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The Proposed Anglican-Methodist Ordinal

BY ROGER BECKWITH

THE preoccupation with the ministry which has characterised thought about reunion in this century, especially since the 1920 Lambeth Conference issued its 'Appeal to All Christian People', made it almost inevitable that the Anglican-Methodist negotiators should recommend the preparation of a new ordinal. In their 1963 report they said, 'It is desirable that before this happens (viz. the consecration of Methodist bishops) the Church of England and the Methodist Church should jointly revise their respective ordinals, so that by the use of a service of ordination which is common to both Churches unity may be furthered, and ground for suspicion and criticism removed. The ordinal of the Church of South India offers an example of what might be done' (p. 37). That the suspicion referred to is not all on one side may be inferred from the fact that the general approval given to the proposals by the Methodist Conference was qualified by a request for clarification on (among other matters) 'the form of the Ordinal in the two Churches.' A similar concern was expressed by eleven Anglican dioceses, and Convocation therefore asked that the continuing committee which would carry on the negotiations between the two Churches should 'arrange for the preparation of an Ordinal to be used in both Churches from the beginning of Stage I'. This the negotiators have now performed through a subcommittee of their own number, with three distinguished members of the Church of England Liturgical Commission and Principal A. R. George (Methodist) as assessors, and the proposed ordinal occupies twenty-five pages of their new report *Towards Reconciliation*.

THE NEED FOR REVISION

The grounds for the mutual suspicion between members of the two churches regarding their respective modes of ordination, in so far as it is not based on mere ignorance, or on the participation or non-participation of a bishop, are probably to be found in the absence from the service for the Ordination of Candidates for the Ministry in the Methodist *Book of Offices* of the title 'priest' and the commission to forgive and retain sins,¹ and in the presence of these features in the service for the Ordering of Priests in the Prayer Book. In other respects, the Methodist service does not very greatly differ from the Prayer Book service, on which it is based.² Anglo-Catholics are accustomed to appeal to these features of the Prayer Book service as showing that the Church of England desires to maintain the pre-Reformation conception of the ministry. Methodists, on the other hand, are apt to regard these features as dangerous because of the use Anglo-Catholics make of them. Anglican Evangelicals take a middle position, and while recognising that the New Testament does not require the inclusion

of these features in an ordination, and sympathising with the motives of the Methodist Church in abolishing them, remain unconvinced that such a course is necessary. They know from the formularies and from history that the Church of England has no such desire as Anglo-Catholics attribute to it,⁸ and are therefore unable to see relevance in any consideration except these: that 'priest' is a neutral word, the meaning of which is determined by its context, and that the commission to forgive and retain sins is securely based on the words of our Lord, a fact which sufficiently proves its edifying character. Nevertheless, Evangelicals would be ready, with adequate safeguards, to make a concession to Methodist scruples here, and consider that the Church of England as a whole ought to be ready to make such a concession.

So much for mutual suspicion. There were, however, more substantial reasons for reviewing the ordinals of the two churches than suspicion. The Methodist Church, so it is intended, will become episcopal. It was therefore necessary to add to the single ordination service which the Methodist Church uses at present a service for the appointment of bishops. Moreover, such episcopal functions as are at present performed in the Methodist Church are performed by ordinary ministers. Clearly, therefore, there was something to be said for providing the Methodist Church with a revised service for the ordination of its ordinary ministers, such as would indicate the future limits of their functions (though on the other hand it is arguable that the Methodist Church would best demonstrate that it was not abandoning Wesley's view that presbyters can in cases of necessity ordain, or the claim made in the 1960 Conference statement on 'Ordination in the Methodist Church' that Methodist ministers are equivalent to the presbyter-bishops of the New Testament, if it retained the same service of ordination as before). In favour of revising the Anglican ordinal, there were the facts that it had not been revised for three hundred years and that the revision of the Prayer Book is now in progress. There were good reasons, therefore, for reviewing the ordinals of both churches.

WAS JOINT REVISION PREMATURE?

When the intended Stage II is reached, and the two churches become one, they will undoubtedly need a single ordination procedure, and may well content themselves with a single ordinal. At Stage I, however, it would be possible for them each to have their own ordinals, and to review their existing ordinals separately to this end. However, assuming that Stage II is the goal, there does not seem to be any sufficient reason (*pace* Lord Fisher and the Church Union) why the preparation of a joint service for the ordination of presbyters should be regarded as premature, though the preparation of a joint service for the consecration of bishops may prove to have been so, and the preparation of a joint service for the ordination of deacons almost certainly will.

