THE OXFORD
American Prayer Book
COMMENTARY

BY MASSEY HAMILTON SHEPHERD, JR.

NEW YORK
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To the Presiding Bishop of
The Protestant Episcopal Church
in the United States of America

THE RIGHT REVEREND HENRY KNOX SHERRILL, D.D., LL.D.

with the affection and esteem of one
whom he ordained to the Sacred Ministry
of Christ's Church

Foreword

BY JOHN W. SUTER

This Commentary fills a need that has been felt by Church people generally ever since the current Book of Common Prayer was adopted in 1928. An interleaved Prayer Book,* published to mark the Three Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary, had supplied much information but was not revised to match the present edition.

The Reverend Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. has now provided us with an excellent survey of the historical development of the Book of Common Prayer and has presented his material in a way that answers the many questions which arise in the minds of those who use it. He has shown remarkable balance in appraising the various influences that have gone into the making of the Prayer Book through the centuries. He has been at great pains to give full credit where credit is due, and to recognize frankly those points that will probably always remain in doubt.

Equally notable is Mr. Shepherd's spiritual interpretation of the various prayers, helping the reader to see the inward and spiritual meaning of the outward words and acts. The Commentary is, of course, not only valuable to clergymen but also to other teachers of Prayer Book material. Any interested layman who loves the Church and desires to know more about it will find here much that will make his churchgoing more intelligible and more uplifting. Indeed, all who are interested in Christian public worship, regardless of their ecclesiastical allegiance, will benefit from a study of *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary*.

* *The Teacher's Prayer Book*, by Alfred Barry, New York: E. & J. B. Young & Co. Now out of print.

Preface

One of the most useful and excellent commentaries on the Prayer Book ever published is *The Teacher's Prayer Book* by the late Bishop Alfred Barry. The American edition of this work, adapted to the 1892 Book, was issued at the time of the 350th Anniversary observance of the First Book of Common Prayer. It has long been out of print, and in the meantime new revisions of the Prayer Book have been completed not only in the American Church, but also in other branches of the Anglican Communion. Many have been the requests in recent years for a new edition of Barry's manual, to bring it up to date in respect to both the liturgical developments and the advances in liturgical knowledge that have been made during the past generation. The present commentary is completely new and not a 'revised edition' of Barry's book. In both plan and scope it is designed to meet the need of a work comparable to his.

In order to keep this volume within a manageable size it has been reluctantly decided to omit commentary on the Psalter. It is hoped that the numerous cross references throughout the commentary will serve as an adequate substitute for a detailed index of subject matter. All references to and quotations from Scripture, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version—except the Psalter, which is always cited from the Prayer Book version.

It is impossible for me to list all the many sources and authorities to which I am deeply indebted. The Select Bibliography contains only a very small indication of my works of reference. But I must not allow this book to issue from the press without the most grateful acknowledgment of the encouragement and assistance of many kind and interested friends. Without the solicitation of the Rev. William Krause, formerly of the Oxford University Press, and the Very Rev. Dr. John W. Suter, Dean of Washington

Cathedral and Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, I should not have embarked upon this venture, which others of greater learning and keener judgment have started but, in God's overruling providence, have not lived to finish. One of these was my late lamented colleague, the Rev. Dr. James Arthur Muller, whose papers and notes in liturgics were generously given to me after his death by his widow, Dr. Gulli Lindh Muller. They have been of incalculable help, and I am profoundly grateful to Mrs. Muller for her kindness. Two other colleagues have given me much time and assistance with both the manuscript and the proofs, thereby saving me from many stupid blunders: the Rev. Dr. Sherman E. Johnson and the Rev. Dr. Samuel M. Garrett. My good friend, the Rev. Dr. Bayard H. Jones of the School of Theology, Sewanee, also graciously consented to read the proofs and give me the benefit of his unexcelled knowledge of the Prayer Book. If errors still remain they are not the fault of these true and generous helpers. Finally, it is with the greatest sense of inadequacy that I express my gratitude to the Presiding Bishop of the Church, who to his many gracious acts of kindness to me has added yet another—his ready consent in allowing me the privilege of dedicating this work to him.

Massey H. Shepherd, Jr.

Septuagesima, 1950

Introduction

IN THE preface to the first Book of Common Prayer, issued in 1549, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer adroitly described the principles that guided the reformers of the Church's liturgy. By eliminating whatever they considered to be corrupt modifications and excrescences made during medieval times to the Church's ancient traditions of corporate worship, the Reformers sought above all things to restore the Bible, whole and uncontaminated, to its paramount place in the liturgy. Thus the Church would recover

> an ordre for praier (as touchyng the readyng of holy scripture) muche agreable to the mynde and purpose of the olde fathers, and a greate deale more profitable and commodious, then that whiche of late was used . . . because here are left out many thynges, whereof some be untrue, some uncertein, some vain and superstitious: and is ordeyned nothyng to be read, but the very pure worde of God, the holy scriptures, or that whiche is euidently grounded upon the same. (See p. vii ff.)

To make effective such an order of common prayer, so that both clergy and laity 'should continuallye profite more and more in the knowledge of God, and bee the more inflamed with the loue of his true religion,' it was necessary for the liturgy to be 'in suche a language and ordre, as is moste easy and plain for the understandyng, bothe of the readers and hearers.' It is true that vernacular versions of the Bible and devotional manuals designed for the laity were not unknown in the Middle Ages, but the official services of the Church most commonly in use had never been translated into English in a form corresponding to their public celebration. Moreover, before the invention of printing (which occurred less than a century before the beginnings of the Reformation movement) the cost of books, all written of necessity by hand, was prohibitive for the vast majority of the people, including most of the parish clergy.

By no means averse to exploiting the economic inducements of the new order, the Reformers pointed out that henceforth it would be sufficient that 'the curates shal nede none other bookes for their publique seruice, but this boke and the Bible: by the

meanes wherof, the people shall not be at so great charge for bookes, as in tyme past they haue been.' Certainly one of the most significant innovations of the Book of Common Prayer was the inclusion of the entire liturgy of the Church within the limits of one commodious book—with the exception of the Bible lessons read at the Daily Offices—by shortening and simplifying the older offices which had hitherto been distributed among many books. Whatever was lost from the old rites in richness and variety was more than balanced by the opportunity of ultimately placing the whole liturgy of the Church within reach of all the people. This development, little less than revolutionary, requires a brief explanation of the liturgical books in use before the Reformation.

