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Editorial: Reform and Renewal

This is a time of change in the Church of England. The ‘Reform and Renewal’ project, driven by the Archbishop’s Council and underwritten by the Church Commissioners, will have effects (not only organisational) which are difficult as yet to estimate, but even in its earlier days some were complaining that too narrow a range of voices was being listened to:

[Scholars and academics are] not wanted because they would slow the work down and cause lots of questions to be asked. If you can’t value the past, you may then decide it needs to go, or needs modification. If you’ve never taken the time to understand it in the first place, there are risks.¹

There have been complaints that the project is too closely associated with a particular style of churchmanship and worship, and that the statistics which are relied on to indicate the ‘levers’ of church growth have been misrepresented.² One of the documents associated with ‘Reform and Renewal’ (*Setting God’s People Free*) calls for a ‘change in the culture’ of the laity to make them more ‘missional’. (This sounds very ambitious unless the ‘culture’ in question is quite superficial.) Here too those who might want to ask awkward or sceptical questions are unwelcome—I have seen a document concerning ‘pilot dioceses’ whose teams (which need contain only one layperson!) will form part of ‘a learning community’. It is quite firmly stated that ‘these communities work best when those involved “trust the process” and get stuck in. They work much less well when participants want to question the premise on which everything is done or seek to justify the present position’. They would ‘slow the work down, and cause lots of questions to be asked’. One even hears conversations in which the existing laity are seen as the principal obstacle to renewal—only to be tolerated because their donations are needed during the period which must pass before they are replaced. One is reminded of Bertolt Brecht’s quip: ‘wouldn’t it be simpler if the government dissolved the people and elected another?’

This is not all new, of course. Who has not heard exhortations to ‘embrace change’? With the implication that anyone opposing change is an impediment to beneficent and needful reform—part of the ‘culture’

1 The Dean of Christ Church, Martyn Percy, quoted in the *Guardian*, 21 November 2015.

2 For the latter see Mark Hart, ‘From Delusion to Reality’ at revmarkhart.blogspot.com

which is holding the Church back, and which itself needs to be changed. But nobody in his senses is either for or against change *per se*. 'Change' is what might be called a 'receptacle' or 'container' word, referring to any 'act or process through which something becomes different', to any alteration, of any kind. And without taking the plunge into metaphysics we can see that change is of many different kinds. There are the changes we have no option but to accept, such as ageing and death. There are large-scale social changes which we may have only very limited power, even acting collectively, to control or deflect. On the other hand there are those changes which are certainly within human control and for that reason can be advocated or resisted, and may be proposed in legislative form, with the expectation that they will be weighed and debated and perhaps refined in the process. The rhetoric of change may sometimes seek illicitly to give to proposals of the latter kind an aura of inevitability—as if they represented the kind of change which you must like or lump, rather than the kind which you can discuss and as to whose merits you can differ. In more coercive contexts this can be accompanied by the sinister suggestion that the objector is 'on the wrong side of history'. In Church contexts it is perhaps a tribute to the reformers' benevolence that since their own intentions are benign they cannot readily conceive of deliberate changes which are ill-intentioned (such as the Nuremburg Laws), and so tend to think of change in a fuzzy sort of way as good and desirable in itself.

The conservative principle that you must sometimes change in order to conserve—appealing to Burke's observation that 'A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation'³—certainly applies to the Church as to other institutions, along with the recognition that change necessarily involves loss as well as gain. As Richard Hooker remarked:

But true withal it is, that alteration though it be from worse to better hath in it inconveniences, and those weighty . . . if it be a law which the custom and continual practice of many ages or years hath confirmed in the minds of men, to alter it must needs be troublesome and scandalous. It amazeth them . . . when they behold even those things disproved, disannulled, rejected, which use had made in a manner natural.⁴

3 *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Oxford World Classics edn., p.21. A more cynical and paradoxical version is to be found on the lips of Tancredi in Lampedusa's *The Leopard*: 'If we want everything to remain the same, everything needs to change' (*Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi*).

4 *Ecclesiastical Polity*, IV.14.1. The first line is familiar in Johnson's (mis)quotation: 'change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better'.

Editorial

Openness to change must be accompanied by powers of discrimination—we must try to distinguish between what is merely inconvenient and what is vital.

The Christian life is committed to change—to sanctification by grace leading to that final alteration in which Christ ‘shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body’. ‘Here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often’⁵ But that change needs for its accomplishment some stabilities of setting—if all were in an equal state of flux, how should we judge relative change? The Church will need to hear as many voices as possible if it is to differentiate, in the coming period, between what must change, what may be allowed to change and what ought, if the Church is to remain true to itself, to be conserved.

John Scrivener

5 JH Newman, *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1878 edn 1.1 (p.40). Newman is actually speaking here of the development of a ‘great idea’ over time.

Unto the Throne of the Heavenly Grace: The Journey of Penitence in the Book of Common Prayer

BRIDGET NICHOLS

Introduction

In the event of a fire, there are three books I would be anxious to rescue before leaving the house. The first two make up F.E. Brightman's study of the development of the Book of Common Prayer, *The English Rite*.¹ The third is Bishop Colin Buchanan's Grove booklet, *What Did Cranmer Think He Was Doing?*² They are vastly different in historical setting, scale and purpose. Brightman published his work in 1915, as discussions towards a revision of the Prayer Book gained momentum. Buchanan's work first appeared in 1976, as an era of experimental modern language forms of service moved towards the publication of the *Alternative Service Book* in 1980. Brightman, in the view of his friend and admirer, W.H. Frere, had expended prodigious energy that could have been diverted into other forms of scholarship into a work that sought to put Prayer Book revision on a solid, if particular footing.³ Buchanan wrote with the purpose of demonstrating Cranmer's steady progress from the focus on consecration in the Sarum Mass, towards an entirely receptionist eucharistic theology in 1552. Both could be described as essays in determining Cranmer's mind as the touchstone for testing the Anglican continuity in anything that might replace his work. That, in a way, is their glory. They would probably not have agreed with each other, but their portraits are consistent in showing two trends. On the one hand is the resourceful gatherer of findings from contemporaries, both reformers and staunch voices of the Church of Rome, and from the Fathers. Diarmaid MacCulloch has referred to this habit as 'appreciative pilfering'.⁴ On the other hand is someone of genuine liturgical imagination, who saw the dramatic possibilities that words and actions create, and knew how to charge the words themselves with just the right freight of meaning to make sense

1 F.E. Brightman *The English Rite* London: Rivingtons, 1915.

2 Colin Buchanan *What Did Cranmer Think He Was Doing?* (2nd edn) Bramcote, Notts: Grove Books, 1982.

3 W.H. Frere 'Frank Edward Brightman' [Obituary] *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1931-1932) pp.337-329. 328.

4 Diarmaid MacCulloch *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996, p.631.

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of the actions.

The penitential material of the Prayer Book is a particularly good example of both these trends. It encompasses much more than the carefully positioned forms of confession at Morning and Evening Prayer, and in the Order for Holy Communion. Cranmer's programme involved homilies, exhortations, the Litany, the encouragement to confession in the Visitation of the Sick, and the Commination Service reserved for Ash Wednesday. It was amplified in collects and occasional prayers. For its inspiration, it drew widely on the Sarum Use and the work of Continental Reformers. Two scholars, Ashley Null and Diarmaid MacCulloch, have demonstrated how closely all this material reflects his conviction that justification came by faith alone. Obedience and good works were the fruit of that gracious divine gift, rather than the means by which it could be won.⁵ Their work is so comprehensive, that it would be impertinent to attempt to add to it. This paper takes up the discussion in its post-Cranmerian phase. Its interest is not in excavating the mind of the figure who looms over the Book of Common Prayer. Instead, it turns to the way the fact of the Prayer Book in the shape it achieved in 1662, has been interpreted by others, who faced very different theological and contextual questions, and yet believed that a fixed liturgy had something important to say in those situations.

At most periods of the Prayer Book's life, there have been voices calling for revision. Truly thorough coverage of the arguments in its defence should begin with the Fifth Book of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, and continue through the many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century commentaries to the publications marking the Prayer Book's 350th anniversary in 2012. I have had to be extremely selective, and have chosen two examples from the first half of the nineteenth century and one mid-twentieth-century work. All three deal in various ways with the gift or problem of a fixed liturgy—how its use is to be rationalised; and how it is to be commended as a benefit to its users, and not an imposition. Their interest is less in Cranmer's mind than in the mind of God. Their purpose is to show how that mind operates at a moment in history, through the medium of a liturgy designed for another age, yet still lively and relevant to the strengths and fears of the Church of the authors' time. I conclude with a short reflection on the way we might face the questions of our own age through the possibilities of our liturgy.

Isaac Williams (1802-1865) was the author of three of the *Tracts for the Times*. Two of them, Tracts 80 and 87, dealt with the subject of religious

⁵ Ashley Null *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power to Love* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *op. cit.*.

knowledge and the need for its recipients to be properly prepared. Tract 86 is a three-part discussion of liturgy, Part I bearing the cumbersome title: 'Indications of a Superintending Providence in the Preservation of the Prayer Book and in the Changes which it has Undergone'.⁶ Williams wrestles here with the fact of a very imperfect Church, using a liturgy which has experienced change at the hands of both beneficial and destructive forces. That somehow an integrity has been maintained surely indicates the directing hand of God, prevailing over human interventions. If 'rituals and forms of prayer' are 'the appointed means of access from man to God' and 'methods of approach to Him which He has Himself provided, and of which we are bound to make use', there could be no other explanation.⁷ These rituals are providential in character, and 'the changes in the external condition of the Church, and its pervading peculiarities, harmonize with those that are internal, so as to indicate one controlling design and purpose'.⁸

The Tract's first step in working out its argument is to show 'one prevailing tendency, to put into our mouths the language of servants rather than of sons'. However the Reformation is viewed, it continues, it was above all 'a call to repentance on the part of God, a call to the Church to return to her first love and repent'. So it follows that 'He who sees the returning penitent afar off, and hastens to meet him, should also put those becoming words into his mouth, by which he confesses himself to have forfeited the claim of sonship, and to be willing to be received in a lower state'.⁹ It goes on to provide illustrations from the Collects, and suggests that the Prayer Book will usually moderate the spiritual optimism of its Sarum ancestor to a more subdued tone, with a lively awareness of repentance and judgement. Choices of words also attract the writer's attention: he shows how servants and sinners come to take the place of Latin words that connote 'the faithful', or 'supplicants'. He makes the tantalising passing observation that Hooker recorded the Puritans' objections to the "'abjection of mind'" and "'servility'" of the language of the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁰

Williams then compares the opening of the Prayer Book orders for Morning and Evening Prayer with their Sarum, York and Hereford analogues, and the Prayer Book of 1549. Where other models begin with

6 This is part I of Tract 86, which falls into three sections. An online text is available as *Tracts for the Times* [Number 86] Project Canterbury <http://anglicanhistory.org/tracts/tract86.html>. The full text is found in John Keble, John Henry Newman & Edward Bouverie Pusey (eds) *Tracts for the Times Volume 5* 2nd edn London: Rivingtons, 1840, pp.1-100.

7 Ibid. pp.7-8.

8 Ibid. p.8.

9 Ibid. p.9.

10 Ibid. p.15.

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the Lord's Prayer and its claim on God as Father, from 1552 onwards, English worshippers began their public prayers with penitence. He has reservations about the exhortation to confession: its 'passionate appeals to the feelings . . . would not be so objectionable in themselves, if they were given outside the Church, and not allowed to occupy the place of Religious Worship'.¹¹ As for the Confession itself,

It is needless to show how deeply it is pervaded with this penitential tone. It appears new in itself, and also new in this place in the service, in which it is not supported by much authority in antiquity. . . . May we not trust that these strong words of preparatory humiliation are put into our mouths by Him who spake the same language in His Church of old, under circumstances not dissimilar to our own. For it may be observed, that in the time of the captivity, and in the return from it, the prayers of Daniel, of Ezra, and of Nehemiah, in behalf of their people, began with a Confession, the very words of which might be put into our mouths at the Reformation. And these Prayers of humiliation may be contrasted with that of Solomon, which commences with blessing and thanksgiving.¹²

Yet against this bleak picture we should set his description of the Absolution. 'A more merciful provision, than that it should have been preserved and occupied this place, can scarce be conceived.'¹³ If the words came via foreigners intent upon depriving the Catholic Church of its riches, divine providence has transformed them into something which can speak eloquently to a Church seeking to reclaim its heritage.

Williams points to other deprivations too: not praying for the dead in the prayer for the Church Militant, not having our offerings borne up by the ministry of the holy angels in the Eucharistic Prayer, even not saying the offices in the chancel, but in a state of banishment in the nave, omission of anointing at Baptism and Confirmation, and a narrowing of the order for the Visitation of the Sick.¹⁴

His conclusion is a verdict on the Church in its contemporary setting. It is not an institution in a position to complain about 'the judicial withholding of privileges'. Rather, its members should 'lament [their] unfitness to receive them'. The Church he writes of has found itself with the 'essentials', but without the 'higher privileges' of its fullest Catholic identity. It has retained the two essential sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, but without anointing. There is no 'oil of gladness'

11 Ibid. p.18.

12 Ibid. p.18-19.

13 Ibid. p.19.

14 Ibid. pp.27-29.

to confirm the status of worshippers as 'faithful sons' and a 'royal priesthood'. That situation is the consequence of losing reverence for the sacraments.¹⁵ The rest of the Tract would go on to promote obedience as the proper stance for a penitent Church in a much less than perfect condition. The 1662 Prayer Book furnished appropriate language for the Church's understanding of that condition.

Williams wrote out of the Tractarian preoccupation with the interference of the State in the ordering of the Church. F.D. Maurice (1805-1872), a contemporary of Williams, held a 'view of history' which 'did not accept a division between sacred and secular'.¹⁶ That judgement comes from the Church historian, Jeremy Morris. He wrestles with the paradox of a theologian who was not a liturgist, yet who emerges as 'perhaps the most substantial and influential defender of the Book of Common Prayer in the nineteenth century'.¹⁷ Opposed to revision and updating of the Prayer Book, Maurice is also claimed as a founder of the Anglican Liturgical Movement, particularly on account of his promotion of the Parish Communion.

In 1848 and 1849, he preached a series of sermons on the Prayer Book in the chapel of Lincoln's Inn. The purpose was to challenge a view of the Church of England that saw its Articles as Protestant and its liturgy as Catholic, in the Roman sense. Addressing himself particularly to the legal profession and the younger clergy, Maurice argued for the Prayer Book as resistant to 'faction and coterie'¹⁸:

The evils which we bring with us to the Prayer-Book are charged upon it. I believe that it is the great witness against them. Some of us would use it as an excuse for self-glorification, for boasting of our superiority to foreign nations, or to the sects at home. Many of us would cast it aside that they may be more like foreign nations, or more like the sects at home. If we used it faithfully, I believe we should find it the most effectual deliverance from that spirit which converts our nationality into an instrument of dividing the nation, our privilege of belonging to a Catholic Church, into a plea for exclusiveness. We should find not that we must cease to be Englishmen in order to be men, but that we are Englishmen only so far as we claim our humanity.¹⁹

15 Ibid. p.32.

16 J.N. Morris "'A Fluffy-Minded Prayer Book Fundamentalist'?" F.D. Maurice and the Anglican Liturgy' *Studies in Church History* 35 (1999) pp.345-360, p.358.

