here quoted shows the difficulty of winning acceptance for the English version of the Book of Common Prayer in a district that had been English-speaking since the twelfth century. At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign English was not spoken in the greater part of the island, nor had the Reformation been felt in the greater part of the Church. Introducing an English liturgical reform in these conditions inevitably required adaptation to the circumstances of the country. Given that

I may be a false prophet; yet your good Lordship must pardon my opinion, for I write to your Lordship as a warning'.

41 H.M.C. Egmont, vol. i (1905), p. 33.

Cranmer's ideal was that the liturgy should be 'understanded' (1549) or 'understanden' (1552), it was in principle wholly proper that the Book should be translated into Irish, the language that the bulk of the population spoke. This was also the policy in Wales, where a Welsh version of the Prayer Book was published in 1567. The aspiration to publish an Irish translation, a theme considered below, had existed from the beginning, but hopes of publishing a version in Irish took nearly sixty years to fulfil, and it was not until 1609 that such a translation appeared. In the meantime the cause of liturgical reform was pursued through an unexpected medium: Latin.

The Prayer Book in Latin

It would be incautious to assume, even in England, that it was the policy of the reformers to abolish the liturgical use of Latin.⁴² The language was then and for long afterwards the medium of European scholarly communication, and the reformers, scholars themselves, were all accustomed to its liturgical use. It was solicitude for the unlettered laity that actuated them. That any objection to Latin was practical rather than dogmatic is evident from Cranmer's preface, where, in the section 'Concerning the Service of the Church', he wrote:

[And moreouer,] whereas s. Paule would have such language spoken to the people in the church, as they might understande and haue profite by hearyng the same; the seruice in this Church of England (these many years) hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understoode not; so that they haue hearde with theyr eares onely; and their hartes, spirite, and minde, haue not been edified thereby.

But then he went on to say:

Though it be appointed in the afore written preface, that al thinges shalbe read and song in the church, in the Englishe tongue, to thende yt the congregacion maie be therby edified: yet it is not meant, but when men says Matins and Euensong priuatelye, they maye saie the same in any language that they themselues do understande.

In England the Act of Uniformity of 1549 contained two relevant provisos, which regulated the status of Latin more particularly:⁴³

42 There is an extensive treatment of the liturgical scene in England in May 1551 (and a statement that the new arrangements have not been put into effect in Ireland) in the report of Barraro, the Venetian ambassador: see *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, v (1534-1554), [1873] p. 347.

43 2 & 3 Edward VI, cap. 1, printed in *The Statutes at Large from Magna Carta to the Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: 1811), ii, p. 271. The other early Acts of Uniformity, 5 & 6 Edw. VI, cap. 1, and 1 Eliz. cap. 2, are printed in the same volume at p. 297, and p. 383 respectively.

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V. Provided always, That it shall be lawful to any Man that understandeth the Greek, Latin and Hebrew Tongue, or other strange Tongue, to say and have the said Prayers heretofore specified of Mattens and Evensong in Latine, or any such Tongue, saying the same privately, as they do understand.

VI. And for the further encouraging of Learning in the Tongues in the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, to use and exercise in their common and open Prayer in their Chapels (being no Parish Churches) or other Places of Prayer, the Mattens, Evensong, Letany, and all other Prayers, (the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass, excepted) prescribed in the said Book, in Greek, Latine or Hebrew; any Thing in this present Act to the contrary notwithstanding.

It will be seen that the reformers wanted to preserve Latin in the universities, and that the extent of their disfavour to the language was the statutory prohibition on the celebration of the Communion in Latin. We may infer that their concern here was that Latin possessed some mystique that conduced to the idolatrous effect that they condemned in the mass.

These provisions of the 1549 Act of Uniformity were (and may still be) the law of England. They were never the law of Ireland, for the reason that no equivalent of the 1549 Act was introduced, and that the Irish parliament in 1560 enacted a statute that permitted the use of Latin in public worship. The first fourteen of the clauses of the Irish Act of Uniformity of 1560,⁴⁴ which is the first Irish statute on this subject, faithfully reflect the same provisions in the English Act of Uniformity of 1559, which was the third Act to deal with this subject in England. It is the fifteenth and final clause of the Irish Act that is novel, and worth quoting in full:⁴⁵

And forasmuch as in most places of this realm, there cannot be found English ministers to serve in the churches, or places appointed for common prayer, or to minister the sacraments to the people; and that if some good mean were provided, that they might use the prayer, service, and administration of the sacraments set out and established by this act, in such language as they mought best understand, the due honour of God should be thereby much advanced; and for that also, that the same may not be in their native language, as well for difficulty to get it printed, as that few in the whole realm can read the Irish letters; we do, therefore, most humbly beseech your

44 2 Eliz. (Ir.) chap. 2 (1560), *An Act for the Uniformitie of Common Prayer and Service in the Church, and the Administration of the Sacraments* [ref to English statute of 5 & 6 Edw. VI].

45 Richard Mant, *History of the Church of Ireland from the Reformation to the Revolution* (2 vols.; 1841), i, pp 260-2. For the last clause, inserted after the transmiss, see Thomas Leland, *The History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II* (3 vols; Dublin, 1814), ii, 225, note; and W.A. Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland*, ii, 304.

majesty, that with your highness's favour and royal assent it may be enacted, ordained, established, and provided, that in every such church or place, where the common minister or priest hath not the use or knowledge of the English tongue, it shall be lawful for the same common minister or priest, to say and use the mattens, even-song, celebration of the Lord's Supper, and administration of each of the sacraments, and all their common and open prayer, in the Latin tongue, in such form and order as they be mentioned and set forth in the said book established by this act, and according to the tenour of this act, and none otherwise, nor in other manner; anything before expressed and contained in this act to the contrary notwithstanding.

The form of this clause betrays that it was an addition that took its rise in the Irish Parliament. Its recitals, which mention the twin difficulties of finding English ministers to serve, and of printing a version of the Prayer Book in Irish, are revelatory. Significant too is the care taken by the draughtsman to spell out that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is included in what may be performed in Latin.

The Irish Act of Uniformity was passed in January or early February of 1560. At the same time in London a Latin translation of the Book of Common Prayer was in preparation. It may be that the clause added to the Irish Act was linked to the imminent publication of the Latin translation. This duly appeared, at the press of Reginald Wolf, 'Apud Reginaldum Volfium', under the full title *Liber precum publicarum, seu ministerii Ecclesiastice administrationis Sacramentorum, alliorumque rituum et ceremoniarum in Ecclesia Anglicana*. There is no date on the title page, but Letters Patent of Queen Elizabeth authorising the use of the book are dated 6 April 1560, which establishes that the Irish statute came first.⁴⁶ The translator was Walter Haddon, of whom there is a notice in the D.N.B. He lived from 1516 to 1572, was educated at Eton and Cambridge, made his name as a stylist in Latin prose and verse, and flourished as an LL.D. and practitioner of the civil law. Although the translation of 1560 served the needs of the two English universities and the royal schools of Eton and Winchester, the institutions mentioned in the prefixed Letters Patent, the assumption is that the translation published in London in 1560 was also intended for the Irish market. There are copies in Irish libraries, including Trinity and Marsh's.

The book printed in London in 1560 was not the first Latin translation of the Book of Common Prayer. There had been one earlier published translation, printed at Leipzig in 1551.⁴⁷ This was the work of

⁴⁶ The Irish Parliament, which sat in Christ Church, met on 12 January and was dissolved at the beginning of February (Ware, *Antiquities*, 'The Annals of Ireland, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth', p. 2) There are several copies of the 1560 work in libraries. The text is available on the internet at http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/BCP_Latin1560.htm.

⁴⁷ *Ordinatio Ecclesia, seu Ministerii Ecclesiastici in florentissimo Regno Angliae, conscripta sermone patrio. & in Latinam linguam bona fide conuersa & . . . edita, ab Alexandro Alesio Scoto. In Officina Wolfgangi Gunteri : Lipsiae, 1551. [B.L. 40 221.e.5]*

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a Scotsman, probably called Hales, but known by the Latinised version of his name, Alexander Alesius (1500-1565). According to the D.N.B., Alesius, although settled in Germany, paid several visits to England, and was employed by Cranmer to translate his liturgy for the use of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, who spoke no English, but whose views on his 'Communion Book' Cranmer desired to know. The 1560 edition, a translation of Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book of 1559, drew on this earlier translation of the 1549 Book published in Leipzig.

There does not appear to be a copy of the Leipzig book in an Irish library, but there is another distinct and fascinating clue to the use in Ireland of a Latin translation before the statute of 1560. The Calendar of Irish State Papers for 19 January 1551⁴⁸ cites a letter from St. Leger to Cecil reporting that he has 'caused the whole service of the Communion to be drawn into Latin', and that 'The city of Limerick has gladly condescended to embrace the same'. This stray reference would suggest that a manuscript translation of the Book of Common Prayer, of which nothing is otherwise known, came into existence in Ireland by dint of official encouragement in 1550/1. If that effort was linked with Limerick, it would appear to have been undertaken in the time of Bishop John Coyne (or O'Quin), who retired in April 1551. The reference is tantalising, but more cannot be said, save that the clause of 1560 authorising the use of Latin looks as if it may have had a pre-history.

