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450th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer



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Members of the Society are encouraged to join together in saying the following Collect at the same time in their own homes, at 10.00 p.m. each Sunday evening.

THE COLLECT OF THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Cover picture:

The Archbishop of Canterbury leads the commemoration at the site of Thomas Cranmer's martyrdom in Oxford
Photograph by Chris Hall

Cranmer's Lasting Legacy

'Cranmer would have been very surprised if he knew we were still doing this, 450 years later', said a certain clergyman, on hearing about our commemoration of the 450th anniversary of Cranmer's martyrdom.

Stumbling to his death through rainswept Oxford four and a half centuries ago, Cranmer could scarcely have imagined those same streets on a crisp, clear day in 2006, thronging with hundreds of people in his footsteps and in his memory, solemn yet joyful. There is, too, a certain irony that we in the Prayer Book Society, for the most part sceptical about liturgical reform in our own time, are celebrating the life and works of the ultimate liturgical reformer, the compiler of the first English Prayer Book, even more radical in his day than Dean Jasper and the authors of the *Alternative Service Book*.

And yet, Cranmer surely knew that he was building something to last. As his fellow reformer Hugh Latimer, burned at the stake in Oxford with Nicholas Ridley just a few months before Cranmer met his similar fate, had said: 'We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'

Today, we are sucked into a whirlwind of accelerating change, where last year's fashions and pop charts are ancient history and where mobile telephones, broadband internet and now satellite navigation, almost unimaginable but a few years ago, have for many of us already come to feel like basic necessities. Documents, church service sheets, whole books can be saved on computer disk and amended or deleted at will.

While the Reformation was of course a time of dramatic upheaval (with two Prayer Books in three years), Cranmer's contemporaries did not live in the expectation of continuous change, fuelled by consumer choice, which besets us nowadays. Change was fought for—died for, even—but its architects had at least some expectation that

its results would endure. If Cranmer might have been a little surprised that we are still using his Prayer Book in essentially the same form in which he bequeathed it to us, he would assuredly have been shocked and bewildered as much by the format as by the content of *Common Worship*, described by the journalist and PBS member Peter Hitchens as 'not so much a book of common prayer as a website of diverse devotion'.

It is quite contrary to the modern mindset to imagine the current output of the Liturgical Commission surviving for hundreds of years: for such is hardly their intention. We are blessed that Cranmer's genius and

the spirit of an age very different from our own coincided to give us a Prayer Book which is alive and fresh now as it was almost half a millennium ago, and which (unlike the late unlamented *ASB*, forever reminding us that the liturgy of the Church of England was best before 1980) does not have a 'sell-by' date.

For us, then, this anniversary year is less to do with historical remembrance, and more like a wedding anniversary, a celebration of something continuing. Our concern is not so much with events over and past, but with a living legacy, born of the death of a Martyr.

Here's to many happy returns.

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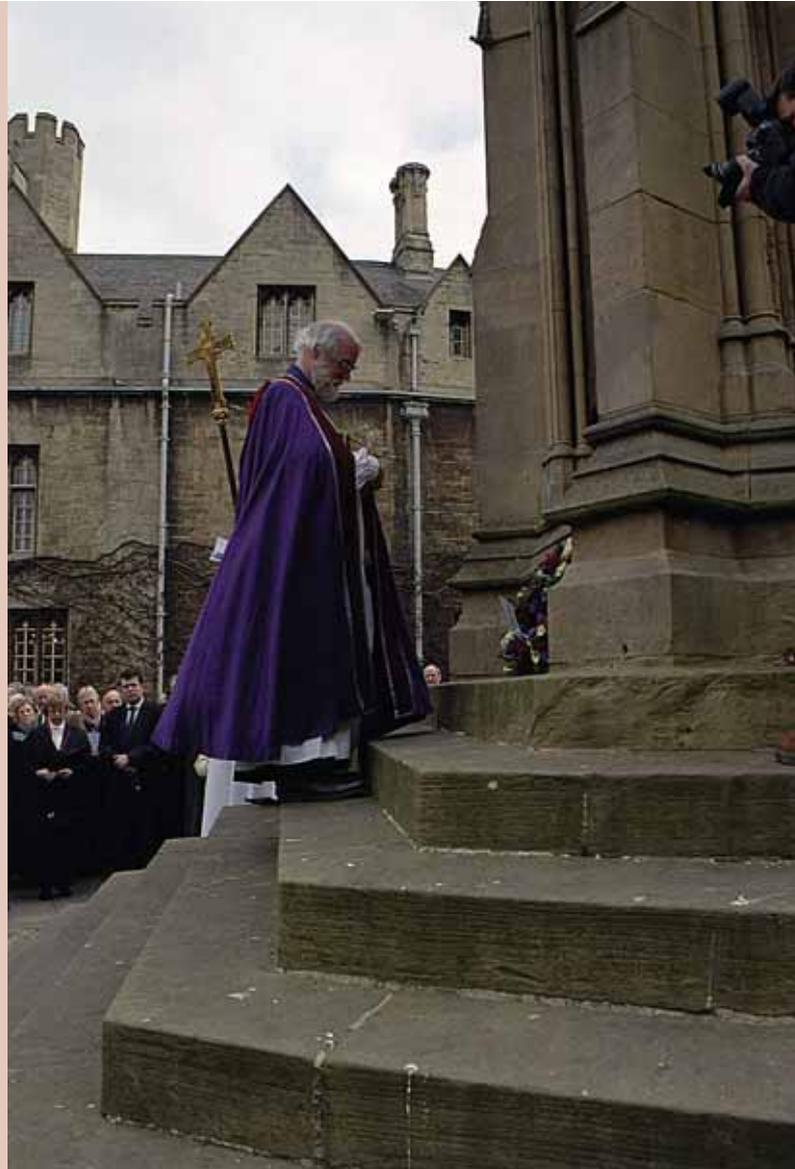
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450 Years On, an Archbishop Commemorates his Predecessor

The marking of the anniversary of Thomas Cranmer's martyrdom in Oxford on 21 March 1556 has been an annual PBS event for a number of years now. This year, being the 450th anniversary, called for a special commemoration, and we were most privileged to have the current Archbishop of Canterbury with us for the occasion.

The day's events began with a service of Holy Communion in the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, where Cranmer was tried and whence he was led to his death. The celebrant was the Vicar of St Mary's, Canon Brian Mountford, and the Bishop of Oxford presided. The Archbishop preached a sermon in which he paid warm tribute to Cranmer and to the Prayer Book, which was enthusiastically received by PBS members. (The full text of Dr Williams' sermon is reprinted on page 6.) The service was magnificently accompanied by the choir and organist of St Mary's, with music from Cranmer's contemporaries including Orlando Gibbons and Thomas Tallis.

The church was packed to capacity with about 750 people—many more than expected—including locals and members of the University (many young students among them) as well as PBS members from all around the country and beyond.



Distinguished members of the congregation included the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Oxford, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and his wife, one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors of the University and several bishops and archdeacons. In addition, many of the 'great and good' of the PBS were present, including the National Chairman, Roger Evans; Patrons Baroness James of Holland





Park (better known as the novelist P. D. James) and Lord Sudeley; and Vice-Presidents Professor Roger Homan and the Revd Dr Roger Beckwith. The Revd Dr Peter Toon, President of the PBS of the USA, came over from the States especially to be with us.

After the service, hundreds of people thronged the streets in procession to the site in Broad Street where Cranmer was put to death, pausing for a few moments while Roger Beckwith read an account of the martyrdom and the Bishop of Oxford said a prayer. We continued to the Martyrs' Memorial, where Peter Toon read a short passage of scripture and the Archbishop then said a prayer and laid a wreath. The only aspect of the day

which perhaps did not go precisely to plan was that the promised police presence failed to materialize, leading to some impatient traffic in the vicinity of the Memorial as the road was briefly blocked by several hundred people paying tribute to the late Archbishop; but this did nothing to mar the occasion.

Events concluded with a lunch in Balliol College, attended by the Archbishop and some 200 PBS members and invited guests. The Archbishop received a spontaneous standing ovation as he left the dining hall.



Prudence Dailey

Photographs by Brian Carter and Chris Hall



The Word of God is Not Bound

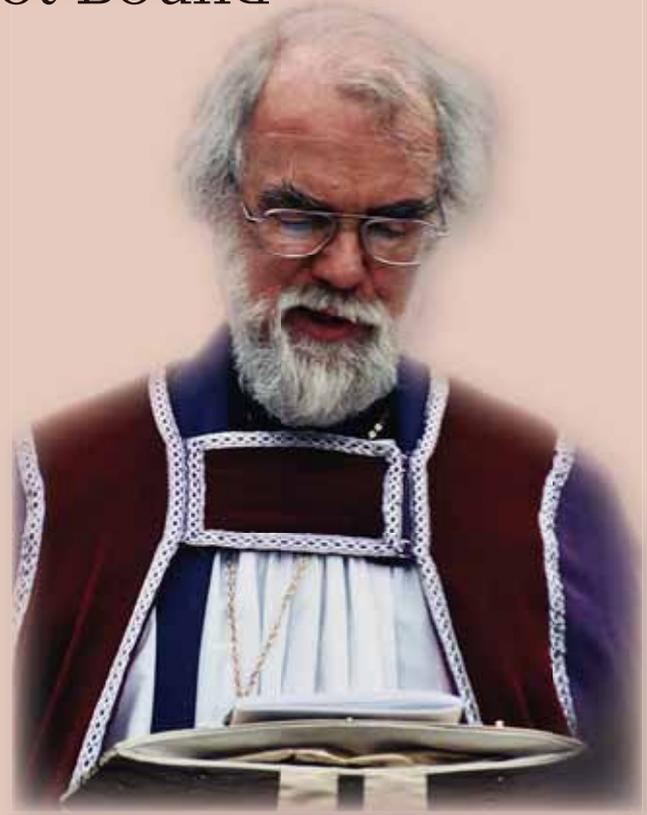
by Rowan Williams

From today's epistle: 'The word of God is not bound'.

When it was fashionable to decry Cranmer's liturgical rhetoric as overblown and repetitive, people often held up as typical the echoing sequences of which he and his colleagues were so fond. 'A full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction'; 'Have mercy upon us, miserable offenders; Spare thou them which confess their faults; Restore thou them that are penitent'; 'succour, help and comfort all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation'; 'direct, sanctify and govern'; and of course, 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'. The liturgical puritan may well ask why it is not possible to say something once and for all, instead of circling back over what has been said, re-treading the ground. And in the same vein, many will remember the arguments of those who complained of the Communion order in the Book of Common Prayer that it never allowed you to move forward from penitence to confidence and thanksgiving: you were constantly being recalled to your sinful state, even after you had been repeatedly assured of God's abundant mercies.

Whether we have quite outgrown this reaction, I'm not sure. But we have at least begun to see that liturgy is not a matter of writing in straight lines. As the late Helen Gardner of this university long ago remarked, liturgy is epic as well as drama; its movement is not inexorably towards a single, all-determining climax, but also—precisely—a circling back, a recognition of things not yet said or finished with, a story with all kinds of hidden rhythms pulling in diverse directions. And a liturgical language like Cranmer's hovers over meanings like a bird that never quite nests for good and all—or, to sharpen the image, like a bird of prey that never stoops for a kill.

The word of God is not bound. God speaks, and the world is made; God speaks and the world is remade by the Word Incarnate. And our human speaking struggles to keep up. We need, not human words that will decisively capture what the Word of God has done and is doing, but words that will show us how much time we have to take in fathoming this reality, helping us turn and move and see, from what may be infinitesimally different perspectives, the patterns of light and shadow in



a world where the Word's light has been made manifest. It is no accident that the Gospel which most unequivocally identifies Jesus as the Word made flesh is the Gospel most characterized by this same circling, hovering, recapitulatory style, as if nothing in human language could ever be a 'last' word. 'The world itself could not contain the books that should be written' says the Fourth Evangelist, resigning himself to finishing a Gospel that is in fact never finishable in human terms.

