

The Journal
of
The Church of England
(Continuing)

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and to day,
and for ever. Heb. 13:8*



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The Association of the Continuing Church Trust. Registered Charity Number 1055010

CONSTITUTION

1 **Doctrine:** The doctrine of the Continuing Church shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.

2 **Worship:** The worship of the Continuing Church shall be generally according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Authorised Version of the Bible shall be the only version used in the lectern and the pulpit and in public readings and expositions at all meetings of the Continuing Church.

3 **Ministry:** The consecration and ordination of ministers shall be according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). The Continuing Church believes in the ministry of women according to Scripture which does not permit them to teach or exercise authority, particularly as bishops, priests, and deacons.

4 **Discipline:** The church shall be episcopally governed. A general assembly shall be held not less than once a year consisting of the bishop and the ministers of the church and representatives of the local congregations to transact the business of the denomination and for mutual encouragement and edification.

5 **Membership:** New churches may apply for membership of the Continuing Church on the basis of their agreement with the doctrine, worship and discipline of that body.

Membership of the local church shall be on the basis of baptism and confirmation and approval by the local presbyter.

Any matters incapable of resolution shall be referred to the Ordinary.

The Continuing Church publishes a prayer letter, "Intercessions." It is available free of charge to those who would like to receive news and to pray for the various needs.

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Would contributors please note that they can send their news via email, to
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Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.

From the Presiding Bishop, Edward Malcolm

15, Bridge Street
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Dear Friends,

“...called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us..” (Joshua 22:34)

Calling our friends both within the C of E and those who joined other churches

Forty years together in the desert and many years spent fighting the Canaanites, made a close relationship, just as our island people grew closer together in a mere five years of war, and those in the forces still hark back to that special camaraderie. So we, who fought to keep the Church of England to the Bible over a lifetime, remember our bond with you who felt as we do but remained within, and we are most unwilling to lose that special relationship together.

Do not cut us off

The reason for putting up the altar was for “a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us”. The Lord separated the tribes, but those who went home across Jordan feared the others on this side Jordan would in time cut them off as ‘un-Israelite’, as having left the service of the Lord.

That is already happening between those who remained within the Church of England, and we who are just as much Church of England, but outside the structures. Many dismiss us as having cut ourselves off. No, it was the Lord who separated us. We did what we did in obedience to His call. Giving women rule over men in the Church of England, argue as they will, was the first official open act of defiance of God’s Word to have been enshrined in the Church of England and made an article of belief. We could not in conscience be a part of it.

We are still Church of England

So we reply “God forbid”. We still offer our worship to God and serve Him as did the Church of England. All we refuse is the increasingly blatant abandonment of Scripture by the majority within the Church of England. We hold dear all you hold dear. “The Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord (save us not this day,) that we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord...” We have set up our “Ed”, the Church of England (Continuing), as a witness that we worship obediently, according to the way of our fathers.

Indeed, far from us becoming different, those who wished to become something different amongst us have grown dissatisfied, and left us and joined others. We remain yours.

So the reason we have set up our ‘Ed’, our witness, is the opposite. “If we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel?”

Speak to your children to honour what we have done, and follow our example, and not reject us. "And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God and did not intend to go up against them in battle." That is our plea, 'accept us'.

We appeal to you

We are not dreamers, but have set our hand to plough, through cold and rain and against the season we live in, which is the winter of Christianity. We shall reap in due season if we faint not. No, we are practical and hard headed. Let me explain.

There are young men in Britain who are called of God to the Church of England ministry, but want nothing to do with propping up the present state of affairs within. They see that the source of the trouble in the C of E is that the Word of God is no longer followed. So they seek Anglican ministry, but outside the structures, and therefore come to us. They are mostly unsupported, working with their own hands to gain a livelihood. We do not take on any who have more than one wife alive, in accordance with 1 Timothy 3: 2. We are interested that they walk in the Lord and in the light, and are trained.

We ask you to think, not count heads

At the time of the Reformation, thinking men could see plainly that the then Church of England needed reforming. A few courageous men lifted their voices. They consisted of three types.

One was the many Mystics, saying they had arrived at Truth directly and intuitively, and had immediate soul-dealings with God, so could perform miraculous and extraordinary works. They appealed in addition to the Bible, but were weak on sin, grace and faith. They failed because who could say ultimately they were right and the Church wrong? Their successors make much ado today.

Another group, by far the largest, was the Traditionalists, who appealed for a return to the Church as it was in the vague past. They failed, because the past Church, whilst perhaps a bit better, was even then deeply flawed, and at bottom this was an appeal, not to God's Word, but to morality. Traditionalists exist today, but will never get far.

The third group, first Wycliffe, later many others, appealed directly and only to God's Word, in a scholarly yet homely way proclaiming the Church of England was wrong by the yardstick of the Bible. They were the ones who caught the full blast of the Church's hatred, but who had hold of the only force capable of cleaning out the Augean stable. They lived the purest lives, and alone gave us the Bible back, so in time fathered the present huge world-wide movement of God's Spirit.

Your friend,



A CALL TO WORSHIP

by **David N Samuel**

Psalm 96:9 “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: let the whole earth stand in awe of him.”

Why do we meet together for worship? The Book of Common Prayer gives us a very good and exhaustive answer, which we find in the Exhortation to Morning and Evening Prayer, immediately after the Scripture sentences. The reasons stated are these:

1. “To acknowledge and confess our sins” and to receive forgiveness from God.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). The Lord Jesus himself has given us the parable of the Pharisee and the publican both going up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee felt no need to confess his sins or to seek forgiveness. The publican does, and confesses his sins and acknowledges his unworthiness. And Jesus said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.”

The confession of our sins is the right and proper way to begin our worship and to approach God. We find the principle exemplified throughout Scripture. Isaiah in the temple, when he saw the Lord high and lifted up, immediately cried out, “Woe is me! for I am undone.” Peter in the boat, when it dawned on him that he was in the presence of the holy Son of God, cried out, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

If, like these, we come into the presence of God empty, we shall go away full. “He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.” So sang the Virgin Mary in Magnificat, and such must be the experience of all who come to worship God in spirit and in truth.

That then is the first thing we must do when we come to worship God. Much modern liturgy has set aside the confession at the beginning of the service and begins with praise. The Reformers thought otherwise, and they were right, and exemplified in their services the need first to confess our sins and to seek forgiveness and grace.

2. “To render thanks for the great benefits we have received.”

Giving thanks to Almighty God is an important part of worship. We have much to be thankful for. There is first of all “common grace,” that is, “our creation,

preservation, and all the blessings of this life.” God has created human beings with minds and spirits, above the brute creation, by which we can acknowledge our Maker and return thanks to Him for common mercies. We sink to the level of the animal, or below, if we neglect to do this. But there is also “special grace”; God’s “inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Christian believer has so much more to thank God for, since by grace through faith in Christ he has been made a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Paul singles out unthankfulness as one of the root causes of sin. In Romans 1 he writes generally of the moral condition of mankind and states, “that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.” He then goes on to point out what were the consequences of this unthankfulness. They “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” They became idolatrous and as a consequence licentious. All this flowed from unthankfulness. Martin Luther in his comment on this passage has the following to say about the sin of unthankfulness: “Take note of the order of the stages of perdition. The first is ingratitude or the failure to be grateful. Thus Lucifer before the Fall was ungrateful to his Creator. It is the result of self-complacency: forgetting the giver, one delights in accepting the gifts as if one had not received them. The second is vanity: one feeds on one’s own self and all that is created and enjoys that which lets itself be used, and so one becomes necessarily vain... The third is deluded blindness: deprived of the truth and immersed in vanity, one necessarily becomes blind in one’s whole feeling and thinking because one is blocked in upon himself... Therefore *the fourth is to be in error toward God*, and this is the worst because it leads to idolatry. To have come this far is to have come to the abyss. For to one who has lost God, nothing is left but to be exposed to every kind of turpitude that the devil invents.”