As regards the consecration of bishops, the difficulty is that the functions of Methodist bishops are not yet fully defined. *Ex hypothesi*, they will ordain. In addition, the 1963 report assumed that, like the

Anglican bishop and the modern bishop of the American Methodist Church,⁴ they would exercise pastoral oversight of a regional kind, such as is already exercised in the Methodist Church by District Chairmen and Circuit Superintendents (pp. 26, 53-55); though, in view of the fact that 'the appointment and functions of Methodist bishops' was one of the matters on which the Methodist Conference called for clarification, this cannot be taken as completely settled. There is also the matter of confirmation, of which the negotiators have been promising an examination since their *Interim Statement* of 1958 (p. 44), and on which thirty-two Anglican dioceses called for clarification after the appearance of the 1963 report. It is doubtless intended to deal with this matter in the negotiators' final proposals. At present, the Methodist service for the Public Reception of New Members in the *Book of Offices* may be led by any minister and contains no ceremony corresponding to the imposition of hands in Anglican confirmation. However, the statement on 'Church Membership' adopted by the Methodist Conference of 1961 commended the practice of inviting the District Chairman and Circuit Superintendent to participate, suggested that the service be revised in ways which would to some extent assimilate it to confirmation, and recommended that in the meantime the words of reception 'should be said separately to each person as he is received, and . . . accompanied by an outward sign of welcome and blessing'. In consequence, a revision of the service has been drawn up containing an optional imposition of hands and approximating to confirmation in other ways also, and the revision was this year authorised by Conference for experimental use. In view of all this, it is not perhaps surprising that the draft ordinal, in its statement of the duties of a bishop, assumes that the Methodist bishop, like the Anglican, will ordain, exercise pastoral oversight, and confirm (p. 70). Nevertheless, the feelings of Methodists on the matter are still to some extent unknown, and if the negotiators have misjudged them, a joint service for the consecration of bishops may prove to be at present impracticable.

Still more problematical is the ordering of deacons. The Methodist Church in this country (unlike the Methodist Church in America) does not ordain deacons, and the negotiators recognise that 'for the time being, the Methodist Church may not wish to ordain deacons' (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 51). Moreover, the present doctrine of the Methodist Church concerning the diaconate, as expressed in the 1960 Conference statement 'Ordination in the Methodist Church', is that 'the Reformation office of "deacon", closely corresponding to the New Testament "diaconos", is held among us by the various kinds of "stewards". . . .' The 'Preface' of the draft ordinal expresses a very bold assumption, therefore, when it says that 'the Church of England and the Methodist Church have pledged themselves to continue the historic ministry as it has come down from early times, and in this Ordinal provide forms which they agree to use when they ordain men to any of the three orders of Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon in that historic ministry.' The negotiators recognise, of course, that there is a difficulty here, but they seem not to appreciate how great a difficulty. Their suggestion that, as the Methodist probationer minister is roughly

equivalent to the Anglican deacon, he should be ordained deacon (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 22), is open to three objections:

(i) as the Church Union points out in its manifesto, the Methodist probationer minister may, by dispensation, celebrate communion, whereas the Anglican deacon may not. This difficulty would be met if the Church of England found it necessary to grant such dispensations to deacons, or if the Methodist Church decided in future to withhold them, but in fact the Church of England does not find it necessary, whereas the Methodist Church does. This is because the Methodist probationer minister, unlike the Anglican deacon, may be in charge of one or more congregations. One suspects that the negotiators recognise the intractability of this problem, and that the vagueness of the statement of the deacon's duties in the draft ordinal (p. 58) is intended to cover both practises. If so, the intention is not successfully achieved. The statement opens thus: 'It belongs to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Presbyter in leading the worship of the People, and specially when he ministers the Holy Communion. The Deacon shall also help the Presbyter in the ministration of Baptism and in preaching the Word of God.' Now, if this means that (as in the Church of England) the deacon may not, by himself, celebrate communion, it means also that he may not, by himself, baptise (which is contrary to Anglican custom as well as to Methodist) and that he may not, by himself, preach (which is absurd). If, on the other hand, it means that he may on occasion preach and baptise, it means also that (as in the Methodist Church, by dispensation) he may on occasion celebrate communion. Thus, the statement covers Methodist practice but not Anglican.

(ii) The second objection is that, according to the defined doctrine of the Methodist Church, the officers in that church who correspond to New Testament deacons are not the probationer ministers but the stewards. (It has to be remembered that the Methodist Conference has authority under the Deed of Union to interpret the doctrine of the Methodist Church, and is considered to have done so in statements like that on 'Ordination in the Methodist Church', which gives this account of the diaconate.) In the eyes of the Methodist Church, therefore, the probationer minister is not a deacon, whatever he may look like to Anglicans.