The early Christians employed no books in their common worship except the Scriptures. Prayers were freely composed by the celebrant according to his taste and ability, although the thoughts and aspirations expressed in them were more or less fixed by custom and tradition. There was no official hymn-book other than the Psalter, from which selections were chanted by appointed soloists or small choirs. By the beginning of the third century there began to appear short manuals, known as Church Orders, which provided directions and suggested forms of prayer for the liturgical assemblies of the Church. The most notable example of such Church Orders, both by reason of its age and provenance and by virtue of its influence upon succeeding generations, was the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus of Rome, composed about the year 200 or shortly before. The elaboration of the Church's public rites and ceremonies that followed the cessation of persecution and the official recognition of Christianity by the State in 313 was accompanied by a gradual but steady establishment of prescribed texts of the historic usages of the principal sees of Christendom. These texts were completely fixed, as far as the essential structure of the liturgy is concerned, by the end of the sixth century. Throughout the Middle Ages, however, many enrichments and modifications of detail were superimposed.

The liturgical books containing the formularies used in the services were put together in such a way that all the parts needed by a single officiant were separated and gathered in one volume. Thus the celebrant had in his hands a Sacramentary, a book containing only the prayers that he himself said. The various chanters had their Antiphonaries, Responsorials, Graduals, Psalters, Hymnals; and the readers of the lessons their Lectionaries, Epistolaries, Evangeliaries, and so forth. To keep the entire service moving in its proper order and ceremony another officiant was required, who had in his Ordinary or Directory (commonly called the Pie in England) all the cues and rules of liturgical procedure.

This multiplicity of books, arranged as they were according to officiating persons rather than inclusive of entire services, is still in use in the Eastern Orthodox Churches; but it has been retained in the Western Churches only in larger churches and monasteries where the full choral service, requiring many officiants, has continued. As early as the ninth century its inconvenience was felt by priests in small parishes without a corps of assistants, and later by traveling monks and friars who wished to say their liturgical offices *en route* without being encumbered by a whole library of books. Hence, there developed the system of codifying the several parts of a single type of service—prayers, chants, lessons, rubrics—in one collection. Thus arose the Missal, which contained all things necessary for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist throughout the year; the Breviary, in three or four volumes, for the Daily Offices; the Manual or Ritual, with the Occasional Offices; and the Pontifical, containing such services as were reserved to the Bishop.

In many parishes, where there resided more than one priest and where there were several 'clerks' to take the choral parts, there might be a mixture of the two systems of books. Even so, a complete supply of books needed for the services was often lacking in medieval parishes, owing either to indigence or neglect. In addition to these difficulties there was the great complexity of rules and rubrics scattered among the many books—a complexity greatly intensified by the ever-growing number of saints' days and holy days with their special 'propers' of lessons, chants, and pray-

ers to be added to or substituted for the regular, daily, and weekly sequence of the liturgy. Cranmer's complaint in his preface to the Prayer Book about the inherited system was not overdrawn: 'Moreouer, the nōbre and hardnes of the rules called the pie, and the manifolde chaunginges of the seruice, was the cause, y^{t} to turne the boke onlye, was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times, there was more busines to fynd out what should be read, then to read it when it was founde out.'

The simplicity and commodiousness of the new Prayer Book were also directed towards the elimination of the 'great diuersitie in saying and synging in churches within this realme.' In medieval times every diocese, every great monastic order, had its own peculiar adaptations of custom and ceremony in the performance of the Church's liturgy. Basically, of course, all of them used the liturgy of the Church of Rome, but about this common core there developed numerous varieties of local 'uses,' diverging from one another in devotional and ceremonial accompaniments and particularly in the calendar of saints commemorated. In England the use of the diocese of Salisbury (commonly called Sarum) was widespread, but others were current, such as the uses of York, Hereford, Bangor, and Lincoln. With the issuing of the Prayer Book this flowering of local color disappeared. A new principle of uniformity was established. 'Now from hēcefurth,' said Cranmer, 'all the whole realme shall haue but one use.'

Without the machinery of the printing press the realization of liturgical uniformity would, of course, have been impossible. But in large measure the new principle reflected political tendencies and expedients of the Tudor sovereigns, who were desirous of securing a united Church in an autocratic State at a time when controversy even in minute matters was lamentably easy to excite. Recent revisions of the Prayer Book have exhibited a marked trend away from the rigid uniformity in the Anglican tradition, especially in respect to ceremonial. In no case has the rule of uniformity in liturgy been considered applicable or desirable beyond the limits of a self-governing national or provincial Church (see pp. v–vi). But a reasonable degree of uniformity in common

worship must of necessity presuppose full and active lay participation in the liturgy—all the more so in times such as the present, when population is mobile. And underlying all the principles that molded and fashioned the Book of Common Prayer, and that continue to shape its history, is the inalienable right of all the people of God, laity no less than clergy, to an active and intelligent share in all the services and sacraments of the Church.

Note on ancient Sacramentaries. In the ensuing commentary frequent reference will be made to certain ancient Latin Sacramentaries as sources of many prayers and formularies in the Prayer Book. The oldest one which is extant is the so-called Leonine Sacramentary, a collection of prayers for masses throughout the year, which dates from the middle of the sixth century, though many of its formularies are much older, and some of them undoubtedly go back to Pope Leo the Great (440–61). There is no reason to suppose that this collection was ever an official service book, but it circulated widely outside of Rome, its apparent place of origin, and was drawn upon by later generations for supplements to more developed and official books.

Pope Gelasius I (492–6) drew up an official Sacramentary for the Church in Rome, and this work is generally identified with the so-called Gelasian Sacramentary, extant in a manuscript of the mid-eighth century. In the form in which it has come down to us it has been considerably 'de-Romanized' and adapted for use in Gaul (i.e. France), where it enjoyed considerable popularity. A definitive revision of the Roman liturgy was executed by Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), and it was this Gregorian Sacramentary which the Benedictine monks took with them when sent by St. Gregory as missionaries to the English people. Considering the lack of any centralized authority in liturgical matters in this age, and the role of individual initiative in the collation of liturgical uses, it is not surprising to find that there were circulating in northern Europe by the end of the seventh century many and various 'mixed' Sacramentaries, compiled for individual dioceses, churches, or monasteries, according to the specific needs and interests of the several ecclesiastical establishments. Gelasian and Gregorian materials, with occasionally some Leonine features, were mixed in diverse combinations with non-Roman formularies stemming from the indigenous 'Gallican' rites. The prestige of the Roman Church, however, combined with the missionary zeal of the Benedictine monks, favored the increasing weight of authority given to liturgical books of Roman origin in competition with Gallican rituals.

