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Another stock objection relates to the alleged manufacture of "aggrieved parishioners." In reply to this it may be said that, if there has been any improper working up of a case, under the Act, by prompting complainants, this can hardly be said to be a peculiar failing of Evangelicals and Protestants. It is in the human nature of Ritualists, as well as in that of their opponents. On the other hand, it ought to be borne in mind that in many rural parishes an "aggrieved parishioner," for the purpose of the Act, is an impossibility; and yet the people of the parish may be groaning under the infliction of the parson's Ritual eccentricities.

A further objection is that the P.W.R. Act has produced a large number of the Ritual troubles, which it was intended to prevent. The answer to this has been given by the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Davidson. He has pointed out that the true explanation of the increase of Ritual prosecutions, which immediately followed the passing of the P.W.R. Act, is that they were due to the spirit which made the Act necessary. For the first sixteen years after the Act was passed, only seven or eight prosecutions took place under its provisions. Many people, he says, have been misled by the clamour raised to think that they were ten times more.<sup>1</sup>

*(To be continued.)*



## Prayer-Book Revision: Suggestions from the American Prayer-Book.

BY THE REV. ROBERT R. RESKER, A.K.C.

THE conservative instinct which makes us shrink from modernizing an old church—an instinct with which we all sympathize—also influences many minds in regard to suggestions for making the Book of Common Prayer more suitable for the needs of the present day. In addition to this, the

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Archbishop Tait," vol. ii., p. 227.

serious divergence of views both on doctrine and ritual among members of the Church of England leads some to fear that any revision of the Prayer-Book would disturb the balance between the various schools in the Church, and "let loose the dogs of war."

But I am persuaded that the exigencies of our day call both for a relaxation of some of the arrangements of our services as well as for an enrichment of them. It surely stands to reason that what may have been sufficient and suitable for our forefathers 350 or even 250 years ago (when the Prayer-Book was last revised) should need adaptation to the altered conditions of our times. The need for this has been recognized in every other department of life, and markedly in politics and education. And it is somewhat strange that long ere this some change has not been made in the order of public worship. The principle is, moreover, acknowledged in the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer itself, where we read :

"It is but reasonable that, upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigencies of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein as to those that are in place of authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient."

The necessity is felt by all sections of the Church. In regard to the expediency of making such alterations at the present juncture, there may be differences of opinion. But it would surely be possible for all to agree to needed changes in the ordering of our services without touching upon questions of doctrine or ritual—changes which would render the services of the Church more attractive and helpful to the people generally without in any way lowering the standard of liturgical correctness.

As a matter of fact, of course, many changes have been made in the order of the services with a view to shorten them, in the absence of authority and sometimes in defiance of rubrics.

The Act of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1872, moreover, sanctioned the separate use of Morning Prayer, Litany, and Holy Communion, and permitted the Litany to be used in the evening. But what is specially needed is some authoritative abbreviation in the services by the avoidance of repetition.

In addition to the call for an authorized shortening of the services there is also a felt need for some enrichment of the Prayer-Book by the provision of an alternative form of Evening Prayer, etc., and of Offices for other occasions which the development of the Church's life has created in our days.

Now, in what way can these needs be met?

Let us see what the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. has done both as regards the simplification and the enrichment of the services of the Church in her Revised Prayer-Book.

I. *In reference to the Shortening of the Services.*—It is to be noted that the question referred to the Convention was—“Whether the public service on Sunday mornings be not of too great length, and tends rather to diminish than increase devotion?”

I may remark in passing how little English Churchmen appear to know of the American Prayer-Book. It is to be hoped that one result of the drawing together of the representatives of the English and American branches of the Anglican Communion in the recent Pan-Anglican Congress may lead to a study of the Revised Prayer-Book of that Church.<sup>1</sup>

Exigencies of space only permit of a summary of the main changes, which I proceed to indicate.