Evidence of the holding of services according to the Latin version of the Prayer Book is not extensive, but there is one good source: a letter written to Walsingham on 26 October 1587 by a visiting English lawyer, Andrew Trollope.⁴⁹ The letter is generally informative about the state of the church, and is worth quoting at length, even though it is only towards the end that we find the desired confirmation that Queen Elizabeth's Latin Prayer Book was in use.

I have herein, without art or method, briefly bewrayed such things as I find amiss in this Realm, and decyphered the causes thereof. As first:- There is no divine service in the country, that all the churches in the country are clean down, ruinous and in great decay, and in those in cities and in walled towns is overseldom any service said,

48 Cal. S.P. Ire., 1509-73, p. 110 Sentleger to Cecil, 19 January 1551. See W.A. Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland*, ii, 260. I was first alerted to this reference in A.P. Pollard, *The History of England from the accession of Edward VI to the death of Elizabeth (1547-1603)*, (1910), pp 420-1, who wrote:

Sir Anthony St. Leger was instructed to enforce the first Book of Common Prayer, which was, however, to be translated into Latin and into Irish for those who did not understand the English tongue. The Irish version was delayed, but Limerick and other towns expressed their readiness to use the Latin form. St. Leger himself was a moderate man, opposed alike to the catholicism of the Primate Dowdall, who was deprived for recusancy in 1551, and to the protestantism of Archbishop Browne of Dublin and of Bishop Staples of Meath, and still more to the fanaticism of Bale, who in 1552 was made bishop of Ossory.

49 The letter is SP 63/131, no. 64. It is happily printed in full in W. Maziere Brady, *State Papers concerning the Irish Church in the time of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1868), p. 117. Summary only in Cal. S.P. Ire. 1586-8, p. 428.

and yet that negligently repaired unto. Here are also above thirty bishopricks and not seven bishops able to preach; and yet, those which be, by making of long leases, reserving small rents, and sundry sinister devices, so much impair their [p. 118] sees, as, if they be suffered, all the bishopricks in Ireland, within few years, will not yield sufficient maintenance for one man worthy of this calling. The ordinaries and patrons here have so ordered the matter as most ministers are stipendiary men, and few have £5 a year to live on—the most not above 53s 4d. In truth, such they are as deserve not living or to live. For they will not be accounted ministers but Priests. They will have no wives. If they would stay there it were well: but they will have Harlots which they make believe that it is no sin to live and lie with them and bear them children. But if they marry them they are damned. And with long experience and some extraordinary trial of these fellows, I cannot find out whether the most of them love lewd women, cards, dice, or drink, best. And when they must of necessity go to church, they carry with them a book in Latin of the Common Prayer set forth and allowed by her Majesty. But they can read little or nothing of it or can well read it, but they tell the people a Tale of our Lady or St. Patrick or some other saint, horrible to be spoken or heard, and intolerable to be suffered, and do all they may to dissuade and allure the people from God and their prince, and their due obedience to them both, and persuade them to the Devil the Pope.

The historian J.B. Black, commenting on the state of Ireland in the sixteenth century, discerned ‘a kind of ecclesiastical dyarchy ... a protestant state church functioning in the obedient areas, and a papal church in all the rest of Ireland’, but neither exercising much influence over the people. Consistently with the impression given by the letter just quoted, he adds ‘Nor were the prospects of the former sensibly improved by the concession that Latin might be used in the liturgy instead of English’.⁵⁰ Archbishop McAdoo described the decision to sanction a Latin translation of the Prayer Book as a ‘fantastic expedient’.⁵¹

By way of a digression on the subject of Latin, attention may be drawn to an observation inspired by a comparison of the English of Cranmer’s collects with the Latin of their precursors. A.F. Pollard, author of a volume in what is now a forgotten series called *The Political History of England*, remarked that ‘many of the prayers and collects are translations,

50 John Bennett Black (1883–1964), *The Reign of Elizabeth* (2nd edition, Oxford, 1959), p. 467. The passage continues ‘or the subsequent publication of a catechism (1571) and certain articles in Erse 1566’.

51 H.R. McAdoo, ‘The Irish Translations of the Book of Common Prayer’, in *Éigse: a journal of Irish studies*, vol. ii (1940), 250–7, at p. 252.

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but they achieve the rare distinction of being superior to the originals'.⁵² Making the translation superior to the original was Cranmer's genius. Archbishop McAdoo instanced the Collect for the 6th Sunday after Trinity, where he admired Cranmer's translation of *bona invisibilia* as 'such good things as pass man's understanding'.

The Prayer Book in Irish

As long ago as 1550 Sir Anthony St. Leger had been instructed to arrange for services to be said in Irish where the people spoke only Irish.⁵³ His successor, Sir James Crofts, received similar instructions. We know from the text of the Irish Act of Uniformity of 1560 that the Earl of Sussex was wrestling with the problem of procuring a supply of Irish type. A decade later, there is at last a sign of progress, for we learn from Ware's *Annals* for 1571:⁵⁴

This Year the Irish Characters for Printing were first brought into this Kingdom, by Nicholas Walsh, Chancellor of St. Patrick's in Dublin, and John Kerne, then Treasurer of the same; and it was Ordered that the Prayers of the Church should be Printed in that Character and Language, and a Church set part in the chief Town of every Diocese, where they were to be Read, and a Sermon Preached to the common People, which was Instrumental to Convert many of the Ignorant sort in those Days.

This entry is misleading. While the Prayers of the Church may have been ordered to be printed in the newly-arrived Irish type, and an edition may have been contemplated by the group in St. Patrick's Cathedral that had the press, the only book known to have been printed in 1571 was the previously-mentioned Alphabet and Catechism known as the *Aibidil*.⁵⁵ There are indications that work on a translation of the Book of Common Prayer was undertaken in 1575 by Nehemiah Donnellan, later Archbishop of Tuam (1595-1609);⁵⁶ but it was William Daniel, his

52 A.F. Pollard, *The History of England from the accession of Edward VI to the death of Elizabeth* (1547-1603) (London, 1910), p. 23:

'the draft Book of Common Prayer ... was to all intents and purposes the work of Cranmer, and little in it seems to have challenged opposition except its treatment of the mass.'

p. 24. 'Cranmer accomplished two great things, the prayer book and his final recantation; many of the prayers and collects are translations, but they achieve the rare distinction of being superior to the originals. As a vehicle of devotion the English language reached its climax in the Book of Common Prayer; and three and a half centuries after its composition the rhythmic cadence of its phrases charms a wider circle than the communion of the English church.'

53 Cal. S.P. Ireland, Edw. VI, ii, pp 54 and 57. W.A. Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland*, ii, p. 257.

54 Ware, *Antiquities*, 'The Annals of Ireland, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth', p. 15.

55 Ware, *Antiquities* (Dublin, 1705), 'The First Book of Irish Writers', pp 25-6.

56 H.R. McAdoo, 'The Irish Translations of the Book of Common Prayer', in *Éigse: a journal of Irish studies*, vol. ii (1940), pp 250-7, at p. 252. Donnellan is mentioned in a Privy Seal letter of 24 May 1575 because (quoting Olden) 'he had taken great pains in translating and putting to the press the Communion Book and New Testament in the Irish Language which Queen Elizabeth greatly approved of'.

successor (1609-28) as Archbishop, to whom, much later, the honour fell of bringing out the first edition of the Prayer Book in Irish.

The publication so long in contemplation finally occurred in 1609. The title page is dated 1608, but William Daniel's preface, signed 'Will. Tuamensis' is dated 'from my House in Saint Patricks Close Dublin the XX. of October. 1609.' The printer was Frankton, or, as he styled himself, Seón Francke. *Príontóir an Ríogh an Eirinn*'. The 1609 book is an attractive, largish quarto. The type (once one has worked out what the letters represent) is excellent; and the pages are generously spaced. There are red letters on the title page and for the feast days in the calendar, and the royal arms and the arms of Sir Arthur Chichester are decorative features. The preface, which is all of the work that is in English, is dedicated to Sir Arthur Chichester, the Lord Deputy, on whom Daniel confers the accolade of being truly religious. The language of the preface, of which some extracts follow, is pleasingly quaint, and reveals that the Reformation had an honest admirer in William Daniel:

The blessed Trinity hath already founded a College upon our Easterne shore [viz. Trinity College, Dublin], wherein learning and Religion begins to flouish, and (rising with the Sunne) to spred the beames thereof already to some partes ...

It pleased your Lordship to impose vpon my selfe the burden of translating the booke of common prayer, (the liturgy of the famous Church of England) into the mother tongue (for the comfort of the meere Irish Churches) to the end that the ignorant may understand, how grosely they are abused by their blind malicious guides, which beare them in hand that our diuine seruice is nothing else, but the seruice of the Devill. my good Lord I was as willing to vndergoe this burden, for the good of the Church, as your lordship was zealous to commaund the same.