A by-product of the political alliance made between the Pope and King Pepin of the Franks in the middle of the eighth century was the official suppression of the Gallican liturgy in favor of the Roman. Under Charlemagne this work was definitively concluded by the Sacramentary compiled by his chief minister, the Englishman Alcuin. To an authentic copy of the Gregorian Sacramentary, sent to Charlemagne by Pope Hadrian I (*c.*784–91), Alcuin added a supplement, including much Gelasian and some Gallican material, so as to make the Pope's own service book for the city of Rome

suitable for use in any parish. This revised Gregorian Sacramentary of Alcuin was later adopted officially at Rome itself, and forms the substance of the Roman Missal still in use today. Needless to say, it was this form of the Missal that was current in England, according to the Sarum and other uses mentioned above, at the time of the Reformation. Thus, the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer is directly continuous in substance with that liturgy brought to England by St. Augustine of Canterbury, in 597, which in turn is continuous with the liturgical traditions as developed by the Church in Rome from the days of the Apostles.

The history of the compilation and successive revisions of the Prayer Book, so often recounted and published, will be sketched here in brief, solely to serve as a frame of reference for the more detailed notices in the ensuing commentary. The breach between the Church of Rome and the Church in England made by Henry VIII in 1534 resulted in no immediate change in the use of the medieval Latin services. In 1543 a chapter of the Bible in English was appointed to be read at Matins and Vespers on Sundays and holy days, from the version known as the Great Bible (1539). The following year the Litany in English was published, in the form which it has maintained with but slight alteration until the present day. An official edition of the Primer, a vernacular book of devotions drawn chiefly from the Breviary, was put forth by the King's Majesty in 1545. We know also that the King and Archbishop Cranmer projected other works of revision and translation, such as an English Processional. There survive from the years 1542–7 two manuscripts of Cranmer's embodying schemes for the reform of the Breviary. Although these projects of Cranmer were in Latin, they anticipated much that saw the light in the first Prayer Book.

Cranmer's studies in preparation for the revision of the liturgy were broadly based. (It should be remembered that he was a University scholar and professor before fate placed him in the role of archbishop.) The Latin rites according to the Sarum and other uses current in England were, of course, the basis upon which he worked. He was much influenced by a reform of the Latin Breviary prepared for the Pope by the learned Spanish Cardinal, Francesco Quiñones, first published in 1535, with a second edition in 1537, and sanctioned for trial use by the Roman clergy

until it was suppressed in 1558. Cranmer's mission to Germany in connection with King Henry's famous annulment case had given him a first-hand knowledge of the various Lutheran experiments in liturgical reform. One Lutheran Order in particular was to furnish him with many suggestions—the *Simplex ac pia deliberatio* put forth by Hermann von Wied, reforming Archbishop of Cologne. Hermann's *Consultation*, as it is generally called from its English translation in 1547, was largely the work of Bucer and Melancthon, distinguished leaders of the Reformation in Germany. Bucer had been active in the reforms at Strasbourg, where his work had some influence on Calvin. During the reign of Edward VI he was domiciled in England, and his criticisms of the first Prayer Book carried great weight with Cranmer in his review of that book. Cranmer also made use of the Greek liturgies, which had been printed in 1526, and the editions of the Missal and Breviary of the ancient Spanish liturgy (known as the Mozarabic rite), which had appeared in 1500 and 1502, respectively, under the supervision of Cardinal Ximenes.

With the accession of Edward VI in 1547 the reform party led by Cranmer was more free to promote changes. A first step towards the Mass in English was the royal Injunction of that year requiring the reading of the Epistle and Gospel in English. Then appeared in 1548 an *Order of the Communion*, an English form to be used in the Mass immediately before the communion of the people. It contained the Exhortations, Invitation and Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words, Prayer of Humble Access, Words of Administration, and the Blessing—all of which were later incorporated into the Prayer Book rite of Holy Communion. The first Prayer Book of 1549, attached to an Act of Uniformity passed by Parliament on January 21st, was ordered to come into exclusive use on Whitsunday of that year (June 9th). In March 1550 appeared the first edition of The Ordinal, a revision of the old Pontifical.

Discontented with the moderate and comprehensive character of the first Book, the more extreme reformers of Protestant sympathies, with whom Cranmer allied himself, pushed through a

second Prayer Book of 1552, under a new Act of Uniformity, to come into effect on All Saints' Day. Shortly before the King's death the following summer Cranmer issued a set of Forty-two Articles, later to be taken up, revised, and reduced to the familiar Thirty-nine under Queen Elizabeth. The accession of Mary brought a swift end to the use of the Prayer Book. With her restoration of England to the papal obedience the Latin rite was restored, save for the continued use of the English Litany and the reading of a lesson from the English Bible at Matins and Evensong. In other words, Mary reinstated the liturgy as it was performed at the close of Henry's reign.

Elizabeth restored to use the second Prayer Book by an Act of Uniformity in 1559, with a few, but by no means insignificant, changes. This Book remained in force until the Long Parliament proscribed its use in favor of the Presbyterian Directory in January 1645. Some minor changes and additions were made in 1604 by order of James I, consequent to discussions held early that year with leading Puritans at Hampton Court. But the great result of that conference was the royal order for a new translation of the Bible, which resulted in the famous Authorized Version of 1611. In passing, it may be noted that it was the Jacobean Prayer Book in its 1604 edition that was used by the first permanent English settlers in America at Jamestown, Virginia.

During the reign of Charles I a Prayer Book for the Church of Scotland was prepared by a group of Scottish bishops with the cooperation of Archbishop William Laud of Canterbury. This Book, published in 1637, was in many ways a return to the first Book of 1549. But it never came into general use in Scotland because of the implacable hostility of the people to the project. 'Laud's Liturgy,' as it is commonly, though inaccurately, called, exercised some influence upon the English revision of 1661. More particularly it affected the Scottish Communion rite of 1764, from which the American form of the Holy Communion is descended.

After fifteen years of total proscription, whether in public or private use, the Prayer Book was restored to the English Church with the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660.

There was some hope that its content and design might be so revised as to make it acceptable to the moderate Puritans, more specifically the Presbyterians. To this end a conference was opened in October 1660, at the Savoy Palace, between leading Anglican and Presbyterian divines. Neither party proved sufficiently pliable to the demands of the other. In 1661 the Anglicans thereupon proceeded to their own conservative review of the Elizabethan-Jacobean Book. Numerous minor changes of a literary or rubrical nature were made, some new material was added, and the Biblical portions, except for the Psalter, were made to conform to the King James Bible of 1611. 'An Act for the Uniformity of Publick Prayers' imposed the revised Prayer Book of 1662, but with its passage Nonconformity became a permanent element in English religious life.

