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DR. SANDERSON AND THE PRAYER BOOK.

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THE Ordinances of Parliament in 1645 which replaced the Book of Common Prayer by the Directory, eventually forbade all use of the former under heavy penalties (£5 for the first offence, £10 for the second, and one year's imprisonment without bail for the third). Apart from this, any incumbent convicted of habitually using it in Church would be sure to be sequestered or deprived. But as the Directory (on which see CHURCHMAN, January, 1927) only here and there gave a precise form of words to be used, more frequently laying down only the subjects to be dealt with, or the line to be taken, it was very possible to bring in a good deal of the Prayer Book, provided it was not read straight out of the book, and certain distinctive points were avoided; and we find that this was often done. It must be remembered that there was no clean sweep made of the old clergy; in most parts at least quite 50 per cent. were left; and not all of these were thorough-going Puritans.

After the Restoration, there was a tendency on both sides to exaggerate the previous use of the Prayer Book. Some Churchmen made out that their friends had constantly used it; some Presbyterians urged that its prohibition was never enforced. But when we come to clear cases of its use, we find they were nearly all in private chapels or conventicles, not in parish churches; though we may find a very few exceptions in obscure places, or in the closing years of the Protectorate. Newcourt says that the Church of St. Peter, Paul's Wharf, "was famous some years before the Restoration, by reason the Common Prayer was much read therein, and the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper duly administered according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, which brought a great concourse and resort to it." But this was obviously very exceptional. Probably there were many more cases where the Prayer Book was partially used with such modifications as might satisfy the Law. We know of a few such cases, where the minister reached such importance that we have his biography. But it is only in the case of Dr. Robert Sanderson that we have full details.

Edward Rainbow (Bishop of Carlisle, 1664-84), after his ejection from the Mastership of Magdalene College, Cambridge, was presented by the Earl of Suffolk to Little Chesterford in 1652, and by the Earl of Warwick to a benefice near Northampton in 1659: "in both places composing all the prayers for the Church out of the Liturgy, and repeating the offices of Christening and Burial

by heart, which the ignorant people not understanding liked well." ¹

John Hacket (Bishop of Lichfield, 1661-71) lost his benefice of St. Andrew's, Holborn, but kept that of Cheam, Surrey, where for some time he officiated by the Prayer Book, till the Committee of Surrey enjoined him to forbear to use it at any time, under Order of Parliament. "Yet after this order he still kept up the use of it in most parts, never omitting the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, Confession, Absolution, and many other Collects; and also as soon as the Church service was done absolved the rest at home." ²

George Bull, privately ordained by Bishop Skinner, of Oxford, at the age of twenty-one, became incumbent of St. George's, Bristol, in 1655.

"The iniquity of the times would not bear the constant and regular use of the Liturgy; to supply therefore that misfortune, Mr. Bull formed all the devotions he offered up in public, while he continued Minister of this place, out of the Book of Common Prayer, which did not fail to supply him with fit matter and proper words upon all occasions. He had the example of one of the brightest lights of that age, the judicious Dr. Sanderson, to justify him in this practice; and his manner of performing the public service was with so much seriousness and devotion, with so much fervour and ardency of affection, and with so powerful an emphasis in every part, that they who were most prejudiced against the Liturgy did not scruple to commend Mr. Bull as a person who prayed by the Spirit, though at the same time they railed at the Common Prayer as a beggarly element and as a carnal performance." ³

Bull was Bishop of St. David's, 1705-10.

We come now to Dr. Sanderson (Bishop of Lincoln, 1660-3; the "Preface" to the Book of Common Prayer was written by him). Here we have the advantage of a very full account by the man himself, not merely a brief statement by another; and as the above account of Bull shows, Sanderson's practice was well known, and an example to others. Isaak Walton, in his *Life of Sanderson*, says that

"he was advised by a Parliament-man of note, that valued and loved him much, not to be strict in reading all the Common Prayer, but make some little variation, especially if the soldiers came to watch him; for then it might not be in the power of him or his other friends to secure him from taking the Covenant, or from sequestration; for which reason he did vary somewhat from the strict words of the Rubric."

Walton gives the words of Confession he used. ⁴

Sanderson's own account is found in Volume V of the standard edition of his works by Dr. Jacobson (1854). It appeared in the 1678 edition of his *Cases of Conscience*; Dr. Jacobson used also three MSS. in the Libraries of Oxford Colleges; there is another among the Rawlinson MSS. in the Bodleian. It evidently had considerable circulation. He wrote to defend his practice against some thorough-going Anglicans, who had probably all been already

¹ Kennett's *Register*, p. 353.