What a dreadful commentary upon the wickedness of mankind in every age, particularly the present, which all arises from one source, unthankfulness; the failure to acknowledge that “every good and every perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights.”

3. “To set forth his most worthy praise.”

One of the delightful parts of worship is the singing of God’s praises. Praise is different from thanksgiving. We praise God for what he is, holy, almighty, gracious, merciful, wise, all-knowing. These are some of the attributes of God. We praise him because he is God and we are his creatures. We get some insights into God’s glory when we look at the world he has made. For example, the Psalmist declares, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful

of him?” (Psalm 8:3 & 4). Looking up at the night sky we get some faint intimation of the greatness and glory of God who made the universe, his power, majesty and wisdom; for “the heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Psalm 19:1).

But most of all we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who is “the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person”. The apostle draws a parallel between the revelation of God in nature and in the person of Christ when he writes: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). The revelation of God’s character in nature is complemented and surpassed by the revelation we are given in Christ his Son. The Christian then has every reason to praise God for the revelation of himself, which he has given to us first in creation, but secondly and supremely in his Son Jesus Christ.

4. “To hear his most holy Word.”

Hearing the word of God from the Bible and through the preaching of the Gospel is worship, for God speaks to us through his Word and through the servants of the Word. When God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush he told him to put off his shoes, for he was standing upon holy ground. And Moses hid his face and worshipped. The same is true for us. Wherever God speaks to us through his Word, we are in the presence of God and we are to worship him. As William Cowper has put it,

Jesus, where’er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where’er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.

Sometimes people have the idea that the worship finishes with the hymn before the sermon and that what follows is merely listening to a man giving us his views and ideas on religion and the state of the world. And we must confess that in some churches that is a pretty accurate description; but it ought not to be so. If the servant of God is a faithful minister of the Word of God, he will seek to bring to his hearers the very words and message of God himself. In the sermon we shall encounter the truth of God and hear him speaking to us, and the only proper response to that is worship and submission. “I heard thy voice,” said Adam, “and was afraid.” And Isaiah declares, “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word.” (Isaiah 66:5). Hearing the Word of God with godly fear and submission is indeed true worship of the highest sort. It is something which is not common today in the churches, because both preaching and hearing have sunk to a very low level and lack seriousness. Like much else in worship today,

the sermon has become entertainment. But if we rightly understand it, it is the Word of God which quickens us and makes us spiritually alive. “Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). It is the Word of God which cleanses us from sin. “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). Faith is imparted and strengthened by the Word of God: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). We see, then, how hearing the Word of God is an indispensable and fundamental part of worship.

5. “To ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.”

We have both the need and the opportunity in worship to ask our heavenly Father for what we require for our physical and spiritual well-being. It is true, as our Lord says, that our heavenly Father knows all our needs before we pray, but he likes to hear us ask him and turn to him with our petitions. The Bible teaches us that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). God is the source of every blessing and is unchanging and faithful. Since that is so, then it is clear that we must go to him for what we need, and we may go with confidence for he bids us come, and because we come in the name of his dear Son, Jesus Christ.

As John Newton put it, in his inimitable manner,

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For his love and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.

The public worship of the church is, then, an occasion when we can bring all our requests before God, and seek his help and blessing. In that way we can ease our minds of anxiety, fear, and care; which is why Paul says, “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6 & 7).

These are the reasons we gather for worship. It is good to keep them before our minds as the Prayer Book helps us to do.

THE HERITAGE OF THE PRAYER BOOK

by **Roger Beckwith***

All Christians, of whatever allegiance, would probably claim to follow the examples and commands of the New Testament in their worship, in the same way as users of the Prayer Book do. But the Prayer Book way of following them is distinctive—it is a liturgical way of doing so. Liturgy is worship in set forms, such as can be written down or learned by heart. It is particularly suited to themes that are permanently and universally relevant, as all the greatest themes of Christian worship are. This is not the only way of worshipping God, but it is a traditional way which has definite sanction from the Bible. The Psalms in the Old Testament and the Lord's Prayer in the New Testament are instances of worship in set forms— liturgical worship. Of course, there are also instances in the Bible of prayers not in set form but newly composed for the occasion, and Christians are free to worship in this way also, and are wise to do so when they want to bring before God particular individuals and local or temporary needs. Those who worship liturgically at Sunday services can still use freer forms on less formal occasions, though the reverse does not seem to be equally true. Be this as it may, the liturgical way is the historic Anglican way of worshipping at the church's main corporate services, and the Prayer Book is a particularly fine example of liturgical worship.

In liturgical worship, it is possible for particular texts to remain in use for centuries, and even throughout Christian history. The lessons from the Bible which are read at Christian services are obvious examples, but there are other shorter passages, such as the Grace, (2 Cor. 13:14), which Christians use as a prayer, and there are sung items as well, notably the Psalms, and Canticles like the Magnificat, Benedictus and Nunc Dimittis, taken from the Gospel of St. Luke (Luke 1:46-55, 68-79, 2:29-32). Scattered throughout the Prayer Book, there are also ancient texts from the periods of the Fathers and the early Middle Ages, which Thomas Cranmer, the compiler of the Prayer Book, adopted and did not alter beyond translating them into fine English. The three Creeds, the Te Deum at Morning Prayer, and the Gloria in Excelsis at Holy Communion are examples. Most of the Collects for Sundays and Holy Days are translated by Cranmer from old Roman Collects (though where necessary he substituted excellent collects of his own composition, such as those for the first two Sundays in Advent and the Sunday after Ascension Day). The Burial Anthem 'Man that

This paper may be found in a fuller form in *The Story of the Prayer Book*, published by the Harrison Trust, to which acknowledgements are made. It was given in the present form as a public lecture at St. Mary's Castle Street, on 13th September 2003

is born of woman...’ and the Ordination hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* (‘Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire’) are other examples of ancient texts which the Prayer Book has translated, and so are the four short prayers before the main payer at Baptism, which Cranmer introduced from the Mozarabic liturgy, the ancient liturgy of Spain. Another of his borrowings from ancient sources elsewhere is the Prayer of St. Chrysostom at Morning and Evening Prayer and in the Litany, which comes from the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The Marriage vows, which are in such curiously antiquated English, and stand out from the rest of the Prayer Book by having a strange word-order, were one of the very few items which were already in English in the mediaeval services, where the rest was in Latin. It was recognized even then that the couple had to understand what they were promising, and, as the words were so familiar, Cranmer retained them in their mediaeval form.

Doctrine and Reform

The late Middle Ages was a period in which tradition, instead of being the servant of Scripture, came to be treated as its master, with a resultant decline both in doctrine and in morality. Worship suffered as well. Biblical preaching was neglected, the reading of Scripture became disorderly, and ceremonial became enormously complicated. The worship of the transubstantiated elements, prayer for the dead detained in purgatory, and the invocation of saints as if they were minor deities, became major focuses of worship, despite their unbiblical character. Moreover, since the language of public worship was Latin, which was no longer generally understood, even what was good was lost upon the majority. When, providentially, the revival of Greek learning at the Renaissance recalled attention to the Scriptures in their original tongues, the need for a reform of church life became widely recognized, with a reform of worship as part of it.

