

of the 1963 Anglican-Methodist conversations report was the more regrettable, its calculated laxity in handling the authority of Scripture or its assiduity in writing the whole substance of episcopal ordination for Methodist clergy into the Service of Reconciliation. The times, of which these things are signs, call us to right the balance by recovering the historic Anglican awareness that the true and sufficient basis of the unity which closer church relations are to manifest lies not in the realm of ministerial order, but of catholic—that is, evangelical—faith.

## The New Alternative Services

BY JOHN SIMPSON

THE Church of England's Alternative Services, published in December 1965, appear as two books—the *First Series*, a book with the episcopal seal, being "the result of long consideration by the bishops, and of consultation with *some* members of the Liturgical Commission and of the Joint Liturgical Steering Committee of the Convocations of Canterbury and York" (Preface—my italics), and a *Second Series*, which is the production of what are virtually two Liturgical Commissions, the original Commission having been reconstituted, with a large change in personnel, during the summer of 1962. The *Second Series* is undoubtedly the more important and more interesting document, but the *First Series* has a political significance far in excess of its liturgical merit, since it resurrects the debate on controversial material from the 1928 Prayer Book, which, by this *First Series*, the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure 1965 is now extended to cover.

The content of the *First Series* is the 1928 forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, Quicunque Vult, Litany, Baptism, Confirmation, Burial, and Communion; and forms of the Holy Communion and Marriage Service which allow combinations of the 1662 and 1928 rites. In the Holy Communion, those parts of the 1928 rite most frequently in use are permitted—namely, the summary of the law, kyries, proper collects, lections, and prefaces, and the prayer for the Church, though permission for the 1928 Consecration Prayer is withheld, provision being made, in its place, for the "Interim Rite", that addition of the 1662 Prayer of Oblation, or part of it, and the Lord's Prayer, to the 1662 Consecration Prayer. An Old Testament lesson may be inserted (to provide for this the table of Old Testament lessons from the C.I.P.B.C. Prayer Book is printed) and the prayer for the Church may be said as a litany, the response "Hear us, we beseech thee" following each section of the prayer. In the Marriage Service, the 1662 vows may be used in place of those designed in 1928, and a choice of psalms is permitted.

The aim of the *First Series* is clearly to legalize all the common, current liturgical practices in the Church of England, with the notable exceptions of reservation of the sacrament and auricular confession, and the cover for this is Section 1 of the Alternative and Other Services Measure, a section which provides for experimental services. The provisions of 1928 can hardly be termed "experimental" after thirty-seven years of illegal use. But the seriousness of the matter lies in the fact that this book contains certain controversial doctrinal issues. The same issues are raised by the *Second Series*, but they must be fought in this bishops' book, since it is obviously the intention to lay this *First Series* before Convocation ahead of the Second, in the hope that it will, with little debate, be rubber-stamped, and so leave time for due attention to the *Second Series*. To allow the *First Series* an unhindered passage is to surrender those grounds on which the *Second Series* must be challenged. The controversial issues raised are : explicit prayer for the dead in the Holy Communion prayer for the Church, in the Burial Service, and in the collects for the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed ; permission for a Holy Communion service for the faithful dead ; and the concepts of eucharistic sacrifice raised by the Interim Rite—all points which deeply divide the Church, and yet are put forward here with a naivety almost unbelievable. The Liturgical Commission is at least aware that prayer for the dead divides the Church and consequently makes such prayer optional : the *First Series* does not make this concession and so creates a set of alternative services, which one section of the Church cannot use from the outset. But the real point at issue, high-lighted by the *First Series*, is whether the Church of England is to be committed to a double doctrinal standard, for the points at issue are symptomatic of two variant theologies of the Gospel. The *Second Series* assumes this double doctrinal standard in the Church, and seeks by employment of optional forms and of the ambiguous to accommodate the liturgical life of the Church to this.