17 Ibid. p.356.

18 F.D. Maurice *The Prayer Book* 3rd edn London: James Clarke, 1966.p. x. This edition, with a foreword by Archbishop Michael Ramsey, drops the extended title, *The Prayer-Book Considered Especially in Reference to the Romish System*, first published in 1849, with a second edition in 1852. The preface to the 1852 edition is printed in the third edition.

19 Ibid. pp.x-xi.

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For him, the Church had a ‘universal yet national character’.²⁰ But how this worked out in practice was a more complex affair, and Jeremy Morris explains it like this: Maurice meant by the comprehensiveness of the Church that existed for the nation more than ‘a mere administrative arrangement’. The Church as he understood it was ‘comprehensive in its aspirations but far from comprehensive in its existence. How could its comprehensive mission and character best be supported?’²¹ Part of the answer to that question lay in a fixed liturgy, as a sign of unity and catholicity. This, writes Morris, means that ‘the liturgy of the Church has a permanent, corporate character in principle and the multiplication of different forms of liturgy is a sign of the perverse effects of human rebellion against God in division and disunity.’²² National varieties were allowable, however, for catholicity did not rule out ‘local variation’.²³ Morris remains uncertain as to whether Maurice’s arguments for a historic liturgy, at a time of demands for change, were legitimately presented.²⁴ Against that background, we turn to his sermons on the Prayer Book, and particularly, his dealings with the Confessions at Morning and Evening Prayer and at the Holy Communion.

His strategy is to work with the readings for the day, so that his approach to liturgy is in the context of, and obedient to the discipline of, a corporate pattern of reading Scripture. The warnings about judgement and the need for humility in Isaiah 11 thus become the setting for his consideration of Confession. Before all else, the ‘laying low [of] our own haughtiness’ and the ‘exalting of the Lord alone’ ‘must be wrought into the tissue of our lives’.²⁵ The daily Confession can achieve such progressive transformation:

The Church says ‘Prepare to meet thy God’ not as a future insurance, but because intercourse with Him now is essential to your life here as well as hereafter – because without it you cannot do the works of men and possess the rights of men How can your approach to Him be a reality and not a dream?²⁶

The only way to test the reality is to keep on coming back, to offer the prayer of sheer dependence because one feels one cannot pray. Maurice goes on: ‘I press this thought upon you. Our daily confession of sins to an Almighty and Most merciful Father, our prayer that he would restore

20 J.N. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

21 *Ibid.* p.357.

22 *Ibid.* p.358.

23 *Ibid.* p.358.

24 *Ibid.* p.360.

25 F.D. Maurice, *op. cit.* p.14.

26 *Ibid.* pp.14-15.

us, is a daily witness against our insincerity, a daily cry to be delivered from it.’²⁷ No matter that voices all around protest ‘that they lead to insincerity, that the repetition of them is an insincere act’, that a mixture of self-righteousness and aggression calls for an end to ‘mockery’. It is in fact a good thing for the Church to hear them and to acknowledge their truth:

We have contrived to make acts of confession, as well as other acts, profane and unreal. It cannot be denied. We have done it, we and our fathers. We, our priests, our princes, our people, are all in this sin. Therefore God is sending judgements upon us; therefore He will send yet more.’²⁸

Our confession confronts us with this reality:

To be shown that though our conditions in life are different, though each has a peculiar temperament and constitution, though each is conscious of a multitude of thoughts and acts which no other man knows, though none can tell what is going on at any moment in his neighbour’s heart, yet that the radical evil is the same, and that all may confess it together, and that each may feel it and confess it for the other, is not to make us insincere. For our cheating and hypocrisies one towards another, and for the deep hiding of our counsels from God, the Prayer Book is not answerable. Let each ask himself, whether, if he had used the Prayer Book as his conscience bids him use it, according to its natural signification, it might not have been the mightiest means of preserving him from these evils.’²⁹

Maurice points out that ‘[t]hrough three hundred years of use and abuse’, the words of the Book of Common Prayer have stood against the particular hypocrisy of identifying the individual sins of our neighbours, easing ‘burdened and earnest hearts’. He speculates that they may even be responsible for the fact that ‘our national faith and honesty have resisted in any degree the influences secular and religious which have been undermining them’.³⁰ The Reformers may have mounted an attack on the confessional, but amongst present day denouncers of perceived Romanism in the Church, Maurice senses much of the unpleasant inquisitorial element that was banished with the introduction of corporate confession.³¹ That will not be eradicated ‘till we have initiated

27 Ibid. p.16.

28 Ibid. p.16.

29 Ibid. p.17.

30 Ibid. p.18.

31 Ibid. p.19.

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men into the meaning and mystery of confession', turning them from human accusation to seek God directly. The words of the confession 'do not go into the minutiae of your experience just because your comfort will consist in laying that experience before Him who understands it all; because your consciences are seldom the better, often much the worse for the probing of human instruments'. Finally, there is the comfort of being among fellow-sufferers, who trust that Christ will 'make intercession for them'.³²

Later on, writing of the confession at Holy Communion, Maurice says:

The Church invites you to come with the most profound confession of sins which can be put into language. Let no one persuade you that your heavier sins are those which you share with the general congregation, that being communicants you have only venial sins to cast off and be delivered from. May God put this horrible and accursed pride far from us! The communicant should feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin as none other does. He should feel it not as that which may bring a punishment after it, but as that which is itself the intolerable burden.³³

Maurice speaks into a world where the Church and Christianity had a social mission, especially in combating secular forces. In this setting, the Prayer Book comes both as a gracious gift, and as a very practical pattern for living. Defending it is neither a matter of conservatism in the face of cries for a liturgy that more vigorously opposes hypocrisy and self-deception, nor an attempt to smuggle in 'romanising' tendencies. (The 1966 edition of the book drops the longer title, which could only have caused embarrassment in an ecumenical age. See note 18.) On the contrary, hypocrisy and self-deception can best be faced and wrestled with by worshippers who are brought back regularly to say the same words, with the same people who share their Church and society, to the same God.

Just over a hundred years later, in 1953, Colin Dunlop, who was Dean of Lincoln from 1949-1964, published arguments for a fixed liturgy and its benefits in a little book called *Anglican Public Worship*.³⁴ Dunlop mounted a passionate defence of public worship as something to be offered for the glory of God, and for the formation of the worshipping community as citizens of heaven, against arguments that worship should be consciously morally edifying. The consequences of the latter view, as he saw them, were a drift to entirely private spirituality on the one hand, and desperate

32 Ibid. p.21.

33 Ibid. p.172.

34 Colin Dunlop *Anglican Public Worship* Gateshead: Northumberland Press, 1953; repr. 1956.

attempts by clergy to make worship appealing to consumer demand on the other. Competing secular Sunday interests exacerbated the problem. Dunlop is uncompromising in promoting public worship, according to authorised forms, as training for the worship of heaven. He wrote at a time before the next official phase of liturgical revision began, yet in a period where the unofficial alternatives of 1928 were widely used. The effects of another World War were still being felt in religious and national life. That was the background against which the Prayer Book had to be commended. He approaches the question via proficiency: by becoming better at doing something, it is likely that you will also enjoy doing it much more:

To assist in the Church's liturgy is like learning to play the piano. In order to play a Beethoven sonata you begin just by playing it and playing it very badly. But playing it badly helps you to play it better next time. . . . In order to worship adequately you must begin by worshipping inadequately: by persisting in the exercise of worship you will grow to a more perfect worship.³⁵

If you played a different sonata every time you practised, you would never learn to play well. Worship operates by the same principles:

If you always used different words every time you worshipped progress would be slow. It is the perseverance with a given form which enables you to learn how to worship and which helps you to advance in the art.³⁶

From proficiency in general, he moves on to detail. It is not imposing too much on his discussion to say that mastery of the form leads to a greater liberation in entering into the deep matter of the Church's common prayers. This is particularly evident in his discussion of the confession at Holy Communion:

If some feel that the declaration that 'the burden of them [our sins] is intolerable' is an overstatement, let them remember that the words of the liturgy express what we ought to feel rather than what we actually do feel when we first use them. We make them our own by aspiration, by desiring that they may be true of us. Further, we make our confession as members of the Church, 'members one of another'. We confess not only our private sins, but the sins which our own pride and selfishness have led others to commit, our share in that whole

35 Ibid. p.36.

36 Ibid.pp.36-37.

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aggregate of sin which all but crushed our Master in the Garden of Gethsemane. Intolerable is no overstatement except to the heedless.³⁷

In respect of Matins and Evensong, Dunlop admits that the opening confession is ‘somewhat cumbersome in its forms’, but applauds its straightforwardness. This is in contrast to the 1928 alternatives, which cause uncertainty and work against attentiveness:

It is sometimes asked whether it is a good plan to start with penitence and whether it would not be better to lead up to it at a later point the service. There may be much to be said for the latter suggestion, but if each office is to be considered as a memorial of redemption, it is best to start from where we actually are in spiritual standing. It is just because we are sinners that we need redeeming and it would perhaps obscure that fact if we were not asked to remember it whenever we begin to worship. As the Eucharist has its *Lord have mercy upon us* at the beginning, so the offices have the General Confession. The language of this confession is sometimes criticized as being more extreme than the feelings of the average worshipper can in sincerity justify, but the reader will remember what was said about a similar criticism of the Confession in the Communion service. . . .³⁸

Written more than 10 years before the emergence of Series 1, 2 and 3 through the 1960s and 1970s, and read from the vantage point of the present, Dunlop’s argument sounds élitist and condescending. Read within its own context, it is a robust essay in commending Prayer Book worship as an endeavour which repays the effort that the worshipper is prepared to put into its complex syntax and ideas. Just as one might practise hard to master a musical instrument, so one learns to participate sincerely and rewardingly in public worship.

It is fascinating to see another demonstration of the benefits of liturgical difficulty, this time focused particularly on Confession, penned forty years later by the philosophical theologian, Catherine Pickstock.³⁹ In a close comparison of the forms of Confession at the Eucharist in the Book of Common Prayer and the *Alternative Service Book*, Pickstock sets out to consider ‘the way in which the use or omission of certain types of utterance can determine the efficacy of the confession, asserting the link between language and event’.⁴⁰ Her contention is that the compilers of the ASB sought ‘to present a less mysterious God, and to reduce the

37 Ibid. p.95.

38 Ibid. 104.

39 Catherine Pickstock ‘The Confession’ *Theology* XCIX (no. 793) 1997, 25-35.

40 Ibid. p.26.

emphasis on human sin'.⁴¹ Whereas the Prayer Book confession develops a complex and majestic picture of God, and a form for confessing the experience of being a sinner in search of repentance with the potential to endure through time, the ASB reduces all this to the present experience. This is a function of its sequence of short, co-ordinate clauses, normally used in the 'informal, unplanned' kind of speech that moves only through the 'inhabited present'.⁴² Her view is that confession in the ASB form fails as an action. Unable to express the 'loss' of relationship with God, it cannot grapple with the 'reality of penitence'. In the end, 'no deed is performed by the worshippers'.⁴³ The forms offered in *Common Worship*, had they been in public use by 1997 when the article was published, would presumably have attracted the same criticism.

The step from comparing complex linguistic beauty to more plain-spoken attempts at the same outcomes, to judgements about efficacy is a large and risky one. Nor does it seem useful for encouraging the kind of full and active participation in the liturgy which has been the great ecumenical gift of the Liturgical Movement to the Churches. Yet in a curious way, Pickstock's argument expresses a longing for that full and active participation. Her comparison of the two forms illustrates that participating wholeheartedly is not always the same thing as finding something easy to perform and understand. She demands that we stop to think about what we are doing, and that is important.

At the same time, we cannot pretend to be anywhere other than where we are, historically, as worshippers and as Anglicans. It is unlikely that anyone here today is opposed to the forms of confession provided by the BCP in its Daily Offices and Order for Holy Communion. It is equally unlikely that any of us thinks that how we make our way 'to the throne of the heavenly grace' is unimportant. But the answer is not, surely, a matter of better and worse, or valid and invalid ways of confessing our sins. In an era of liturgical plurality, how are we to make a positive and compelling case both for holding onto our heritage, and striving to make the offering of worship in contemporary language beautiful and sincere?

To put this on a more stable platform than aesthetics, I turn finally to Paul Bradshaw, doyen of liturgical historians. At a conference to mark the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Prayer Book, he had this to say about liturgical revision and uniformity of use:

Does it matter if Anglican churches have little similarity in the ways that they worship and in the words that they use? I believe that it

41 Ibid. p.26.

42 Ibid. p.34.

43 Ibid. p.34.

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does. The most important thing that the Book of Common Prayer did for the Church of England was to provide a bond between Christians of different theological persuasions. It enabled them to recognize one another as members of the same Church. This is not an argument for a return to a rigid uniformity of practice, but it is to recognize the great importance of some sort of liturgical bond to a Church, and especially to an Anglican Church with all its other varieties, something that has been rather overlooked in a generation when individuality, freedom and creativity have become the watchwords. Moreover, if we only ever express in worship those things that we already believe, how will we ever be led to those things we do not yet believe?⁴⁴

What do we believe about God? What are we prepared to recognise in ourselves? Those questions challenge confessional practice equally with the whole offering of worship.

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44 Paul F. Bradshaw ‘Liturgical Development’ in Stephen Platten & Christopher Woods (eds) *Comfortable Words: Polity, Piety and The Book of Common Prayer* London: SCM Press, 2012 pp.121-131, p.131.

‘Manifold Sins and Wickedness’: Penitential Repetitions in the Prayer Book

MARGARET WIDDESS

There is a story about the composition of the Prayer Book. Cranmer sits writing the Confession, and when he writes ‘sins’, his wife looks over his shoulder and says, ‘And wickedness’. And when he writes ‘provoking most justly thy wrath’, she says, ‘And indignation, Thomas!’, and so on. This story is unlikely to appeal to devotees of the Prayer Book, as it seems to poke fun at Thomas Cranmer, Mrs Cranmer, the Prayer Book itself or all three. There are in any case quite a lot of people whom we might imagine looking over Cranmer’s shoulder: all the people whose liturgies he borrowed, translated or adapted as he compiled the Prayer Book. But the story arises from a very obvious characteristic of the style of the Prayer Book: concepts repeated in word pairings of synonyms or near synonyms to produce a texture of rich prose style. The Confession has a particularly high concentration of repetitions: in it, we appeal to Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, before we even start the process of confession which comprises phrases such as ‘acknowledge and bewail’, ‘manifold sins and wickedness’, ‘wrath and indignation’, ‘we do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry’, and the repeated ‘have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father’. The repetitions are Cranmer’s and, distributed through the entire confession, they give a unity and coherence of style to material collected from a variety of sources.¹

The rich style that these repetitions create is admired by Prayer Book devotees, but by others it is held responsible for making the Prayer Book wordy and therefore difficult. In this paper, I shall argue that on the contrary these repetitions bring positive benefits, that they lead to theological and spiritual insights, and that the wordiness actually

¹ See Procter and Frere, p. 488 nn. 1 & 2, which outline two of the influences on Cranmer: the Latin forms of confession, and the confession composed by Archbishop Hermann von Wied of Cologne, in his *Pia Deliberatio*. Some ideas and phrases from this confession, including the opening invocations, have been used by Cranmer, compiling his Prayer Book in 1548 (a year after an English translation of the *Deliberatio* was published), but the repetitions in Cranmer’s version are distinctive. For a summary of Hermann’s life and influence, see Cross and Livingstone eds. s.v. ‘Hermann of Wied’. Jasper and Bradshaw (p. 182) provide a convenient survey of penitential elements used by Cranmer together with their sources. For a detailed and exhaustive account of the preparation of the 1549 Prayer Book, its sources and the influences upon its composition, see MacCulloch chapter 9, pp. 351ff.

