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them (Gal. iii. 1) ; and for some it may well mark the beginning of a new and deeper Christian life. It is worth remembering in this respect that the Wesleys were accustomed to regard the Lord's Supper as a *converting* as well as a *confirming* ordinance ; and their own wide experience bore this out. A really living communion service can scarcely fail to bring a spiritual challenge to any unconverted people who may be present.

Finally, there is the difficulty which arises in regard to non-communicating attendance. In actual fact this is not likely to create a very big problem. In any case there is a world of difference between a few unconfirmed people or children being present at a communion service as observers, and the kind of situation with which the Reformers had to contend in the sixteenth century, when the whole congregation met together simply to "hear mass" without any intention of communicating. In reality, there are only three classes of non-communicants likely to be present at a Parish Communion. (i) The first class consists of children who are too young to be confirmed ; for them, attendance at the service is an excellent preparation for their later communicant life. (ii) Then there are adults who are not full church members and who, therefore, are not entitled to communicate ; to them the service must present a powerful incentive to seek confirmation and thus to enter into the full life of the Church. (iii) Last, there are the confirmed church-people who shrink from receiving the sacrament through mistaken notions as to the sanctity of the ordinance or the unworthiness of their own hearts. Such should be encouraged to draw near with faith and to take the holy sacrament to their comfort, thereby appropriating for themselves all the benefits of Christ's passion.

Let one further word be added. As far as the present writer is concerned, practically all the objections he has heard raised against the Parish or Family Communion have come from those who have never tried it. On the other hand all who have made the experiment have testified to the deep enrichment which has come to the life of the parish when the Lord's Supper has thus been enthroned in the centre of its worship and fellowship.

## The Revision of the Communion Service

BY THE REV. CANON D. R. VICARY, M.A., B.Sc.

**I**N an article in *Theology* a few years ago, Dr. Oscar Hardman suggested that the best process of Prayer Book revision is piecemeal, and that it should be spread over a long experimental period. This suggestion has been embodied with safeguards in the recent "Church and State" report, and in the resolutions passed in the debate upon it in the Church Assembly.<sup>1</sup> It is tempting to ask whether the last fifty years have not in fact been an experimental period ; certainly the variety of uses at present indicates that the living worship of the

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Church Assembly Commission on Church and State, p. 30.

Church of England is in fact undergoing continuous change. The ill-fated 1928 book appears now to have been a premature crystallisation of this change. Its temper is dated. Its liturgical sense is most criticised in the version of the communion service compiled for it. Its fate is a warning to revisers to-day. "The theological understanding both of the church and of worship, is not yet sufficiently wide or deep, nor is it to be desired that the passing moods of a civilization in decline should find lasting embodiment in our liturgical forms."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it must be recognized that the very existence of disorder implies the urgent need for revision. To-day it is true that the 1928 rubrics, however lacking in authority, form the only yardstick in the hands of the Bishops in their effort to maintain some sort of liturgical discipline.

## I

If we face the task of revision of our liturgy, we must ask ourselves three preliminary questions: In what spirit is it to be done? By what standards is it to be achieved? What practical purposes is it meant to serve? The first of these questions is paramount. We are dealing with living faith expressing itself in living rites. The worship of God through Christ in His Body the Church, is an activity of the Holy Spirit in the members. "Quench not the Spirit" is a solemn warning, for not only is He the Spirit of freedom, He is also the Spirit of Truth and of Love. As Evangelicals, we rightly desire that the power of the Gospel creating the worshipful response of men shall not be fettered by over-much stylisation. To that extent we may welcome variations in rubric and greater flexibility. At the same time, we believe that the truth of the Gospel is something which must control the forms of worship, however sanctified by age they may be. The challenge of love is the more binding on us when we remember the acrimony created in the discussions in 1927-8. "If we and our bishops again approach the revision of our eucharistic liturgy in the spirit of ecclesiastical politics, we shall do the English church a terrible, perhaps an irreparable, harm. It is not a matter of academic niceties or devotional fancies or of administrative convenience. A church which sets out to revise its liturgy has taken in hand something which will affect its own supernatural life at its very source."<sup>2</sup>

The standards to be adopted in such a revision also call for discussion. At one time, the 1549 liturgy was regarded as the level from which we had fallen and to which we needed, with a little judicious mixture from the East, to return (cf. Frere, *The Anaphora*). Even a Presbyterian can look over the wall and speak of 1549 as "beautiful, adequate, reformed . . .".<sup>3</sup> But it has been shown both by Dom Gregory Dix in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, and from another standpoint by R. R. Osborn in *The Holy Communion in the Church of England*, that 1549 was not Cranmer's *pièce de résistance*; it was the half-way stage to 1552, which represents the liturgy which Dix commends as "the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the

<sup>1</sup> F. J. Taylor, *Into Thy Courts*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 734.

