

The Rearrangement of the Communion Office.

IN discussing this subject two governing considerations require to be borne in mind. An arrangement that is part of the Roman Catholic Mass is not necessarily bad. We do not condemn or disuse the Apostles' Creed because it was the baptismal Creed of the Roman Church, and if something be found in a particular position in the Roman Mass it is not therefore to be discarded. Appeals to prejudice are always suspicious, and we have to be careful lest we are misled by the confusion of characteristic Roman Doctrine, which we reject as false, and Roman teaching which is in accord with the teaching of the Catholic Church. It is true that something that is in itself innocent may be made connotative of error by its position in a distinctively Roman setting, but this must be clearly proved before we reject what we have been accustomed to employ in our Church services.

The other consideration is of even more importance. In dealing with a rite it must be taken as a whole, and modifications are cumulative in their effect. Revision of the Prayer Book has taken a certain course, and we have to look upon the changes proposed not one by one but in their cumulative influence on the mind of worshippers and of thoughtful as well as uninformed Churchmen. The Houses of Convocation have adopted a statement, "And it is hereby explicitly declared that by the Resolution (giving sanction to Eucharistic Vestments) no sanction is intended to be given to any other doctrine than what is set forth in the Prayer Book and Articles of the Church of England." It is not possible by a Resolution to alter the significance of Rites and Ceremonies employed daily in the services of the Church. The label is forgotten, when the plain meaning of the changes brings its lesson home to the minds of worshippers. If Revision be carried into effect we shall have in our Church the Eastward Position—already allowed by the Lincoln Judgment—Eucharistic Vestments, Reservation, the use of the First Clause of the words of administration and the rearrangement of the prayers in the Communion Office. This involves alterations of a character that restore the First Prayer Book of Edward VI in place of the Prayer Book, which, with the short interval of the Marian reaction and the Commonwealth repression, has been the

Prayer Book of the Church of England since 1552. The Communion Office has never had associated with it since 1552 the name "Mass." In an age when many are pleading for the restoration of the Mass it is hard to avoid the impression that there is an effort to bring back the distinctive teaching of the Mass by reverting to a Book whose chief recommendation to some of the Revisers is that its Communion Office had printed in small type the descriptive words "commonly called the Mass."

We have to deal with the proposal to alter the order of the Prayers in the Service. The order of prayer may not seem a matter of very great moment, but order may have much to do with the character of worship. It may transform a prayer of Humble Access to the Table of the Lord, that has on it the unconsecrated elements, into humble access to elements that are believed to have in, with, or under the veil of Bread and Wine the Real localized Presence of the Body of the Redeemer. Worship may be diverted from God to the elements, and surely this is not a change without doctrinal significance. The proposed rearrangement may be briefly summarized. The Prayer of Consecration follows the Ter Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), which is followed by the words, "Wherefore, O Lord and Heavenly Father, according to the institution of Thy dearly beloved Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, we Thy humble servants do celebrate and make here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy holy gifts, the memorial which Thy Son hath willed us to make, having in remembrance His blessed passion, mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension, rendering unto Thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same, entirely desiring Thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving." The prayer continues in accordance with the first of our alternative post communion prayers. The Lord's Prayer follows, and then the Priest, who up to this point has been standing, kneels and says in "the name of all them that shall receive the Communion" the Prayer of Humble Access. It is to be noted that the existing Rubric concerning the Consecration of additional Bread and Wine is retained, and any theory that objects to the present Consecration Prayer as inadequate or improper is rejected by the retention of this Rubric.

This is a return to the Service of 1549 which was appealed to by Bishop Gardiner as not only compatible with the doctrine of

the Mass but incompatible with any other view. He argued that the presence of our Lord in the elements was conceded in the Service. Cranmer defended his own view, but when the Prayer Book was revised in 1552 he altered the arrangement so as to remove from them their sacrificial import. Mr. Leighton Pullan, in his *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, writes: "Cranmer retained the words 'sacrifice of praise,' transferring them from the beginning of the Canon of the Mass to a position immediately after the consecration, and connecting them with the 'Holy Gifts' which have been already blessed to be the Body and Blood of Christ. . . . We may add that the phrase, 'sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,' is the precise phrase which the medieval party in 1546 compelled Shaxton, Bishop of Salisbury, to apply to the 'oblation and action of the priest' in the Mass, as one of the proofs that he repudiated the Protestant doctrine of the Eucharist. Therefore a natural interpretation of the words employed forces us to say that the First Prayer Book teaches the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice, though Cranmer had ceased to believe in that doctrine when the book was published" (*Hist. Bk. of Com. Prayer*, p. 99). Cranmer has left us in no doubt as to the meaning he attributed to the words "sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving," for in his work on the Lord's Supper he distinguishes between two kinds of sacrifice: one offered to God by Christ for us; the second kind we ourselves offer to God by Christ. The second kind of sacrifice is the sacrifice of laud, praise and thanksgiving (Cranmer, *On the Lord's Supper*, Bk. V., chap. iii.). This is plainly the meaning in the prayer as it now stands. As it will stand it is palpably open to the other interpretation.