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helps rather than hinders our understanding and our consciousness of penitence. Possible origins of these repetitions and the relevance of their origins to the present day will be considered, and the recurrence observed of not only words or concepts but also of whole Collects and themes.

The term ‘repetition’ will be used quite broadly to mean the doubling up of words and notions. The elements that are doubled up are not always exact synonyms, but are close enough in combination to reinforce one idea.

‘Repetitions’ make us think of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6. 7, where Christ teaches his hearers how to pray, in the words of the Lord’s Prayer, but also how not to pray: ‘But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them: for your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him’.² A further reason for a broad interpretation of the term repetition is that the Greek word translated as ‘vain repetitions’ means saying a lot but without much meaning: heaping up empty phrases, as the NRSV translates it, which might embrace both repetitions and more general pairing of words and accumulation of words: ‘much speaking’ is another phrase that Christ uses of ‘heathen’ prayer.

Nonetheless, this veto on ‘vain repetitions’ certainly raises questions for devotees of the Prayer Book. Thomas Bennet, in his *Paraphrase, with annotations, upon the Book of Common Prayer of 1709*, addresses this point in the context of the repeated responses in the Litany. He concludes that these are not vain repetitions, because in each case the response is to a different prayer, which makes the meaning of the response different too (p. 99 n4). We could also argue that the verse in the Sermon on the Mount anticipates the later assurance, in very similar words, that our heavenly Father knows that we have need of food and clothing before we ask (Matthew 6. 31-2). Vain repetitions then could mean specifically repetitions, or repeated petitions for the specific things God knows already that we have need of, which are different from the verbal repetitions ‘acknowledge and bewail’, ‘manifold sins and wickedness’, ‘wrath and indignation’ and so on.

But whatever the phrase ‘vain repetitions’ refers to, those who love the Prayer Book can happily focus on the impact of the repetitions in the Prayer Book, rather than spending time defending them against the charge of being ‘vain’.

It is well known that in compiling the first Prayer Book of 1549, Thomas Cranmer borrowed skillfully from many sources, as noted

2 All biblical quotations are from the Authorised (King James) Version.

above, and that many people contributed to its composition. But it is also agreed that it is the hand of Cranmer himself that has given the Prayer Book its character, and that English prose writing took a huge step with the appearance of the Prayer Book.³ The use of repetition under consideration is one feature of Cranmer's distinctive style. Because the subject of the 2017 Prayer Book Society Conference at Cambridge was penitence, the other obvious example of repetitions, as well as the Confession discussed above, is the Collect for the day of the conference, Ash Wednesday, where repetitions are also prominent:

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness.

In this Collect, the characteristic of God is his mercy as creator, the 'Maker of all things', as he is addressed in the Confession. He hates nothing that he has made and therefore forgives his penitent creatures. The urgency of our prayer to repent as God desires is expressed in repetitions: we ask not just for contrite hearts, but also for new hearts, which we ask God both to make and create in us. Repetition reinforces our determination to lament our sins and acknowledge our wretchedness, and underlines our longing for 'perfect remission and forgiveness' from 'the God of all mercy', who is the God who hates nothing that he has made and forgives the sins of the penitent, who are given, by the Prayer Book language, the tools to be insistent. The Collect comes full circle, but not, as one might have expected in Lent, in penitence but in mercy and forgiveness.

This leads on to a consideration of repetitions on a wider scale, for this Collect is to be used throughout Lent at every service, Office and Eucharist. The significance of the repetition of this Collect throughout Lent cannot be overestimated.⁴ It is not obligatory in *Common Worship*, but if one of the virtues of *Common Worship* is the freedom of choice it offers, there is great comfort in the Prayer Book's uncompromising instruction, 'This Collect is to be read every day in Lent after the Collect appointed for the Day'. Obedience to this imperative means that priest and people

3 For a discussion of the Prayer Book in the context of English prose style and Cranmer's role in the development of prose, see Ian Robinson in Dailey ed. ('The prose and poetry of the Book of Common Prayer', pp. 70-81). He begins (p. 70) with the bold claim that before the 1540's there was no English prose as commonly understood.

4 The repetition of this Collect, and the Collect for Advent Sunday, gives them a seasonal standing similar to that of the repetition in all services and in all seasons of the Lord's Prayer.

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gradually become aware of its effect, its balancing of penitence and forgiveness expressed in beautiful language.⁵

So important is the theme of the merciful creator in this Collect that it is repeated in the Good Friday Collect: ‘O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made...’. The element of creation also appears, as it does in the Confession, and the mercy of God in opposing death: ‘nor wouldest the death of a sinner but rather that he should be converted and live’. There are echoes of this theme in the absolution in the Office, and in the Communion.⁶ The same themes appear in, and are possibly ultimately derived from chapter 11 of the apocryphal book, the Wisdom of Solomon.⁷

The repeated Collect and the related passages provide sure and familiar stepping stones for navigating the fierce currents of Lent, a reminder that in the Prayer Book, the repetition of penitential phrases is inseparable from the repetition of mercy and forgiveness. In the second part of Lent, just when we need it most, the collects of the day all include the word ‘mercifully’ in our entreaties to God for his protection and various graces. These collects build on the foundation of the Ash Wednesday collect which, with its weighing of penitence and forgiveness, enables us to pray for God’s mercy not abjectly, but hopefully or even confidently during the course of Lent.

We might now consider why the repetition of collects is so satisfying. P D James described how the Prayer Book collects and liturgy entered her consciousness, even from an early age, influencing her growth as a writer.⁸ Specifically on repetition, and demonstrating that this is not exclusive to the Prayer Book or Christianity, a friend told me how an old member of his Muslim family insisted that people did not go to the mosque and repeat prayers because they believed in God, but in order to believe in God—to help their unbelief, we might say.

5 The Ash Wednesday Collect can be used in *Common Worship* as a Lenten Post-Communion prayer. Arguably, in this case, the freedom afforded to the priest in *Common Worship* to omit or, in the opinion of this author, to demote this Collect results in the people being deprived of repeated exposure to this Collect, which they might choose to make a spiritual exercise for their own prayer through hearing it embedded in the liturgy and the Office for the whole of Lent. Rebranded as a Post-Communion, the Collect’s integral link with the Office is broken.

6 The absolution in the Office begins: ‘Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live...’; the penultimate Collect in the Communion begins: ‘O most mighty God, and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made; who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sin, and be saved...’

7 Wis. 11. 23-4: ‘But thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend. For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it.’

8 ‘Through all the changing scenes of life: living with the Prayer Book’ (p. 46) in Dailey ed. , pp. 45-51.

But there is another benefit arising from the process of repetition and the repeated collects, and that is how memorable they are, how easily they are absorbed into the blood stream. The Ash Wednesday Collect especially becomes so familiar through its constant repetition in Lent that both clergy and congregation can raise their heads from the book, speaking and listening taking the place of reading. We can experience a recovery of the oral experience of worship, at an earlier time when fewer people in the congregation could read, and more of the clergy knew the whole service off by heart. The Prayer Book makes it easier for us to liberate ourselves from books and service sheets if we choose to. Geoffrey Wainwright sums up this effect: 'Memorable prayers in the fixed parts of the liturgy allow the worshippers to be disencumbered from books and to relish the spoken words'⁹. Among the factors contributing to this effect he lists parallelism, balance and word pairs.

This effect of the spoken word, within a full and detailed study of the different ways in which societies operate that rely on the spoken word, compared with those who rely on writing, has been analysed by Walter J Ong in his classic and much-reprinted work.¹⁰ He writes extensively about the importance for oral cultures of rhythm, patterning, formulae, the frequent use of epithets and their repetition in references to particular characters or events, helping both the performer and the audience to remember the identity and characteristics of the people and places of the narrative. Some of these characteristics, derived from purely oral communication have been carried over into communication that is no longer purely oral and where the written word has taken over. What Ong says specifically about 'redundancy', termed repetition in this paper, is particularly relevant to liturgy. He says that such redundancy is more common before a large audience than in more intimate conversations:

Not everyone in a large audience understands every word a speaker utters. It is advantageous for the speaker to say the same thing, or equivalently the same thing, two or three times. If you miss the 'not only...', you can supply it by inference from the 'but also'...¹¹

Ong explains that the 'redundancies' associated with orality became a rhetorical tool, an aspect of prose style.¹² This transference of oral techniques to the written word resonates with our experience of the Prayer Book. For instance, many of the features of orality that Ong

⁹ Jones, Wainwright, Yarnold and Bradshaw eds., p. 527.

¹⁰ *Orality and Literacy*. The interest of this book for students of religion goes far beyond the points noted here.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p.40.

¹² *Loc cit.* Ong also relates repetitions to the need to make oneself not only heard but understood in the days before widespread electronic amplification.

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discusses are bound up with memorising in a culture without writing to record things, and in fact the Prayer Book is still experienced very much as an oral communication, lodged in the memory of the celebrant and congregation alike primarily through speaking and hearing. The doublets may now be a part of a style rooted in rhetoric, but they still serve the purpose mentioned by Ong, acting as a tool that enables the congregation to catch up on the discourse.

These features common to the oral tradition and to the Prayer Book suggest a particular relevance to penitence. The repetitions—or redundancies—such as ‘manifold sins and wickedness’ give us the time and space for the reality of what we are repenting to sink in: if we somehow miss out on ‘manifold sins’, then ‘wickedness’ catches up with us. And conversely, the pleonastic ‘have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father’ highlights both our *need* of mercy and our *expectation* of that mercy. It is even possible that the present-day habit of rapid communication via text and minimalist Tweets gives the leisureliness of discourse with oral characteristics a new advantage: sitting in church, we are forced to take the time to hear not just of God’s love but of his tender love; we are forced to slow down, to acknowledge and bewail, to repent *and* to be sorry, to fear God’s wrath *and* indignation.

As Ong points out, it is true that the transference of oral redundancies into rhetorical writing has become excessive in some writers in some eras, and there are people who find the Prayer Book itself too wordy, as noted above. What can we who love the Prayer Book say to those who feel oppressed by the language that we find so enriching? What do we say if people charge Cranmer with ‘vain repetitions’? At this point, F D Maurice comes to the rescue in what he says about repetition in prayer. In his discussion of Matthew 6.7, he ascribes the Heathen’s use of repetitions to a concept of a God who is essentially out of reach.¹³ Only by reiterating his or her wants with what Maurice describes as ‘sufficient clearness and earnestness’ and therefore with ‘much speaking’ can such a worshipper hope to attract the attention of the deity.¹⁴ Maurice uses the image of shooting arrows, of which a large number must be shot in the hope of some hitting a mark. There are many examples of this piling up of titles or of deities themselves in ancient Roman prayers, a practice described by Augustine with some impatience in *The City of God* (4.8).¹⁵

13 Maurice p. 107. Maurice’s sermon on Matthew 6. 7-8 begins by claiming ‘These words express the whole difference between Heathen and Christian Prayers’. In the discussion of Maurice’s argument in this paper, his use of the word Heathen will be retained.

14 See for example 1 Kings 18. 22-29, where the prophets of Baal call repeatedly on his name when he seems not to hear.

15 Augustine’s comments can be read conveniently alongside examples of Roman prayer in Shelton pp. 363ff

But while the arrow-shooting approach is characteristic of Heathen prayer and the view of God from which it is derived, according to Maurice, he has also identified something of great importance in the repetition or ‘much speaking’ of Heathen prayer which it has in common with Christian prayer—its earnestness. It is a Prayer Book word: we are invited to ‘earnestly repent’, in the invitation to Communion, and in the following Confession we do ‘earnestly repent’. Maurice does not disparage the earnestness of the Heathen. The Christian is earnest too, but prays to God for earnestness itself—the earnestness we need to pour forth our prayers, in confident pleas rather than random arrow-shots, for the very things God knows we need. But what is particularly striking is Maurice’s assertion that we are never to think of ourselves as free from Heathen earnestness, the temptation to pile on the words, when we might be driven by circumstances to what he calls the ‘mechanical repetition of Aves and Paternosters, invocations of saints’ and so on.¹⁶ If we never succumbed to such temptations, Maurice insists, we would be inhuman.

Maurice’s analysis makes us look again at the gospel stories of those pleading for a release from disease or disability crying out repeatedly to Christ (for instance, Bartimaeus in Mark 10. 47-8 and the woman of Canaan in Matthew 15. 22ff) or the Parable of the Unjust Judge and the widow’s persistent prayer (Luke 18. 1ff). Maurice might also encourage us to look again at the repetitions in the penitential sections of the Prayer Book. This is not to suggest that Cranmer is directly imitating ‘heathen’ prayer. But it does look as though he is expressing the earnestness identified by Maurice as an ingredient of both Heathen and Christian prayer, commonly expressed in Heathen prayer by a pleonasm to which Christians might also resort in desperation.

The penitential parts of the Prayer Book are conspicuous for their earnest language and the repetitions that some might regard as wordiness, so perhaps it can be claimed that while the act of penitence is enhanced by the uses of this language, we are also driven to it: driven to address not just God, but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; driven not just to be sorry but to be heartily sorry, not just to repent but to acknowledge and bewail. In Wainwright’s list of things that produce what he calls the ‘total effect’ of the Prayer Book’s aesthetic (*op. cit.* p. 527), he mentions ‘the discreet use of affective language’, as a separate item alongside the parallelism, balance and word pairs already noted. A logical conclusion is that these features, and

¹⁶ Maurice, p.109. Maurice (p. 107) is from the outset aware that ‘the words “Heathen” and “Christian” may easily be abused to purposes of self-exaltation and self-delusion’.

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repetitions of whole prayers and themes as well, play a major role in this affective language. It is language that is spoken and public, inheriting and exploiting features of oral tradition. Far from being mere rhetoric, it gives us the greatest potential for expressing ourselves in discourse with God and with each other. Thomas Bennet, defending repetitions from the charge of being vain, can have the last word. He says that repetitions that ‘do expresse matter of great Consequence, and the most fervent Affections, cannot be called vain, or reproved as a faulty Tautology’¹⁷.

(The Revd Margaret Widdess was formerly Associate Priest at St Botolph’s Parish Church, Cambridge. This paper was addressed to the PBS Ely Branch Conference on ‘The Penitential Theology of the Book of Common Prayer’ held on Ash Wednesday 2017)

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17 Bennet, p. 158 n. 2.

From the Savoy Conference to the Savoy Operas: Gilbert and Sullivan and the Book of Common Prayer

MICHAEL BRYDON

I spent part of my summer holiday in the charming Yorkshire spa town of Harrogate where the annual international Gilbert and Sullivan Festival is now held. The performances take place in the magnificent Royal Hall which is a flamboyant Edwardian creation. It also boasts some magnificent examples of heraldic decoration including the great shield for the Duchy of Lancaster; for it was the royal Duchy that owned and, indeed, continues to own a lot of the land in the area. I thought that this was a happy link with the festival, since the private chapel of the Duchy of Lancaster is the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy just off the Strand. The name Savoy recalls how back in the thirteenth century Henry III granted the land to Peter of Savoy, a favourite uncle of his wife. In the east window of the chapel you can see Peter riding across one of the lancets.