In the Preface, “Concerning the Service of the Church,” it is provided that Morning Prayer, the Litany, and Holy Communion may be used separately or together, provided that no one of the services be habitually disused, thus relaxing the rule (first prescribed in 1552) that the Litany *must* be said every Sunday.

The “Order how the Psalter is appointed to be read” directs that on days other than those for which Proper Psalms are appointed, “instead of reading from the Psalter as divided for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer, [the Minister] may read one of the selections set out by this Church”; and a table of twenty selections is provided.

This, it will be seen, would permit the use of alternative Psalms when they are very long, and also, if desired, in place of

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the American Prayer-Book can be obtained of H. Frowde, of the Oxford University Press, Amen Corner, E.C., at prices from 1s. upwards.

the Imprecatory Psalms—Psalms which many feel to be unsuitable for Christian worship.

After the *Venite* the rubric reads :

“And at the end of every Psalm, and likewise at the end of the *Venite*, *Benedicite*, *Benedictus*, *Jubilate*, *may* be, and at the end of the whole portion, or selection from the Psalter, *shall* be sung or said the *Gloria Patri* or the *Gloria in Excelsis*.”

An examination of the Psalter as now arranged reveals : (1) The uneven length of the portions for each day, ranging from 26 verses on the second and twenty-third evenings to 73 on the fifteenth evening, and—of all days in the year—to 76 on Christmas evening ; and (2) the variable number of times the Doxology is said—viz., once on nine occasions—whilst on the morning and evening of the twenty-seventh day it occurs six times. Thus, if Morning Prayer and Litany be said on that morning, the doxology is used no less than ten times (eleven, if the *Benedicite* takes the place of the *Te Deum*) !

The second and third rubrics read as follows :

“On any day not a Sunday [the Minister] may omit the Exhortation following, saying instead thereof, *Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God*, and may end the Morning Prayer with the Collect for Grace and 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

“On any day when the Holy Communion is immediately to follow, the Minister may, at his discretion, pass at once from the Sentences to the Lord's Prayer, first pronouncing, *The Lord be with you*.”

The *Benedictus* may be shortened, except at Advent, by the omission of the last eight verses.

The second Lord's Prayer is deleted, and the Versicles after the Creed are limited to the first and last in the English Prayer-Book.

When Holy Communion follows, the Collect for the Day “shall be omitted” at Morning Prayer.

The Collects after the Prayer for the President “*shall* be omitted here when the Litany is said, and *may* be when the Holy Communion is immediately to follow.”

The Litany may be shortened by the omission of what follows *O Lamb of God* to the prayer *We humbly beseech Thee*.

Evening Prayer follows on the same lines as that for Morning, except that *Let us humbly confess our sins*, etc., may be said instead of the Exhortation, and that the Versicles are in full.

The Athanasian Creed, as is well known, is entirely omitted from the Prayer-Book, together with the mention of it in Article VIII.

In the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, the following omissions are permitted :

The opening Lord's Prayer, if the service immediately follows Morning Prayer.

The Decalogue,

"provided it be said once on each Sunday. But *note*, that whenever it is omitted, the Minister shall say the Summary of the Law, beginning, *Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith*"—viz., "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc., which also may be said in *addition* to the Commandments.

The Nicene Creed,

"If it hath been said immediately before in Morning Prayer"; or the Apostles' Creed may be substituted for it, except at the Greater Festivals.

The Exhortations giving notice of Holy Communion (which are placed at the end of the Office) may be read, "or so much thereof as [the Minister] may think convenient."

The Exhortation beginning "Dearly Beloved in the Lord," may be omitted if it hath been already said on one Lord's Day in that same month."

Turning now to the Occasional Offices, the following abbreviations are to be noted :

In the Baptismal Service permission is given to omit the Gospel, Exhortation, and following prayer, which, however, are to be used

"once at least in every month, for the better instruction of the People in the grounds of Infant Baptism."

In the Marriage Service the "causes for which Matrimony is ordained" are eliminated, as also the words, "With my body I thee worship." The Lord's Prayer follows the putting on of

the ring, and the service concludes with the Blessing, the Canticle, Versicles, Collects, and Address being entirely omitted.