*The Alternative Services : Second Series* contains the new material compiled by the Liturgical Commission, including a Draft Order for Holy Communion, the most interesting and radical feature of the book, intended to provide the Church with some indication of a future Anglican eucharistic pattern. The other contents of the book are forms for Morning and Evening Prayer, a collection of Intercessions and Thanksgivings, including Litanies, a Thanksgiving after Childbirth, and Burial Services. The last two services, together with the Draft Communion, form the work of the Commission since 1962, and as liturgical compositions have a vigour and directness totally lacking in the earlier revisions.

Before ever the doctrine or the liturgical suitability of these services is assessed, comment is needed on the language employed, since this determines whether or not the forms will be intelligible or useful as a vehicle of worship in the twentieth century. It is a fact that the Tudor English of the present Prayer Book is not fully understood by the majority of people, though in many cases it is not so much words, which have changed their meanings, as constructions and thought forms which have become archaic. However, throughout the changes,

the Commission has set its face against the introduction of contemporary English, the Chairman, Dr. R. C. D. Jasper, going as far as to assert that the Commission had yet to come across anyone in favour of contemporary English. Consequently the third person of the Trinity is still referred to as the "Holy Ghost", and "prevent us, O Lord" (p. 71) and "kindly fruits" (p. 76), to give but two examples, are still retained. Even new prayers, despite their crisp, staccato quality, resort too frequently to latinisms—"we pray thee that, as by us thou art pleased to create, so through us thou wilt nourish and protect this child" (p. 97)—and this to be said by parents "who may be nervous or unfamiliar with public worship" (p. 95). The Commission's justification for this retention of the antiquated is that no historical or theological reasons could be adduced to support a change; pastoral and linguistic reasons, it would seem were not reviewed.

Fortunately, each service is introduced by a Commission Report, which sets out the aims of the revisers, and the actual changes made, with justification for those changes. In this way, a constructive basis is given for an assessment of the services, and to this we now turn.

\* \* \* \*

The revision of Morning and Evening Prayer is conservative and unimaginative, and to judge from the introductory Report, the revisers saw little need for a radical approach. The two notable points of revision are the penitential introduction, and the positioning of the Canticles at Morning Prayer.

The Commission has retained, for Sunday at least, a penitential opening to these services, but it gives no theological justification for penitence in this position. It would have been both more biblical and more refreshing to have designed a service beginning with praise and adoration, or with the ministry of the Word, and then with this basis proceeding to penitence. To a certain extent, however, this question of the suitability of a penitential opening is raised by the provision of the table of Seasonal Sentences. The Commission recognizes the difficulty of combining a seasonal and a penitential introduction, and wisely recommends the use of either one or the other, not both together. The disadvantage of this is appreciated when the seasonal introduction is used: on such occasions an adequate expression of penitence is absent from the service—an essential ingredient in a form for congregational worship.

The form of the penitential introduction is a fixed sentence of Scripture (1 John 1 : 8, 9), a call to confession, a brief confession, and an absolution, or in the absence of a priest the prayer for forgiveness from the 1662 Communion Service. As a penitential form it coheres better than the 1662 form, which in the Exhortation, is interrupted by the superb, but in context, awkward statement of the purposes of the congregational gathering. The provision of an unchanging sentence must be regretted, if only because it will become tiresome through constant use, and the new confession, though simple and direct, cannot escape the judgment of being too general and anaemic. The Lord's Prayer does not follow the Absolution, on the grounds of too frequent repetition, and the fact that it occurs more naturally in the intercessory context later: reasons to which few people would object.

The Venite is retained as an invitatory psalm—what normal congregation appreciates this use?—with permission for its shortening, a regrettable rubric, since mention of the ethical purpose is thereby excised. The text for this psalm, as for all psalms in these services, is that of the Revised Psalter: only the thoroughly initiated will understand verse 8—the young Christian or casual church attender will be confounded.

The second notable revision in Morning Prayer is the re-positioning of the Canticles, a commendable, though hardly revolutionary change. The Benedictus, Benedicite—deprived of its reputed authors Ananias, Azarias and Misael—and Jubilate, being pre-incarnational canticles, follow the Old Testament lesson, and the Te Deum, as the song of the Church, invariably follows the New Testament lesson. The Te Deum may be used in full, or part 1, or part 2, or both parts, or in Penitential Seasons part 3 alone, and to print this canticle in parts and to abandon its present pointing is an advantage. The only defect lies in the fact that now two credal statements coincide, the Apostles' Creed follows this Canticle. Would it have been too radical for the Commission to omit the Apostles' Creed, or at least to make its use permissive?