<sup>3</sup> Maxwell, *Outline of Christian Worship*, p. 148.

doctrine of 'justification by faith alone'.<sup>1</sup> Yet 1552 by itself cannot be our standard because it enjoyed so little time in authority and because we are bound to acknowledge the fact that a further revision of Cranmer's work in 1662 has held sway for nearly three centuries. 1662 is the primary legal authority. It is also not lacking in its champions as a liturgy which can stand on its own feet (cf. Addleshaw, *The High Church Tradition*). But the very existence of the present disorder shows how weak that authority is, in practice.

Another factor is the growing self-consciousness of the Anglican Communion as a whole. The claim of the Lambeth bishops that "the Book of Common Prayer has been, and is, so strong a bond of unity throughout the whole Anglican Communion that great care must be taken to ensure that revisions of the Book shall be in accordance with the doctrine and accepted liturgical worship of the Anglican Communion"<sup>2</sup> conceals a difficulty. The 1662 rite is by no means the only rite in the Anglican Communion: and the more carefully one examines the Anglican Communion as a whole, the more clearly the 1662 rite appears as the precious heirloom of the Mother Province which her Missionary Daughters prefer to leave at home. The 1662 rite therefore becomes one, albeit the major, formative influence among others when we come to the question of standards of liturgical revision. One factor which governs the authority of all these rites is the primacy of sound doctrine over liturgical custom, and in this respect the 1662 Prayer Book and Articles stand supreme.

The practical purpose of revision is to provide a more satisfactory channel of worship. This would be sufficiently obvious were it not for the fact that revision is often discussed as a means of ecclesiastical discipline. It is certain that a revision may not commend itself if the Church's discipline is not more surely and constantly exercised; but this in itself is a matter of the methods of enforcing discipline and not of liturgy. It is true that a revision must aim, like that of 1662, at some sort of synthesis: but to try to please too many people for the sake of uniformity will result in clumsy liturgy. The marvel of Cranmer's work is partly due to his definite purpose. To be satisfactory in the modern setting, the communion service needs to provide for a variety of occasions of its use. This is a point often ignored by Evangelicals who stick to the "low mass" tradition, i.e., a said service for an eclectic few, who get up early or who "stay behind". But there is an increasing number of Evangelicals who in the Family or Parish Communion, emphasize the eucharist as the worship of the whole gathered church; and for them this need of variety is a real one. This question also depends on frequency of communion, which may vary very greatly.

The revisers of 1662 gave us their principles in the Preface of our 1662 book: "To do that, which to our best understanding 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; and the cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of cavill or quarrel against the Liturgy of the

<sup>1</sup> Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 672.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution 78(a) of the Lambeth Conference, 1948.

Church". The following discussion of possible ways of revising our communion service, bearing in mind the recent creative liturgical work in the Liturgy of the Church of South India<sup>1</sup> and in the revision of the communion service in Canada, is offered in the hope that it is neither "of dangerous consequence (as secretly striking at some established doctrine or laudable practice of the Church of *England*, or indeed of the whole Catholick Church of Christ)" nor yet "of no consequence at all, but utterly frivolous and vain".

## II

For convenience we may consider points of possible revision under three headings: (i) changes in rubric, without necessarily changing the text of the service; (ii) additions in the text, without altering the essential structure of the service; and (iii) changes in the structure and wording of the service itself.

**Changes in rubric.** The first rubric which has to be faced is that which deals with the position of the celebrant. The Canadian revisers have merely: "standing at the Table"; 1928, following 1549, had: "standing at God's Board". Some such wording is long overdue, for the old "North End" controversy is very cold pudding, and in the south of England it is doubtful whether even a majority of Evangelicals use it. At a time when there is evidence that Evangelicals are awakening liturgically and even using a Western position, this rubric must be freed. We need also a number of rubrics indicating permissive use of hymns. We have a great heritage of eucharistic hymns in our tradition from Watts, Doddridge, and Wesley. These may well enrich our worship, and there is also need for an ordered use of music. Thus the liturgy of the C.S.I. after the Old Testament lection: "A psalm or a part thereof or a hymn or lyric, may be sung"; and after the creed: "A hymn may here be sung, followed by the announcements and by biddings for prayer". Again, since so few ever use the exhortations, we need a permissive rubric such as the 1928, and the removal of the longer ones to the end of the service. A further permissive rubric is needed to cover variations in the words of administration, now almost universal, after the example set in 1928. There is also something to be said for allowing the reverent consumption of the remaining consecrated bread and wine immediately after the communion. Not only does this allow a time of silence at a most profitable point in the service; it also lessens the uncertain length of what happens after the blessing.

