

The New Communion Service

REASONS FOR DISSENT

BY COLIN BUCHANAN

"In joining with the Commission in generally commending this Report, I reluctantly dissent from the last paragraph but one of section 24. Inquiry has shown that the phrase 'we offer unto thee this bread and this cup' in this paragraph is unacceptable to many Anglicans. I could not use it myself.

"I also dissent from the proposed optional petition for the dead in section 14 for doctrinal reasons."

THE above words are the text of the dissenting note I added to the report on the Communion service submitted to the Archbishops after the March meeting of the Liturgical Commission. I write now to express more fully my reasons for that dissent. It was a step not to be taken lightly and one I would have far preferred to have avoided. I have sufficient grounds of principle to have taken it on my own. Nevertheless I am confirmed in my decision by inquiries I was able to make after the publication of the interim draft text in December 1965. I now know that I express the convictions of a wide section of the Church of England. My detailed reasoning is of course my own. My conclusions are held by many. The results of my inquiries are summarized in an appendix.

* * * *

(1) "we offer unto thee this bread and this cup".

The Communion text is laid out so that the sacramental section of the service clearly expresses the acts instituted by our Lord. These are, in order, the taking of the bread and the wine, the thanksgiving over them, the breaking of the bread, and the administration or sharing of them both. These are the only "acts" which can be called "instituted". The "thanksgiving" here, as traditionally, includes a narrative of the Lord's institution of the sacrament, containing (with respect to both bread and cup) his command "do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11 : 24-25). The next paragraph is traditionally an "anamnesis"—that is, an echoing of his command, with a statement of how we intend to fulfil it. Hippolytus, in the most ancient liturgical text we possess (about 215 A.D.), at this point said: "Therefore in remembrance of his death and resurrection we offer to thee the bread and the cup, giving thanks to thee because thou hast found us worthy to stand before thee and minister to thee". Here is the direct ancestor or archetype of the Commission's text. Cranmer in 1549 wrote: "Wherefore . . . we . . . do celebrate and make here before thy Divine Majesty with these thy holy gifts, the memorial which thy son hath willed us to make . . .". This, of course, though conceivably involving a Godward "movement", does not resolve the then debated question of *how* we make memorial of Christ. To this extent the Commission's proposals lie well to the further side of the 1549 ambiguity.

Cranmer however was moving in the opposite direction. In 1552 he resolved the question—the vital thing that we *do* in remembrance of Christ is to eat and drink. Not content with merely describing our eating and drinking at this point, he went further yet. The very acts of eating and drinking were moved to this place in the service and made into an anamnesis. The words of administration were altered to bring out this anamnesis aspect—“Take and eat this *in remembrance . . .*” (this has been obscured by later changes). For myself, whilst I gladly use Cranmer’s rite, I am equally happy to follow a more traditional outline. That difference is not the point at issue. The question here is—what are we in fact to do or say we do “in remembrance of him”? The traditional answer in liturgy from Hippolytus onwards was “we offer . . .”. But this, as Cranmer saw, is *not* what our Lord commanded. “Offering” is not one of the instituted acts of Christ, and is therefore an intrusion.

It is not only an intrusion, it is in fact a regrettable one. The initiative in a sacrament lies with God. He provides the elements (“these thy creatures”), he interprets them with His Word, and He gives the inward grace they convey. We give thanks over them, but in so doing we should acknowledge them as provided primarily by God *for* us, if any question of their origin is to be raised at all. In a secondary sense we do of course literally provide them ourselves, but if any liturgical expression needs to be given to this (which I very much doubt), it could only properly come at the “Preparation of the Bread and Wine”. After that the sacramental elements are at God’s disposal not ours, and further giving them to God by us is redundant and badly misleading. The context provided by the narrative of our Lord’s institution neither encourages nor permits a “movement” of the bread and wine from us to God. To “offer” is *not* the logical fulfilment of our Lord’s command which the linking “wherefore” claims it to be.