Writing on the Scottish Liturgy Canon Perry maintains that the word "remembrance" means primarily a memorial or remembrance *before God*. Further the words, "This is my Blood of the New Covenant," refer back to Exodus xxiv. 4-8. The covenant is God's, and the thought of sacrifice is clearly present. He then quotes the oblation or *anamnesis* (remembrance) in the Scottish rite, which is practically identical with that of the proposed additional words in the Convocation proposal (omitting after "thy divine Majesty" with "these thy holy gifts" the words "which we now offer unto thee"), and adds, "By this means every Eucharist becomes definitely a representation before God of the one sacrifice; linked,

so to speak, backward with the redemptive acts of Christ and forward with the second Advent." The Bishop of London lately said that now the Church of England is going to the Scottish Prayer Book for its principles of revision.

It is obvious that the Prayer of Humble Access offered by the Priest, who kneels before the consecrated elements that have been offered as a representation of the sacrifice of Christ, leads the minds of those who have been impressed by the use of Eucharistic Vestments and the practice of Reservation, to adoration of the Presence they believe to be localized in, with, or under the elements. It is practically impossible for one who knows the history of the past and the development of the Roman Doctrine and our existing Prayer Book to avoid concluding that the proposed change of order lends support to doctrine deliberately abandoned as untrue by the Church of England.

We do not dwell upon the fact that our present order brings the communicant into the Upper Room and makes him realize that he is doing what the Apostles did on the night before their Lord was betrayed. The devotional value of this experience is one of the greatest inspirations of the framers of our Liturgy. We lose it if the proposed change be made.

The arrangement of the Consecration Prayer as desired by Canterbury Convocation has already a place in the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, the Spanish and Mexican Reformed Churches and in Baxter's Communion Office. It was natural that the American Church should borrow from the Scottish as it owed Bishop Seabury to the action of the Scottish Bishops. We have been invited to believe that no doctrinal issue is involved because the Spanish Reformed Church is distinctly Evangelical, the Mexican Church was founded under Evangelical auspices, and Baxter was the representative Puritan of the Restoration period. Unfortunately, by an accident, the present writer has not access to his copy of the Mexican Liturgy, which, like the Spanish, has been largely influenced by the Mozarabic rite. It will be useful to see how the Spanish Reformers and Baxter avoided the doctrinal evils which we allege are associated with the Revision scheme.

Bishop Cabrera, who is responsible for the composition of the Text of the *Oficios Divinos* of the Spanish Reformed Church, was

a Protestant. His great friend and "protector" was Archbishop Plunket of Dublin. It is not wrong to call both these men champions of Protestant principles. The arrangement of the Prayer of Consecration and pre-communion service is taken from the Mozarabic rite—the ancient Spanish Service Book—and other sources. The prayer after the recital of our Lord's words reads: "Most Holy Father, we Thine unworthy servants do hereby commemorate and announce the death of Thy only begotten Son, as He commanded us to do, until He come again in glory and majesty: remembering His glorious passion, resurrection and ascension to heaven; giving Thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits conferred on us by them." It will be seen that the words differ from "We Thy humble servants do celebrate and make here before Thy divine Majesty, with these Thy holy gifts, the memorial which Thy Son hath willed us to make." Here we find that the Spanish Book deliberately avoids making use of the words in the Convocation Prayer that are open to misinterpretation. It is true that after an Invocation of the Holy Spirit, prayer is made to God to accept "this our sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving," but this follows the prayer "that we receiving them according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in memory of His death and passion, may be partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood." The sacrificial view of the Communion is excluded as far as possible by the Rubrics of the Book. The Presbyter consecrates facing the people. Eucharistic Vestments are forbidden and Reservation is condemned. In the preliminary observations on the Lord's Supper we read: "And with regard to the errors of those who teach that Christ gave Himself, or His Body and Blood, to be elevated, reserved, carried in procession, or adored, under the veil of Bread and Wine we absolutely reject it." Even the most ingenious of casuists cannot find the doctrine of the Mass in the Spanish Prayer Book, and we have shown that in its arrangement of the Consecration Prayer it avoids the dangers to which the proposed English rearrangement exposes the Church.