In another of the windows you can see pictures of famous historical events connected with the area including the meeting of 1661, known to history as the Savoy Conference. It was this meeting which laid the groundwork for the Book of Common Prayer as we have it today. The chapel also boasts a window commemorating members of the D'Oyly Carte family, who commissioned Arthur Sullivan and William Gilbert to produce their operas. It was Richard D'Oyly Carte who built the famous theatre especially for their productions, not far from the Savoy Chapel, which on the basis that the old manor of the Savoy once had a theatre allowed him to name his building the Savoy Theatre.¹ Since Gilbert and Sullivan were so intimately associated with the Savoy Theatre it is not surprising that their works are usually referred to as the Savoy Operas.² So the Victorian opera-loving public could visit the Savoy Theatre, enjoy a Savoy opera, stay at the adjacent Savoy Hotel, attend the Savoy Chapel in the morning and worship using the Prayer Book masterminded by the Savoy Conference.³

1 A Lawrence, *Sir Arthur Sullivan: Life-Story, Letters, and Reminiscences*, (London: James Bowden, 1899), pp. 153-154.

2 The term Savoy Operas technically refers to any comic opera produced for the Savoy Theatre, but popular usage tends to reserve it just to those produced by Gilbert and Sullivan.

3 The Savoy link expanded even more in the twentieth century when the BBC established studios at Savoy Hill, on the Strand, which was conveniently placed for the first live broadcast of Choral Evensong, from Westminster Abbey, on 7th October 1926. See *Church Times* 30 September 2016

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Gilbert and Sullivan did not set out to write joint works of profound religious meditation; the only sacred work they ever collaborated together on is the now little known oratorio, *The Martyr of Antioch*.⁴ Nevertheless I hope to show you that in all sorts of ways the Prayer Book is gently present in the background of the Savoy Operas. I also hope to suggest there may be lessons to be learnt by enthusiasts of the Prayer Book from the way that fans of Gilbert and Sullivan have sought to share their music with new generations.

Gilbert and Sullivan were deeply popular with many clergy from the beginning. It was a proud boast of the D'Oyly Cartes that the clergy were enthusiastic in their attendance. The *Church Times* certainly commended them for their respectability which avoided any 'taint of impurity or suggestiveness.'⁵ One might add that the D'Oyly Carte company which performed them remained very much a Victorian family with firm moral principles right to the end; not without reason was it sometimes known as the D'Oyly Carte Sunday School.⁶ The only clergyman to my knowledge to find public fault with them was Lewis Carroll, the clerical writer of *Alice in Wonderland*, who was disappointed that the D word was used in a children's production of *HMS Pinafore* and also felt that the sacrificial life lived by many of the clergy was mocked in the portrayal of the vicar in *The Sorcerer*. Carroll's objections it has to be said did not stop him from enjoying subsequent operas.⁷

You only have to glance at later novels and films featuring clergy to see how deeply engrained this clerical affection came to be. In 'To Serve them all my Days' the clerical headmaster, Algy Herries, can't wait to put on the school performance of *The Mikado* and the vicar, in the classic Ealing Comedy, *The Titfield Thunderbolt*, suggests a performance of *The Mikado* to raise funds to save his beloved railway. Many a cleric has put on productions in the parish to raise funds and used them for parish entertainments. Even more enterprisingly the Venerable Michael Perry, then Archdeacon of Durham, produced a Gilbert and Sullivan grace.⁸ More locally Eric Kemp, former Bishop of the diocese of Chichester, wrote in his autobiography of his familiarity with the Prayer Book and

4 I.Bradley, *Lost Chords and Christian Soldiers. The Sacred Music of Arthur Sullivan*, (Norwich: SCM Press, 2013), p. 134.

5 *Church Times*, 2nd June 1911.

6 I.Bradley, *Oh Joy! Oh Rapture! The Enduring Phenomenon of Gilbert and Sullivan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 31.

7 L.Carroll, 'The Stage and the Spirit of Reverence' in C.Scott (ed), *The Theatre*, (London: Strand Publishing, 1888), p. 291; E.Wakeling, *Lewis Carroll: The Man and his Circle*, (I.B.Tauris, 2014), pp. 194-95.

8 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, pp. 177-178.

how he was also an enthusiastic Savoyard.⁹ Indeed he was the longest lived member of the Gilbert and Sullivan Appreciation Society at his death. In his nineties he was seen still tapping his foot to some of their music, at the Southern Cathedrals' Festival Fringe performance in the Bishop's Palace, and at his funeral, in Chichester Cathedral, the organist wove some of their tunes into the voluntary.¹⁰

We might also think of the former Bishop of London, Robert Stopford, Dean of the Chapel Royal, bastion of the Prayer Book, and a dedicated Savoyard, who was chairman of the D'Oyly Carte Trust, and worked hard to mobilise the establishment to be more supportive of the ailing D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.¹¹ The appeal of Gilbert and Sullivan to the clergy is well described by John Wall, now vicar of Uckfield, in his recollection of the University of York Gilbert and Sullivan Society in the early 1970s.

Just as some clergy go weak at the knees at the first toot of a steam train so some of us still go misty-eyed (well, a bit), at the opening bar of *Iolanthe*. Indeed, the first time I wore clerical garb was when playing Dr Daly in *The Sorcerer*. It's amazing the swirl you get with a five-pleater cassock, if you put your hips into it.¹²

The clerical links are also being kept up. For example the Revd Selwyn Tillett is chairman of the Sullivan Society. At this year's Harrogate Festival the secretary to the friends informed me that I was not the only incognito clergyman wandering around and they had a fair number on their books as friends. The Festival is actually run from a rambling Victorian Vicarage in Halifax where no doubt the Victorian vicar's family thumped out the songs on the parlour piano. At the annual Gilbert and Sullivan Festival there is always a Sunday church service; not something which happens at other music Festivals. Neither would most other festivals, as happened in 1997, be considered a suitable location for a *Songs of Praise* broadcast. The following year the BBC's art programme *Omnibus* also explored the so-called religion of Gilbert and Sullivan.¹³

The laity also seems to be enthusiastic and there is a much higher than average proportion of churchgoers in Gilbert and Sullivan appreciation and amateur performing societies. The reviewer of the film *Topsy-Turvy* for the *Church Times* reflected that 'there was a time when to belong to the Church of England and to Gilbert and Sullivan societies felt like

9 E.Kemp, *Shy but not Retiring*, (London: Continuum, 2006), pp.11-12.

10 *Church Times*, 12th January 2010

11 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, pp. 47,104.

12 *Ibid*, pp. 104-105.

13 *Ibid*, p. 196.

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one and the same thing.’¹⁴ This is neatly supported by the experience of the bass-baritone, Michael Rayner, who received a letter asking him to audition for the D’Oyly Carte whilst on holiday in Norfolk. Obviously he had no music with him, but he sought out the choir master of Cromer parish church, who had all the scores, and willingly coached him for a successful audition over the weekend.¹⁵

It might also be added that among the most prominent of its lay enthusiasts are members of the Royal Family. The late Princess Alice was patron of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society for many years and marked the 150th anniversary of Sullivan’s birth in 1992 by attending a special service at the Savoy Chapel.¹⁶ Her son, the Duke of Gloucester is the current patron. Her Majesty the Queen, a big proponent of Prayer Book Matins, has attended performances both officially and privately and commanded a royal performance of *HMS Pinafore* at Windsor Castle. The Prince of Wales, the current lay patron of the Prayer Book Society, is also an enthusiast.¹⁷

So what is it about the operas, which has made them such a comfortable bed fellow for classic Anglicanism? I want to begin by thinking about the words, which were written by Gilbert. Gilbert does not seem to have been especially marked in his piety, but the Prayer Book was a given in the world he occupied. For example as a student at the then staunchly Church of England King’s College, London, he attended compulsory daily services. I think we can also be confident that he would definitely not have been a fan of *Common Worship*’s encouragement to exchange the sign of peace, from his barbed comments in *Ruddigore* about the way ‘them furriners’ were guilty of kissing each other’s cheeks.¹⁸ When it comes to issues of churchmanship it used to be said that High Church clergy liked a lot of wine and Low ones preferred puddings. Gilbert to judge by his wife’s cookery book was more Low Church in sympathy although some of the dishes such as Religious Cod and Lady Abbess Tarts do show a certain Catholic tinge.¹⁹ Perhaps we might also see in the use of electric lights in the fairy costumes of *Iolanthe* a certain ritual flamboyance too. Not too much should be made of this since his opera, *Patience*, was originally intended to lampoon Anglo-Catholic clergymen.

14 Ibid, p. 123. I think it only fair to point out that Dr Bradley also provides substantial evidence of the operas also being popular with Methodists. See *Oh Joy!*, pp. 95-96.

15 R. Morrell, *D’Oyly Carte. The Inside Story*, (Beauchamp: Matador, 2016), pp.14-15.

16 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 106.

17 I.G. Smith, *John Reed OBE. A Pictorial Biography*, (Platinum, 2010), pp. 64, 82, 84-86, 113-114, 140, 185. *Gilbert and Sullivan News*, Summer, 2016, p. 16; Morell, *D’Oyly Carte*, pp.189-207.

18 I. Bradley, *The Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 677.

19 D. Steadman and M. Tarrant, (eds), *Cookery à la Carte*, (The Choir Press, 2016), p. viii, 2.

He based it on his popular Bab Ballad, 'The Rival Curates', where two clergy vied with each other in mildness until one of them was persuaded to dance, smoke and play croquet. In the end, however, Gilbert decided that it was perhaps safer to abandon the planned vicarage lawn for Castle Bunthorne and to mock aesthetes and poets instead.²⁰

There are, however other references to Anglican clergy within the operas; a ghostly bishop steps out of a picture in *Ruddigore*²¹, colonial bishops are referred to in *The Sorcerer*²², and the Bishop of Sodor and Man is mentioned in *Patience* along with Anthony Trollope who wrote his famous *Chronicles of Barssetshire* about the clergy.²³ *Patience* also names the Anglican worthy, Dr Sacheverell, an old-fashioned high churchman devoted to the Restoration settlement of Church and State who came to prominence during the reign of that most faithful of Anglican monarchs, known, as Gilbert reminds us, as 'good Queen Ann'.²⁴ In *The Mikado* it is also true that Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else, lists Archbishop of Titipu among his offices, but we cannot be sure that he is an Anglican Archbishop.²⁵ But we can be sure that the soulful Dr Daly, Vicar of Ploverleigh in *The Sorcerer*, a principal character of the opera, is a thorough-going representative of the Established Church. The satirical journal *Punch* thought it was a bold step to place a clergyman on the stage, but noted that the clerical members of the audience seemed to enjoy the joke.²⁶

Dr Daly, like Archbishop Cranmer was only too anxious to discover a 'helpmate' presumably through the 'mutual society, help and comfort' promised by the Prayer Book wedding service, but seemed destined to remain a bachelor.²⁷ By Gilbert's direction the spire of his church, where he presumably led Prayer Book worship, appears in the staging of Act I. The role of Dr Daly was first sung by Rutland Barrington, whose father was a clergyman. A first-night review commented 'Mr Barrington is wonderful. He always manages to sing one-sixteenth of a tone flat; it's so like a vicar.'²⁸ Dr Daly introduces himself as the vicar, but at least one of his parishioners thinks he is a rector. Perhaps a more devout Victorian public used the terms interchangeably.²⁹ Or as a rector myself, a position

20 Bradley, *Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, pp .268, 270, 274.

21 *Ibid*, p. 731.

22 *Ibid*, p. 109.

23 *Ibid*, p. 278-279

24 *Ibid*, p.279, 293.

25 *Ibid*, p. 567.

26 L. Baily, *The Gilbert and Sullivan Book*, (London: Spring Books, 1967), p.142.

27 Bradley, *Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, p. 53.

28 *Ibid*, p. 50.

29 *Ibid*, p. 88-89.

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which is historically more important than being a vicar, maybe she thought that the merits of her parish priest were worthy of being a rector! Daly as a Doctor of Divinity was certainly a talented man to be buried so deep in the Devon country.

Gilbert seems to like his clergy to be well qualified, however, since in *The Pirates of Penzance* he mentions a ‘Doctor of Divinity, who resides in this vicinity’ who can marry all the pirates off to the wards of General Stanley.³⁰ Marriage looms large in so many of the operas and the knot, as it were, is clearly to be tied by Prayer Book rites. Following the drinking of a love potion Dr Daly is certainly amazed when ‘the whole village’ comes and implores him to ‘join them in matrimony with as little delay as possible.’³¹

Before the teapot is enchanted in *The Sorcerer* the lovely Aline, clearly knowing the Prayer Book preface that marriage is for life is anxious to confirm that the love potion will have no effect upon those who are already married.³² Her betrothed, Alexis, is clearly quite keen that the lovely Aline is going ‘to honour and obey’ him to judge by his reaction to her initial refusal to drink the love potion. In the end Aline gives in for ‘It is my darling’s will, and I obey.’³³ Mind you it all backfires when she drinks it and falls in love with the vicar. With heavy irony and deep unfairness Alexis parodies the Prayer Book marriage vows when he sings ‘Be his, false girl, for better or for worse.’³⁴

Gilbert is guilty at times of ignoring the Prayer Book’s rubric that banns must be called before a marriage can take place. In *HMS Pinafore* the lovely Josephine and Ralph Rackstraw seek to escape to the shore so they can be secretly married that very night, for ‘a clergyman is ready to unite the happy pair.’³⁵ On the other hand he is scrupulous in seeing the Table of Kindred and Affinity is observed when Sir Joshua Porter, accompanied by his ‘sisters and his cousins and his aunts’ finally decides to marry his cousin Hebe; the only relative he can be tied to according to the table.³⁶ The annual Parliamentary battle to reform marriage legislation to allow a man to marry his deceased wife’s sister, after such a union had been included in the Church’s list of prohibited marriages in 1835, also finds a mention in *Iolanthe*.³⁷ This was a more important Prayer Book matter than it

30 Ibid, pp. 84, 217, 231.

31 Ibid, p. 95.

32 Ibid, p. 75.

33 Ibid, p. 103.

34 Ibid, p.107.

35 Ibid, p.169.

36 Ibid, p.183.

37 Ibid, pp. 406-407.

might at first appear, because its successful passing would suggest that civil and church law need not be in agreement. The Church of England would be less of a national church and more of a religious chaplaincy.

The Prayer Book assumes that to be a subject of the monarch is to be a member of the Church of England. There is no distinction between Church and State. That is one reason why the Prayer Book is so keen on praying for the monarch. The Savoy operas are equally devoted to the monarchy. Just think of how the famous pirates of Penzance submit themselves to the constabulary when asked to yield in Queen Victoria's name.³⁸ Queen Victoria certainly enjoyed the operas and had a royal command performance of *The Gondoliers* in 1891. Giuseppe's famous catalogue of the duties of a working monarch greatly amused her.³⁹ The Prayer Book litany also teaches us to pray for the 'Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility' so both the affectionate portrait of the House of Lords in *Iolanthe*, or the expression of love for our House of Peers in *Pirates* are in accordance with that.⁴⁰

One great historic challenge to both monarch and lords was Guy Fawkes' attempt to blow them up. One wonders if the figure of the Public Exploder, in *Utopia Limited*, recalls him in some way. Sullivan, as a chorister at the Chapel Royal, recalled having to sing the annual Gunpowder Service, which made him wince, since it spoke so badly of Roman Catholics who had fought so bravely in the Crimea.⁴¹ It is total speculation, but this recollection might well have contributed to Gilbert's development of the Public Exploder.

