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Reflections FROM THE Editor's Desk

Roberta Bayer, Associate Professor,
Patrick Henry College, Purcellville, Virginia

We need your gifts in order to carry out your mandate to defend the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer*. You may send a contribution in the enclosed envelope.

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Dr. Bayer at
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order to discontinue
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note to the PBS using
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last page.

The Prayer Book Society of England has graciously allowed us to reprint a talk given by the Most Rev. and Right Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth, former Archbishop of Canterbury. Lord Williams spoke to the English Prayer Book Society, and once again showed himself to be a contemporary theologian who is willing to praise Cranmer's liturgy for its spirituality and its theology. He describes the missional aspects of the prayer book, its capacity to set forth Christ's benefits to us, to teach us how to give God His due and remind us of our duties to our fellow man. He states that one of the virtues of this liturgy is that it affirms the Reformation teaching that liturgy is not a work that we do for God, but rather a manifestation of God's sovereign grace working through us and indwelling in us. The Book of Common Prayer is about making "the benefits of Christ to be visible in our lives." Its deep spiritual heritage, its patristic and medieval style, repeat the teaching that we are assimilated to Christ by walking in His holy way. The Christian is called to indwell in Christ as He does in us; this indwelling is not simply a matter of imitation, but of spiritual communion offered to us in the whole theology which proclaims that by His work we are made regenerate and God's children by adoption and grace. In this way Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer allows one to maintain deep roots to ancient Christian theology both doctrinally and spiritually. It is the answer for those seeking ancient-future worship.

Scott Dettra, one of America's finest organists and the Director of Music at the Church of the Incarnation in Dallas has contributed an informative article

on Cranmer and the musical upheaval during the English Reformation. He points out that the theology of the Reformation had a profound effect upon the way music was conceived. Mr. Dettra is much lauded for his musical performances both as an organist and a choir director, it is an honor and a pleasure to have his article in the magazine. His concert schedule can be found online at <https://www.scottdettra.com/>

The Rev. Dr. Alexander Pryor, Director of Chapel Music and Instructor in Church Music at Nashotah House Theological Seminary has also contributed an article on the history of Anglican music. He explains the history of how the psalms were sung as part of the daily office. Interestingly enough the Oxford Movement changed the way psalms were sung. His explanation of the changing pattern of psalmody sheds light on the changing way in which music and liturgy were combined in earlier centuries. It is a great pleasure to have a contribution from the faculty of Nashotah House.

Richard Mammana, founder and director of Project Canterbury, an online archive of Anglican texts, has contributed a sermon by George H. Clark, rector of St. John's Church in Savannah, preached in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War. Clark preached on the Book of Common Prayer and the great advantages of Anglican public worship. It's a lovely argument for the use of the prayer book written at a difficult time in the history of the nation.

Finally, William Murchison, nationally syndicated political columnist and a very important member of the Board of the Prayer Book Society, has written a typically lively article in praise of the

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Collect in the 1928 prayer book "In Praise of our Country." Very timely!



Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliff, our administrator, was able to attend the World Congress of Families XI, which took place in Budapest, Hungary this June. Like other North Americans who attended, he found it very heartening to meet so many conservative Christians from around the world uniting to affirm Biblical teaching on marriage and the family. It is more evidence that Christian families continue to teach the faith, the suicidal trends of Western Europe are not ubiquitous, and in some places Christians are helping shape public policy on the family.



We received a request from the Sarum Society to advertise their mission. They are dedicated to supporting traditional sacred music and boys choirs within traditional 1928/1928 Altar Missal worship. They are trying to research and discover the names of those 1928 Prayer Book churches that have or are considering starting either a boys choir, men's schola, or more specifically a men and boys choir. If your church fits this description please contact: Kenneth L. Knott, and his email address is: Sarum Society@aol.com



I greatly apologize for erroneously labelling a picture in the last issue. In the Rev. Edward Rix's article about his trip to Tanzania, there is a picture of Archbishop Jacob Chimeledya, not Bishop Makaya.



Mrs. Auburn Traycik, journalist, former editor of *The Christian Challenge*, Secretary-Treasurer of the Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen, former Board member of the Prayer Book Society, passed away in May at the age of 64 after suffering from Parkinson's disease. Her funeral was held at St. Alban's Church (ACC), Richmond, Virginia, the Rev. Canon Charles H. Nalls presiding. Fr. Edward Rix, Vice-President of the Prayer Book Society and I attended. We knew her as a staunch defender of traditional worship. Friend, fellow journalist, and traditional Anglican Robert England said of Auburn, "She was an outstanding journalist and editor and led an exemplary life as a devout Christian. She also had a great sense of humor and did not let the advance of revisionist forces within the Episcopal Church and the West in general discourage her in her faith, devotion, and witness." (virtueonline.org) Whether reporting on the 1998 Lambeth Conference or local struggles among traditionalist Anglicans, Auburn clearly and

articulately related the events and posed hard questions to those involved. The traditionalist movement within the Episcopal Church in the USA would have been much weaker if it had not been for the careful reports and commentaries written by Auburn in *The Christian Challenge*.



The Prayer Book Society, also known as the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer exists for the purpose of preserving the use and theology of the magisterial documents of the Anglican Communion. These are the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (and its North American heirs, the 1928 BCP in the United States and 1962 BCP in Canada), the Thirty Nine Articles, and the Ordinal.

One speaks of an Anglican Communion, although it is more of an Anglican Fellowship because provinces such as TEC no longer treat these documents as magisterial. Nonetheless we in the PBS believe that the whole truth of Scripture, witnessed to and transmitted by the Apostles is reflected in these documents and needs to be defended for the renewal of communion among Anglicans.

One cannot ignore the fact that the institutional unity of the Anglican Communion was irrevocably impaired first by the decision to ordain women, and then compounded by later decisions. Many passages of Scripture affirm the headship of men, and Christ's choice of twelve male apostles confirms this. In choosing men he was not constrained by convention because all things he did to teach God's word were ordained by God from the beginning of time. Furthermore the theology of ordination found in the Ordinal cannot accommodate women's ordination.

Moreover the claim to catholicity formerly made by the Anglican Communion was undermined when it adopted women's ordination. It is un-catholic because it was never practiced by the universal church. So the Anglican Communion lost the status it formerly enjoyed with Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches; it became just one Protestant denomination among others.

The Prayer Book Society in defending the catholic and reformed nature of Anglicanism is therefore opposed to the ordination of women. Although the desire of women for the political equality is laudable, in the church a political ideal was projected onto an institution which is not in its essential nature political. It is important to distinguish church and state. The state is responsible for the material well-being of mankind; the Church is responsible for teaching about the City of God, the final end of mankind, eternal life. Reason is the foundation of law and political justice, revealed truth is the foundation of the Church. Political equality can be defended by the standards of reason. God has revealed divine truth, and equally we are called to obedience to Him. Obedience to his word is the foundation of ecclesiastical law.



The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar, President, Prayer Book Society, and Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, Georgia

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

The Reverend G. G. Dunbar, St. John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, Georgia

Articles of Religion (Part I)

Near the back of the 1928 Prayer book—on page 603—we find one of the doctrinal pillars of classical Anglicanism, the Articles of Religion. Since 1801 they have been taken as one of the authorities defining the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church, which the clergy at their ordinations solemnly vow to uphold. (They are also to be found in the appendix to the 1979 Prayer Book). The Articles of 1801 are an adaptation of the English Church's Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, first drafted by Archbishop Cranmer in 1553 as Forty-Two Articles, but adopted, with some revision, as Thirty-Nine Articles in 1571. Replaced in 1647 by the Westminster Confession, they were restored in 1662 under Charles II. *Ex animo* ('from the heart') subscription to the Articles was required of all the clergy, as well as of students of the Universities, so they functioned like other Protestant confessions of faith, as a doctrinal standard or 'formulary'. We therefore must consider the Articles in their American form in two historical settings – that of the American church after the Revolution, and that of the English church in the Reformation.

American Origins

After the Revolution, the American churches of the Church of England found themselves in an unprecedented situation: cut off from the institutional authorities of the Church of England, and free to do anything they wanted to do. Yet rather than pursue a revolutionary path in doctrine or liturgy, they chose a path of what might be called 'freedom-in-relation'. As established by the General Convention in 1801, the Articles represent the resolve of the American church to exercise its new freedom of self-government in a fashion that preserved continuity with its origins in the Church of England and honored its continuing fellowship with it also—a fellowship which would eventually grow and be formalized in the 19th and 20th centuries as the Anglican Communion. A similar idea appears in the Preface to the first American Prayer Book of 1789. After affirming the American church's freedom to adapt to its new circumstances, it adds, "this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship" (p. vi). Hence, from its inception, the Episcopal Church sought to locate itself both in time and space within a larger community of faith than that merely of itself. As late as the 1960's, the same idea appeared in the preamble to the church's constitution: "The Episcopal Church . . . is a

constituent member of the Anglican Communion . . . in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer." These constitutional commitments to the responsibilities of membership in the Communion (most obviously, not to act unilaterally on matters that concern the Communion as a whole), and to uphold the historic faith and order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, are in direct line of development with the Prayer Book of 1789 and the Articles of 1801. The Articles of 1801 do not take a sectarian, nationalistic, or revolutionary approach to defining the doctrine of the Episcopal Church. In this regard they are consistent with the principles that shaped their 16th century source, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England.

English Origins

The English reformation did not begin with doctrinal reform, but with institutional reform. Under Henry VIII, the papal supremacy was replaced by a royal supremacy, and the monasteries were dissolved, but no significant further changes were made. Doctrinal and liturgical reform began only under his successor, the boy-king Edward VI. Images were removed from the churches, and the elaborate splendor of the Latin liturgy replaced by the chaste simplicity of the English Book of Common Prayer. A book of Homilies was published to promote the two principal doctrines of the Reformation: the sufficiency of Scripture and justification by faith alone. Along with the Prayer Book and the Homilies, a more precise doctrinal standard was required for the clergy and the theologically educated, "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent touching matters of religion". The Articles were a key element in forging a comprehensive theological consensus to unite an entire nation in a common faith as it was also united liturgically in common prayer.

Since the 19th century, there has been a tendency to distinguish the English reformation (often portrayed as more moderate or catholic) from the (supposedly more extreme) continental reformation. The distinction is historically dubious. The distinctive features of the English reformation, its retention of features of the catholic tradition that disappeared in other parts of the Protestant world (three-fold order, diocesan structure, cathedral foundations, and the Prayer Book liturgy), owes more to the special historical circumstances of the English reformation than to a

rejection of putative continental extremism.¹ Though the 16th century fellowship of Protestant churches later degenerated into the denominationalism, in its original impulse the reformation both in England and on the continent was ecumenical in spirit, determined to build and to live within a scripturally-based consensus of reformed churches about matters of faith.

So when we turn to the Articles, we find a document largely shaped not by the sectarian or nationalistic agendas, but rather by a desire to anchor the English church's place in a trans-national fellowship of churches sharing a consensus of faith. In turn, this consensus itself did not present itself as an innovation, but as a faithful expression of the ancient faith set forth in Scripture, and taught in catholic antiquity. Like their counterparts on the continent, the English reformers introduced some bold reforms; but they were careful to anchor these reforms within a larger community both of time and space. Like their partner churches on the continent, the English church would not define its faith on its own terms, but in terms shared with the larger Christian world both in the past and in the present.

