

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

realized that our fundamental position, in all vital respects, is the same.

II.

BY THE REV. E. ARTHUR BERRY, M.A., Vicar of Drypool,
Hull.

We have listened to two very excellent and informative Papers on "The Revision that is needed" by Canon Thornton-Duesbery and Canon Briggs, and it makes it very difficult to add much to what they have said.

We have already had shown to us the many causes that make revision necessary and urgent. The sooner that urgency is recognised the better, in order that we may accomplish our task, and proceed with our real commission in life, to express to our people the Gospel of Jesus Christ anew.

There are many suggestions before us as to what the line of revision should be. We ourselves, unfortunately, have made no real contribution in preparing a suggested revision which might be before the National Assembly, but we have now at least four definite contributions towards revision:—

(a) *We have the E.C.U. Book*, and we are very grateful for the scholarship and care which have there been shown; but I am bound to point out that there is something very subtle about it, and I do not think its compilers are quite fair in putting in two parallel columns the things they do not wish for but are prepared to have in order that they may get the things they desire and which they think others may not be prepared to give. I see no parallel between the two.

(b) *The Edward VI Prayer Book*, which we must remember is being supported by several in authority, and we are bound here to remember that when it was first introduced, it was considered to be not merely non-Roman but distinctly anti-Roman.

(c) We have the *Communion Office* as prepared by the Life and Liberty Movement, with a foreword by the Bishop of Manchester.

(d) And the *N.A. 84*, which is the one we really ought to consider, and here the compilers have tried to:—(1) Modernise; (2) Enrich; (3) Abridge; (4) To restore the balance of doctrine, by which some mean the making of the Communion Service a greater aid to worship and more of an Eucharist than at present it is found to be; but by others it means the restoration of certain doctrines which by many are believed to have been set aside at the Reformation.

We remember that by the provision of *N.A. 84* we are to have an alternative book, and we find everywhere a growing dislike and a determined opposition to such a provision, and the longer revision is delayed, the less likely are we to see an alternative book accepted. If there be an alternative book, then we must remember that men may use either the old or the new, or parts of the old with parts of the new. In dealing with this matter we should remember, not

only the immediate but the ultimate effect upon the Church, say, in ten or fifteen years' time.

I find a growing tendency to discuss the question of revision in two parts, putting the subject of communion and the communion of the sick by itself, because of the growing feeling that the time is not yet ripe to face the matter of such controversy. Personally, I cannot believe that any revision will come unless there be a revision also of the Communion Office, and there are some of us who desire it, and in fact, by way of abridgement, we have already revised the service for ourselves. The difficulty will come when we remember that there are undoubtedly within the Church two schools of thought which are diametrically opposed the one to the other, and it is very difficult for us to see, if this be so, how the service can be so revised as to help and please them both. I would have you to remember the constituent members of the Prayer Book Revision Committee. The Evangelical Party were well represented on that committee, and while they reserved for themselves the right to express their opposition on other matters, they only signed a minority report against reservation, and therefore it is for us to assume that they more or less approved of the other provisions of N.A. 84.

In order that I may become somewhat constructive, let me emphasise the following points:—

- (a) Revision is necessary.
- (b) The revision must be worth while, and we remember here that Mr. Athelstan Riley stated that N.A. 84 meant great sacrifices on the part of some, and that those sacrifices would not be accepted by others, and therefore it was not worth the while.
- (c) The revision must maintain that Scripture is our ultimate word of appeal.
- (d) That revision must mean the adherence and loyal co-operation of all, without any mental reservation.
- (e) It must reflect the certainty of ecclesiastical truth.
- (f) The revisions I should suggest should be shown in schedule form as in the Scotch Prayer Book, rather than in an alternative book.
- (g) The revision should be carried out with a loyalty to our Anglican inheritance, while we should ever be prepared to look at and study it in the light of the history of past times.
- (h) In revision we must stretch forth to the future, and seek to emphasise our great spiritual work.
- (i) I do think we should give very general approval to N.A. 84, although I believe that that requires far more enrichment, and I think it does lay itself open to the charge that in it we shall lose much of the enchantment of the beautiful language of our present Prayer Book.
- (j) There should be, I feel, provision for special services for men, for children and for special occasions, and for use in our various guilds, which would take away the need of the many varying manuals now used by the clergy.