This in itself might be reasonably innocent even if illogical. But a set of words cannot now be wrenched free from its historical associations. The associations which this set of words has gathered are various expressions of one or more doctrines loosely covered by the term “eucharistic sacrifice”. These doctrines, whether ancient, medieval, or modern, sophisticated or crude, must, if they are to obtain liturgical expression, at some point link an offering of *ours* with *this* bread and *this* cup. The anamnesis is traditionally the place where this is done. It is hardly possible therefore to take “we offer unto thee this bread and this cup” as just an archaizing return to Hippolytus, as distinct from an expression of a modern doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice. Hippolytus merely provides a convenient peg on which to hang the modern doctrine, and would surely never have been copied otherwise. Most such modern doctrines seem to me to be defective in just the very point of wanting to ensure that we have something to offer God which is peculiar to a communion service. Certainly there are responsive sacrifices which we are to offer. Thanksgiving is one such sacrifice, the offering of our whole selves to God is another. But such sacrifices are in no way peculiar to the eucharist. They should no doubt find liturgical expression at the eucharist, for they are very

appropriate to it. They do in fact have liturgical expression at other points in the text under consideration. But they cannot properly be offered by, with, or under the bread and the wine. This particular offering is in fact additional to those, and I have found myself unable to think of any doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice which I could both believe and wish to express this way.

The Commission has of course been well aware of the different schools of thought in the Church of England. Its claim (as in *Alternative Services Second Series*, p. 147, or in the speech of Canon Couratin at the Liturgical Conference in February 1966) is that a liberty of interpretation will allow all Anglicans to use this text equally happily. That claim was made without all schools of thought being equally heard. Many Anglicans regard an oblation such as this as unambiguously wrong for today, and others again can only accept it at the cost of real unhappiness at what is one of the most solemn points of the service. In other words, what this text needs is not interpretation but alteration. Men who fear that doctrinal novelty is being imported will be confirmed in their fears by the Commission's insistence that this form of words, and nothing less than this form of words, must be recommended to the Church. For myself I was and am ready to recommend at this point different texts giving varying emphases, and some of these I add as an appendix. I would not myself insist on any one particular set of words, but the Commission in effect does. As I could not accept the Commission's set, I think an onus now lies upon those who so immovably insist on this form of words to show *why* it is so vital to a proper fulfilling of our Lord's command.

Here Hippolytus (and for that matter, Clement, Justin, Irenaeus, etc.) must come up for reconsideration. A full treatment of their eucharistic doctrine is beyond my present task. But the application of a guiding principle will enable us to get their writings into perspective. The principle is that before controversy has arisen men often express themselves in ways that would be later regarded as unguarded and misleading. This is obviously true with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. We would be unwise to take our creed from pre-Nicene writings—we cannot "get behind" Nicea. Eucharistic controversies of course have never had so thorough and decisive revolution given to them. The Reformation, however, saw many issues brought to a head, and the Hippolytean form of words, so far from "getting behind" the Reformation, in fact takes sides in the Reformation disputes. Hippolytus obviously used the words as innocent of all offence (as the ante-Nicenes did in their sub-Trinitarian statements about God), but that does not mean in either case that we can. The innocence is lost when they are imported into our present context.

This principle further means that men of Hippolytus' times are often simply wrong in their use of Scripture. Liturgy was not in fixed form but great respect was paid to "the tradition". This means that liturgy grew and changed slowly with the passing of the years. The oblation terminology arose and developed alongside two other dubious ideas. One was the notion that the eucharist was the fulfilment of the "pure sacrifice" prophesied in Malachi 1 : 11, the other that in some sense the Christian ministry held a sacrificing priesthood. How much

these ideas sponsored each other and affected the liturgical expression of the eucharist is difficult to say. But they seem to be interrelated and they are all equally a departure from the New Testament. Hippolytus himself calls the bishop a "high priest", and links with this title the bishop's offering to God the gifts of the church. By parity of reasoning with that which has given us this eucharistic text, is the bishop to be called a "high priest" in any future ordinal? If so, then further controversy must be expected. If not, then why is Hippolytus' terminology so sacrosanct in the eucharist?