And hauing translated the booke, I followed it to the Presse with ielousy, and daiely attendance, to see it perfected, payned as a woman in trauell desirous to be deliured. Being now perfected with much difficulty, I present and dedicate the same to your honorable Lordship, as to the lawfull Father thereof: a better pledge of mine intire affection I can not present, and could I present a better, I would in bounden duty present it to your Lordship. Beseeching the same that you will be pleased to accept thereof as of your little Benjamin, the sonne of your right hand, the rather because it hath been to the mother (for the space of two yeares) Benony, the sonne of her sorow. And haung imbraced it, I humbly pray your honorable Lordship to send it abroad into the Country Churches, together with

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the elder brother the new testament, to be fostered and fomented; Gods blessing & mine be with them. If any ignorant or malicious malcontent will barke at them as dogges at the mooneshine, this shalbe my preface to them for the present, *Hominibus scribimus non canibus.* ...

In 1940, when Archbishop McAdoo wrote about the Irish translations of the Book of Common Prayer, it was his view that Daniel's translation was truly idiomatic.⁵⁷ He called it 'the best translation of the Prayer Book, far surpassing that [Richardson's] of 1712'. He noted that Daniel had translated New Testament passages from the Greek. There were shortcomings attributable to the want in Daniel's time of a translation of the Old Testament – i.e., no Old Testament lessons in the Lectionary, and no Psalter; there was no Ordinal (not that an Ordinal would have been put to use); and the calendar had been somewhat edited.⁵⁸ Where a word with theological nuances arose for translation, Daniel followed the course that would still find widest acceptance in the Church of Ireland. He has *minisdir* (rather than *sagart*) for priest; and *comhchoidchion* (universal) for 'catholic'. In these choices he would be followed, a century later, by the German translator of the Dublin-printed Book of Common Prayer of 1710, who used *Prediger* for both minister and priest. In the Creed he translated 'the holy Catholick Church' as 'der wahre christliche Glaube', and in the Litany 'This is the Catholick Faith' with 'Das ist der rechte Christliche Glaube', in both cases studiously avoiding the good German word *katholisch*.

The vicissitudes of the Prayer Book in the first half of the seventeenth century

The Book translated by Daniel was the King James version of 1604, notable for the prefixing of the king's wordy Declaration on Uniformity, a document which Daniel had to translate. The same preface appears in the two English versions of the Prayer Book published in Dublin in 1621 and 1637. Seeing King James's hand in the work is a reminder that our story has now reached the seventeenth century, and the reign of the Stuarts. The cause of the Prayer Book, as of the monarchy, is about to suffer a disaster from which Providence will rescue both at the Restoration, leading to the sunlit uplands of 1662.

57 He instanced these comparative translations: - for 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me', *Ná biodh aon ndia eile agat achd mise amháin* [Daniel], and *Ní bhiaidh dee ar bith eile achd mise agad* [Richardson]; and for 'He suffered and was buried', *do fhulaing an pháis agus do h-adhlaiceadh* [Daniel: (in the creed)], and *D'fhulaing sé agus do h-adhlaiceadh é* [Richardson].

58 McAdoo notes: 'Erased from the calendar were all festivals for which there were not special services in the Liturgy'.

In the British Library catalogue under Common Prayer, where there are numerous pages of entries covering thousands of editions in many languages, it will be found that the Library possesses no copy of any edition printed between 1642 and 1660. It is, of course, no mystery why this should be so; but the point to be made is that a fall-off in demand for prayer books was no mere incidental feature of a time of domestic turbulence. While the troubles of the mid-seventeenth century were about more than the liturgy, there was no element more central to the struggle than the dispute over the Prayer Book. The case can be made that King Charles might not have gone down the road to martyrdom if in 1637 he and Archbishop Laud had had the wisdom to desist from seeking to impose the Prayer Book on Scotland. It was that attempt which provoked the Scottish Covenant and the Bishops' Wars, caused the impoverishment of the King that necessitated the calling of a parliament, and led to that humiliation of royal power in England that encouraged rebellion in Ireland. It goes without saying that the Irish rebellion of 1641, which undid the Protestant Interest in the greater part of the island, was not good for the cause of the Prayer Book. At Kilkenny, the capital of the Catholic Confederacy, we learn from a deponent called James Benn, that Bibles and Prayer Books in the shops were used to wrap up soap, candles and other wares.⁵⁹

The unhappiest side of the matter is that the greater threat to the Prayer Book in these years came not from the Roman Catholics but from the Puritans. In March 1645, Parliament in England had published its *Directory for the Public Worship of God* and prohibited the use of the Book of Common Prayer.⁶⁰ In Ireland the Parliament was at that date supplying armies in Ulster and Munster, but there is no evidence that Parliament then sought to interfere with Irish ecclesiastical arrangements in the parts of the country where it had influence. The assumption is that the Prayer Book remained in use in the parish churches of the Munster towns, where Lord Inchiquin commanded, and also in Ulster, although in their quarters in Antrim and Down the Scots and Sir John Clotworthy presumably worshipped under ministers who had taken the Covenant.

Dublin was the citadel of royalist Ireland, and the refuge of the clergy of the country at large; but, with the collapse of the king's cause in England, and in the face of pressure from the Kilkenny Confederates and Owen Roe O'Neill, the Duke of Ormond felt obliged in the spring of 1647 to agree terms for the hand-over of Dublin to the Parliament.

59 Mary A. Hickson, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century; or the Massacres of 1641-1642* (1884), ii, p. 75, quoted in W.A. Phillips (ed), *History of the Church of Ireland*, iii, p. 79.

60 A / DIRECTORY / For the Publique / Vvorship of God / Throughout the Three KINGDOMS / OF England, Scotland and Ireland. / Together with an Ordinance of Parliament for the taking away / of the Book / OF / COMMON PRAYER / AND / For establishing and observing of this present Directory throughout the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales / Die Jovis, 13. Martii. 1644. / Ordered by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, That this Ordinance and / Directory be forthwith printed and published.

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These terms, dated 18th June and signed on 19th June,⁶¹ were silent as to the future religious order. Because the hand-over was to a degree amicable, and because the Parliament's governor of Dublin, Colonel Michael Jones, was a bishop's son,⁶² and a bishop's brother,⁶³ the clergy may well have had no inkling that the Parliament would so promptly act to impose the *Directory*, and prohibit the use of the Prayer Book; but this is what happened. Dublin had no sooner been handed over to Colonel Jones than the blow fell. On 20 June 1647 Sir James Ware's marginal note reads: 'The Common-Prayer Prohibited by Proclamation'.⁶⁴ What happened next was that the Dublin clergy absented themselves from their pulpits on two successive Sundays, 27 June and 3 July, thereby effectively going on strike. A strike by clergymen against an ideological régime with a battle-hardened military leadership, such as was the Honourable Committee at Derby House, was ill-calculated to succeed, and so it proved. When Sir James Ware, author of the *Annals*, who was in London as a hostage for the handover of Dublin, pleaded for the Prayer Book, he was curtly told that he was a hostage and not a negotiator.

The Declaration of the Protestant Clergy of Dublin, 1647

The story of the Prayer Book in 1647 would be wholly bleak were it not for a spirited act of literary defiance by the clergy of Dublin,⁶⁵ an act that is marked by an entry in a library catalogue. There is a rare pamphlet, dated 9th July 1647, with a harp and crown on the title page, but with no name of a printer or place of publication. The British Library catalogue assumes that it was published in London: but the circumstances that the document was a production of the moment, arising from events in Dublin, six days' travelling time from London; that a harp and crown device adorns the title page; and that the Marquess of Ormond, who was still (until 28 July) in residence in Dublin Castle, and would have had the motive and authority to encourage the government printer to produce the work, suggest that the pamphlet deserves to be added to the list of putative Dublin printings of the seventeenth century. The title page reads:

61 Printed in Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, ii, 137-40, Appendix XXXVIII. The signatories for the Parliament were Arthur Annesley, Sir Robert King, Sir Robert Meredith, Colonel John Moore, and Colonel Michael Jones.

62 Lewis Jones (?1550-1646), of Killaloe.

63 Henry Jones (1605-82), of Clogher (1645) and Meath (1661). Scoutmaster General under the Commonwealth.

64 Ware, *Antiquities*, 'Gesta Hibernorum', p. 181. See also H.M.C. Egmont, i (1905), p. 425. Val. Savage to Sir Philip Percivall, from Dublin, 7 July 1647. Postscript. 'I had almost forgot to acquaint [you] that all our divines are silenced for not accepting the *Directory*, and are upon departing the kingdom. Those that were never esteemed for any parts they had are preferred. This the protestants here do much take to heart. [The word protestant is here (as often, at this period and later) used to denote the Church party in distinction to the Puritans.]

65 Sir Richard Cox (*Hibernia Anglicana*, ii, 195), calls it 'an excellent Petition or Declaration from the Episcopal Clergy, to be found at large. Burlace, Appendix 94.'

