

Liturgical Chronicle

BY R. T. BECKWITH

IN the issue of *The Churchman* for June, 1946, the Rev. E. J. G. Rogers warned Evangelicals that 'they must be prepared to specialise in liturgical studies'. 'Only thus can we make a positive contribution to the discussions which must inevitably rise,' he continued: 'it is in this way that our opinions will command respect. . . .' One can, I suppose, regard it as indicating a measure of progress towards this goal during the intervening twenty-one years, that the editor of *The Churchman* now feels that a regular survey of liturgical matters can be undertaken. During that period Evangelicals have made a modest but recognisable contribution in the liturgical field. They have produced a series of eight expository and devotional *Prayer Book Commentaries*,¹ under the editorship of Canon Frank Colquhoun. They have produced the *Prayer Book Reform Series*,² a series of short studies in Prayer Book revision, six of which have so far appeared, and one of which (*The New Communion Service—Reasons for Dissent*, by C. O. Buchanan) has had a real influence. They have produced a symposium (*Towards a Modern Prayer Book*),³ reviewing the two series of Alternative Services proposed for the Church of England. They have started producing additional proposals, or counter-proposals, of their own, such as *Evening Prayer—a conservative translation into modern English*,⁴ and *Services of Baptism and Confirmation*.⁵ They have produced, again under the editorship of Canon Frank Colquhoun, the most comprehensive collection of occasional prayers available (*Parish Prayers*),⁶ which is sadly disfigured by a section of prayers for the dead included for the use of non-Evangelicals, but is otherwise very serviceable. They have produced, in the N.E.A.C. statement,⁷ a worthwhile section on 'The Church and its Worship', expressing Evangelical principles on the matter. Outside England they have not been idle either. Both in Wales and in New Zealand Evangelicals have published symposia reviewing critically the new communion services proposed for their respective provinces.⁸

This record of achievement provides no grounds at all for complacency, nor will it after some substantial publications planned for the coming year have been added. Not for forty years have Evangelicals had in their ranks a man whose learning in the history of liturgy bore comparison with that of the great Anglo-Catholic liturgiologists of this century, such as Frere, Brightman, Lowther-Clarke, Dix and Ratcliff. J. T. Tomlinson, Nathaniel Dimock and Bishop T. W. Drury (who died at an advanced age in 1926, before the last Prayer Book revision débâcle in this country) left few successors. The tradition of Evangelical liturgical scholarship needs to be built up again, and this is the more urgent in that Prayer Book revision is now being taken up in the Anglican Communion more widely than ever before. Seven independent Anglican churches outside England—those of Scotland, the U.S.A., Ireland, South Africa, Canada, Japan and India, Pakistan,

Burma and Ceylon—now have their own Prayer Books, and experimentation with a view to revision is going on in the West Indies, Africa, New Zealand, Wales, England, Australia and Brazil; while experimentation with a view to further revision is under way in Scotland, Ireland and the U.S.A. It is encouraging to know that in a good many parts of the world Evangelicals are represented on the liturgical commissions, and that in Australia they have had a real influence on the proposals made,⁹ but everywhere else there have been greater or lesser concessions to unreformed doctrine and to doctrinal agnosticism, except in the new province of Brazil, where there has been a recognisable withdrawal from the standpoint of the American communion service which was previously used there, and an even more definite refusal to follow the new proposals for the U.S.A.¹⁰ Evangelical resistance in India, East Africa, England and Ireland has had the effect of making the new liturgies there also less offensive than they would otherwise have been, for Evangelical participants in Prayer Book revision are still obliged to concern themselves primarily with safeguarding Biblical doctrine, and the Brazilian developments are the more significant because they do not seem to be due to Evangelical influence. A recent booklet by the writer of this chronicle¹¹ contains a doctrinal analysis of the revised Prayer Books and experimental liturgies authorised by the various provinces of the Anglican Communion. Since it was published, three more experimental liturgies have been authorised, apart from the Brazilian. These are the Scottish, which conforms in doctrine to the existing Scottish liturgy, the American, which introduces permission for reservation, and the Irish, which has a sacrificial consecration prayer. It is very sad to see the liturgy of the Church of Ireland beginning to follow modern Anglican fashions.