The great Reformation of the Western church began on the Continent, about 1517, and only spread to England about 1530. The reform of worship had therefore made some headway on the Continent by the time it got under way in England, and there were continental models to assist Thomas Cranmer, the reforming Archbishop of Canterbury, in the task. He was particularly helped by a revised Breviary of the daily services, drawn up by Quignon, a Spanish cardinal living in Rome, and published in 1535, and by a manual of reformed worship and discipline called the *Consultation*, issued by Archbishop Hermann of Cologne in 1543. Quignon remained a Roman Catholic, but Hermann was one of the few bishops who joined the Lutheran Reformers. The Reformation followed somewhat different lines in Germany, where it was guided by Martin Luther, from the lines followed in Switzerland, where it was guided by Huldreich Zwingli and John Calvin. Though Cranmer was influenced by Calvin’s sacramental teaching, his approach to worship in general was more influenced by Luther, and this led to his retaining what was good in the existing worship of

the church, and not trying to attempt to sweep everything away and begin again, as Zwingli attempted to do.

Reform by Stages

One of the advantages of retaining what was good from the past was that Cranmer could make some claim to be beginning from where people were. As he said himself (echoing the New Testament), an unnecessary degree of change injures Christian unity and wounds the conscience of the weaker brother. The same cautious motives led him to reform worship by steps and not all at once. In 1538 the English Bible had been set up in every church, and in 1543 he started introducing readings from the English Bible into the Latin services, and further extended the practice in 1547. He could now move much faster, with the accession of a more sympathetic king, Edward VI, in place of his father, Henry VIII. In 1548 he introduced English communion devotions, and the administration of the sacrament to the laity in both kinds (not just the bread, as formerly), into the Latin Mass. In 1549-50 he published, within a single manageable volume, a complete manual of worship in English, the first Book of Common Prayer. In 1552 he published a revision of it, in order to make its biblical teaching much more explicit. Among other changes, he altered seven features of the 1549 Holy Communion service which had been turned by Bishop Gardiner of Winchester to support unreformed teaching. This revision was only just in time, as Edward VI died the following year, and Cranmer's work was brought to an end by the accession of Queen Mary. Whether he would otherwise have produced a further revision is doubtful. The only real evidence shows that he might have altered some of the rubrics.

On three occasions in the next one hundred and ten years, small changes were made to the Prayer Book, to bring it to the form with which we have been familiar since 1662. And in 1662, under Charles II, a detailed revision was carried through, though all the changes made were minor, and the character of the book remained unaltered. The changes were summarized in the 'Preface', which was added at that date, as of four kinds: fuller directions to the minister, modernizing of obsolete words and phrases, use of the most accurate translation for passages of Scripture, and provision for fresh needs (notably by the addition of an Adult Baptism service).

Temporary Suspension

The Prayer Book was withdrawn in 1553, when Queen Mary attempted to restore mediaeval Christianity, only to be brought back by Queen Elizabeth six years later. It was again withdrawn in 1645, when the Puritans of the Commonwealth period introduced non-liturgical worship. It was brought back again at the Restoration of the monarchy in 1662. There has been talk of withdrawing it a third time in our own day, when the Church and State

Commission of 1970 unsuccessfully proposed to give the General Synod power to do this. What has instead been done has been to promote as aggressively as possible the use of alternative services, so that this time the Prayer Book has tended to disappear from view without actually being prohibited.

Attempted Revision

Revision of the 1662 Prayer Book has been attempted in England on three main occasions, prior to the present day. In 1698 the aim was to conciliate moderate Nonconformists, in 1880 (following the revival of Convocation) to update certain of the rubrics, and in 1927-28 to satisfy the new aspirations of Anglo-Catholics and Broad Churchmen. In each case the proposals were rejected because of insufficient agreement, though in the third case they came into widespread use. Actual revision took place among Anglicans abroad, beginning in Scotland in 1637, during the struggle between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, and continuing in America in 1789, following the break with the British Crown in the American War of Independence. Up until the 1960s, Cranmer's Prayer Book was normally taken as the starting point for revision, and the additions, subtractions and transpositions made in it left much of the text unchanged. From the 1960s onwards, however, following a new policy proposed by Dom Gregory Dix in his book *The Shape of the Liturgy*, it has been normal to set Cranmer's Prayer Book on one side, and to begin again from patristic patterns, filling them out with much of the liberal theology popular in the 1960s, expressed in a modern idiom of language. The *Alternative Service Book (1980)*, and *Common Worship (2000)* have been produced on these lines, but the attachment to the Prayer Book has not died, and seems to be reasserting itself.

The Principles of the Prayer Book

1. *The Centrality of Scripture.* It is not often that a writer tells us as fully as Cranmer does the principles which he set before himself and tried to implement in his book. The essay 'Concerning the Service of the Church' at the beginning of the Prayer Book is Cranmer's preface (the 'Preface', called by that name, having been added by the 1662 revisers), and it expresses his concern to restore the public reading of the whole Bible, more or less, and also of the Psalms, in an orderly and regular manner, and in the vernacular language. If anything else is read in the services, such as passages from the Apocrypha, they must be agreeable to the Scriptures. The essay 'Of Ceremonies' which follows explains that the ceremonies of the services have been formed in such a way that they clearly set forth the Gospel, without obscuring or distorting it. Students of the Prayer Book have observed how constantly and deliberately the wording of its services echoes the teaching and even the language of the Bible. In the nineteenth century the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge used to circulate a book called *The Liturgy Compared with the Bible*, by H. I. Bailey, in which he set out, in parallel columns, the whole spoken text of the Prayer

Book and the passages of Scripture on which each part is based. It is currently being republished in sections by the Harrison Trust.

2. *Edification.* Cranmer was much influenced by the teaching on public worship given by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14. In his essay ‘Of Ceremonies’ he quotes Paul’s words, ‘Let all things be done unto edifying’ (1 Cor. 14:26), and applies it to those helpful ceremonies which are ‘apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification’. Edification means building up, and Paul uses it of the building up of Christian character through the understanding. In this connection, Cranmer’s other essay refers to the discouragement Paul gives, in the same chapter, against using unknown tongues in the congregation, and it applies this to the current custom of reading the Scriptures and conducting services in Latin. Instead, Cranmer introduced the liturgical use of English, in which he proved himself not just a pioneer but a master. His Book of Common Prayer is still highly edifying today. The only problem is that in the English of the Prayer Book there are about one hundred different words or phrases which, since 1662, have fallen out of use or changed their meaning. They are listed and interpreted in *Praying with Understanding*, published by the Latimer Trust. On the whole, however, Prayer Book English is still perfectly intelligible. It is not colloquial English, and it never was. But, however unfamiliar Cranmer’s manner of expressing himself may seem, it is only rarely difficult to understand.