In the *Reformation of the Liturgy*, composed by Baxter, we have a Communion Office entitled, "The Order of Celebrating the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." In the explication of the Sacrament we find the following passage: "The Lord's Supper, then, is an holy Sacrament instituted by Christ: wherein bread and

wine, being first by consecration made sacramentally, or representatively, the Body and Blood of Christ, are used by breaking and pouring out to represent and commemorate the sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood upon the Cross once offered up to God for sin; and are given in the name of Christ unto the Church, to signify and solemnize the renewal of His holy covenant with them, and the giving of Himself unto them, to expiate their sins by His sacrifice, and sanctify them further by His Spirit, and confirm their right to everlasting life. And they are received, eaten, and drunk by the Church, to profess that they willingly receive Christ Himself to the ends aforesaid (their justification, sanctification, and glorification), and to signify and solemnize the renewal of their covenant with Him, and their holy communion with Him and with one another."

This clear statement of Eucharistic doctrine removes the meaning which in the Church of England to-day would be attached to the Priest—called "the Minister" in the Reformation of the Liturgy—who before distributing the bread that has been consecrated, says: "The Body of Christ was broken for us, and offered once for all to sanctify us: behold the sacrificed Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." When he takes the cup and pours out the wine in the sight of the congregation he says: "We were redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." Words have a very different meaning when taken in their context, and it is as clear as anything can be to the reader of the Baxter service that he rejected absolutely the doctrine of the Mass, the localized Presence in the Elements and the Eucharistic teaching that is attached to such a breaking of "the Bread which being set apart, and consecrated to this holy use by God's appointment, is now no common bread, but sacramentally the Body and Blood of Christ."

Between the words of institution and the delivery of the bread and wine, a prayer is placed which includes the petition: "Sanctify these Thy creatures of bread and wine, which, according to Thy will, we set apart to this holy use, that they may be sacramentally the Body and Blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ." This is the case when the Minister at his discretion consecrates the bread and the wine together. In the case in which he consecrates separately the service is different, but in both cases the words quoted are used.

The Prayer of Humble Access is not employed, and the whole service is framed on principles that exclude the interpretation placed on it by many who advocate the proposed changes in our existing Rite. After reception the Minister prays: "Accept us, O Lord, who resign ourselves unto Thee as Thine own; and with our thanks and praise, present ourselves a living sacrifice to be acceptable through Christ, useful for Thine honour." Here we see the equivalent of "our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" used in a sense very different to that assigned to it by the critics of Archbishop Cranmer.

We have said sufficient to prove that the order of the prayers in the two Communion Offices reviewed, does not convey the doctrinal signification imposed on them by many who read into our Communion Office a meaning very different to that intended by the Reformers. This would become its natural meaning if the proposed changes became law. The objection that our Service is based on a theory that is Roman in the sense that it is common to the Western Group of Liturgies, does not in any sense prove that our present Service is defective or unscriptural. As it stands to-day it has devotional advantages of a very high order. It brings us into the Upper Room, and as one who has both consecrated and communicated according to the Rite of the Spanish Reformed Church the writer has missed this element in the excellent and rich Communion Office of that Church. The Spanish Reformers do not observe this, as they are unfamiliar with our Service, and there is no reason why we in this country should adopt a Liturgical Order that they enjoy—especially when we are asked to do so by those who would refuse to accept the express command to adopt the Westward position, the prohibition of Vestments and the condemnation of Reservation.

It must never be forgotten that the psychological effect of a service is cumulative, the doctrine inculcated must be derived from the Rite and Ceremonies as a whole, and the effect of the proposed sanction of the changes desired is to assimilate our Service and ritual to the doctrine that is associated traditionally with the Roman Mass. On account of our rejection of that doctrine we are opposed to the alterations now put forward, and our hostility is not based on any prejudice against them as Roman, but on our conviction that they are unscriptural and opposed to the doctrine of the Holy Communion as taught by the Apostolic Church.