² Plume: *Life of Hacket*.

³ Nelson: *Life of Bull*, ch. lx.

⁴ See below.

sequestered ; they took the line that those who had once promised to use the whole Prayer Book ought to continue to do so under all circumstances. He first gives his own practice, and then answers their arguments. He was Rector of Boothby Pagnell, near Grantham in Lincolnshire ; had been deprived of his Oxford Professorship, but kept this living. His narrative runs :

“ So long as my congregation continued unmixed with soldiers (as well after as before the promulgation of the Ordinance of the Two Houses for the abolition of Common Prayer), I continued the use of it, as I had ever formerly done in the most peaceable and orderly times, not omitting those very prayers, the silencing whereof I could not but know to have been chiefly aimed at in the Ordinance, viz. those for the King, the Queen, and the Bishops. And so I did also, though some soldiers were casually present ; till such time as a whole Troop coming to quarter in the town, with a purpose to continue a kind of garrison or headquarters amongst us, were so enraged at my reading of it the first Sunday after they came, that immediately after morning service ended, they seized on the Book and tore it all to pieces.

“ Thenceforward during their continuance here for full six months and upwards (viz. from the beginning of November till they were called away to Naseby-fight in May following) . . . I saw that it behoved me, for the preventing of further outrages, to waive the use of the Book for the time, at least in the ordinary services ; only I read the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, with the versicles and the Psalms for the day ; and then, after the First Lesson in the forenoon, *Benedictus* or *Jubilate*, and in the afternoon *Cantate*. After the Second Lesson also in the forenoon, sometimes the Creed, sometimes the Ten Commandments, and sometimes neither, but only sang a Psalm, and so to Sermon. But all that while, in the administration of the Sacraments, the Solemnisation of Matrimony, Burial of the Dead, and Churching of Women, I constantly used the ancient forms and rites to every one of them respectively belonging, according to the appointment of the Book. Only I was careful in all the rest to make choice of such times and opportunities as I might do them with most secrecy and without disturbance of the soldiers ; but at the celebration of the Eucharist I was the more secure to do it publicly, because I was assured none of the soldiers would be present.

“ After their departure I took the liberty to use either the whole Liturgy, or but some part of it, omitting sometimes more, sometimes less, upon occasion as I judged it most expedient in reference to the auditory, especially if any soldiers or other unknown persons happened to be present. But all the while the substance of what I omitted I contrived into my Prayer before Sermon, the phrase and order only varied ; which yet I endeavoured to temper in such sort as that any person of ordinary capacity might easily perceive what my meaning was, and yet the words left as little liable to exception or cavil as might be.”

But about two years before he wrote (i.e. about 1650) he had a friendly warning from “ a Parliament-man of note in these parts,” that at a public meeting at Grantham great complaint was made by some Presbyterian ministers of his refractoriness to obey the order of Parliament. The Committee had known his attitude and practice long before, but were not willing to take notice of it before complaint had been made, but now could not avoid doing so. So Sanderson was advised to consider well what to do ; he must either risk the loss of his living, or lay aside the Prayer Book ; if he continued to use it after complaint and admonition, it would not

be in the power of any friends to preserve him. His reply was that he had long ago resolved what he might do with a good conscience, if he were put to it ; viz. to forbear the use of the Common Prayer Book, so far as might satisfy the letter of the Ordinance, rather than forsake his station. So he considered how to take such a course in the public worship of his parish as would be likeliest neither to bring danger to himself by the use, or scandal to his brethren by the disuse, of the Established Liturgy. He gives his solution thus :

“ I begin the service with a passage of Scripture and an exhortation inferred thence to make confession of sins ; which exhortation I have framed out of the Exhortation and Absolution in the Book . . . expressed for the most part in the very same words and phrases, but purposely here and there transplac'd, that it might appear not to be, and yet to be the same. Then follows the Confession itself in the same order it was, enlarged only by the addition of a few words, whereby it is rather explained than altered. (Sanderson gives this in full, as an example of his treatment of other parts ; it is given in Walton's *Life*.)