Poets often reinvent their language, the 'register' of their voice. Shakespeare's last plays show him at the edge of his imagination, speaking, through Prospero, of the dissolution of all his words, the death of his magic; Yeats painfully recreates his poetic voice, to present it 'naked', as he said; Eliot, in a famous passage of the Quartets, follows a sophisticated, intensely disciplined lyrical passage with the brutal, 'that was a way of putting it'. In their different ways, all remind us that language is inescapably something reflecting on itself, 'talking through' its own achievements and failures, giving itself new agendas with every word. And most of all when we try to talk of God, we are called upon to talk with awareness and with repentance. 'That was a way of putting it'; we have not yet said what there is to say, and we never shall, yet we have to go on, lest we delude ourselves into thinking we have made an end.

So the bird is bound to hover and not settle or strike. Cranmer lived in the middle of controversies where striking for a kill was the aim of most debaters. Now of course we must beware of misunderstanding or modernizing: he was not by any stretch of the imagination a man who had no care for the truth, a man who thought that any and every expression of Christian doctrine was equally valid; he could be fierce and lucidly uncompromising when up against an opponent like Bishop Gardiner. Yet even as a controversialist he shows signs of this penitent scrupulosity in language: yes, this is the truth, this is what obedience to the Word demands—but, when we have clarified what we must on no account say, we still have to come with patience and painstaking slowness to crafting what we do say. Our task is not to lay down some overwhelmingly simple formula but to suggest and guide, to build up the structure that will lead us from this angle and that towards the one luminous reality. ‘Full, perfect and sufficient’—each word to the superficial ear capable of being replaced by either of the others, yet each with its own resonance, its own direction into the mystery, and, as we gradually realize, not one of them in fact dispensable.

You can see a poignant concomitant of this in Cranmer’s non-liturgical prose. When he wrote to King Henry in unhopeful defence of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell, the convoluted sentences and sentiments show, not only a constitutionally timid man struggling to be brave (and all the braver for that), but a man uncomfortably capable of believing himself deceived and of seeing the world in double perspective. What both letters in effect say is: I thought I saw the truth about this person; if I was wrong, I was more deceived than I could have thought possible; how in this world can even the King of England know the truth of his servants’ hearts? I see both what I always saw and the possibility that it has all been a lie; is this a world where we can have certainty enough to kill each other?

And in his last days, this was Cranmer’s curse. If there was no easy certainty enough to kill for, was there certainty enough to die for? That habit of mind which had always circled and hovered, tested words and set them to work against each other in fruitful tension, sought to embody in words the reality of penitence and self-scrutiny, condemned him, especially in the midst of isolation, confusion, threats and seductions of spirit, to a long agony, whose end came only in this church minutes before his last hurrying, stumbling walk through

the rain to the stake. It is extraordinary to think of him drafting two contradictory versions of his final public confession, still not knowing what words should sum up his struggles. But at the last, it is as if he emerges from the cloud of words heaped up in balance and argument and counterpoint, knowing almost nothing except that he cannot bring himself to lie, in the face of death and judgement. What he has to say is that he has ‘written many things untrue’ and that he cannot face God without admitting this. He cannot find a formula that will conceal his heart from God, and he knows that his heart is, as it has long been, given to the God whom the Reformation had let him see, the God of free grace, never bound by the works or words of men and women. Just because he faces a God who can never be captured in one set of words, a God who is transcendently holy in a way that exacts from human language the most scrupulous scepticism and the most painstaking elaboration possible, he cannot pretend that words alone will save him. ‘If we deny him, he also will deny us’. He must repent and show his repentance with life as well as lips; ‘forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished’.

He is not the only theologian to have found at the last that words failed: Aquinas after his stroke, speaking of how all he had written seemed so much straw; or, disarmingly and mischievously, Karl Barth summing up his *Church Dogmatics* to an interviewer in the words, ‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so’. But neither Barth nor Aquinas would have said that there was any other way to this simplicity and near-speechlessness except by discovering in the very experience of struggling to talk about God that limit beyond which no human tongue can go. ‘The word of God is not bound.’ At the boundaries of speech, we are only at the beginning of the fullness of the Gospel.

So Cranmer draws the terrible and proper conclusion from a lifetime of skill and balance, of ‘rightly dividing the word of truth’: what appears bit by bit in our words about God as they are prompted and fired by the Word Incarnate is the realization of the God who is always in excess of what can be said. The rhetorical excess of repetition and rhythm is not just a stately game to decorate or dignify a basically simple act of acknowledgement directed towards God. It is the discipline that brings us to the edge of our resource; just as the insistent reversion to penitence in the Communion order is not neurotic uncertainty but the sober expression of the truth that we never ‘move on’ from being

saved sinners, and our amazement at God's free forgiveness has to be spoken out again and again. The edge of our resource: that is where faith belongs, and that is where the language of worship has to lead us.

It led Cranmer—as it led so many others in that nightmare age, as it led the martyrs of our own age, Bonhoeffer, Maria Skobtsova, Janani Luwum—to something more than a contemplative silence: to a real death. When we say that the word of God is not bound, we say that death itself can be the living speech of God, as the Word was uttered once and for all in the silence at the end of Good Friday. Cranmer speaks, not only in the controlled passion

of those tight balances and repetitions in his Prayer Book, but in that chilling final quarter of an hour. He ran through the downpour to the town ditch and held out his right hand, his writing hand, for a final composition, a final liturgy. And, because the word of God is not bound, it is as if that hand in the flames becomes an icon of the right hand of Majesty stretched out to us for defence and mercy.

This sermon was delivered by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the service in the University Church, Oxford, on 21 March 2006 to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer.

An Oxford Martyr Remembered

by Robert Triggs

Readers will no doubt have their own well-rehearsed views on the respective strengths and weaknesses of the 1662 Prayer Book, the King James Bible, the *Alternative Service Book* and its successor, *Common Worship*. It is a sensitive and difficult topic. In his memorable sermon in Oxford on 21 March, Rowan Williams wisely eschewed any reference to their comparative merits. Taking as his text the words from 2 Timothy 2, 'The word of God is not bound', he discussed instead the peculiar style of the language of Cranmer's Prayer Book, which sometimes appears to be marked by wordy repetition, (e.g. 'full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction'), but which in fact reflects the necessary imprecision that is needed when discussing God. God is always in excess of what can be said, and words alone, as Cranmer ultimately found to his cost, were not sufficient to save him. So the tentative style of the Prayer Book, like a great bird hovering over its prey, approaching but never striking, is particularly well suited to the style of Cranmer's own struggles. And at the end, there is no simple formula for expressing the inexpressible. T. S. Eliot, in a later century, spoke of the 'intolerable wrestle with words and meanings', and humbly concluded of his own efforts: 'That was a way of putting it'. Cranmer's magnificent language mirrors the same struggle.

In addition, the Archbishop also paid fulsome tribute to Cranmer the man, who, as one of the

principal architects of the Reformation, was caught when the political wind changed and the Catholic Mary succeeded to the throne in 1553. He spoke of Cranmer's 'penitent scrupulosity of language' and added 'He could not bring himself to lie in the face of judgement.' Cranmer himself had recanted his heresies by March 1556. He tried to tell the truth, and show repentance, but the Queen had no intention of sparing Cranmer's life, despite his enforced recantation, and thus, on 21 March 1556, he was taken to the same University Church in which we were sitting, to declare publicly his reconciliation to the unreformed Church and its teaching before his execution. But when, from the pulpit, the 67-year-old Cranmer shouted his defiance and refused to recant his heresies according to the prevailing religious orthodoxy, he was harried through the rain to the nearby city ditch and burned at the stake. As the flames leaped around him, he thrust his right hand—the one that had signed his recantations—into the fire, crying 'This hand hath offended', and, according to eye-witness accounts, 'as soon as the fire got up, he was very soon dead, never stirring or crying the whole while.'

What has all this to do with our own lives in 2006? It is hardly likely that an Archbishop of Canterbury, or indeed anybody in England today, would be burned at the stake for their faith. But the twentieth century, and indeed the present one, is littered with the corpses of men and women

who suffered just such a fate, not only Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the victims of the Holocaust. Only two weeks ago, the government in Afghanistan sentenced an Afghan to death for espousing Christianity, and offered him a chance to recant. In countries as various as North Korea and the Sudan, and others rather nearer to our own doorstep, heretics have paid with their lives. Neither should we forget that, although we in the west have reached the year 2006, the Muslim calendar has only recently entered the fifteenth century. What comparable atrocities were not committed in England around the year 1410?

For those who have an interest in these matters, it is easy and fashionable to regard the members of the Prayer Book Society (who sponsored this commemoration) as a reactionary crowd of middle-aged, middle-class readers of the *Daily Telegraph* who refuse to move with the times, and cling on to the hymns with which they are most familiar, and prayers in the words they miss so much, while the present Church of England seeks to make itself more 'accessible' by the use of revised liturgy. This is not entirely the case. The language of the 1662 Prayer Book, like the music of J. S. Bach and Palestrina, has stood the test of time, and fortunately even young priests have become 'infected' by the beauty of the Prayer Book despite having been reared on a diet of alternative services. So a preference for the cadences of Cranmer's Prayer Book is as natural to those who love language as is a love of York Minster, say, or Durham Cathedral, to those who love buildings. What would Cranmer himself, one wonders, have made of the pedestrian banalities of *Common Worship*?

But Cranmer, of course, lived in a different age. The Established Church was part of the old order, rural, hierarchical and aristocratic, and probably the last Archbishop of Canterbury to communicate the self-confidence based on the assumptions of that old order was Geoffrey Fisher (1947–63). One of its characteristics was a highly educated priesthood, which in an increasingly educated society today, the Anglican clergy are no longer capable of providing. Whereas the typical ordinand in 1900 was a young Oxbridge graduate who knew his way round Plato and Newman, so the typical ordinand in 2000 was often a middle-aged graduate of secretarial college or social work, who knew her way around the Meals on Wheels service, but was incapable of intellectually challenging the materialism of society. Furthermore, as Lord Deedes perceptively remarked in an article in

1999 'You cannot sensibly discuss the state of the Church of England without reckoning with the revolution that has been running in this country for the last half-century, as so many emerged from the restraints of poverty. Because it is bloodless and has no obvious leader, we fail to recognize it. Yet it has had profound consequences. Egged on by a brash new media, we have developed not simply an allergy to religion, but to all who are set in authority over us'.

What, then, is the solution? Some, like former Dean of York Dr Ronald Jasper, who sat on the Anglican Church's Liturgical Commission for a quarter of a century, thought the solution lay in revising the great texts of English religion. Along with other moving spirits in the General Synod of the Church of England at the time, he introduced the *Alternative Service Book* in 1980 on the blithe assumption that the 1662 Prayer Book, cherished by mainly older churchgoers, would die a natural death simply because people did not want it any longer. That did not happen. By the year 2000, the *Alternative Service Book* had already reached its sell-by date, and had to be supplanted by *Common Worship*. Meanwhile, Cranmer's Prayer Book still has a large and committed following, thanks in large measure to the energetic work of the Prayer Book Society. Clearly, the dumbing-down of Church liturgy, and the rather desperate attempts to make the Church more 'relevant' and 'accessible' by adapting itself to the changing standards of the world outside, is not working.

It is in many ways an intractable problem. What seems clear, however, is where the answer does not lie. It does not lie in gimmickry. There is little doubt that the church has, over the last thirty years or so, suffered from a series of self-inflicted wounds, and it has been remarkably foolish and divisive, not just over the questions of women priests and homosexuality, but over a whole raft of changes, not least the abandonment of the Prayer Book and the repeal of the Act of Uniformity. The effect of all these changes has been to sever the cords which moor the church to its history. England may have changed out of all recognition in the last fifty years, but the permanence of the Church of England in the future will depend finally not on ducking and weaving to accommodate the latest fashions of the world outside, but on the permanence of the values it really believes in.