The remainder of the service, the prayer section, follows the pattern of the 1662 order with very minor revision. The thought of God fighting for His people is still considered too bellicose in the modern humanist setting, but its replacement by the Compline response, "For it is thou, Lord only that makest us dwell in safety", is a happier choice than that made in 1928. The State Prayers have been expanded to include the prayer for Parliament, and for all conditions for men, and explicit mention is made of the sermon, which may follow the second lesson. Taken as a whole the revision is unexciting: it is to be regretted that the Commission was not free to consider a new form of Sunday Service more related to modern life.

The section of Intercessions and Thanksgiving bears the unmistakable stamp of the late Dean of York, and, apart from the first prayer for unity and the two commendations of the faithful departed, avoid doctrinal controversy. The revision of the Litany is mild and deserves no comment; the shorter litany may prove useful; and though the idea behind the three short litanies is good, their stilted language may limit their use.

With the Thanksgiving after Childbirth, the work of the reconstituted Commission is reached, and a change can be sensed in the whole nature of the revision: it becomes more enterprising. The Thanksgiving itself is a slight service, but the aims of the revisers are pastorally sound, and the service now includes an appropriate selection of verses from psalms arranged in versicle-response form to take the place of a whole psalm. However, controversy is encountered with the Burial Services.

\* \* \* \*

The crucial issue raised by the Burial Services is prayer for the dead, and the Commission spends much of its report seeking to justify and commend the practice. But the Commission poses the wrong question. It asks: "Is there any fallacy in the argument against prayer for the dead?" (p. 111). The correct question to place before a Church

which has excluded explicit prayer of this kind since 1552 (and the revisers should read the Homily Concerning Prayer, part 3, in the Second Book of Homilies to correct their historical approach to this subject and their assertion about the Anglican formularies) is: "Is there any evidence in favour of prayer for the dead?" In answering its own question, the Commission offers a twofold answer. In the first place, it is suggested that "such prayer for the dead is not the only kind of prayer which asks for what God has already promised in Holy Scripture". Prayer on the ground of promise is the basis of all prayer of faith, but, Christians do not pray for what has been fulfilled. The Commission lists rest, refreshment, and joyful resurrection as the requests to be made in any prayer for the dead, but these are all secured and fulfilled in the case of the justified believer who dies. To suggest that they are not secured is to undermine the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith alone, and to run counter to the New Testament teaching that a man's life in this world governs his position in eternity (2 Cor. 5 : 10, 6 : 2, Heb. 9 : 27) and that, for the believer, death opens up the fulfilled life in Christ (Phil. 1 : 21-24). By denying such fulfilment the Commission becomes guilty of applying the standards of time to the state of the departed—a form of pedantry of which it wrongly accuses those who object to prayer for the dead. (In seeking to support this first answer, the Commission quotes the prayer for right-reception from the 1662 Consecration Prayer, but misrepresents it as a prayer that the elements may be the Body and Blood of Christ to the recipients, and quotes texts on the general principles of forgiveness in a narrow, semi-mechanistic sense.)

The second answer supplied by the report asserts that "to pray that God will grant the dead rest, refreshment, or a joyful resurrection is to acknowledge that these things can be given by God alone, without presuming to say whether in his judgment he will grant them to a particular person". This immediately raises the question: Is there no distinction between praying for the dead and acknowledging the sovereignty of God? If there is no distinction, then prayer for the dead is no problem. But the crux of this is that there is a distinction: acknowledging God's sovereignty does not thereby validate the prayer. All heretics include orthodox statements about God in their heretical prayers. In concluding this discussion, the Commission recognizes "that there may be those who are still unhappy to use such prayers. It has therefore made their use optional".