I would also make note of the following points:—

1. I do feel the need of abbreviation, such as is shown in the Morning and Evening Prayer, the shortening of the Commandments, and the words of administration.

2. That variety is needed as is shown in the alternative ending to, and the second Evening Service.

3. I think there might be further provision for Mission Services.

4. I welcome the special days for St. Mary Magdalene and the Transfiguration. Mary Magdalene is one of the saints who has always impressed me more than any other.

5. We do need extra occasional collects, epistles and gospels, and I should certainly introduce the one for Sunday and Day Schools and Training Colleges.

6. I welcome the alternative Baptism Service, and am glad to note further provision made, and emphasis laid on the need for baptism in the Morning and Evening Prayer.

7. The new visitation of the sick meets a real need, and many of us who rarely use the present service will be attracted, I think, to the new one.

8. The service for the Burial of the Dead will again meet a real need, and solve many problems.

9. I should like to have seen carefully defined, within certain wide limits, what are the ornaments of the Church. I do not notice that N.A. 84 deals with the ornaments in any way, except as referring to the vestments, and I rather wonder what will be the attitude of our brethren in the various ornate ceremonials that some so much enjoy.

10. I do feel myself that there is a real demand of revision of the Communion Service, and I believe that unless some consideration be given to it, we cannot satisfy a large section of the Church.

11. Much has already been said about the question of vestments and reservation, and there is no doubt that the question must be settled. In the demand for reservation, I am not quite sure what the desire really is, although it seems to me that many would not be satisfied with reservation for the sick and for the sick alone, and one does see the difficulty of providing safeguards that the reserved sacrament should be for them and them alone, and in dealing with this matter we must remember that the Communion Service is now said daily in most churches where the reserved sacrament would be desired.

The controversy concerning revision has made our love for the language of the old very much deeper, and it would be well perhaps if we sometimes looked once again at its language much more carefully, and from its Preface I would quote words that seem to be of help to us:—

“ It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England ever since the first compiling of her Publick Liturgy to keep the mean between two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it. For, as on the one side common experience sheweth that

where a change hath been made of things advisedly established (no evident necessity so requiring) sundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued ; and those many times more and greater than the evils, that were intended to be remedied by such change." . . .

" Our general aim therefore in this undertaking was, not to gratify this or that party in any their unreasonable demands ; but to do that which to our best understandings we conceived might most tend to the preservation of peace and unity in the Church ; the procuring of reverence and exciting of piety and devotion in the publick worship of God," etc.

CHANGES IN MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER, LITANY, ETC.

BY THE REV. CANON G. D. OAKLEY, M.A., Vicar of Jesmond,
Newcastle-on-Tyne.

THE discussions to which the Revision of the Prayer Book has so far given rise have centred mainly round the Holy Communion Office, so that the proposals relating to the rest of the Prayer Book have been somewhat overshadowed—at least, they have not received that careful consideration which they deserve.

The paper which is to follow this will deal with " The Occasional Offices." I have been asked to confine myself to the proposed changes in Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, etc. Happily, these changes are, for the most part, of a non-controversial character, and we shall most of us probably agree that, on the whole, they go a long way towards meeting the demands of the altered circumstances of the time in which we live.

It is now nearly three centuries since the Prayer Book was revised. Those centuries have witnessed changes in our national and social life, the magnitude of which it is almost impossible for us to conceive. It is no small tribute to our Book of Common Prayer that during all those years of change and upheaval the English people have found in its forms of services the most fitting medium for the expression of their common worship.

It is not, however, a detraction to say that the time has come for the Prayer Book to be revised. Whatever differences there may be as to the particular form or forms which revision should take, there is, I think, general agreement as to the need of revision itself.

This *need* may be illustrated in three ways : First, there is need for shorter services ; second, there is need for services more in harmony with our modern conceptions of the Christian revelation ; third, there is need for greater enrichment. I will deal as briefly as possible with these three great needs, and endeavour to show how the