None of what I have written above means that I despair of finding in the future a rite in which all Anglicans can agree. Quite the reverse. It is that very hope which makes me wish all the more that this text should not be passed in its controversial form. These are days of great change in the Church of England, and times when different schools of thought are genuinely on far better terms with each other than has often been true up to now. We also are beginning to learn from each other biblical truths which separately we have tended to overlook. In this situation, I, as an evangelical, find a new flexibility among anglo-catholics. Today, to the question "What do we need, and what do we *not* need, to say in a eucharistic liturgy?" the answer that many of them will give is "We *do* need to give thanks over the bread and the cup, but we do *not* need to make specific verbal reference to offering the elements to God in that thanksgiving". This irenic approach (the spirit of which I would warmly wish to reciprocate) seems to me to hold great hope for the future, and to make the present text all the more regrettable. For it is not only the *spirit* of this sort of approach which an evangelical must applaud, it is also the actual content of it. It suggests that if we were to express the thanksgiving *totally* in terms of thanksgiving we might well be able to agree a text, and this I know to be true from personal experience. I can agree with at least some fairly representative anglo-catholics in a text which says *all* that both sides feel must be said and includes *nothing* that would give offence to either side. I remain hopeful that even the Commission itself, which has for the moment abandoned the quest for an agreed liturgy, will return to it and succeed in the future.

Some of the factors that have produced the situation in which I have found it necessary to dissent may not recur, and this may make the task slightly easier in the future. On this occasion the unexpected need for immediate and final action after the Liturgical Conference has been one reason, and perhaps the lack of a clear spelling out of the unacceptable nature of these words at that Conference has been another, why the Commission has settled for a text less than unanimously.

* * * *

(2) The Prayer for the Dead

My dissent in this case differs from that in the preceding one, in that here the matter I oppose is only optional. Thus its mere existence in the eucharistic text will not of itself stop those who will not pray for the dead from using the text. Nevertheless its existence raises a serious doctrinal problem. The same question is of course raised by

First Series and by the Occasional Prayers and The Burial of the Dead in *Second Series*. I came on to the Commission at the point when the latter service was reaching its final stage of approval. I had had no part in the discussion leading up to its production, so, rather than dissent, I asked that I should be treated for these purposes as having not yet joined the Commission. I anticipated that a list of members would be attached to the report without my name appearing. In the event *Second Series* was not printed in this way, so it now appears as though I may well have assented to The Burial of the Dead Report. This was not so. I dissented from its historical introduction, its agnosticism about the state of even the Christian departed, and its prayers for the dead.

What then is the status of prayers for the dead in the Church of England? Three points of view are to be found. One is that, as not being explicitly condemned in the Articles, they are perfectly permissible liturgical material, though not in point of fact appearing in any Anglican liturgy from the Reformation onwards until this century. Another view is that, as being excluded from the 1552 and 1662 Prayer Books and denounced by the Book of Homilies, they are forbidden in the Church of England. A third and mediating point of view, to which I would subscribe, sees them as neither forbidden nor encouraged as private opinions or individual practices, but not eligible for inclusion in official liturgies. Liturgy expresses doctrine, and official liturgy official doctrine. It is true that no declaration of assent will be required to experimental services, yet such services can only be authorized as being "in their doctrine neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England" (Alternative Services Measures 1965, Section 1, para. 1). To authorize prayers for the dead even experimentally is to make them part of Anglican doctrine, and rule out two of the three points of view I have listed above. It is for this reason that I cannot commend them.

It is freely acknowledged on all sides that the New Testament contains no prayers for the dead. To urge that Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1 : 18) was dead when Paul prayed for him is to write one's conclusions into one's premises. We do not know, and must therefore decide on other evidence what the apostolic practice was. And here there is silence throughout. Prayers are offered for hosts of other objects, but none on behalf of the departed. Rather the reverse—for the New Testament *does* have a doctrine that we would call "the communion of the saints". It was just a lack of such a doctrine that unsettled the church at Thessalonica, Paul therefore writes to reassure the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4 : 13-18). They need have no sorrows or fears on behalf of the departed. Yet he never tells them to express their unity with the departed by praying for them. His comfort to the bereaved is a declaration of eschatological confidence. For the moment the departed "sleep", one day we shall be reunited with them joyfully at Christ's return. The situation was one that cried out for a commendation of prayer for the faithful departed, if that was an apostolic practice. Modern advocates of the practice would hardly have missed the opportunity if they had been addressing the same situation.