One more attempt was made to find a means of embracing the Nonconformists. In connection with the Toleration Act of 1689 a royal commission was appointed to draw up a new scheme of revision. Its report was never published, or presented to the Convocation of the clergy, for the temper of 'Church opinion' was strongly hostile to the whole project. The Preface of the American Prayer Book speaks of it as the miscarriage of a 'great and good work,' but later generations have not shared in this regret over its relegation to oblivion.

The accession of William and Mary had a more lasting, if indirect, effect upon the course of Prayer Book history than the ill-fated attempt to promote a new revision. The disestablishment of the Episcopal Church in Scotland and the schism created in the Church of England by numerous bishops and clergy who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereigns left these groups of Non-Jurors, as they were called, free to revamp their liturgy without royal or parliamentary interference and control. Inspired by the 1549 Book and 'Laud's Liturgy' of 1637, and also by their scholarly investigations into the ancient Greek rites, the Non-Jurors produced a series of revised Communion services. The most notable feature of these new liturgies was the conformation of the Prayer of Consecration to the pattern of this prayer

as it is found in the Greek liturgy and in the 1549 rite. When the Scottish bishops consecrated Samuel Seabury in 1784 as the first American bishop, a Concordat was drawn up whereby Bishop Seabury engaged to introduce into his diocese of Connecticut, and if possible into the new American Church then struggling to be formed, the Scottish Communion Office of 1764.

At the time of the American Revolution the English Book of 1662 was in use, of course, in all the Anglican churches in the colonies. The success of the Revolution necessitated changes in the prayers for civil rulers, and this occasion suggested the possibility of a more comprehensive review of the Prayer Book to adapt it to the American scene. A convention of several dioceses at Philadelphia in 1785 put forth The Proposed Book, a revision that represented a radical shortening of the familiar English Book. It was received with little favor. The general temper of Church opinion was cool towards its doctrinal ambiguity, and churchmen in New England led by Bishop Seabury were distinctly hostile to the Book. The English bishops, to whom it was sent for review in connection with a request for the episcopal succession for America, made some severe remonstrances regarding it. Some of its suggestions, however, were incorporated into the final draft of the Book of 1789. The venture was not entirely fruitless.

The first official American Prayer Book of 1789 was issued by the first General Convention, meeting at Philadelphia in the autumn of that year, and was ordered to come into use October 1, 1790. Its most significant change from the English Book was the adoption of the Consecration Prayer of the Scottish Communion service, through the efforts of Bishop Seabury; and thus there was united in the liturgy of the American Church the two streams of Anglican tradition, the English and the Scottish, in a way parallel and comparable to the fusion of these two streams in its episcopal succession. In 1792 the General Convention adopted an American edition of the Ordinal, to which were added in 1799 the form for consecrating a church and in 1804 an Office of Institution of Ministers. In 1801 a slightly revised edition of the Thirty-nine Articles was approved. Apart from minor alterations in the detail of rubrics and tables of lessons, the Prayer Book of 1789, as a whole, has undergone two extensive revisions, the first completed in 1892, the second in 1928.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Episcopal Church in America had largely recovered from the general depression that had fallen upon it in the generation immediately following its organization. A vigorous new leadership was extending its missionary work in all spheres of society both at home and abroad. Renewed interest in theological problems, stimulated by the Tractarian Movement in England, was giving birth to rival parties, and novel experiments in ceremonial were arousing heated controversy. A great conciliator, seeking a more comprehensive witness and worship for the Church, arose in the figure of the Rev. Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg, rector of the Church of the Holy Communion, New York City, 1844–77. At the General Convention of 1853 he led a group of like-minded clergy in presenting to the bishops a Memorial, asking them to consider whether the Episcopal Church 'with only her present canonical means and appliances, her fixed and invariable modes of public worship, and her traditional customs and usages, is competent to the work of preaching and dispensing the Gospel to all sorts and conditions of men.' The bishops gave serious attention to this appeal, and in their reply appended several prayers for consideration and a few suggestions regarding a more imaginative use of the existing Prayer Book services. Though the results of this effort were meager, the principles behind it were not forgotten nor the need of keeping the Church's liturgy abreast with the demands of ministration to the ever-growing, ever-changing conditions of American society. Meanwhile the development of 'ritualism,' as it was called, increased with more vigor and with correspondingly more tension and controversy. And with it went a renewed interest in historical research in the field of liturgics.

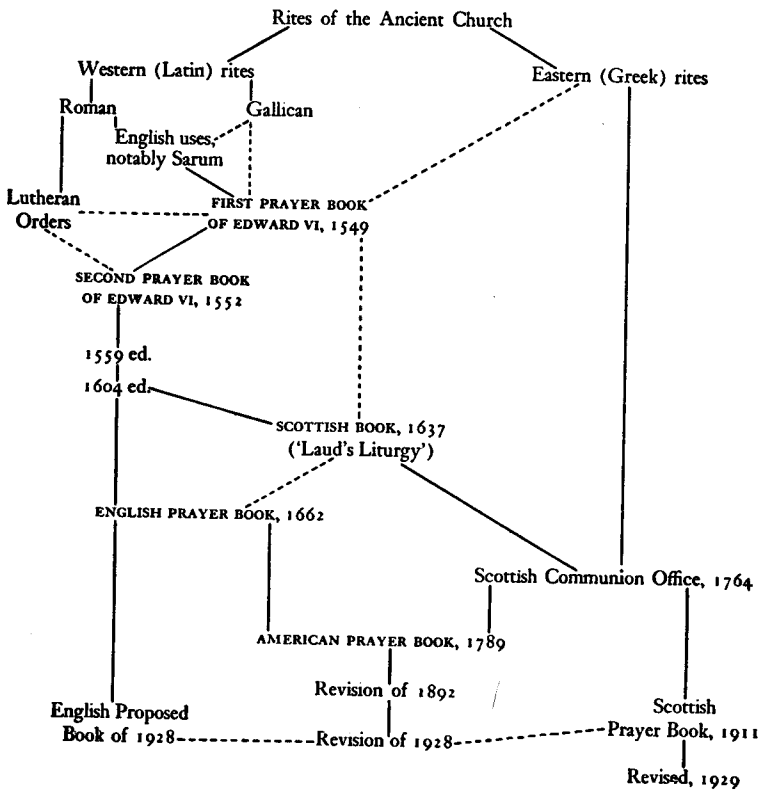
The torch lighted by Dr. Muhlenberg was taken up by the Rev. Dr. William Reed Huntington, rector of All Saints, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1862–83, and of Grace Church, New York, 1883–1909. To him is due the primary credit for the vision and leader-