(iii) The third objection is that only in the fourth century did the diaconate become a step to the presbyterate, and that the development is now being called seriously in question. As the negotiators remark, 'this practice does not appear to have obtained in early times' (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 51). They have therefore wisely omitted any suggestion of it from their ordinal, and thus avoided placing any bar to the revival of the perpetual diaconate, which is being widely canvassed in Christendom at the present time, and which would certainly be necessary if the order of deacon and the order of deaconess were to be amalgamated, a possibility which the negotiators wish to see explored (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 23). Is it, therefore, really consistent or appropriate to suggest that the Methodist Church should now adopt the probationer-minister conception of the diaconate, a

conception which the rest of Christendom, including the Church of England, may shortly decide to discard?

The negotiators allow that their form for the ordering of deacons is 'of a more tentative character' than their forms for the ordering of presbyters and bishops (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 51). However, the facts seem to require one to go further than this, and to say that the preparation of a joint service for the ordering of deacons was decidedly premature, and that the most it contributes to the new ordinal is a sort of symbolic completeness, while being out of touch with the realities of the present situation. Nevertheless, if the two churches decide to adopt the services for ordering presbyters and bishops, and if research and discussion eventually make possible the adoption of a joint service for ordering deacons, it will be natural to base the new form as far as possible on the form now proposed, so as to make it congruous with the other two services of the ordinal; consequently, we will not exclude the service for ordering deacons from our discussion of the new ordinal, though the forms for ordering presbyters and bishops are of more immediate significance.

THE STARTING POINT FOR REVISION

As we have seen already, the 1963 report, when proposing a joint ordinal, added that 'the Ordinal of the Church of South India offers an example of what might be done.' This did not necessarily mean that the C.S.I. ordinal would be made the basis of the Anglican-Methodist ordinal, but in fact it has been, as the negotiators themselves say (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 51). The enthusiasm of the late Professor E. C. Ratcliff for the C.S.I. ordinal may have been partly responsible. As the most learned liturgiologist on the ordinal sub-committee, his opinion doubtless received due respect, and in his article on the C.S.I. ordinal in the January 1960 issue of *Theology* he had actually suggested that it should be made the model for future Anglican revisions. The negotiators defend their decision to follow this course on the grounds that the C.S.I. ordinal conforms to the practice of the primitive church, where prayer for the gift of the Spirit and of the *charisma* appropriate to the order in question accompanied the laying on of hands; and in so doing they actually describe the prayer for the gift of the Spirit as the 'form' of ordination (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 51f.). This language suggests that ordination is a sacrament, and that ancient liturgical practice supplies one at least of the essentials of the sacrament; it also prompts the question whether, if this is the 'form' of ordination, Anglican ordinations are valid. But, quite apart from the unfortunate language, it is obvious that this feature of ancient ordinations, if thought Biblical and edifying, could be copied without copying the C.S.I. ordinal as a whole. The same applies to the use of the term 'presbyter' instead of 'priest', and also to other features of the C.S.I. ordinal which have *not* been adopted in the Anglican-Methodist ordinal, though they might well have been: namely, the association of presbyters with the bishops in the imposition of hands at the consecration of a bishop, and the avoidance of reference to three 'orders' of ministers. To have followed the C.S.I. ordinal at these points would have helped to dispel the impression that bishop

and presbyter are orders *essentially* different, especially if the features of the Prayer Book ordinal which indicate that they are not had been retained, viz. the rubrics about the great necessity of deacons and priests (but not apparently bishops) in the church of Christ, and the alternative epistle in the Consecration of Bishops from Acts 20: 17-35.

It may seem rash to differ from so great an authority as Professor Ratcliff, especially when the majority of members of the Church of England Liturgical Commission agree with him, but one feels bound to say that it is a fundamentally mistaken procedure in liturgical revision to take as one's *starting point* the worship of the early church or the worship of a different church (like the Church of South India), and not to begin from where one is, with the existing liturgy of the church or churches undertaking revision. Any other procedure arouses a needless degree of controversy and causes a needless degree of distress: it is contrary to the principles of maintaining unity and concord and respecting the conscience of the weaker brother which are laid down in the New Testament. Necessary change in the worship of a church can be explained to the members of the church and defended against criticism, but unnecessary change can be neither explained nor defended. And in churches which stand in the tradition of Cranmer wholesale change is certainly unnecessary change.