The Prayer Book may also be seen to be in the background due to the frequent commands that a bell is to be tolled, so people know when worship is about to begin. Such bells feature quite a lot in the librettos.⁴² The chorus of villagers open *The Sorcerer* thus:

Ring forth, ye bells,
With clarion sound-
Forget your knells
For joys abound.⁴³

38 Ibid, p.261.

39 Ibid, pp. 920-924.

40 Ibid, p. 261.

41 A Lawrence, *Sir Arthur Sullivan: Life-Story, Letters, and Reminiscences*, (London: James Bowden, 1899), p. 11.

42 One exception when the bell can't hint at Prayer Book Worship is in the *Yeomen of the Guard*. The execution scene is preceded by the ringing of the bell of St Peter ad Vincula, but since the opera is set at the time of Henry VIII the Prayer Book did not yet exist. Today, however, the chapel is a Prayer Book stronghold.

43 Bradley, *Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, p. 47.

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Bells also feature in *HMS Pinafore* as the issue of married happiness is discussed and a trio sing of how the merry bells will ring on board ship. In encores all sorts of bells have been rung including a church bell, which inevitably carries the ringer up into the air.⁴⁴ The merry bells are no doubt a euphemism for impending matrimony, but there would in point of fact be a ship's bell, which might also be upended as necessary for Baptism. There is only one reference to Christenings, which I have been able to find and that falls in *Utopia* when Princess Zara refers to there not being 'a christened baby in Utopia' who has failed to be issued with his Prospectus.⁴⁵ Given that Princess Zara has been educated in England, at Girton College, Cambridge, a place of Anglican worship and the current preferred venue for Prayer Book Society Conferences, I think we might safely assume that this would be a Prayer Book service. Further credence to this derives from the fact that in early drafts of the opera Gilbert intended to have her accompanied by an English curate, as one of the six professions to represent all that was great about Britain.⁴⁶

The lack of a clergyman on board ship home to *Paramount*, however, was not a total religious disaster, since she was also accompanied by a naval officer, Captain Corcorran. Since the Admiralty regulations commanded that he was to lead divine worship, in the absence of a chaplain, on board ship, we can imagine that he would have been especially familiar with the Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea. Although naval worship is never mentioned in *HMS Pinafore* we can be equally certain that the First Sea Lord's anxiety for polite and decent behaviour and Captain Corcorran's claim that he never swears, means that both would have expected the morals and actions of their crew to be guided further by the expected Prayer Book worship.⁴⁷

The Prayer Book not only assumes the moulding of sailors, but also the instruction of children too as shown by the rubric for the curate of every parish to instruct them in the catechism. Dr Daly clearly instructed Alexis, the local squire's son in the principles of the church. Alexis greets him as 'My dear old tutor, and my valued pastor.'⁴⁸ Such faithful clerical tutors, back at the time of the Savoy Conference, by diligently instructing the younger sons of the gentry during the period of the Commonwealth, certainly ensured that the Royalist House of Commons, was full of enthusiastic Cavaliers anxious to see a return to Prayer Book

44 Ibid, pp. 163, 164.

45 Ibid, p. 1045.

46 Ibid, pp. 977, 1009, 1024, 1045.

47 Ibid, pp. 128-128,137, 173.

48 Ibid, p. 53.

worship. By the time Gilbert and Sullivan were writing the Church of England had expanded much further into the realm of education. There is a reference in *Ruddigore* to a National School, which means it was set up under the auspices of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. Such principles would naturally have included exposure to the Prayer Book.⁴⁹

Methods of education at that point would have been rather more robust than today. In *HMS Pinafore* Captain Corcorran sings of how sparing the rod spoils the child, which comes from a saying in Proverbs. This weaving in of Scripture reminds us that the Prayer Book has long been lauded for effectively being a string of scriptural quotations. We can't claim the same for Gilbert and Sullivan, but there is still Scripture to be found in it including paraphrases of our Lord's words on the pointlessness of sewing new patches on old garments and references to biblical places such as Aceldama; the field which Judas purchased with his blood money.⁵⁰

The position of the traitor Judas is a knotty one, but the consensus, today, is that even Judas could be included within the love of God. God wants to welcome sinners home as the Prayer Book makes clear. The General Confession is generally seen as adequate, but both the Visitation of the Sick and the First Exhortation of the Communion Service do allow for confession directly to a priest. One suspects that Gilbert would not have approved of this, but he does have Mabel, daughter of General Stanley, in *Pirates*, pleading that her father should not die at piratical hands unshriven.⁵¹ It is unlikely that Stanley is Roman Catholic, so it could be that Mabel is carried away by the language of reading too many Gothic novels, or just possibly, like the real Lord Kitchener, Stanley was a high churchman. In his famous Major-General's song he does show awareness of nunneries, of which there were some Anglican ones by 1879.⁵²

Where there is no ambiguity is regarding the fact that Gilbert is something of a comic genius. In *Modified Rapture*, Alan Fischler, professor of English at Le Moyne College, Syracuse, New York, undertakes a serious analysis of Gilbert's use of comedy. Dr Ian Bradley sums up his argument as running like this: Fischler 'suggested that it fitted in with the Victorian crisis of faith, replacing divine providence by human law and ingenuity, detaching conscience from God and providing a new kind of comedy for the Victorian middle classes in which law and authority lost the

49 Ibid, p. 735.

50 Ibid, pp. 158-159, 294-295, 792-793.

51 Ibid, pp. 258-259.

52 Ibid, p. 219.

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malignity ascribed to them in the theatre and became the prime agencies of Salvation in the post-Darwinian world.⁵³ I must confess that any thought of detaching my conscience from God to seek salvation in post-Darwinian comedy has never crossed my mind. I doubt very much if it crossed Gilbert's either; indeed I think Professor Fischler would probably have made it onto Gilbert's list of people that the Lord High Executioner was going to do away with.

But Gilbert notwithstanding, are there any deeper theological themes that the Prayer Book and the Savoy Operas may have in common? Both of them certainly know something about joy! One female fan of Gilbert and Sullivan announced that 'I have had more pleasure from the Gilbert and Sullivan Festival than from either of my husbands'.⁵⁴ Perhaps more commendably Bishop Stopford, at the D'Oyly Carte centenary service at St Paul's, Covent Garden, spoke of 'the joy which the operas have given, and can give in times of stress'.⁵⁵

More seriously I think we might say that both Prayer Book and the Savoy Operas occupy a middle ground. Gilbert and Sullivan successfully managed to break new ground by proving a thoroughly respectable form of light entertainment, which avoided the ribaldry of the music hall, but with sufficient musical grandeur to appeal to lovers of opera. The Prayer Book, of course, was trying to occupy a rather different religious mean. Bishop Sanderson writes in the preface of the Prayer Book it was intended 'to keep the mean between the two extremes'; those being the Puritans and the Catholics. The Prayer Book is certainly both Catholic and Reformed, but it never achieved the religious comprehensiveness it desired in the way the Savoy Operas achieved universal appeal. When *Pindore* was touring America, Arthur Lawrence, a biographer of Sullivan, writes of how 'thousands of sturdy Puritans who had never been inside a theatre before went to see' it, but it was equally popular with the Catholic choirs of Boston.⁵⁶

So far I have said almost nothing about the music of Sullivan and have concentrated upon Gilbert's words. The crossover with singing in church choirs and liking Gilbert and Sullivan is substantial. That is hardly surprising since Sullivan wrote a large amount of sacred music and parts of the Savoy operas can sound distinctly churchy. As Dr Bradley comments, there is a strong echo of 'the parade ground and the school

53 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 182.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

56 Lawrence, *Sir Arthur Sullivan*, pp. 128-130.

chapel' in Sullivan's music.⁵⁷ When a children's production of *Pinafore* was mounted at the end of 1879 its reviewer described, in distinctly ecclesiastical tones, how the boy playing the part of Ralph Rackstraw 'has one of those pure and delicious cathedral voices'.⁵⁸

In his youth, Sullivan possessed just such a delicious voice as he sang the Prayer Book services of the Chapel Royal. Late in life he actually named one of his race horses Cranmer, which would suggest a certain respect for the compiler of the Prayer Book.⁵⁹ Sullivan's character is one in which both the sacred and the secular seem to have been able to co-exist. This juxtaposition is neatly summed up in a letter of 1867 to his mother. 'You remembered my Prayer Book but forgot my collars which in this world are nearly as necessary as the Prayer Book.' As Dr Bradley puts it: 'Prayer Book and collars were both important to Sullivan. If the latter epitomised his sociability and love of house parties and aristocratic society, the former testified to his abiding attachment to the liturgy and the faith of the church in which he had been brought up.'⁶⁰

Some of Sullivan's earliest experiences of the Prayer Book were at Sandhurst where the old style of singing was in still in vogue with the Tate and Brady psalms and a west gallery band.⁶¹ The Anglican choral tradition as we would recognize it was not something he was fully cognizant with until he went to the Chapel Royal and encountered it at Matins, Evensong, Holy Communion and other occasional offices.⁶² He became well-used to choral settings, anthems and singing the Psalter to both plainsong and Anglican chant.⁶³ It is worth noting that the master of the children of the Chapel Royal was only prepared to take him after confirming that his knowledge of the Prayer Book catechism was sufficient.⁶⁴ Twice every year all the boy choristers were examined by the Sub-Dean as to their scriptural knowledge

It is a fact that these early religious musical experiences seem to have marked him for life. He produced large numbers of hymn tunes, anthems, settings for the Te Deum, chants for the Psalter, a setting of the ordination hymn, but interestingly never managed to set the evening canticles.⁶⁵ In probably his most famous anthem, 'The Lost Chord', at

57 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, pp. xi-xii.

58 John Van der Kiste (ed), *Gilbert and Sullivan's Christmas*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 32.

59 Bradley, *Lost Chords*, p.10.

60 *Ibid*, p. 187.

61 *Ibid*, p. 41.

62 *Ibid*, p. 42, 44.

63 *Ibid*, p. 44, 48, 49.

64 *Ibid*, p. 41.

65 *Ibid*, pp. 64,68, 77, 146, 151, 153-54, 156, 159-60, 191.

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least one commentator has detected a similarity in the opening bars with the versicle and response found at the start of Morning and Evening Prayer.⁶⁶ One critic complains that 'it tainted him with the spiritual bankruptcy of Victorian Anglicanism' but I prefer to suggest that it means that even some of his supposedly non-religious music may have churchy Prayer Book undertones.⁶⁷ Later in life Sullivan's strongest champions and defenders, when he was assailed by the musical establishment for writing his comic operas, were all church composers.⁶⁸

So how in particular does this churchy Prayer Book character manifest itself in the music he wrote for the Savoy Operas? Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction and it is a surprising fact that the choir of singing policemen in *Pirates* almost certainly owes something to a church choir, composed entirely of policemen, which he used to run at St Michael's, Chester Square. The music critic of the *Daily Telegraph* later commented that 'I never ceased to admire the way in which he kept the constables at the boiling point of enthusiasm, as well as on the brink of laughter. The organist's good spirits were infectious, and though, as he himself sang in after years,

Taking one consideration with another,

A policeman's life (sic) is not a happy one'.⁶⁹

Many of the hymn tunes that Sullivan wrote would not sound out of place in the Savoy operas. It has been commented that the likes of St Gertrude, the tune for 'Onward Christian Soldiers', would suit the chorus of heavy dragoons in *Patience* rather well.⁷⁰ There has been a lot of musical snobbery regarding Sullivan, probably because he was popular. The distinguished hymnologist, Erik Routley, denounced all his hymn tunes as being banal, secular, vulgar and more suited to the stage of the Savoy.⁷¹ Similarly, after Sullivan, in conjunction with Gilbert, produced the oratorio, *The Martyr of Antioch*, there was a rather cruel parody in *Punch* of their next piece called 'I'll tell you how I came to be a martyr' which owes something to both *Trial by Jury* and *Pinafore*.⁷² There is a sort of back-handed compliment in both of these attacks, however, since it suggests that the Savoy Operas were musically redolent of much church music that was being written. Many of Sullivan's choruses and melodies certainly have a churchy feel with their anthem like structure and four-

66 Ibid, p. 110.

67 Ibid, p. 42.

68 Ibid, p.53.

69 Ibid, pp. 55-58.

70 Ibid, p. 71.

71 Ibid, pp. 82-83.

72 Ibid, p.135.

part harmonies.⁷³

There is certainly a strong tradition of setting hymns to tunes from the operas. Gatherings of the Sullivan Society are regularly enlivened by the singing of 'The king of love my shepherd is' to 'In enterprise of martial kind when there was any fighting' from *The Gondoliers*, 'Abide with me' to 'When I was a lad' from *HMS Pinafore* and 'While Shepherds Watched' from the *Mikado*'s, 'The sun whose rays' to name but a few possibilities.⁷⁴ The Revd Richard Sturch, formerly vicar of Islip, in Oxfordshire, published a hymn to the company promoter's song from *Utopia Unlimited*.⁷⁵ Malcolm Sargent, whilst deputising at Peterborough Cathedral, where he was a pupil of the regular organist, accompanied the creed at the morning service with harmonies and descant, which were a direct transfer at slow tempo from the opening number sung by the fairies in *Iolanthe*. 'You see how it all fits', he would say years later playing it over on his grand piano; 'the modulations and tunes go perfectly with every section of the Creed.'⁷⁶ Sullivan would be even more surprised to find that some of his Savoy music has also been adapted for Eucharistic settings, such as in the 2006 Pirate Eucharist.⁷⁷

But perhaps he shouldn't have been surprised. Gilbert reproached him for the seriousness of his music which was 'fitted more for the Cathedral than the Comic opera stage.' George Bernard Shaw also picked up on their religious nature when he commented on how he found the Savoy Operas 'most unexpectedly churchy after Offenbach.'⁷⁸ On the back of a great national choral revival, with hundreds of singing societies being founded, Sullivan wrote for stage choruses as if he was writing for church choirs. The four-part writing for the chorus has much in common with Victorian church anthems, which is one reason the operas were enthusiastically taken up by church choirs.⁷⁹ Dr Bradley also suggests that the madrigals have the feel of Tudor anthems and even the famous patter songs may owe something to the plainsong tradition experienced by the young Sullivan.⁸⁰

Perhaps the closest Sullivan comes to declaring musically for the Prayer Book is within the opera *Haddon Hall*, which was written for the Savoy Theatre, but with Sydney Grundy rather than Gilbert. *Haddon Hall* is

73 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 98.

74 Bradley, *Lost Chords*, p. 90.

75 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 168.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

78 Bradley, *Lost Chords*, p. 172.

79 *Ibid.*, pp. 173-74.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 172.

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set on the eve of the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and one year before the Savoy Conference. It contrasts the lifestyles and attitudes of the Puritans and the Cavaliers. Sullivan's music leaves you in no doubt that he is on the side of the Royalists.⁸¹

In their different ways both Gilbert and Sullivan were highly patriotic with an enormous pride in their country. It would no doubt have pleased both of them, like the Prayer Book, to have become something of a national treasure. Harold Wilson spoke of their operas as being 'part of the national heritage' and Enoch Powell who helped lead the fight to preserve the Prayer Book was a regular attendee of performances.⁸² In the past both the preservation of the Prayer Book and the Savoy operas has been fiercely argued over in Parliament. Back in 1959, as the copyright was due to expire on the operas, a petition was actually presented in Parliament to extend the copyright and to turn the D'Oyly Carte into a nationalised monopoly.⁸³ Members of this society will need no reminding of the parliamentary battles of the 1970s regarding the Book of Common Prayer. Sadly I fear that many of the current occupants of both the red and green benches could not argue as articulately over either of these national treasures, or would even see the point of doing so!