3. *Orderliness.* The essay ‘Of Ceremonies’ also quotes Paul’s other great maxim in 1 Corinthians 14, ‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’ (1 Cor. 14:40). Liturgy itself, as the essay hints, is an orderly form of worship, and it goes on to say that to disrupt the common order of the church, without authority, is an offence before God. Those who did in Cranmer’s time, the essay explains, were either people who objected to anything being altered in pre-Reformation custom, or people who objected to anything in it remaining unaltered—traditionalists or forerunners of the Puritans. Cranmer steered a middle course between them. We have, of course, people who disrupt the common order of the church today also, but their motives are different. Most are clergy who do not appreciate the value of liturgical worship, and therefore play fast and loose with the liturgy in the vain hope of being helpful to the congregation.

4. *Simplicity.* The mediaeval liturgy was hard to celebrate. The rubrics were in separate books from the texts, and they were both many and complicated. To adjust the service to the occasion was a large task. In addition, the ceremonial was extremely elaborate, and much of it was obscure, if not actually misleading. In his two essays, Cranmer tells us how he had attempted to meet these problems by thoroughgoing simplification. He pruned the rubrics to such an extent that they had to be developed somewhat even in 1662, in the interests of decency and

order. Since that time, mostly through unofficial action, ceremonial has tended to become elaborate again, but it was not until the *Alternative Service Book* that the church was confronted again with a set of ‘Rules to Order the Service’ that ‘rival the number and hardness of the rule called the Pie’, which Cranmer was so concerned to abolish. Some decisions, in the conduct of worship, should always be left to common sense!

5. *Corporateness.* The title that Cranmer gave to his liturgy, ‘The Book of Common Prayer’, is itself a plain declaration of his intentions. ‘Common’ means ‘for everybody’—not just for the country in general, in place of the regional ‘uses’ of the Latin liturgy (though it did replace them), but for every individual. In particular, it declared that the book was not just for clergy (as the Latin liturgy, with its ‘secret’ prayers and learned language, largely was) but for the laity too. It was in the vernacular; it was simple; its rubrics declared that everything was to be made audible and visible; it provided for the laity to be offered communion as often as they were willing to receive, not just once a year, and in both kinds, not the bread alone; and it gave them a good deal to say and sing. Though, until well after 1662, more than half the population were still illiterate, and the Prayer Book had to avoid making unreasonable demands upon them, it provided a good deal which they could learn by heart, and a good deal which they could say in turn after the parish clerk. We, who have the privilege of universal literacy, can encourage the congregation to join in suitable items which Cranmer did not require them to, but even what he did not require showed how sincerely he aimed at corporate worship or ‘common prayer’. And in doing this he nevertheless retained a God-centred emphasis. We, who know from modern experience how easily corporate worship can degenerate into man-centred worship, are in a position to recognise what a remarkable achievement this was.

6. *Respect for Antiquity.* Even if we did not have Cranmer’s explicit statement at the end of his essay ‘Of Ceremonies’ to inform us, we would be able to tell from his book how much he respected Christian antiquity. His other essay commends the Bible-reading practice of the early church. The opening exhortation of his Communion service commends the disciplinary practice of the early church, and desires its restoration. The preface to his Ordinal points out the extreme antiquity of the three-fold ministry, going back even to ‘the Apostles’ time’, and expresses a determination to maintain it. And we saw earlier how he maintained many ancient texts from the pre-Reformation liturgy, and restored others. It is therefore often supposed and even asserted that Cranmer’s great aim was to restore the worship of the patristic period, in the same way as revisers of the Prayer Book in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland and America attempted to do. If this had indeed been his aim, it would be perplexing that he did not get nearer to it, considering how unusually good was his knowledge of patristic literature and worship. In reality, however, his aim

was to bring worship back into conformity with Scripture. When this involved change, he always gave first consideration to ancient example as a possible model to follow, looking next at continental example, and finally, only if both these failed him, doing something original. But where something true to Scripture was already in use, he did not attempt to change it at all, but left well alone.

These six wise principles are the ones by which Cranmer was mainly guided, and since he carried them out with such skill, they gave his Prayer Book the unique quality which has so long stood the test of time.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

from “Thoughts on the Prayer Book”

by John Charles Ryle

Firstly, although salvation does not depend on going to church, and a prayer book is not necessary to get to heaven—a personal interest in Christ is the one thing needful; yet there is no denying that our edification in public worship depends greatly on the kind of prayers that are prayed. Better preaching may be heard in a Chapel, but seldom better prayers. So no one should esteem the Prayer Book lightly, or think it no consequence whether we hear it used on Sunday or not.

Secondly, if the Prayer Book has so many excellencies, the members of the Church of England ought not to be ashamed of defending it and upholding it. If anyone decries it, ask if they know any better form of worship. It is easy to say that the Prayer Book is imperfect and faulty. It is not quite so easy to show that extempore prayers are better. The Church of England may well be ashamed of its ministers sometimes. It never need be ashamed of its liturgy.

Thirdly, members of the Church of England ought to study the book more, and become more acquainted with its contents. So many, who consider themselves excellent Churchmen, know little about it and its teaching. They can hardly tell you what their church asks them to believe and how to worship. There is need for people to know it more fully.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

The Spiritual Benefits of Returning to the Traditional Services

by **Peter Ratcliff**

You may have noticed that if you are away from home on the Lord's Day and visit another place of worship that you find all sorts of things going on. We naturally all do things a bit differently and are no doubt best in our home congregation where we really do belong together as a flock of sheep with their pastor under God. However sometimes we find things are very different from what we are used to. It is thought by many that the old ways don't work any more. Like the social revolution in society at large, anything goes, and ministers are experimenting with every possible way of "doing church" as they demeaningly describe what should be seen as holy worship. It is claimed that nowadays people can only tolerate short soundbites and that everything must be ultra-relevant and contemporary. To facilitate this the preaching is either broken up or at least lightened up. It is called the talk rather than the sermon to make it sound less threatening. It is claimed by many that the Authorised King James Version of the Bible is 'Ye Olde Englishe Verescione' at best, and at worst is in a language nearer to Latin than modern English. They say that the Prayer Book is quaint although they purport to believe its strong doctrine. This type of talk is quite unfounded and perhaps stems from worldliness.

Current Worship Dilemmas

Strangely where traditional nonconformist hymn sandwiches have been replaced by singing sessions with music groups there is still a sense of awkwardness. The new tunes often have combinations of very short and very long notes that are hard to follow as songwriters attempt to fit unmeasured lines into metre. The Anglican Psalm chants are simple in comparison and soon mastered. A sense of unity is lost as everyone does their own thing during these concert like performances. Some sit, some stand and some don't sing at all but chat with their neighbours about their clothes. Some young people have their own services or even their own churches where they neither benefit from nor challenge their elders. Sometimes extended prayer and Bible reading is replaced by interviews, mini plays or simply a time to chat with and hug one another. It can soon get to the point that we go to services primarily because we have to meet people to discuss things rather than to meet with Almighty God. Most don't bother with the evening service. It is rightly said that God is everywhere, but the belief that we can talk to Him anywhere and anytime we like is not meant to replace meeting together with Him. It is so easy to lose the sense of awe. That sense of awe is not created by atmospheric music whether it be popish Gregorian chanting or the latest Jesus I

Love You song. Rather it comes simply from the amazing truth that where two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, there He is in the midst.

It may sound upside down but despite these trends in worship I want to convince you of the benefits of using the Book of Common Prayer services of Morning and Evening Prayer. It is particularly helpful for preparing the congregation to hear the preaching of the Word of God. I suppose it is necessary to defend the practice but really I want to be far more positive than that.