A Reply to Rowan Williams

by Ian Robinson

It is not often that the Prayer Book Society can celebrate an improvement in the Church of England's attitude to the Book of Common Prayer, and so it is certainly an occasion for rejoicing when an Archbishop of Canterbury at a Prayer Book Eucharist on the anniversary of Archbishop Cranmer's martyrdom preaches a sermon commending the Prayer Book. In the circumstances it may seem impolitic and possibly impolite to disagree with that sermon. The Archbishop, however, was not speaking *ex cathedra*, and knows (remember that he is also the distinguished academic Dr Rowan Williams) that comment and discussion are the very life of thought. So I may be allowed—with all respect and in, I trust, the same spirit of truth-seeking as Dr Williams—to say that in some important ways he got it wrong.

Dr Williams raised the questions why the Prayer Book is so often repetitive, and why in its Holy Communion there is no linear progression to a point where sin is left behind. The answers he gave to both seem to me too post-modern ('language is inescapably something reflecting on itself') to carry conviction about Cranmer as thinker and stylist. 'A liturgical language like Cranmer's hovers over meanings like a bird that never quite nests for good and all—or, to sharpen the image, like a bird of prey that never stoops for a kill.' A species of bird that never nests will soon be eliminated by natural selection, and a bird of prey that never swoops will rapidly get both tired and hungry.

It seems to me a relevant observation—though it is a commonplace of literary criticism that authors do not always achieve their intentions—that Cranmer himself could not conceivably have agreed with Dr Williams's characterization of what he was trying to do. For instance, some of the revisions to the 1549 Prayer Book probably made in response to Bishop Gardiner's interpretations were surely aimed at getting meanings more definite and foolproof.

Dr Williams says that the Communion enacts a process in which 'we have not yet said what there is to say, and we never shall, yet we have to go on, lest we delude ourselves into thinking we have made an end.' Yet later, 'he could be fierce and lucidly uncompromising when up against an opponent like Bishop Gardiner.' Why, if the best we can do to get at the truth is to circle without ever landing? "Full,

perfect and sufficient"—each word to the superficial ear capable of being replaced by either of the others, yet each with its own resonance, its own direction into the mystery, and, as we gradually realize, not one of them in fact dispensable.' I agree: but if so is not the writing trying for the utmost precision possible to the human mind, that is, doing what can be done to 'settle and strike' rather than endlessly hovering?

There are, however, plenty of repetitions in the Prayer Book that do nothing for paraphrasable meaning. Why? Firstly, English idiom demanded them. As far back as we can go into the Germanic past, English has always much relied on phrases sometimes called doublets, like *kith and kin* or *time and tide*; there is no difference between *kith* and *kin*. They are normally alliterative and two-beat: *sac and soke*, *house and home*. Such phrases are at the heart of the alliterative verse that was still alive in Cranmer's day and deeply permeated the whole language. 'Our father, which art in heaven' would itself make an Old English alliterative line, and the marriage vows, much older than the Book of Common Prayer, are so readily memorable because they are well-made alliterative half-lines. 'To have and to hold' is a doublet just like 'kith and kin'. One of Cranmer's great achievements (for which I think the word *genius* is called for) was to be able to make in excellent modern prose some of the effects one more readily associates with alliterative verse. Bear in mind that the Prayer Book was carefully made to be read aloud. Any lecturer knows that the matter must be paced to the audience. Some moments need to be dwelt on. The test is effectiveness. 'We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.' There is no difference between erring and straying, and though devices and desires are not the same, the phrase was used more for the secondary alliteration (i.e. not on the stressed syllable) and assonance than for any distinction between them. The General Confession could certainly have been zippier and more like newspaper prose without losing much paraphrasable content, as it is in much modern liturgy. But it is a common experience that the brisk 'We are sorry and repent' or the like is not as effective, not as searching and not as expressive of feeling. Confession is something the expansive Prayer Book form better allows us to make.

To say so is to agree that phrases like ‘succour, help and comfort’ are more than ‘just a stately game to decorate or dignify a basically simple act’. They nevertheless are rhetorical, part of the effort to get something really enacted. ‘He pardoneth and absolveth’: we dwell on that instant of enacted forgiveness when, if I may say so, something is actually performed and accomplished.

I am encouraged to offer this reply by the fact that long ago C. S. Lewis and Stella Brook took a rather similar view.

I do not understand why Dr Williams, following Helen Gardner, thinks that epic has no movement ‘towards a single, all-determining climax’. Surely the *Odyssey* does have to end with Odysseus killing the suitors and the end of the feud and *Paradise Lost* with the hopeful journey out of Eden? I do not

agree with Dr Williams that the Order for Holy Communion goes on retreading the same ground, if by that is meant that it has no dramatic or narrative progression. It seems to me a wonderfully evolving dramatic structure (as I argued at some length in my book *Prayers for the New Babel*). Sin is not forgotten even in the post-communion, but nor is the context of our recent forgiveness and communion with the Lord. The transfer of the Gloria in Excelsis to post-communion was one of Cranmer’s most drastic innovations; there, it surely both keeps in mind that we constantly need the mercy of him that taketh away the sins of the world, and glorifies God in a way dependent on context. The Lord at this point has opened our lips and our mouths can show forth his praise. We make that sense at that moment within the whole.

Forthcoming Cranmer Commemoration at Tewkesbury

Tewkesbury will be the setting for a half-day of events focusing on Thomas Cranmer and the part he played in bringing us the Book of Common Prayer.

As part of the commemorations marking the 450th Anniversary of Cranmer’s martyrdom in 1556, a number of events are being planned of which the centrepiece is a special service of Solemn Evensong to be held at Tewkesbury Abbey on Tuesday, 12 September.

Commencing at 5.00 p.m. the service will be led by the Vicar of Tewkesbury, Canon Paul Williams, and the sermon will be preached by the Bishop of Tewkesbury, the Rt Revd John Went. Society Vice-President, Sir Eric Anderson, will read a lesson.

Founded in 1087 to house Benedictine monks, the Abbey was purchased by parishioners in 1539 following the dissolution. Renowned for the splendour of its liturgy in the Anglican Catholic tradition, the Abbey continues to flourish.

Before and after the service other events have been planned.

At 3.00 p.m. there will be a lecture given by the Revd Dr Roger Beckwith,

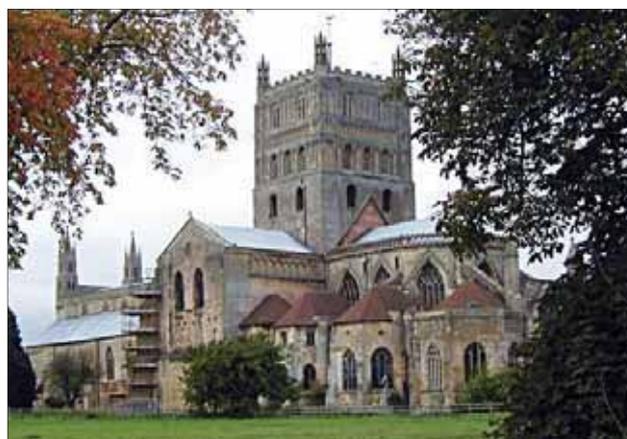
formerly Warden of Latimer House, Oxford, and a respected author on Reformation theology.

Tewkesbury Abbey

Tea will be available in the Abbey Refectory at 4.00 p.m. and the day’s events will be rounded off by a reception and supper commencing at 7.30 p.m. at Stanway House near Broadway.

Stanway House is an outstandingly beautiful example of a Jacobean Manor House with a fourteenth-century tithe barn and eighteenth-century water garden built on an estate originally owned by Tewkesbury Abbey. For the last 500 years the estate has been in the hands of the Tracy family and their descendants, the Earls of Wemyss and March.

During the reception there will be an opportunity to see the famous Stanway Fountain, the pride and joy of Lord Wemyss’s heir, Lord Neidpath, which rises to over 300 feet, making



it the tallest fountain in Britain and the tallest gravity-fed fountain in the world.

Stanway House

Lord Wemyss’s brother, the late Lord Charteris, was the Society’s former President who was largely responsible for setting up the Cranmer Awards scheme.

Sir Eric Anderson and Bishop John together with other members of the clergy and the Society’s Board are expected to join Lord Neidpath and his guests at Stanway.

Places for the lecture (£10), tea (£5) and supper (£25) are expected to sell out fast and members are advised to order their tickets as soon as possible from:

Tony Hilder, 28 St Luke’s Place, Cheltenham GL53 7HP

Thomas Cranmer, the Wobbly Martyr

by Vincent Strudwick

I owe my introduction to Thomas Cranmer to my mother. I hasten to add she was born in the reign of Queen Victoria, not Henry VIII; but in those days at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, she not only attended worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, but at school, she learned much of the text, and in particular the collects, which to the end of her life she could recite by heart, and which formed the basis of her spirituality.

It was the genius of the Archbishop for whom we give thanks this evening, that he was the architect of a book that from the very early days of its general use, became the means by which people understood their Christian discipleship, as well as providing the occasions for its renewal in worship. Indeed in the 'long reformation' in England it was through the use of this book (not by reading the Act of Settlement or pondering the Thirty-nine Articles) that the English learned to *belong* to their Church.

What was the genius of Cranmer's accomplishment? It was not chiefly as a poet. After a rather awful attempt to render the *Veni Creator* into English he wrote to King Henry 'Mine English verses lack the grace and facility I wish they had'; and a hundred years later the revisers agreed and replaced Cranmer with John Cosin's beautiful *Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire*. No, it was not his poetry, nor was it his humour. His most recent biographer, Diarmaid MacCulloch, says that in his researches into Cranmer he has discovered only six jokes that he made. He was a very serious scholar who in a time of massive theological exploration and change was seeking to express the mysteries of God and his workings with us.

With his scholarship—he had the finest library in England—he wrestled with the Scriptures and the tradition, with old service books, and the work of contemporary divines like Luther, fulfilling the need (quoting MacCulloch) for 'words which can be polished as smooth as pebbles on a beach by repetition, to become part of the fabric of individual people in the middle of a communal act'. Perhaps more of a playwright than a poet, he came to see public worship as a series of relational acts in which priest and people were engaged in a joint liturgical performance. 'O Lord open thou my lips' in the 1549 book, becomes 'O Lord open thou our lips' in the first Prayer Book of King Edward. And in the preface

to this book he adds the words that before service the priest shall 'tolle a belle thereto a convenient time before he begyn, that such as be dysposed may come to heare Goddes word and to prai with him'. And come they did. Whereas at first some rebelled and saw in his relational liturgy something like a Christmas game, by the end of Elizabeth's reign when a certain priest attempts to say the service in the old style, without giving time for the responses, the parishioners complain at the loss of a practice they had valued 'for forty years last past and more'. Forty years? When I was rector of a Sussex parish in the 1970s, I continued to toll the bell as Cranmer directed, and say Matins in church each morning, and then go down and collect my newspaper from the village shop. One morning I slept in; and when I later collected my paper, I was met by a hostile glare from the owner—not a churchgoer. 'No bell this morning' she accused. 'So no prayer I suppose, rector. We don't want you getting slack on our behalf you know.' So after that, when I slept in, I would leap across to the church, ring the bell and at least say one of Cranmer's collects. And it was here, struggling into the vertical position from the horizontal, that my favourite became that for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany:

God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright; grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations.

Now I was well aware that part of the Archbishop's skill was to take someone else's prose, and work on it both theologically and with an ear for its purpose in the liturgy, and that is what he had completed in many of his prayers. What I didn't realize for some time was that this was a prayer on which Cranmer was still working; and that it was left to Sanderson and the seventeenth-century revisers to put it into the form we know it.

Now for me this does not diminish his stature, but offers a picture of a great theologian and liturgist, working at his quest for truth, on a text still seeking perfection, that would encourage many into broad unity within the national church. The quest for truth was still uppermost in his mind in the events of his martyrdom that we recall today.