The point is frequently made and easily taken that prayer for the dead does not automatically entail belief in a purgatory (which is certainly contrary to the New Testament and the doctrine of the Church of England). This approach allows us to have absolute confidence in the blessed state of the faithful departed whilst still praying for them. It is certainly thoroughly in accord with the New Testament to pray that God will do what he has definitely promised to do. "Lead us not into temptation" is a good example of this. On these grounds prayer for the faithful departed is not contrary to the New Testament, but a natural inference from it. These grounds may well be acceptable, provided that two further safeguards are observed.

The first safeguard is that, even when we are praying to God to do what he has promised to do, we only pray thus with respect to things that are still future. We do not pray that God should do something yesterday. Neither do Christians pray that they should be incorporated into Christ. Past events are accepted as having happened, and we either give thanks for them or repent of them. The logic of this safeguard is that we only ask for the departed those things which are really future. "Grant them a share in thy eternal kingdom" does not fall into this category. "Grant them a joyful resurrection to the last day" would (as might Paul's prayer in 2 Timothy 1 : 18 even if Onesiphorus were dead). To become sharers in God's eternal kingdom may be seen as occurring in this life ("in knowledge of whom *standeth* our eternal life"), or on departure from this life ("and *in the world to come* life everlasting"), or, and this is admitted, on the last day. The future reference of the prayer is therefore possible, but not so sufficiently clear as to make the prayer fall into the category of permissive prayers for the departed. The prayer might be amended, even as it stands, to read "Grant them at the last day to inherit thy eternal kingdom". This would draw out the future perspective it needs in order to be legitimate.

However, there is another safeguard to be considered. The argument above still only admits prayers for the dead of this particular sort as possible forms of private prayer for the theologically sophisticated. Public prayer is a different question. Here we must keep Paul's distinction between what is lawful and what is expedient. We have a moral duty to consider those who are not theologically sophisticated. They are easily caused to stumble by *any* forms of prayer for the dead. They become unsure of heaven, or distrustful of the authority that sanctions such prayer. We live in days when there is little certainty about heaven, little confidence in the ecclesiastical powers-that-be, and little theological sophistication in ordinary congregations. So even lawful forms of prayer for the dead should still be reckoned inexpedient.

They are also inexpedient because they seem to admit a larger principle. The present debate about prayers for the dead tends to deal in block judgments for or against them. It is thus inevitable that any allowance of the legitimate forms of such prayer will open the door to the illegitimate forms. No proper grounds can be alleged for praying that the dead may currently enjoy rest or light. Prayers

like this *prima facie* teach that they lack these blessings and that is why we are praying for them. The Church of England perhaps needs a doctrinal commission (perhaps with an ecumenical composition) to define which prayers for the dead are possible and which not. Until such a distinction is officially made, they must be viewed under one heading as changing the official doctrine of the Church of England if they are authorized. That is why I am opposed to their inclusion in the text.

What should happen then when congregations want such prayers? Are they to be refused their desire for the sake of some perhaps mythical "weaker brethren"? Clearly the only sensible answer to this question is "no". No one wants to be purely negative about this. But it is not necessary to write such prayers into the text. The Commission's form of intercessions allows great liberty of interpolation. Those who wish, for reasons of their own, to pray for the faithful departed may easily do so under the heading of "the Church". Prayers may be inserted here at will. And such prayer here would give better expression to the communion of saints. An insertion would not become expressive of Anglican doctrine, but remain a private opinion within the Church. Only in this way can full justice be done simultaneously to all three points of view listed earlier.

