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THREE PRAYER BOOK REVISIONS.

THE Anglican Communion consists of the Church of England and the Churches in communion with it. The Church of England by reason of its numbers, its missionary and colonizing activity and its historical position holds a special place in the Communion. The Church of Ireland is older—the other Churches are much younger. All have adopted the Anglican Liturgy in its broad outlines, although the Churches in Scotland, America and South Africa have made structural changes in the Communion Office, that are due to historical considerations in Scotland and the United States and to doctrinal developments in South Africa. Scotland gave its episcopate to the United States, and Bishop Seabury for some time adopted the Scottish Rite. For four years this was used, and in 1790 changes were made that brought the Service more into line with that of the Church of England, and these changes have persisted. Nevertheless in its main structure the American Communion Office is based on that of the Scottish Liturgy. In South Africa the doctrinal trend of the Church since its separation from the Church of England sufficiently accounts for the adoption of the existing Liturgy.

The late Dr. Swete, writing of the English Communion Office, said :

“ The Communion Service of 1549 was as a whole a revised Sarum ; it belonged to the Roman family of liturgies. This can scarcely be said of the present English Liturgy ; while it makes large use of Sarum and other materials, in its structure it follows an order peculiar to itself. In other words, it heads a new liturgical family, and one which already has taken root, in slightly different forms, wherever the English tongue is spoken. There is no reason why English Churchmen should regret the fact, or pine for a restoration of the Roman Mass. It was fitting that the Church of England should possess not merely a uniform use, but one which, while in accordance with ancient precedent in things essential, should proclaim independence of foreign dictation in the order of her worship. It would have been a grave misfortune if the English race had been tied for all time to customs and forms which rest ultimately upon the local traditions of an Italian Church. While we are far from claiming either perfection or finality for the present English use, we regard it with the loyal affection due to a national rite which has commended itself to the conscience of devout Englishmen for more than three centuries, and which is destined, as we believe, to surpass even the Roman Mass in its influence on mankind.”¹

These words of one of the most learned of Victorian High Church-

¹ *Church Services and Service-Books*, 120-1

men deserve the careful consideration of all who are concerned with Revision Problems.

We have had lately Revisions of the Canadian and Irish Books of Common Prayer. The former has been printed in a complete form, whereas the latter, although authorized by the General Synod, has not yet been printed as a whole. The English Bishops have issued the Proposals of their Composite Book, and it will shed light on the character of the three Revisions if we compare them on points that seem to most Churchmen to involve doctrinal considerations. All three Revisions profess that there is no change of doctrine involved in the alterations. The Revisers had this before their minds and proposals have been rejected because they were considered in Ireland and Canada to be *ultra vires* on doctrinal grounds. The Canadian Primate deliberately rejected the proposal that the Invocation of the Holy Spirit should be inserted in the Consecration Prayer at Holy Communion on the definite ground that it involved doctrine and made a change in the teaching of the Church. The Composite Book contains this Invocation and the Archbishops of the Church of England declare that no doctrine is involved. This one fact shows that high ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Anglican Communion are by no means of one opinion on what constitutes change of doctrine.

Before discussing the changes made, one other fact should be taken into consideration. It is boldly stated that the Church of England has been metamorphosed during the past twenty years. No one who knows the existing worship of the Church and compares it with the illegalities so widely introduced since the beginning of the twentieth century can doubt that the Anglo-Catholics, who make this boast, are, so far, correct. There has been a definite retrogression to medieval conceptions of the approach to God in the services conducted by them. This has been done either with the approval, the acquiescence or the unwilling tolerance of the Diocesans. Twenty years ago the great majority of the Bishops were in favour of one Communion Office for the whole Church. Now the majority plead for an Alternative Office. What seemed treason then is now the fruit of successful treason, and it is hardly too much to say that the urge for uniformity in the Sacrament of Unity will be so great that in the future one Order only will be in existence. As we are told that the Composite Order, if adopted, will have behind it an unrivalled authority due to its acceptance after twenty years' incubation by the Bishops, the assent of Convocations, the Church Assembly and Parliament, it is the duty of all who value the doctrine of the Church of England and its appeal to Scripture to weigh every word and arrangement in this Order and to ask whether or not a doctrinal change is involved.