Now, the Church of England and the Methodist Church both stand in the tradition of Cranmer. They are not, therefore, in the same position as the Church of South India, which incorporated not only Anglicans and Methodists but a union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, and therefore needed (whatever the risk or loss involved) to stand aside from any one tradition of worship. The Methodist ordinal, as has already been observed, is based upon the Prayer Book service for the Ordering of Priests. And though the Methodist Church in England does not at present ordain bishops or deacons, the American Methodist Church does, and uses for the purpose services likewise based on the corresponding services of the Prayer Book. To take as the starting point for revision the Prayer Book services and the similar Methodist services would therefore seem to have been the natural and proper course.

What perhaps moved the negotiators to take a different course, more even than the influence of Professor Ratcliff and the other co-opted members of the Liturgical Commission, or the argument which they themselves use to defend the course they have taken, was the hope of avoiding controversy over the substitution of the term 'presbyter' for 'priest' and the modification of the commission to forgive and retain sins. By taking the C.S.I. ordinal as their starting point, they could have these changes ready made in the basic text from which they worked. But if the negotiators hoped to avoid controversy on these points, they have been disappointed. Despite the enthusiasm of Professor Ratcliff, the most eminent Anglo-Catholic liturgiologist, for the C.S.I. ordinal, and his known satisfaction with the Anglican-Methodist ordinal (attested by A. H. Couratin in his obituary notice on Ratcliff in the *Church Times* for 7th July), despite the fact that 'presbyter' is a designation acceptable in the unreformed as well as in the reformed churches, the fact that 'priest' (as used in the Prayer

Book) and 'presbyter' were to the Reformers equivalent terms, and the fact that 'priest' is retained in the *title* of the new service for 'The Ordination of Presbyters, also called Priests', despite the late origin of the formal commission to forgive and retain sins in the Prayer Book service for the Ordering of Priests, and the inclusion in the new service of John 20: 19-29 as the gospel and of the words 'to declare to the penitent the absolution and remission of their sins' in the statement of the presbyter's duties—despite all this, the two changes in question have been strongly censured in the manifesto of the Church Union.⁵ One cannot regard the Church Union's complaints on these points as anything but unreasonable, but they serve to show that nothing has been gained by taking the C.S.I. ordinal as the starting point for revision. Indeed, we shall find that much has been lost.

By choosing the wrong starting point, the negotiators have placed needless obstacles in the way of the acceptance of their work by the churches. If these obstacles were bound to make acceptance impossible, as they surely would if the C.S.I. ordinal did not owe something to the Anglican, it would not be necessary to carry our discussion any further. But as this cannot be assumed, we shall continue our discussion, and try to judge the new ordinal by its merits, ignoring from now on the question of its suitability for the two particular churches, for which it is intended.

DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE IN THE NEW ORDINAL

In terms of doctrine and discipline, the draft ordinal deserves real praise and little criticism. It manifests none of those sacerdotal tendencies which appeared in the 1963 report, but which have been checked in the doctrinal chapters of *Towards Reconciliation*. The treatment of the forgiving and retaining of sins is better than the treatment in the C.S.I. ordinal, where the 'declaring of God's forgiveness to penitent sinners' appears to be differentiated from the 'ministry of his word.' We have already noted certain lost opportunities to indicate in the new ordinal that bishop and presbyter are not essentially different orders, but the new 'Preface' does much to compensate for this by avoiding every resemblance to the ambiguous statement with which the present Anglican 'Preface' begins: 'It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons'.⁶ This statement is interpreted by some (contrary to its author's intention) as meaning that the episcopate is found as a distinct order in the New Testament.⁷ The new 'Preface' says merely that the threefold ministry 'has come down from early times' and that 'the *titles* used for each of the three orders (viz. the titles of *bishop*, *presbyter* and *deacon*) are found in Scripture.' As regards ministerial duties, the wonderful exhortation in the Prayer Book service for the Ordering of Priests is retained optionally in an abbreviated form, and a succinct statement of the duties of each order (not simply of deacons) is included; but the interrogations are extremely brief and decidedly less searching than those of the C.S.I. ordinal, on which they are modelled, to say nothing of those in the present Anglican and Methodist ordinals. One further omission from the new 'Preface'

to the ordinal is important: the prohibition introduced in 1662 against any but the episcopally ordained ministering in the Church of England has gone. It is suggested in Appendix II that the Church of England should for the duration of Stage I attach to the ordinal draft Canons C 1-4, which would restore this requirement; but the Methodist Church would not, of course, be involved, and it is to be expected that at Stage II purely denominational glosses of this kind will be swept away. With them, a requirement will be swept away of which the Church of England knew nothing between the Reformation and 1662, which was then introduced as a punitive measure against English Puritans, and which has since, sad to say, proved to be an enormous barrier against Christian union and communion throughout the worldwide church.