It is interesting to notice that the new Roman Catholic form of corporate intercessions at the mass has no section for the departed at all. They are commended to the intercession of the Virgin Mary in a final petition and that is all. They are also still the subject of intercession in the canon, but this is said silently by the celebrant and is not part of "The Prayer of the Faithful". The Roman intercessions have four main sections of prayer, the first three of which correspond with the Commission's first three. Where however the Commission has the section for the departed, the Roman form has a section "For the local Christian Community". Something like this would be sheer gain for us.

Canon Couratin stated publicly at the Liturgical Conference that the intercessions did not necessarily represent the Commission's final mind. They now do, but once again it is pressure of time which has made it so. I have been unable to accept the final form, not through any desire to obstruct the wishes of those from whom I differ. I dissent because it goes too far towards closing what the Church of England has up to now left as an officially open question.

* * * *

(3) The Unity and Policy of the Church of England.

Thus far I have tried to express my personal reactions only, and my arguments would stand even if no one else shared them. However, the situation is far more serious than that. Through inquiry I have good reason to think that a large majority of evangelicals, and a small minority of other churchmen will agree with me in at least one of the two questions over which I have dissented. The Commission has therefore been facing a problem which is not simply a liturgical one. That problem now in turn faces the Convocations and the House of Laity. Members are being asked not simply "Do you like this

liturgy ? ” but rather “ Are you prepared to commend liturgy which will prove divisive ? ” The Commission, not without regrets, has been so prepared. This policy seems to me very questionable, so that even if I personally had been prepared to sanction the text, I would still have been given pause by the opposition to it. We live in a time that sees an unprecedented drawing together of evangelicals and anglo-catholics. It is a cause for regret that the Commission is prepared to forfeit or at least obstruct this progress by a liturgy that will tend to divide men into parties once more.

The case has been put to me that the matter is not as serious as this. Evangelicals, it is said, are not being asked to give up anything they wish to keep, nor to use anything they personally dislike. They have frequently professed themselves satisfied with the 1662 rite, and they will be able to continue using it. As 1662 lacks certain emphases which others desire, it is only right and fair that a new rite should be produced for these others. This argument has a specious plausibility, but a closer examination will show that it is disastrous. It is a proposal to isolate and fossilize evangelicals. They are by no means so committed to the structure, language, and emphases of 1662 that they want no part in progressive experiment. They are as enthusiastic for liturgical revision as anyone. But if the policy of the Church of England is to produce “ party ” liturgies, then two, three, or more commissions ought to be asked to produce them. That policy would stand self-condemned, yet the case that 1662 is to become one “ party ” liturgy and the new text another is only a variant on the same theme. The quest for an agreed text is far and away more sensible, and that is the Commission’s task. Men concerned that the whole Church of England should move together and pray together will perhaps want the Commission to be told its task more plainly.

The Church of England today is not an isolated entity in Christendom. As the ecumenical movement involves us in ever closer relations with Methodists, Presbyterians, and so on, it is vital that our liturgy be ecumenical and irenic. Ecumenical relations in the past have frequently been disturbed by the ability of a party representing less than the whole Church of England to present its own case as the official Anglican one. That will be the case if this liturgy passes into use in its present form.

The actual strength of the opposition to the text is extremely difficult to assess accurately in the very short time that has been available. Because of the very small initial printing in December clergy in many places did not receive copies till late in February. This has meant there has been little opportunity for thorough study, and no chance of taking thorough sampling of opinion. The Church may have been somewhat misled by the hesitant nature of the opposition at the Liturgical Conference (where perhaps it was not anticipated that the text would be reaching its final form so soon). On the Commission itself, whilst I have been heard with the greatest patience and understanding, for which I am grateful, yet my numerical representation as one among twenty is not such as to suggest that a large section of the Church of England has similar objections to these critical points in the text. Lest there should be further misunderstanding of the

extent of the opposition I have attempted to systematize in an appendix the evidence I have to hand.

In many respects opposition to the interim draft ran far beyond the two matters on which I have dissented. Some of these objections have been met by the Commission. For instance, the ten commandments (and the two), and the old words of administration have been optionally included. Other objections I have felt unable to press. I have tried to meet the rest of the Commission by sinking many matters of emphasis or preference for the sake of agreement.