This spirit eventually shaped the Anglican Communion, and the principle was acknowledged in the American church's Constitution. Though now ignored, it is the first lesson the Articles have to teach us: to locate ourselves in a community of faith that is much larger than us both in time and space. In an age of sectarian nationalism, this ecclesial humility and charity is impressive.

The Purpose and Nature of the Articles

Now the Articles are not an exhaustive or encyclopedic treatment of every possible topic. On some questions - the doctrine of creation, for instance—we might wish they had said rather more. But they were designed with a practical purpose in mind: “for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent touching true religion”, in the context of the 16th century church of England. Still, the questions of the 16th century—about the gospel, and the church—are of perennial importance, and in the Articles they are addressed not randomly but systematically. They proceed in ordered and logical necessity from the greatest to the smallest, from the most essential to the least. So beginning with the triune God as principle (1–5) they proceed through divine revelation (6–8), salvation in Christ (9–18), the Church's proclamation (19–31), to conclude with matters of administration both ecclesiastical (32–36) and civil (37–39). Their systematic character means that everything is seen in its logical relation to that which comes before and that which follows after. This is not a grab-bag of theological opinions, held together only by the

arbitrary will of the opinionated, but (for all its brevity) a coherent theological ‘master-plan’ that sees all particular aspects in terms of the whole.

For all the grandeur of their scope, the Articles are studied in the minimalism of their doctrinal requirements. Precise on what is essential, they are nonetheless broad on all other matters. Aiming to include the whole English people in one church, with a shared rule of faith, the Articles have (as J. I. Packer says), “the comprehensiveness that results from keeping doctrinal requirements down to a minimum and allowing the maximum of flexibility and variety on secondary matters. The Articles are in this sense minimal . . . but they are meant to ensure that all Anglican clergy, whatever their views on other matters, should unite in teaching an Augustinian doctrine of sin and a Reformed doctrine of justification and grace.”²

The unity of the Church is first of all theological, and only secondarily administrative. Thus W. J. Hankey: “the church, its existence, its specific form, the administrative matters and relations with the secular reality which follow on its existence, comes out of the gospel; the church comes out of and follows on the truth known and declared.”³ In the current confusion of the church, its inability to sort out the conflict of theological opinions, its despair of the truth, it has sought to locate unity in administrative process. But the Articles proceed from a confidence in the truth that is in Jesus, that by his grace (as the Prayer for the Church puts it) “all those who do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live together in unity and godly love”. The church's unity is fundamentally a matter of truth and charity, which is to say it is a spiritual unity before it is an administrative one, a matter of mind and will brought together in submission to the revealed Word of God.

The Articles were a key element in clarifying the truth of the Word of God for the sake of the unity and mission of the Church of England, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, as also the Anglican Church of Canada, and other national churches of the Anglican Communion. If we are to recover the unity of Anglicanism, and its mission, a rediscovery of the Articles is a good place to start.

We may apply this principle to the present divided and fragmented condition of Anglicanism by recognizing that theological differences cannot be resolved by merely administrative means. If we truly cared about tolerance, we would not try to erase all differences or pretend there were none: we would seek respectfully to live with them and to clarify them. This is the first step for the church to rediscover a loving unity in the truth.

1. For instance; since the reformation was led bishops, and so there was no need to abolish the three-fold order or diocesan structure to proceed with reformation. Since it embraced a whole country and not just pockets of protestant opinion, it had to be as comprehensive as possible of conservative opinion in less advanced areas.

2. J. I. Packer, *The Thirty Nine Articles: their Place and Use Today* (Oxford: Latimer House, 1984), p. 54

3. W. J. Hankey, “The Thirty-Nine Articles as Theological System” in G. Richmond Bridge, ed., *The Thirty Nine Articles [Atlantic Theological Conference Report]* (Charlottetown, P.E. I.: St. Peter Publications, n.d.) p. 5

The PBS 2017 Conference

ANGLICANISM CATHOLIC AND REFORMED:
REVISITING THE REFORMATION LEGACY 1517–2017



The Reverend
Canon Alistair
Macdonald-Radcliff,
Director General,
The World Dialogue
Council

The first Prayer Book Society Theological Conference in some years was held at St. John's Savannah (with the Elliott House) over three days from the 16th–18th February. This was something of an adventure for the Society but proved to be a significant success with over a hundred people in attendance. Indeed, such was the positive feedback (rating the conference either 'very good' or 'exceptional') that we are already undertaking the initial planning to hold another one in 2018 around the same time and will hope to welcome even more people next time around!

The pending 500th anniversary of Luther nailing his ninety-five theses to the Church door in Wittenberg and thus starting the Reformation, made this an obvious theme to explore in relation to Anglican identity and we were fortunate in having a range of very fine speakers to cover this terrain while we also touched on other topics such as liturgical revision as well as Science and Faith, a field in which Anglicans have been disproportionately prominent.

The first lecture entitled, *An Historical Overview of the Reformation Context* was given by Dr. Gillis Harp, Professor of History, Grove City College with the Principal of Pusey House in Oxford Dr. George Westhaver opening the discussion under the chairmanship of Dean William McKeachie. This was followed by the Revd. Dr. Oliver O' Donovan, Professor of Moral Theology at Edinburgh and formerly of Oxford who addressed the theme of *Sanctification* as set out through the Collects of Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer and Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliff opened the discussion.

In the Third Session of the day, the PBS President, Fr Gavin Dunbar spoke on *The Nature and Future of the Reformation liturgy*, to which The Society's Vice President the Revd. Fr. Edward Rix and the Revd. Dr.

Arnold Klukas, the recently retired Professor of Liturgy at Nashotah House responded with the Very Revd. Fr. David Thurlow taking the chair. The Conference Reception concluded the day in the Green Meldrim House.

Proceedings opened on Friday with Dr. Neil Robertson, Professor of Humanities, University of King's College, Halifax giving an address entitled, *"It is required that you do awake your faith"* *The Elizabethan Settlement and the Drama of a Catholic Reformation: ("The Winter's Tale, V.3 ll.94–5)* with Dr. Stephen Blackwood, President of the planned Ralston College and Dean William McKeachie opening the discussion.

After Coffee Dr. Joan O'Donovan of University of Edinburgh spoke on *The Public Authority of the Church in the Cranmerian Tradition* with Dr. Roberta Bayer, Editor of *The Anglican Way* responding. In the afternoon Dr. Jesse Billett, of Trinity College, University of Toronto gave a paper on *"The Holy Scriptures, or That Which Is Agreeable to the Same": The Scriptural Catholicity of the Prayer Book* to which Dr. Neil Robertson responded. This was followed by the Revd. Dr. George Westhaver, Principal of Pusey House, Oxford on the subject of *Incarnational Reading: A Tractarian View of the Authority of Scripture* with Dr. Gillis Harp opening the discussion.

The final session of the day on the topic of *Anglicanism catholic & reformed: Quo Vadis?* was comprised of a panel discussion chaired by William Murchison, Radford Distinguished Professor of Journalism, Baylor University (retd.) featuring Dr. Roberta Bayer, the Revd. Dr. Oliver O'Donovan, Dr. Gillis Harp, Dr. Neil Robertson, the Revd. Dr. George Westhaver and the day ended with a Choral Evensong at which Professor Oliver O'Donovan preached the Sermon.

On the Saturday morning the Revd. Fr. Patrick Bright, of All Souls Oklahoma City chaired a session on the theme of *Apologetics Now, Science Faith and Contemporary Culture* opened by Dr. Paul Julienne, Professor University of Maryland and of the The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) emeritus. This was followed by the last session chaired by the Revd. Fr Gordon Anderson was opened by the Revd. Dr. Arnold Klukas on the theme of *Liturgy Now—American, English and Canadian Perspectives* with additional speakers being the Revd. Gavin Dunbar, the Revd. Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliff and Dr. Jesse Billett.

The conference closed with a Choral Eucharist at which the Revd. Dr. George Westhaver preached the Sermon.



From left to right: The Revd. Dr. George Westhaver, Dr. Neil Robertson, William Murchison, Professor Oliver O'Donovan, Dr. Gillis Harp, Dr. Roberta Bayer

‘Prevent Us O Lord’

DWELLING, WALKING AND SERVING IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

By Rowan Williams

The Book of Common Prayer is not a book for social programmes or mission initiatives, it's not a manifesto and it's not a rule book. And it's quite important, in a slightly feverish and hyperactive world of liturgical revision, to be reminded that worship is not, of its essence, a matter of programmes or manifestoes. When we look at some of the prefatory material of the Book of Common Prayer, we find in the little essay 'Of Ceremonies' this very simple definition of what's going on in public worship: 'to declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us'. And in what I say this morning I'm going to be taking for granted two aspects of liturgy as understood in the Book of Common Prayer—that liturgy is, first of all, *giving God his due*; and secondly, *confirming for us where we stand*. And anything we might want to say about the consequences of worship in our Christian discipleship in general will arise out of these two things.

So worship declares what has happened because of Jesus Christ *in us*. Worship therefore declares the character of the relationships in which we stand—relationships to God, and to one another. It *declares* those relationships, it makes something manifest. Worship therefore isn't something we do in order to manipulate the Divine Will, or even to arouse and reinforce the human will. Worship sets forth what is true. And that vision of worship, of course, accords very well with what the Articles have to say about the nature of good works. In reaction to late-Medieval culture, in which the performance of ceremonial duties was a meritorious work, the Articles of Religion, and most particularly Article XII, speak in just these terms of a declaration, a showing forth. Good works don't change the mind of God, they do not cause our justification, or turn away God's judgement, but 'yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; inasmuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit'—which I think is not simply about how an individual may show that they are in a state of grace by the life they live, but how an individual may show what a state of grace *looks like*. And in what I say about some of the language and ideas of the Book of Common Prayer that is going to be quite near the heart of the argument.

Good works are not there to gain us merit in the sight of God and persuade God to change his mind. Good works, worship included, manifest what God has already given and what God is continuously doing. Therefore good works, liturgical and otherwise, are

works which represent our realising, our actualising, of the possibilities God has created for us. And that will immediately of course recall to your minds the resonant phrase at the end of the Order for Holy Communion: 'all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in'. Our good works manifest the 'benefits of Christ' in us—they aren't things we devise; they are simply our walking into and activating the possibilities prepared by God; divinely-ordained possibilities that we must now realise. If we fail in good works, it's not that we are failing to keep rules, or satisfy God in some way. We are failing to show what we are.

In that sense, in a broader theological context, we can say that we're failing in mission. Our manifesting of who we are, where we stand before God, our manifesting of the benefits of Christ in us becomes, in the theology of the Book of Common Prayer, very clearly, the act of God in us, therefore the manifestation of God in God's creation. What we say to God, what we enact in God's presence, and what we do in consequence of that act of worship, is all rolled up in that definition. We are allowing God to be God in God's world, so to speak.

Now that has some quite specific and clear tangible effects. What it means to manifest the life and act of God in our lives is not any generic kind of virtue, but very specifically a faithfulness to the quality of the new relationships which exist in the Body of Christ. And you'll recall that in the first Exhortation in the Order for Holy Communion, that is set out in very unambiguous terms indeed:

And if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours; then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them; being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other; and being likewise ready to forgive others that have offended you, as you would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand; for otherwise the receiving of the holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your damnation.

So the manifestation of where we stand, Christ's benefits in us, requires us to change our relationships with others—requires us to be reconciled, requires us to restore other men's goods 'wrongfully withholden,' to use again a phrase from the earliest version of the Exhortation in the Communion Service.¹ We're not simply being exhorted to be slightly nicer.

