

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

FEBRUARY, 1883.

ART. I.—THE NEW DEPARTURE.

IT is one of the difficulties of perfect fairness in controversy that we are often unable to ascertain with accuracy the real opinions of any considerable bodies of men. This is especially the case when people are not united as a corporate body, and therefore there is no dogmatic or authoritative statement of their opinions. If, for example, we are brought into discussion with those who term themselves "The Brethren," we may be perfectly satisfied that we are giving a fair and faithful representation of what we believe to be their teaching; but still we cannot prove our statements by authority; for there are no authoritative documents, and what one "brother" admits, another may deny. It was, doubtless, this difficulty that led to the peculiar language of the 31st Article. The Council of Trent did not define the doctrine of propitiatory sacrifice in the mass until the year A.D. 1562, and consequently in A.D. 1552, when the Article was drawn up, the framers of it could not refer to any authoritative document, but could only condemn what they knew to be the current teaching of the Church of Rome. They therefore used the expression, "*in which it was commonly said.*"

There has been just the same difficulty with reference to that remarkable movement which originated at Oxford about fifty years ago, beginning with Tractarianism, and now developed into Ritualism. It has all along professed to be an effort for the revival of Church Principles, and as such has been heartily supported by a considerable number of loyal and true-hearted Churchmen. By "Church Principles" they have understood the real principles of the Church of England; and, as loyal Churchmen, they have welcomed the movement, believing it to be an effort to recommend and develop those principles.

In this they have been encouraged by the use of the epithet "High." The Ritualistic party call themselves "High Church," and so do many of that large class of Churchmen to whom I have just referred. The result is that, although they have not altogether approved of some things which they have read or seen, still, on the great, broad basis of High Churchism they have considered that they have more affinity with that movement than they have with those whom they designate "Low." They sincerely disapprove of many things said and done by Ritualists, but they cannot quite get over the fact that if Churchmen are to be classed as either High or Low, they and the Ritualists, at all events, class themselves together as High.

But many amongst us have for a long time been profoundly convinced that the Church principles of the loyal, conscientious, traditional High Churchman are totally different from the Church principles of the Ritualist; and that the epithet "High" means in the language of the two classes two totally different things. In the one it means a faithful adherence to the Prayer Book and its principles; but in the other a dissatisfaction with the Prayer Book, and a craving after something beyond: in the one a rising to it, and in the other a departure from it. To many amongst us this has been perfectly plain for years. But still it has been impossible to prove it, for there have been no authoritative documents; and, even if there had been any, they would not have been likely to contain any such avowal. It has been seen perfectly clearly in sermons, in pamphlets, in books, and in the ceremonial imitation of Rome. But still, individual words and actions could only be regarded as proofs of individual opinions, and therefore, although they left no doubt on the minds of observers, they could not be accepted as absolute proofs of disloyalty against any of those who were not themselves guilty of disloyal acts.

But a great change has now taken place, and we are brought into altogether a new position. After the Church Congress at Derby there can no longer be any doubt on the subject, for we had there what was as nearly an authoritative statement as under the circumstances it is possible to expect. It is needless to speak of that well-known body, the English Church Union. The E.C.U. was formed as a centre for the Ritualistic movement, and it has ever since maintained its position as the most widely extended and influential organization in existence for the maintenance of Ritualistic principles.

I believe, also, that it has been considered the most moderate of the various kindred associations, so that it embraces several who, as they express themselves, are not prepared to go to extremes. Now, at the Derby Church Congress we had the

advantage of hearing a most important avowal from the President of this influential organization. Of course, we who do not belong to the Union have no means of knowing how far he spoke as the mouthpiece of the Council, or simply gave expression to his own personal opinion ; but all must admit that when the President of the Union, on such a great occasion, delivered a carefully prepared written paper at the request of the Bishop of the Diocese, we may regard that paper as approaching as nearly as possible to an authoritative declaration of the principles and purposes of the Union.

What, then, did the President of the English Church Union say? What line did he pursue? The subject of discussion was "Proposals for Liturgical Improvement," and Canon Venables accordingly made several important practical suggestions which he thought might tend without the slightest alteration of principle to increase the interest of our Liturgical worship. But the President of the English Church Union did nothing of the kind. He made one proposal, and one only, namely, that those who wished to do so should be at liberty to abandon our present Prayer Book altogether, and adopt in its place the First Book of Edward VI. His words were: "In discussing the question of Liturgical Improvement, the proposal I have to make aims not so much at any change in our existing Prayer Book, as at the alternative use along with it of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI." Nor was this all, for almost immediately afterwards he avowed his preference for the unreformed liturgies, and the Use of Sarum, above our English Prayer Book. He said, "Those who are at all acquainted with the unreformed Service books of the English Church must often have wondered how it came to pass that from a revision of originals so rich and varied as the Sarum Breviary, and the great English rite of S. Osmund, there should have resulted anything so meagre in comparison with them as our existing daily Offices and Liturgy." There is no mistaking these plain and outspoken words. There is the distinct avowal of a preference for the unreformed Service books, while our own Prayer Book is described as being so meagre in comparison with them that it is a wonder how it could have been derived from such rich and varied sources. Nor is this an isolated sentence. In another passage, he says, "In this respect it is impossible to deny that our existing Communion Office is open to grave exception." The one object of the whole paper, indeed, is to give such evidence of the inferiority of our existing Liturgy as may induce the Bishops to give permission (which, of course, they have no power to do) for the substitution under certain circumstances of another book.