ship that produced the revised Prayer Book of 1892. Dr. Huntington combined a taste and sensitivity for the best of our tradition with a rare insight into the need of his own times. The two principles he established in the Church's thinking about its common prayer were: enrichment from past and present sources, and flexibility in the use of the appointed liturgical offices. The 1892 revision was a significant step forward along these lines, despite the fact that so many of the proposals for the new Book failed to be accepted. But it was not long before the task was taken up again. The General Convention of 1913 appointed a 'Commission on the Revision and Enrichment of the Book of Common Prayer,' under whose guidance the Prayer Book of 1928 was finally adopted. The chairman of this Commission was Bishop Cortlandt Whitehead of Pittsburgh, and, after his death in 1922, Bishop Charles Lewis Slattery of Massachusetts. The Rev. John Wallace Suter was the secretary of the Commission throughout the fifteen years of its labors.

These recent revisions of the American Prayer Book were much indebted to the reports and accomplishments of similar efforts in other branches of the Anglican Communion. The Church of Ireland after its disestablishment made a modest revision of the English Book in 1877, and again in 1927. The Episcopal Church in Scotland completed revisions in 1911 and in 1929, and the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada in 1922. The Church of England's Proposed Book, which had such extraordinary influence upon all these revisions, was rejected by Parliament in 1927 and again in 1928, although it had been passed by large majorities in the Church Assembly. Alternative forms of the Holy Communion were produced by the Church of the Province of South Africa in 1929, and by the Church in India in 1933. The process of using experimental alternatives for other Prayer Book offices continues to go on in South Africa, and it has been taken up anew in Canada. In China, in the West Indies, and in other provinces of Anglicanism that have become self-governing, ideas are being considered for the adaptation of a common liturgical heritage to 'the various exigency of times and occasions.' In far-flung mission fields

throughout the world today the Prayer Book has been translated, in whole or in part, into more than 150 languages and dialects.

A TABLE SHOWING THE HISTORICAL DESCENT OF THE AMERICAN PRAYER BOOK



THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church

ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Together with The Psalter or Psalms of David

NEW YORK
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE TITLE PAGE

The phrasing of the title of the Prayer Book is instructive. 'Common prayer' has been a term employed from the earliest times to describe corporate or collective worship as distinct from individual or private prayer. More specifically it was used to denote those particular forms of intercession, such as the Litany or Bidding Prayer, that require active participation by both minister and people. In the ninth century the phrase began to be used for the contents of the Church's services as a whole or in its several parts. At the time of the Reformation 'common prayer' often meant 'divine service': Matins, Evensong, and the celebration of the Mass, which included the Litany and Bidding Prayer. This last sense is the strict meaning of the phrase on the title page, while the rest of the title refers to other services and offices. Not until the end of the eighteenth century was the custom established of printing the first half of the title in larger letters.

In strict usage the word 'rite' refers to the text of a liturgy, 'ceremony' to the manner of its performance. But the two terms are evidently synonymous on the title page. It is important to notice that the title claims that the liturgy of the Prayer Book is that 'of the Church' as a whole, i.e. of the universal Catholic Church, continuous in time and spread throughout the world. But just as in times past various dioceses, provinces, or national churches have adapted that universal liturgical tradition to their own 'use,' so the Episcopal Church as a self-governing province or branch of Christ's Church has, 'according to the various exigency of times and occasions' (to quote the Preface), shaped its own 'use.'

The name 'Protestant Episcopal Church' was first officially adopted at a church convention in Maryland, 9 November 1780, presided over by the Rev. Dr. William Smith. Through his initiative the convention secretary, the Rev. James Jones Wilmer, presented a motion that the Church in the province of Maryland be called 'The Protestant Episcopal Church.' However inadequate this terminology has seemed to later generations—and there have been many attempts to change it, or at least to remove it from the title page of the Prayer Book—it corresponded to the actual situation and to the accepted usage of words at the time it was first adopted. 'Protestant' distinguished it from Roman Catholic, 'Episcopal' from Nonconformist. The Revolution

CERTIFICATE

I certify that this edition of the Book of Common Prayer conforms to the Standard Book of 1928, as amended by subsequent actions of General Conventions.

JOHN WALLACE SUTER
Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer

September 1952

Printed in the United States of America

had dissolved its legal connection with 'the Church,' as then understood, the Church of England. And as yet there was no national ecclesiastical organization to warrant the use of 'American' or 'of America.' When a national convention was organized the terminology had become so generally accepted that no thought was given to finding another name.

THE CERTIFICATE

The Prayer Book in America is not copyrighted. Anyone may publish all or part of it, amended or enlarged versions of it. But only certain editions are canonically permissible for use in the Church's services. In England the Crown maintains its prerogative and exclusive right to print those editions of the Bible and Prayer Book that are 'appointed to be read in churches.' Only the King's Printer (at present Messrs Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd.) and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have this privilege. Their texts must conform to the manuscript *Book Annexed* to the 1662 Act of Uniformity, or to one of its certified copies, known as the 'Sealed Books' from their having attached to them the Great Seal of England.

The General Convention of the American Church in 1801 passed a canon that declared the octavo and quarto editions of the Prayer Book published by Hugh Gaines, New York, 1793, to be the 'Standard.' The Bishop or Standing Committee of each diocese was to authorize a person or persons (in 1835, they were specified to be presbyters) to compare and correct all new editions used in the Church by this standard. Other standard editions were designated in 1821, 1832, 1838, 1845, and 1871. At the Convention of 1868 the Rev. Benjamin I. Haight offered a resolution calling for inquiry to be made in regard to who possessed the stereotyped plates from which the standard editions were printed. Only James Pott Co. was found to have a set. Hence the Convention resolved to appoint a Custodian of the Standard Prayer Book whose duty was to keep the plates and a copy of the standard edition for the General Convention. In 1871 he was made responsible for making all alterations in the Prayer Book as authorized by the Convention.

After the completion of the revision of the Prayer Book in 1892 a change was made from a Standard Book to a Standard Copy signed by the presiding bishop, officers, and secretaries of the Convention. All

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editions intended for official use in the Church were to conform to this standard copy and contain a certificate thereto by the Custodian. Copies of the standard were sent to the ecclesiastical authority in each diocese and jurisdiction. It was further required that in all such certified editions there should be a uniform pagination from Morning Prayer through the Psalter, except in musical editions or in editions smaller than 24mo (changed to 32mo in 1907). Rubrics might be in red or black. These canonical requirements were repeated in 1928 for the newly revised Book. At the present time the standard copy of the 1928 Prayer Book is exhibited in Washington Cathedral.