My present dissent therefore only arises on matters of principle. My hope is that even men who do not share those principles, or would not apply them as I have done, will yet sufficiently respect them not to authorize this service in its present divisive form.

* * * *

APPENDIX 1. *The Text of an Anamnesis.*

How are the various possible texts of the anamnesis to be classified? In the light of the foregoing arguments the most helpful division is between those which describe a Godward action with reference to the bread and the cup and those which describe a movement from God to man. The classification would then be as follows:

(a) Godward action :

- (1) " We . . . offer unto thy most excellent Majesty of thine own gifts a pure victim, a holy victim, a spotless victim, the holy bread of eternal life, and the cup of everlasting salvation " (Roman mass).
- (2) " We offer thee thine own from what is thine " (Eastern Orthodox Liturgy of St. Chrysostom).
- (3) " We offer to thee this bread and this cup " (Liturgical Commission following Hippolytus).
- (4) " We do this as thy Son commanded, offering to thee, with this holy Bread and Cup, our praise and thanksgiving for his one sacrifice . . ." (Liturgy for Africa).
- (5) " We . . . do celebrate and make here before thy Divine Majesty, with these holy gifts, which now we offer unto thee, the memorial which thy son hath commanded us to make " (Scottish Liturgy following 1549 but adding an offering).
- (6) " We . . . set before thee this bread and this cup to be that memorial which he has commanded us to make " (Southwark Liturgy for discussion following ancient Alexandrian Liturgy of St. Mark).
- (7) " We here present unto thee, through thy Holy Spirit, this bread of eternal life and this cup of everlasting salvation " (*An Experimental Liturgy* by Cope, Davies, and Tytler).

Despite the attempts to break away from the word " offer ", each

of these texts contains in substance the same thought, and none could well carry assent throughout the Church of England.

(b) Manward action :

“ We in obedience to thy Son’s command do break this bread and drink this cup in remembrance of him ”

(*An Evangelical Eucharist* by L. E. H. Stephens-Hodge).

This is one sample of the sort of words that more genuinely describe our Lord’s instituted acts. Perhaps a little more consistency could be obtained by saying “. . . eat . . . drink . . .” or “. . . break . . . bless . . .”. The rigorous purist might criticize such words by saying that they only describe one, or perhaps two, of the instituted acts, but they are surely the right ones to describe, and the previous forms describe none of them at all. It might also be said that this form does not describe what we are doing at the moment we are saying the words. The logic of this criticism would bring us back to Cranmer’s method of making the administration the anamnesis. Otherwise Cranmer himself would no doubt have had a similar form. For the sake of unity, however, we are prepared to be a little less logical than Cranmer, and the criticisms do not seem overwhelming. I would like to see this tried.

(c) Neutral forms of words :

- (1) “ We . . . do celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, the memorial which thy son hath willed us to make ” (1549).

This would be possible, although with some discomfort as it seems to veer towards the “ Godward ” side.

- (2) “ We . . . entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving ”

(*Alternative Services First Series* following the “ Interim Rite ”).

This involves a play on words (which have been moved from the context they had in either 1549 or 1552), and in the upshot either says the wrong things about the bread and cup or else says nothing about them at all. It is therefore unsatisfactory.

- (3) “ We . . . do this ” (C.S.I. and draft Irish rite).

This is probably the neatest and simplest form possible, but it may well say too little. There is no explicit reference to the bread and the cup, and the question of what we do is left totally unresolved. It smacks of contrived vagueness.

My own strong preference would be for something in the second category, but it is probable that somewhere in the last category a way will emerge. None of the listed texts quite meets the case, but I have reason to think that a text expressed more definitely in terms of thanksgiving might command widespread assent. An example would be :

“ We give thanks to thee over this bread and this cup.”