1. 1549 version



The Most Revd and Right Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge former Archbishop of Canterbury

We are to *walk* in these good works. We are to proceed, to advance, to grow in grace—not in any sense that we accumulate further resources of individualised holiness but that our manifestation of the benefits of Christ becomes clearer and clearer. And that is our ‘service’ to God—to allow God’s sovereign will and purpose and active grace to be visible in us.

The Book of Common Prayer, for all that we speak of its poetic quality, is in many ways a deeply prosaic book, a highly practical, focussed set of meditations on what it might be to be open to God’s grace. Now I say that because this language of ‘dwelling’ and ‘walking’ and ‘serving’ is in its way a kind of translation into sixteenth- and seventeenth-century basic English of an older tradition—or idiom—in Christianity, that of participating in the divine nature: that’s to say, so leading our human lives, with all our human faculties and intelligence and energy involved, that it’s the intelligence and energy of God himself that appears in what we do; that we are sharing, in some crucial sense, in the act of God (language which was to return and to be used and developed again more fully by some of the early seventeenth-century Anglican divines).

But, as I say, the Book of Common Prayer is designedly a prosaic enterprise—what does it all boil down to, this highfalutin language of participation? It boils down to the willingness, day by day, week by week, to allow the benefits of Christ to be visible in our lives. All that we do therefore needs to be tested against that

touchstone: as simple and as alarmingly difficult a matter as that. That is the spirituality of the Prayer Book, a spirituality deeply hostile to any kind of excessive interiority about our discipleship, which yet requires us to dig very deep into our confused and tangled hearts, so that the will of God may clearly be seen.

As I’ve already hinted there, the spirituality of the Prayer Book pivots around at least three concepts, three words, which echo in a diversity of ways through the Prayer Book—‘dwelling’, ‘walking’, ‘serving’. We’ll reflect on those words, and some of their implications, in turn.

To begin with ‘dwelling’—two places where the use of that word most readily springs to mind I suppose would be in the Prayer of Humble Access and in the Collect for Ascension Day. To begin with the first of these: ‘That we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us’ (as the Prayer of Humble Access concludes). We come to Holy Communion in order that Christ may be at home in us, and we in him—which is deeply Johannine, and slightly uncharacteristic in a way of the language of the Prayer Book, which, for

all its wonderfully resourceful and imaginative use of the farewell discourses over the Easter period, rather seldom in its directly liturgical language refers to this mutual indwelling. But there, at a crucial moment in the service of Holy Communion, comes this affirmation of the significance of mutual indwelling. Christ has elected to make his home in us and we are to be at home in him.

And, with what is again a very slightly unusual spurt of bright colour, the Collect for Ascension day asks that ‘we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell’—which I take to refer not simply to our aspirations for *post-mortem* dwelling in heaven, but for the dwelling here and now, in heart and mind, where Christ is—echoing of course the words of the fourth gospel, Christ’s promise that where he is his servants will be also (John 12.26).

So, we are *now*, as sharers of the common life of the Church, dwelling where Christ, on our behalf, has gone. And if we look in the Articles, Article IV this time, we’re told that Christ has gone into heaven, taking our entire humanity with him—he rose from the dead with all that belongs to our humanity and took

it into heaven. And this dramatic evocation of how our humanity is raised, glorified and made to dwell in the heavenly places, though seldom expressed with that kind of explicitness in the Book of Common Prayer, reflects a very deep and continuing theme in the theology of the Church of England from the

The Book of Common Prayer, for all that we speak of its poetic quality, is in many ways a deeply prosaic book, a highly practical, focussed set of meditations on what it might be to be open to God’s grace.

mid-sixteenth century onwards, reflected not least in the characteristic Anglican interest in the heavenly priesthood of Christ, but here underlined simply as a point which is material to every baptised believer

So, our spiritual life is, first and foremost, about dwelling, about discovering where we stand so that, as I mentioned earlier, our public worship is a confirmation of where we stand—where we stand in relation to Christ, where we stand in Christ in relation to God the Father, and of course where we stand in relation to other members of the Christian society (back to the language of the first Exhortation, once again). Those relations—with Jesus Christ, with the Father of Jesus Christ and with one another—are given, already real, they are the benefits of Christ, manifest in us. And our task is not to *create* them out of nothing but to let them be, let them come alive and be visible in us

And so it’s appropriate that, again and again, our prayer turns into a prayer for discernment, asking for the liberty and clarity to see what we are, what God has opened for us, what God has made possible for us, and what we are now to make concrete. Several

collects, familiar to all of you, return to this need for discernment, asking for things to be made clear for us

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Epiphany 1)

And, perhaps a little surprisingly, the Easter Collect itself:

Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: we humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .

And I needn't, I think, underline the fact that the collect for Whit Sunday is also about 'right judgement' and discernment—'evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour'—because we have been given what we asked for yet again, and that is true discernment, a right judgement, a sense of where we stand, and therefore of what lies open before us.

We are, in good patristic and medieval style, assimilated to Christ in this—to do what God has prepared for us to walk in, to reveal where we dwell, is indeed one form of witness to the manifestation of Jesus Christ. We turn again to the collects, this time the collect for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany:

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end.

We are to be *like* Christ, eventually, and our likeness begins now, in our indwelling Christ and Christ indwelling us. And that indwelling requires us constantly to renew the prayer for discernment—let it be clear to us who we are, where we stand and what we are to do.

And so, in our relationship with Christ we are not simply imitators of a distant exemplar, we are animated embodiments of Christ's glorious liberty. The collect for Palm Sunday, asking that 'we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection'—that we are to be

'partakers of his resurrection' is clearly, again, to do with dwelling and indwelling

The whole of that theology is summed up in the wonderfully rich and resourceful Collect for the Sunday after Christmas Day—'Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit'.

All that, then, is what I understand by 'dwelling'—'that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us', that we may 'continually dwell' where Christ is, and that therefore we share Christ's relation to the Father, we live in and through Christ's relation with all the members of Christ's body. And we need from God, specifically from God the Holy Spirit, that gift of right and keen judgement which allows us to know who we are and where we are.

'Dwelling', alone, sounds static, but as soon as it's understood in something of the sense I've just outlined, we see that in fact it is a moving process, hence the connection with 'walking'. That we 'walk' in God's ways is an idiom which comes back in quite a number of contexts:

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways . . .

invites us to make our confession; and in the post-Communion prayer, as we've already noted, God has prepared 'good works for us to walk in'. The language of walking is used, once again, in the Catechism and in the Baptism liturgy, and I want us particularly to focus on the end of The Baptism of Such as Are of Riper Years:

And as for you, who have now by Baptism put on Christ, it is your part and duty also, being made the children of God and of the light by faith in Jesus Christ, to walk answerably to your Christian calling, and as becometh the children of light;

Dwelling and walking belong together: we journey unceasingly into what God has invited us to, and use our minds to discern, to judge, to discover, where we walk. We need God's grace to love what is commanded (Trinity 14), and we need the grace and the act of God to 'prevent and follow us' in that (Trinity 17). Once again, issues around discernment come into focus, and issues around walking, in the Easter Collect which I've already referred to, and also Trinity 9:

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are rightful; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will;

To 'think' and to 'do', because if the Book of Common Prayer is a prosaic book, it's also a thoughtful book, a book which assumes that we are essentially

responsible, reflective beings. It is most emphatically a book for adult Christians. It assumes a lot, which is really quite a good thing for a Christian prayer book. It doesn't answer every question. My point is simply that 'walking', which recurs in so many different contexts in the Prayer Book, expresses that active and developing manifestation of where we dwell. And in so walking before God, walking in the works he has prepared for us, living out, activating, the possibilities he has made for us—in that way, and only in that way can we be said to *serve* God. Released from our sins, we do indeed become God's servants; not that we supply anything God needs by our effort, but simply that the effect of our release from sin and selfishness becomes service.

So in the formulae of absolution, in the second of the Good Friday collects, and in many other contexts, our released life becomes a service to God, in the sense that we are doing God's will, and actualising God's purpose. We are making God's preventing work of grace, and God's providence, clear in what we do—to serve him all the days of our life by that grace; not in the sense that we are necessary instruments of God's purpose—quite the contrary, God's purpose has already been formed and realised quite independently of us. But now we are instruments and signs of that purpose in the world, and that's our service—making plain the benefits of Christ in us, where we stand before God and in relation to one another. God's work, God's providence, once and for all clear in the world.

'Dwelling', 'walking' and 'serving': three words which are pervasive, as we've seen, in a number of different contexts in the Book of Common Prayer and which are interwoven closely with one another in that sense of manifesting who and what we are by grace. And so the worship of the Book of Common Prayer is emphatically an act of proclamation, and the life which arises from it is, again, an act of proclamation—in that sense, of course, therefore, an act of mission. But it is mission in a very Augustinian or even Calvinist sense; and there's no point in ignoring the theological hinterland of this. Mission, in this context, is not a human enterprise, designed to share a few interesting religious ideas. Mission is God's action of showing grace, declaring judgement, inviting sinners to repentance. That's what our worship does. There's no exhortation here to go out and convert anybody. The only references to conversion come in that ever so slightly ungracious section in the 1662 Preface where we're told that an order for adult baptism has been added to the earlier text because unfortunately there is now a great increase in the number of Anabaptists around, and some of them

may see sense and be baptised—oh, and also it may serve 'for the baptising of Natives in our plantations'. It's *slightly* ungracious—there's not very much there on which to ground a twenty-first century theology of mission, you might say. Yet what I've been arguing is that within the heart of the Book of Common Prayer there is indeed a theology which we might call appropriately 'missional', in that rather austere Reformed sense of allowing sanctified lives to speak of God, a plain obligation to inhabit the place into which we have been brought by Christ, to dwell, to *dwell*, where Christ is, partaking *now* in the resurrection, dwelling in the heavenly places, sharing Christ's intimacy with the Father, and, by so doing, articulately and explicitly declaring to the world what are the benefits of Christ.

Any theology which has its roots, in one way or another, in the idea of Christendom, is going to be a theology very different from one that might be developed for a post-Christendom environment. We, living in such a post-Christendom environment, will always be tempted to look to a text like the Book of Common Prayer for some kinds of orientation and exhortation about going out and making a difference. That's not where the Prayer Book begins. If we're

going to understand how the language of worship in the Prayer Book works it is, as I've argued, by seeing with greater clarity what mission, then and now, is in its essentials, which is *God being God in the world*. Our worship is at least as significant as anything else we

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may do in manifesting God, making manifest what it is to live the resurrection, to be partakers of Christ's resurrection.

To reflect in this way on the language of 'preventing', the language of going where God has gone, in the Book of Common Prayer does allow us to put some significant and, I would argue, constructive questions to some of our contemporary approaches to mission and to worship. And perhaps the most important of these is the perspective which never allows us simply to instrumentalise worship. The act of public worship, the act of liturgy, is not there in order to make a point, win an argument, or persuade an outsider. And yet, when it is performed with the integrity that the book assumes, so that it really is a manifestation of where we dwell, its effect will be to move beyond our assumed borders to speak to strangers. To functionalise worship, to say that we must constantly so adjust our worship as to allow it to make points and win arguments, is to miss something profound and necessary about our act of worship—that two-fold function with which I began: giving God what is God's due, and confirming to us where we stand.