Prayer for the dead need not obscure the merits that the new Burial Service certainly possesses. The aims of the revisers (p. 105 f.), with the exception of the second—one wonders in what sense commendation is meant—are valid, and are fulfilled in the service. The office clearly proclaims the glory of the risen life in Christ here and hereafter; it confronts men with the fact of judgment; and it avoids the over-statement of the 1662 rite that life in this world is wretched, miserable, and short. The emphasis of the Sentences on resurrection is excellent; the provision of Psalm 139 : 1-11 is most appropriate; and the lesson from 1 Corinthians 15 is judiciously curtailed. The use, however, of the *Nunc Dimittis* as a response to the ministry of the Word is particularly unfortunate: it is difficult to see in what sense

it is a response, and since the congregation will most certainly apply it to the corpse, it would have more relevance at a death-bed than in a funeral. The occurrence of this canticle and later the Commendation suggest that this service is meant to re-capitulate a person's last moments. Practical reasons have governed the removal of the prayers from after the Committal to after the Canticle. A successful feature of the prayers is the conversion of the final sentence prior to the 1662 committal into a series of versicles and responses, but the commendation with which the prayers conclude is only one stage removed from an actual prayer for the dead person. To this point, the service could be used for a memorial service. A committal, however, is appended consisting of verses from Psalm 103 stressing the compassion of God; a committal prayer, which though it does not presume about the faith of the deceased, does concerning the faith of the mourners; and Hebrews 13 : 20, 21 as a blessing. At cremations, the committal is reserved for the burial of the ashes: a psychological mistake, since it subjects the mourners to two services.

One aim of the Commission was to provide a Burial Service suitable for all baptized persons (including suicides), but an exception is made in the case of a child, for whom a special rite is provided. There is a form for the reception of the body at the Church "On the Eve of Burial", a form which follows that of the Burial Service, and Evangelicals are encouraged, by name, to adopt the practice of Holy Communion at funerals. The Communion in this context has greater dangers than benefits: in popular thought it would soon become an offering on behalf of the dead.

\* \* \* \*

The centre of interest in the *Second Series* is, without doubt, the Draft Holy Communion Service, which is a radical revision of the 1662 Communion Office, and is based, as might be expected, on the recommendations of the 1958 Lambeth Conference. The Commission admits to working on three principles: rubrics have been written in such a way as to permit the maximum amount of experiment in the conduct of the service; flexibility is allowed in order that the rite may be expanded or contracted according to circumstance; where matters of eucharistic doctrine are involved, the revisers have "tried to produce forms of words which are capable of various interpretations" (p. 146). The second principle allows for too much variety: the third comes near to dishonouring the truth with its boast about ambiguity.

Structurally, the service has its roots in Justin Martyr's liturgy and the Hippolytan consecration prayer, and none of the Reformation liturgical additions—commandments, exhortations—remain. It has a directness which is attractive, and the movement of the service is unobscured: the first part, which can be paired to the collect, two lessons, and a sermon, is obviously a Bible class; in the sacramental section, it is clear that taking bread and wine, giving thanks, breaking the bread, and eating is what constitutes obedience to Christ's command "Do this". Provision for an Old Testament lesson is gain, as also the permission to use the Gloria in Excelsis at the commencement of the service, when its penitential section does not jar. The Intercession is obviously in draft form and it is to be hoped that, at a later stage, the

Commission is bold enough to permit extempore prayer at this point. As in the Burial Service any prayer for the departed is optional.

The Commission has not surrendered to the current fashion of dismissing penitence in the first five minutes of a Communion Service. Penitence is retained as a preparation for the sacrament and a constructive innovation is the use of Hebrews 4 : 14, 16 as an exhortation to confession. The confession and absolution are drastic précis of the Prayer Book forms, and the Comfortable Words and Prayer of Humble Access, which follow are made optional. Little change is made in the forms of these, and they stand so much in contrast to the style of the Confession as to create the impression that the revisers wished to omit them. The medieval speculative theology of the final clauses of the Prayer of Humble Access is now erased, and the Preparation of the People concludes with the forgiven people of God expressing their peace and unity with each other.