We confine our consideration to three subjects. Prayers for the Departed, the Communion Office, and the Reservation of the consecrated Elements.

Prayers for the Departed. In the Irish and Canadian Books no change has been made in the Book of Common Prayer, as far as

prayer for the Departed is concerned. Additional prayers provided are in full accord with those already in existence. When we turn to the Composite Book we find in the Occasional Prayers a section (31) devoted to the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. The first prayer is a mere commemorative thanksgiving, the second is a prayer for "thy whole Church in Paradise and on Earth," and the third, a prayer to "multiply to those who rest in Jesus, the manifold blessings of thy love, that the good work which thou didst begin in them may be perfected unto the day of Jesus Christ." And then there follows a provision which is capable of abuse: "If it is desired to pray for other needs it shall be sufficient to say, 'Let us pray for . . . ' and silence shall be kept for a space." The invitation of the Prayer for the "Church Militant here in earth" is changed into "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church," and a commendation of the faithful departed is inserted. A Collect with Epistle and Gospel is appointed for All Souls Day—a new feast in the Calendar—and in the Burial of the Dead, Prayers for the Departed find a place. The faithful in Ireland and Canada are as attached to the memory of their dead as those in England. They love their memory and know that they are safe in the keeping of the hands of God. Scripture is silent on the subject of Prayers for the Dead—we say this with full knowledge of the exegesis of certain passages—and the Church of England is also without them in public worship. The object of the changes made in the service of 1552—which remains to-day what it was then—is to mark a distinct return in the Composite Book to 1549 and its medieval models. And in our opinion not only is there a doctrine taught which has no place in Scripture, but one that has in it elements distinctly contrary to the assurance of full salvation for those who die in the Lord, and is in danger of bringing with it the doctrine of Purgatory. It is easier to read into the final prayer in the Occasional Prayers (31) and the following Rubric and intercession, the doctrine of Rome than to contend that it is excluded from our Book of Common Prayer, especially when the history of All Souls Day is remembered.

The Communion Order. In both the Irish and Canadian Revisions the Commandments in their unabridged forms must be said at least once on Sundays and at other times our Lord's Summary may be used. The Irish Book provides additional Offertory Sentences and new Prefaces for Whitsuntide and Trinity Sunday, and also permits one or both of the Post-Communion Prayers to be said. With some minor translation, and other, changes the services are both identical with those in the Book of Common Prayer, and both retain the title Lord's Supper which is omitted in the Composite Book. We now turn to the Composite Book which provides an entirely new Order. In Ireland and Canada the Introductory Rubrics remain unchanged, but in the Composite Book the First Rubric provides for the wearing of a "white alb plain with a vestment or cope." This seems to give the key to the interpretation of the whole Rite. The Rubrics from the close of the service are placed at the beginning, and there is a significant Rubric,

“It is much to be wished that at every celebration of the Lord’s Supper the worshippers present, not being reasonably hindered, will communicate with the Priest.” Is “reasonable hindrance” the obligation to communicate fasting? And does the shortening of Morning Prayer imply that the Holy Communion should be the Holy Communion transformed into a Mass at which the worshippers assist and do not communicate? “Every confirmed member of the Church” replaces “every parishioner” when the duty of communicating is inculcated, but remains when the duty of making payments is concerned.¹ Wafer bread is permitted, and the mixing of water with the wine allowed. Before the Service the Priest is allowed to say with the people “in a distinct and audible voice” a Devotion in which the Anthem, “I will go unto the altar of God : even unto the God of my joy and gladness,” is twice sung. The Psalm from which this verse is taken is said, and it is argued that the use of the word Altar has no significance sacrificially. As well say that the interpretation of passages in the Psalter applied to God and transferred to the Virgin Mary has no significance. Unfortunately human nature does not devotionally think, with theological niceties, to restrain errors. There is only one interpretation of the Devotion and that interpretation will be given by all who use it.