Worship first and foremost must be what it is, and must do what it does; it must honour God, and it must affirm who we are in Christ, must affirm our dwelling, our walking, our serving. And to show the world where we truly dwell, and who dwells in us, is where mission begins. The God who 'prevents' us by grace, who goes before us, is a God who assures us that the task of mission is not a human project which might succeed or fail, but the human share in the divine act, far beyond our own individual or corporate resource.

In that sense, of course, the Book of Common Prayer belongs entirely, firmly and explicitly within a Reformed Christian perspective, but at the same time is entirely in accord with what a great many medieval, West and East, said on the nature of worship. It's a rather eccentrically post-Enlightenment development that we should suddenly think that worship needs to win arguments or make points. I'd venture to guess that I'm not the only person in this room who has sat or knelt through various events of worship that seemed very much designed to win arguments or make points.

The challenge then put before us is how our Christian worship may return to that centre of honouring God, and confirming who we are; how worship can express more and more effectively and powerfully our mutual indwelling, prayed for in the Prayer of Humble Access. Examples could be multiplied in texts from the Prayer Book, and I've given you this morning simply what I hope is a representative selection of the kinds of words and phrases which bring us back to those fundamental concepts of our worship.

But I believe that perhaps the most important thing which this says to us is to do with themes touched on earlier this morning. It is easy for worship in the modern Church to become hectic and worried—hectic, in the sense that it seems constantly to want to fill in gaps and silences, and to do all the work that could possibly be done in interpreting. It's the kind of worship where the worship leader may constantly want to interrupt the flow of the liturgy to explain what is happening. And that is why I say that it is not only hectic, but worried. 'Is this making sense?' becomes a troubling question at the back of the mind of the person leading worship. 'Is this making sense? Are we winning the arguments? Are we getting our points across?' And that can lead to more and more feverish elaboration of what we want to say. Like others, I admire greatly some of the forms of modern liturgy that have developed in the last ten or fifteen years. And yet, again along with others, I sense an apologetic (and I mean that in the colloquial sense), an apologetic wordiness, a worrying about whether we have yet said enough. 'Have we made

it clear enough? Will all those who haven't followed please put their hands up?'

One of the things I had to do quite often in a former job of mine was to ordain bishops, and while the order for episcopal ordination in *Common Worship* has many virtues, one of the virtues it does not possess is economy. I would find myself saying for the third or fourth time what bishops are supposed to be and to do. And I felt not that this was a joyful and celebratory overflow of theological understanding, but an anxiety about whether we had made it clear enough. 'Just in case, let me tell you yet again what the office and work of a bishop is. It's one example in which, for me, this feature of contemporary liturgy came home; I dare say most of us could come up with others. I sense too in some of the baptism rites that anxiety about whether we have yet made it clear enough.'

To turn from that to the Book of Common Prayer is to turn to an idiom of worship where that kind of worry does not feature very much—'If this is not clear, come back next Sunday. If this is not clear: Walk on! Walk on!'; because a manifestation of where you

dwell in Christ is a lifetime's work, and therefore not something to be explained in any one event of worship, however charged, however rich. And it is in that *continual* affirmation of where we dwell, that the true educative and heart-enlarging role of liturgy finally comes in.

How we discover that—in the midst of a religious and indeed a secular culture often so preoccupied with making things plain, and being sure we've got the message across—I don't entirely know. But I'm very glad that we have as part of our liturgical repertory in the Church of England a book which treats so much of that anxiety with disdain, and which draws us back inexorably to those two fundamentals—of honouring God as God should be honoured, and articulating where indeed we are in relation to God. And which also takes us back, inexorably, gently and firmly, to the Johannine vision of a redeemed and restored humanity, indwelt by Christ and dwelling with him in the heavenly places; and because of that, doing 'all such good works as [he] has prepared for us to walk in'.

(The Most Revd and Right Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth is Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and was formerly Archbishop of Canterbury. His most recent book is *The Tragic Imagination*, published by Oxford University Press. This article is an edited transcript of an address to the Prayer Book Society Conference 2016. We are grateful to the Prayer Book Society of England for the permission to reprint this article.)

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Book Review

The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation

By Rod Dreher, Sentinel Press, New York, NY, 2017

Rod Dreher, conservative social commentator and senior editor of the *The American Conservative*, has written a book entitled *The Benedict Option*. It is about how lay men and women can live a life of community, prayer, and work, after the model of the Rule of St. Benedict, the 6th century founder of Western monasticism. The book is partly biographical, and partly sociological. A few years ago Dreher moved his family back to his hometown in Louisiana after being deeply impressed by the friends and family who supported his sister when she was dying of cancer. This experience inspired him to write *The Little Way of Ruthie Leming*, about the virtue of living in a small community. This led him to research Christian communities, communities made up of dedicated lay and religious members. Dreher suggests that these communities have come into being because of dissatisfaction with the “spiritual and emotional costs of the gyrovague’s liberty” (what most people take to be liberty and freedom today—a rootless, wandering, itinerant liberty without anything but passing desire at the center). They are a means by which to order one’s life to what is unchanging.

The book has received a huge amount of press and commentary, much of which is critical of the idea that Dreher purportedly advances, which is that serious Christians have no option but to opt out of contemporary society with its market capitalism and cosmopolitanism, with its transsexualism and constant entertainment. Some say this is not a plan for changing the culture, but rather a plan for defeat. Perhaps this is an unfair critique because it seems that Dreher’s project is to catalog a growing dissatisfaction with and alienation from public life. Many Christians recognize that to some degree they are already in retreat, having lost the battle on the political front. One sees in many places attempts to set up alternative institutions, educational and social, to the ones which have been overtaken by people whose agenda is un-Christian, and whose methods are undemocratic. Given that situation, *The Benedict Option* is affirming a decision already made by some Christians, to adopt a life in which acquisitiveness is replaced by kindness, e-communities are replaced by neighborhoods, and entertainment is replaced by worship of God. Perhaps this book should be read as a discussion of the spiritual rebirth which is already at

work in society, rather than a manifesto for political change. Those who don’t like it clearly don’t like the Christians who have found this necessary, but such as it is, Dreher’s audience are those people already seeking shelter from the excesses of progressivism or secularism.

Technological society is spiritually empty and it is draining to keep up with its oppressive demands and follow the welter of information transmitted via internet, facebook, twitter, etc. Opting out of that has a lot of appeal, even for a liberal journalist such as Andrew Sullivan who apparently has given up blogging. A short while ago I met a salesman working in midtown Manhattan, someone who will probably never read Rod Dreher, but who has structured his life around community. He works in Manhattan three days a week, then returns home to his family, who are living in his hometown in Pennsylvania, where he has another job. He does this in order to bring up his children in a small town and care for aging parents. Speaking as a social scientist, I would say that *The Benedict Option* has identified a deep discomfort with modernity in contemporary America, while intentionally speaking of Christian discomfort with that society.

It is interesting to read about some of the newly-founded Christian communities such as the Benedictine monastery in Norcia, Italy, the birthplace of St Benedict, and Tipi Loschi, a “vigorously orthodox, joyfully countercultural Catholic community in Italy.” Such communities, monastic and lay, are springing up all over the western world. Their members are not necessarily seeking to effect political change, but have chosen to live according to a different standard, acknowledging that the highest end of human life is to live for God. This can, of course, have some effect in the long run. Monasticism changed the shape of European culture over the first millennium of its existence. So *The Benedict Option* warns readers not to give their lives over to consumerism and materialism, as if it were the only option, nor to give their lives over to the same old vices which beset Christians in every age. One can see the book as simply a new iteration of an age-old Christian teaching—living the life of the faith requires one take care as to which aspects of the culture one adopts.

These communities are an escape from the omnipresence of a popular culture mediated through the

means of technology, and which saps one's time and energy, fills the brain, and draws one away from the prayer and worship which ought to be at the center of Christian life. In his opening chapter Dreher notes that one effect of the technological, entertainment culture, young self-identified Christians are ignorant of the faith even after many years attending a church. Many adhere to moral therapeutic deism instead of Christianity. Dreher argues that not only families are at fault, but also schools, and the omnipresent technology of our culture. It is important for Christian parents to make a conscious and careful study of the faith themselves; they must take care in choosing a church, they must model the faith in their own lives, and that may involve homeschooling or choosing to enroll their children in an independent Christian school. This is a way of building a new community, and countering the watered down, feel-good spirituality which is, as he says, 'colonizing' many American churches.

Hence the need to revive a life of prayer. Certain aspects of that Benedict's Rule are useful today—its combination of work and prayer, fasting and penance and rejoicing, according to the cycle of the Christian year. One should note that the cycle of prayer and worship, the 'hours' observed in a Benedictine monastery were incorporated and simplified in the cycle of prayer and worship which lies at the heart of the daily offices and weekly calendar of feasts and fasts in Cranmer's prayer book. The prayer book, like the Rule, gives discipline to prayer—it directs Christians to change themselves through penance, and prayer.

The failure of churches to teach theology and history and liturgy is mentioned as a reason for why the general culture is no longer Christian—of course this failure describes the weakness of Anglicanism in North America—but it is true across the board. At one point he relates a conversation with someone who left Evangelicalism for Eastern Orthodoxy because the Evangelical churches did not care about the writings of the Church Fathers; it was as if there was nothing but contemporary Christianity on offer in churches. Speaking from my own experience, this lack is not unique to Evangelicalism, modernism is ubiquitous in Mainline and Roman Catholic churches. Dreher is right to note that the near ignorance of historical theology is part of the reason why the old Protestant churches are failing today and the message of Roman Catholicism is confused and inconsistent.

About liturgy Dreher states: "There is a connection between neglecting to take liturgy seriously, or giving up liturgy altogether, and abandoning Christian orthodoxy." Liturgy affects us both by what it conveys and in the way it conveys it, he states. Dreher is right to note that it is important to revive the pattern and rhythm of Christian life in daily life. Yet, Cranmer did not write the Book of Common Prayer to build community. The idea that liturgy should be

used to build community would only occur to someone today. For Cranmer community was a given in the English polity, the challenge before him was ensuring that authorized worship would encourage true faith and true religion. Everyone should be given the opportunity to know scripture. It was to guide souls Godward, free them from the pull of the world. When the Church of England attempted to make all England worship with a single book, to make England a Christian state, unified in mind and deed, worshipping God together, it failed. That is a salutary lesson; in a nation as large as the United Kingdom this plan was too ambitious.

Yet on a smaller scale, uniformity of ordered worship is a necessary a feature of a Christian community. So *The Benedict Option* is really about being a Christian in a fallen world, learning how to dwell with Christ, and to allow Christ to dwell in them. It would seem that the daily worship and doctrinal instruction found in the Book of Common Prayer is tailor-made for the kind of Christian community which he describes. Perhaps there are communities where traditional prayer book worship forms the basis of their worship. It would be good to know of their existence.

As reported in the last issue of *Anglican Way*, the Prayer Book Society of America has sought opportunity for many years to promote the cause of Common Prayer amongst our Anglican brethren in the African churches and has had particular success in preaching and teaching missions in the Anglican Church of Tanzania. We will have another report on that mission in the next issue.

Please give generously to the Prayer Book Society in her ongoing mission to Africa and for future conferences, which we hope will be as successful as the one this year.