THE STRUCTURE AND TEXT OF THE NEW ORDINAL

The ordination services of the Prayer Book are marked by a beautifully simple and orderly structure which is basically common to all three services. It is somewhat obscured, however, by the integration of each service with Holy Communion. The structure of the Methodist ordinal is approximately the same, but the device of using only a small part of the communion service, added at the end, avoids complication from that source. The compilers of the new ordinal have followed the Anglican structure (which is followed also by the C.S.I.), and though they have used the whole communion service they have ensured that the structure is not lost to view in the same way as the C.S.I. has done, by giving each section of the service a title. They have followed the C.S.I. also in dispensing with the Litany (never a favourite with non-Anglicans), presumably contenting themselves, like the C.S.I., with whatever brief litany may be included in the communion service used. There is great loss of substance here, but it makes for orderliness and brevity, since it means that there is an intercession only at one point in the service, not at two points.

The Anglican service for the Making of Deacons contains a formal list of the deacon's duties, which the compilers of the new ordinal have sensibly supplied in the other two services also, but it lacks the set exhortation, the call to prayer, or time of silent prayer, the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and the ordination prayer (as distinguished from the ordination formula), which are found in the other two services. These further items suggest the greater importance of the offices of priest and bishop, and the greater weight of responsibility which they bring, but the first and last could well be included in the service for deacons also. The compilers of the new ordinal, following the C.S.I., have actually included there all except the first. This has the incidental effect of assimilating the three services considerably.

The Prayer Book service for the Consecration of Bishops likewise lacks something which is present in the other two services, the invitation to anyone present to allege reasons why a particular candidate should not be ordained. Once again the compilers of the new ordinal, following the C.S.I. as before, have added the item to the third service. The addition further assimilates the three services, and it also makes one wonder whether the compilers have considered the fact that the Church of England is not in the same position as the C.S.I., since in

the Church of England refusal to consecrate is at present against the law.

In the Prayer Book ordinal there is an interesting difference between the way that the services for deacons and priests are integrated with the communion service^a and the way that the service for bishops is integrated with it, and both methods have something to be said for them. The C.S.I. ordinal, however, integrates all three services in the same way, and the Anglican-Methodist ordinal, though it does not precisely follow the C.S.I. ordinal in its method of integrating them, does follow it in integrating them all in the same way. This assimilates the three services even more.

When, in addition to this, one finds the text and rubrics assimilated as well, the degree of assimilation becomes really astonishing. The C.S.I. ordinal leads the way here, using the same collect for the three services and directing that the Bible (not the New Testament) be delivered to deacons as well as to presbyters and bishops. It also curbs variety within each service, by giving no choice of readings. The Anglican-Methodist ordinal follows suit in all three respects, but goes considerably further, using the same post-communion collect and (except for the list of duties) the same interrogation for the three services, and the same epistle for deacons and priests. The great drawback to this policy is not that when the services are made so much alike they are bound to prove monotonous (though this *is* a drawback, for the bishop and the cathedral congregation will have to go through them often enough, and everyone will find it a drawback when deacons and priests are ordained together, since one is then directed to use the almost identical Presentation and Examination from the two services twice without a break^b): the great drawback is that as one assimilates the three services, they become more and more vague and general, and less and less particular and appropriate to the order of ministry in question. For those who are accustomed to the abundance and variety found in the Prayer Book ordinal, to be confronted with this narrow uniformity is like turning from the beauty of the countryside to the frigid elegance of a geometrical garden.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

At the presentation of the candidates to the bishop, the Prayer Book services for deacons and priests include, as we have already noted, an invitation to anyone present to allege objections against the ordination of any particular candidate—an invitation which the new ordinal extends to the service for bishops. The C.S.I. ordinal, however, substitutes a request that the congregation should assent to the ordination of the candidates, the request being put in the form 'Do you trust that these persons are, by God's grace, worthy to be ordained?', to which the congregation replies 'We trust that they are worthy'. The word 'trust' is presumably intended to allow for the fact that we do not know other men's hearts, even when outwardly we know them well, and the further fact that members of the congregation are unlikely to know more than one of the candidates well, if indeed they know one. The words 'by God's grace' are, of course, intended to allow for the fact that no one is worthy to be ordained on his own account. A question

qualified to this extent is a clumsy question, and the compilers of the new ordinal (which includes both the invitation to object and the request to assent) have boldly swept away the qualifications, so that the question runs 'Are these persons worthy of this Ministry?' and the reply 'They are worthy'. When put in this unqualified form, it becomes manifest that the wrong question is being asked—a question which, if it was answered in 'a loud voice', as the rubric requires, might have the unfortunate effect of making the candidates' hearts swell with pride, but which is in fact more likely to elicit from the congregation a response of the most feeble and unconvincing kind. The proper question to ask is surely 'Do you assent to the ordination of these persons?', with the answer 'We do'.