The Priest stands “at God’s Board”—not at the North Side which he may adopt, or for that matter he may face the congregation. The Commandments are said in an abbreviated form, and they may be omitted in favour of our Lord’s Summary provided they be said once a month. On weekdays there may be substituted in English or Greek, “Lord have Mercy,” “Christ have Mercy,” “Lord have Mercy.” The Collect for the King is omitted, and the Nicene Creed may be omitted on any day not being a Sunday or Holy Day. In the Creed a comma is placed after the word Lord, applied to the Holy Ghost (in this the Irish and Canadian Books concur), and the word Holy is added to the description of the Church. Additional Offertory Sentences are provided, and the Intercession follows for the whole Church with the commendation of the Departed and additional prayers and thanksgiving.

In “The Preparation” after the Exhortation, Invitation, Confession and Absolution a shorter form of Invitation, etc., is supplied, the Comfortable Words are said and “The Consecration” follows. This begins with “The Lord be with you,” followed by the *Sursum Corda* (Lift up your hearts), and the well-known words of our Office are used with the Proper Preface, followed by the *Ter Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy). The Prayer of Consecration is composite. It begins, “All glory to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly

¹ It is noteworthy that the Rubric at the close of the Confirmation Office reads, “And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be found in the judgement of the Bishop to be ready and desirous to be confirmed,” replacing the old Confirmation Rubric with its historical interpretation and in contrast to the Irish Rubric, “Every person ought to present himself for Confirmation (unless prevented by some urgent reason) before he partakes of the Lord’s Supper.”

Father, for that thou of thy tender mercy didst give," etc., to the words "coming again" as in the present prayer. Then the paragraph, "Hear us, O merciful Father," with the significant words "these thy creatures," is omitted, and the words of Institution follow. The Prayer proceeds:

"Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants, having in remembrance the precious death and passion of thy dear Son, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension according to his holy institution, do celebrate and set forth before thy divine majesty with these thy holy gifts, the memorial which he hath willed us to make, rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits which he hath procured unto us. Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and with thy Holy and Life-giving Spirit vouchsafe to bless and sanctify both us and these thy gifts of Bread and Wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to the end that, receiving the same, we may be strengthened and refreshed both in body and soul."

The prayer concludes with the first Post-Communion Prayer in our Order and the Lord's Prayer.

It is significant that permission is given that immediately before the Consecration Prayer after the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy) is said the Anthem may be said or sung, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest," and that after all have communicated the Priest prefaces the Post-Communion Prayer (the second in the present Order) with the words, "Having now received the precious Body and Blood of Christ, let us give thanks unto our Lord God." Looking back on the history of our Consecration Prayer and the form of the new Prayer, it is certain that it retains precisely those elements which were removed from the 1549 prayer in order that the doctrine of a sacrifice and of transubstantiation might not be read into them. The whole structure of the Order and the way in which the service is compiled makes it clear that it has been arranged as a concession to those who hold and believe in the doctrine of the Mass. The Consecration Prayer has been defended as non-Roman because it has no specified point at which the change takes place. Does it occur when the words of Institution are said or when the Holy Spirit is invoked? It makes very little difference when it happens, so long as it does happen. And the Alternative Order brings forcibly the conviction that in the mind of the man who uses the Order a change transforms it—the sign—into It, the thing signified. Vestment, Gift, Memorial, "be unto us" preceded by "Blessed is He that cometh" and followed by "having now received the precious Body and Blood of Christ" have no other meaning than the attachment to the elements by virtue of consecration something—the localized Presence of the Redeemer—they did not previously possess. And this is the core of the difference between the scriptural and the unscriptural interpretation of the Supper of the Lord.

When this is the case it is absolutely impossible to remove abuses. And the regulations or absence of regulations concerning the manner of Reservation and the permission to reserve the elements continuously confirm this conviction. Here we have definite change in the use of the consecrated elements. It is true that in 1662 the new Rubric was added to prevent the careless disposal of the elements that remained over after open communion. Its existence is the best proof that Reservation did not take place before its enactment and Reservation definitely ceased to exist in the Reformed Church after 1552 until in the last century a number of the Clergy reserved the elements owing to their objection to communicate after having broken their fast. The need of the sick was secondary. They wished to communicate the sick, but they laid much more stress on their conceptions of Catholic custom. Then the natural results followed: Adoration, Devotional services, Benediction and all the usual accompaniments of a belief in the continuous Presence of the Body and Blood in, with, or under the elements.