These changes in rubric would widen the range of our communion service to cover a great many varieties of its use, without any great shifting of emphasis, and may be commended to those who are nervous of touching the essentials of the 1662 text. It may be that, bearing in mind our debt to Cranmer, "far more freedom comes to worshippers by interpreting his liturgy than by revising it".<sup>2</sup> Whatever we do, there is one change above all which is necessary on educational grounds. The 1928 service was divided into its parts with clear bold headings.

<sup>1</sup> This liturgy is published by the O.U.P. and is also printed as an appendix to the Bishop of Derby's Lichfield lectures, *The Church of South India*.

<sup>2</sup> Osborn, *Holy Communion in the Church of England*, p. 101.

Such a device is only half-heartedly repeated by the Canadian Church when the revisers use capitals in the rubrics for such words as the INTERCESSION and the PRAYER OF CONSECRATION. To this need of underlining the structure of the service we may add the necessity of having it printed in very large type. A recent edition of the Roman mass in English in pamphlet form has its prayers printed in type as large as that of a lectern Bible. This is of incalculable value in helping people to find their way about a service and to join in.

**Changes in and additions to the text.** For a considerable time many evangelical students of liturgy have recognised the need for an enlarged Proper Preface for our communion service.<sup>1</sup> This would take the form of a new range of Proper Prefaces. The 1928 book attempted this work, but a glance at the Proper Prefaces in the Presbyterian Book of Common Order will show that there are many more possibilities in this direction. There can also be a wider range of Collects, Epistles and Gospels for lesser feasts and days in Lent, etc. If a rubric permitting a hymn or psalm at the beginning is allowed, it can occupy the place of the Introit at a choral service. The need for these variations is, of course, felt most where the custom of frequent receiving of communion is encouraged.

The use of the ten commandments is unfortunately decreasing, but the wider use of the version as shortened in the 1928 book is to be commended. It is blunt and vivid and serves to remind us that the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The reminder of the law also fits in with the prayer for the Queen which follows. The liturgical justification of this prayer has always been based on the use of the ten commandments as a witness to our membership of an earthly as well as a heavenly kingdom. The commandments and the collect for the Queen are thus complementary to the further challenge of the heavenly kingdom which follows in the lections.<sup>2</sup> The use of the two commandments of our Lord or the traditional *Kyrie Eleison* is not so clearly related to this view, but should be inserted in the interests of providing shorter alternatives for certain occasions. Both the 1928 and the Canadian revision have adopted this practice, though slightly differently. 1928 omits the prayer for the Sovereign; the Canadian revisers are more flexible: "Then may follow this collect. . ." No one will object to inserting the responses before and after the Gospel.

The widespread use of biddings for prayer should be allowed *before* the Offertory, and not immediately before the Prayer for the Church as in the Canadian revision. It is a practical point that such a direction enables worshippers to use to the best advantage the time occupied in the taking up of alms and the preparation of the elements. The Offertory is an action in the rite which has grown in prominence through two important witnesses in the last few years: the concern for a Christian sociology, and the liturgical revival, in connection with which "Parish and People" gathers to itself a number of those in the evangelical tradition. The addition of offertory sentences such as

<sup>1</sup> cf., D. E. W. Harrison, *The Book of Common Prayer*, ad loc.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Osborn, op. cit., p. 117, and M. A. C. Warren, *Strange Victory*, p. 60.

Ps. xxvii. 6, or Ps. 1. 14 allows a wider interpretation than mere almsgiving. The reference to "Deacons, Church-wardens, or other fit person appointed for that purpose" in the present 1662 rubric covers the use of an offertory procession adequately.

