

## Project Canterbury

## The New American Prayer Book: Its History and Contents

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Chapter I. The Antecedents of the American Prayer Book

The first American Book of Common Prayer of 1789 was not a new book. Its history goes back to the earliest Liturgies and its immediate sources are to be found in the successive Prayer Books of the mother Church of England.

When "in the course of Divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included. At that time the jurisdiction of the English Church ceased in the American colonies. That ecclesiastical independence involved changes in the Prayer Book in use in the colonies by reason of a change in government. The State prayers had to be revised and adapted to the new political order. While advantage was taken of this opportunity to make some changes in the English book affecting doctrine, discipline, and worship, they were kept down to a minimum. The General Convention of 1789 which put forth the first American Prayer Book was careful to affirm 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." [Preface to Prayer Book of 1789, p. vi.] The framers of the constitution of the church and the compilers of her Prayer Book were alike determined to preserve a continuity with the reformed Church of England. It is significant that some of the most important changes in the new American Standard Prayer Book of 1928 are taken from the First Prayer Book of Edward VI published in 1549. It is therefore to the Prayer Book of the Church of England and to the preceding Liturgies that we must turn for the antecedents of the American Book.

Tennyson once wrote, "We are part of all that we know." That is as true of Liturgies as it is of life. The first English Book of Common Prayer was issued in 1549, but its roots are in the far past. Its sources are to be found in forms of service used in the earliest ages of the Church and especially in the forms of prayer used in the monasteries.

In the main the earliest services were non-liturgical, the earliest form of liturgical use probably being the Lord's Prayer, and there are indications of doxologies in the Epistles of Saint Paul. In the course of time worship gradually crystallized into liturgical form. As far back as the fourth century we have "The Prayers of Serapion," a Sacramentary, i.e., a collection of prayers used in the administration of the sacraments. By the seventh century there were in use three Liturgies:

## The Sacramentary

The Divine Office, comprising the prayers used in the seven periods of the day, and

The Occasional Services, such as Dedication of Churches, Marriage and the Reconciling of Penitents

These were separate books written by hand, for the day of printing was not yet. In the course of time it became convenient to combine the different parts of the services in books. They numbered four:

The Missal, or Mass Book, containing the administration of the Sacrament, including the Epistles and Gospels

The Breviary, with the lessons, the Psalter, the collects, prayers for the stated hours and the music books

The Manual, containing the occasional offices including Baptism, Marriage and Burial

The Pontifical, with the offices to be said only by the Bishop, including ordinations and consecrations

These are the main sources of all the Liturgies of the Church. The Missal has been transformed into the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion. The "Pontifical" is now known as the "Ordinal." Our present Morning and Evening Prayer is drawn from the Breviary. The monastic hours of prayer were seven:

At Cockcrow..... Matins  
 Sunrise ..... Lauds and Prime  
 9 A.M..... Terce  
 Noon ..... Sext  
 3 P.M..... None  
 Sunset..... Vespers or Evensong  
 Bedtime ..... Compline

In these various services lessons from Holy Scripture were read; the Psalter was said through each week. There were versicles and responses; the singing of chants like the "*Te Deum*" and the "*Nunc Dimittis*" together with prayers and hymns. It was a short step to combine these offices into Morning and Evening Prayer.

In the middle ages the Breviary became overladen with additions in the shape of legends, "some true, some doubtful, some vain and superstitious," and the services were multiplied by such offices as the "Little Service of our Lady" and the "Service of the Dead" together with numerous other commemorations. They became so long that irreverence crept in and so wearisome that the monks at Exeter whiled away the time in the service by dropping wax from their candles on the shaven crowns of their brethren sitting in the lower stalls. The corruptions in the Breviary were a large factor in the desire for a reformed service.

The other factor was the growing demand for the rendering of the services in what was called

the "vulgar tongue." Prior to 1559 the Mass and other offices were said in Latin; the Scripture lessons also. Then came the great moment when the Bible was translated into English. Coverdale's translation appeared in 1535, fourteen years before the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. Three years later there was set up in every English church a "Bible of the largest volume in English where it might be read without exposition or disputation." How eagerly the multitudes flocked to hear the reading is vividly described in John Richard Green's *History of the English People*. Then followed an order to teach the people in English the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments. In 1554 the curate of every parish was directed to read "openly one chapter of the New Testament in English without exposition; and when the New Testament was read over, then to begin the Old." This paved the way for the eventual substitution of English for Latin in the public services of the church.