For Every Syllable a Note

CRANMER AND MUSICAL UPHEAVAL IN THE ENGLISH REFORMATION



Scott Dettra,
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By Scott Dettra

Throughout most the fifteenth century, English composers were isolated from their Continental contemporaries, a situation that allowed English sacred music to develop relatively free of outside influence. This independence resulted in a particularly florid style of polyphony, which reached its height around the turn of the sixteenth century. Although most collections of this music were destroyed during the Reformation, the Eton Choirbook survived, and it offers us the finest examples of English sacred music from this time. In it is preserved the music of such composers as John Browne (1453–c. 1500), Richard Davy (c. 1465–1507), and Robert Fayrfax (1464–1521). Consisting primarily of Latin motets and Magnificat settings, the music in the Eton Choirbook gives us a glimpse of what Catholic worship sounded like in England, not only at Eton, but also at other institutions, such as the Chapel Royal, with choirs capable of singing this ornate music. The music is rich with soaring lines and long *melismas* (the singing of one syllable over many notes), if not always exhibiting a close relationship to the meaning of the text. Not for the fainthearted, many of these pieces are upward of 15 minutes in length. This English style of polyphony is more elaborate and complicated than anything written on the Continent.

Fast-forward to the next generation of English composers, and we begin to encounter names that are more familiar to our modern ears: John Taverner (1495–1545), Christopher Tye (c. 1505–c. 1572), Thomas Tallis (c. 1505–1585), John Sheppard (c. 1515–1559), and later on, William Byrd (c. 1540–1623). These composers took the best of the earlier English style, incorporated some compositional techniques from the Continent, and produced a refined style that was more disciplined, structured, and wedded to the meaning of the text. This was the golden age of English polyphony, and we enjoy its fruits today in services, concerts, and recordings.

Just as English composers were sharpening their polyphonic skills in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Reformation was gathering steam, and the liturgical trends were toward simplicity and the vernacular. Complex Latin rites began to lose favor, and the Bible began to appear in English translation in the 1520s. The publication of the Great Bible in 1539 brought with it Miles Coverdale's lasting translation of the Psalms—a source of inspiration for Anglican composers to this day. But these were relatively

minor events in terms of their impact on English sacred music.

Major reform came to England in the late 1540s, forcing composers to make stylistic changes. The first hint of things to come was the publication of Archbishop Cranmer's *Exhortation and Litany* in 1544. Here, for the first time, was an authorized vernacular service begging to be set to music. In a letter to Henry VIII concerning the Litany, Cranmer wrote, "but in mine opinion, the song that shall be made thereunto would not be full of notes but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note." *One note per syllable*: music now existed to serve the text, that it might be understood as clearly as possible. This was the signal that the Church was no longer interested in the pre-Reformation compositional style, with its ornate polyphony, long *melismas*, and extended musical settings. Sacred music needed to become much simpler to suit the reformers' wishes. Cranmer was not the only reformer with such musical ideas, of course, but one can argue that the change had a greater impact in England than elsewhere, in part because English music, little influenced by that of the Continent, had developed such an extremely florid style before the Reformation began.

The death of Henry VIII and the accession of Edward VI in 1547 led to rapid reform, including the introduction of more vernacular services and the publication of the first *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549. Music was now needed for entirely new English services. Not only was all the existing music in the wrong style, it was in the wrong language! The brakes were put on briefly during the reign of Mary I (1553–1558) with the restoration of Roman Catholicism, during which time composers were allowed to revert to their pre-Reformation style, but the new Anglican music was back on track with the accession of Elizabeth I and the return of the Prayer Book in 1559.

How did composers react to these reforms and the much simpler music they required? How did they deal with these more-or-less overnight (in terms of music history, anyway) changes and the restrictions put on their creative freedom? The answers to these questions varied by individual composer, of course, but they can reasonably be grouped into three basic categories: the Protestant converts, the pragmatists, and the staunch Catholics.

First, there are the converts, of which John Merbecke (c. 1505–1585) is perhaps the best example. Merbecke is primarily remembered for his *Booke of Common Praier Noted*, published in 1550, in which he offered the first musical settings of the English

services in the then-new 1549 Prayer Book. This makes him the prototypical Anglican composer, in a way. This music, mostly adapted from Sarum (Salisbury use) chant, conforms fairly strictly to Cranmer's ideal of one note per syllable—Merbecke was fully on board with the musical wishes of the reformers. Many of these settings are well known to us today, particularly the Communion Service.

But before he set about setting Cranmer's Prayer Book in plain style, Merbecke wrote elaborate polyphony. His *Missa per arma justitiae* and the motets *Ave Dei patris filia* and *Domine Jesu Christe* are firmly rooted in the earlier style of the Eton Choirbook composers and their successors, proving his talents as a first-rate composer of the early Tudor period.

Why would such an accomplished composer set about writing such simple music as found in the *Booke of Common Praier Noted* at the height of his career? Maybe simply to keep his job (and his head), but in Merbecke's case, it was primarily because his personal sympathies were with the Reformation, a fact proven by two events. First, he is known to have compiled a concordance of the English Bible. Second, he was arrested in 1543 for heresy, accused of authoring a document that criticized the Latin Mass. Clearly, he was in the reformers' camp, not just musically, but theologically as well. Sentenced to death at the stake, he was granted a royal pardon and allowed to live. It may have been he (or perhaps Tallis) who wrote the first musical setting of Cranmer's English Litany the following year. This evidence shows that, even though Merbecke was a master composer in the elaborate pre-Reformation style, his personal beliefs led him to embrace the simpler Protestant style promulgated by Cranmer. He may even have participated in the destruction of his own Catholic music, so committed was he to the Reformation and its ideals.

The second category is the pragmatists, who may have remained Catholic at heart, but who worked in the new Anglican style to great effect. Thomas Tallis is the poster child of this group. A direct contemporary of Merbecke, Tallis established his reputation as a first-rate composer in the pre-Reformation style with extended votive antiphons such as the 23-minute *Salve intemerata*, probably written in the 1520s.

In 1543, Tallis became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. Now at court—where he remained for the rest of his life and served four sovereigns (Henry, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth)—Tallis had a front-row seat to the many political and religious changes that were the growing pains of the English Reformation. Remarkably, he survived it all, easily shifting his compositional style back and forth from the older Catholic one to the new Anglican one as doctrine changed with each new sovereign. We have no definitive evidence that Tallis privately remained a Catholic throughout his life, but it seems probable. More importantly, he avoided controversy and stayed active by exhibiting a flexibility that allowed him to change his style with the prevailing religious winds.

Tallis was an early adopter of the simpler Anglican style, and he quickly set the bar for Anglican composers with such well-known anthems as *If ye love me* and *Hear the voice and prayer*, both of which date from the Edwardian period. Here we find a master at work. Seemingly not bothered at all by the strictures of the new style, these anthems are masterpieces that follow Cranmer's one-note-per-syllable rule. Tallis shows us that real beauty can be achieved within the limits of the reformed style.

When Mary came to power and reverted the Church to Catholicism, Tallis deftly changed his style once again, composing large-form Latin masses and antiphons. Works from this period include the so-called Christmas Mass, *Missa Puer natus est nobis*, probably composed in 1554, and the antiphon *Gaude gloriosa Dei mater*, both extended, mature works that show the master at his pre-Reformation best.

Undaunted by the return of Protestantism under Elizabeth, Tallis returned to the Anglican idiom, notably with nine tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter of 1567. Among them are the eighth tune, known to us today as the hymn tune *Tallis' Canon* (often paired with the text "All praise to thee, my God, this night"), and the third tune, which Vaughan Williams took as the theme of his well-known orchestral work *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*. Once again, Tallis heeded the call of the times by composing beautiful and lasting music, no matter the required style.

It is important to note that court composers continued to set Latin texts throughout the sixteenth century (Elizabethan Protestantism turned out not to be as austere as that of her half-brother Edward), and many of Tallis's well-known Latin works date from Elizabeth's reign, including both sets of Lamentations and the 40-voice motet *Spem in alium*. Indeed, the Prayer Book itself was retranslated into Latin for use in the Chapel Royal, the chapels of Oxford, Cambridge, and Eton, and other places where the congregation could be expected to understand the language. It may have been for these rites that Tallis composed his Latin settings of the Magnificat and *Nunc dimittis*, once again showing his endless flexibility, equally at home in either the Catholic or Anglican style, in spite of his own religious convictions.

The third group is made up of composers who held their Catholic faith so strongly that they seem to have rejected the Reformation and quit composing altogether. Nicholas Ludford (c. 1490–1557) is a good example. An admirer of Fayrfax, Ludford's compositional style is similar, full of rich textures and ornate polyphony. Ludford was prolific, composing at least seventeen Mass settings, including a complete cycle of seven Lady Masses (one for each day of the week), which were likely a gift to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. In addition to Masses, Ludford composed Magnificats and antiphons. He was a committed Catholic composer, to be sure.

However, there is no record of any composition of his after the mid-1530s. He remained an active

parishioner at St. Margaret's, Westminster throughout his adult life, even serving as Warden from 1552 to 1554. Why would this talented composer and active churchman simply quit composing in his mid-to-late forties? Health was apparently not an issue (he lived another twenty-plus years), so it seems he could not bring himself to write music for the reformed Church, possibly rejecting the task on stylistic grounds, due to a deeply held Catholic faith. Here we have the anti-Merbecke: similar in style before the Reformation, but unwilling to accept the task required of Anglican composers once it got underway. As a result, Ludford is little known today.

Music was not a primary concern of the reformers. They were, without doubt, more concerned with

things theological. However, the musical ramifications of the Reformation were huge, particularly in England, where the development of florid polyphony had progressed farther than it had on the Continent. Even though the Eton Choirbook style was being reigned in and refined by composers like Taverner and Tallis in the early sixteenth century, nothing had the jarring impact on the development of English sacred music like the reforms of the 1540s and 1550s. In a short period of time, musical gears were shifted, altering the course of English music as the nascent Church of England took its first steps.

Scott Dettra's biography can be found at <https://www.scottdettra.com/biography>

Plainsong Psalms for the Parish

MAKING A CASE FOR CONGREGATIONAL PSALMODY

By Fr. Alexander Pryor, Nashotah House



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The renewed interest in the choral offices as a means of introducing people to the worship of the Church—evidenced by reports ranging from newspaper articles, blog posts, and now even focused research¹—is both an exciting proposition and perhaps a daunting challenge for those congregations lacking the musical resources of a large cathedral or Oxford college chapel. Perhaps most daunting for the parish priest and musician are the psalms, the very heart of the daily duty, or *officium* (from where we get the term “daily office”), of Morning and Evening Prayer; ancient texts intended to be sung by the people of God.

A Romanticized Ideal

There are few images more iconic of Prayer Book worship than that of a surpliced choir standing on opposite sides of the aisle, chanting the Psalms at Evensong: the phrases of the Coverdale Psalter floating through the air over the harmonies suspended on the organ, sung to the Anglican chants handed down through the centuries. It is easy to imagine that, when sitting in a historic building, surrounded by sacred sound and bathed in the soft light of stained glass, this liturgy and its music had been handed down unchanged through the centuries.

As happy as that thought may be, the romantic image quickly disappears when tempered by fact.

1. “Looking for Britain’s future leaders? Try Evensong,” *The Guardian* (1 March 2016); blog posts by Frs. Clint Wilson (22 August 2016) and Paul Wheatley (4 October 2016) on *The Covenant Blog* of the Living Church Foundation; “One in six young people are Christian as visits to church buildings inspire them to convert,” *The Telegraph* (17 June 2017).