The critics of both the Prayer Book and Gilbert and Sullivan have often accused their supporters of being nostalgic, longing for an England which no longer really exists.⁸⁴ I well recall some of the ceremonies surrounding the installation of Rowan Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury as being Gilbertian and it wasn't meant as a compliment. If you are a fan of both the liturgy of the Savoy Conference and the Savoy Operas, as I am, then you couldn't pigeon hole yourself much more, in the eyes of such critics as a thoroughgoing reactionary! I think it might be fair to say that those of us who value the Prayer Book and those of us who value the Savoy Operas have a sense of the value of tradition. But there is all the world of difference between traditionalism, which means the way we have always done it and a Spirit-filled living tradition. Towards the end of its life the old D'Oyly Carte opera company was, perhaps, erring too much towards traditionalism. At the start of the final London Season Dame Bridget D'Oyly Carte reflected on the ups and downs of her thirty-three years leading the family business. She spoke of how 'tradition is never static and, in our case, never in fact has been...and the future does require, as you will realise, an

81 Ibid, p. 171.

82 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 47.

83 Ibid, p. 28.

84 Ibid, p.63.

imaginative, constructive attitude.⁸⁵

The Savoy operas were sadly never going to be imaginative enough for the Arts Council and the snobbery of the arts establishment helped sound the death knell of the old D'Oyly Carte Company, because it despised anything that smacked of popular cultural activities. Having lobbed that pot shot, however, it is also fair to say that it was something of a miracle that the Victorian world of D'Oyly Carte made it into the 1980s. It was only in its final year, for example that the company finally employed a publicity and marketing officer.⁸⁶ At the Savoy Hotel's press launch for a revived company on 1st March 1988 Richard Baker announced that 'while all that is good in Gilbert and Sullivan tradition should be respected, fresh vision is called for if the Company is to build a new audience.'⁸⁷

It is very hard, of course, to make changes without causing distress. Back in 1991 the Birmingham season opened with a bizarre production of *The Gondoliers* including a joke rat, a corgi dressed as the queen and a bizarre set of orange undulating waves. *The Times* critic, Benedict Nightingale, wrote of how the director 'has found a way of escaping from traditionalism more destructive than traditionalism itself and of packaging the opera so gaudily that nobody can see the contents for the wrapping paper.'⁸⁸ In short a well-meaning attempt at relevance had gone wrong.

Members of the Prayer Book Society must likewise often wish that the Church of England had proceeded with more care. The Prayer Book stills exists in law, but is often so surrounded by the wrapping paper of all the alternatives that it has disappeared from sight. I use *Common Worship* and admire much that is in it, but there is nothing common about it, since it allows for legal variety *ad infinitum*. Rather like the well-meaning chaos that ensues in *Utopia Limited* or *The Flowers of Progress*, when the benefits of supposed civilization are brought to a South Sea island, we may feel it might have been better to leave well alone. After all as the stately song in *Iolanthe* about the House of Peers points out Britain was at its greatest when they 'were doing nothing in particular.' There is much to be said for being a Mary rather than a Martha.

John Reed who was one of the great principal singers of the old D'Oyly Carte Company recollected that when he joined it was positively rammed down your throat that you were to use the words as written by Gilbert. 'This is why today I am a stickler for words. Amateurs do an awful lot of things to words that are not as good as what was originally

85 Ibid, p. 50.

86 Ibid, p. 51.

87 Ibid, p. 54.

88 Ibid, pp. 57-58.

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written...[and] it alters the whole meaning.’⁸⁹ This happens all the time with regard to the Prayer Book. For example, in the Communion Service I have noticed that the reference to ‘meekly kneeling upon your knees’ is routinely cut out. Likewise in the Prayer for the Church Militant clergy seek to improve on Cranmer’s prayer for ‘all Bishops and Curates’ to suit whatever theology of the ordained ministry they are attracted to. My other *bête noire* is cutting the reference to ‘brethren’ in the invitation to confess our sins at Morning and Evening Prayer; it is only one word but dropping ‘brethren’, even if it is motivated by the kindly desire not to exclude our sisters in the faith, lessens the point that we are family when we come together.

To quote John Reed, again, he believed firmly that the ‘reason the operas are as popular today as ever’ was because of the care and attention given to performing them.⁹⁰ Whilst fully aware that it is the heart that God is interested in we must all have experienced dreadful acts of Prayer Book worship when whoever is presiding makes a poor fist of it. As a clergyman, myself, I have to be careful, since I have made gaffes in worship, but if we are putting on a performance for God we want it to be the best it can be. So like the D’Oyly Carte Company I put in a plea for audibility so the words Cranmer wrote can be enjoyed along with their cadence, so they can both instruct and lift us into the true worship of God.

Reed obviously had a healthy regard for both the operas and the way they were performed, but that did not stop him helping their performance to evolve. For example he saw encores as a great opportunity to try something new.⁹¹ You can do amazing things with Gilbert and Sullivan whilst remaining loyal to the text and the music. There is the famous introduction of the spaghetti eating scene into *The Gondoliers* in the 1960s and at the recent Harrogate Festival I was mightily impressed by the way an American group, in their production of *Pirates*, used the overture, when you normally stare at the curtain, as the opportunity to show a specially made film explaining why the pirate king had turned to his life of plunder. Likewise you can be scrupulously faithful to the Prayer Book whilst still recognizing that some additions may complement it without undermining it. For example it would seem odd to us now without the addition of hymns at sung services.

Things do evolve in the world of both Gilbert and Sullivan and the Book of Common Prayer. One development that is equally unwelcome to both of them is the fact that they are not as well-known as they once were. Ian Smith, founder of the Gilbert and Sullivan Festival writes that back in 1994 ‘judging by the age of our first audience’ he wondered if

89 Smith, *John Reed*, pp. 58, 68.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

there would 'be enough left to have a second festival in 1995' let alone be preparing for its Silver Jubilee in 2018.⁹² The same quip of gracious years has been levelled at fans of the Prayer Book although it would be fair to say that predictions of their imminent extinction have also failed to come true. If you believe anything you read in the *Church Times* then attendance at Prayer Book Evensong is massively on the increase across Oxford and I felt positively silver-haired next to some of the youthful attendees at this year's conference.

But we have to be pro-active too. Lovers of Gilbert and Sullivan know they are onto a good thing, but want to share it too. For example university and youth productions are positively encouraged at the Festival and workshops have been held for children.⁹³ This year I had the pleasure of seeing the Ploverleigh Players incorporate a whole troop of angelic enthusiastic children into *The Sorcerer*, who clearly loved every minute of it. When it comes to sharing the Prayer Book our Society does run the Cranmer Awards, but some resources to show clergy how they might use the Prayer Book in family services, or in school worship would be highly welcome. Children can respond well to poetry, cadence and mystery, but you have to introduce them to it first. The Prayer Book Society is engaging more with outreach than it is often given credit for, but more needs to be done.

Gilbert and Sullivan and the Book of Common Prayer are part of the English cultural tradition. They are both texts which have shaped the identity of a nation and even the direction that nation has gone in. Within my parishes I am privileged to minister to an enthusiastic Savoyard and former member of the Palestine Police, who served there in the last years of the British mandate. One legacy of his time there was his love of Gilbert and Sullivan. He was taken to a performance of the *Mikado* in which English, Jews and Arabs were all performing; a splendid coming together of three cultures, as he puts it, in 'perfect harmony'. Later that year there was to be a performance of the *Pirates*, but it had to be abandoned due to threats from the Zionist leader, Menachem Begin, who didn't want this cross-cultural fraternization. The Savoy Operas, agents of peace and reconciliation, is not an epithet normally given to them, but they nearly pulled it off in the 1940s.

Fans of the BBC programme *Desert Island Discs* will know that you are given a Bible along with the complete works of Shakespeare and are also allowed to take one other book. My book would be the Book of Common Prayer, but among the records you are allowed to take would be some Gilbert and Sullivan. The Savoy operas are not an alternative to

92 *Friends of the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival Friends News* (2016)

93 Bradley, *Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, p. xi; Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 76-77.

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the Prayer Book, but both the churchy feel of much of Sullivan's music and the gentle religious assumptions of Gilbert's text certainly provide a very happy and friendly companion to it. So let the last word go to a reworking of a song from *Pirates*, which comes from St Mark's Episcopal Church, Altadena, California, that brings them both together.

Hail, Liturgy, thou heav'n-born dove,

Thou blessed structure from above.

Hail, Prayerbook (sic) trebly eloquent,

All hail, all hail, divine emollient!⁹⁴

(The Revd Dr Michael Brydon is Rector of Catsfield and Crowhurst. This is an expanded version of a talk give to the Chichester East and West branches of the Prayer Book Society in October 2016.)

94 Bradley, *Oh Joy!*, p. 164.

An Apology for Authorised and Set Forms of Liturgy

JEREMY TAYLOR

(This is the concluding section of Taylor's Apology for Authorised and Set Forms of Liturgy Against the Pretence of the Spirit (1649), a response to the Directory for Public Worship issued by Parliament in 1645 to replace the Prayer Book. The text has been slightly abridged; spelling and punctuation have been partially modernised.)

Thus far we are gone: the Church hath (1) power and authority, and (2) command, (3) and ability, or promises of assistances, to make public forms of liturgy; and (4) the Church always did so. It remains only that I consider upon what reason and grounds of prudence and religion the Church did so, and whether she did well or no. In order to which, I consider:

1. Every man hath personal needs of his own, and he that understands his own condition, and hath studied the state of his soul in order to eternity, his temporal estate in order to justice and charity, and the constitution and necessities of his body in order to health, and his health in order to the service of God, as every wise and good man does, will find that no man can make such provision for his necessities, as he can do for his own. *Caeteris paribus*, no man 'knows the things of a man but the spirit of the man', and therefore, if he have proportionable abilities, it is allowed to him, and it is necessary for him, to represent his own conditions to God, and he can best express his own sense, or at least best sigh forth his own meaning; and if he be a good man, the Spirit will make intercession for him, with those 'unutterable groans'. Besides this, every family hath needs proper to it in the capacity of a family, and those are to be represented by the master of the family; whom men of the other persuasion are apt to confess to be a priest in his own family and a king; and they call upon him to perform family duties, that is, all the public devotions of the family are to be ordered by him.

If he prays extempore, without a set form of prayer, he may commit many an undecency; a set and described form of prayer is most convenient in a family that children and servants may be enabled to remember, and tacitly recite, the prayer together with the major domo. But I rely not upon this; but proceed upon this consideration.

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As private Persons and as families, so also have Churches their special necessities in a distinct capacity, and therefore God hath provided for them rulers and feeders, priests and presidents of religion, who are to represent all their needs to God, and to make provisions. Now because the Church cannot all meet in one place, but the harvest being great it is bound up in several bundles, and divided into many congregations, for all which the rulers and stewards of this great family are to provide, and yet cannot be present in those particular societies, it is necessary that they should have influence upon them by a general provision, and therefore that they should take care that their common needs should be represented to God, by set forms of prayer, for they only can be provided by rulers, and used by their ministers and deputies; and it is a better expression of their care and duty for the rulers to provide the bread and bless it, and then give it to them who must minister it in small portions and to particular companies (for so Christ did), than to leave them who are not in the same degree answerable for the Churches as the rulers are, to provide their food, and break it, and minister it too. The very economy of Christ's family requires that the dispensations be made according to every man's capacity. The general stewards are to divide to every man his portion of work, and to give them their food in due season, and the under-servants are to do that work which is appointed them; so Christ appointed it in the Gospel, and so the Church hath practised in all ages. When the rulers are few (for the ecclesiastical regiment is not democratical) and the under offices many, and the companies numerous, for all which those few rulers are bound to provide (and prayer and offices of devotion are one of the greatest instances of provision), it is impossible there should be any sufficient care taken or caution used by those rulers in the matter of prayers, but for them to make such prescript forms which may be used by all companies, under their charge; that since they are to represent all the needs of all their people, because they cannot be present by their persons in all societies, they may be present by their care and provisions, which is then done best when they make prescript forms of prayer, and provide pious ministers to dispense it.

2. It is in the very nature of public prayer that it be made by a public spirit, and performed by a public consent. For public and private prayer are certainly two distinct duties; but they are least of all distinguished by the place, but most of all, by the spirit that dictates the prayer, and the consent in the recitation; and it is a private prayer which either one man makes, though spoken in public, or which is not attested by public consent of minds; and it is a public prayer, which is made by the public spirit, and consented to by a general acceptance; and therefore the

Lord's Prayer, though spoke in private, is a public form, and therefore represented plurally. And the place is very extrinsical to the nature of prayer: 'I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up pure hands'; and retiring into a closet is only advised for the avoiding of hypocrisy, not for the greater excellency of the duty. So that if public prayer have advantages beyond private prayer, or upon its own stock, besides it, the more public influences it receives, the more excellent it is. And hence I conclude, that set forms of prayer composed and used by the Church (I mean by the rulers in conjunction and union, of heads and councils, and used by the Church; I mean the people in union and society of hearts and spirits,) have two very great advantages which other prayers have not.

For, first, it is more truly public, and hath the benefit of those helps which God (who never is deficient to supply any of our needs) gives to public persons in order to public necessities, by which I mean, its emanation from a public, and therefore a more excellent, spirit. And secondly, it is the greatest instance of union in the world; for since God hath made faith, hope, and charity, the ligaments of the Communion of Saints (and Common Prayer, which not only all the governors have propounded as most fit, but in which all the people are united, is a great testimony of the same faith, and a common hope, and mutual charity), because they confess the same God whom they worship, and the same articles which they recite, and labour towards the same hope, the 'mighty price of their high calling', and by praying for each other in the same sense, and to the same purpose, doing the same to them, that I desire they should do for me, do testify and preserve, and increase their charity. It follows, that common and described prayers are the most excellent instrument, and act, and ligament of the Communion of Saints, and the great common term of the Church in its degrees of Catholic capacity. And therefore, saith St Ignatius, 'All meet together and join to common prayers', and 'Let there be one mind, and let there be one prayer'. That is the true Communion of Christians.

And in pursuance of this, I consider, that if all Christian Churches had one common liturgy, there were not a greater symbol to testify, nor a greater instrument to preserve, the Catholic Communion; and whenever a schism was commenced, and that they called one another heretic, they not only forsook to pray with one another, but they also altered their forms, by interposition of new clauses, and hymns, and collects, and new rites and ceremonies; only those parts that combined kept the same liturgy; and indeed the same forms of prayer were so much the instrument of Union, that it was the only ligament of their society, (for their Creeds, I reckon as part of their liturgy, for so they

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ever were:) so that this may teach us a little to guess, I will not say into how many Churches, but into how many innumerable atoms, and minutes of Churches those Christians must needs be scattered, who alter their forms according to the number of persons, and the number of their meetings, every company having a new form of prayer at every convention. And this consideration will not be vain, if we remember how great a blessing unity in Churches is, and how hard to be kept, with all the arts in the world; and how every thing is powerful enough for its dissolution. But that a public form of liturgy was the great instrument of communion in the Primitive Church, appears in this, that the *καθαιρεσις*, or excommunication, was an exclusion, 'from the participation of the publick meeting and prayers'; and therefore the more united the prayer is, still it is the greater instrument of union; the authority and consent, the public spirit, and common acceptance, are so many degrees of a more firm and indissoluble communion.