The same year it was found that the people had become slack in attendance on the Rogations and this was partly attributed to the fact "that they understood no part of such prayers as were then sung and said." Consequently, as the quaint record runs, there were "set forth certain godly prayers and suffrages in our native English tongue." These godly prayers and suffrages, issued on June 11, 1554, constituted what we know as the Litany which was compiled by Archbishop Cranmer and remains today substantially as it was in the reign of King Henry VIII. So the Litany was the first part of the Prayer Book to be said or sung in English. It was a long step toward an English order of divine service. Other steps followed in rapid succession. It was ordered that at High Mass the Epistle and Gospel should be said in English. Under Edward VI a Book of Homilies appeared and on March 8, 1548, came the "Order of Communion." In this was printed in English the Invitation, Confession, Absolution, Comfortable words and the Prayer of Humble access; the rest remained still in Latin. Prior to this it had been ordered that the Holy Communion should be administered to the laity in both kinds. The Order of Communion provided that water should be mixed with the wine. The next step was the removal of all images from the churches. In May at St. Paul's Cathedral Matins, Mass and Evensong were sung in English. Westminster Abbey followed suit and administered Communion in both kinds. Such radical changes as these prepared the way for a new Book of Common Prayer.

The first English Book of Common Prayer, commonly known as the First Prayer Book of Edward VI, received the assent of Parliament on January 21, 1549, and was published under the title page of:

THE BOOKE OF COMMON PRAYER AND  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS  
AND OTHER RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE  
CHURCHE: AFTER THE USE OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Its use was enforced by the Act of Uniformity which made the use of any other liturgical forms illegal in England.

The Preface points out that in time past the "godly and decent" order of reading Holy Scripture had been marred by the interposition of stories and legends; that there had been great variations in the order of service--the Hereford, York and Sarum use; that the service had been read in Latin so that the people were not edified. The justification for a new Book was its design to restore the integrity of the reading of Holy Scripture; to have the prayers read in a language

understood by the people and a uniform divine service. Another section dealt with the abolition of certain ceremonies, begun with "godly intent, but often falling into indiscreet devotion." A further section dealt with vestments. At Holy Communion the bishop was directed "to have upon him, besides his Rochette, a surplice or Albe, and a Cope or Vestment; also his pastoral Staff, either in his hand, or holden by his chaplain." And, it went on to say: "As touching kneeling, crossing, holding up of hands, knocking on the breast, and other gestures, they may be used or left, as every man's devotion serveth, without blame."

The Book began with an Order for Matins daily throughout the Year. It differs, from the American Book in that it begins with the Lord's Prayer and ends with the present third Collect. The "*Venite*" was followed by the Psalter, and between the Lessons the "*Te Deum*" or the "*Benedicite*." The rest was as in the present book save that there was no Benediction. Evening Prayer was much as it is now. A rubric provided for the saying of the Athanasian Creed on six specified Sundays in the year. Introits were inserted to be sung before the Epistles and Gospels.

The doctrinal crux of the Book is in the Office of Holy Communion. The title is significant:

THE SUPPER OF THE LORDE  
and  
THE HOLY COMMUNION,  
COMMONLY CALLED THE MASS

The retention of the word "Mass" was a concession to long established tradition. The priest's vestments at this service were to be "a white Albe plain, with a Vestment or Cope," and assisting ministers' "the vestures appointed for their ministry, that is to say, Albes with Tunacles." This too was traditional. The Prayer for Christ's Church, now a separate prayer, was then linked with the prayer of the Consecration of the elements. It had a significant clause of thanksgiving for the "wonderful grace and virtue declared in all thy saints from the beginning of the world," and added, "and chiefly in the glorious and most blessed Virgin Mary, mother of thy sonne Jesus Christ our Lorde and God, and in the holy Patriarchs, Prophetes, Apostles and Martyrs." It included also a prayer for "all other thy servants, which are departed hence from us, with the signe of faith, and do now rest in the slepe of peace." Direction was given to make the sign of the cross in the Prayer of Consecration. The Prayer of Consecration in the American Book is, in the main, taken from this Book of Edward VI. Communion was to be in both kinds.