The Alternative Order for the Communion of the Sick entirely consists of Rubrics. The first provides that when the Holy Communion cannot reverently or without grave difficulty be celebrated in private, then the Communion may be administered with the reserved elements if the sick person so requests. This is to be done with as little delay as possible on the day of open communion. Then if further provision be needed, with the permission of the Bishop continuous Reservation may take place. In both cases, the elements must be used only for the communion of the sick and both kinds must be reserved and administered. "All other questions that may arise concerning such Reservation shall be determined by rules framed by the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province, or by Canons lawfully made by the Convocation of the Province, and subject to any such rules and Canons, by direction of the Bishops." "Any of the consecrated elements that remain over shall be reverently consumed, or else taken back to the Church." "The sacrament so reserved shall not be brought into connection with any service or ceremony, nor shall it be exposed or removed except in order to be received in Communion, or otherwise reverently consumed." Arrangements are made for administration by intinction, and "if any question arise as to the manner of doing anything that is here enjoined or permitted, it shall be referred to the Bishop for his decision."

Here we have the permission of continuous Reservation, the directions for communion and returning the surplus elements to the Church and the plan of administration by intinction. All must be in both kinds, and it will be noticed that the Bishops are the supreme regulative body and that the local Bishop has wide discretionary powers. Since the decisions of the Bishops were made on this subject—according to report—we have had two interesting instances of Judgments of Consistory Courts. In one the Bishop definitely advised the Chancellor to give permission for Reservation

in an Aumbry with a lighted lamp before the Aumbry, and in the other the Chancellor granted a faculty for an Aumbry, and the Incumbent immediately requested his people to pay the same reverence to the reserved elements in the Aumbry as they paid to them in the administration of the Communion! When we turn to the Measure we find (Sect. 1. 3) the following provision: "The Archbishop and Bishops of each Province may from time to time make and at their discretion rescind rules for the conduct of public worship, in accordance with the Composite Book (including any rules required or authorized to be made by them under any rubric of the Composite Book), and any rules so made shall have effect within the Province for which the same are made as if contained in rubrics of the Composite Book." In Ireland and Canada such regulations can only be made by the General Synods. There is a danger of an Episcopal Church becoming episcopalized and that danger is at our doors. When we recall the very grave changes of orientation shown by the Bishops since 1906—not to go further back—we see at once the way opened to pressure that will break down obstacles. If they acted as they did in the green tree in which Reservation was forbidden, what will they do in the dry tree when it is permitted? If they have enlarged the teaching of the Prayer Book so as to embrace the rash and perilous statements that avoided condemnation because of the penal consequences involved, what will they do when the logical and emotional results of the Composite Book are seen in practice? It will be impossible to stay the tide of medievalization that will overtake the Church, and the episcopal Canutes cannot say "Thus far and no further" with any hope of being obeyed.

It is argued that the Alternative Prayer of Consecration does not assimilate the doctrine of the Church of England to that of Rome, as the Consecration of the Elements does not take place at any one moment but is a continuous process. It is not so much when the change takes place as the change itself that matters. Creation and Evolution supply hypotheses as regards the origin of species. But the species are there, and it is because they exist a theory is required to explain their being. In the case of the localized Presence we have the assertion that something has occurred in or in connection with the elements that makes them different in kind to what they were before, and it is this that makes all the difference between the new and the old Order. We maintain that the old Order transforms the Mass into a Communion and that the new Order restores the Mass. And we have behind us the consentient interpretation of Anglican divines and the Formularies since 1552 until the rise of Anglo-Catholicism, rooted in the Tractarian movement. Bishop Knox has written: "The new prayer is consistent with the idea that a change is wrought in the elements by the action of the Holy Spirit and with the idea that a sacrifice is offered by the priest for the remission of the sins of the living and the dead." Anglo-Catholicism proclaims that Dr. Knox is right, and that "the inclusion of the *Epiklesis*, therefore, emphasizes the

Catholic doctrine of Eucharistic Sacrifice, and it should be welcomed by Catholic opinion." For us the Catholic doctrine is not the doctrine taught in common by the Greek and the Roman Church, but the doctrine taught by the New Testament and believed by the Primitive Church. The misuse of the word Catholic is the parent of many gross errors.