In the Visitation of the Sick the Absolution is expunged, and Ps. cxxx. substituted for Ps. lxxi.

In the Order for the Burial of the Dead the Psalms are shortened, and some additional Collects are provided.

In the Churching Service Ps. cxvi. is abbreviated and Ps. cxxvii. left out.

“A Penitential Office for Ash Wednesday” precedes the Collects, and is the existing Communion Service, beginning with Ps. li.

This brief survey will indicate that the American revisers appear to have aimed at a shortening of the various Offices by eliminating repetitions, so as to allow of their general combined use without that use being burdensome.

While I do not commit myself to the approval of all the changes which they have made, I venture to think we might copy what they have done in (1) the omission of the Doxology when more than one Psalm is used; (2) permitting the choice of definitely selected Psalms in place of the Psalms for the day, when they are very lengthy or may seem unsuitable; (3) relaxing the direction for the Litany to be said every Sunday, provided it be not habitually disused; (4) permitting the Litany to be shortened when it is said with Morning Prayer; (5) allowing “Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God” instead of the Exhortation at Evening Prayer; (6) sanctioning the permissive substitution of the “Summary of the Law” in the Communion Office, provided that the Decalogue be said once on each Sunday; and (7) omitting the first part of the Communion Service.

I believe these alterations would give considerable relief, and would remove objections which are urged against both the length and repetition of our public and occasional services.

II. *The second part of our examination of the American Prayer-Book relates to the Enrichment of the Services.*—In Morning and Evening Prayer we note the following additions or alternatives:

The opening sentences are increased by sixteen in the Morning and fifteen in the Evening, most of the latter being different; and each season has its own appropriate verses, which at once strike the keynote of the season.

Permissive use of the Absolution in the Communion Office is given, and also of the *Gloria in Excelsis* instead of the *Gloria Patri* after the whole portion of the Psalms, as well as of the Nicene in place of the Apostles' Creed.

Proper Psalms are provided for Advent Sunday, Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, Annunciation, Easter Eve, Trinity Sunday, Transfiguration, St. Michael's, and All Saints'.

"A Table of Proper Lessons for the Forty Days of Lent, and for the Rogation and Ember Days," which may be used in place of those in the Calendar, is provided.

Two additional alternative Canticles—verses from Psalms xcii. and ciii.—are provided at Evening Prayer.

In the Litany there is a petition for Missions: "That it may please Thee to send forth labourers into Thy harvest."

It should be noted that the General Thanksgiving is printed in its proper place in the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer and at the end of the Litany, and that the Prayer for All Conditions of Men is also so printed in the former services. This is a great advantage for those unacquainted with the Prayer-Book.

In the "Prayers and Thanksgivings upon Several Occasions" there are Collects or Services for Meetings of Convention, Missions, Fruitful Seasons (for Rogationtide), Persons Going to and Returning from Sea, Harvest Festivals, the Visitation of Prisoners, Family Prayer, Consecration of a Church or Chapel, and the Institution of Ministers.

The Confirmation Service contains a Lesson from Acts viii., together with the following words at the presentation of candidates:

"Reverend Father in God, I present unto you these children [*or* these persons] to receive the Laying on of Hands."



In the last place, we turn to the Communion Office to note what additions and changes have been made there beyond those already specified under the first division of this article.

Five additional Offertory sentences are provided.

An additional Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for use at the first celebrations on Christmas Day and Easter Day.

A Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Transfiguration.