The appended rubrics guarded against solitary masses. "There shall be no celebration of the Lord's Supper, except there be some to communicate with the Priest." The Bread for the Communion was to be uniform throughout the realm--"unleavened and round ... but without all manner of print, and something more larger and thicker than it was, so that it may be aptly divided in two pieces at the least, or more, by the discretion of the minister." The last rubric is of great importance. In quaint language it reads:

And although it be read in ancient writers that the people many years past received at the Priest's hands the Sacrament of the Body of Christ in their own hands, and no commandment of Christ to the contrary; yet forasmuch as they many times conveyed the same secretly away, kept it with them, and diversely abused it to superstition and wickedness: lest any such thing hereafter should be attempted, and that an uniformity might be used throughout the whole Realm, it is thought convenient the people commonly receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body in

their mouths, at the Priest's hand.

In the Office of Baptism provision was made for exorcising the evil spirit from a child; the giving of a white vesture or Crisome and anointing as a symbol of the unction of the Holy Spirit. The child was to be dipped in the water three times: first the right side; second the left and third with the face toward the Font with the instruction that it "be discreetly and warily done." In Confirmation the bishop crossed the candidates in the forehead. At the giving of the ring in marriage the man said, "With this ring I thee wed, etc. This gold and silver I give thee; with all my worldly goods I thee endow; with my body I thee worship." A Collect, Epistle and Gospel were provided for the Holy Communion at a marriage.

The Office for the Visitation of the Sick made provision for private confession and a form of anointing; permission was also given for reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for the sick person "and so many as shall communicate with him." The Burial Office definitely provided prayers for the dead; also for a requiem Mass. The service for the First Day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday, called for the grim recital of a series of curses leveled against those who removed the mark of a neighbor's land; caused the blind to go out of his way; smote a neighbor secretly and against fornicators, adulterers, worshipers of images, slanderers and drunkards.

In the Prayer Book of 1549 there was no service for: ordinations of deacons and priests or the consecration of bishops. This was added in 1550 when the Ordinal was authorized by Act of Parliament. It recognized only three Orders in the Ministry. The oath of Supremacy called for a repudiation of the Bishop of Rome and went on, "And I from henceforth will accept, repute, and take the King's Majesty to be the only supreme head in earth, of the Church of England: So help me God and the holy Evangelist."

Such, in broad outline, was the First Prayer Book of the reformed Church of England. We have described it in some detail because though it was subsequently changed, it yet provided the basic foundation on which future Liturgies were built. It was frankly a compromise between the old and the new learning; an endeavor to preserve all that was of proven value in the old and to embrace and embody the new ideas and aspirations. On the one hand certain rites and ceremonies were abolished; orders in the ministry were simplified; solitary Masses were forbidden as was also the use of Latin in the public services and such offices as the Service of the Dead and the Commemorations. On the other hand, private confession, anointing of the Sick, the sign of the Cross in Communion, Baptism and Marriage, Prayers for the Dead, the use of the word "Mass" and eucharistic vestments were retained. The Prayer Book of Edward VI in 1549 is an illustration of liturgical reform; not liturgical revolution.

The Book remained in use for a little over three years and then it was superseded by the Second Prayer Book of 1552. From the beginning it met with determined opposition. There were not a few in the church, notably a group of bishops led by Bonner of London, who had no desire for a reformed Liturgy and evaded its use when they could. Traditional English conservatism inflamed the masses of the people against reform, and the west of England was in open revolt against the Book. Radical reformers like Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester and Ridley, who succeeded Bonner in London, were displeased at the sacramental doctrine of the Book. Hooper complained bitterly of the frequency of the sacraments, vestments and candles and asserted that "the mass priests, although they were compelled to discontinue the use of the Latin language,