It is also urged that in the Alternative Service no opportunity is given for the use of the sacring Bell, as no one can tell at what point the change occurs. Already we have had detailed instructions as to the time the Bell should be rung, and the absence of prohibitory rubrics that will prevent the ceremonies that are the normal accompaniments of the Mass will be utilized for their continuance and introduction when the Alternative Liturgy is substituted for the existing Order. It would be folly to close our eyes to what has been done and the tendency that is at work. The aim of Anglo-Catholicism is to square the doctrine of the Church of England with that of the Council of Trent. And it is made easy by the formularies of the Composite Book which will be undoubtedly used for this purpose. Catholicity is not synonymous with the Catholicity of the New Testament and that of the Primitive Church, but with a syncretism that is neither Scriptural nor Primitive.

The Preface to the Church of Ireland Book of Common Prayer says :

"As for the error of those who have taught that Christ has given Himself or His Body and Blood in this sacrament to be reserved, lifted up, carried about or worshipped, under the Veils of Bread and Wine, we have already in the Canons prohibited such acts and gestures as might be grounded on it, or lead thereto; and it is sufficiently implied in the Note at the End of the Communion Office (and we now afresh declare) that the posture of kneeling prescribed to all communicants is not appointed for any purpose of such adoration; but only for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ, which are in the Lord's Supper given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and a disorder as might if some such reverent and uniform posture were not enjoined."

Had the Church of Ireland authorised the Alternative Order this Preface could never have been written, and the Order in the Revised Prayer Book of the Church of Ireland is identical with that in our present Book save for the provision of the Lord's Summary of the Decalogue which, however, must be said once at least on the Lord's Day, the addition of a comma after the word Lord in the Nicene Creed, the provision of new Offertory Sentences, and the permission to say either or both of the Post-Communion Prayers. Here we have two voices in the Anglican communion, and the Church of Ireland is the oldest Church in the communion.

The Church of England by reason of its numbers, its importance historically, and its world influence has a unique place in the communion. When it gives the lead other Churches may and will

follow. The apologists for the Alternative Order point to Scotland—a very small Church—South Africa—a Church in which it is made difficult for Evangelicals to minister and to use as their spiritual home, and the American Church which is more comprehensive than either of these Churches and has an ethos of its own. The Church of Ireland is at our doors and we have seen what it teaches, and its teaching has been contradicted by the Alternative Order. If the interpretation given by the Church of Ireland to the Book of Common Prayer be right—then the Alternative Order is in error. And the error is not on minor matters of taste but on central doctrine. Those who believe that the interpretation of the divines of the Church of Ireland is in full accord with the teaching of our Formularies and is upheld by Holy Scripture, and the practice of the Primitive Church, have no option but to use all their strength to prevent the legalization of a Book that will change the whole orientation of the National Church, make deeper and wider its separation from Reformed Christianity and prepare the way for the return to a Medievalism which the Church has rejected for more than three and a half centuries. We may incur the ill favour of those in authority, we may be charged with opposing the mind of the collective Episcopate and of a narrowness that is contrary to the tolerant indifferentism of the day. We cannot help this. When Truth leads we have no option but to follow.

Uriah the Hittite : A Tragedy, by W. Franck (J. W. Ruddock), is a setting of a well-known Old Testament story in dramatic form. The personalities are well conceived and the action of the play well maintained.

Labyrinthine Ways, by Dorothea C. Waller (S.P.C.K., 6d.), is an account of the writer's personal experience of spiritual progress told to help others along the same path. There are some interesting and touching incidents drawn from her life in India.

From a Victorian Post-bag (Peter Davies, 1s. net) contains a number of letters addressed to the Rev. J. Llewelyn Davies by Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Sir J. R. Seeley, Sir J. F. Stephen, Sir Leslie Stephen, Herbert Spencer, F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Bishop Westcott, Dr. F. J. A. Hort, and other equally well-known men of the nineteenth century. The interest is enhanced by the personal touches they reveal of some of the intellectual giants of a great age. They are written to a scholar and divine who never received the recognition in the Church which he deserved. A great variety of topics are dealt with, some of personal and some of general interest. They form a welcome memento of the relationship of Dr. Davies with his contemporaries.