Faith & Worship 88

A
DECLARATION
OF THE
Protestant Clergie
Of the City of
DUBLIN,
Shewing the Reasons why they cannot
consent to the taking away of the Book of
Common Prayer, and comply with the Directory.
Presented
To the Honourable Commissioners for the
Parliament of England,
July 9. 1647.
[harp and crown]
Printed in the Yeere 1647.⁶⁶

In form a petition addressed 'To the Honourable Commissioners for the Parliament of England', the pamphlet has eighteen signatories, headed by 'Ed. Laonensis'. This was Edward Parry, the Treasurer of Christ Church who had recently been consecrated as Bishop of Killaloe. Ware characterised him as 'a Man of Acute Wit and honest Disposition'.⁶⁷

Ed. Laonensis.	Hen. Hall.	Ioan. Creighton, Can.
Jer. Margetson	Ios. War.	Edw. Syng.
Ben. Culme.	Io. Brookbank.	Robt. Dickson.
Ambr. Aungier.	Gilbert Deane.	Rand. Ince.
Ja. Sybald.	Dud. Boswell.	Henry Byrch.
Godf. Rhodes.	Rob. Parry.	Rich. Powell.

A production of considerable spirit, the petition is well reasoned and confidently expressed. These samples give the flavour of its arguments:

... we see and know, that the Protestants of this City, for the most part, are much grieved in heart for the want of the daily accustomed Service of God in the two Cathedralls, and the Parish Churches of this City, and for their late being deprived of us and our Ministry, which they have long enjoyed

... we cannot consent with a good conscience to the discontinuance of the Book of Common-Prayer, & receiving the Directory in lieu

⁶⁶ The copy in the British Library is at E.399 (27). The National Library of Ireland's copy [Lough Fea Pamphlets, vol. x, no. 216. Microfiche 8], came from the library at Lough Fee, the Irish seat of the Shirley family. Sir Robert Shirley (1627-56), 13th Baron Ferrers, was a notable royalist and high churchman, as well as a protector of displaced clergy, to whom he afforded refuge at Staunton Harold, his house in Leicestershire.

⁶⁷ Ware, *Antiquities*, 'A Commentary of the Prelates of Ireland', sub Killaloe, p. 48. Edward Parry died of the plague in Dublin on 20 July 1650, and is buried in St. Audoen's.

The Early History of the Book of Common Prayer in Ireland, 1551-1647

thereof, or any other private forme of publike service,

III. As the Act of Parliament 2. Eliz. still in force in this Kingdome, expressly commands the use of this Book of Common-Prayer, so it forbids Common-Prayer or Administration of the Sacraments otherwise or after any other manner or forme, with any private dispensation whereof we cannot comply, we being bound to the obedience thereof, not only for fear of penalty, but by conscience sake. Rom. 13.5.

III. Whereas the Booke of Common-Prayer is one maine part of the Reformation established in the Churches of England and Ireland, the laying aside thereof and the receiving of the Directory or any other forme would be, we conceive (considering the present state and circumstances of things) a departing in this from the Communion of the Church of England and Ireland.

... the Reformed Church of Ireland, under the Government of our dread Sovereigne the King, is and ever was reputed a free Nationall Church, and not subordinate unto or depending upon the convocation of any other Church ... Should wee therefore receive or admit of any other forme, without the Authority of this Church, we should be held and esteemed before God and the world, guilty of unconscionably betraying the Liberty of the free Nationall Church of Ireland.

A chapter that began with a rare book of 1551 now ends with another one of 1647. At the time, it was in vain that Bishop Parry and his seventeen co-signatories bade defiance to the Puritans; yet, looking at this final sample of their prose, the sentiments of the Dublin clergy of 1647 still strike a resonant chord:

The Book of Common-Prayer hath been in use in Ireland from the beginning of the Reformation, we have preached for it, and recommended it to the people as a forme of Gods publike Worship and Service: the people of God in this City for the most part, generally doe love it, have been edified by it, and are loath to part from it, and earnestly desire the continuance of it.

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Ashes in a Time of Plague

SAMUEL L. BRAY

‘Thy mercy is over all thy works, and therefore also over us, who alas by our sins have defaced thy Workmanship, but thou canst repair as well as make; and thy mercy is equal to thy might.’—Thomas Comber¹

Earlier this year, Ash Wednesday came and went without most Americans thinking of the coronavirus. Soon afterwards it became clear that the coronavirus was spreading in the United States, and that it was a disease of striking ferocity. But this next Ash Wednesday will be different. It will be the first one in a society that has been changed by the pandemic.

Before it comes, we can expect to hear many times that the imposition of ashes is especially appropriate now, because it reminds us of our mortality. ‘For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’

But for some, the ashes may feel out of place. If the toll this winter continues to be grim, we will not need to remember that we are dust. We will remember. We are reminded daily of our mortality by this plague.

There is something to both of these perspectives. Whatever view one takes, this year is likely to feel different. Amid all the dislocation of our usual practices, this Ash Wednesday gives a chance to reconsider what the day is for.

Among Anglicans, many probably assume that ashes on Ash Wednesday have always been part of our tradition. But that assumption would be misplaced. For hundreds of years after the Reformation the imposition of ashes was unheard of in any service of the Church of England or her daughter churches, and none of the prayer books through these centuries make any room for the practice. The first prayer book to authorize imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, ‘after a four-hundred-year absence from official Anglican rites,’² was the Episcopal Church’s *Book of Common Prayer 1979*.³

1 Thomas Comber, *The Occasional Offices of Matrimony, Visitation of the Sick, Burial of the Dead, Church of Women and the Communion* (1679), pp. 575-576.

2 Ruth A. Meyers, Review, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 79, no. 3 (September 2010), at p. 305 (reviewing Sweeney, *An Ecofeminist Perspective on Ash Wednesday and Lent*).

3 The optional prayer over the ashes in the BCP 1979 ‘is the first such prayer to appear in any authorized Anglican prayer book since the days of medieval Anglicanism.’ Sylvia A. Sweeney, *An Ecofeminist Perspective on Ash Wednesday and Lent* (Peter Lang, 2010), p. 130.

Ash Wednesday is a major day in the classic edition of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP 1662). But in the Prayer Book's special service for Ash Wednesday, there are no ashes. How can it be Ash Wednesday without ashes?

This essay considers that question. There is much it will not do. This essay will not argue that imposition of ashes is inherently good or bad; it will not say that all churches, or none, should use this medieval practice. It will not situate the absence of ashes within the larger theology of ceremony reflected in the Anglican Formularies—a theology which constantly pushes back on any notion that grace is conveyed automatically without faith, and which emphasizes decency, edification, minimalism, antiquity, and the authority of the church.⁴ Nor will this essay take up the possible socio-cultural and technological causes for the late modern surge in this practice among Protestants in the United States, including the curious fact that the imposition of ashes appears so often in stock photos of liturgical worship.

Instead, this essay will attempt something more modest. I will describe the structure of a Prayer Book Ash Wednesday, with particular attention to one service at the heart of that day. That service holds the clue to why there are no ashes in a Prayer Book Ash Wednesday. (In this essay, 'Prayer Book' refers to the BCP 1662.)

You might find this alternative compelling. Or you might not. But for those who are already burdened with ever-present reminders of our vulnerability, a Prayer Book Ash Wednesday may be the way of peace.

The distinctiveness of Ash Wednesday in the prayer book

The title of this day is 'The First Day of Lent commonly called Ash Wednesday.'⁵ It is distinctive in the Prayer Book in several ways.

First, it is the only day in the entire year which receives its own special service. That service is called 'The Commination'—a word derived from a Latin word for a 'threatening.' If a church used the full complement of Ash Wednesday services laid out in the Prayer Book, it would have four services in the morning, one right after another: Morning Prayer, Litany, Commination, and Holy Communion (or Ante-Communion). Later in the day would be said Evening Prayer.

Second, Ash Wednesday is one of only six days in the entire year to receive proper psalms instead of the psalms that would be said in the

4 The central source is of course 'Of Ceremonies,' but the general tenor is captured in this sentence from *Saeptus Officio* (1897): 'For such is the force of simplicity that it lifts men's minds towards divine things more than a long series of ceremonies united by however good a meaning.'

5 The title dates to BCP 1549. Kenneth Stevenson suggests that 'commonly called' refers to English vernacular usage, because '[t]he tradition of the Roman Missal does not actually use the term *feria IV cinerum* ('the Wednesday of ashes') until 1474.' Kenneth W. Stevenson, 'Origins and Development of Ash Wednesday,' in *Worship: Wonderful and Sacred Mystery* (Pastoral Press, 1992), p. 178.

monthly psalm cycle. The others are preeminent days that emphasize the work of Christ: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Day, Ascension Day, and Whitsunday.⁶ The proper psalms for Ash Wednesday are quite consciously chosen so that the traditional seven penitential psalms will all be said this day: three at Morning Prayer (6, 32, 38), one in the Communion (51), and three at Evening Prayer (102, 130, 143).⁷

Third, the collect of the day for Ash Wednesday is said more often than any other proper collect in the Prayer Book.⁸ It is said from Ash Wednesday through Easter Even. (The second-most frequently said proper collect is the one that ties together the season of Advent.)