The Ways of Samuel Walker of Truro

If you read the long out-of-print *Life of the Reverend Samuel Walker of Truro* by Edwin Sydney you will see that the town of Truro was revived under Walker's ministry without any gimmickry at all. (The new Evangelical Press biography of Walker by Tim Shenton is said to be excellent.) Walker lived in the time of the eighteenth century evangelical revival when Methodists were rising in influence and he was not ashamed to be associated with them. However, although Walker was powerfully converted during the revival from being a jolly hunting and high-society fellow of a minister, he never went in for the extremes of Methodism. Rather he simply became a serious but down to earth kind of preacher. He believed in doing things in a very orderly way. J.C. Ryle places Walker in the very highest category of eighteenth century ministers along with Whitefield, Wesley, William Grimshaw, Romaine, Daniel Rowland, Berridge, Venn, James Hervey, Toplady and Fletcher of Madeley. Ryle explains that the only reason why Walker is less well known is because he was down in West Cornwall for most of his life. The fact that most of the town of Truro was converted under Walker's ministry, and that the rest of the town feared him and gave up their Sabbath breaking pursuits, and that the public houses were virtually put out of business, shows that Walker's method which was old fashioned even in his own day, was far from unworkable.

Walker kept to the old paths of the Book of Common Prayer. He had extra meetings during the week but he did not allow the free-for-alls that brought some Methodist meetings into disrepute through gullible excesses. Again I stress that Walker's ways worked. If you are a pragmatist or a purpose-driven-churchman you should think about that. I put it to you that God the Holy Spirit was very much involved in the compiling of the Prayer Book services. They were written by men such as Archbishop Cranmer who were burnt at the stake for their stand for truth. How such times must have focussed the mind with a due reverence toward God and utter dependence upon His mercy and grace. This seriousness was not morose or dull but rather a consequence of the fact that real dealings with the living God were taking place in the lives of men. This seriousness and genuine devotional love to the Lord was carried over into the services. Compare that with the TV worldliness that infiltrates the church today and you may

conclude that there may be good reason to retrace the steps of church history to reclaim some gems from 1662.

1662 And All That

You may suggest that the 1662 services could never have been very spiritual because so many good and godly puritans left the Church of England in the Great Ejection. We must remember that they did not all leave. I suggest that the heavy-handedness of bishops was a far more significant cause than any minor particular problems with the essentials of the services of Morning and Evening Prayer. Indeed many who left would not have radically altered their form of service. Many among them did not throw out the baby with the bathwater but continued, like the Church of England (Continuing), to use much of the Prayer Book outside of the formal structures of the Church of England. Furthermore when we consider how far worship services have generally been downgraded from the Prayer Book's high aims, it might be asked where we should go to return to a more biblical form of church service. Of course the Bible is our answer and it is the Bible we find in the Prayer Book. Cranmer rejected what was wrong with previous services but did not reject the good. He did not reject the work of the Holy Spirit over previous centuries. The ultra-radical approach of not using anything except the Bible is unworkable. It is a rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit over the last two thousand years. Taken to its logical conclusion it rejects the church completely as it is always using words apart from Scripture to express Scripture. It must reject all of the written words that have been used since the Bible was finished. To reject them all is to say that these men were not godly and that we are on a higher spiritual plane and have a better understanding of the Bible. It is simply arrogant to propose that twenty-first century Christians have as high a view of and as close a walk with God as did some of the early Christians, the Reformers, the Puritans, and men like Whitefield and Walker in the eighteenth century. Who among us has been converted having agonised and pleaded with God or wept for weeks to receive Christ, as many of our forebears? If we really had such confidence in our discernment we would not only need to reject the Prayer Book, but all forms or habits that had developed. It would mean the rejection of not only all old hymns, but also modern hymns as they too would be dated and unreliable and need to be replaced by spontaneous melody. Then we would have to reject the writings and sermons of the last two millennia, many of which were instrumental in the refuting of error, the conversion of souls and the building of the Church to the glory of God. In short our doctrine of the Church would be erroneous. We would be saying that the gates of hell had prevailed and the Lord Jesus had not been building his church as he promised.

Purposeful Services

In Sydney's *Life of Walker* there is a chapter by Walker which has been serialised in the *English Churchman* recently. It shows how the Morning and Evening Prayer services are so carefully written in order to lead us step by step from our

sin and up to God. It is perhaps a shame that we usually nowadays start the service with a hymn rather than the Scripture sentences about sin as originally set out. Is it because we want things not to be so solemn? The fact that the Lord's Supper was to follow Morning Prayer and that ministers were not expected to be brief in their preaching makes one wonder what great spiritual and indeed physical capacity our forebears had in them.

Technical or Spiritual Problems in Worship

Maybe we do not think that we have such a capacity. We may think that all we can manage is a hymn sandwich so that we lighten up as soon as we have had a serious time of prayer or Bible reading. We may say that we do not like to say the same words week by week, although judging by the choruses, and even much polite conversation, repeated over and over again, that does not seem to be a problem for many. However, I put it to you that we often have excuses and give explanations parrot fashion that are not the real reasons why we object to the Prayer Book. I put it to you that the services of Morning and Evening Prayer are indeed very weighty. If we get tired of them I suggest it is because we are getting lazy and that we have made little effort in the past week to grow in grace and that we need to be convicted of this sin and of sin in general. We realise that we are saying the same words but from the same perspective as previously because we have not moved on. Maybe we are beginning to backslide. Of course it is a solemn thing to confess our sins communally at the opening of the service and we should be shocked by our sin. We should grieve. But our reaction should not be to run away, rather we should flee to Christ, to His blood and righteousness. This is where these old services are so precious. Right from the start we are warned not to dissemble nor cloak our sin. The singing then, as Walker explains, is a response to hearing again about salvation. Then we come to prayer.

A Great Aid to Preaching

We come then to the preaching of the Word of God. Of course I am speaking only of the evangelical preacher who is the only one who really intends to preach. That is not because he is more eloquent than others, but because he alone has the Gospel to preach. So it is that when the preacher comes to preach after the prayers, that he has before him a congregation who are prepared. They have been involved in worshipping in spirit and truth, not because they are superior, but because they have not skirted the issues. They have cried out to God in distress about sin and they have also soared to the heavenly heights as they have been overwhelmed with the joys of salvation. Not all will have done this as well as others, but all have come some of the way towards being ready to hear a sermon. The young will perhaps have understood just a little better than in previous weeks, while the older believer may have seen just a little more brightly at some particular point. As the preacher starts preaching he is encouraged that the congregation have already said much of what he is about to say to them! He

is not having to convince hearts that have been warmed or softened up merely by musical atmosphere and pastoral niceties. The congregation is already serious. The congregation, if they have been diligent and not just mouthed the words, are already on his wavelength.

Being Spiritual Not a Matter of Form

I hope none of you believe in the Prayer Book in a superstitious way. There are some who just like its beautiful language but don't care for the Calvinistic doctrine that addresses God as the one without whom we can do nothing but sin. Some seem to believe that the mere sound of the lovely words pleases God. We are told by the Lord Jesus in John 4 that the true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth. That neither means that we should or should not use written prayers or responses. It means that both the purely aesthetic lovers of the Prayer Book, and those who despise its orderliness, are wrong. We must say the words meaningfully. We may add in words of encouragement or elucidation from time to time to help our congregation understand the purpose of the services. Perhaps we will sometimes remind them that we will say the words of the oft repeated Lord's Prayer somewhat slowly and carefully.