The Prayer for the Church needs revision in language, but after the inferior quality of the 1928 prayer, who is sufficient for this task? A revision is also needed in the scope of the prayer. 1928 enlarged our interests by including missions, education and a commemoration of the "Saints" in both the New Testament and the later sense of that term. It is weak to make the prayer any longer, for it becomes less flexible in proportion as it becomes more specific. It is worth noting that the sense of corporate prayer is enhanced at this point in the Liturgy of the C.S.I. by turning it into a litany. This process has Eastern precedent, though it will not satisfy those who continue to regard this prayer as the beginning of a disrupted canon.

The Liturgy of the C.S.I. is forthright in incorporating both the Benedictus and the Agnus Dei as a permissive use, as in the 1928 Book. The more conservative Canadian revision omits them, although it is worth pointing out that a *permissive* use distinguishes the use in question from what is regarded as the essential part of a rite. While there are difficulties in regard to the Benedictus, the singing of the Agnus Dei during the Communion is less open to misconstruction, especially now that many churches use a hymn sung softly at Communion time. What is to be avoided is the use of the hymn, as in some Anglo-Catholic parishes, as a sort of stop-gap while the celebrant fills in bits of the Roman canon and accompanying ceremonies, a practice which has no sanction in any English service book.

### III

**Changes in the structure of the rite itself** involve much bigger questions of principle. They take us back to the standards already discussed. One that can be mentioned briefly is the position of the Gloria. The Liturgy of the C.S.I. has it at the beginning. This can hardly commend itself except to the champions of 1549, for as Dr. Swete has observed,<sup>1</sup> the placing of the Gloria in Excelsis at the end of the rite in 1552 has started a new family of liturgies. Our communion service with its penitential beginning, moves steadily through all its parts to its climax at the end.

The second point at which change is urged is that of the placing of the people's preparation. It has caused difficulty in every revision and there is no agreed place for it. The Liturgy of the C.S.I. is thorough-going in placing it at the beginning after an exhortation and the commandments. The Prayer of Humble Access then becomes a prayer before the communion. The 1549 rite puts the whole preparation after the consecration before communion. Compromises between these two extremes are found in the Canadian revision, which has the confession in its old place, while the prayer of Humble Access is placed before the actual communion, and in the 1928 revision which put the Prayer of Humble Access after the comfortable words, before the Sursum Corda. The whole must be judged in the light of the

<sup>1</sup> Swete, *Services and Service Books before the Reformation*, pp. 91-2.

rhythm of the service as Cranmer intended it. If it is true that the emphasis on worthy reception together with the placing of the communion within the old canon is the heart of the matter, then these removals seem to be less satisfactory than the 1662 order.

The further question which is related to the above alternatives is the actual shape of the canon itself. Here we are indebted to Mr. Osborn for his most able study of Cranmer already mentioned. He insists that we must not regard what happened in 1552 as a breaking-up process, but as a transference to the service as a whole of what was the former unity of one part of it. If we take this view, then the canon is not broken, but has inserted into it those liturgical features which ensure the right emphasis. In particular, these are : worthy reception through the people's preparation, the true Communion of the whole congregation by the insertion of the Communion before the Lord's Prayer, and the emphasis on sacrifice as the response after reception, consistent with justification by faith, as expressed in the placing of the Prayer of Oblation after Communion. A weakness in the 1662 rite is that the Prayer of Oblation is merely an alternative. The Canadian revisers add a rubric to the effect that the minister may use both the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Prayer of Oblation, at his discretion.

The adequacy of the anamnesis in the 1662 consecration prayer is often called in question. The 1928 extended this part of the prayer by reference to "His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension". The Canadian revisers have simply added the following after the narrative of institution :

"Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, in union with all thy holy Church we do this in remembrance of him who died, and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, presenting unto thy divine Majesty this our thankoffering and service, through the merits and mediation of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end."

This prayer certainly helps, not only in extending the anamnesis, but in removing the abruptness of the end of the prayer which at present fastens attention on the words of institution at the expense of the prayer as a whole.

There are many other vexed questions such as epiclesis which would require a separate paper in itself. Suffice it to say that the Collect for Purity is an epiclesis for the service as a whole, and since there is no agreement as to the primitive character of epiclesis or whether it can be applied to persons or things or both, it would be wise to remain content with our present use in this respect.

In conclusion, the writer would ask the tolerance of those more versed in these matters because so many questions have been touched on lightly, and the forgiveness of those whose cherished customs and convictions have been called in question. It is the firm belief of the writer that we are being led by devious ways into a new unity through experiment in worship, and it is an encouraging sign that Evangelicals are bearing witness in this field.