In connection with this question and answer, the statement in the 'Preface' should be noted that 'the form of ordination in each case follows the scriptural pattern of acceptance by the People and prayer with the laying on of hands'. This hardly fits the facts. The truth is that, in so far as any pattern is discernible in the scanty New Testament references to the appointment of ministers, it is *choice* by the people not *acceptance* by the people that we find there (Acts 1: 23; 6: 5).

THE WORDS OF ORDINATION

The formula of ordination in the new ordinal, accompanying the laying on of hands, takes the ancient precatory form, and (as in the C.S.I. ordinal) is part of the great ordination prayer. This is surely to be welcomed. The traditional imperative form, as used with the laying on of hands in the Prayer Book services for ordaining priests and bishops, suggests that the laying on of hands is a sacrament, and that the Holy Spirit is *promised* in connection with it. The imperative form of words regarding the authority to minister, which in the present ordinals accompanies the delivery of the Bible or Testament and, at the ordination of deacons, the laying on of hands also, is not open to this objection, but a prayer for the gift of the Spirit at the ordination of deacons is an improvement, and there is something to be said for the change (adopted from the C.S.I. ordinal) whereby the giving of authority to minister is associated rather with the laying on of hands than with the delivery of the Bible. The latter still follows, but now with a form of words which emphasises its purely symbolical character, and under a separate heading. Prayer and the imposition of hands at the appointment of ministers are both exemplified in the New Testament, whereas the delivery of the Bible is an edifying ceremony fully in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament, though not explicitly authorised there.

THE ORDINATION EUCHARIST

It is a curious fact that the eucharistic text with which the new ordinal is integrated is a text in which the sermon precedes the creed (pp. 56, 63, 69) and in which there is a prayer or part of the service called 'The Thanksgiving', in the recitation of which the draft ordinal directs the new priests and bishop to join (pp. 67, 73). Now, the communion service of the *Book of Common Prayer* has the sermon *after* the creed; and there is no prayer or part of the service called

'The Thanksgiving' in the communion service of the *Book of Common Prayer*, of the *Book of Offices*, or of *Alternative Services: First Series*; nor can the title refer to the consecration prayer, which in none of those liturgies includes any words of thanksgiving at all. The Methodist Church is known to be preparing a revision of the service in the *Book of Offices*, but it is not yet finished, far less authorised. The only authorised service with which the new ordinal can be used, therefore, is the service from *Alternative Services: Second Series*, produced by the Church of England Liturgical Commission, and this is a service authorised only for experiment, not the official liturgy.

THE COLLECTS, EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

The collect and post-communion collect which are used with all three services of the new ordinal have been chosen, one would guess, chiefly because of their antiquity. They both come from the old Roman sacramentaries. The collect was the first collect at the consecration of a Roman bishop, and is of so banal a character that it hardly deserves to be used once in the new ordinal, let alone three times. The post-communion collect is more edifying, but to have used it once would have been enough.

We have already noted that there is no choice of readings in the new ordinal, and that one of the readings is used twice. Thus, five passages are employed, of which two (Jn. 20: 19-29 and Jn. 21: 15-17) come from the Prayer Book ordinal, and one (2 Tim. 4: 1-5) from the Methodist ordinal. The other two are Mk. 10:35-45, which makes a very good gospel at the ordination of deacons, and Rom. 12: 1-12, which is used for the epistle at the ordination both of deacons and of presbyters, and is not particularly suitable at the ordination of either. How much more suitable are 1 Tim. 3: 8-13 and Eph. 4: 7-13, which disappear! Among the further passages which disappear, one particularly regrets the loss of Mt. 9: 36-38, 1 Tim. 3: 1-7, Acts 20: 17-35 and Mt. 28: 18-20, all of which are admirable readings for the ordination of presbyters or bishops.