Had he been right in the conclusions he had reached and which through his office and his books—particularly the Book of Common Prayer—had influenced so many? For a time during his trial, he was persuaded otherwise, and for his final sermon to be preached in the church of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford, the text was agreed with his accusers and printed, and distributed before the event—prefiguring what happens in the dissemination of news today. If the *Today* programme had been on the air in 1556 the anchor person would have read: ‘Before his execution this morning, the Archbishop will preach in Oxford and will denounce his untrue books and writings of recent years.’

But when he got into the pulpit, Cranmer read the first part of the text as planned—and then, renounced his recantation; and later, so the story goes, thrust first into the fire the hand that had signed it. It was also, we recall, the hand that penned the text that still moves us in worship and discipleship today.

So for me, Thomas Cranmer was a true martyr,

who died for what he believed in his heart; but he was no fanatic. He is a martyr who warms my heart; a wobbly martyr, who cannot always stand upright. A martyr who more than most of us, was set in a time when he faced daily dangers and temptations, and who knew that only by the grace of God can they be surmounted. Count the number times in Cranmer’s collects that he specifically asks for grace—I make it at least twenty out of the weekly and saint’s days collects.

So, on a day when the present Archbishop of Canterbury has laid flowers in the place of martyrdom in Oxford this morning at the hour Cranmer died, let us join together to thank God for him, and let us pray for the Church of England today, that the grace of God, on which Cranmer always relied, may support us in all our present dangers, and carry us through all temptations.

This sermon was preached by Canon Vincent Strudwick, Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford, at Evensong at St Paul’s Cathedral on the 450th anniversary of Cranmer’s Martyrdom.

‘On Fire for Jesus’

by Clark Cornelius

In popular Christian lingo, someone who is more than the usual lukewarm church attender is ‘on fire for Jesus.’ On 21 March, my wife and I travelled to Oxford, England for an important commemoration—the 450th anniversary of Thomas Cranmer’s martyrdom, literally ‘on fire for Jesus’.

Who cares about Thomas Cranmer?

If you enjoy reading the Bible in English in your church, you should. If you relish worshipping God in English instead of Latin, you should. If you like to participate in worship instead of watching the clergy do everything, you should.

Architect of a Reformed Catholic faith

Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, steered a *via media* (‘middle way’) of Christian faith. He did not want to throw out the baby with the bathwater, so to speak. The medieval church had allowed many misleading practices into its worship. Preaching had all but disappeared, and the people watched priests with no biblical understanding conduct a beautiful but often superstitiously misunderstood service in Latin. Cranmer wished

to re-form the worship of the universal (‘catholic’) church, retaining the useful, discarding the untrue.

‘Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation’

Cranmer’s primary criterion for his reforms was agreement with God’s Word. The Articles (Anglican statement of faith) repeatedly defend cutting away many ceremonies widely practised in Cranmer’s day, insisting that all matters of faith must be provable by Scripture (Article 6). For example, a re-formed catholic church would keep Scripture readings, but read them in a language the people understood: English (Article 24). Cranmer raised the importance of the pulpit to the level of the Lord’s Table. He required full sermons at all Communion services, unless the priest was untrained, in which case he was to deliver a homily, most of which were forty-five minutes or more in length. (Ironically, in many churches today a Communion service has a shortened ‘sermonette’ due to ‘time constraints’.) Cranmer’s worship was full of Scripture. To this day, one will hear more Scripture in the multiple Bible readings, offertory sentences, ‘comfortable’ words

of assurance, and closing prayers of an Anglican worship service than in many 'Bible' churches.

Semper reformanda— 'Always to be reformed'

One of the Reformation's foundations was viewing the Church as a living organism which required continual attention to its health. Cranmer lived this slogan. From 1534 to 1540, he worked to put a Bible in English in every church in England. But he did not stop there. With so many untaught priests, he wrote Scripture-soaked sermons and distributed these for preaching (much as the way we use a video series); but he did not stop there. In 1544, he wrote a Litany (a 'responsive reading' of prayer) in English to use alongside the Latin Mass; but did not stop there. He composed the first worship services entirely in English in the Book of Common Prayer (worship book) of 1549; but did not stop there. Reading, praying, listening, his mind was being re-formed by the gospel of grace by faith. Thus in 1552 he wrote a new worship book. A critic has described its Communion service as 'the most effective attempt ever made ... [to enact] the doctrine of justification by faith.' But he did not stop there.

Actions louder than words

Cranmer was a word master. Many phrases of his 1552 Prayer Book are familiar to millions of non-

Anglicans: 'peace in our time', 'lift up your hearts', 'Glory be to God on high'; 'take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee'. When in 1553 Mary Tudor, a zealous Roman Catholic, took the throne, Cranmer's words doomed him. Bibles were removed, the Latin Mass returned, and Cranmer 'the chief heretic' was imprisoned and interrogated for three years, then humiliatingly stripped (literally) of his position. Fearful of death, he signed several statements recanting his views on salvation. But Queen 'Bloody' Mary did not stop there.

'This hand has offended'

In a packed University Church of St Mary's, Oxford, my wife and I watched the preacher climb the very pulpit from which Cranmer had been expected to confess his 'errors' (salvation by grace through faith) before dying at the stake. After praying for forgiveness, he addressed the mixed congregation of Roman and reformed catholics, urging them to care for the many poor in the land. Then, clearly and courageously:

'And now I come to the great thing which so much troubleth my conscience, more than any thing that ever I did or said in my whole life, and that is the scattering abroad of a writing contrary to the truth; which I now here renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life. And I renounce as false and untrue all such papers signed with my hand since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand hath offended, writing contrary to my heart, therefore this my hand shall first be punished; for when I come to the fire, it shall first be burned.'

But he did not stop there. Pulled from the pulpit he faced death with resolve, holding his writing hand in the fire until it was burned, a sermon of action. Julie and I stood silently at the spot in the street where Cranmer died trusting Christ alone for salvation. May all who call ourselves Christians be passionate about knowing and loving him who first loved us, and until our death, be 'on fire for Jesus.'

Let your light shine before others, that they may ... give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5.16

The Revd Clark Cornelius is Pastor of St Paul Anglican Church, Panama City, Florida, USA, which worships with a mix of hymns and praise music, and in a modern version of Cranmer's 1552 services. The anniversary of his ordination falls on 21 March.



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The Bishop of London Remembers Cranmer

by Richard Chartres

What a privilege it is to be permitted to dine in this hall in the College which Thomas Cranmer joined as a boy of fourteen in 1503 and where he spent more than a quarter-century. We are all in the debt of the Master and Fellows of Jesus for having responded so handsomely to the desire of the Trustees of the Prayer Book Society to begin the commemoration of the 450th anniversary of Cranmer's martyrdom here in the college which he loved.

I can see that for some people the notion of a dinner to celebrate a martyrdom might appear odd. Indeed I have been scrutinizing the menu rather anxiously, mindful of Cranmer's own regulations of the early 1540s. To combat gluttony, the Archbishop specified what the various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were permitted to eat at dinner. Bishops, for example, were not allowed to have more than two partridges or four blackbirds in a pie.

When Cranmer entered Jesus, the College was even younger than he was. The last two nuns of St Radegund had been evicted by the Bishop of Ely only in 1496. Cambridge was full of the noise of building works and new structures rising as a result of some spectacularly successful fundraising.

It was also a period of intellectual excitement. In 1511 when Cranmer proceeded to his BA degree, Erasmus arrived for his first extended stay in Cambridge.

By 1515, Cranmer was a Fellow of Jesus but then he married Joan (Black or Brown) and had to resign. It was quite proper for him to marry of course as a layman, but he had to quit the college and take the lowlier position of 'common reader' at Buckingham College—better known to us as Magdalene.

Joan alas died in childbirth. If she had not, the history of England might have been very different. Cranmer was re-elected, and here at Jesus from 1518 to 1526 (when he graduated as Doctor of Divinity) he applied himself to the study of the scriptures.

The researches of Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch conjure up a picture of a relatively conservative academic living here in his thirties, with little hint of the great role he was to play after being selected as a junior member of an embassy to Spain in 1527. As a result of this embassy, he had his first

fateful meeting with King Henry VIII. The academic became a leading actor in the affairs which preoccupied the whole of Europe.

You will not want me on this occasion to rehearse the whole story, which has been brilliantly told by Professor MacCulloch in his magisterial and moving biography. As preparation for the commemoration this year it would be hard to improve on MacCulloch's chapter entitled 'Condemned'.

Cranmer was finally sent to the flames on 21 March 1556. One of the most fascinating pieces of evidence for his final days is contained in the itemized bills from the bailiffs of Oxford for the provision of meals for the former Archbishop and to pay for the faggots for his pyre. Queen Mary's government refused to settle the bill in full, and it remained unpaid until the matter was referred to Archbishop Parker in 1566 and he and a group of Elizabethan bishops finally settled the account.

The drama involved first the intervention of a Catholic sister to the Archbishop and Cranmer's recantation. There was an apocalyptic atmosphere as the various parties sought to stage-manage the demise of the Archbishop for propaganda purposes. People were perturbed by the appearance of a comet over the skies of southern England in early March.

But as Cranmer faced his last day on earth, 21 March, a mysterious message from another sister, a Protestant arrived and Cranmer himself contrived to wreck the propaganda coup that had been planned. We survivors of the twentieth century and its show trials can perhaps understand the state of mind which induced the isolated Archbishop to recant; but at the very end in the University Church where he was expected to make a public show of contrition, he renounced the documents he had been forced to sign under pressure and proclaimed his continuing belief in the eucharistic doctrine contained in the Prayer Book.

There was commotion in the church, and as Cranmer was dragged out of the pulpit and taken into the street on the way to be burned, people could hear the Spanish friar who had been his interrogator, Juan de Villagarcia, in a dazed state repeating over and over again 'non fecisti—you didn't do it'. We all remember how he held out his right

hand that had signed the recantations so that it would be burned first. After his death, in the ashes of the fire his heart was discovered un-burnt, and rather feebly his detractors could only suggest that the condition of his heart was due to some form of heart disease.

This anniversary is a good opportunity to tell Cranmer's story and the story of the Prayer Book to a new generation who are not always well served by how history is taught in our schools. Inspecting my daughter's GCSE history syllabus, I discovered a focus on Twiggy and the Vietnam War with a lurch into ancient times represented by the Wall Street crash. There has never been a generation better informed about 'now' with so little sense of how we came to be here. Every child in this country ought to have the opportunity of meeting Cranmer and considering his legacy.

Belatedly it may be that public authority has come to see that knowledge of our nation's story, its title deeds and foundation documents is vital if we are to weather the turbulent times which are most assuredly coming upon us. I read that a project called 'Icons' has been launched with government funding. £1 million has been set aside for this two year exercise entitled 'Icons: A Portrait of England' in which the public will be invited to nominate the things they cherish most about England.

Lack of clarity about our story and our common values could easily expose us to the kind of volatile and fearful panic which is so often the prelude to a descent into hasty and illiberal legislation.

Members of the Church of England are not Cranmerians in the sense that Lutherans and Calvinists look to some master theologian for their inspiration. Much that we cherish, including the choral Evensong in which we participated in the College Chapel, would not necessarily be approved by the Archbishop, but we honour him and celebrate his contribution to the spiritual life of this and every nation which worships in English.

English was being shaped to encompass the highest themes in the sixteenth century. It could have developed in two ways. One way would have led to the pompous and convoluted style favoured by some humanist scholars, with an excessive dependence on the classical languages.

The other path favoured by men like Sir John Cheke, Cranmer's friend, would have seen a consistent preference for Anglo-Saxon derivations over Latin and Greek. He proposed, for example, that instead of resurrection we should speak of 'gainrising'; crucified would have been 'crossed' and proselyte—'freshman'.

The Prayer Book played a key role in deciding what was good English. We can thank God that it was composed by Thomas Cranmer who had an ear for formal prose: for its sonorities and structure.

The influence of the Prayer Book system upon many generations, in its very language and the dispositions which it inculcates, has played a major role, instilling in English culture the virtues of restraint and balance.