“ O Almighty God and merciful Father, we Thy unworthy servants do with shame and sorrow confess, that we have all our life long gone astray out of Thy ways like lost sheep, and that by following too much the vain devices and desires of our own hearts we have grievously offended against Thy holy laws, both in thought, word, and deed. We have many times left undone those good deeds which we might and ought to have done ; and we have many times done those evils, when we might have avoided them, which we ought not to have done. We confess, O Lord, that there is no health at all in us, nor help in any creature to relieve us. But all our hope is in Thy mercy, Whose justice we have by our sins so far provoked. Have mercy upon us therefore, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare us, good Lord, who confess our faults, that we perish not ; but according to Thy gracious Promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord, restore us upon our due repentance to Thy grace and favour. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we henceforth study to serve and please Thee, by leading a godly, righteous and sober life ; to the glory of Thy holy Name, and the eternal comfort of our own souls ; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.’

“ After this Confession, the Lord's Prayer, with the versicles and *Gloria Patri*, and then the Psalms for the day, and then the First Lesson ; after which in the forenoon sometimes *Te Deum* (but then only when I think the auditory will bear it), and sometimes a Hymn of my own composing, gathered out of the Psalms and the Church Collects, as a general Form of Thanksgiving, which I did the rather because some have noted the want of such a form as the only thing wherein our Liturgy seemed to be defective¹ ; and in the afternoon, after the First Lesson, the ninety-eighth or the sixty-seventh Psalm. Then the Second Lesson, with *Benedictus* or *Jubilate* after it in the forenoon, and the afternoon a singing Psalm. Then followeth the Creed with *Dominus vobiscum*, and sometimes the versicles in the end of the Litany, From our enemies defend us, O Christ, etc., if I like my auditory ; otherwise I omit these versicles.

“ After the Creed, etc., instead of the Litany and the other prayers appointed in the Book, I have taken the substance of the Prayer I was wont to use before Sermon, and disposed it into several Collects or Prayers, some longer and some shorter, but new modelled into the language of the Common Prayer Book much more than it was before. And in the Pulpit before Sermon, I use only a short prayer in reference to the hearing of the Word, and no more ; so that upon the matter in these prayers I do but

¹ The General Thanksgiving was not added to the Prayer Book till 1662.

the same thing I did before, save only that what before I spake without book and in a continued form and in the pulpit, I now read out of a written book, broken into parcels, and in the Reading Desk or Pew. Between which prayers and the singing Psalm before the Sermon I do also daily use one other Collect, of which sort I have for the purpose composed sundry, made up as the former for the most part out of the Church Collects with some little enlargement or variation. . . . And after one or more of them in the forenoon I usually repeat the Ten Commandments, with a short Collect after for grace to enable us to keep them."

The rest of Dr. Sanderson's paper deals with objections to this practice :

- (1) The Obligation of the Law.
- (2) The Scandal of the Example.
- (3) Joining with Schismatics.

The first is dealt with at length. The point is that the Prayer Book had been established by law, viz. Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity ; this law had never truly been repealed, as the Ordinance of Parliament had not received the Royal Assent. Hence it was still binding in conscience, and no minister publicly officiating in the Church could with a good conscience omit or vary anything. (This was a line taken by some extremists, who had themselves nothing more to lose.)

Sanderson argues that all laws are intended to procure and promote the public good. Where the observance of the law by reason of the conjunction of circumstances or the iniquity of the times would be rather prejudicial than advantageous to the public, or when the injury to those observing it far outweighs all imaginable good to the public, then the law does not bind ; it may well be presumed that the lawgiver has no intention, by the strict observance of any law to force any person to his destruction or ruin, when the common good is not answerably promoted thereby. To apply to the present case : If a number of godly ministers, well affected to the established Liturgy, and actually possessed of benefices with the charge of souls, should think themselves obliged in conscience to use the whole Book without addition, omission or variation, three obvious evils would be sure to follow :

(1) The utter undoing of so many worthy persons fit to do God and His Church service, together with their dependants, by the sequestration of their benefices.

(2) The depriving them of opportunities of discharging the duties belonging to them in their ministerial calling, by not permitting them, after such sequestration, to teach or instruct the people belonging to their charge, or to exercise anything of their function publicly in the Church.

(3) The delivering over of the sheep of Christ that lately were under the hands of faithful shepherds into the custody of ravening wolves, when such guides shall be set over the several congregations as will be sure to mis-teach them one way or other. These consequences are so heavy to the sufferers, so certain to ensue upon the use of Common Prayer, that it is beyond the wit of man to imagine what benefit to the public can accrue by the strict

observance of the Act, that may in any proportion countervail these mischiefs. . . . It would also be well considered whether he that by his over-nice scrupulosity runneth all these hazards be not in some measure guilty of his own undoing, of deserting his station, and of betraying his flock.