It is of no use, therefore, any longer to maintain the delusion that the movements of the English Church Union are prompted by any love for the English Prayer Book. That book is condemned as "meagre," and "open to grave exceptions." The preference is given to the unreformed services, and especially to the Use of Sarum; and it must be plainly understood that if anything is suggested as a *via media* or a *modus vivendi*, the two parties between whom it must be a *via media* are on the one hand those who avow their preference for the Use of Sarum, and on the other those who with their whole heart delight in the reformed worship of our dear old Church of England.

But I have heard it said that the Use of Sarum was itself a reformed service, and free from many of the abuses of Rome. Thus Mr. Wood calls it "The great English rite of S. Osmund." But surely he was mistaken in that expression, for, though used in England, it was not an English rite. Osmund was a Norman Count, and having fought in the army of William the Conqueror, was, as a reward for his services, first created Earl of Dorset, and then appointed Bishop of Salisbury. At the time of his appointment there was great religious dissension in the country occasioned by the introduction of the Gallican liturgy by William the Conqueror, which was resisted by the English; and Osmund compiled the Use of Sarum in order, if possible, to harmonize all parties. His chief work, therefore, was to introduce, as far as possible, the Gallican element; and in no sense whatever can that use be called "The great English rite of S. Osmund."

But its origin is of little importance as compared with its contents. The great question is, "What is the real character of the book which is thus preferred to our 'meagre' English Prayer Book?" And it would be an important contribution to the present controversy if any of those who exalt its excellence would inform us of any one particular in which it differs in principle from the Romish Missal and Breviary. There is not space in such a paper as this for the investigation of its identity in all important points with the liturgies of Rome; but it would be extremely interesting to know in what that richness consists of which we heard so high an encomium at the Derby Church Congress.

Three things may be briefly mentioned:

(1.) The Use of Sarum was certainly rich in Legends, and that to the exclusion of Scripture. On such a subject we surely cannot have a better authority than the preface to that First Book of Edward VI., which is now so strongly recommended. In that Preface it is said:

"These many years past this godly and decent order of the ancient

fathers hath been so altered, broken, and neglected by planting in uncertain stories, legends, responds, verses, vain repetitions, commemorations, and synodals, that commonly, when any book of the Bible was begun, before three or four chapters are read out, all the rest were unread."

And of these Legends, etc., the same preface adds, "Some be untrue, some uncertain, some vain and superstitious." If it is the omission of such Legends as these that makes our Prayer Book "meagre," all I can say is, Let us thank God for its meagreness.

(2.) Then, again, the Use of Sarum was rich in complicated and senseless ceremonial. The Preface already quoted says of these ceremonies :

"Some at the first were of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet, at length, turned to vanity and superstition; some . . . because they were winked at in the beginning, they grew daily to more and more abuses, which, not only for their unprofitableness, but also because they have much blinded the people and obscured the glory of God, are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected."

It may be well, perhaps, to give one illustration from the Sarum Missal: "Here let the priest uncover the cup, and make the sign of the cross with the host five times—first beyond the cup on every side, secondly even with the cup, thirdly within the cup, fourthly as the first, fifthly before the cup." This is given simply as a specimen, and some may say that there is no harm in it. But I can scarcely believe it possible that anyone will hesitate to apply to it the language of the Preface. "This excessive multitude of ceremonies was so great, and many of them so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us."

(3.) The Use of Sarum was rich in saint worship. For example, in the Missal the priest did not confess to God alone (I suppose that would have been meagre), but was directed to say, "I confess to God, to blessed Mary, to all the saints, and to you; because I have sinned too much by thought, word, and deed by my fault: I pray holy Mary, all the saints of God, and you to pray for me." Again, in the Litany, the Use of Sarum was far in excess of the modern Church of Rome. In the modern Romish Litany I count only forty-seven persons to whom prayer is addressed, including the Virgin, two arch-angels, and the twelve apostles; but in the Use of Sarum according to Bishop Short,¹ there were no less than 116 persons addressed. Possibly some Gallican saints may have been added by S. Osmund. On that point I am not pre-

¹ "History of the Church of England," § 744.

pared to speak; but of this I am certain, that in regard to the worship of saints, all true English Churchmen will rejoice in the meagreness of the Church of England Prayer Book, and have no desire for the richness of the Use of Sarum.