The first appearance of a surpliced *parish* choir was in Leeds, UK in 1818, and it caused such contention that the choir was at least twice disbanded over the following two decades as parishioners refused to pay their church rates. The issue was finally settled in 1841. This most “traditional” parochial service was a product of the Oxford Movement, and was not common in American parishes until the turn of the twentieth century. Remembering that the return to weekly communion has been a relatively recent development (although it is appropriate to Cranmer’s plans), and that weekly Morning Prayer, perhaps the Ante-Communion, and Evening Prayer with sermon was the normative Sunday pattern in Anglican parishes for centuries, contemporary clergy and laity must be diligent to present an informed and accurate picture of these services if we are to be true to our inheritance, all the while trying to capitalize on renewed interest in the missional potential of choral offices.

Metrical Psalms: The Music of the Masses

As rich as the repertoire of Anglican Chant and Plainsong has become—and has been, in the unique contexts of cathedrals and college chapels—this musical style is a recent addition in the diet of ordinary Anglican parishes. From the eighteenth century, congregations on both sides of the Atlantic, both urban and rural, adopted *metrical psalms* as the basis of their musical tradition. These are paraphrases—often loose paraphrases—of the psalms. They are written in rhyming couplets set to standard poetic and musical meters. The “common meter” consisted of a pair of lines, with eight syllables in the first line and six in the second (86.86); authors of psalm paraphrases and hymn-writers adopted a number of different meters for their texts, which can

Psalm 51^a

<i>1928 Book of Common Prayer</i>	<i>Sternhold and Hopkins edition of 1562 (Common Meter)^b</i>	<i>1979 Book of Common Prayer</i>
HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; * according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.	1 Have mercy on me, Lord, after / thy great abounding grace. / After thy mercies multitude / do thou my sin set free.	1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; * in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
2 Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, * and cleanse me from my sin.	2 Yea, wash me clean from my offence / and my iniquity; / For I do own my faults, and still / my sin is in my eye.	2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness * and cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I acknowledge my faults, * and my sin is ever before me.	3 Against thee, thee alone, I have / offended in this case, / And evil have I done before / the presence of thy face.	3 For I know my transgressions, * and my sin is ever before me.
4 Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; * that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou shalt judge.	4 That in the things that thou hast done / upright thou-may'st appear, / And when thou judgest, all may see / that thou art very clear.	4 Against you only have I sinned * and done what is evil in your sight.
5 Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, * and in sin hath my mother conceived me.	5 In wickedness I form-ed was, / when I began to be; / My mother at the very first / in sin' conceived me:	5 And so you are justified when you speak * and upright in your judgment.
		6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, * a sinner from my mother's womb.

a. The discrepancies in verse numbering is original. The 1979 Psalter breaks "quatrains" in the Hebrew poetry into two verses (BCP, p. 583), such that the verse numbering is different than the Coverdale Psalter historically used in the Book of Common Prayer. Metrical psalters combined verses freely to suit the exegetical emphases of the authors. In this example, verses 2 and 3 of the prose versions are combined in the metrical version, while the 27 words of verse 4 in Coverdale's translation become 45 over two verses in Sternhold & Hopkins.

b. This text, like all Common Meter texts, can be sung to any Common Meter tune. For reference, there are 54 Common Meter tunes in *The Hymnal 1982*. For instance, this psalm text can be sung to ST. ANNE, the tune commonly used for "O God, our help in ages past".

still be found in *The Hymnal 1940* and *The Hymnal 1982*—printed below the text for quick reference. This metrical system meant that a congregation could learn a small number of tunes, as few as 8 or 10, and use those tunes each week to sing whichever psalm or hymn texts were chosen.

Metrical psalmody is a product of the Reformation, reflecting the theology of Jean Calvin and the idea that music should contain nothing more than the plain words of scripture; this was caused by an objection to the many pious, but theologically unsound, hymns and devotional songs of the late middle ages. The irony, of course, is that the Church of the pre-Reformation era already had a way to sing using the plain words of scripture: plainsong chant. But, desiring something both more congregationally-minded and less Roman Catholic, the plain words of the psalms were re-written to fit the desired metrical pattern. The first complete English version is that of Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins published in 1562, and it went through more than 600 printings, the last occurring in 1828. The result, while popular and easily sung once a small number of tunes were learned by even a small congregation, is perhaps jarring to the modern ear, particularly for those accustomed to either the Coverdale psalter of the 1928 BCP or the Coverdale-based psalter of the 1979 BCP (see table above).

These metrical psalms, together with pious hymns adopted from other protestant churches, formed the musical backbone of Anglican worship in the United States. In the 1789 American Book of Common Prayer, the entire metrical psalter of Nahum Tate and

Nicholas Brady, first published in 1696, was included in printed editions. For over a century, during which the principal service of worship on Sunday was Morning Prayer or Ante-Communion, the psalms in the body of the liturgy were likely to be shortened "selections," spoken by the minister and the people.² The Convention of 1832 augmented the metrical psalter with a selection of 207 hymns

set forth, and allowed to be sung in all congregations of the said Church, before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, and also before and after Sermons, at the discretion of the Minister. And it shall be the duty of every Minister of any church, either by standing directions, or from time to time, to appoint the portions of the Psalms which are to be sung.³

These loosely paraphrased psalms were likely sung to one of a dozen or so hymn tunes known by the parish musicians, or, in some cases, were played on "barrel organs," similar to a player piano, where metrical

2. The 1789 BCP provides "Selections of Psalms to be used instead of the psalms for the day, at the discretion of the minister." While long by modern standards, they are generally much shorter than the Psalms appointed for the day in the 30 day rotation inherited from the English practice. The 1928 BCP introduces *proper* psalms appointed for each Sunday morning and evening of the church year, though these remain at the discretion of the minister.

3. *The Journal of the General Convention, 1832*, quoted in *Psalms in Meter selected from the Psalms of David* (Philadelphia: Protestant Episcopal Female Prayer-Book Society, 1844), p. 2.

hymn tunes were played by simply turning a crank. Even in large centers like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, which had established singing schools and had imported organs from Europe in the 1700s, the focus was on singing anthems and elaborate settings of metrical psalms before and after services and sermons, as well as producing the oratorios of Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the General Convention both recognized and seemingly supported the use of paraphrases rather than the prose text of psalms in worship. Following the precedent set in England in 1819 which finally removed the prohibition of hymns and metrical psalmody in Church of England worship, the Convention of 1832 resolved that, where the rubrics of the BCP require the singing of a particular psalm, specifically referring to Psalm 26 in the liturgy for the consecration of a church, the equivalent verses from the metrical version is also authorized.⁴

The Re-Discovery of Plainsong

The Oxford Movement, which is traditionally dated to 1833, reinvigorated the Anglican choral tradition. The Tractarians voiced their opposition to the cursory and perfunctory exercise of religion and the “national apostasy” at the same time as the public school movement drew attention to the need to improve access to education, and this education came to include the education of child choristers in church-run schools. This coincided with Lowell Mason’s groundbreaking work introducing music education in American public schools, so that the average student could be taught to read music and sing in four-part harmony. The Tractarians, many based at the college chapels of Oxford, began making attempts to revive the Gregorian psalm tones, although this was met with resistance; the lack of experience with English-language chanting presented major hurdles.⁵ After published attempts by various musicians, the young Thomas Helmore, who graduated with a B.A. from Oxford in 1840 and rose quickly to be Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal by 1846, set the whole of the Coverdale Psalter, together with the versicles and responses and the canticles of Matins and Evensong to plainsong tones in *A Manual of Plainsong* (1850), thus forming a foundation for all choral services ever since. Widespread interest in music and public education provided the raw talent for choirs by providing young people who could read music, and so there was established the chanting of prose psalms in the liturgy in place of the loose paraphrases sung to the same few tunes before and after sermons each week.

4. *The Journal of the General Convention, 1832*, quoted in *Psalms in Meter selected from the Psalms of David* (Philadelphia: Protestant Episcopal Female Prayer-Book Society, 1844), p. 18.

5. Bernarr Rainbow’s *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church (1839–1872)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) is the standard text on this period in Anglican Church music.

The American Anglican Choral Tradition

The first recorded instance in America, of what many would recognize today as Choral Matins, took place in New York on April 14, 1846; at that service Tallis’ responses were used,⁶ although it is unclear whether the psalms and canticles were spoken or chanted. Without support from the Episcopal Church establishment, and in competition with the large musical programs of wealthy Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches which were performing cantatas and other large-scale musical works in their services, it is unsurprising that the reception of chanted plainsong psalmody, and indeed the chanted service as a whole, was slow. Starting in the 1840s in New York, it was not until the end of the Civil War that new “vested” choirs of men and boys singing from the chancel rather than a gallery became an established form of worship in the Episcopal Church, while Baptists, Congregationalists, and other protestant churches maintained quartets or soloist song leaders to lead metrical singing. By 1862 Racine College in Wisconsin had a men and boys choir that was using Thomas Helmore’s Psalter⁷ under the direction of James DeKoven. In England, *cathedrals* maintained the harmonized Anglican Chant tradition, while it was *parishes* that revived the practice of singing the Psalms, the hymnal handed down in the Church from ancient Israel.

Widespread Acceptance and Normativity

In the 1840s and 1850s John Mason Neale, Edward Caswall, Catherine Winkworth, among others, translated medieval hymns for liturgical use in the Church of England, and these came to be part of the Anglican musical heritage alongside the popular evangelical hymns of the day. Their work culminated with the printing of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861, which included, for the first time, plainsong melodies from the Roman Breviary set to English texts: hymns now taken for granted, such as “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” “Come Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire,” “Humbly I Adore Thee.” This is the same period that the Cranmerian *Prayer Book Noted*—John Merbecke’s 1550 unison setting of the Communion Service—was rediscovered, after having been shelved in 1552.

In 1902, H.B. Briggs and W.H. Frere, founder of the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, UK, would revise *A Manual of Plainsong*. This work influenced Canon Winfred Douglas who then set a “modern” *Plainsong Psalter: pointed and set to Gregorian Chants by the Joint Commission on Church Music under the authority of General Convention* in 1932. This provided, for the first time in the Episcopal Church, official prose psalmody for chanting, being the exact opposite of the decision by Convention

6. David W. Music and Paul Westermeyer, *Church Music in the United States: 1760–1901* (St. Louis, MO: MorningStar Music Publishers, 2014), pp. 105–107.

7. Leonard Webster Ellinwood, *The History of American Church Music* (De Capo Press, 1970), pp. 76–78.

that had authorized rhyming paraphrases just 100 years earlier.

Conclusions

Shortly after the publication of *The Hymnal 1940*, focus shifted away from the daily office in favor of the parish weekly-communion movement. Evensong and Matins as Sunday services became increasingly *special services*, and thus subject to romanticizing tendencies. As more and more parishes experiment with the choral offices, it is important to remember that, while there is a vast body of complex choral repertoire which has grown out of the cathedral and collegiate tradition, there is also a parochial tradition of plainsong melodies specifically intended to help the common person sing the ancient praises of the Church. While some parishes have choral foundations capable of matching King's College, Cambridge and St. Thomas, Fifth Avenue, the congregationally-focused plainsong psalms and canticles are both more accessible and more traditional in a parochial context, particularly in light of the decline of musical education over the past several decades, leading to a lack of available singers and musicians in many suburban and rural contexts. While matching the music of some great Oxford college is indeed thrilling and ambitious, the revivers of psalmody and plainsong chanting were instead concerned with making

the ancient worship of the Church accessible not to the paid quartets of other protestant churches of the period, but to whoever would join the corporate worship of the Church: one body singing with one voice. Helmore presented a noble, scriptural, and sacred-sounding (*i.e.* "set apart") alternative to the popular worship songs of his day, metrical psalms. In light of the current statistics and interest in Evensong, perhaps that same alternative—simple plainsong psalmody—is presenting itself as the long-awaited answer to the various "worship wars" of the past two decades: traditional versus contemporary music, congregational hymns versus Vatican II responsorial cantored music; it simply asks that we take the duty of the Church—the recitation of the Psalter—seriously.