yet most carefully observed the same tone and manner of chanting to which they were heretofore accustomed in the papacy." A little later he described the Book as "very defective and of doubtful construction, and, in some respects, indeed, manifestly impious." Opposition too arose from an important group of foreign Reformers who had found refuge in England and some of whom became divinity professors at Oxford and Cambridge. John Calvin intervened in a strong letter of protest against, the Crisome and Unction and prayers for the dead and urged that "rites, which savor at all of superstition, be utterly abolished." Archbishop Cranmer fell more and more under the domination of these men and in 1550 publicly repudiated the doctrine of transubstantiation. Ridley removed the high altar from St. Paul's Cathedral and "set up God's Board after the form of an honest table decently covered." The extremists were in the saddle. The old Prayer Book was doomed.

Into the details of the making of the new Book we cannot enter; indeed, little is known of its compilation. But on April 14, 1552, the assent of parliament was given to the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, and it was ordered to be used on All Saints' Day.

In this Book, as compared with the First, appear for the first time the familiar Opening Sentences; the Exhortation beginning, "Dearly beloved brethren," etc.; the General Confession and the Absolution. The changes in the Communion Service amounted to a doctrinal revolution. It was here that the radical reformers had their fling. Everything of the nature of priestly sacerdotalism was swept aside. Eucharistic Vestments were forbidden. The word "altar" was eliminated, also the subtitle, "Commonly called the Mass." Introits were deleted and the Ten Commandments added. The reference to the Virgin Mary and the patriarchs and prophets in the Prayer for Christ's Church were removed; also the clause praying for the dead. The sign of the cross in the Consecration Prayer was omitted and the Prayer itself mutilated. The words at the distribution of the bread and wine were changed to avoid the mention of taking the Body and Blood of Christ. Unleavened bread required in the First Book was no longer mandatory, and there was to be no Communion except three or four were present with the minister. The Second Book continued the rule for kneeling at the reception of the elements--a practice to which John Knox and the like violently objected. To placate such men the famous "Black Rubric" was hurriedly inserted three days before the Book was issued. Referring to kneeling it says:

We do declare that it is not meant thereby, that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either to the Sacramental bread and wine there bodily received, or to any real or essential Presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the Sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful christians. And as concerning the natural body and blood of our saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is against the truth of Christ's natural body, to be in more places than one, at one time.

Behind this ponderous language lies the deliberate repudiation of the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood and the prohibition of Adoration. At one fell stroke the Second Book broke with the earlier Liturgies of the Church as well as with the Book of 1549. For the time being the Church of England ceased to be Catholic in her sacramental doctrine and became Presbyterian.

The same ruthless hands mutilated the Office of Baptism by the omission of Exorcism and the

giving of the white vesture. Anointing was omitted from the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, as was also the provision for the reservation of the Sacrament. The Nuptial Mass was left out of the Marriage service and the Requiem Mass from the Burial Office; also the prayers for the dead. And so the sad and sorry story runs. It only remains to be added that this Second Book never received the sanction of the Church. It was the work of the state. Convocation was never consulted.

Eight months later the young king died and with him the second Prayer Book which bore his name. When Mary came to the throne the Mass was again sung in St. Paul's Cathedral and the bishops who had been deprived of their sees by the reformers were restored. The foreign protestants fled the country and Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper and others went to the stake. Parliament was opened with the Mass of the Holy Ghost and England returned to allegiance to Rome.

Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth came to the throne. By slow and cautious steps the way was paved for a new Book of Common Prayer. At the beginning of 1559 it was intimated that laws would be enacted "for the uniting of these people of the realm into a uniform order of religion and that nothing should be done which would continue any kind of idolatry or superstition." The revision was the work of a commission of ten divines, and in April, 1559, the Third Prayer Book was adopted by Parliament, nine bishops voting against it. Again Convocation was not consulted. The changes were comparatively few, but important. The petition in the Litany to be delivered "from the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities" was removed. The famous "Black Rubric" was omitted and what came to be known as the "Ornaments Rubric" ordered the minister to "use such ornaments in the church as were in use by authority of parliament in the second year of the reign of king Edward VI." In 1561 the Kalendar of Lessons and the list of the black-letter saints were revised and the following year the number of the Articles of Religion was reduced from forty-two to the present number of thirty-nine. This Prayer Book of Elizabeth was not to the liking of the Puritans, whose influence was steadily growing. A proposal in Convocation to abolish all festivals, organs, the signs of the cross in Baptism, all vestments other than the surplice and compulsory kneeling at Communion was lost by only one vote. In the *First Admonition to Parliament* issued by the Puritans the Prayer Book was described as "an unperfect Booke, culled and picked out of that Popish dunghill, the Portuise (Breviary) and Mass-book, full of all abominations." A well-known Puritan preacher boasted that he had "made eight sermons in London against surplices, rochets, tippets, and caps, counting them not to be perfect that do wear them." As time passed it became evident that nothing short of a new Prayer Book would satisfy the Puritans. Pending this some met for worship secretly in private houses, using a "Book of Prayers framed at Geneva for the use of the English exiles there." Waxing bolder, they presented for approval of Parliament A *Booke of the Forme of Common Prayers, Administration of Sacraments &c* based entirely upon the Knox Service Book of Geneva.

So matters remained until the accession of James I in March, 1603. Within less than a month the Puritans drew up and presented to the king the "Millenary Petition" setting forth their grievances and praying for redress. As touching the Prayer Book they petitioned that the cross in baptism, the questions addressed to infants in that service and the Confirmation office be eliminated from the Book entirely; that some other words be used for "Priest" and "Absolution"; that the services be shortened; the giving of a ring in marriage abolished and the observance of

Holy Days be not so strictly enforced. They asked for uniformity of doctrine; "no popish opinion to be any more taught or defended; no ministers charged to teach their people to bow at the name of Jesus: that the canonical Scriptures only be read in the church." These and other abuses, they said, "we are able to show not to be agreeable to the Scriptures," and asked for an opportunity to prove their case. Their request was granted and in January, 1604, King James presided over a conference of bishops and other divines and representative Puritan ministers. Certain changes in the Prayer Book were agreed upon. A new section was added to the Catechism dealing with the Sacraments. A prayer for the royal family together with thanksgiving for rain, fair weather, plenty, peace and victory were also added. A concession was made to the Puritans who desired to abolish the public reading of the Apocrypha by omitting certain parts of it, and private baptism was restricted to a "lawful minister." The rite of Confirmation was explained by adding to the title the words, "or laying on of hands upon children baptized, and able to render an account of their faith, according to the Catechism following." To the title "Absolution" was added the explanatory words "or Remission of sins." With these changes the new Prayer Book was ordered into use on March 5, 1604.

It survived until the establishment of the Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell and then met with short shrift. On January 3, 1645, the Long Parliament abolished the King James Prayer Book and substituted for it *The Directory for the Public Worship of God in the Three Kingdoms*. One week later Archbishop Laud was executed. An Ordinance of August 23 forbade the use of the Book of Common Prayer "in any public place of worship or in any private place or family" under a penalty of five pounds for the first offense; ten pounds for the second and for the third one whole year's imprisonment. The same Ordinance provided that to say anything "in opposition, derogation or depraving" concerning *The Directory* could be punished by a fine of five or fifty pounds "at the discretion of the magistrate."

The Restoration of the monarchy carried with it the restoration of the English Prayer Book. When Charles II was proclaimed at Durham an entry in a parish register reads: "On which day I, Stephen Hogg, began to use again the Book of Common Prayer." The king's first Sunday was spent at Canterbury, the Prayer Book being used in the Cathedral, and within one month its use was authorized in all the churches. On the return of the king the Puritans petitioned that the Prayer Book might be conformed to the liturgies of the reformed churches, to which the bishops replied that "the nearer both their forms and ours come to the Liturgy of the ancient Greek and Latin Churches, the less are they liable to the objections of the common enemy." Charles responded by summoning the Savoy Conference which convened April 15, 1661, and consisted of twelve bishops and an equal number of Presbyterian divines, including Richard Baxter, the immortal author of *The Saints' Rest*.