There is, however, one serious alteration in this Office which, as being the only change in the Prayer-Book which may be regarded as of doctrinal significance, calls for special remark; and this alteration is all the more remarkable when we find that in the Baptismal Service it is provided that the Sign of the Cross in Baptism may be omitted when those who present the infant desire it. This is the return, in the Prayer of Consecration, to the arrangement in substance of the first Prayer-Book of 1549 and of the Scotch Office. The Prayer commences: "All glory be to Thee, Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, for that Thou, of Thy tender mercy," etc., followed by the words of Institution as in the English Prayer-Book (except that "sacrifice" is added to "death"), after which comes the "Oblation," the "Invocation" (marked so in the margin), and the Prayer of Oblation, the latter being transferred from the Post-Communion to its original position as part of the Consecration Prayer. This seems to depart from the principle upon which any revision of the Prayer-Book is possible without producing considerable friction—viz., that questions of doctrine should be left untouched—and as such it is to be deprecated.

Limits of space do not permit me to refer to the Revised Lectionary (in which there are considerable alterations), nor to other points for commendation, such as the rendering of obsolete into modern words (as "indifferently" into "impartially"), and the numbering of the Psalms by Arabic figures; nor to the permissive use of "place of departed spirits" for "hell" in the Creed, and some other minor alterations.

On these matters some guidance may be found in the Revised Book. But what I would press is that, ruling out all

changes which touch either doctrine or ritual, the general lines of this revision should be followed, without a slavish copying of every detail. In particular, I should like to see our English Prayer-Book enriched by the provision of (1) additional sentences at the opening of Morning and Evening Prayer; (2) additional Proper Psalms and Lessons; (3) alternative Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for Christmas and Easter, and a Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Transfiguration; (4) Prayers for Missions and for the Rogation Days; (5) additional Offertory sentences; and I should personally like to add, though some will not agree with me here, (6) the omission of the Athanasian Creed, which, however, should be left in the Prayer-Book, as in the Prayer-Book of the Irish Church.

I believe that most of the alterations and additions which have been specified would not only win over many Nonconformists to the Church, but would be acceptable to Churchmen generally, and would make the Book of Common Prayer more suitable to the needs of the times in which we live.

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This article was about to be placed in the hands of the printer when the first Report of the Committee of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury on the "Royal Letter of Business" was issued to the public. It has been thought well to let the article stand as it was written, but it may be desirable to indicate what are the main changes recommended in this Report. It will be seen that they follow some of the lines suggested above, but are of a more conservative character than those which are made in the American Prayer-Book.

Briefly, the principal alterations are the following :

1. Additional Proper Psalms are provided for all the days included in the American Book, with the exception of the Transfiguration, and the addition of Thursday before Easter.

2. "Upon occasions approved by the Ordinary other Psalms may, with his consent, be substituted for those appointed in the Psalter."

3. The Five Prayers after the Third Collect are to be

omitted when the Litany is read or Holy Communion “followeth immediately.”

4. The only relaxation in the use of the Litany is the provision that it “may be omitted on Christmas Day, Easter Day, and Whit-Sunday.”

5. The Transfiguration is to be made a red-letter day, with a proper Collect, Epistle, and Gospel.

6. “The Ten Commandments may be omitted, provided they be said once on each Sunday or Holy Day,” and when omitted the “Summary of the Law” must be substituted.

7. Three additional sentences are added to the Offertory.

8. The use of the Athanasian Creed is left optional; it “*may* be sung or said.”

9. The use of the opening address in the Communion Service is left optional, the proposed rubric being: “The priest shall, in the reading-pew or pulpit, say as followeth, or exhort the people in like manner.” And at the end of the service it is proposed to add: “This Office, with or without the Exhortation, may be used at other times, at the discretion of the minister.”

10. In the Marriage Service the opening address and the prayer relating to child-bearing are modified.

All these suggested alterations involve no question of doctrine or ritual, but the Committee have introduced a serious cause of division in their proposed resolution:

“Whereas the Eucharistic vestments commonly so-called cannot be rightly regarded as symbolic of any distinctively Romish doctrines, and whereas the historical conclusions underlying the ruling judgments in regard to the vestments appear to be liable to reasonable doubt, it is expedient that two alternative vestures for the minister at the time of celebrating the Holy Communion—viz., (1) the surplice, with stole or scarf and the hood of his degree; (2) the Eucharistic vestments commonly so called—be recognized as lawful under proper regulations.”