But there is much more. Just before Christmas, I went to take the sacrament to someone who was putting up a brave fight against cancer and who has since died. I used the Prayer Book Communion Service which he had not heard for many years. The power of the liturgy, its 'in your face quality' did not alienate him at such a grave moment, but liberated him to face the deep and simple questions that somehow elude us in the coded speech of more modern times. The liturgy enabled him to 'lift up his heart' and left him more joyful and positive.

In particular, it was such a relief not to lurch into the indicative mood of 'the Lord is here', that proprietorial sentence which so jars on the ears of those who have a lively sense in prayer of the immensity in our midst.

The proper mood in worship is adorative and implorative. True, a generation that has been outrageously flattered and has a very good opinion of itself until reminded by affliction of its own creaturely existence, has found the liturgy of the Prayer Book insufficiently affirming. But that is precisely why it is vital that the BCP is not relegated to some liturgical museum, because it preserves in its DNA things that are virtually unsayable now but which will, with the revolution of the times, come into focus once again.

The Prayer Book system embodies the ethos of our Church: founded on scripture, interpreted by tradition, articulated by the catholic creeds (which are perhaps more commonly used in the Prayer Book liturgies than in any other liturgical régime) and expressed by the spirit-filled continuity of life in the church and the ways in which we have sought together to respond to the demands of successive generations.

Tradition for us is not 'traditionalism', the obstinate adherence to mores of the day before yesterday, but the spirit-filled continuity of the church's life and her response to contemporary challenge, always under the supreme judgment and inspiration of scripture.

Cranmer himself was a renovator rather than an innovator, and composed our Prayer Book from scripture and the deposits laid down in the course

of the history of the church. He understood that God said 'Behold I make all things new' and that he did not say 'Behold I make all new things'.

The Prayer Book offers a simple and moderate system for a whole life, from baptism to last rites and seeks in its rubrics and ceremonies to embrace the whole person and not merely the cerebellum.

Now is all this at an end? Is the Prayer Book a dead book, a museum piece? I think we certainly need to tell the story with more confidence as a system which transforms lives and translates doctrines and ethics into living ethos. We are certainly counter-cultural at present as we are taught to desire instant satisfaction of our most

superficial cravings and to be entertained enough to keep us from the deathly boredom of our own company. The formation offered by the Prayer Book is life-long and demands and expects a great deal from those who use it. While we live, we must help new generations who grow sick of perpetual carnival with no ensuing Lent to appreciate that there is in the Prayer Book system a sure, though not flashy, way to transfiguration and to Heaven beyond.

This talk was delivered by the Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, Ecclesiastical Patron of the PBS, at the Society's dinner at Jesus College, Cambridge on 21 January this year.

A New Setting of a Prayer Book Collect

To mark the 450th anniversary of the death of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the Irish Branch of the Prayer Book Society commissioned the composer Philip Stopford to write a new setting of an Ascensiontide Collect.

Mr Stopford is Director of Music at Belfast Cathedral, and the newly commissioned work was for the Cathedral Choir to sing for the first time at the BCP Choral Eucharist on Ascension Day 2006.

Much of Philip Stopford's output has been liturgical music such as the *Missa Brevis* for Keble College and the Centenary Mass for the centenary of the consecration of the nave of Belfast Cathedral. This is his first setting of a Prayer Book Collect.

Referring to this new composition, Mr Stopford told the *Journal*:

Everyone knows that William Byrd and the other Elizabethan composers wrote many settings of Prayer Book Collects at a time when these texts were 'new'.

Despite the BCP Choral Evensongs and Choral Eucharists which occur throughout the British Isles every week, contemporary composers however are not often asked to set them to music.

I very much welcomed the Prayer Book Society commission. The richness of the language and the clarity of the thought is a great challenge and, I hope, an inspiration to the composer.

The challenge is to write music that matches

the beauty of the Prayer Book prose and also to make a composition whose structure is based on the thought structure of the Collect.

Members of the Society and other Book of Common Prayer enthusiasts might consider placing commissions with contemporary composers.

Don't forget that with so many excellent youth choirs and school chapel choirs, this is a way of introducing young people to BCP language, enabling them to become enthusiasts in their turn.

In Belfast Cathedral we have recently established a youth choir and I have been delighted to see young people so enthusiastic to sing great church music from previous centuries as well as exploring contemporary settings of famous texts.

Music offers such an opportunity to draw young people to appreciate the grandeur of the Prayer Book language. Great liturgical literature and good music surely provide an opportunity for the church to touch the lives of lots of our young people.

Mr Stopford was born in 1977. He has been at Belfast Cathedral since 2003 and is a prolific composer of church music. His Ecclesium Choir has recorded some of his works on the Priory Records CD *British Church Composer Series—2: Philip Stopford* PRC D 832. All of his compositions are published on www.ecclesium.co.uk

Cranmer Awards Finals 2006

by Meg Pointer

The National Finals of the Cranmer Awards were held on Saturday 25 February 2006 at Hatfield House by invitation of the Marquess of Salisbury, President of the Prayer Book Society. In this 450th anniversary year of Thomas Cranmer's martyrdom, the Marquess reminded us that his family have held high office in the government of this country since the time of the Tudors when the Prayer Book was being compiled and revised.

This year the Senior final was again held in the beautiful Chapel. Canon Laird opened the proceedings with prayer. The judges were Mrs Lesley Cook, the Hon. Mrs Mary Pearson and the Revd Dr Roger Beckwith who heard eleven candidates—eight girls and three boys. Mr and Mrs Ian Woodhead were on hand to check the time and text and Mrs Meg Pointer combined the role of Master of Ceremonies and room manager. The Junior final took place in the Winter Dining Room with Dr Jennifer Longhurst, Mr Stanley Johnson and Mrs Jean Gorton judging, the Revd Paul Thomas as Master of Ceremonies, Mrs Lesley Scott room manager and the Misses Joy Rabbetts and Valerie



The Revd Paul Thomas introduces the next candidate

Butler checking time and text. There were thirteen candidates—seven girls and six boys.

The judges consider various aspects of the presentation—not just accuracy. An under- or over- run of time is noted as well as diction and clarity, pace and presence, use of pauses and emphasis, sincerity, intelligent communication of meaning and the use of the voice for the passage chosen. The choice of passage varies considerably. To make the programme interesting for the



The Junior finalists

audience and judges, the person arranging the final needs to know the passages in advance to prepare the running order and for the text checker to have a BCP 'flagged up'. The 1662 text is the only one allowed and the judges' decision is final.

The results were as follows (with the passages chosen shown in brackets).

Seniors

1st **Gina Walter**, London
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of St John the Baptist)

2nd **Jannan Gunaratnam**, Rochester
(Psalms 95 and 96)

3rd **Susan Patrick**, Sodor & Man
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of St Michael and All Angels)

Highly Commended

Emily Egerton, Chester
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of Trinity 21)

Lucinda Richardson, Bath & Wells
(Psalms 103 and 143)

Juniors

1st **Elizabeth Martin**, Worcester
(Psalm 118)

2nd **Thomas Varney**, Rochester
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of Trinity 9)

3rd= **Nicholas Bowman**, London
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of Trinity 23)

3rd= **Sarah Qualtrough**, Sodor & Man
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of St Michael and All Angels)

Highly Commended

Connie Birch, Norwich
(Collect, Epistle and Gospel of Advent 1)

Tara Scott, Oxford
(Introduction to Evening Prayer, General Confession and Magnificat)

A Gift of Historic Prayer Books

Mr Christopher Hone has given the Society a valuable collection of Prayer Books dating from the seventeenth century onwards, collected by his late mother, Mrs Barbara Hone, whom members of the Society may remember.

A suitable home will now need to be found for them, where they can be preserved and displayed. We should be grateful for any suggestions as to where these books might appropriately be housed.



Elizabeth Martin, Junior First Prize winner

It is hoped that the winners' local churches will invite them to participate in a service. This year's senior winner was invited to repeat her presentation at her school assembly on the Monday morning.

Changes over the years in church usage of the BCP at the main Sunday services, arrangements for school assemblies and the teaching of RE all have reduced the exposure of the younger generation to the BCP. The language is not incomprehensible as some would have us believe. Before 'Education, Education, Education' became a watchword, the BCP was understood and loved by people in all strata of society. May the efforts of the PBS help to return us to this situation.

Meg Pointer has been involved with the Cranmer Awards for many years, first assisting the late Mrs Margot Thompson and then as National Administrator. She has now retired from running the Awards, and the Society expresses its grateful thanks to her for her hard work, efficiency and dedication.

Photographs by Chris Hall

My Baptism

by Chloe Ivey-Ray (aged eleven)

My baptism was at St Martin's Church, Chipping Ongar at 3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 5 February 2006.

I wanted to have a traditional baptism service because it had lovely old words and it was a very rare and unusual service and not many people have it. The service is called 'A Baptism for those of Riper Years'. There was a great turnout with eighty-seven people there.

I wore a lovely cardigan with my bridesmaid dress and flower hairclips. After the service there was a party with lots to eat and drink. Daddy had to put on the service sheet 'There will be no waste!' There was a bit of music at the party played by Natasha Brewin and Francesca Clark. I had a lovely cake made by a friend of ours called Mary King. The cake had a dove on it with flowers in each corner with 'God Bless You, Chloe' in fancy letters.

I liked the service not only because it was done nicely by the Revd Barry Pyke, but also because I liked the hymns. The hymns were 'All things bright and beautiful', 'Ye servants of God', 'Colours of Day', 'Great is thy faithfulness', 'O Father bless the children' and the song 'Great, great, brill, brill' (for younger children). The readings were done by Natasha Brewin (my class friend) and Gareth Kaye (my infant class teacher). My Godparents were Gareth Kaye and Robert and Theresa Wallis.

The Revd Barry Pyke gave me a candle and a Certificate of Baptism. I got quite a few presents and cards as well. I really felt inside me God was all around the place (but not to see).

Another thing about the service was that even though the words were old fashioned I could understand them; it was not Chinese or something. My Daddy goes to a traditional service but they have no Sunday School for my age group, so I go to St James' church which has modern services. The hymns are modern and boring but the Sunday School is great.

Daddy said I could have a Prayer Book service if I understood the words, which he taught me. I really did not want a modern clappy one and the other choice Daddy said was called *Common Worship* which did not have the magical words.

The Archdeacon has said I could take Communion now because I have taken the promises as a person of riper years and I am not like a baby so I don't really need a Confirmation of Baptism,



Chloe at her baptism

but it could be nice to think about it. I would probably go for a Prayer Book service with lots of music and children and a big reception. Daddy said he is skint because the Baptism cost him £667.24 and I need to be older to study for Confirmation. I reckon Communion will have to wait.

The big point is that my special Riper Years Baptism was very special. There were loads of kids and the band was children and grown ups. There was a cello, piano, two clarinets, one flute and an organ. The Revd Barry Pyke explained all about the Prayer Book and said it was the first Riper Years Baptism he had done, but he would be happy to do another one. He was great and wore a really cool green cloak with a big gold cross on the back—we don't have anything like that at St James'. Some people have said that if the church was like my service they would go every week!

There are some orders of service left in plastic binders. If anyone wants to see how my special day was made happy and nice for children, they can send a stamped addressed envelope* for a free copy to: Philip Ivey-Ray, 6 Aukingford Gardens, Shelley, Ongar, Essex CM5 0BG.

*Please note that the order of service weighs 106g, so please include appropriate postage.

Chloe with her friends after the service



The Honorary Secretary of the Chelmsford Branch writes:

On Sunday afternoon, together with other members of the Prayer Book Society, I was privileged to attend the baptism of Chloe Ivey-Ray, aged eleven, at the eleventh-century church of St Martin, Chipping Ongar.

The service was attended by her friends, family and groups from various local churches, perhaps eighty to ninety persons. The common denominator seemed to be that few would have used or perhaps even heard of the Book of Common Prayer.

Chloe's father Philip, a long-standing and active member of the PBS had approached the Rural Dean, the Revd Barry Pyke, who agreed to lead the service using the liturgy from the BCP from the 'Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years'. Courageously he left the details of the service to Philip Ivey-Ray who produced a fully detailed service sheet.