3. To this I add, that without prescribed forms, issues of the public spirit and authority, public communion cannot be regular and certain, as may appear in one or two plain instances. It is a practise prevailing among those of our brethren that are zealous for extempore, or not-enjoined prayers, to pray their sermons over, to reduce their doctrine into devotion and liturgy. I mislike it not for the thing itself, if it were regularly, for the manner and the matter, always pious and true. But who shall assure me, when the preacher hath disputed, or rather dogmatically decreed, a point of predestination, or of prescience, of contingency, or of liberty, or any of the most mysterious parts of divinity, and then prays his sermon over, that he then prays with the Spirit? Unless I be sure that he also preached with the Spirit, I cannot be sure that he prays with the Spirit, for all he prays extempore. Nay, if I hear a Protestant preach in the morning, and an Anabaptist in the afternoon, today a Presbyterian, tomorrow an Independent, am I not most sure, that when they have preached contradictories, and all of them pray their sermons over, that they do not all pray with the Spirit? More than one in this case cannot pray with the Spirit; possibly all may pray against him.

4. From whence I thus argue in behalf of set forms of prayer. That in the case above put, how shall I, or any man else, say 'amen' to their prayers that preach and pray contradictories? At least, I am much hindered in my devotion. For besides that, it derives our opinions into our devotions, makes every School-point, become our religion, and makes God a party so far as we can, entitling him to our impertinent wranglings. Besides this, I say, while we should attend to our addresses towards God, we are to consider whether the point be true, or no? and by the time we have

tacitly discoursed it, we are upon another point, which also perhaps is as questionable as the former, and by this time our spirit of devotion is a little discomposed and something out of countenance, there is so much other employment for the spirit, the spirit of discerning and judging. All which inconveniences are avoided in set forms of liturgy. For we know beforehand the conditions of our communion, and to what we are to say, 'amen', to which if we like it, we may repair; if not, there is no harm done, your devotion shall not be surprised, nor your communion invaded, as it may be often in your extempore prayers, and unlimited devotions.

5. And this thing hath another collateral inconvenience which is of great consideration, for upon what confidence can we solicit any Recusants to come to our Church, where we cannot promise them, that the devotions there to be used shall be innocent, nor can we put him into a condition to judge for himself? If he will venture he may, but we can use no argument to make him choose our churches, though he would quit his own.

6. So that either the people must have an implicit faith in the priest, and then may most easily be abused; or, if they have not, they cannot join in the prayer, it cannot become to them an instrument of communion, but by chance and irregularly; and *ex post facto*, when the prayer is approved of, and after the devotion is spent, for till then they cannot judge, and before they do, they cannot say 'amen', and till 'amen' be said there is no benefit of the prayer, nor no union of hearts and desires, and therefore as yet no communion.

7. Public forms of prayer are great advantages to convey an article of faith into the most secret retirement of the spirit, and to establish it with a most firm persuasion, and endear it to us with the greatest affection. For, since our prayers are the greatest instruments and conveyances of blessing and mercy to us, that which mingles with our hopes, which we owe to God, which is sent of an errand to fetch a mercy for us, in all reason will become the dearer to us for all these advantages. And just so is an article of belief inserted into our devotions, and made a part of prayer. It is extremely confirmed by that confidence and fullness of persuasion that must exclude all doubting from our prayers, and it insinuates itself into our affection by being mingled with our desires, and we grow bold in it by having offered it to God, and made so often acknowledgement of it to him who is not to be mocked.

And certainly it were a very strange liturgy in which there were no public confession of faith, for as it were deficient in one act of God's worship, which is offering the understanding up to God, bringing it in

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subjection to Christ, and making public profession of it, it also loses a very great advantage which might accrue to faith by making it a part of our liturgical devotions; and this was so apprehended by the ancients in the Church, our Fathers in Christ, that commonly they used to oppose a hymn, or a collect, or a doxology, in defiance of a new-sprung heresy. The Fathers of Nice framed the Gloria Patri, against the Arians. Saint Augustine composed a hymn against the Donatists. St Jerome added the *sicut erat in principio* against the Macedonians. S. Ambrose framed the Te Deum upon occasion of Saint Augustine's Baptism, but took care to make the hymn to be of most solemn adoration, and yet of prudent institution and public confession, that according to the advice of Saint Paul we might sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, and at the same time teach and admonish one another too: Now this cannot be done but in set forms of prayer; for in new devotions and uncertain forms we may also have an ambulatory faith, and new articles may be offered before every sermon, and at every convention; the Church can have no security to the contrary, nor the article any stable foundation, or advantageous insinuation either into the judgment or memory of the persons to be informed or persuaded, but like Abraham's sacrifice, as soon as his back is turned, the birds shall eat it up. A cursory Prayer shall have a transient effect; when the hand is off, the impression also is gone.

8. Without the prescription of public forms of prayer there can be no security given in the matter of our prayers, but we may burn asafoetida for incense, and the marrow of a man's bones instead of the fat of rams; and of all things in the world we should be most curious that our prayers be not turned into sin, and yet if they be not prescribed and preconsidered, nothing can secure them antecedently, the people shall go to church but without confidence that they shall return with a blessing, for they know not whether God shall have a present made of a holy oblation, or else whether the minister will stand in the gap, or make the gap wider. But this I touched upon before.

9. They preserve the authority and sacredness of government, and possibly they are therefore decried that the reputation of authority may decline together. For as God hath made it the great cancel between the clergy and the people, that they are deputed to speak to God for them, so is it the great distinction of the persons in that order, that the rulers shall judge between the ministers and the people in relation to God, with what addresses they shall come before God, and intercede for the people, for so Saint Paul enjoins, that the spirits of the prophets, should be submitted to the prophets, viz. to be discerned and judged by them, which thing is not practicable in permissions of every minister to pray

what forms he pleases every day.

10. Public forms of liturgy are also the great securities and basis to the religion and piety of the people; for circumstances govern them most, and the very determination of a public office, and the appointment of that office at certain times, engages their spirits: the first to an habitual, the latter to an actual, devotion. It is all that many men know of their religion, and they cannot any way know it better, then by those forms of prayer which publish their faith, and their devotion to God, and all the world, and which by an admirable expedient reduces their faith into practice, and places their religion in their understanding, and affections. And therefore Saint Paul when he was to give an account of his religion, he did it not by a mere recitation of the articles, but by giving account of his liturgy, and the manner of his worship: 'after that way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers'. And the best worship, is the best religion, and therefore I am not to trust any man to make my manner of worshipping, unless I durst trust him to be the dictator of my religion; and a form of prayer made by a private man, is also my religion made by a private man. So that we must say, after the manner that G—the minister of B— shall conceive and speak, so worship I the God of my fathers, and if that be reasonable or pious, let all the world judge.

11. But when Authority shall consider and determine upon a form of liturgy, and this be used and practised in a Church, there is an admirable conjunction in the religion, and great co-operation towards the glory of God. The authority of the injunction adds great reputation to the devotion, and takes off the contempt which from the no-authority of single and private persons must be consequent to their conceived prayers; and the public practise of it, and union of spirits in the devotion, satisfies the world in the nature of it, and the religion of the Church.

12. But nothing can answer for the great scandal which all wise persons, and all good persons in the world must needs receive when there is no public testimony consigned, that such a whole nation, or a Church, hath anything that can be called religion, and those little umbrages that are, are casual as chance itself, alterable as time, and shall be good when those infinite numbers of men (that are trusted with it) shall please to be honest, or shall have the good luck not to be mistaken.

13. I will not now instance in the vain-glory that is appendant to these new-made, every-days forms of prayer, and that some have been so vain, that they have published their extempore faculty upon experiment, and scenical bravery. You shall name the instance, and they shall compose the form: amongst whom also the gift of the man is more than the devotion of the man. Nor will I consider that then his gift is esteemed best, when

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his prayer is longest; and if he takes a complacency in his gift (as who is not apt to do it?) he will be sure to extend his prayer till a suspicious and scrupulous man would be apt to say, his prayer pressed hard upon that which our Blessed Saviour reprehended in the Pharisees, who thought to be heard for their much babbling. I know it was observed by a very wise man, that the vanity of spirit and popular opinion that grows great, and talks loudly of his abilities that can speak extempore, may not only be the incentive, but a helper of the faculty, and make a man not only to love it, but to be the more able to do it. It may so happen that the opinion of the people, as it is apt to actuate the faculty, so also may encourage the practise, and spoil the devotion. But these things are accidental to the nature of the thing, and therefore though they are too certainly consequent to the person, yet I will not be too severe, but preserve myself on the surer side of a charitable construction, which truly I desire to keep, not only to their persons, whom I much reverence, but also to their actions. But yet I durst not do the same thing even for these last reasons, though I had no other.

In the next place we must consider the next great objection, that is with much clamour pretended, viz. that in set forms of prayer we restrain and confine the blessed Spirit; and in conceived forms, when every man is left to his liberty, then the Spirit is free, unlimited and unconstrained.

1. I answer, either their conceived forms (I use their own words, though indeed the expression is very inartificial) are premeditate and described, or they are extempore. If they be premeditate and described, then the Spirit is as much limited in their conceived forms, as in the Church's conceived forms. For as to this particular, it is all one who describes and limits the form, whether the Church, or a single man, does it, still the Spirit is in constraint and limit. So that in this case they are not angry at set forms of prayer, but that they do not make them. And if it be replied, that if a single person composes a set form, he may alter it if he please, and so his Spirit is at liberty; I answer, so may the Church, if she see cause for it; and unless there be cause, the single person will not alter it, unless he do things unreasonable, and without cause. So that it will be an unequal challenge, and a peevish quarrel, to allow of set forms of prayer made by private persons, and not of set forms made by the public spirit of the Church. It is evident that the Spirit is limited in both alike.

But if by conceived forms in this objection they mean extempore prayers (for so they would be thought most generally to practise it), and that in the use of these, the liberty of the Spirit is best preserved; to this I answer, that the being extempore, or premeditate will be wholly

impertinent to this question of limiting the Spirit. For there may be great liberty in set forms, even when there is much variety; and there may be great restraint in extempore prayers, even then when it shall be called unlawful to use set forms. That the Spirit is restrained, or that it is free in either, is accidental to them both; for it may be either free or not free in both, as it may happen.

But the restraint is this: that everyone is not left to his liberty to pray how he list, (with premeditation or without, it makes not much matter) but that he is prescribed unto by the spirit of another. But if it be a fault thus to restrain the Spirit, I would fain know, is not the Spirit restrained when the whole congregation shall be confined to the form of this one man's composing? Or shall it be unlawful, or at least a disgrace and disparagement, to use any set forms, especially of the Church's composition? More plainly thus.

2. Doth not the Minister confine, and restrain the spirit of the Lord's people, when they are tied to his form? It would sound of more liberty to their spirits, that every one might make a prayer of his own, and all pray together, and not be forced or confined to the minister's single dictate, and private spirit. It is true, it would breed confusions, and therefore they might pray silently till the sermon began, and not for the avoiding one inconvenience run into a greater, and to avoid the disorder of a popular noise restrain the blessed Spirit, for even in this case as well as in the other, where the Spirit of God is, there must be liberty.

3. If the Spirit must be at liberty, who shall assure us this liberty must be in forms of prayer? And if so, whether also it must be in public prayer, and will it not suffice that it be in private? And if in public prayers, is not the liberty of the Spirit sufficiently preserved, that the public spirit is free? That is, the Church hath power, upon occasion, to alter and increase her litanies. By what argument shall any man make it so much as probable, that the Holy Ghost is injured, if every private minister's private spirit shall be guided (and therefore by necessary consequence limited) by the authority of the Church's public spirit?

4. Does not the *Directory* that thing which is here called restraining of the Spirit? Does it not appoint everything but the words? And after this, is it not a goodly palladium that is contended for, and a princely liberty they leave unto the Spirit, to be free only in the supplying the place of a vocabulary, and a *copia verborum*? For as for the matter, it is all there described and appointed; and to those determined senses the Spirit must assist, or not at all, only for the words he shall take his choice. Now I desire it may be considered sadly and seriously: is it not as much injury to the Spirit to restrain his matter, as to appoint his words? Which is the more

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considerable of the two, sense or language, matter or words? I mean when they are taken singly, and separately. For so they may very well be, (for as if men prescribe the matter only, the Spirit may cover it with several words and expressions; so if the Spirit prescribe the words, I may still abound in variety of sense, and preserve the liberty of my meaning; we see that true in the various interpretations of the same words of Scripture.) So that, in the greater of the two, the Spirit is restrained when his matter is appointed; and to make him amends, for not trusting him with the matter without our directions and limitations, we trust him to say what he pleases, so it be to our sense, to our purposes. A goodly compensation surely!

5. Did not Christ restrain the spirit of his Apostles, when he taught them to pray the Lord's Prayer, whether his precept to his disciples, concerning it, was, 'pray this', or 'pray thus', 'pray these words', or 'pray after this manner'? Or though it had been less than either, and been only a *Directory* for the matter, still it is a thing which our brethren in all other cases of the same nature, are resolved perpetually to call a restraint. Certainly then, this pretended restraint, is no such formidable thing. These men themselves do it by directing all of the matter, and much of the manner, and Christ himself did it, by prescribing both the matter, and the words too.

6. These restraints (as they are called) or determinations of the Spirit, are made by the Spirit himself. For I demand, when any Assembly of Divines appoint the matter of prayers to all particular ministers, as this hath done, is that appointment by the Spirit or no? If no, then for ought appears, this *Directory* not being made by God's Spirit, may be an enemy to it. But if this appointment be by the Spirit, then the determination and limitation of the Spirit, is by the Spirit himself, and such indeed is every pious, and prudent constitution of the Church in matters spiritual. Such as was that of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, when he prescribed orders for public prophesying, and interpretation, and speaking with tongues. The spirit of some he so restrained, that he bound them to hold their peace, he permitted but two or three to speak at one meeting, the rest were to keep silence, though possibly six or seven might at that time have the Spirit.

7. Is it not a restraint of the Spirit to sing a psalm in metre by appointment? Clearly, as much as appointing forms of prayer, or Eucharist; and yet that we see done daily, and no scruple made. Is not this to be partial in judgement, and inconsiderate of what we do?

8. And now after all this strife, what harm is there in restraining the Spirit in the present sense? What prohibition? What law? What reason or

revelation is against it? What inconvenience in the nature of the thing? For, can any man be so weak as to imagine a despite is done to the Spirit of grace, when the gifts given to his Church are used regularly, and by order? As if prudence were no gift of God's Spirit, as if helps in government, and the ordering spiritual matters were none of those graces which Christ when he ascended up on high gave unto men. But this whole matter is wholly a stranger to reason, and never seen in Scripture.

For, Divinity never knew any other vicious restraining the Spirit, but either suppressing those holy incitements to virtue and good life, which God's Spirit ministers to us externally, or internally; or else a forbidding by public authority the ministers of the Word and Sacraments, to speak such truths as God hath commanded, and so taking away the liberty of prophesying. The first is directly vicious in *materia speciali*; the second is tyrannical and antichristian. And to it persecution of true religion is to be reduced. But as for this pretended limiting or restraining the Spirit, viz. by appointing a regular form of prayer, it is so very a chimaera, that it hath no footing or foundation upon any ground where a wise man may build his confidence.