CONCELEBRATION

The rubrics directing that the new presbyters and the new bishop join with the presiding bishop in reciting the Thanksgiving (pp. 67, 73) would introduce into the Church of England and the Methodist Church the Roman form of concelebration, whereby several priests recite the consecration prayer together. The Eastern form is different, and even in the West concelebration of this type is not a very ancient feature of ordination services. 'Sacramental concelebration in the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops in the Roman rite would seem to have been introduced some time between the eighth and the twelfth century. . . . This mediaeval addition to the liturgy was a novelty . . .' says the Roman liturgiologist Archdale King.¹⁰ Public worship needs someone to lead it (whether a single officiant, or various people officiating in different ways at different points in the service) but it does not normally need several people to lead it at the same time. This ought to happen only when there is some special need to justify it, as at the distribution of the sacrament to a large

body of communicants, or when it has a symbolical value. Now, concelebration admittedly bases its claim to exist on its symbolical value. But worthy symbolism is symbolism with a meaning that is both evident and edifying, whereas there are many occasions on which concelebration, if it suggested anything to the mind at all, would suggest nothing more edifying than a clerical society holding one of its private meetings in a public place. And it seems to the writer that the consecration of a bishop might very well prove to be such an occasion. At the ordination of presbyters, however, the objection would not apply. For this is the service at which those receiving ordination are authorised for the first time to consecrate the sacrament. There is therefore a real and edifying significance in their proceeding forthwith to do so.

There is, however, an objection to the practice of concelebration which does apply at the ordination of presbyters, that it suggests a false doctrine of eucharistic consecration. Since the new presbyters, unlike the new bishop, do not take part either in the manual acts or in the distribution, the implication is that they consecrate simply by reciting the consecration prayer. But the truth surely is that the bread and wine are consecrated (made sacramental) only by the performance of *all* that our Lord did and commanded to be done in his remembrance, not simply by repeating his recorded words or imitating his giving of thanks. A presbyter who simply joins in the consecration prayer is no more a joint-conservator than is a deacon or layman who simply helps with the distribution.¹¹

In the service for the Ordination of Presbyters, the direction about concelebration is combined with the Prayer Book direction that the new priests are to remain at the place where hands were laid upon them until they have received communion (p. 67). This is doubtless in deference to Frere's theory that the Prayer Book rubric is a relic of concelebration.¹² The fact that the rubric originated in Bucer's draft should have been a sufficient warning against the acceptance of this theory, for Bucer (as his *Censura* shows) was a great enemy of the idea that one part of the church belongs to the clergy, another to the laity. The real idea behind the rubric is probably simple convenience. Since the imposition of hands takes place near the Lord's table, and since in the combined service for deacons and priests the priests are ordained after the deacons, it is convenient that they remain near the Lord's table until they have received the sacrament.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW ORDINAL

The English of the draft ordinal is in need of a good deal of attention. No one could accuse it of being colloquial, but it is cold rather than dignified, and has about it more than a touch of 'olde English', good examples of which are provided by the answers to the interrogation. On the other hand, the retention of the pronoun 'thou' in addressing God may be right, for this mode of address is not a mere antiquarianism: through falling out of general use it has acquired the power to suggest the 'otherness' of God and the reverence with which he should be approached. It is perhaps worth adding that in the list of the presbyter's duties (p. 65) the parallel suggested by the words 'he is . . .

to prepare the baptised for Confirmation, and the dying for their death' is an unfortunate one!

NECESSARY LEGISLATION

One final matter. The proposed legislation for bringing the new ordinal into use (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 53) is somewhat perplexing. It is stated that legislation will be necessary for the Church of England, to authorise the use of 'presbyter' as an equivalent to 'priest', and it is further suggested that when this has been secured the ordinal can be brought into use under the Alternative Services Measure. As regards the first point, this may be correct, but the Latin version of 'presbyter' (*presbyterus*) is a well established legal equivalent to the Prayer Book term 'priest', being used, for example, in the Latin texts of the Thirty-nine Articles and the 1603 Canons, and in the subscriptions to the Prayer Book, as appended to the 1662 Act of Uniformity. Moreover, the Church of England has for some while been acting as if no such legislation were needed. It has admitted to its ministry without reordination 'presbyters' ordained in the Church of South India, not to mention priests from the unreformed churches, ordained with rites in which both *presbyterus* and *sacerdos* (or cognate terms) are used. And though, as the writer is informed, the diocese of Madagascar has always used the Malagasy translation of 'presbyter', and exclusively so, the Church of England has never raised any query about the orders conferred there. It may well be that a similar usage has been adopted in vernacular Prayer Books used in other parts of the Anglican Communion, and in the ordinals of some of the non-Anglican churches with which the Church of England is in full communion.¹³

With regard to the second point, the writer has heard it contended that, as the Alternative Services Measure covers alternatives only to the services of 'the Book of Common Prayer', of which (in its narrowest sense) the ordinal is not a part, authorisation of the new ordinal under cover of this measure would violate its terms; and, quite apart from this consideration, it is obvious that the aim of removing suspicion between the two churches by the use of a common ordinal will be achieved only if both churches do in fact use it. Consequently, one wonders (especially in view of the attitude of the Church Union, as we now know it) whether it would be wise to authorise the new ordinal under the Alternative Services Measure, since by the terms of that measure its actual use would be dependant upon the good will of the ordaining bishop, of the P.C.C. of the cathedral (if also a parish church), and possibly of the ordinand as well.