Fourth, this day has a unique connection to the opening sentences at Morning and Evening Prayer. Of those eleven sentences, more than half are read in their biblical context in the Ash Wednesday propers.⁹ Ash Wednesday might therefore be said to be the key that is supposed to unlock these sentences, which are the door to Morning and Evening Prayer as said daily throughout the entire year.

The contents of the Communion

Morning and Evening Prayer are read the same way on Ash Wednesday as on any other day (proper psalms and collect of the day excepted). The Communion service does not have a proper preface for Ash Wednesday, but it does have a proper collect, epistle, and gospel, so it is distinctive on this day. But by far the largest change to the Prayer Book pattern is the Communion, which is required for Ash Wednesday, though it may also be said at other times.¹⁰

6 Of these six days, Ash Wednesday is the only one for which there are no proper lessons, which has the effect of laying even greater stress on the psalm scheme.

7 The proper psalms for Ash Wednesday are first appointed in the 1662 revision. For discussion, see Charles Whitworth, 'The Penitential Psalms and Ash Wednesday Services in the Book of Common Prayer, 1549–1662,' *French Journal of British Studies*, XXII-1 (2017), pp. 1–9.

8 The collect is: 'Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.' Compare the Wisdom of Solomon 11:24 and Psalm 51:10.

9 Psalm 51:3, 9, and 17 are read in the psalm in the Communion. Joel 2:13 is in the reading for the epistle at Holy Communion (or Ante-Communion). Psalm 6:1 is in a proper psalm at Morning Prayer, while Psalm 143:2 is in a proper psalm at Evening Prayer. Still another sentence is drawn from the preaching of John the Baptist (St. Matthew 3:2), which is one source for the homily in the Communion—a connection that Lancelot Andrewes draws out in the peroration of his sermon on Ash Wednesday, February 26, 1623.

10 Archbishop Grindal encouraged the use of the Communion not just before Lent but before Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Brian Cummings, ed., OUP, 2011), p. 744. Identical or similar injunctions were issued during Elizabeth's reign by the bishops of Chichester, Hereford, Lincoln, and London. Donald Jay Martin, *Ash Wednesday in Tudor England: A Study of Liturgical Revision in Context* (Dissertation Submitted to the University of Notre Dame, Department of Theology, January 1978), pp. 137–138. Martin notes that Abp. Grindal's dates for the saying of the Communion 'merely followed the pattern of the traditional dates for the recital of the

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The Communion service is the heart of Ash Wednesday in the Prayer Book. Its point is to bring the worshipper to a place of repentant prayer—not pretending, not dissembling, but open, true, and earnest repentance. To achieve that goal, the service has the following elements:

- a brief exhortation about the discipline of penance
- a series of curses, to which the people respond ‘Amen’
- a pre-written homily
- Psalm 51
- the Kyrie
- the Lord’s Prayer
- versicles and responses
- two prayers
- an anthem
- the peace

The very last element was added in the 1662 revision, but almost every other word of the service comes from Archbishop Cranmer’s first Book of Common Prayer (1549). Some parts were taken by Cranmer directly from the Sarum Rite, one of the service books used before the Reformation. Other parts were new compositions. Others were free adaptations.

As Sylvia Sweeney has aptly described it, Cranmer’s service was ‘developed in . . . appreciation for the beauty of the Sarum Rite for Ash Wednesday and its ancient derivatives,’ while also being ‘rearticulated . . . in the firm conviction of Reformation principles.’¹¹ This service is ‘the basic frame for what would continue to be the Anglican Communion’s rite for Ash Wednesday until the twentieth century.’¹²

The best way to understand the structure of the Communion service is by thinking about the three-part movement that J.I. Packer¹³ and Gavin Dunbar¹⁴ have used in their expositions of the BCP 1662 services. At the start of his richly insightful exposition of the Prayer Book Communion service, Dunbar notes: ‘Inwardly, God’s grace elicits a triad of human

General Sentence [of excommunication] as codified by Archbishop Chicheley in 1435.’ Id. at p. 138.

11 Sweeney, at p. 107; see Martin, at p. 121 (‘The entire penitential service exhibits some of the characteristic techniques and sensitivities of the English liturgical revisers. Working out of intimate familiarity with the medieval traditions, they consolidated and abridged many of the familiar elements into a new synthesis. At the same time, the selection and composition of texts was constantly guided by the principle of the primacy of the scriptures, which was a cardinal point for reformers of every hue.’).

12 Sweeney, at p. 107.

13 J.I. Packer, *The Gospel in the Prayer Book* (1966).

14 Gavin Dunbar, ‘Like Eagles in this Life: A Theological Reflection on “The Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion” in the Prayer Books of 1559 and 1662,’ in *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present, and Future* (Prudence Dailey, ed., Continuum, 2011). Sylvia Sweeney also applies this triad to the Communion, though with a particular focus on the propers in the Communion service. Sweeney, at pp. 110-111.

responses whereby the grace revealed in Christ, and in the Gospel, is appropriated: repentance, faith, and those good works (especially of love), done in obedience to the Commandments, which are the fruits of a living faith, and which testify to gratitude for this grace.’¹⁵ The parts of this triad are given various labels, but whichever ones are used, ‘by the mid-sixteenth century, this triad was a commonplace of Protestant orthodoxy.’¹⁶ The labels used here are the alliterative *guilt, grace, and gratitude*.

The Commination: the first movement

The Commination service has three movements. The first consists of the exhortation, curses, and homily. This movement is from guilt to grace. But make no mistake, it is overwhelmingly about guilt.

The exhortation begins by noting the disciplines of the early Church, and it offers as a substitute a series of curses, taken largely from Deuteronomy 27. That itself will be surprising to readers today, but even more surprising may be what comes next: the congregation is instructed that after each of the curses it should answer ‘Amen’—exactly as the people of Israel were instructed in Deuteronomy 27. The point of these affirmations, says the exhortation, is to ‘be moved to earnest and true repentance.’

Next come the curses themselves (especially taken from Deut. 27:15-26¹⁷). There are ten, with some overlap and correspondence with the Ten Commandments. But in the ten curses there is less emphasis on worship and more on sins against our neighbours, and especially against those who are weak. ‘Cursed is he that maketh the blind to go out of his way,’ says the priest. ‘Amen,’ say the people. ‘Cursed is he that perverteth the judgement of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.’ Again, ‘Amen.’ There is a denunciation of pride and trust in human strength, recalling our Lord’s first great commandment: ‘Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord.’¹⁸

Here there is no hint of grace. Not even the gracious notes in the Ten Commandments are expressly sounded—there is no ‘who brought thee out of the land of Egypt,’ no ‘mercy unto thousands,’ no act of God hallowing the seventh day. It is all curses all the time, with the only breaks being the insistent ratification by the people themselves: ‘Amen.’¹⁹

15 Dunbar, at p. 86.

16 Id. at p. 87.

17 On the omissions from Deuteronomy 27 and the additions from elsewhere in the Scriptures, see Liam Beadle, ‘No Imposition: The Commination and Lent,’ *Faith & Worship* (Lent 2018), pp. 16-30, at p. 20-21.

18 Compare Sirach 10:12, a favorite verse of St. Augustine: ‘The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker.’

19 F. D. Maurice described the curses this way: ‘The Service draws no distinctions, enters into no

After the exhortation and the curses comes the homily. It is a pre-written mini-sermon, one of several in the Prayer book, and has been aptly called ‘evangelistic.’²⁰ It is a collection of dozens of biblical phrases, quotations, and allusions.²¹ In the first part of the homily, God’s ‘dreadful judgement’ is said to be ‘hanging over our heads and always ready to fall upon us’—there are anticipations of the famous sermon of Jonathan Edwards. Biblical imagery is pervasive. It is a kaleidoscope of pictures of judgment, many from the prophets, but also from John the Baptist and from Jesus. Scenes of judgment in the Old Testament are juxtaposed with ones in the New. Most chilling of all, perhaps, is an allusion to the closing of the door of the ark: ‘Then shall it be too late to knock, when the door shall be shut; and too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time of justice.’

By this point there has been a truckload of guilt: the exhortation to penance, the ten curses, and the first half of a homily that is holding before the congregation all the most vivid and arresting pictures and sounds of doom that can be collected out of the entire Bible.

Then comes a pivot: ‘Therefore.’

What follows is the second half of the homily, and it is a call to repentance grounded not in the extremity of divine judgment but the extravagance of divine mercy. Now we hear that it is ‘the day of salvation,’ that ‘we have the light’ and that in this light we see ‘the goodness of God’ and ‘his endless pity,’ which ‘promiseth us forgiveness of that which is past, if with a perfect and true heart we return unto him.’ Here the imagery is a bit less dramatic—Dante and Milton could attest that it is easier to hold the reader’s attention with the infernal than the celestial. Yet there are still images, such as scarlet sins becoming white as snow, an easy yoke and a light burden.