The main theme of the booklet just mentioned is that the only prudent, charitable and irenic policy with regard to doctrinal innovations, which some deem erroneous, is the policy adopted by the Australian commission, of refraining from making them until all schools of thought can agree upon them. This policy has also been generally adopted now by the House of Laity in the National Assembly of the Church of England. Since the agreement of the House of Laity is necessary to the authorisation of experimental services, the policy has in effect been adopted by the Church of England, and many in the Convocations of the Clergy have in fact expressed their agreement with it. Consequently, though *Alternative Services: First Series*¹² was authorised, with nearly all its objectionable features, as a temporary measure designed to legalise the *status quo*, the productions of the Liturgical Commission are having a slower passage through the House. *Second Series Holy Communion*¹³ was authorised only after significant alterations had been made, and after further change had been stipulated before any second period of experiment, and *Second Series Burial of the Dead*¹⁴ is now undergoing similar treatment. Of *Second Series Morning and Evening Prayer*¹⁵ and *Baptism and Confirmation*¹⁶ only Confirmation has yet been authorised. The article on the first edition of *Baptism and Confirmation* in the June 1960 issue of *The Churchman*, though not everything it says applies to the second edition, is still well worth consulting.

Setting aside the doctrinal considerations on which we have so far concentrated our attention, the new services now in experimental use in the Anglican Communion are from other points of view rather strikingly different from the revised Prayer Books of a few years back. Linguistically, there are signs of change. Moreover, revision does not begin from the same starting-point. Following the counsel of the subcommittee which reported on the Book of Common Prayer at the 1958 Lambeth Conference, the example set a few years earlier by the Church of South India (a *united*, not an *Anglican* church, of course), and earlier still the re-orientation of liturgical thought in the English-speaking world achieved after the war by Dix's *Shape of the Liturgy*, revision committees are now sitting far looser to the existing services, and producing not so much revisions as substitutes. The new liturgies are much further removed from 1662, and therefore much further removed from each other. This is more tolerable under the modern policy of revision by experiment, for in an experimental period the most adventurous revisions can be tried out for purposes of comparison, *provided there is something to compare them with*. At present there is not, and this may prove to be their downfall. There will surely be a reaction before long in favour of the established worship of the Anglican churches, rich in its scriptural content, and marked by Cranmer's liturgical mastery, and a consequent demand for a modernisation of this, rather than something entirely strange, and essentially inferior.

Turning from liturgies to liturgical literature, recent Anglican publications include the following: *The Ordination Prayers of the Ancient Western Churches*, by H. B. Porter Jr.,¹⁷ a useful addition to the Alcuin Club Collections, comprising texts in Latin and English with comments and textual notes; *Crisis for Confirmation*, ed. M. Perry,¹⁸ a symposium in which a considerable number of contributors address themselves to the practical problems of confirmation today; and *Worship and Mission*, by J. G. Davies.¹⁹ One does not have to accept the secular theology of this book or much of its exegesis to appreciate its stress on the importance of the missionary outlook and the proper place this has in liturgy.

If we now begin to look beyond what is purely Anglican, we may first take note of the proposed joint-ordinal for the Anglican and Methodist churches, which formed the subject of an article in the Autumn 1967 issue of *The Churchman*. This ordinal was mainly the work of Professor E. C. Ratcliff, whose death in 1967 was a severe loss to liturgical studies. He was an authority on the ancient liturgies, especially those of the Syrian Church, and was very well versed in the writings of continental Roman Catholic liturgiologists. His written work consists mainly of learned articles in journals and symposia, giving expression to many original ideas. Like Dix, he had no great admiration for the Middle Ages, and on the matter of Prayer Book revision also he was a true disciple of Dix, perhaps because he recognised more clearly than most Anglo-Catholics the genuinely Protestant character of sixteenth and seventeenth century Anglican liturgies. His notable open-mindedness failed him only at one point—his determination to bring back into modern use what we know of the worship of the third century, and to uproot everything (however well-established,

however edifying, however Biblical even) which stands in the way.