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The Liturgy of the Episcopal Church

A SERMON FROM 1860

Transcribed and introduced by
Richard Mammana

The Reverend George Henry Clark (1819–1906), author of this 1860 sermon on the Book of Common Prayer preached at St. John's Church, Savannah, was born in Newburyport Massachusetts, and graduated from Yale College in 1843 before attending the Virginia Theological Seminary. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1846. Clark's ministerial charges were at All Saints, Worcester, Massachusetts (1846–1849); St. John's, Savannah (1854–1861), and Christ Church, Hartford (now the cathedral of the Diocese of Connecticut, 1861–1867). He was an active member of the corporation of Trinity College, Hartford, which conferred on him the degree of S.T.D. in 1863, and his brother Thomas March Clark served as Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church from 1899 to 1903. He is buried at Spring Grove Cemetery in Hartford.

Just a week and a half after delivering this sermon, Clark preached another on a Wednesday appointed by Georgia's governor, Joseph B. Brown, on the

then-looming secession crisis.¹ "My hearers," he said, "my heart trembles, and the blood thrills through my veins, when I contemplate the dissolution of these States." Nevertheless, he preached that "if there be no remedy, in darkness and in gloom, in sackcloth and in ashes, looking up to heaven for light to guide our sons, for mercy to protect our daughters, we will sing the requiem of these United States" if secession is deemed necessary. Georgia's secession was enacted early the next year on January 22, 1861, and Clark returned to ministry in the North.

The current sermon² is a typical (for its time) exhortation to the duty of common worship along with an explanation of its benefits for Christian life.

1. George Henry Clark, *A Sermon Delivered in St. John's Church, Savannah, on Fast Day, Nov. 28, 1860* (Savannah: George N. Nichols, 1860).

2. George Henry Clark, *The Liturgy of the Episcopal Church: A Sermon, Delivered in St. John's Church, Savannah, on Sunday, Nov. 18, 1860* (Savannah: George N. Nichols, Printer, 1860.) Available online at http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/clark_liturgy1860.html



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The Liturgy of the Episcopal Church

To my Beloved People of St. John's Church:

On the Sunday before the following Sermon was delivered, I addressed you on the subject of Public Religious Worship, under these particulars: Your duty to yourselves, your duty to your families, your duty to society, and your duty to God. You were told, that each individual among you, in view of the nature with which he is endowed, and the endless life before him, is under obligation to engage, in this worship; that private communion with God is not to be expected, where sacredly authorized services are willingly neglected; that this worship fortifies you against temptation, and imperceptibly moulds your characters, imparting purity and love of truth; that you cannot join in it sincerely, and not in every way be elevated by its influence, becoming better citizens, kinder neighbors, surer friends, more patient under trials, more just in duties, by the power which it exerts over you; and that you owe it to your souls and your ultimate existence, to engage in it with regularity. It shows that one does not know his wants, when this obligation is lightly held. Something is wrong if you do not love to meet in the Church of Christ. Something is wrong, if you only come here, when there is no temptation to stay away.

You were told, that public worship is a duty, which parents owe to their families; that if the custom of worshipping is of value, and the establishment of it, in early life, almost a necessity, it is a matter of the first importance for parents to take, not send, their children to God's house; that the son of a careless Church-goer will probably slide away from Church influences, when the restraints of childhood are over, perhaps wholly ignoring the Church, never entering its hallowed walls; that, while irreverent and negligent parents, may be able, by reason of the pious education of their childhood, to be moral, and upright, notwithstanding their inadequate appreciation of worship, their son, taught by a father's or a mother's life, may, by renouncing the Church, renounce all the principles which cluster around it, and be driven, a shattered wreck, on the rocks of depravity and corruption; or if he escape such dangers, human philosophy may take with him the place of religion, and human ambition the place of God. You were told why you should occupy, if possible, the same pew, year after year; how your child should have sacred associations gathering around that spot, and be able to remember, amid the perils of manhood, his bowing there, with sainted ones, and learning with them to pour out his heart to God; that that recollection will be a protection to him, a power for good, it may be forever, in his soul.

You were told, that the public worship of Almighty God is a duty which you owe to society; that the public morality rests on it; that it will not do for one to say, he can pray at home, when the general interests

of virtue and piety demand that he shall consecrate his service to God in His temple, the perpetuation and the very existence of religion depending on the support of public Christian worship.

You were then called to consider this subject in connection with divine obligations. You were asked to look on public worship as a duty to God. To forsake this assembling was pronounced, an offence to your gracious Creator. You were instructed, to be here, as poor, sinful men, admitting guilt, craving favor, to show your love to Christ, to show your trust and gratitude. You were told, that it was not your convenience which you were to consult, nor your mere gratification; that you were to be here, not as spectators, but as honest, penitent, hopeful worshippers. Let me call on you, my beloved people, to remember these things in connection with the statements of the following sermon, in which it was my purpose, not to instruct you as to your duty, but to set forth the superiority of our Liturgical Services.

How blessed, how grand is this our Sunday worship. Labor stops. The weary workman rests. The din of trade is hushed. The halls of gayety are closed. Secular study, political strife, schemes of ambition, are suspended, and man kneels before his God. How solemn the duty, how exalted the privilege. See to it, that it makes you truer, purer, more like Christ.

See to it, that not your words only, but your thoughts, go up to heaven. See to it, that this worship enlarges your soul, and deepens your piety. See to it, that neither pride, nor lust, nor levity, intrude on the sacred hour. See to it, that you keep the world, the flesh, and the Devil, outside the Church, outside your heart. The place is God's; the time is God's; the service is God's. To him these prayers bear your spirit; from Him may they bring you blessings.

I am,

With great affection,

Your friend and Rector,

GEORGE H. CLARK.

I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also —
Ep. to Corinthians, chap. XIV, verse xv.

It is my purpose, in this sermon, to bring before you the advantages which are secured in the Episcopal Church, by her Liturgical Worship. This subject I take up, not in a controversial spirit, but simply with a view to the better appreciation of your religious privileges. It is wisdom, under some circumstances, to let the Liturgy speak for itself, and impress itself on intelligence and piety; but, in a congregation containing many, by whom our forms of devotion have but recently been adopted, and which are yet perhaps regarded, in comparison with other modes, as of doubtful benefit, it is right and proper that we give the reasons, why we so venerate and cherish these forms of prayer, which our Christian fathers have

bequeathed to us. To do this implies no want of charity, nor lack of affection, toward those whose worship is different from ours, but only our conviction of the great and peculiar excellence of our premeditated services. I disclaim hostility to others as unworthy of the pulpit, and inconsistent with the Gospel; as contrary to the temper of our devotions, and out of harmony with our position as followers of Jesus Christ.

A prominent advantage involved in our Liturgy is indicated by the text: praying with the spirit, and with the understanding; in other words, and reversing the order, praying intelligently and with the heart. It is not affirmed that liturgical services necessarily secure these ends, but that they are better adapted to attaining them than other modes of worship. Assuming that a worshipper is not thoughtless, and truly desires to commune with God, the Liturgy secures, both for the mind and heart, what the mind and heart need in worship, more certainly and constantly than extemporaneous services; and we affirm its superiority to such services, in that it best enables one to pray with the spirit and with the understanding. It is possible to pray with the spirit and not with the understanding; many, I doubt not, do this, praying in a dead language in the Romish Church, for prayer, perhaps, is but the "burden of a sigh, or the falling of a tear;" but this is not the best or most comprehensive devotion; and one can take a devotional attitude before God, in attempting to follow unpremeditated prayers, which he cannot understand, but this again is not the most desirable communion with heaven, nor that which the Apostle speaks of in the text. Let us look more closely this subject. The maker of a public extemporaneous prayer is, by necessity, more or less occupied in intellectual invention. If he has not a form of his own, his work is apt to be too much a work of the head, too little a work of the heart. The demands on memory, the securing of grammatical accuracy, the attaining of appropriate language, the arrangement of subjects and sentences, require often a mental effort, which completely paralyzes the heart. The religious affections cannot flow out freely, where the mind has to toil on, under the consciousness of feeble conceptions and in adequacy of thought. Where one does not understand himself, it is presumption to attempt to lead others; how much greater presumption to attempt to guide souls Godward, when one feels that his mind is dragging itself earthward, his thoughts being dim, his materials meagre, and his language obscure. It would be unjust thus to characterize all extemporaneous worship; sometimes it is clear, impressive, solemn; but where there is great originality, there is great mental exercise, which interferes with spiritual communion; and where there is poverty of thought, confusion, embarrassment, there must be a check on the heart and its outpourings. While the framer of an extemporaneous worship is contending with these difficulties, the worshipping listener is beset by hindrances to devotion of another character. He must apprehend

the meaning of what he hears, in order to his praying with the understanding—a thing not always easy to be done. He must agree with the doctrines unfolded in the prayer, and yet possibly his mind dissents from them. He is liable to be forced into a critical position, if he has culture and taste, and that is likely to impede his devotions. The understanding may have too much to do, or it may have too little to do, in such a worship; and in either case, the heart does not pray.

These evils are avoided in our liturgical worship. The minister is not required to invent, the people are not, in the hour of prayer, required to judge. The understanding is not distracted, nor are the affections disturbed. The meaning of the petitions are understood by all. No doubtful doctrine and no questionable subjects can find their way into the services. We have but to join our souls to the supplications, and confessions, and praises, and send them up to God. The mode of conducting the worship can furnish the only possible perplexity on one part; the worshipper's inattention and coldness of heart, the only obstacles on the other. Devotion may not be secured, but if not, the fault is with ourselves, not in our forms of worship.

Another advantage in our Liturgy, is its comprehensiveness. All that belongs to worship is included in it—confession, praise and prayer. It meets the wants every Sunday, of every Christian heart. It vibrates on every chord of the soul, which can properly be touched in the house of God, whether it be of penitence, or gratitude, or sorrow. Instead of wanting speciality, its prayers are so formed, that, under general language, each worshipper can offer to God, the cares, the burdens and the wants of his heart. It is a mistake to suppose, that variety in emotions or aspirations is best secured by ever changing language. New thoughts, new hopes, new resolutions are inspired by old familiar words; and as the music which we have heard in childhood, thrills through our bosoms like no other music, so these praises, and prayers, and confessions, come to us in our sacred hours; come with new power, with ever freshening beauty; they speak to us in deeper and deeper tones; they stir our souls to love and mercy, to penitence and faith, to gratitude and hope, far quicker, far more surely, than any other worship. The same words, Sunday after Sunday, says the critic, how cold, how formal; the same words; but not, it may be, the same things under them. Praying, for instance, that it may please God to succor, help, and comfort all who are in danger; to defend the fatherless and desolate; that in our troubles we may put our confidence and trust in his mercy; in confessing that we have erred and strayed from his ways, that we lament our sins and acknowledge our wretchedness, that "we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and have done those things which we ought not to have done," we do not of necessity fix our minds on the same subjects, the same sins to be repented of, or the same sufferings to be assuaged. Perhaps today, in the unchangeable words of the Liturgy, one

of us has thanked God for some special mercy of the past week; and another has bowed his soul in the sad remembrance of some particular sin; and another has poured out his heart's desire that God would have mercy on some poor wanderer, or some afflicted and troubled spirit; so that, while the language is fixed, the confessions, petitions and thanksgivings are as varied as our sins, our wants and our blessings.