The organ at St Martin's has recently been refurbished and tuned to concert pitch. It was magnificent to hear Jeremiah Clarke's *Trumpet Voluntary*. From that stage the music for six traditional hymns was provided by a children's

band of strings and flute. 'All things bright and beautiful', totally appropriate, has rarely been sung with such gusto.

Readings, additional to the Order of Service in the Prayer Book, from 1 Corinthians 10 and Matthew 3 (Christ's Baptism), read by Chloe's friend, Natasha Brewin, emphasized the scriptural content of this challenging liturgy which was conducted so carefully and faithfully by the Revd Barry Pyke.

This Service should be used regularly both publicly and privately for in it lies the truth of salvation. We pray that Chloe may be 'regenerate' and encouraged to lay hold on the promises which she has made.

In promoting this service, I commend Philip, as did so many others in the congregation. We must be thankful for those who give all for the furtherance of their belief; for the clergy who stand firm in delivering God's Word through the Cranmer liturgy within the Book of Common Prayer, and above all for the examples of those who 450 years ago were burned at the stake for their belief.

David Martin

A New Publication from the Chelmsford Branch

A new paper and personal testimony by Stanley Ward, Vice-Chairman of the Chelmsford Branch, 'elder statesman' of the PBS, long-serving Branch Secretary and member of the former Executive Council 1982–2002

Upholding the Value and Necessity of the Authorized/King James Version of the Holy Bible and in Thanksgiving for its Vital Influence on The Book of Common Prayer

Copies available free of charge from the Branch Secretary

David Martin, Mill Cottage, Mill Road, Felsted, Essex (telephone 01371 820591 or fax 820464)

The Passion of The Christ

by Julie Lethaby

I wonder what runs through your mind when you hear these words?

Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.

On Good Friday the Daily Mail ran a report of the work of a British trauma surgeon and an Israeli archaeologist and their attempts to establish the medical cause of Christ's death; the argument apparently hinges—quite literally—on how a body was nailed to the cross. It appears that there was no standard practice, other than the whim of the soldiers ordered to perform the task. The report is not unduly macabre or sensationalist, but it does remind one of the facts of crucifixion, as it was intended as a means of 'deliberately dishonouring and humiliating their [Rome's] most despised prisoners, who usually came from the lowest social classes'.

The words of Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer seek to reflect in *language* not only what it cost Christ to achieve our redemption but why that cost was necessary. The weight, indeed all-pervasiveness of human sin as represented in the Book of Common Prayer is often used as the main clerical argument against its use in the modern Anglican Church: the argument goes that people need reminding that they are loved, special and accepted and by inference if not statement, that the exacting paternalism of the historical Church needs correcting. Yes ... but ... for the love of Christ and his gift of self-esteem to be real there is need, like Martin Luther and Thomas Cranmer, to start with the truth: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ...' as the opening Sentences of the Order for Evening Prayer remind us. The greatest evidence of the ubiquitous character of human sin is the Passion of Christ.

Just before Easter I watched, for the first time, Mel Gibson's controversial film, his attempt to present a historical portrayal of *The Passion of The Christ*. I watched the film on a screen set up by the parish in the village hall with my neighbours. For me the film simply and honestly visually illustrated the import and ethos of the Prayer Book liturgy: its

sincerity, relevance and reality. The film underlined that every ungenerous thought or unkind action does have consequences; including the good I fail to achieve. Relief from those consequences is only acknowledged when 'we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee.' To daily pick up the Cross and do his will and not mine. Although as historically accurate as any account of the Crucifixion, secular or religious, that I have encountered, it failed to portray the final consequences of mankind's desire for autonomy from God; the film failed to acknowledge the ultimate indignity that Christ was crucified naked.

It has long been my thought that Christ was crucified because mankind could first of all think up the act of crucifixion as a punishment and secondly could not only imagine such a cruel and twisted act but actually treat another human, a child of God, with such alienation.

The words of the Prayer Book are exceptional not because of their majesty or the way they roll off the tongue and cleave to the mind; many sacred and poetic writings equally deserve such accolades. The words of the Prayer Book are exceptional because they represent the truth, and uniquely in a manner that is finely tuned to the literary consciousness of the English mind. Art like music transcends cultural boundaries and traditions. Mel Gibson's *The Passion of The Christ*, surprisingly for some, reverently and historically captures and conveys the seriousness and cost to Christ of our salvation: our wholeness. *The Passion of The Christ* portrays in the medium of film the intent of the Prayer of Consecration:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again.'

Dr Julie Lethaby is Head of Development of the PBS.

News and Notices

Editorship of the PBS Journal

The Society wishes to express its sincere thanks to Dr Chris Hall, who edited the previous four issues of this magazine (from Lent 2005 to Lent 2006). Under his editorship, the *Journal* has continued to develop and flourish, and we are most grateful to Dr Hall for his very patient and thorough work.

Regrettably, Dr Hall has now stepped down as Editor, and we are urgently seeking a volunteer to take his place, who must be a member of the PBS and committed to our aims. Common sense and the ability to devote the required time are more important than journalistic experience. The Society is looking to widen its pool of active volunteers and to avoid placing its workload on too few shoulders, so previous active involvement with the PBS is not a prerequisite.

The Editor is assisted by an Editorial Board, for which new members are also sought, and which meets as required by telephone conference (so no physical travelling is required). Access to e-mail is essential. To find out more, please contact the Acting Editor, Prudence Dailey.
Telephone: 01865 766023
E-mail: prudence.dailey@prayerbook.org.uk

Liturgy and Music in English Cathedrals 1900–2005

Research student beginning work in this area under the supervision of Professor Peter Aston at the University of East Anglia; particularly looking at the relationship between musical and liturgical development (including music for BCP Matins and Evensong). Any relevant unpublished papers or correspondence would be very welcome.

Please contact the Revd Martin Eastwood.
Telephone: 020 7385 5023
E-mail: fathermartin@hotmail.com

Do You Have an Eye for Layout and Design?

We are seeking a volunteer to typeset flyers and inserts for our publications, such as booklists or notices of meetings and events, on an *ad hoc* basis. These are relatively straightforward, black-and-white, A4 sheets, and it is not anticipated that this will be an excessively onerous or time-consuming task. Use of specialist desktop publishing

packages is not essential, provided that you are confident with Microsoft Word® (or similar) and are able to produce a smart-looking result.

To discuss the requirements, and for some examples of the kind of thing you might be asked to create, please contact Prudence Dailey.
Telephone: 01865 766023
E-mail: prudence.dailey@prayerbook.org.uk

Welcome to our Newest Trustee

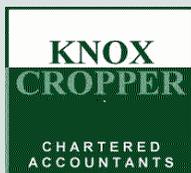
John Yaxley was co-opted to fill a vacancy on the Board of Trustees in November 2005.

John served in Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service (Colonial Service) from 1961 to 1994 in the Western Pacific (Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands) and, by contrast, in Hong Kong. His career has ranged from contacting 'lost' tribes in mountainous Pacific islands to being a Director of a Nuclear Power Station in China, to lobbying at Westminster when he was Hong Kong's Commissioner in London.

On retirement, John served on the Council of Durham University and was also the Chairman of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance and a member of the Salvation Army Advisory Board. He is a Trustee of the Oxford Historic Churches Trust, an appointment which reflects his interest in church architecture and history. In Hong Kong, he was a member of the Cathedral Council and Chairman of the Diocesan Social Welfare Committee. He has recently retired after twelve years as churchwarden responsible for two medieval Cotswold churches.

Erratum

In the previous issue, we incorrectly identified Baroness James of Holland Park (P. D. James) as a Vice-President of the Prayer Book Society. She is, of course, one of our Lay Patrons, and we apologize both to Lady James and to our readers for any confusion.



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Sheila Kilmister

Mrs Sheila Kilmister, wife of former PBS National Chairman Tony Kilmister, died in January this year. Neil Inkley remembers her.

For many in the Prayer Book Society, especially those of that core which met regularly during its first twenty-five years, Friday 20 January 2006 was one of those days when time stood still and separated eras. Sheila Kilmister had been in hospital for just a week when she suffered a stroke and repeated brain haemorrhage. Prayers had been said for her in many places at that time. The news of her death travelled quickly and the realization was rapid and widespread.

Sheila, devoted wife of Tony Kilmister, had been a founder member and one of the 'ever presents' in the formative and developing life of the Society. Indeed, it was Sheila who proposed the title 'The Prayer Book Society' for the new body succeeding the BCP Action Group in 1975. Whilst she never held any formal 'grand' office, she occupied more than an office as the Chairman's wife. She did so much of the Society's administrative work such that she might have been called—on her own—the Honorary Head Office. She also fulfilled an almost ambassadorial role in contacts with the Branches. And then, year upon year, there was her endless provision of sandwiches and refreshments for Executive Councils and other meetings, where in terms of 'person occasions' she must have come close to feeding the five thousand.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings were held at the Kilmisters' home in Northwood and it was so freely thrown open for a cheerful foregathering, a sherry break and a superb lunch between morning and afternoon sessions, and Sheila still had the stamina to produce afternoon tea before members headed home. Sheila was indeed a marvellous hostess. It seemed piquant that the Epistle under which we sat on the day of her passing contained 'Be kindly affectioned one to another ... not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the

Lord; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.' This really forms a ready obituary in itself.

Sheila was born in Manchester in September 1935. She was nineteen when she met Tony early in 1955 and they were married in Hyde, Cheshire on 24 May 1958 (which was the last ever Empire Day). The permanence of that loving relationship over the following forty-eight years was evident for all to see.

In 1993 Tony and Sheila were the co-founders of the Prostate Research Campaign UK and Sheila threw herself into the administration of that charity with the same verve as she displayed for the Prayer Book Society.



Around 200 people filled St Peter's Church, Bushey Heath, in Hertfordshire for her funeral on 2 February. As might be expected the dignified words of the Book of Common Prayer rang out, supplemented by inspirational hymns. People representing many aspects of Tony and Sheila's life together were present and the many PBS members there came from a dozen or more Branches.

But after all the facts and figures it is as an outgoing and constant friend of so many that Sheila will be sadly missed. Add to this the cliché about the good woman behind every good man and it is a matter of no surprise that among the hundreds of condolence letters received were

those from Bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury, a member of the Royal family and many leaders in various spheres. That was a reflection of the Sheila-and-Tony partnership. We must remember both of them in our prayers.

One is left momentarily wondering how Sheila's great vibrancy could be so quenched. But then of course taking the next world into account, and not just this one, it hasn't been. Her contribution was too big to be measured; it can only be missed.

Neil Inkley is Chairman of the Branches' Representative Council, and was formerly the Vice-Chairman of the PBS.

Reflections on a Parting

by Nikki Sales

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.

In comparison to new birth, too often we react to death in haste. In our very human grief, the instinct of many is to cloak and hide in anguish the confidence given by our Christian faith. Too often death strikes as a bitter reminder of the ending of our cherished human relationships when we forget its true purpose; that it is the extraordinary beginning to our perfect union with God.

The funeral of Mrs Sheila Kilmister, at St Peter's, Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire, was an uplifting and enriching experience for those who gathered together to mourn. On a cold February day it was a warm celebration of life. Due homage was paid in perfect measure to the rite of passage and deep ache of our human loss, within the thankfulness that through the grace of God, his promise of eternal life is realized.

It is the faith and prayer of the Bible as encapsulated and as daily reinforced through the 1662 Book of Common Prayer that gives each man in every generation the words and doctrine to so sensitively express and live the Christian faith. With

a quiet and noble dignity, Mr Tony Kilmister showed us how to adapt the Burial service sensitively to create a thoroughly modern, yet orthodox, order of Thanksgiving followed by private cremation; wholly appropriate to the practicalities of the twenty-first century.