NOTES

¹ With regard to these two omissions, it should be borne in mind that the Methodist Church nevertheless recognises in its Deed of Union that the minister has a *representative* priesthood (clause 30), and includes in its version of Morning Prayer in the *Book of Offices* the main substance of the Prayer Book absolution, under the rubric 'A Declaration as to the Forgiveness of Sins to be made by the Minister'. Declaratory absolutions are, of course, a form of 'the ministry of God's holy word', through which absolution is stated in the Prayer Book to be received (first exhortation at Holy Communion), and to which Methodist ministers are explicitly commissioned in the Methodist ordinal.

³ The chief differences are that in the Methodist service the words accompanying the laying on of hands and the delivery of the Bible take a partly optative instead of a wholly imperative form, that the service is followed by the latter part of the communion service instead of being integrated with the whole of it, and that the readings (an expanded selection) are consequently not specifically an epistle and a gospel. Four features of the Methodist service, the readings from Mt. 28: 18-20 and Jn. 21: 15-17, the call to prayer after the interrogation and the exhortation at the end, are derived from the Prayer Book service for the Consecration of the Bishops, and one feature, the reading from Lk. 12: 35-38, is derived from the Prayer Book service for the Making of Deacons.

⁴ The evidence for this assertion has been assembled by the writer of this article on pp. 22-32 of his book *Priesthood and Sacraments* (Marcham, 1964).

⁵ The American Methodist bishops were formerly wholly itinerant, with nothing corresponding to an Anglican diocese, but with a general jurisdiction, held jointly with the rest of the bishops, over the whole church (see G. F. Moede, *The Office of Bishop in Methodism: its History and Development*, Zurich, Methodist Publishing House, 1964).

⁶ The use of the term 'presbyter' has been objected to on different grounds by Professor Margaret Deanesly in a long letter to the *Daily Telegraph* for 30 March. In her view the term suggests that the two churches are becoming Presbyterian. It is a sufficient answer to this to say that the difficulty does not seem to have arisen in the Church of South India, and that the Presbyterian churches of Great Britain do not normally call their 'presbyters' by that name but by the names of 'ministers' and 'elders', which are the names used in the *Books of Common Order*.

⁷ There is, however, an ambiguous statement of this kind in the Service of Reconciliation (*Towards Reconciliation*, p. 30, paragraph 2).

⁸ The 'Preface' originated in Cranmer's first ordinal of 1550, and Cranmer's view was that 'the bishops and priests were . . . not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion' (*Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, Parker Society, p. 117). This view comes out in the ordinal itself, as we have seen, though it came out much more clearly in Cranmer's original text and in his revision of 1552 than in the 1662 revision. The 1662 revisers seem to have been prompted to make this aspect of the ordinal less prominent by the attempts of doctrinaire Presbyterians to draw arguments against episcopacy from it (see E. Cardwell, *A History of Conferences connected with the Book of Common Prayer*, 1840, pp. 385-387).

⁹ The only difference between the method of integration used in the Making of Deacons and that used in the Ordering of Priests is that on the former method the gospel is postponed until the deacons have been ordained, so as to allow one of them to exercise the more or less obsolete prerogative of the deacon to read the gospel at Holy Communion.

¹⁰ *Towards Reconciliation*, p. 55. It is true that in the Prayer Book ordinal the presentation, which differs little from one service to the other, has to be used twice, but even this degree of duplication one would expect to see ironed out in a modern revision.

¹¹ *Concelebration in the Christian Church* (Mowbray, 1966), p. 70f.

¹² Concelebration is included also in the Service of Reconciliation (*Towards Reconciliation*, pp. 46-48), where it is more defensible in form and seems justified by the occasion. It could well be retained in whatever inauguration service replaces the Service of Reconciliation.

¹³ See F. Procter and W. H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (Macmillan, 1905), pp. 668f.

¹⁴ Since these words were written, the writer has consulted the Prayer Book, Ordinal and Articles of the Lusitanian Church, full communion with which was sanctioned by the Convocations in October 1963. He finds that the terms used for 'priest' are 'presbitero' and 'ministro', never 'sacerdote'. Much the same is probably true of the formularies of the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, full communion with which was sanctioned on the same occasion.