The Beauty of Flexibility

We had a visit from two zealous brethren recently who were obviously used to a far more extemporary and modern style of worship than ourselves. I wondered how they would cope with our more formal services. Thankfully they were actually rather spiritual serious men and they joined in heartily with the words although there was no bouncy music to jig them along. They fully believed the words of the responses such as when the congregation reply, "The Lord's name be praised". It is right that we must say such words with our whole strength to the glory of God. It is quite conservative to do so and not to mumble them parrot fashion. At the end of the service one brother said that he would like to use a similar style of service if he was a minister.

The Grace of Humility

Finally we must not think we can look down on those who do not use the Prayer Book services. God sees the heart. His saints for whom Christ died are precious. We have totally missed the truth of the Prayer Book if we are conceited or think of ourselves as superior to others. We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Paul wrote to Timothy that those who strive for masteries must do so lawfully, so we merely commend to you the services of Morning and Evening Prayer as being of very great benefit. We are not to be puffed up, we are miserable sinners saved by the amazing grace of God. This is what makes the 1662 Prayer Book services so helpful. We should not impose them so rigidly that we cannot breathe, but neither should we deviate from them so much that we just have a jamboree of human centred preferences.

THE LEADING PRINCIPLE

of the Prayer Book

By John Charles Ryle

It is absolutely essential to understand the great leading principle upon which the Prayer Book was first compiled, and on which it was always meant to be interpreted. It is a principle which runs right through, and much damage has been caused and false teaching given through lack of knowledge or neglect of it.

The principle of the Prayer Book is to suppose that all members of the Church are in reality what they claim to be in profession; namely, true believers in Christ and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. The Prayer Book takes the highest standard of what a Christian ought to be, and is worded, right through, accordingly. The minister addresses those who come together for worship as believers. The people who use the words of the liturgy are supposed to be believers. But yet those who drew up the Prayer Book never meant to assert that all who are members of the Church of England are actually and really true Christians. In fact, in Article 26 it is stated “in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good”.

However, the compilers held that if forms of devotion were drawn up then they must be written on the supposition that those who used them were real Christians and not false ones. In fact, a liturgy cannot be compiled on any other basis. A liturgy for unbelievers or unconverted people would be absurd and practically useless. The people for whom it was meant would care nothing for any liturgy at all, while the converted part of the congregation would find its language entirely unsuitable for them.

a) The Baptismal Service.

This general principle applies to the baptismal service, for it supposes that those who bring their children to be baptised, bring them as believers. The infants are baptised as the seed of godly parents, and the godparents and parents are exhorted, as believers, to pray that the child may be born again and encouraged to lay hold on the promises made. And as the child of believers the infant, when baptised, is pronounced “Regenerate”, and thanks are given for it.

b) The Communion and Confirmation Services.

Surely no intelligent person would seriously maintain that all the communicants who say “the remembrance of our sins is grievous and the burden of them is intolerable” do really feel and mean what they say! An examination of the lives of many shows that they feel nothing of the kind. Equally, no common sensed person really believes that all the young persons, when confirmed, really think

that they are “bound to believe and do”, what they profess when they say in reply to the Bishop’s question, “I do”. Too many never think at all! But in both cases, the Prayer Book puts into the mouths of those who are confirmed or who come to the Table, the language they ought to use, on the great ruling principle of charitable supposition. But it does not in the least follow that all is right because of the language that is used.

c) The Collects.

Many of the collects can only be fully explained if this principle is accepted. The Epiphany collect says, “Grant that we who know Thee now by faith may after this life have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead”. Surely no one would maintain that the compilers of the Prayer Book meant to teach that all who use the Prayer Book do know God by faith. The Collect for the third Sunday after Trinity says, “We to whom Thou hast given an hearty desire to pray”. No one can doubt that this form of words is used by many of whom it could not strictly and truly be said for one minute. But in these, and many other instances, there is one uniform principle; that of charitably assuming that members of a church are what they profess to be. The Church puts into the mouths of her worshipping people the sentiments and language they ought to use, and if they do not come up to her high standard the fault is theirs, not hers. But to say that by adopting such expressions she stamps and accredits all her members as real and true Christians in the sight of God, would be manifestly unreasonable.

d) The Churching of Women.

Every woman for whom the service of ‘Churching’ is used is spoken of as the “Lord’s Servant”, and is required to answer that she “puts her trust in the Lord”. But no one can deny that such words are utterly inapplicable in the case of many of those who are churched. They are not servants of the Lord, nor do they put their trust in Him. Further, it cannot be argued that, because they used these words, the compilers of the Prayer Book considered that all women who were churched really did trust in the Lord. The simple explanation is that they based the service on the same great principle, that of charitable supposition.

e) The Service for Adult Baptism.

In the service for adult baptism the minister first prays that the person about to be baptised may have the Holy Spirit given to him, and be born again. The Church cannot take upon herself to pronounce decidedly that he is born again until he has witnessed a good confession, and shown his readiness to receive the seal of baptism. Then, after that prayer, he is called upon openly to profess repentance and faith before the minister and congregation, and that being done, he is baptised. Then, and not until then, comes the declaration that the person baptised is ‘regenerate,’ and is born again and made an heir of everlasting salvation. But can these words be strictly and literally true if the person baptised is a

hypocrite, and has all along professed that which he does not feel? In fact, the words are used on the charitable assumption that he has repented and does believe. It is quite plain that, in the absence of this repentance and faith, the words used are a mere form. The Church cannot draw up two forms of service, and in a case like this they do not imply for a moment that inward and spiritual grace necessarily accompanies the outward sign, or that a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness is necessarily conveyed to the soul. The person baptised is pronounced “regenerate” upon the broad principle of the Prayer Book that people are charitably supposed to be what they profess to be.

f) The Burial Service.

In the burial service the person buried is spoken of as a dear brother or sister. It is said that it has pleased God for His great mercy to take to Himself his soul. “We give thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world”. “Our hope is this our brother rests in Christ.” In using statements like this, did the compilers wish us to believe that all this was strictly and literally applicable to every individual over whose body these words were read? No one can honestly say so. The simple explanation is that the service was drawn up, like the rest, on the charitable assumption that all members of a Church were what they professed to be.

g) The Catechism.

In the catechism, everyone is taught to say, “In baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven”, and “I learn to believe in God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God”. Does this mean that the Prayer Book writers intended to lay down the principle that all baptised children are sanctified and elect? Certainly today no minister can say that every child in his parish who has been baptised is actually sanctified by the Holy Ghost. It would be an exceptional parish if he could; or else Bible words have no meaning. Again there is but one explanation, namely these words are words of charitable supposition, and they cannot be taken in any other sense.

It is quite impossible to understand how anyone cannot see this principle in the Prayer Book. It is quite certain that Paul wrote in his epistles on this principle. He constantly addresses the members of the churches as saints and elect, and as having grace, faith, hope and love, although it is evident that some of them had no grace at all! Obviously the compilers of the Prayer Book drew up its services on the same lines, and it is on these lines of charitable assumption alone that the book can be interpreted.

So it must not be forgotten that this principle, that worshippers really are what they profess to be, runs through the whole of this most valuable book. On this principle it is an incomparable manual of public worship. Without this principle people tend to draw from it lessons which it was never meant to teach.