During Mrs Kilmister's funeral service I grew almost to envy her, safely translated by transition from the cherished and amiable love of man, into the revelation of the love of God. Why had I been left behind? The sequence of Mr Kilmister's choice of hymns powerfully moved my spirit from darkness to light as I recalled other times and places, when in both happiness and sadness I had sung 'The day thou gavest', 'Now thank we all our God' and 'Thine be the glory.' Ultimately it was the unearthly beauty of the recessional chanting of the *Nunc Dimittis* that reduced me to quiet sober tears, in the humble sharing of the gift of secure faith which believes in perfect trust that God works in, through, and by his timescale, in which each of us is but a single stitch in a tapestry of which we cannot see either the colour and richness of his design, nor any boundary to his glorious work.

Nikki Sales is Honorary Secretary of the PBS.

Peter Bolton Packs Up his Books

Peter Bolton was Chairman of PBS Trading and Head of Publications from November 2003, until his resignation at the end of April this year. During that time, he has made an invaluable contribution to the Society, and it is almost impossible to overestimate the amount of sheer hard work he has put in.

Having been run faithfully for many years by John and Ann Skinner from their home in Ruislip, the administration of PBS Trading was subsequently put into the hands of a commercial distribution company. This arrangement did not, however, prove successful, and increased costs combined with the lack of a

personal touch meant that sales soon dwindled, and a new volunteer was sought to take on the task.

Peter Bolton, combining his passion for books with a thoroughly practical approach, proved the ideal man for the job. He and his wife, Rosalind, gave over significant parts of their house to boxes of books, and their lives to what became in effect a full-time job: taking orders, packing and posting publications, and dealing with enquiries. Then there were the additional and unexpected problems, such as the occasional customer who failed to supply a name and address, leaving Peter to trace his identity through the banking system!

It was, however, a labour of love, and Peter's particular skill and interest lay in developing an appealing and varied booklist. In addition to stocking a wide range of titles from external publishers, Peter also commissioned a number of books which have been published by the PBS, as well as expanding the offering to include CDs (which have proved very popular). Peter has become a familiar figure to many members, organizing and manning the bookstall at the PBS Conference and other national events.

He proved an astute judge of what would sell and what would not, and sales rose steadily to over £12,000 per year. March this year saw the advent of Peter's one thousandth customer, who fortuitously happened to be passing through Leamington station, near to where Peter lives, and so was able to complete the purchase in person.

PBS Trading is essential to the work of the Society in many ways: in raising funds, in publishing and selling books to promote our cause and in helping to demonstrate our academic credibility. Peter Bolton has fulfilled his task with admirable success, and he is already sorely missed. Happily,

he is continuing in his role as Secretary of the Coventry Branch.

We are pleased to announce that books may now be ordered from the PBS Administration Office at Copyhold Farm, Goring Heath, the address of which is given on page 2. We regret that orders cannot be accepted by telephone. The booklist issued with the previous Journal remains in force for the time being, and a new one will be sent out with the forthcoming issue of Faith & Worship.

Peter Bolton hands over some books to Geoff Evison, his 1,000th customer. Photograph by Margaret Hall



Letters

Common Worship as Directory

Professor Chapman (Lent 2006) is too kind when he writes that 'it would be unfair to make a plain comparison' between the Presbyterian Directory for Public Worship of 1644 and our own *Common Worship*. The Directory, as Professor Chapman reports, 'was not a service book but ... a set of directions for the conduct of services'. The first two items in *Common Worship* are directions for the conduct of services of exactly the same kind, though to be fair, they give our clergy much more freedom than was allowed to the preaching ministers of the Commonwealth. It is true that in our

new liturgical supermarket we are also offered plenty of alternatives with written-out texts, so the book would have been condemned by all the great parties of the 1640s. But directory-style is certainly in pride of place on our shelves. I wonder whether anyone more knowledgeable than I can tell us if this is the first time in history that services of the Church of England have been modelled on those of the Puritans?

Ian Robinson
The Stonehouse, Bishopstone,
Herefordshire, HR4 7JE

Thomas Cranmer Anniversary

With reference to the 450th anniversary of the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer held on 21 March, you may be interested in the reaction I obtained in my region of Greater Wellington, New Zealand.

I must admit that I myself was unaware of this anniversary until your *Lent Journal* arrived a few weeks ago. I wondered whether the local Anglican Province of New Zealand was equally ignorant so I contacted the Wellington Anglican Diocesan Office to enquire. No, said the Archdeacon, he wasn't aware but thanked me for drawing it to his attention. He forwarded my

message to the Dean of the Wellington Anglican Cathedral for his attention, who very kindly replied to me thanking me for the information and as a consequence he would be holding a celebratory Choral Evensong on the day, and invited me to attend. This I did with a very good friend and last evening we were two of about ten in the congregation. We enjoyed the essentially 1662 service, especially the singing from the eighteen-strong boys and girls choir, and the officiant, the Ven. Judith Hardie, commenced the service by making a five-minute address outlining the importance of the occasion and the part that Thomas Cranmer played in the establishment of the Reformation and the formation of the liturgy which for centuries has been the foundation of our worship. There was also prominently displayed on an easel, a good-sized tapestry picture of Cranmer with Ridley and Latimer.

I also drew the attention of the priest-in-charge at my local Anglican church to the occasion and again she also was not aware of the anniversary. However, I was told it was too late to make special mention of it, neither was it possible to hold a special service in commemoration. Ah me, I'm afraid I shall not be around in another fifty years to remind the local churches to celebrate the quincentennial!

The Revd Herbert P. Hall (Free Church of England)
349A Te Moana Road, Waikanae 6010,
New Zealand

Responses to Mrs A. L. Stephenson's 'Agony Column'

Thank you so much for publishing the letter from Mrs Stephenson in the Lent edition of the Prayer Book Society Journal. Her experiences and opinions accord so exactly with the way I feel that I felt obliged to write to you on the same matters.

I used to travel twenty-nine miles each way on a Sunday to get to a BCP service, held regularly at one of the several parishes of a particular benefice, at the wish of the parishioners although the incumbent was not that keen. I was a sidesman, rang the bells and did the readings.

Now I have been obliged to move to a residential home. I can be taken

on Sundays to a church in the nearest village but the service there is way-out Common Worship. There is an in-house service in the home on Sunday afternoons which is non-conformist and not to my liking. I have my own Bible and Prayer Book, of course, and rely on these to keep me in touch with things that matter.

But is it enough? I do not begrudge other people their right to worship as they wish and do rather wonder why I seem to be expected to conform to a way of public worship which is distasteful to me.

Joanna Crimp
Dulas Court, Dulas, Ewyas Harold,
Herefordshire, HR2 0HL

I agree with every word of Mrs Stephenson's letter. Our services are chaotic and change at the whim of whoever is taking them. Our church is a cross we have to bear.

Keep going, PBS!

Mrs M Chenevix Trench
Lisnamoe House, Ballymackey,
Nenagh, County Tipperary, Ireland.

We have also received a number of other responses to Mrs Stephenson's letter, and we regret that there has not been space to print them all on this occasion. We are, however, keen to hear further of members' experiences.

Defending the King James Version

Inasmuch as the Chief Executive of the Bible Society can write to *The Times* (25 March 2006) advocating the abandonment of the King James Version in favour of the *New Jerusalem Bible*, the *New International Version* or the *Good News Bible*, we surely see a warning that, as a Society, we must be ever watchful about espousing only the language and theology of the Book of Common Prayer.

Neil Inkley
6 Knot Lane, Walton-le-Dale,
Preston, PR5 4BQ

Cranmer Commemoration in Oxford

Many thanks to the PBS for such an amazing day in Oxford on 21 March. The organization seemed to proceed on oiled wheels—and we all know how much effort goes into achieving such a presentation.

This was, for me, a 'once in a lifetime' event and not to be missed. The Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon was a finely tuned and crafted gift to us all. There was a lump in the throat especially upon driving home, back to Somerset, when I had time really to understand what this commemoration meant; especially in the light of the unhappy world we live in at present. What an example Thomas Cranmer was.

Mrs Caroline Gentinetta
North View, Little London, Oakhill,
Nr Radstock, Somerset. BA3 5AU

The Prayer Book in Hiroshima

You may be interested to know that the Japanese Episcopalian Church of the Resurrection (*Fukkatsu Kyoukai*) here in Hiroshima has begun to hold occasional services in English using the Book of Common Prayer.

The presiding chaplain, Augustine Naoaki Kobayashi, agreed to a suggestion that I made to him recently that the Litany be read on Good Friday. He asked me, as the only native English member of the congregation, if I would read the service while he gave the responses. We held the service in the chapel at 2.00 p.m. on Good Friday. There were just three of us gathered together.

After the service we agreed that it would be a very good thing if we could offer Evening Prayer on regular occasions (perhaps twice a month). As I shall be responsible for conducting these services as a lay reader I would be grateful for any advice.

If any members of the Prayer Book Society should happen to come to Hiroshima, I would be very pleased should they wish to contact me.

David Hurley
Hiroshima, Japan
Telephone: 81-82-922-5820
E-mail: hirohurl@hotmail.com

News from the Branches

Bath & Wells and Bristol

A happy concurrence of anniversary celebrations was marked at Christ Church with St Ewen and St George in Bristol on 23 April 2006. Bristol PBS members were joined by members from Bath & Wells and the local branch of the Royal Society of St George for Choral Eucharist at 11.00 a.m. Her Majesty the Queen had celebrated her 80th birthday on 22 April, and prayers that God 'grant her in health and wealth long to live' held special resonance. We were reminded that Archbishop Cranmer had preached here in 1534 in the church which preceded the present day fine Georgian building (1786–90). It was a joy to worship on a site where the Litany was sung in English for the first time in England, in procession from Christ Church to St Mary's at Redcliffe on 2 July 1543. Christ Church has always used the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version of the Bible at all of its services, and continues with this very fine tradition to this day. And of course it was St George's Day! Our own Vice-Chairman, the Revd John Masding, was the celebrant and preached a rousing sermon before a goodly congregation which included honoured guests—the Lord Lieutenant and his wife, the deputy Lord Mayor, and the Chairman of the Bristol Branch of the Royal Society of St George. Also warmly welcomed was Dr Julie Lethaby, Head of Development of the PBS. Jonathan Price, Director of Music, played the magnificent *Renatus Harris* organ with great energy and inspired the choir and congregation in singing 'I vow to thee, my country' and 'Jesus, Lord of our Salvation'—the St George, Patron of England hymn. The organ voluntary, *Crown Imperial* by Sir William Walton brought the service to a conclusion.

After lunch, PBS members strolled down to St John's, a church built on one of the medieval city's gates, where they were treated to a lecture/guided tour by Dr J. H. Betsey, who gave a brief but fascinating account of the religious foundations in medieval Bristol, ranging from the great monastery of St Augustine (later to become Bristol Cathedral) to the many parish churches, eighteen in all, that were packed in to the old city. Bristol

has a remarkable amount of detailed documentary evidence

(churchwardens' accounts, inventories, wills etc.)—very rare nationwide—which describes the life of its parish churches. John Masding's clerical duties were not yet finished: he had a further sermon to preach at Choral Evensong in the cathedral where PBS members joined the Royal Society of St George for the day's final act of worship. The visiting choir, Cantores Literati, threaded the service with lovely renditions of the Responses (*Sumsion*), the Canticles (Howells' 'Gloucester Service'), Psalm 30. 1–5 ('I will extol thee, O Lord') and the anthem (Howells again—'Like as the Hart').



Julie Lethaby enjoys tea with PBS members in Bristol

An addition to this full day's programme was the opportunity for members of both Branches to discuss Prayer Book Society matters with Dr Julie Lethaby over a cup of tea at the Royal Hotel.

Peter Coxon
Honorary Secretary, Bath & Wells Branch

Exeter

Around two hundred people gathered in Exeter Cathedral on 21 March to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the Martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. The Dean celebrated Holy Communion according to the 1549 rite. Before the service began he gave an introductory address outlining the significance of the occasion and its importance in the history of our nation's religious life. There followed a truly mystical service, by the lantern lights of the choir stalls and to the peaceful harmonies of Merbecke's familiar setting. We hope the beauty of Cranmer's liturgy, which we are all striving to preserve, came over to the many young people present.