The Presbyterians put forth many demands to be incorporated in a new Prayer Book. Among them that bowing at the name of Jesus be abolished together with "erecting altars, bowing towards them and such like." They objected to the observance of Lent as a religious fast; likewise the observance of Saint's Days; also to the use of the words "Priest," "Curate" and "Sunday," and saw no necessity for godparents in Baptism. The surplice, the sign of the cross in Baptism and kneeling to receive the Sacrament they objected to as "fountains of evil," and they likewise protested against Confirmation as a prerequisite for the reception of Holy Communion. The bishops were, for the most part, adamant and they had the people behind them. The Conference came to naught and it was reported to the king that "the Church's welfare, that



unity and peace, and his Majesty's satisfaction were ends at which they all agreed, but as to the means, they could not come to any harmony."

The next step was taken by Convocation and on December 20, 1661, the revised Book was approved by the Convocations of Canterbury and York. It was then submitted to Parliament and the new Act of Uniformity received the royal assent on May 19, 1662. So the Fifth English Book of Common Prayer was issued by the joint authority of Church and State.

In analyzing this Book it at once becomes evident that the large demands made by the Presbyterians were rejected. This was done on the ground that "they were either of dangerous consequence ... or else of no consequence at all, but utterly frivolous and vain." Vestments, kneeling at Communion, the sign of the cross in Baptism, the absolution for the Sick--to all of which they had strenuously objected--were retained in the Book of 1662.

There were some six hundred changes. A new Prefix to the old Preface declares that the Church of England in her Public Liturgy had ever striven "to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it." This was the aim of the new Liturgy. The Epistles and Gospels were taken from the new King James' Version, but the Psalter from the Great Bible of 1540. Many occasional prayers and thanksgivings were added, notably the beautiful Prayer for all Sorts and Conditions of Men written by Gunning, afterwards Bishop of Ely, and the General Thanksgiving. Two collects were added for the Ember Days and new ones for the third Sunday in Advent and Saint Stephen's Day; also an entirely new one for Easter Eve. There were also added for the first time Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea; Services for January 30, The Martyrdom of the Blessed King Charles I; May 29, the Restoration; and the old service for the Fifth of November, the Gunpowder Plot, was revised. In the Prayer for Christ's Church Militant in the Communion Office there were inserted the words, "We also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear." New rubrics directed the presentation of the Alms and the placing of the bread and wine on the holy table; provision was made for consecrating more bread and wine when needed; for covering what remained with "a fair linen cloth" and a direction to consume any remaining consecrated elements with the specific direction that "it shall not be carried out of the Church." Reservation thus became unlawful. The "Black Rubric" was retained with a change of the words "real and essential Presence" to "Corporal Presence."

The spread of the Church of England to the American colonies and plantations and to the West Indies was recognized by the provision of a new Office of Baptism for Adults to meet the need "of the baptizing of natives in our plantations, and others converted to the faith." The Catechism was separated from the Confirmation Office and in the latter the familiar question, "Do ye here ... renew the solemn promise" ... was inserted. Generally speaking "priest" was substituted for "minister"; "priests" for "pastors" and in some cases "church" for "congregation." Another rubric provided for anthems "in quires and places where they sing." A clear distinction between the office and work of a bishop as compared with that of a priest was made in the Ordinal. In the Marriage service provision was made for the first time for the publication of the Bans of Marriage and the old provision for a Celebration of the Holy Communion was omitted. In the older Prayer Book Communion was mandatory. In the Book of 1662 the rubric reads: "It is convenient that the new-married persons should receive the holy Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first opportunity after their Marriage." A significant rubric was added to the Burial Office reading, "Here it is to be noted, that the Office ensuing is not to be used for

any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves," and the mention of the name of the departed at the grave was omitted.

Such, in the main, were the changes made in the Fifth Book of Common Prayer, the Book in use in the American colonies at the time of the War of the Revolution and the Book which formed the basis of the First Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. It is interesting, however, to note that the revision which has resulted in the new American Prayer Book has proceeded in point of time side by side with the revision of the Prayer Book of the Church of England which has not, as yet, received the assent of the High Court of Parliament.

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Project Canterbury