This describes one of the instituted acts, and the one we are doing at that very last moment. It steers clear of both offering and receiving

whilst saying something positive and relevant in unambiguous terms. The full text might then read something like this :

“ Wherefore, O Lord, having in remembrance his saving passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his glorious ascension into heaven, and looking for the coming of his kingdom, we give thanks to thee over this bread and this cup; and we pray thee to accept this our thanksgiving, and to grant that as we eat and drink we may be filled with thy heavenly benediction and grace, through the same Christ our Lord. . . .”

* * * *

APPENDIX 2. *The Extent of Opposition.*

In the very short time available I was able to initiate sample inquiries among evangelicals about their reaction to the service in its interim form. It was impossible to range further afield. The text was not generally available in many places till February because of the tiny initial printing. Ruri-decanal chapters and conferences were not meeting in the requisite three or four weeks, or where they were the draft was not on the agenda, which had been prepared some time before. The only chapter finding which has come to hand was from a deanery in Cheshire in which the clergy apparently wanted a much more conservative revision of 1662 (keeping its present shape), so that the problems I have been tackling were not raised in their present form. Similarly P.C.C.s and congregations have had little chance of corporate consideration of the text, though I have some P.C.C. resolutions to hand deploring those very matters from which I have dissented. It is therefore among evangelical clergy that I have largely had to make my inquiries. In doing so I have attempted to give only the broadest guidance as to the kind of replies I wanted, and I have not drawn attention to any one particular part of the service.

(a) Clergy wishing to experiment.

I have been in touch with clergy who with their P.C.C.s have already indicated to their bishops that they wish to take part in official experiment with services. I sent a circular round for sampling purposes to one in each diocese. I had 19 replies from men who had a chance to study the text. They replied as follows :

2 sent replies of a few words only, one moderately satisfied with the service, the other less so.

16 of the remaining 17 objected to the offering of the bread and the cup.

11 of the remaining 17 objected to the prayer for the dead.

This is a very small sample, but it is from *progressive* evangelical clergy, which may give it additional significance—many of them for instance found much to applaud in the text.

(b) Younger clergy.

I was at a conference of nearly 200 younger evangelical clergy at the beginning of March. There I distributed a brief questionnaire, asking

for comments under the headings, Overall Reaction, Doctrine, Liturgical Structure, and Language. Many again said that they had been unable to obtain copies, but I had 109 replies from those who had. The 109 proved to have been in orders for an average of 6 years each. Thirty-eight were incumbents, 63 assistant curates, and 8 were in non-parochial jobs. Four of them are also included in the previous section. They replied as follows :

- 11 made single word or comparable general comments expressing dislike of the doctrine, e.g., " scripturally dubious ", " doctrine unacceptable ", etc.

Of the remaining 98 the replies showed the following picture :

- (1) Concerning the offering :

83 rejected the offering in straight terms.

11 more said that the finished work of Calvary was obscured or brought into doubt (as did 33 also of the 83 above).

3 of the remaining 4 had a negative overall reaction to the service.

- (2) Concerning the prayer for the dead :

63 of the 98 explicitly rejected it.

Further alarm was expressed about the lack of commandments, the lack of a thorough doctrine of sin, the shortened words of administration, and the great weakening of the emphasis on reception which governs the meaning of consecration in the 1662 book. A few of these points have now been met. Nine explicitly deplored the Commission's faded eschatology.

- (c) Other reactions.

I have received sample reactions of a more or less informal kind from diocesan evangelical unions in the diocese of Chelmsford, Chester, and Southwell. I have good reason to think them to be fairly representative. There have also been articles in the *Church of England Newspaper*, *The Churchman* and the book *Towards a Modern Prayer Book* edited by R. T. Beckwith (Marcham Manor Press, 1966). The Latimer House Liturgy Group, of which I am a member, has also considered the text very thoroughly. In every case, despite great variety of opinions on many other features in the text, there has been an almost unanimous rejection of the offering of the bread and the cup, and objection to the prayer for the dead only slightly less overwhelming.

I am well aware that these inquiries are less than exhaustive. They are however the only ones of any sort to which I have had access. They seem to me to afford sufficient grounds for thinking that to persist in the controversial features of the present text is to arouse opposition and division within the Church of England. I write in the hope that this may be averted.