The following presbyters of the Church have served as Custodians of the Prayer Book: Benjamin Isaac Haight, 1868–79; Francis Harison, 1880–85; Samuel Hart, 1886–1917; Lucien Moore Robinson, 1917–32; John Wallace Suter, 1932–42; and John Wallace Suter, Jr., 1942–.

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The Prayer Book is a collection of five books: the 'Common Prayer' proper, the Missal, the Manual, the Psalter, and the Ordinal, to which is added an appendix in three parts: the Catechism, Family Prayers, and the Thirty-nine Articles. In England the Psalter and Ordinal were not bound up with the rest of the Prayer Book until 1662. The first American Book of 1789 did not contain the Ordinal, which was adopted in 1792. This explains why the title of the Ordinal is not found on the title page of our American Book (as it is in the English Book). The Articles were adopted in 1801. In the 1928 revision the Catechism and Family Prayers were removed from the Manual and put in the appendix. Since 1892 the Table of Contents has marked off (in this edition, by dotted lines) these successive additions to the first American Book.

The services in the Prayer Book are arranged according to temporal sequence. They begin with the daily services, followed by such additional material as may be in daily or frequent use. Then follow the weekly and annual cycles of Sundays and holy days for which the Holy Communion is especially appointed. (The Communion may, of course, be celebrated daily, but the Prayer Book appoints no special daily propers for it as it does for Morning and Evening Prayer.) Lastly come the occasional rites, wherein the critical stages of one's life and growth from birth to death are consecrated to God's eternal purposes

THE RATIFICATION OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

BY THE BISHOPS, THE CLERGY, AND THE LAITY OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IN CONVENTION, THIS SIXTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINE.

This Convention having, in their present session, set forth *A Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church,* do hereby establish the said Book: And they declare it to be the Liturgy of this Church: And require that it be received as such by all the members of the same: And this Book shall be in use from and after the First Day of October, in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety.

through the corporate prayer of the whole Church: Baptism in infancy, Offices of Instruction in childhood, Confirmation in adolescence, marriage and childbirth, sickness and old age, and death. Thus the Prayer Book sets forth a pattern for living so that all of time, whether ordinary or extraordinary, is ordered and related to the redeeming and sanctifying grace of God.

THE RATIFICATION

The Ratification takes the place in the American Prayer Book of the Acts of Uniformity of 1559 and 1662, which were printed in the English Books used in the colonial churches until the Revolution. After the Declaration of Independence the convention of the Church in Virginia and various rectors and vestries elsewhere made alterations in the Prayer Book to adapt it to the changed political situation. In 1783 the General Assembly in Maryland granted a petition of the clergy to draft a bill for the revision of the liturgy. Conventions in other states (where the Church of England had not been established) took similar measures.

At a general convention held in Philadelphia, September 27, 1785, deputies from seven states, exclusive of New England, appointed a committee, of which the Rev. Dr. William Smith of Maryland was chairman, to prepare a revised liturgy and a constitution. The convention agreed on the proposed alterations, and a committee of Dr. Smith, William White, and C. H. Wharton was appointed to edit and publish the new Book. This work, commonly known as 'The Proposed Book,' was published in Philadelphia in April 1786, and was submitted to the English bishops and to the various state conventions for their criticisms. It found little favor.

Meanwhile the episcopate had been obtained for the American Church from Scotland and England. At the first General Convention of the whole Church, which met at Philadelphia September 29, 1789, the two houses of bishops and deputies took up again the revision of the Prayer Book. The work was completed in thirteen days, ratified on October 16th, and enjoined upon all dioceses beginning October 1, 1790. Additional services and various minor alterations have been made by successive conventions, and two major revisions were adopted in 1892 and 1928. It has not, however, been considered legally necessary to have new ratifications for the revised Books.

Preface

IT is a most invaluable part of that blessed "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," that in his worship different forms and usages may without offence be allowed, provided the substance of the Faith be kept entire; and that, in every Church, what cannot be clearly determined to belong to Doctrine must be referred to Discipline; and therefore, by common consent and authority, may be altered, abridged, enlarged, amended, or otherwise disposed of, as may seem most convenient for the edification of the people, "according to the various exigency of times and occasions."

The Church of England, to which the Protestant Episcopal Church in these States is indebted, under God, for her first foundation and a long continuance of nursing care and protection, hath, in the Preface of her Book of Common Prayer, laid it down as a rule, that "The particular Forms of Divine Worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency 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 same Church hath not only in her Preface, but likewise in her Articles and Homilies, declared the necessity and expediency of occasional alterations and amendments in her Forms of Public Worship; and we find accordingly, that, seeking to keep the happy mean between too much stiffness in refusing, and too much easiness in admitting variations in things once advisedly established, she hath, in the reign of several Princes, since the first compiling of her Liturgy in the time of Edward the Sixth, upon just and weighty considerations her thereunto moving, yielded to make such alterations in some particulars, as in their respective times were thought convenient; yet so as that the main body and essential parts of the same (as well in the chiefest materials, as in the frame and order thereof) have still been continued firm and unshaken.

Her general aim in these different reviews and alterations hath been, as she further declares in her said Preface, to do that which, according to her best understanding, might most tend to the preservation of peace and unity in the Church; the procuring of reverence, and the exciting of piety and devotion in the worship of God; and, finally, the cutting off occasion, from them that seek occasion, of cavil or quarrel against her Liturgy. And although, according to her judgment, there be not any thing in it contrary to the Word of God, or to sound doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good conscience use and submit unto, or which is not fairly defensible, if allowed such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to

PREFACE

The Preface of the American Prayer Book—one of the monuments of eighteenth-century English prose—was written by the Rev. Dr. William Smith. It consists of excerpts drawn from the much longer preface that he wrote for the Proposed Book of 1786. The second and third paragraphs, as well as the first part of the fourth paragraph, are for the most part quoted from the Preface of the English Prayer Book of 1662. The excellence of this Preface is such that in the two successive revisions of the American Prayer Book in 1892 and in 1928 it was not considered necessary to change or enlarge it.

The Preface summarizes in brief: (1) the general principles of the Church's worship as they are represented in the Anglican tradition; (2) the reasons for the edition of an American Prayer Book distinct from the English; (3) the nature of the American revision of the English book; and (4) a concluding, brief commendation of the Book to the Church's membership and 'every sincere Christian.'