Yet another change is that we are not alone. In the first half of the homily, we are outside—outside the ark, exposed to divine judgment if we will not enter in. In the second half of the homily, God is calling to

refinements; it pronounces, in the words of God’s law, that he who takes any one of these courses, whatever his motives be for taking it, whatever the pleas to his conscience may be for it, whatever contrivances he may use not to bring his doings exactly within the letter of the prohibition, does yet, assuredly, put himself at a distance from God, and choose another service than His. He may fancy the molten image may promote his devotion; he may have much provocation to curse his father or mother; he may find it highly convenient to his own interest, and he thinks, to the public interest, to remove his neighbour’s landmarks; he may smite his neighbour secretly with the tongue or the pen, and not with the sword; he may propose to himself most religious ends in all these acts; every one of them may be done for the sake of advancing some principle which he believes to be necessary, or denouncing some error which he believes to be fatal. The result is the same: he is at war with the righteousness of the universe, he is out of fellowship with the living and true God.’ Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Church a Family: Twelve Sermons on the Occasional Services of the Prayer-Book* (Parker: 1850), pp. 194–195.

²⁰ Beadle, at p. 21.

²¹ Donald Jay Martin notes that the homily’s ‘structure was similar to the scriptural *catenae* which were elaborated during the late patristic era.’ Martin, at p. 119.

us. Now we have ‘an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.’ He is the one ‘wounded for our offences, and smitten for our wickedness.’

This is no call to human passivity, however, and the verbs ring the changes on the repentance to which the people are called: *take heed, believe, walk, turn, cast away, make,*²² *turn, return, come, submit, walk, take, follow, be ordered, seek, serve.* This movement toward God should not be a faltering step in doubtful hope. We can stride towards him in sure confidence, for he ‘is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners,’ and we can ‘assur[e] ourselves that he is ready to receive and most willing to pardon us.’

As Marion Hatchett recognized, this is ‘a homily proclaiming forgiveness to the repentant.’²³ Or, as Liam Beadle wrote in the journal of the English Prayer Book Society, *Faith & Worship*, ‘This is preaching of a singular quality. Here, in the pages of the Book of Common Prayer, is a sermon of the sort George Whitefield, William Grimshaw, and Henry Venn would go on to preach in the eighteenth century, and which would bring countless people in England to a living faith in Jesus Christ.’²⁴

This evenly balanced homily—judgement and mercy, guilt and grace—comes to a stirring culmination. If we do this, namely repent and believe, then ‘Christ will deliver us from the curse of the law.’ When the curses were read, the people said ‘Amen,’ but that is not the last word. In Christ, those curses are a broken chain, an escaped prison, a sprung trap.²⁵

One last image is summoned up in the homily—the day of judgment when some are set on the left hand and some on the right hand, the latter being given God’s ‘gracious benediction’ and a command ‘to

22 *Make* appears in the homily in a quotation from Ezekiel 36, as God says to man, ‘Make you new hearts and a new spirit.’ It appears again in the collect of the day, as man says to God: ‘Create and make in us new and contrite hearts.’

23 Marion J. Hatchett, ‘An Introduction to Liturgical Study,’ *St. Luke’s Journal of Theology* (1972), at p. 101.

24 Beadle, at p. 21. Many similar statements could be added. For example, Sylvia Sweeny writes: ‘The exhortation ends with a clear affirmation of God’s willingness to forgive the penitent in reponse to their repentance, through Christ’s advocacy, and as a result of the gracious, forgiving nature of the loving creator.’ Sweeny, at p. 109. Alfred Barry wrote that the exhortation concludes with ‘the Gospel call to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Advocate, as ready to receive and willing to pardon, calling us to take His yoke upon us and find rest, promising us a place on His right hand and his blessing at the Great Day.’ Alfred Barry, *The Teacher’s Prayer Book* (1882), p. 173. Thomas Comber wrote: ‘The words of this pious and pathetic discourse are generally the very words of Scripture, that so they may be more regarded coming from the mouth of God himself. The design of them is effectually to apply the foregoing threatenings in order to the Conversion of Sinners.’ Comber, at pp. 554-555. Donald Jay Martin wrote: ‘The first part developed the themes of divine judgment and retribution against the impenitent sinner; the second portion emphasized the abundant mercy and forgiveness which was promised to any sinner, no matter how sinful, who returned in repentance.’ Martin, at p. 120. Ashley Null has said of the whole Communion, likely with an eye on the homily, that it ‘promised relief from God’s curses to those who repented in time.’ Ashley Null, *Thomas Cranmer’s Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power to Love* (OUP, 2001), p. 241.

25 See Charles Wesley, ‘And Can It Be.’

take possession of his glorious kingdom.’ ‘Unto which,’ the minister concludes, may ‘he vouchsafe to bring us all, for his infinite mercy. Amen.’ This is the eleventh *Amen* in the service. Now at last the *Amens* for the curses are beginning to recede, like the waters after the Flood.

Here I am compelled to quote Beadle again:

If you visit the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London, you will see that they are displayed against a black background. The idea is that their splendour is more magnificent when seen in the context of darkness. The same principle applies in the Communion service. The ‘cursings’ are chilling. God’s judgement is real. The service uses graphic imagery from the Bible to communicate just how serious our predicament is: ‘O terrible voice of most just judgement, which shall be pronounced upon them, when it shall be said unto them, Go, ye cursed, into the fire everlasting, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.’ But in the context of such a terrifying prospect, the gospel makes real sense. It is not only attractive; it is absolutely necessary.²⁶

In short, the first movement of the Communion is from guilt to grace. Although the homily is balanced between these themes, the first movement as a whole is not. It strongly emphasizes judgment and guilt, and the curses are the most unmitigatedly punitive page of the entire Prayer Book. But the service is not done yet.

The Communion: the second movement

The second movement of the Communion consists of Psalm 51, and it is the emotional heart of the service: the priest dramatically moves to be among the people, the priest kneels, the clerks kneel, the people kneel, and all say the words of the psalm together, as if they were reciting a Litany but in unison.

In at least two ways this is unprecedented in the Prayer Book. First, this is the only time in any service that the priest moves, mid-service, to join the people in the nave. Second, at no other time in the entire year is a psalm said kneeling. It is a striking representation of the words of the prophet Joel from the Communion service on Ash Wednesday: ‘Gather the people; sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, and those that suck the breasts. Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar’

In terms of the guilt/grace/gratitude triad, the psalm is neatly balanced, and it moves from guilt to grace to gratitude. This can be seen by looking more closely at the psalm’s structure.

26 Beadle, at pp. 21-22.

As it appears in the Prayer Book, Psalm 51 contains three smaller cycles, or epicycles.²⁷ The first is verses 1-8. The second is verses 9-13. The third is verses 14-19.

In the first and second epicycles, the dominant note is confession of sin and a plea for forgiveness (verses 1-6, verses 9-12). Each of these epicycles ends, however, with a note of grace: either confidence in God's forgiveness (verses 7-8) or a declaration of what will be done after the penitent is forgiven (verse 13).

The emphasis shifts in the third epicycle. In verses 14-19 only the first half verse is concerned with confession. In the rest of this epicycle, the dominant note is gratitude. Here are verses 14-19:

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health; * and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, * and my mouth shall show thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee, * but thou delightest not in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; * a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion; * build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt offerings and oblations; * then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

And then, to lay further stress on this culmination in praise and thanksgiving, the priest, clerks, and people all say together the *Gloria Patri*.

Thus the second movement of the service has guilt, grace, and gratitude, all balanced, and yet it also has a strong progression. It culminates in gratitude, praise, and thanksgiving.

The Communion: the third movement

The third movement in the Communion is from the Kyrie to the conclusion. It consists of seven elements:

- the Kyrie (now for the third time in the day)
- the Lord's Prayer (now for the fourth time in the day)
- versicles
- the prayer beginning 'O Lord, we beseech thee, mercifully hear our prayers'

27 To follow the discussion in this paragraph, it would be easier to be looking at Psalm 51 as it appears in the Psalter (with verse numbers).

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- the prayer beginning ‘O most mighty God and merciful Father’
- the anthem, which begins ‘Turn thou us, O good Lord’
- the peace, which begins ‘The Lord bless us, and keep us’

This third movement, too, begins with confession: ‘Lord, have mercy upon us’; ‘And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.’ Or, in the language of the triad, guilt.

But then it shifts. In the remaining prayers, although there are requests (e.g., ‘Spare us’), the major themes are salvation and grace. There is a repeated stress on the goodness, kindness, and mercifulness of God, who can be approached with confidence by all ‘who put their trust in thee.’

The versicles are the first of these elements awash with grace that complete the service. They are taken directly from Cranmer’s medieval sources, and they largely overlap with the versicles that appear in the Solemnization of Matrimony and the Visitation of the Sick. What is distinctive in the Communion is the third pair of versicles, which call for God’s help, deliverance, and mercy. These are not pleas from those outside the ark, but from those who already know his salvation: ‘Help us, O God our Saviour.’