THE REVEREND HENRY VENN (1724-1797)

In the setting of his time

By Lewis H. How

It would be quite wrong to exalt the memory of one whose dedicated purpose in life it was to exalt our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But, by leave of our Lord Himself we may rightly refer to Henry Venn as salt which lost not his savour; (Matthew 5:13) because, in fellowship with other Evangelical Anglicans of the eighteenth century, Henry Venn was, as Dearmer called them, “the salt of the English Church ...fighting through contempt and opposition, to change the tone of the Church of England” when she was hamstrung by political interference within a society marked by violence, moral indifference and a sharp demarcation between rich and poor.

Although the Church then enjoyed the doctrinal and liturgical equanimity of her re-establishment from the Restoration of 1660, she had lost much of her intellectual energy and spiritual piety through the departure of the non-conformists and non-jurors. Nevertheless, under William and Mary at the close of the seventeenth century, The Church of England was vibrant and active. Attendance was high, within eight years more than five hundred charity schools had been founded, and the age of Societies had begun. Many of these societies were aimed at the reformation of manners and morality as well as devotional exercises and schemes of practical good. Of particular note are The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), 1698, and The Society for the Propagation of The Gospel in foreign parts (S.P.G.), 1701. Furthermore the Church continued to thrive under Queen Anne who came to the throne in 1702. She built new churches and returned the Episcopal tithes of first fruits or annates to church income in the form of support for clergy with poor livings and known as “Queen Anne’s Bounty” a redress of Henry and Elizabeth’s earlier usurpation. By mid-century however, this religious activity had all but vanished within the life of the church. The problem behind the loss of church vitality following Anne’s reign was due primarily to the politicizing of religion. While the Reformation had purged the church of mediaeval doctrinal innovation, it had left her functional operations under monarchical control. By the eighteenth century this control had been transferred to parliament, where party politics replaced subjugation under the Sovereign.

With the accession of George I the liberals (Whigs) dominated parliament.

This article is kindly supplied by the Reverend Lewis H. How, and first appeared in ‘The George and Dragon’

Liberal bishops were appointed to the House of Lords, who in turn favoured Whig clergy in granting livings. In order to overcome the problem of poor livings in this nepotistic system, the practise of *pluralities* was widely undertaken. This created the terrible pastoral neglect of wide spread absenteeism and vicar appointments at starvation wage levels. The inequities and pastoral abandonment were outrageous. While, for example, the bishop of Durham received six thousand pounds per annum, many poor clergy such as Henry Venn, received barely or less than one hundred pounds and still others under fifty pounds serving as assistant curates and vicars. At one point a quarter of the Church of England's ten thousand parishes were without a resident parson. In Devonshire the rate was as high as seventy percent by 1780.

The church was powerless to right this devastating wrong because of parliament's control of Episcopal appointments, which as mentioned above, reflected in the Georgian Church, liberal nepotism. Adding to this spiritual malady were further ills such as the lack of clerical education, poor roads hampering Episcopal travel during the bishop's diocesan visitation time of summer and fall, the secular attack of Deism, the closure of the Church's convocation in 1717, and the social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution.

The English country folk were not irreligious in this malaise, although understandably, they were for the most part parochially apathetic and generally neglected. Amidst this situation God acted with salt and light through the Evangelical Movement, which was a Gospel grounded response to the mass spiritual hunger engendered by the age. Unhappily though, its joyful enthusiasm was suspect to many Englishmen late in the century, who unjustifiably imagined a parallel between revivalism and the revolutions in America and France because of the perception that the Evangelical spirit was a disestablishment movement. Furthermore, the enthusiasm, which had earlier given birth to the age of Societies, had been rejected by Georgian liberalism. The new missionary zeal of the Evangelical therefore suffered initially from suspicion, mockery and dismissal. Tragically the greatest missed opportunity of the movement was Wesleyan isolation by the Church of England, dividing gains where they might have been multiplied.

The Reverend Henry Venn emerged as one of the key figures in the Evangelical Movement, which thrived within the established church. His personal development models the spiritual essence of the movement.

The age was not without its Christian giants responding to such challenges as Deism and moral indifference. Bishop Butler shattered the Deist's assault against Christianity with his book *Analogy of Religion*, 1736, while William Law's work *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, 1728, instilled new commitment to the

moral virtues. Henry Venn in his early days as a curate was dedicated to Law's methods. Throughout his time of discipleship to Law, Venn was however, fundamentally unhappy, due to his inability to achieve the goals presented by the cardinal and theological virtues. But Venn broke with Law, when he perceived in the author's latter works, *Spirit of Love* and *Spirit of Prayer*, a position which "represented the blood of Christ as being of no more avail, in procuring our salvation, than the excellence of His moral character" (Venn Biography); a view Venn rightly rejected as dismissive of our Lord's all sufficient atoning death.

Venn therefore turned to the study of scripture. Here he

perceived that his attachment to mystical writers had hitherto led him to overlook the particular provision which is made for fallen and sinful man in the Gospel of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He now saw that it was not upon the perfection of our obedience, but upon the all sufficient merits and infinite mercies of our Redeemer, that we are able to rely for our justification...Hence the religion of Christ then became to him a religion of hope, peace and joy, under the blood of Christ". (Venn Biography p.20)

In this "evangelical" state Henry Venn then desired holiness as a glorification of "Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous Light". Henceforth his evangelical preaching and pastoral ministry flourished. During his time at Huddersfield, Yorkshire (1759-1771) the church could not hold those who ventured to hear the Gospel, and many conversions marked the blessing of Mr. Venn's ministry.

Like Charles Simeon, upon whom he exercised great influence, Henry Venn did not align himself according to either camp of Calvinism or Arminianism then competing for followers, but recognized the mystical Biblical grounding of both. Freedom to choose Christ did not negate God's plan of salvation. "Though the doctrines of Grace are clear to me", he wrote, "I am still no friend to high Calvinism. A false libertine Calvinism stops up every avenue: sin, the Law, holiness, experience are all nothing" (p.32)

Ill health forced Venn to leave Huddersfield for Yelling, Huntingdonshire, in 1771, and finally back to his old parish of Clapham to die in the rectory where his son John then resided. The last witness he bore to our Lord's Gospel was in viewing death as the final task in our Christian sojourn. As salt retaining its savour, Henry Venn proclaimed the Cross of Jesus to be every Christian's free and only cause for glory. "There are some moments", he once said, "when I am afraid of what is to come in the last agonies; but I trust in the Lord to hold me up, I have a great work before me—to suffer, and to die, to His Glory!" (p.56)

Venn and his fellow Evangelicals brought the Gospel back to thousands who had

been disenfranchised by the political interference of the Georgian Liberals. Where Wesley had made “the world his parish”, these men “took their parishes for the world, and awakened whole districts into new life.” They were at first opposed, and even persecuted:

but their piety and . . . zealous preaching, with its insistence on the depravity of human nature, the need for personal conversion, and the vicarious Atonement of Christ, made a great impression, and their devoted witness bore abundant fruit, alike in the deepening of Churchmen’s lives and in the promotion of good works.” (Bell)

The label of Low Churchmen, so often applied to these great Evangelicals because of ceremonial preference, is, I suggest, quite inappropriate. It was the liberal clerics of the day; the so-called *Latitudinarians* who I contend deserve the title because of their disregard for Doctrine and Liturgy, attempting philosophically to elevate man as a child of reason rather than a fallen sinner. The fruition of their thinking can be seen today in the liberal self-declaration of fiat orthodoxy, the assertion that authority rests in the *mind of the Church* rather than the *Revelation of The Holy Bible*. Evangelicals like Henry Venn, by contrast, loved the Church of England for her true beauty, founded upon Holy Scripture, in full possession of the Dominical Sacraments, evangelical in spirit, after the Great Commissioning of her Lord, and blessed with a rational, ordered and resplendently beautiful liturgy, enshrining creedal Christianity. Thanks be to God for the faithfulness of The Reverend Henry Venn and all the great evangelicals of the eighteenth century revival. May it please God in His Mercy to bring revival again in our day.