The sacramental section clearly presents the four actions which are performed in obedience to Christ's command "Do this in remembrance of Me", but unfortunately, and this is not hidden by any ambiguity, the service preserves a basically static doctrine of the Eucharist, as opposed to a biblical and dynamic doctrine. The problem of an offertory is escaped by making no textual provision for an offering of the elements, and the permission to read 1 Chronicles 29 : 11a, 14b, is merely a recognition that all things come of God. But if an offertory controversy is avoided in this way, immense doctrinal problems are raised by the Thanksgiving, and the basic problem concerns the doctrine of consecration.

The apparent theory of consecration in this service is that by the offering of thanksgiving the bread and the wine are consecrated to be eaten as the Body and Blood of Christ, but at no specific point, as in the Cranmerian rite or in the 1662 Consecration Prayer, does consecration take place. It is not tied to the Institution Narrative or, as in Eastern rites, to an epiclesis, but is seen as the effect of the whole Thanksgiving. This is the apparent view, but it is belied by the form for additional consecration (p. 160), which sees the Institution Narrative, the Anamnesis, and Oblation as sufficient to consecrate the elements. Which view is the Commission really advancing?

However, neither view can find support from the New Testament. The whole concept of the consecration of the inanimate, whether by the offering of thanksgiving or by the repetition of the words of the Institution Narrative, with or without manual acts, is a development of natural religion, and not of New Testament Christianity. In either case, it leads to a static view of a sacrament, which is essentially dynamic. For the Holy Communion to be the sacrament Christ ordained, the congregation must "do" what the Lord commanded : take bread and wine ; offer thanksgiving, which may be interpreted as thanksgiving for the mighty acts of God in redemption ; break bread, with the significance given to the act in 1 Cor. 10 : 16, 17 ; and eat the bread and drink the wine as the Body and Blood of Christ. It is not until all these actions are fulfilled that the sacrament can be said to be the sacrament, and it is certainly not until the eating that the elements have the values of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The new Draft rite does not reflect this New Testament view of the Eucharist. The rite neatly dovetails the thanksgiving for creation, redemption, and sanctification; many Evangelicals will welcome the fuller rehearsal of the mighty acts of God, for the Cross is thereby placed in its rightful setting (though it is regrettable that the Second Coming is virtually abstracted); the breaking of the bread together with the repetition of 1 Cor. 10 : 16, 17 is great gain; and if the above view of the Eucharist were enshrined here, there would be little fear of a misinterpretation of the new words of administration, which are no more literalist than the words Christ Himself used.

But basically the rite is defective. The Hippolytan oblation of the bread and cup, apart from being a feature for which there is no biblical justification, can be interpreted, because of this static view which is maintained, as an offering, by the people of God, of Christ Himself, and so it is further cause for greater dissatisfaction with the rite. It is almost unbelievable that the Commission, which is aware of the dispute concerning the offertory, seems unaware of the deeper dispute in the Church concerning doctrines of eucharistic sacrifice associated with the oblation.

The Conclusion of the service is brief and rapid comprising a précis of the 1662 Prayer of Thanksgiving, or in its place a responsive self-offering by the communicants, and the dismissal.

These services are experimental and as such are meant to call forth discussion and criticism and constructive suggestion. The points raised in this article are put forward as a contribution to that discussion.

## Lambeth 1958 and the "Liturgy for Africa" (II)

BY ROGER BECKWITH

**I**N the former part of this study we reviewed the main proposals regarding liturgical revision made by the committee which reported on the Book of Common Prayer at the 1958 Lambeth Conference, and saw how the first two proposals have been implemented in the experimental *Liturgy for Africa*—the proposals, namely, that the 1662 Prayer Book should cease to be regarded in the Anglican Communion as a norm either of doctrine or of worship, and that all Anglican services of Holy Communion should be revised so as to conform to a new structure, of which the committee laid the foundations. We noted that a second communion service, constructed on similar lines to the *Liturgy for Africa* by the Church of England Liturgical Commission, was known to be in preparation, and an interim draft of this has now appeared in *Alternative Services : Second Series* (S.P.C.K., 1965), which is discussed in the preceding article. Like the *Liturgy for Africa*, it is "a radical revision" (*Second Series*, p. 145) and embodies virtually all the