In broad strokes the Preface depicts the boundaries of Christian liberty and ecclesiastical authority, the absolute and unalterable substance of Christian Faith and its relative and changeable outward forms, the due claims of corporate unity and order, and the needs of individual edification and excitement to devotion. It expresses the temper of Anglicanism—a happy mean, a *via media*, between rigidity and license, between excessive reverence for the past and unnecessary innovation in the present. It views the Church as an organic life, preserving its structural continuity with preceding generations, but, because it is a living thing, constantly adapting itself to its ever-changing environment.

In this spirit the Founding Fathers of the Episcopal Church took up the task of revising the Prayer Book, necessitated in the first instance by the political changes caused by the American Revolution. The Episcopal Church was no longer part of an established national Church, governed by the King of England, but one among many 'different religious denominations of Christians,' free of all legal connections with the civil government and dependent upon voluntary support. Necessary alterations in the prayers for the State afforded 'the happy occasion . . . to take a further review of the Public Service.' Over a century had elapsed since the last revision of the Prayer Book,

Preface

all human writings; yet upon the principles already laid down, it cannot but be supposed that further alterations would in time be found expedient. Accordingly, a Commission for a review was issued in the year 1689: but this great and good work miscarried at that time; and the Civil Authority has not since thought proper to revive it by any new Commission.

But when in the course of Divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included; and the different religious denominations of Christians in these States were left at full and equal liberty to model and organize their respective Churches, and forms of worship, and discipline, in such manner as they might judge most convenient for their future prosperity; consistently with the constitution and laws of their country.

The attention of this Church was in the first place drawn to those alterations in the Liturgy which became necessary in the prayers for our Civil Rulers, in consequence of the Revolution. And the principal care herein was to make them conformable to what ought to be the proper end of all such prayers, namely, that "Rulers may have grace, wisdom, and understanding to execute justice, and to maintain truth"; and that the people "may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty."

But while these alterations were in review before the Convention, they could not but, with gratitude to God, embrace the happy occasion which was offered to them (uninfluenced and unrestrained by any worldly authority whatsoever) to take a further review of the Public Service, and to establish such other alterations and amendments therein as might be deemed expedient.

It seems unnecessary to enumerate all the different alterations and amendments. They will appear, and it is to be hoped, the reasons of them also, upon a comparison of this with the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. In which it will also appear that this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require.

And now, this important work being brought to a conclusion, it is hoped the whole will be received and examined by every true member of our Church, and every sincere Christian, with a meek, candid, and charitable frame of mind; without prejudice or prepossessions; seriously considering what Christianity is, and what the truths of the Gospel are; and earnestly beseeching Almighty God to accompany with his blessing every endeavour for promulgating them to mankind in the clearest, plainest, most affecting and majestic manner, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Philadelphia, October, 1789.

and for the first time opportunity was given the Church to order its liturgy 'uninfluenced and unrestrained by any worldly authority whatsoever.' The restraint upon the revisers was solely one of conscience—to 'hold the faith in unity of spirit.'

The tentative effort of the Proposed Book of 1786 had not been altogether reassuring that 'this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require.' The remonstrances of the English bishops and the stiff opposition of the conventions in the northern states with respect to the Proposed Book were not in vain. The free exercise of Christian liberty in the councils of a democratically governed Church steadied the listing ship. The American Prayer Book as ratified by the first General Convention of the whole American Church in 1789 preserved the Church's continuity with its inheritance without destroying its freedom of growth and development.

Concerning the Service of the Church

THE Order for Holy Communion, the Order for Morning Prayer, the Order for Evening Prayer, and the Litany, as set forth in this Book, are the regular Services appointed for Public Worship in this Church, and shall be used accordingly; *Provided*, that in addition to these Services, the Minister, in his discretion, subject to the direction of the Ordinary, may use other devotions taken from this Book or set forth by lawful authority within this Church, or from Holy Scripture; and *Provided further*, that, subject to the direction of the Ordinary, in Mission Churches or Chapels, and also, when expressly authorized by the Ordinary, in Cathedral or Parish Churches or other places, such other devotions as aforesaid may be used, when the edification of the Congregation so requires, in place of the Order for Morning Prayer, or the Order for Evening Prayer.

For Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving appointed by the Civil or Ecclesiastical Authority, and for other special occasions, for which no Service or Prayer hath been provided in this Book, the Bishop may set forth such form or forms as he shall see fit, in which case none other shall be used.

NOTE, That in the directions for the several Services in this Book, it is not intended, by the use of any particular word denoting vocal utterance, to prescribe the tone or manner of their recitation.

THE USE OF THE PSALTER AND THE LECTIONARY

THE Old Testament is appointed for the First Lessons, and the New Testament for the Second Lessons, at Morning and Evening Prayer throughout the year.

The Psalms and Lessons to be read every day are to be found in the following Table of Psalms and Lessons for the Christian Year; except only those for the Immovable Holy Days, the Proper Psalms and Lessons for all which days are to be found in the Table for the Fixed Holy Days.

On the following days, and their eves, if any, the Proper Psalms appointed in the Tables shall be used: Christmas, Epiphany, Purification, Ash Wednesday, Annunciation, Good Friday, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, Transfiguration, All Saints, and Thanksgiving Day.

But Note, That on other days, the Minister shall use the Psalms appointed in the Tables; or at his discretion he may use one or more of those assigned in the Psalter to the day of the month, or from the Table of Selections of Psalms. And Note *further*, That in the case of a Psalm which is divided into sections, the Minister may use a section or sections of such Psalm.

CONCERNING THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

The regulations and rubrics under this general caption are supplementary to the Canon Law. They first appeared in the 1892 Book, were much revised in 1928, and again in 1943 with the adoption of the new lectionary. In general they represent a noticeable trend away from strict uniformity, by allowing for special services to meet the needs not only of extraordinary occasions but also of varying types of congregations found in our churches today. The Bishop or other lawful authority, such as General Convention, is entrusted with the responsibility of approving forms of service not provided by the Prayer Book. But within the framework of the Prayer Book offices, particularly the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, the local minister is given much latitude in the selection and the length of psalms and lessons.