Mr. Venn’s Receipt for Spiritual Well Being:

I hope you will read your Bible with much prayer. I can give you a never-failing receipt to make a complete Christian and an heir of Glory. You will find the medicine described in the Nineteenth Psalm, 7-11; and the method of taking it, Proverbs 2:1-9. By the use of this medicine and method, you will...certainly improve, and grow in Grace...This is our condemnation; and, alas! this is the real cause of our being so weak in faith, so cold in our love, so confused in our notions; the Bible, and prayer over it for the true understanding of it, is not our exercise, our constant employment.

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A number of the congregations within the Continuing Church are in the habit of recording sermons onto tape. These are available to readers of the Journal who may wish to hear sermons in this way.

Contact Mr J Westmacott, 1 Salisbury Close, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 4AJ for details of sermon texts available, and to request copies of tapes.

Tapes cost £1.25 each, including postage and packing

Please make cheques payable to St. Mary's Castle Street

NEW BOOK NEW BOOK NEW BOOK NEW BOOK NEW BOOK NEW BOOK NEW BOOK

The Church of England (Continuing) are pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of a new title by

The Rt. Rev. Dr. David N. Samuel

THE CHURCH IN CRISIS

This book is being published to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the setting up of the Church of England (Continuing) in February 2004.

This represents a major financial venture for the Church of England (Continuing) and your prayers and practical support are requested.

Readers of the *Journal* are invited to contribute towards the cost of publication, and also to register for copies at pre-publication discounts.

At publication the book is expected to be priced at £4.00. If you register before the end of January 2004, you may order copies at £3.00 each. Orders of ten or more will be sold for £2.50 each. All prices include postage.

For further details please see over.



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Cheques should be made payable to
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Mrs R Westmacott, 1 Salisbury Close, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 4AJ.

From the publisher's blurb

THE CHURCH IN CRISIS

Few people today can fail to be aware that there is a crisis of faith in the Church of England and in the Anglican Communion generally. They may however be unclear as to the cause of it, and unsure of what it means. In this book the author lays bare the real causes, which relate not to peripheral matters, but to fundamental matters of faith and practice.

Until fairly recently the Church of England had a definite identity. Its worship was expressed through the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer (1662); its doctrine was defined by the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion; and its clergy were ordained according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). The word of God was read in the congregation from the Authorised Version of the Bible. Little if anything of this now remains. It has been swept away by the changes of recent times. We believe that with it has gone not just the identity of the Church of England, but the message of the Gospel itself, the doctrinal and moral teachings which are essential to the spiritual and moral health and well-being of the nation.

This led, in 1994, to the setting up of the Church of England (Continuing). As the author of this book explains, this was no innovation but a simple adherence to the position of the Church of England, while the church at large seceded from it. "It is better," as someone has said, "to light a candle, than to curse the darkness." And a candle, though small, when it is lit is capable of "giving light to all that are in the house."

We take its tenth Anniversary as an opportunity for making the position of the Church of England (Continuing) better known, and we hope that those who read this book may be persuaded to identify with it. The months and years ahead are times when Christians will be compelled to face the questions discussed in this book and decide where they stand.

Name

Address

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.....

Postcode

Telephone number (in case of queries)

THE CONTINUING CHURCH

(The Association of the Continuing Church Trust: Charity No. 1055010)

www.continuingcofe.org

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Under the current tax laws, all donations to charities are tax reclaimable. There is no lower limit. If you are a UK income-tax payer or a Capital Gains tax payer you can increase the value of all donations by some 28%, simply by filling in the form available from the Treasurer.

Editor of *Journal and Intercessions*

Rev. EJ Malcolm (*See over*) Email: edward@macmail.com

**MATERIAL FOR APRIL ISSUE OF *THE JOURNAL*
AND *INTERCESSIONS* BY MARCH 19 2004, PLEASE**

We thank all those who sent the names and addresses of others requiring the Journal, or whose names needed deleting. We are very grateful to all who sent donations. Please note that all address details supplied to the Editor for mailing purposes are treated as confidential. We do not pass on addresses to anyone.

Have you considered making a gift to the Central Fund, to assist with the ongoing costs of the Continuing Church? Please contact the Treasurer.

CHURCHES IN UK

Boston Protestant Reformed Church. Meeting at 4 Charles St, Boston, Lincolnshire. Services 11.00 am and 6.30 pm. *Enquiries* Mr Alistair Turner, 01205 311082

Nuffield Congregation meeting with Nuffield Parish Church, near Henley-on-Thames, the Rev John F Shearer. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer, 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8.00 am first Sunday, 6.30 pm third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8.00 pm. *Enquiries* 01491 641305.

St. John's Church, South London. Meeting at the Shaftesbury Home, Trellis House, Mill Road (off Merton High Street), Colliers Wood, SW19, for 11.00 am Morning Prayer and 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. *Enquiries* Rev Peter Ratcliff, 020 8417 0875.

St. Mary's Castle Street, Reading. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper), 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. *Enquiries* Rev EJ Malcolm 0118 959 5131.

St. Silas, Wolverhampton, meeting in St. John's Cloisters Chapel, St. John's Square (A-Z p29 H2). 11.00 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday Holy Communion); 6.00 pm BST Evening Prayer (4.00 pm GMT) (3rd Sunday Holy Communion). Tuesdays in term time 7.00 pm Bible Study; 7.45 pm Prayer Meeting. On-street parking. *Enquiries* Rt Rev E Malcolm 01547 528815. Hon Curate Rev IR Budgen, 01902 656514.

Holy Trinity Church, Frinton-on-Sea. Sunday 11 a.m. Morning Prayer—Room 5, The Frinton Community Centre, Soken House, The Triangle, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. Sunday 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer, Tuesday 8.00 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting—1, Chaplins, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. For more information please contact Mr Philip Lievesley Tel: (01255) 679572. <http://beehive.thisisessex.co.uk/holytrinitycofecfrinton>

Clergy in UK & USA

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The Rt Rev DN Samuel, MA, PhD, 81 Victoria Rd, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1EU. 01380 722513

The Rt Rev AW Knight Jr, MA, MS, 542 Russell Ave., Gaithersburg, MD 20877, USA

The Rev JF Shearer, BSc, The Rectory, Nuffield, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 5SN. 01491 641305

The Rev EJ Malcolm, The Parsonage, 1 Downshire Square, Reading RG1 6NJ. 0118 959 5131

The Rev IR Budgen, BSc, Dip Th (ITA), 159 Castlecroft Road, Wolverhampton, W Mids, WV3 8LU. 01902 656514

The Rev EA Powell, BSc, MDiv 7615 Lankershim Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 91605 USA. 818-765-0716

Rev PJ Ratcliff, 60 Dinton Road, London SW19 2AP. 020 8417 0875

Associate Clergy

The Rev JN Reed BA, BD (United States of America)

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Mr P Karageorgi. Contact on 0208 742 0151