Finally, a brief word about liturgical affairs outside the Anglican world altogether. The Methodist Church during the past year authorised for experiment two new services, for baptism and 'confirmation', as alternatives to those in the *Book of Offices*. More interesting perhaps are developments in the Roman Catholic Church, where further steps were taken in 1967 to implement the Vatican Council's decisions on liturgical reform. A simplified order of the mass was authorised,¹⁰ and also an international English translation of the canon, markedly paraphrastic in character, and permitting the use either of 'you' or of 'thou' in addressing God.¹¹ It is an open secret that a revision of the Latin canon is in preparation, and that the anaphora from Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* and that from the Liturgy of St. Basil are also to be authorised for use in the Roman Church, as well as the revised Roman canon. The reformed Roman rite of concelebration (which still implies a mediaeval view of consecration, as does also the simplified order of the mass) has now appeared in a cheap bilingual edition,¹² and the Roman lay liturgiologist Archdale A. King has added to the debt owed him by students of liturgical history through his book *Concelebration in the Christian Church*.¹³ Meanwhile, in a more domestic vein, Fr. Michael Richards has produced an interesting record and discussion of Roman Catholic worship in this country, under the title *The Liturgy in England*.¹⁴

¹ Hodder and Stoughton, 5s. each.

² Church Book Room Press, ranging from 2s. to 4s.

³ Marcham Manor Press, 96 pp., 5s.

⁴ Falcon Booklets, 16 pp., 1s. 6d.

⁵ Marcham Manor Press, 63 pp., 6s. paperback, 13s. 6d. casebound.

⁶ Hodder and Stoughton, 445 pp., 30s.

⁷ Keele '67, Falcon Books, 60 pp., 3s. 6d.

⁸ *Revised Service of Holy Communion: some Problems Considered*, ed. B. Lewis, published from Aberaeron Vicarage, Cards., 52 pp., 3s., and *Worship for Today*, ed. C. Clark and M. Goodall, Christchurch, Latimer Foundation, 39 pp., not priced.

⁹ *Prayer Book Revision in Australia*, Sydney, Standing Committee of the General Synod, 124 pp., not priced.

¹⁰ The Brazilian liturgy, which has a sacrificial consecration prayer but contains no prayer for the dead and does not permit reservation, has hitherto been published only in Portuguese. An English translation will appear in *Modern Anglican Liturgies*, ed. C. O. Buchanan, to be published by OUP later this year.

¹¹ *Prayer Book Revision and Anglican Unity*, Church Book Room Press, 24 pp., 3s.

¹² SPCK, 94 pp., 12s. 6d.

¹³ SPCK, 16 pp., 9d.

¹⁴ SPCK, 44 pp., 2s. 6d.

¹⁵ SPCK, 44 pp., 2s. 6d.

¹⁶ SPCK, 26 pp., 2s. 6d.

¹⁷ SPCK, 98 pp., 25s.

¹⁸ SCM, 189 pp., 13s. 6d.

¹⁹ SCM, 159 pp., 8s. 6d.

²⁰ *The New Changes in the Mass*, Chapman, 41 pp., 5s.

²¹ *The Roman Canon in English Translation*, Chapman, 44 pp., 5s.

²² *Concelebration: the New Rite*, Catholic Truth Society, 32 pp., 1s. 6d.

²³ Mowbray, 149 pp., 35s.

²⁴ Chapman, 120 pp., 21s.