The second objection is the Scandal of the Example ; others may be thereby encouraged to despise authority and disobey the law. Passing over Sanderson's answer to this, we come finally to that of Schism. To do what schismatics do—leave out the Church prayers and put in their own—is to be guilty of schism ourselves, or at least to confirm them in theirs. His answer is that to do what they do, not voluntarily but when necessitated, in order to prevent further mischief, does not mean partaking with them in schism. But we should give assurance to all by our carriage and behaviour that we do not lay aside Common Prayer of our own accord or out of any dislike thereof. We may probably clear ourselves by observing these and the like general directions, “the liberty of using such meet accommodations as the circumstances in particular cases shall require evermore allowed and reserved.”

(1) “If we shall decline the company and society of known schismatics, not conversing frequently and familiarly with them, or more than the necessary affairs of life and the rules of neighbourhood and common civility will require. . . .

(2) “If we shall retain as well in common discourse as in our sermons and the holy offices of the Church the old theological and ecclesiastical terms and forms of speech . . . which our people are well acquainted with, and are wholesome and significant [not taking up the new theological dialect].

(3) “If in officiating we repeat not only the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and such other passages in the Common Prayer Book as, being the very words of Scripture, no man can except against ; but so much also of the old Liturgy besides, in the very words and syllables of the Book, as we think the ministers of State in those parts where we live will suffer, and the auditory before whom we officiate will bear ; sith the officers in all parts of the land are not alike strict, nor the people in all parishes alike disaffected in this respect.

(4) “If when we must of necessity vary from the words, we yet follow the order of the Book in the main part of the holy Offices, retaining the substance of the Prayers, and embellishing those of our own making, which we substitute into the place of those we leave out, with phrases and passages taken out of the Book in other places.

(5) “If where we cannot safely mention the particulars expressed in the Book, as namely in praying for the King, the Queen, the Royal progeny, and the Bishops, we shall yet use in our prayers some such general terms and other intimations devised for the purpose, as may sufficiently convey to the understandings of the people what our intentions are therein, and yet not be sufficient to fetch us within the compass of the Ordinance.

(6) “If we shall in our Sermons take occasion now and then, where it may be pertinent, either to discover the weakness of the Puritan principles and tenets to the people ; or to show out of some passages and expressions in the Common Prayer Book the consonance of these observations we have raised from the text with the judgement of the Church of England ; or to justify such particular passages in the Litany, Collects, and other parts of our Liturgy, as have been unjustly quarrelled at by Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, or other, by what name or title soever they be called, Puritan Sectaries.”

This judgment by Sanderson is most valuable in two ways :

(1) It shows what the true position was in general as regards the use of the Prayer Book ; not simply during the Presbyterian ascendancy, but in 1650 and 1652. Whatever isolated clergy may have done in obscure places, the full use of the Prayer Book was normally certain to involve sequestration.

(2) It brings out well the general position of the best conformists, not only of those on the present occasion, but of Puritans under the Laudian rule, and to some extent also after the Restoration. When pressed to conform to some form of worship they disliked, these thought it better to do so than to be suspended, sequestered or deprived. They felt themselves called to the ministry ; they chose to continue to exercise this ministry under conditions which they disliked and thought a change for the worse, rather than by holding out to injure their flocks as well as themselves. Herein they were probably right ; though sensible rather than heroic.

WILL GOD SPEAK ? By J. De Blank, B.A. *Lutterworth Press. 6d.*

We should have thought it unnecessary to prove that a quiet time of existing upon God for Guidance is a reasonable and desirable thing. The rush and hurry of these days make it more than ever a profitable practice. But do not all Christians seek the Lord's Will in the way that best suits their needs ? Mr. De Blank directs attention to this matter earnestly and helpfully. But we cannot see why it should be necessary to labour what should be a truism.

There is, of course, a danger in "Guidance" for ill-regulated existence.

H. D.

THE BIBLE AND EVOLUTION. By H. R. KINDERSLEY. *Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd. 6d.*

This well-printed pamphlet is a powerful criticism of the Darwinian theory of Evolution. It has a Foreword by Sir Ambrose Fleming, D.Sc., F.R.S., who quotes the late Lord Kelvin as saying, "I marvel at the undue haste with which teachers in our Universities and preachers in our pulpits are restating truth in terms of Evolution, while Evolution itself remains an unproved hypothesis in the laboratories of Science."

The able argument of this booklet endorses Lord Kelvin's dictum.

It deserves wide circulation.

H. D.