Left to right: The Precentor, the Revd Canon Carl Turner; Col. A. J. M. Drake, Branch Chairman; the Dean, the Very Revd Jonathan Meyrick; Eric Dancer; Lord Lieutenant of the County; and Sir John Cave, High Sheriff.

Members and their guests assembled in the Refectory after the service where an excellent finger buffet, with drinks, fortified them for their long journeys home. After a warm welcome to everybody, the Chairman invited those who were not members to join us. He thanked the Bishop of Exeter and the Dean and Chapter for their splendid co-operation with the occasion. Many members requested that this become an annual event.

Mrs F. O. Urwin
Honorary Secretary

Gloucester

On 29 April the branch held a service of Holy Communion at the ancient parish church of St John the Evangelist in the tiny village of Elkstone, Gloucestershire. Dating from 1160, the church has some fine examples of early seventeenth-century woodwork and early fifteenth-century carved stone. The celebrant was the Vicar, the Reverend Canon John Holder and the preacher, the Branch Chairman, the Reverend Canon Christopher Mulholland. The organ was played by the deputy chairman, the Reverend Canon George Smith. Following the service, members of the congregation and clergy repaired to the nearby village hall to enjoy lunch and good fellowship.

Tony Hilder
Honorary Secretary & Treasurer

London & Southwark

Over 100 branch members gathered at St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday 21 March for a service of Evensong to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer.

Most of us do not often have the opportunity to worship in a cathedral, and it was a treat to hear the service sung by the wonderful cathedral choir. Canon Vincent Strudwick, a Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford, had been invited to preach and we were educated by an erudite and insightful sermon on Cranmer. Canon Strudwick referred to 'the text that still moves us in worship and discipleship today'. He reminded us that Cranmer was a true martyr, 'a wobbly martyr, who cannot always stand upright'. (The full text of Canon Strudwick's sermon is printed on page 12 of this issue.) After the service, the Branch gathered for a reception in the Bishop of London's house, The Old Deanery. Unfortunately the Bishop, being on sabbatical, could not join us, but we were very pleased that Mrs Chartres could. We were indebted to Mrs Chartres for so kindly welcoming us into her house, and for making the formal reception rooms available to us. It was a splendid venue, which was much appreciated by all present. We were joined at the reception by the Dean, the Very Revd Dr John Moses and other members of the cathedral chapter. From members' contributions, the Branch was delighted to be able to make a financial gift to Emmaus, a charity for the homeless nominated by Mrs Chartres.

Gareth Hardwick
Branch Chairman

Lichfield

Lichfield Branch members attended a Choral Evensong at Lichfield Cathedral on 21 March to mark the 450th anniversary of Cranmer's martyrdom. The service was followed by supper at 'Chapters' in the Cathedral Close.

Eric Moore
Honorary Treasurer

North Wales

We had two excellent meetings in 2005, both in Bangor Diocese: in Conway parish church in June and then our very special service at Llanedwen in Anglesey with a memorable lunch and tour of Plas Newydd afterwards with one of our members, the Marquess of Anglesey, giving a talk on his home. This event brought national recognition for our Branch with the visit of Society officers and a write-up in the Society's

Journal. I am delighted to say that the regular celebrant at the Llanedwen service, the Revd Professor Leslie Francis, has joined our Branch, and also that some members have returned to Llanedwen where the 11.15 a.m. service every Sunday continues to be always 1662.

The Revd Neil Fairlamb
Honorary Secretary

Salisbury

The Annual General Meeting of the Salisbury Branch of the Prayer Book Society was held at Dinton Village Hall, with opening prayers led by the Revd Canon Frederick Shail.

The Branch Chairman, Mr Ian Woodhead, thanked the Officers and Committee for their hard work during the year and reported on the year's activities. These included general meetings, an Advent Carol Service and support for Salisbury Cathedral's Prayer Book Holy Communion services. Membership is steadily increasing.

The National Chairman, Mr Roger Evans, spoke on 'The Prayer Book Society Today'. A lively question time was followed by the usual hearty tea provided by the Committee and Branch members.

The bells were rung at the Parish Church of St Mary's, and Evensong was conducted by the Vicar, the Revd John Staples.

The Branch is organizing a service of Choral Matins in Sherborne Abbey on 20 May (which will have taken place by the time this *Journal* is published), to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. It will be attended by the Marquess of Salisbury and the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset.

Miss Joy Rabbetts
Branch Publicity Officer

Sodor & Man

The Lord Bishop of Sodor & Man, the Rt Revd Graeme Knowles, took a service to mark the 450th anniversary of the death of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. It was held on Sunday afternoon, 19 March, at Kirk Braddan. The Revd Canon Philip Frear, Vicar of Braddan, assisted.

The choir sang anthems by Byrd and Tallis. Four former prize-winners at local heats of the Cranmer Awards plus the 2003 National Junior first prize-



Canon Frear and Bishop Graeme Knowles with readers (left to right) Alice Whiteway, Jonathan Knowles, Emily Cook, Gemma Williams, Christopher Lewin. The Junior Cranmer Awards section is popular and well supported in the Island.

winner all gave readings. Two of the readings were from Cranmer's non-liturgical writings. The service was recorded for Manx Radio.

Mrs Celia Salisbury-Jones
Honorary Secretary

West & Central Regional Meeting in South Wales

A meeting of the West & Central Region of the PBS was held in Brecon Cathedral on 26 March, chaired jointly by the National Chairman, Mr Roger Evans, South Wales Branch Chairman Dr John Baker and Regional Trustee, Cllr Stephen Evans. Dr Julie Lethaby, Head of Development, was also present.

During a wide-ranging discussion, Roger Evans explained the formation and role of the Regions and Dr Lethaby's role in developing the Society, including her work with ordinands, which was generally agreed to be a priority for the PBS. Dr Baker outlined the difference in legal status between the Book of Common Prayer in the Church of England and in the Church in Wales. Wales does not enjoy the same protection for the BCP as does England, nor do Welsh PCCs have as much say in the choice of form of service. The Church in Wales has authorized various revisions of the Prayer Book, the most recent in 2004.

The meeting was followed by a service of Evensong, conducted by the Dean of Brecon, the Very Revd John Davies, and sung beautifully by the Resident Choir. Roger Evans read the first lesson. The Dean was delighted to see the PBS in Brecon Cathedral and was most welcoming. He encouraged a return visit.

Forthcoming Events

Bath & Wells

Wednesday 18 October, Wells Cathedral: 2.15 p.m. Lecture in the Bishop's Palace (Lecturer not yet arranged; Dr Jane Williams invited.); 3.15 p.m. 'Spilling the Beans', the monologue given at the Edinburgh Festival by the Revd Lisa Wright; 4.00 p.m. Tea including recitation from the BCP by the winner of the local Cranmer Awards heat; 5.15 p.m. Full Choral Evensong in the Cathedral Quire with the Bishop of Bath & Wells preaching; 6.15 p.m. Reception at the Rib, the wonderful medieval house next to the Chapter House at Wells (thanks to the generosity of Mr Michael Cansdale, a member of the Branch Committee), with guests received by the Rt Revd Michael Ball, the Branch Ecclesiastical Patron.

Blackburn

Friday 1 September. An evening at Whalley Abbey. 6.30 p.m., conducted tour of the Abbey by guides dressed as Cistercian Monks (tickets £2 per head). 7.30 p.m., talk by Mr Neil Inkley. 'The BCP—Where have we got to? How did we get there? What can we do about it?' No charge, but booking required for accommodation purposes. 8.15 p.m., buffet followed by speaker, the Revd Alan Reid: 'A light-hearted look at fifty years in the ministry' (tickets £12.50 per head). Tickets for the whole evening, £14 per head. Please contact the Branch Secretary, Mr Neil Inkley, for bookings. It is also possible to stay overnight in the newly refurbished accommodation at Whalley Abbey, for which the Abbey should be contacted direct on 01254 828400.

Canterbury

Thursday 27th July. Annual gathering, 2.15 p.m. at Christ Church, South Ashford. The speaker will be the Revd Canon Arthur Middleton.

Chester

Saturday 9 September. 11.00 a.m. Choral Matins at St. James the Great, Gawsworth. Singing led by the Thomas Cranmer Choir; preacher to be confirmed.

Chichester

Saturday 14 October. BCP Choral Communion at Chichester Cathedral, followed by lunch and gathering. Speaker Professor Roger Homan. Please contact the Branch Secretary, Mrs Ada Zahoui, for further details.

Coventry

Tuesday 11 July. As last year the Branch outing will be to an attractive, redundant country church where we will say Morning Prayer and then have a picnic lunch. The church this year is SS Peter and Paul, Winderton, in the south of the diocese, and the service will start at 11.30 a.m. After lunch, if the weather is suitable, there will be a guided country walk for the more energetic members of the Branch.

Thursday 28 September. Aston Cantlow Village Hall, Branch AGM preceded by Supper at 7.00 p.m. and followed by a talk by His Honour Judge Richard Cole. Further details from Mr Peter Bolton, Branch Secretary.

Exeter

Saturday 9 September. The Exeter and mid-Devon regional event will be held at Nymet Rowland. Details to follow.

London & Southwark

Saturday 8 July. 3.15 p.m., visit to Sutton's Hospital in the Charterhouse, where we will be welcomed by the Master, Dr James Thomson. This ancient foundation derives from the Carthusian priory that stood on the site, and was the original site of Charterhouse School. It now remains an almshouse for elderly gentlemen, the Brothers. We will enjoy a tour of the buildings, followed by tea. There will then be a service of Evensong in the chapel, with the choir of St Mary the Virgin, Monken Hadley.

Saturday 4 November. Branch AGM. Further details to follow.

Peterborough

Sunday 24 September. Members have been invited to a service of Choral Evensong at 6.30 p.m. in All Saints' Church, Northampton. The choir is of a very high standard and is in demand for concerts here and abroad. It would be helpful if members could contact the Branch Secretary, Mrs Mary Stewart, if they intend to attend.

Salisbury

Saturday 19 August. 2.15 p.m. Branch meeting at Netheravon Village Hall. Speaker Mr John Scrivener, Editor of Faith & Worship and General Synod member, followed by tea and then Evensong in All Saints' Parish Church, Netheravon.

Saturday 14 October. 2.15 p.m. Branch meeting at Alderholt Village Hall; speaker the Revd Dr Stephen Shipley, Producer of BBC Radio 3's Choral Evensong. Followed by tea and then Evensong in Alderholt Parish Church conducted by the Revd Philip Martin.

Saturday 2 December. 11.15 a.m. Advent Carol Service at St Martin's Church, Barford St Martin, conducted by the Revd John Staples, Rector. This will be followed by lunch at 12.30 p.m. in the Barford Inn.

North Wales

Sunday 10 September. Sung Evensong (1662) at 6.00 p.m. in St Mary the Virgin Church, Mold.

On the suggestion of one of our members, Miss Mary Fraser Burns, we are delighted to be invited to this splendid church by the incumbent and organist who are looking forward to a traditionally sung Prayer Book evensong of high musical standard. This will be a service shared with the parishioners and an example of living Prayer Book worship as part of normal church life. St Mary the Virgin Church, Mold, is, along with Gresford, Northop and St Giles', Wrexham, one of the great Beaufort churches built under the inspiration of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, to celebrate the victory of her son Henry Tudor (King Henry VII) at Bosworth Field in 1485. The church was restored by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. A guided tour is offered to members at 5.00 p.m. before the service at 6.00 p.m.

Special Events Organized by the West & Central Region

TEWKESBURY ABBEY, Tuesday 12 September. See details on page 11.

ETON COLLEGE, Saturday 20 January 6.00 p.m. Evensong at Eton College Chapel followed by a reception in School Hall. Further details in the next Journal.

Details of forthcoming events, including some not available in time to be published here, can be viewed on the Society's website at www.prayerbook.org.uk



‘And now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life: and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth. Which here now I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand, contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be: and that is, all such bills, which I have written or signed with mine own hand since my degradation: wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished: for if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned.’

Thomas Cranmer