9. But lastly, how if the Spirit must be restrained, and that by precept apostolical? That calls us to a new account. But if it be not true, what means Saint Paul, by saying, 'the spirits of the prophets must be subject to the prophets'? What greater restraint then subjection? If subjected, then they must be ruled; if ruled, then limited; prescribed unto, and as much under restraint as the spirits of the superior prophets shall judge convenient. I suppose by this time this objection will trouble us no more. But perhaps another will.

For, why are not the ministers to be left as well to their liberty in making their prayers as their sermons? I answer, the Church may if she will, but whether she doth well or no, let her consider. This I am sure, there is not the same reason, and I fear the experience the world hath already had of it will make demonstration enough of the inconvenience. But however, the differences are many.

1. Our Prayers offered up by the Minister, are in behalf, and in the name of the People, and therefore great reason they should know beforehand, what is to be presented, that if they like not the message, they may refuse to communicate, especially since people are so divided in their opinions, in their hopes, and in their faiths; it being a duty to refuse communion with those prayers which they think to have in them the matter of sin or doubting. Which reason on the other part ceases, for the Minister being

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to speak from God to the people, if he speaks what he ought not, God can right himself, however is not a partner of the sin as, in the other case, the people possibly may be.

2. It is more fit a liberty be left in preaching than praying, because the address of our discourses and exhortations are to be made according to the understanding and capacity of the audience, their prejudices are to be removed, all advantages to be taken, and they are to be surprized that way they lie most open. 'But being crafty I caught you', saith Saint Paul to the Corinthians. And discourses and arguments *ad hominem*, upon their particular principles and practises may more move them than the most polite and accurate that do not comply and wind about their fancies and affections. Saint Paul from the absurd practise of being baptized for the dead, made an excellent argument to convince the Corinthians of the resurrection. But this reason also ceases in our prayers. For God understandeth what we say, sure enough, he hath no prejudices to be removed, no infirmities to be wrought upon, and a fine figure of rhetoric, a pleasant cadence and a curious expression move not him, at all. No other twinings and compliances stir him, but charity, and humility, and zeal, and importunity, which all are things internal and spiritual. And therefore, of necessity, there is to be great variety of discourses to the people, and permissions accordingly, but not so to God, with whom a *Deus miserere* prevails as soon as the great Office of forty hours not long since invented in the Church of Rome, or any other prayers spun out to a length beyond the extension of the office of a Pharisee.

3. I fear it cannot stand with our reverence to God to permit to every spirit a liberty of public address to him in behalf of the people. Indeed, he that is not fit to pray, is not always fit to preach, but it is more safe to be bold with the people, then with God, if the persons be not so fit. In that there may be indiscretion, but there may be impiety and irreligion in this. The people may better excuse and pardon an indiscretion, or a rudeness (if any such should happen) than we may venture to offer it to God.

4. There is a latitude of theology, much whereof is left to us without precise and clear determination; so that without breach either of faith or charity men may differ in opinion: and if they may not be permitted to abound in their own sense, they will be apt to complain of tyranny over consciences, and that men lord it over their faith. In prayer this thing is so different, that it is imprudent, and full of inconvenience, to derive such things into our prayers which may with good profit be matter of sermons. Therefore here a liberty may well enough be granted, when there it may better be denied.

5. But indeed, if I may freely declare my opinion, I think it were not amiss if the liberty of making sermons were something more restrained than it is, and that either such persons only were entrusted with the liberty, for whom the Church herself may safely be responsive—that is, to men learned, and pious—and that the other part, the *vulgus cleri* should instruct the people out of the fountains of the Church, and the public stock, till by so long exercise and discipline in the schools of the prophets, they may also be entrusted to minister of their own unto the people. This I am sure was the practise of the Primitive Church, when preaching was as ably and religiously performed as now it is; but in this, I prescribe nothing. But truly I think the reverend Divines of the Assembly are many of them of my mind in this particular, and that they observe a liberty indulged to some persons to preach, which I think they had rather should hold their peace, and yet think the Church better edified in their silence, then their sermons.

6. But yet methinks the argument objected so far as the extempore men make use of it, if it were turned with the edge the other way, would have more reason in it; and instead of arguing ‘Why should not the same liberty be allowed to their spirit in praying as in preaching?’ it were better to substitute this, ‘If they can pray with the Spirit, why do they not also preach with the Spirit?’ And it may be there may be in reason or experience something more for preaching and making orations by the excellency of a man’s spirit and learning, than for the other, which in the greatest abilities it may be unfit to venture to God without public approbation: but for sermons they may be fortunate and safe if made extempore. Now let them make demonstration of their spirit by making excellent sermons extempore: that it may become an experiment of their other faculty, that after they are tried and approved in this, they may be considered for the other. And if praying with the Spirit be praying extempore, why shall not they preach extempore too, or else confess that they preach without the Spirit, or that they have not the gift of preaching? For to say that the gift of prayer is a gift extempore, but the gift of preaching is with study and deliberation, is to become vain and impertinent.

To sum up all. If any man hath a mind to exercise his gift of prayer, let him set himself to work, and compose books of devotion, (we have need of them in the Church of England, so apparent need that some of the Church of Rome have made it an objection against us) and this his gift of prayer will be to edification. But otherwise, I understand it is more fit for ostentation, then any spiritual advantage. For God hears us not the sooner for our extempore, long or conceived Prayers, possibly

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they may become a hindrance, as in the cases before instanced. And I am sure, if the people be intelligent, and can discern, they are hindered in their devotion; for they dare not say 'amen' till they have considered, and many such cases will occur in extempore, or unlicensed, prayers, that need much considering before we attest them. But if the people be not intelligent, they are apt to swallow all the inconveniences which may multiply in so great a licence: and therefore it were well that the governors of the Church, who are to answer for their souls should judge for them, before they say 'amen'; which judgement cannot be without set forms of liturgy. My sentence therefore is: let us be as we are already, few changes are for the better.

For if it be pretended, that in the liturgy of the Church of England, which was composed with much art and judgement, by a Church that hath as much reason to be confident she hath the Spirit and gifts of prayer as any single person hath, and each learned man that was at its first composition can as much prove that he had the Spirit, as the objectors nowadays (and he that boasts most, certainly hath the least)—if, I say, it be pretended that there are many errors and inconveniences both in the order and in the matter of the Common Prayer Book, made by such men, with so much industry: how much more, and with how much greater reason may we all dread the inconveniences and disorders of extempore and conceived prayers? Where respectively there is neither conjunction of heads, nor premeditation, nor industry, nor method, nor art, nor any of those things (or at least not in the same degree) which were likely to have exempted the Common Prayer Book from errors and disorders. If these things be in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?

But if it be said the extempore and conceived Prayers will be secured from error by the *Directory*, because that chalks them out the matter, I answer, it is not sufficient, because, if when men study both the matter and the words too, they may be and, it is pretended, are actually deceived, much more may they, when the matter is left much more at liberty, and the words under no restraint at all. And no man can avoid the pressure and the weight of this, unless the compilers of the *Directory* were infallible, and that all their followers are so too, of the certainty of which, I am not yet fully satisfied.

And after this, I would fain know, what benefit and advantages the Church of England in her united capacity receives by this new device? For the public it is clear, that whether the ministers pray before they study, or study before they pray, there must needs be infinite deformity in the public worship; and all the benefits which before were the consequents of conformity and unity will be lost; and if they be not

valuable, I leave it to all them to consider, who know the inconveniences of public disunion, and the public disunion that is certainly consequent to them, who do not communicate in any common forms of worship. And to think that the *Directory* will bring conformity, is as if one should say, that all who are under the same hemisphere are joined in *communi patria*, and will love like country-men. For under the *Directory* there will be as different religions, and as different desires, and as differing forms, as there are several varieties of men and manners under the one half of heaven, who yet breathe under the same half of the globe.

But I ask again, what benefit can the public receive by this form, or this no-form? For I know not whether to call it. Shall the matter of prayers be better in all churches? Shall God be better served? Shall the Word of God, and the best patterns of prayers be always exactly followed? It is well if it be. But there is no security given us by the *Directory*; for the particulars, and special instances of the matter are left at every man's dispose for all that, and we must depend upon the honesty of every particular for it: and if any man proves an heretic, or a knave, then he may introduce what impiety he please into the public forms of God's worship; and there is no Law made to prevent it, and it must be cured afterward if it can, but beforehand it is not prevented at all by the *Directory* which trusts every man.

But I observe, that all the benefit which is pretended, is, that it will make an able Ministry. And it is very true; to be able to speak excellent things, without long considering is an effect of a long industry, and greatest learning: but certainly the greatest enemy in the world to its production. Much learning, and long use of speaking may enable a man to speak upon sudden occasions, but speaking without consideration, will never make much learning. And to offer that, as a means of getting learning, which cannot be done at all as it ought, but after learning is already gotten in a very great degree, is highest mistaking. I confess I am very much from believing the allegation, and so will every man be that considers what kind of men they are that have been most zealous for that way of conceived prayer. I am sure, that very few of the learnedst, very many ignorants, those most who have made least abode in the schools of the prophets. And that I may disgrace no man's person, we see tradesmen of the most illiberal arts, and women, pretend to it, and do it with as many words, (and that's the main thing) with as much confidence, and speciousnes of spirit, as the best among them. It is but a small portion of learning that will serve a man to make conceived forms of prayer, which they may have easily upon the stock of other men, or upon their own fancy, or upon anything in which no learning is required.

He that knows not this, knows nothing of the craft that may be in the

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preacher's trade. But what? Is God better served? I would fain see any authority, or any reason, or any probability for that. I am sure, ignorant men offer him none of the best sacrifices extempore, and learned men will be sure to deliberate and know, God is then better served when he is served by a public, than when by a private spirit. I cannot imagine what accrements will hence come to the public: it may be some advantages may be to the private interests of men. For there are a sort of men whom our Blessed Saviour noted, 'who do devour widow's houses, and for a pretence make long prayers'. They make prayers, and they make them long; by this means they receive double advantages, for they get reputation to their ability, and to their piety. And although the Common Prayer Book in the Preface to the *Directory* be charged with unnecessary length, yet we see that most of these men, they that are most eminent, or would be thought so, make their prayers longer, and will not lose the benefits which their credit gets, and they, by their credit, for making their prayers.

Add this, that there is no promise in Scripture that he, who prays extempore, shall be heard the better, or that he shall be assisted at all to such purposes, and therefore to innovate in so high a matter without a warrant to command us, or a promise to warrant us, is no better than vanity in the thing, and presumption in the person. He therefore that considers that this way of prayer is without all manner of precedent in the Primitive Church, against the example of all famous Churches in all Christendom, in the whole descent of fifteen ages, without all command or warrant of Scripture, that it is unreasonable in the nature of the thing, against prudence and the best wisdom of humanity, because it is without deliberation, that it is innovation in a high degree, without that authority which is truly, and by inherent and ancient right, to command and prescribe to us in external forms of worship, that it is much to the disgrace of the first reformers of our religion, that it gives encouragement to the Church of Rome to quarrel, with some reason, and more pretence, against our Reformation, as being by the *Directory* confessed to have been done in much blindness, and therefore might err in the excess as well as in the defect, throwing out too much, as casting off too little, (which is the more likely, because they wanted no zeal to carry them far enough): he that considers the universal deformity of public worship, and the no means of union, no symbol of public communion being publicly consigned; that all heresies may, with the same authority, be brought into our prayers, and offered to God in the behalf of the people, with the same authority, that any truth may, all the particular matter of our prayers being left to the choice of all men, of all persuasions—and then

observes that actually, there are in many places, heresy, and blasphemy, and impertinency, and illiterate rudenesses put into the devotion of the most solemn days, and the most public meetings; and then, lastly, that there are diverse parts of liturgy, for which no provision at all is made in the *Directory*; and the very administration of the sacraments let so loosely, that if there be any thing essential in the forms of sacraments, the sacrament may become ineffectual for want of due words, and due administration; I say, he that considers all these things (and many more he may consider) will find that particular men are not fit to be entrusted to offer in public, with their private spirit, to God, for the people, in such solemnities, in matters of so great concernment, where the honour of God, the benefit of the people, the interest of kingdoms, the being of a Church, the unity of minds, the conformity of practise, the truth of persuasion, and the salvation of souls, are so much concerned as they are in the public prayers of a whole national Church. An unlearned man is not to be trusted, and a wise man dare not trust himself; he that is ignorant cannot, he that is knowing will not.

(Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) was Bishop of Down and Connor from 1661 to his death. He was a prolific author, whose most widely-read writings were the classic *Holy Living* (1650) and *Holy Dying* (1651)

Letter

From The Revd Dr Thomas Plant, Old St Pancras, London

Although no great lover of the ‘Protestant and Reformed’ religion as espoused by Dr Gatiss in your last issue, I must concede that there are far more learned theologians and Church historians than I who consider such doctrine compatible with the liturgy and formularies of the Church of England.

Nonetheless, I take comfort that there have been and remain others who cherish our Prayer Book precisely as an exemplar and guardian of the spiritual riches of the ancient Catholic Church, again wiser and more learned than I, and perhaps even than Dr Gatiss. Take, for example, Michael Ramsey, who spoke of the ‘logical priority’ of tradition over Scripture, given that that the content of the Bible was decided by the Bishops of the Church: a statement which would apparently render the former Archbishop of Canterbury a modernist disloyal to the Church of England by Dr Gatiss’ standards.

Selectively pruned quotations from the Prayer Book, Articles and Homilies can yield rather distorted fruits. ‘Proof texts’ are of course a familiar Evangelical strategy, based on the debatable assumption that Scripture is inerrant not only taken as a whole but in every individual jot and tittle. But even if one shares that assumption, it cannot be made also of the Prayer Book and Articles.

Many Evangelicals object (among other things) to the Preface to the Ordinal, the use of the word ‘Priest,’ the signing with the Cross at Baptism, the rubric enjoining the reverent consumption of any remaining consecrated Eucharistic elements, and elements of Articles 26 and 27—indeed, I have heard an Evangelical bishop say that he became a Christian not when he was baptised as a child but when he ‘turned to Christ.’ Such objections were deliberately quashed when the Puritans raised them in the run-up to 1662. Yet, a modern Evangelical might argue that these are matters of doctrinal history and are open to debate, and one should not be considered ‘disloyal’ for honest enquiry. In turn, an equally loyal churchman might aver that Anglicans are no more bound to the errors of the Reformers than to the supposed errors of Rome.

One of the latter is the Protestant bogeyman of the Mass, which Dr Gatiss is so quick to dismiss. If readers wish to avoid the rather tired circularity which often attends arguments about transubstantiation and sacrifice, they would do well to read David Grumett’s excellent new book, *Material Eucharist*. Dr Grumett moves us from the narrow bounds

of the Western Church's sixteenth-century controversies and mutual misunderstandings towards a much more ecumenical consensus, grounded firmly in Scripture and the ancient liturgies of the Church throughout the world. He has positive things to say about the BCP.

Despite my above reservations, I did find it refreshing in the end to read an Evangelical clergyman calling on his brethren to restore the discipline of liturgical worship to their own congregations. Regrettably, I doubt that they will listen: so if Dr Gatiss really does want to find somewhere that enjoins regular recitation of the creeds, use of the collects, and public confession of sin, not to mention the Daily Office, he could do worse than to seek out a loyal, Church of England, Anglo-Catholic church. There he might experience the 'mystery of faith' in its true biblical and sacramental significance.

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