Next comes a collect for forgiveness, for ‘it is now time to bind up the wounds of true Penitents.’²⁸ This collect is a translation of a Latin prayer from the Ash Wednesday service in the Sarum Rite. The textual change that Archbishop Cranmer makes from the medieval prayer is to add one word before ‘hear our prayers’: *mercifully*.²⁹ There are other changes: the prayer is moved from the beginning of the service to the end, the priest and clerks have moved into the nave with the people, and the Kyrie and Lord’s Prayer have been inserted before the versicles. The cumulative effect of these choreographic and structural changes is to make this collect one of absolution.³⁰

The impression that this is an absolution is made certain by the wording of the prayer: that ‘those who confess their sins unto thee . . . by thy merciful pardon may be absolved.’ God has heard the confession of the whole body of his people and is absolving all who are penitent.

The next prayer also borrows from a prayer in the Sarum Rite, but it is more thoroughly changed. This can be seen by closely comparing the two prayers. The Sarum prayer would be said right after holy water was sprinkled upon the ashes, when they were about to be distributed. That prayer began this way: ‘O God, who desirest not the death but

28 Comber, at p. 573.

29 Cf. Vernon Staley, ed., *The Sarum Missal in English: Part I* (1911), p. 144.

30 Although one can see the Kyrie and Lord’s Prayer as operating as the confession, one could also see the confession as the initial curses affirmed by the people. On that view, the Communion service starts with confession and ends with absolution, and the movement from the one to the other is the arc of the entire service.

the repentance of sinners.’ The Prayer Book’s version instead piles high the phrases about God’s mercy and offer of salvation: ‘O most mighty God and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men and hast nothing that thou hast made, who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sin and be saved.’³¹ And because these words echo the beginning of the absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer, the worshipper is immediately reminded of the absolution.

Not only is there a powerful intensification of divine mercy, but there is also a dramatic shift in the object of the prayer. Where the Sarum prayer turns to ask God’s blessing on the ashes, the Prayer Book prayer asks God’s blessing on us.³² No longer do we ask God to ‘vouchsafe for thy lovingkindness to bless and sanctify these ashes which as a token of humility and for the obtaining of pardon, we have determined to have placed upon our heads.’³³ Instead we ask: ‘Mercifully forgive us our trespasses; receive and comfort us, who are grieved and wearied with the burden of our sins.’ In the medieval prayer, we have determined to do something. In the Prayer Book, we are in a different state: grieved, wearied, burdened, but turning to the one who will not only forgive us, but ‘receive and comfort us.’

At this point the Sarum prayer draws out the hoped-for conclusion of God blessing and sanctifying the ashes: ‘that we whom thou hast warned that we are but ashes, and who know that we shall return to the dust as the recompense of our depravity, may be mercifully found worthy to receive the pardon of all our sins and the rewards which have been promised anew to them that repent.’³⁴ Note that the last action attributed directly to God is warning.

But the Prayer Book version once again overflows with the theme of divine mercy: ‘Thy property is always to have mercy; to thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins.’³⁵ Because this is true of God—‘therefore’—we ask him to spare us, but once again we assert our relationship to him: we call him ‘good Lord’ (echoing the Litany), and we are ‘thy people, whom thou hast redeemed.’ We are ‘vile earth and miserable sinners’ (i.e., base bodies and sinners in need of mercy), but this is not pronounced as condemnation, but rather pleaded as a reason for us to be spared divine judgment. That is, we do not ask for a judgment in which

31 Here we find the ‘very same ancient phrases, rich in meaning, rich in encouragement, which form the ground-work of our petition in the Collect for the day.’ J. S. Howson, *Our Collects, Epistles, and Gospels* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), p. 29.

32 There is a parallel with the Communion service, where the Holy Spirit is invoked not on the bread and wine but on those who receive them.

33 Staley, at p. 147.

34 Staley, at p. 147.

35 The phrase ‘thee only’ is repeated from Psalm 51: ‘against thee only have I sinned.’ It is a stunning reversal, for the only one against whom our sins have been directed turns out to be the only one who forgives.

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we hope to be tried, weighed, and acquitted; instead, knowing our frailty, we say ‘enter not into judgement with us’ (echoing a sentence in the daily offices). It is God who must ‘make haste to help us in this world, that we may ever live with thee in the world to come’ (echoing a versicle in the daily offices). In other words, there is a strong shift in the Prayer Book version toward divine presence, initiative, and mercy. The ashes have disappeared, and Archbishop Cranmer has put a profound statement of the gospel in their place.³⁶

Next comes the anthem (called by that name in BCP 1549, and a favorite of early modern English composers³⁷). It is one of only two anthems provided for a special day in the Book of Common Prayer; the other is Easter Day. The anthem is composed of phrases from the Psalms and the prophets, and it is said by all the people.

The anthem begins with another assertion that God must take the initiative: ‘Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned.’ That note was caught by T.S. Eliot, who begins his poem ‘Ash Wednesday’ with a denial of self-turning: ‘Because I do not hope to turn again / Because I do not hope / Because I do not hope to turn . . .’

What remains in the anthem is an exaltation of God’s mercy. We are ‘thine heritage’ and ‘thy people, who turn to thee in weeping, fasting, and praying.’ These do not earn God’s favor—we ask for his mercy ‘through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son’ (a phrase added in the 1662 revision). And the focus is not on us: the one to whom we pray is ‘a merciful God,’ ‘full of compassion,’ ‘long-suffering,’ ‘of great pity,’ one who ‘sparest,’ one who ‘thinkest upon mercy,’ one whose ‘mercy is great.’ Twice the Litany’s description of God as ‘good Lord’ is used. And with one small phrase at the end, ‘the multitude of thy mercies,’ the anthem recalls the beginning of Psalm 51: ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.’ From the beginning of Psalm 51 (at the start of the second movement) to the end of the anthem (near the end of the third movement), God has a ‘multitude of mercies.’ He has not changed. But we have. We have arrived at a place of true, earnest, and repentant prayer. The service began with curses that we affirmed; it is ending with blessings that we receive.

Now at last we have arrived at the peace. Added to the Prayer Book in 1662, it is a perfect ending to the Communion. It is terse compared to the peace at the Communion service. It is simply: ‘The LORD bless us,

36 This sequence—absolution, then a prayer that extols the mercy of God and the good news of the gospel—matches the sequence in the Communion service, where the absolution is followed by the Comfortable Words.

37 John Morehen, ‘The English Anthem Text, 1549–1660,’ *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 117, no. 1 (1992), pp. 62–85, at p. 84.

and keep us; the LORD lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace, now and for evermore. Amen.'

The words of this peace are a blend from Numbers 6:24-26 and the first verse of the *Deus misereatur* (Psalm 67). Note that it uses the first-person plural. The priest, still kneeling among the people at the Litaney desk, does not say (with Aaron) 'The LORD bless thee,' but 'bless us.' That, too, contrasts with the benediction at the Communion. Again the corporate identity of God's people is being emphasized. Just as priest and people knelt together in contrition for sin, and just as they knelt together to receive God's absolution, so now they receive together the divine blessing.

The peace pronounced is abiding: 'peace, now and for evermore.' Only one word is left in the service, and it is the people's final Amen. Amen is the last word, not an Amen to the curses of the law, but an Amen to the blessings of the gospel.

Still, even though no more words are said, one more thing can be thought of as occupying the white space after the peace. As mentioned, the peace is partly drawn from the first verse of Psalm 67. For the worshiper who is familiar with that psalm, there is a delightful open-endedness about concluding the service with words drawn from its first verse. The mind might continue to run to the remaining verses of the psalm, which are summoned up as it were (by the figure of speech *metalepsis*):

That thy way may be known upon earth, * thy saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise thee, O God; * yea, let all the peoples praise thee.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad, * for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise thee, O God; * yea, let all the peoples praise thee.

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, * and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing.

God shall bless us, * and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

It is no accident that Psalm 67 is one of the psalms in the marriage service. Of Shakespeare's plays, someone said a play is a tragedy if it ends with death and a comedy if it ends with marriage. The Communion, which started with the bleakness of curses and divine wrath, has moved to something very different—grace, peace, peace now, peace forevermore, and with this grace and peace there are hints of the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Communion is not a tragedy.

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This culmination is even more emphatic when the Communion is followed by Holy Communion. Then we say the collect of the day, ‘Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,’ and for all right receivers there is a sacramental fulfillment.³⁸ The words of Bishop John Jewel, quoting St. John Chrysostom, are fitting as we partake of the body and blood of our Savior on Ash Wednesday: ‘For this body’s sake thou art no longer dust and ashes.’³⁹

Why no ashes in the prayer book?