The present arrangement of the Psalter and Lectionary was adopted by General Convention in 1943 after eight years of trial use and free criticism. Its liturgical rationale will be explained below. Its practical advantages are the fruit of the Church's recognition that in the present day parish schedules of corporate worship differ widely according to the habits and needs of congregations that frequent them. Larger congregations assemble Sunday morning than do Sunday evening, and frequently the Sunday evening congregation includes many people who have not attended the morning service. Few people regularly attend weekday services where they are provided. Thus a modern lectionary, which aims at a comprehensive course of psalms and lessons for those who will hear them read, must provide three interrelated but independent cycles: a Sunday morning course, a Sunday evening course, and a day-by-day, week-by-week course.

Another factor that has entered into the shaping of the modern lectionary has been the great advance of Biblical studies and the general change in attitude towards the content of the Bible during the past century. No longer are every chapter and verse in the Bible considered of equal value. Several strata of varying worth may be found within the compass of a single chapter. Some passages, not a few of them in the Psalms, are offensive to Christian taste and sentiment. There will, of course, be differences of opinion regarding the relative merits of specific passages. And it is generally agreed that an overly

pedantic approach to the Scriptures in their devotional use is misplaced. The new lectionary therefore attempts to provide a course of reading inclusive of all those sections of the Bible that are of unquestioned worth—and this, of course, represents the major portion of the Scriptures—but, lest anyone feel cheated of any of the riches of God's Word, latitude is given the minister to lengthen (or, for that matter, to shorten) the appointed selection.

A third principle that has been taken into consideration is a most important one: the Prayer Book belongs to the laity as well as to the clergy. The latter are under a moral obligation (in England it is legal as well) to say the Daily Offices regularly, in private if not in church. The laity have no such obligation, but the Church desires to encourage the laity to make their daily prayers and meditations with the Church so far as possible. It is therefore desirable that the lessons be of such length and contain matter of such interest that the use of the Daily Office will not be tedious to the layman, who cannot be expected to have as professional a knowledge of the Scriptures as has the clergy.

A further concession to flexibility is the provision giving complete freedom to the minister to select psalms and lessons 'as he may think suitable' for special occasions. In view of the greatly extended tables of 'Selections of Psalms' (p. ix) and 'Psalms and Lessons for Special Occasions' (pp. xlii–xliii), these times will likely be very rare indeed.

THE USE OF THE PSALTER

In the Breviary offices the psalms are distributed in such a way that the entire Psalter is read through once a week. When Cranmer reduced the Daily Offices from eight services to two, he distributed the Psalms over the course of a month, but in a strict canonical order without reference to their appropriateness to the morning or evening hours. Only on four major feasts—Christmas, Easter, Ascension and Whitsunday—were special psalms appointed to interrupt this hard-and-fast sequence. The 1662 Book increased by two the exceptions: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The strictness of this regular and orderly scheme of reciting the Psalter was a reaction against the medieval abuse of constant alternation of a few psalms, used over and over again as propers for saints' days, for the weekly course arrangement of 'the old fathers.'

Cranmer's system was unduly lacking in imagination. All too often it happened that penitential or lugubrious psalms coincided with festal days. An initial step in breaking the rigidity of the scheme was taken in the first American Prayer Book of 1789. Ten groups of selected psalms were appointed as substitutions permissible for the regular daily course. The 1892 and 1928 revisions extended the number of alternatives, both by enlarging the tables of 'Selections of Psalms' and by lists of proper psalms that might be used on Sundays and holy days. The new lectionary of 1943, however, has provided a fresh approach to the use of the Psalter, which represents a healthy balance between regular course reading and topical or seasonal selection. Not only Sundays and holy days, but every day of the Church Year has its proper psalm, integrated in theme so far as possible with the lectionary of the day. On non-festal days the psalms continue to follow a plan of course reading, but with due regard to their relative suitability to the morning or evening hours. Psalms of greater devotional worth are appointed more frequently. A few passages offensive to Christian ears are omitted altogether. But the older systems are allowed to be retained, if the minister so desires—either by the day of the month, as assigned in the Psalter, or by the appointed tables—except for eleven specified holy days, when the psalms appointed in the tables must be used.

Concerning the Service of the Church

The Psalms and Lessons printed on the same line are intended to be used together. At any service for which more than one such set of Psalms and Lessons are appointed, the choice thereof is at the discretion of the Minister.

Any set of Psalms and Lessons appointed for the evening of any day may be read at the morning service, and any set of morning Psalms and Lessons may be read in the evening.

The starred Lessons provided for Sundays are particularly appropriate for use when Morning Prayer with one Lesson precedes the Holy Communion.

Upon any Sunday or Holy Day, the Minister may read the Epistle or the Gospel of the Day in place of the Second Lesson at Morning or Evening Prayer.

Upon any weekday, other than a Holy Day, the Psalms and Lessons appointed for any day in the same week may be read instead of those appointed for the Day.

When an Octave is observed for any Holy Day, the Psalms and Lessons for the Day may be used upon the Sunday within the Octave.

Upon special occasions the Minister may select such Psalms and Lessons as he may think suitable.

Any Lesson may be lengthened or shortened at the Minister's discretion.

HYMNS AND ANTHEMS

HYMNS set forth and allowed by the authority of this Church, and Anthems in the words of Holy Scripture or of the Book of Common Prayer, may be sung before and after any Office in this Book, and also before and after Sermons.

HYMNS AND ANTHEMS

This general rubric supplements the Canon on Church Music, by limiting the choice of texts sung in public worship to those that are fitting accompaniments to the doctrine and literary style of the Prayer Book offices. The American Church differs from the Church of England in having an official Hymnal, authorized by the General Convention.

In medieval times Latin hymns were used with the Psalter in the Daily Office and also as festal additions to the liturgical chants sung between the Epistle and Gospel at the Mass. Cranmer apparently had little taste for them; certainly he had no talent for versification. Unlike Luther, he seems not to have appreciated the value and popular appeal of vernacular hymnody. Queen Elizabeth, responding to Puritan sentiment, allowed the use of metrical versions of the psalms before and after the Prayer Book services. But English hymnody as we know it today was developed first by the Nonconformists, and later given powerful impetus by the evangelical revival of the Wesleys.

The General Convention of 1789 authorized the use of the psalms in meter and twenty-seven hymns. During the nineteenth century—the great flowering period of English hymnody—the number of authorized hymns was constantly increased, and they gradually displaced the popularity of metrical psalms. In 1892, 1916, and 1940 the General Convention has approved the use of Church Hymnals, comparable in size and content to those used by other Christian denominations. The variety of texts and tunes, representing the aspirations of Christians in many ages and climes, is a valuable supplement to and enrichment of our worship. And the large body of hymns common and familiar to all English-speaking Christians is a strong bond of unity of faith and devotion connecting the varied modes of worship of the numerous religious denominations.