Is this comprehensiveness secured in common extemporaneous worship? Are all wants of all hearts met in such unpremeditated devotions? Are confessions, thanksgiving and prayer, always rightly commingled? May not the intellect composing, on the instant, the worship for hundreds of human beings, fail in the mighty work which it assumes to execute? and may not the heart, which comes between the hearts of the people and their God be in error and in darkness, incapable of transmitting the messages, which men need to send to heaven?

It is another advantage of our worship, that the prayers are so plain, that the most unlearned can comprehend them, and so pure in their diction, that the most cultivated can enjoy them. This combination of simplicity and beauty of language is a distinguishing feature of the Prayer Book, and constitutes one of the highest excellencies in our forms of devotion. There is nothing to perplex the intellect, and nothing to offend the taste. The most uncultivated can engage in the service intelligently, and the most refined can engage in it with delight. Children can take a part in it, long before they could be trained to appreciate, or be taught to comprehend the complicated, theological and perhaps philosophical petitions of unwritten worship; and the old, when incapacitated for other public worship, by physical or mental infirmities, can take its hallowing language on their trembling lips. Thus, it blesses childhood, and thus it comforts age; trains the pliant heart of youth, and supports the wearied, care-worn pilgrim; for the one, it lights the pathway of life, for the other, it illumines the darkness of the grave.

The Liturgy is peculiarly fitted for arresting and holding the attention of worshippers. This advantage arises out of the variety and changes in the services, the brevity and pertinency of the separate acts of devotion, and the part which the people are individually called to take. Objection is sometimes made to our frequent changes of posture; but, sitting being the proper position when instruction is listened to, standing the proper position when praise is rendered, kneeling the proper position when prayer is offered, it is manifest, that these variations are not only not arbitrarily required, but that they serve a very important purpose. The spirit is often willing, when the flesh is weak. One's heart may be inclined to worship, when the body is inclined to rest. Now, there must be a great preponderance of the physical over the spiritual, when in these services a man yields to the former. If he chooses to spend the sacred hour of worship in sleep, he, perhaps, can do so, though the character of the worship makes that difficult; but, if he desires to keep his faculties in

action and his soul in a religious attitude, these variations in the Liturgy, even in an inert physical state, largely contribute to these ends. It is therefore not a common thing to see people sleeping in the time of our worship. Though the service is long, the divisions of it, and the changes which these divisions involve, tend to keep alive the intellect and the affections.

And still more marked are the benefits of the responses in this sacred Ritual. If we apprehended fully this peculiarity, and individually carried out, the theory of the Church; if every Christian worshipper gave out his full and clear amen to the prayers, and Joined, with audible voice in the praises and confessions, the solemnity and sublimity of this worship would be greatly enhanced, interest and sympathy would be widely extended; heart after heart would feel its glowing inspirations; lip after lip would quicken with its hallowed utterances; knee after knee would bend before the Almighty Sovereign and the blessed Redeemer; no longer should we of hear a cold and barren worship; and these, our temples, would be sought, not merely for the conservatism of the Church, or the revered antiquity of the Church, or the Gospel truth of the Church, but for her animating and glowing worship, her inspiring, soul-stirring prayers and adorations.

Rising to higher ground, let me state to you the advantage which the Liturgy holds, in that it embodies the main doctrines and the most precious language of the Bible. As clearly as the sun impresses the beauties of nature on the silvered plate of the Photographer, so clearly have the framers of the Prayer Book impressed on it the truths of God's word. As faithfully as the Painter transfers to the canvass the features and coloring of the human race, so faithfully have the makers of the Liturgy transferred to its pages the truths and the spirit of divine revelation. The Gospel is incorporated in every supplication and in every adoration. The very words of inspiration are engrafted into it. The familiar and blessed language, the revered and hallowed names of the book, which God has given, meet you on every page, in every line. You cannot read a prayer and not feel that Christ is your Mediator. You make a confession, in hope of pardon, and it is in the most fitting Bible terms of penitence, "God be merciful to me a sinner." You offer praise, and your soul thrills with the very language of the Scriptures. You pour out your heart, in prayer, for faith, for charity, for power in temptation, for peace in trouble, for defence in adversity, for patience in affliction, for the redemption that comes through Jesus Christ, not in the language which your fellow-man may furnish, under the inspiration of the moment, furnish, possibly, when his mind sees darkly and when his heart is cold; furnish, it may be, when it is presumptuous in him to come between the souls of worshippers and their God; but in the language, which pious men have deliberately chosen, and chosen in no small part from God's holy word. The devotions of the Prayer Book then are, to a great

extent, the embodiment of the praises, confessions and petitions of the Bible; better, holier, more inspiring means of communion with our Heavenly Father than those which other worship commonly secures.

Our Liturgy not only embraces the truths of the Gospel, but it preserves them. It is conservative of Christian doctrine. It stands a beautiful, and yet a firm and solid pillar on the rock of God's truth, warding off, on one side, the attacks of fanaticism—on the other, the attacks of infidelity. Age after age, century after century, it teaches those glorious truths which Christ uttered; it tells man of his guilt and his helplessness, and his need of a Saviour; it proclaims the divinity of the Son of God, and the sacred offices of the Holy Spirit; it perpetuates the comforting and animating doctrines of the cross; and is a barrier against that, which Church history indicates as a danger, the introduction of false theology, through the services of religion. In a congregation worshipping without a fixed form, the foundations of truth may gradually be undermined; the people, almost without realizing the fearful fact, may lose the Gospel; but, in this Liturgy, the currents of truth roll on, from generation to generation, as clear, and pure, and life-giving, as when they first gushed forth from the fountains of benevolence and love; and as the cross will hold its place, in the constellations of the southern heavens till the earth has ceased to revolve, so shall the Cross to which we look for pardon and for hope, shine out amid the spiritual constellations of our Liturgy, till time shall be no more, and the redeemed, of every name and every race, shall have joined in the nobler worship of heaven.

We love the Prayer Book. We love it more and more; we love it, because it enables us to pray with the understanding and with the spirit; we love it, because it meets all the wants and all the exalted hopes of the heart; we love it, because it is so simple and yet so lofty in its diction; we love it, because the ignorant, the young, and the old, can secure its protection and reach its blessings; we love it, because all worshippers are called to take an active part in it; we love it because it contains God's truth, and perpetuates that truth in the Church; we love it too, for its venerable antiquity, for its connection with the holy dead, whose lips were once vocal with its anthems and its prayers, for its associations with those whose voices once mingled with our own, and who now share we hope, a higher worship; we love it, because so many millions, scattered over both hemispheres, and under all latitudes, the high and the low, the poor and the rich, the exile on some distant shore, and the sailor on the broad seas, the mother in her native Church, and the son far from Christian temples, in the ice bound Arctic, send up to God these *Te Deums*, and confessions, and prayers, thus blending their souls in acts of devotion and piety.

My hearers, having such a worship here on earth, may it be our privilege in that future to which we pass, to join the glorious company of Apostles and Martyrs, the sainted ones who have gone before, and pour forth our praises and our thanks before the eternal throne of mercy and of love, lifting up our souls, and saying: "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. Holy, holy, holy. Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory."

For Our Country

By William Murchison

But . . . but . . . those beards, so long and so white! The folk who gave us the prayer book: that was what they wore back then—right?—along with gowns and frowns of deep sable. They never hailed an Uber or heard a TED talk, or gave a thought to sustainable fishing and locally-sourced broccoli. What could they have known that would engage the 21st century?

Pull up a chair here. Let's talk. Not so much about the dangers inherent in dissing the dead ("In the long run," as Lord Keynes factually observed, "we are all dead") as about the continuing pull of prayers and entreaties that address palpable human needs in a discrete Moment in Time.

It is hard not to notice fast-growing concern about America and its prospects amid pressures seemingly for dissolution and despair. What works anymore? Not our government surely. Not the sense of civic unity we have seemed more often than not to call on in dark times.

What have ancient prayer books, dry and stale, to say of our present conditions? Should we listen? Why?

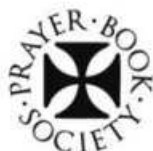
If the times seem out of joint, and they certainly do, in the year of grace 2017, it is well to consider the medical condition of human times in general: dicey. So dicey, indeed, that the need for prayer has never gone out of fashion, prayer being the way of organizing ordinary, and more than ordinary, human concerns, so as faithfully to set them before God.

A prayer book entreaty of unusual relevance to present aches and anxieties can be found on page 36 of the 1928 Prayer Book. Other prayers fit our present case in one way or another: terrorist threats and assaults, divisions of belief, the falling away of faith, the spreads of palpable hatreds, spiritual emptiness, exhaustion, entropy, descent. It all needs addressing. Why not by means of the luminous prayer entitled, "For Our Country"?

It has become one of my favorites. The more I pray it, the harder its wisdom and intensity strike me. "For Our Country" has inexhaustible grace and beauty,



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carefully formulated (like all the best prayers in the Prayer Book); saying the most with the least apparent effort. To wit:

Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favour and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honourable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Here we find . . . everything; from immigration to economic distress and the political “swamp.” Everything is here that we might rate as needful for the sanity and well-being of a nation grounded in thankfulness and hope.

Necessary to note is the non-antiquity of a prayer we might carelessly suppose to date from the age of long beards and Tudor ruffs. “For Our Country,” as Dr. Massey H. Shepherd notes in his famous American Prayer Book commentary, was first published in *The Book Annexed* of 1883 “as a part of the proposed service for Thanksgiving

Day. However, it was not admitted into the Prayer Book until the 1928 revision, and then with several alterations of the Rev. George Lyman Locke’s striking phraseology. Though it has the timeless ring of all true liturgical prayer, it reflects no less the expansive and turbulent era of our national history in which the prayer was composed.”

An era not unlike, in substance if hardly in detail—our own! Think of it: challenges we didn’t devise, divisions we didn’t cause—present in an earlier, supposedly more fruitful, time than ours. What gives? A couple of things do. First, humanity’s steady, continuous cycle of successes and flops; a sort of spiritual quicksand requiring non-stop appeals for guidance and rescue. Second, the knack—the veritable genius—of the Book of Common Prayer and its contributors in illuminating the terms of life and service, and talking about them understandably, reverently, faces turned steadfastly toward God.

I find the Rev. George Locke’s composition as valuable in 2017 as it must have appeared to his countrymen in 1883. Alas for its excision in the 1979 overhaul. Some hopeful committee or other must have decided we were making too big a deal out of our neediness and anxieties. “For Our Country” had to go, notwithstanding that the anxieties remained, and multiplied.

Never mind. Read the prayer. Pray the prayer—with faith and thanksgiving, and the God-given sense that we never achieve the misplaced, miswrought goal of Standing All By Ourselves. When we suppose indeed we’ve reached that fetchingly fatuous goal—well, start by looking around. And turn to page 36; the 1928 book, if you please.

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