It is time now to sum up. In the Communion, the first movement was from guilt to grace. The second was from guilt to grace to gratitude. The third was from guilt to grace. These movements, and their change in emphasis, can be graphically illustrated:

GUILT • grace
guilt • grace • gratitude
guilt • GRACE

The architecture of the service has repetition and progress—from guilt to grace, cursing to blessing, divine wrath to divine peace. This movement is even more pronounced when the Communion is preceded by the Litany and followed by Holy Communion.

And where are the ashes? Why were they absent from Anglican practice for centuries? The answer given here is that they simply had no place in the Ash Wednesday service of Communion.

In giving this answer, I do not mean to slight other reasons that motivated the English Reformers. For example, they were wary of blessing material objects, especially when many people saw that blessing as automatically conveying grace.⁴⁰ And they seem to have been concerned about what we might call the cognitive dissonance between the imposition of ashes and gospel of the day.⁴¹ In the gospel, taken from Matthew 6, our Lord warns his disciples not to be like those who when they fast ‘disfigure their faces.’ To the contrary, Jesus says, ‘when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto

38 See Jared Tomlinson, ‘The Law on Our Hearts: Richard Hooker and Thomas Aquinas,’ *The North American Anglican* (Apr. 24, 2020).

39 John Jewel, ‘Reply to M. Harding’s Answer,’ in *The Works of John Jewel: The First Portion* (Parker Society, 1845), p. 539.

40 Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary* (OUP, 1950), p. 60. As Rowan Williams put it, the Anglican tradition is ‘Reformed Christian thinking’ that, along with its affirmative commitments, is ‘suspicious . . . of a theology of the sacraments which appears to bind God too closely to material transactions (as opposed to seeing the free activity of God sustaining and transforming certain human actions done in Christ’s name).’ Rowan Williams, Introduction, in *Anglican Identities* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 2-3.

41 Shepherd, at p. 60; for a contrary view, see Martin, at p. 19.

men to fast, but unto thy Father.' Similarly, the reading appointed for the epistle from Joel 2 says, 'Rend your heart, and not your garments.'

Whatever other theological and ceremonial reasons there are for the traditional Anglican rejection of ashes, my point is simply this: there are no ashes in a Prayer Book Ash Wednesday, because they do not belong.

Ashes symbolize mortality and death,⁴² but that is not a theme of the Communion service.⁴³ That service presents sin, not death, as the central issue.

Ashes also symbolize penitence, which most certainly is a theme of the Communion (and of Lent as a whole). But their imposition is in strong tension with the movement of the Communion service. For many worshippers, the imposition of ashes is the affective and visceral center of the service. The ashes are what they take with them.

But in the Communion, though we hear the curses, they are not ringing in our ears as we leave. There is a time to weep and a time to mourn. But by the end of the Communion, that time is gone. We have moved from law to gospel. We are granted the gift of peace, and with it perhaps a glimpse through the eyes of St. John the Divine, who saw a vision of a restored humanity, when each person in himself and all together are finally at peace, 'and there shall be no more curse' (Rev. 22:1-5). And if the Communion is followed by the Communion, as the Prayer Book provides, then that sacramental nourishment and the ensuing peace are the end of the ascent.

This is not to deny that many find in ashes an aid to self-reflection in ordinary times; perhaps some would even find them such an aid in this time of suffering and mortality. Moreover, the imposition of ashes can be congruent with other Ash Wednesday services, especially ones in which the service has an arc from grace to guilt.⁴⁴

42 In the BCP 1979 and ACNA BCP 2019, the prayer before the imposition begins, 'Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth,' and the words of administration are taken from Genesis 3: 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

43 Beadle, p. 26: 'Christian holiness finds its ground not in human mortality, but in the sure and certain hope of the new creation. As the Communion service tells us, Christ "will set us on his right hand, and give us the gracious benediction of his Father, commanding us to take possession of his glorious kingdom."'

44 The Communion service is revised or replaced in later Anglican prayer books. They tend to impede the movement from guilt to grace (BCP 1928), or even reverse its direction (BCP 1979 and ACNA BCP 2019).

The (American) BCP 1928, which does not authorize the imposition of ashes, has no exhortation, curses, and homily at the beginning; its penitential service begins with Psalm 51. Thus there is no first movement emphasizing guilt, and no homily offering the work of Christ as the cure. The 1928 service has been praised for 'liberating this telling act of penitence from morbid preoccupations with a supposed vitiation of human nature or futile luxury of grief over an irrevocable past.' Edward Lambe Parsons & Bayard Hale Jones, *The American Prayer Book: Its Origins and Principles* (Scribner, 1937), p. 148; see Edward Clowes Chorley, *The New American Prayer Book: Its History and Contents* ('The revision of the Penitential Office illustrates one marked feature of the new Prayer Book—the elimination of exaggerated and therefore, to that extent, unreal expressions of penitence for sin. . . . In the revision the pagan idea of the 'anger' of God is entirely eliminated.')

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Nor do I mean to deny that the start of the Communion is stern, cold, and bleak—almost unimaginably so for people in the twenty-first century. And for some in the eighteenth century, when one writer complained of the Communion that ‘the reading of it once a year is once too much.’⁴⁵

Yet despite all this the Communion has unmined riches. It contains a startling drama of corporate confession, corporate forgiveness, and corporate blessing. Its denouement is glorious. ‘If parts of the service take our breath away with their stark pronouncement of God’s judgement, by the time we have reached the end of the service, we find ourselves addressing a loving heavenly Father who cares for us as his children.’⁴⁶ In the denouement of the Communion I suspect we learn why so many great English poets end their poems about Ash Wednesday with peace and joy: ‘I fear no more’;⁴⁷ a heart not ‘forgiven and cheer’d in vain’;⁴⁸ the ‘timely fruit of peace and love and joy’;⁴⁹ ‘Our peace in His will.’⁵⁰

John Bunyan, who knew the rhythms of the Book of Common Prayer (even while opposing its imposition), would write his most famous allegory with a similar structure: we end in heaven, but first we must start in the city of destruction, on the edge of a grimpen, the slough of

In the 1979 and 2019 books the transformation is different. The opening of the service includes the collect of the day and four readings. These can include the traditional epistle and gospel, but they also include more exuberant passages, such as Psalm 103 and 2 Cor. 5:20–6:10. The former especially is a paean to divine forgiveness and care. To be clear, the 1979/2019 service does emphasize guilt, especially in the ‘Litany of Penitence.’ But that element is placed late in the service; it is after the readings, sermon, ashes, and Psalm 51. The effect of that placement is to make the arc of the service run from Psalm 103 to the Litany of Penitence, from grace to guilt—the exact opposite of the 1662 service.

The apparent exception is that near the end of the 1979/2019 service there is an absolution. But the priest says the absolution to the people—gone is the corporate identification of priest and people so emphasized in the BCP 1662, the priest kneeling among the people, all confessing, all absolved by God himself.

The 1979 and 2019 books do have a peace at or near the end of the service, but it is boiled down until not much remains. The BCP 1979 rubric says ‘The Peace is then exchanged.’ The BCP 2019 reduces the peace to ‘The Peace of the Lord be always with you. / And with your spirit.’ Yet even that peace is not the conclusion in the 2019 book. A rubric indicates that if there is no Communion, the service is to end with a prayer for God to grant that we would desire him with our heart, and ‘hate those sins from which you have delivered us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.’ That final *Amen* has a different force from the Prayer Book’s, where the final *Amen* is an affirmation of divine peace.

Finally, note that the 1928, 1979, and 2019 books all omit the concluding verses of Psalm 51. The 1979 and 2019 books also excise the *Gloria Patri* at the end of the psalm. The effect of these omissions is a lessening of the theme of gratitude.

45 Marion J. Hatchett, *The Making of the First American Book of Common Prayer* (Seabury, 1982), p. 32.

46 Beadle, at p. 23.

47 John Donne, ‘For Ash Wednesday—A Hymn to God the Father.’

48 John Keble, ‘Communion.’

49 William Wordsworth, ‘The Communion Service.’

50 T.S. Eliot, ‘Ash-Wednesday.’ ‘Our peace in His will’ is the sixth line from the end. It is the only occurrence of *peace* in the poem, and the line is given special stress because of its envelopment by the lines ‘Even among these rocks’ and ‘And even among these rocks.’ For the last line of the poem Eliot circles back to the versicles in the Communion service: ‘And let my cry come unto Thee.’

despond. If conflict and turmoil, sin and war, loneliness and despair, seem all too familiar to us now in this time of plague, then the service begins exactly where we are. But it carries us away—if we are penitent—to a peace that passes understanding. By the end, but not at the beginning, we are ready to say with George Herbert, ‘Welcome dear feast of Lent.’⁵¹

In the ending of the Communion, especially when followed by Holy Communion, we have a different beginning for the season of Lent. If this season begins with ashes and mortality, we may see it as a time of suffering and sorrow that will culminate forty days later in the cross. But the Communion suggests a different journey. The cross is where we start. Yes, we are carried from judgment to forgiveness and peace, but all on Ash Wednesday. Ahead lies training and discipline. But in the Prayer Book, Lent is for the already forgiven.

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51 George Herbert, ‘Lent.’