Now this is the book which, before the assembled Church Congress at Derby, was avowedly preferred to our English Prayer Book. When, therefore, it is said that there is a clear preference for the worship of Rome, no one can any longer regard it as a calumnious or unfounded accusation. We have the open, plain, and undisguised avowal of the President of the English Church Union, that the English Prayer Book is "meagre," and the Use of Sarum rich; the English Communion Office open to grave objections, and the unreformed liturgies so superior, that it is a wonder how anything so inferior as the English Prayer Book could have been compiled from such rich materials. Let no one, therefore, from this day forward, suppose that it is the object of the Union to uphold the Reformed Church of England, or to maintain its worship; but let it be clearly and distinctly understood, that the preference has been publicly given to the Use of Sarum and the unreformed liturgies.

But the avowal of a preference, it may be said, is not a distinct proposal; and if we had nothing more than such an avowal, it might possibly be supposed that there was no intention of any practical action. Such a supposition, however, is rendered impossible by the proposal which followed, viz., that there should be the alternative use of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI.

Now let anyone look for a moment at the line of argument, and the meaning of this proposal is self-evident.

The argument is, that because the unreformed liturgies and the Use of Sarum are superior to our English Prayer Book, therefore we are to give the liberty to make use of the First Book instead of our own. Is it not obvious that the whole force of the argument depends on the fact that the First Book of Edward approximates to these unreformed liturgies more nearly than does our present book? It is preferred because it is more in accordance with that which is considered the best, viz., the Use of Sarum. This proposal, when regarded in connection with the avowed preference, carries with it its own condemnation, and ought at once to put all true Churchmen on their guard.

We are brought to exactly the same conclusion by the historical position of the book. The Reformation was not a sudden act, and our English Prayer Book was not born in a day. The work began with the King's Primer in A.D. 1545,

which was followed in A.D. 1548 by the first Communion Service—the chief object of which was the restoration of the cup to the laity; but the first reformed Liturgy for morning and evening worship was the First Book of Edward VI., in A.D. 1549. Now let no one undervalue, for one moment, the greatness, or importance, of the work which was accomplished in the publication of this book. The compilers cleared away such a vast amount of Romish superstition and error that it is impossible not to admire the courage and wisdom with which they acted. They were perfectly justified, therefore, in describing it as a godly book, and in ascribing their success to the gracious help of the Holy Spirit Himself; nevertheless, when the book was published it was found that there were some parts in it which still required alteration, and a revision became necessary. There were certain things still left which required removal, so that when any further change was objected to by the Papists it was answered: “That it was no wonder that the corruptions which they had been introducing for above a thousand years were not all discovered and thrown out at once” (Bishop Burnet). Besides which, there were certain expressions which it was just possible to understand in the Romish sense.¹ It was clearly of the utmost importance to avoid the possibility of any such doubt or misapprehension; and as the Reformers had no desire that their trumpet should give an uncertain sound, the book was carefully revised. In the Act of Parliament which sanctioned the revision the reason was given as follows:—

“That there had been divers doubts raised about the manner of the ministration of the Service, rather by the curiosity of the ministers and mistakers than of any other worthy cause; and that for the better explanation of that, and for the greater perfection of the Service in some places where it was fit to make the Prayer and fashion of Service more earnest, and fit to stir Christian people to the true honouring of Almighty God, therefore it had been by the command of the King and Parliament perused, explained, and made more perfect.”

The Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. was the result of that revision; and, although it was subsequently both slightly

¹ There was a passage, for example, quoted in the *Guardian* of December 6th, 1882, in which Gardiner is reported to have said: “Willeth children to be taught that they receive with their bodily mouth the body and blood of Christ, which I allege, because it will appear it is a teaching set forth among us of late, as hath been also and is by the Book of Common Prayer, being the most true Catholic doctrine of the substance of the sacrament in that is there so Catholically spoken of.” I do not say that Gardiner was right in this statement, but I do say that if there was anything to justify his assertion, it was most desirable that as soon as possible it should be removed.

altered and added to in 1560 and 1604 till it reached its present form in 1662, we must regard that Second Book as the completion of the great work of the Reformation so ably, but still imperfectly, commenced in the First. The history, therefore, places the First Book in exactly the same position as that in which it was placed in the argument of Mr. Wood, viz., an intermediate position between the Use of Sarum and the present English Prayer Book. It was a great and noble effort, but yet not complete. It was a great movement in the right direction, but there were still in it certain most serious defects; and, what was more important, it contained certain passages which those who were so disposed might misinterpret in the Romish sense.

Yet this is the book to which we are now invited to return; and it is only reasonable that we should ask the reason why. We are content with our beloved old English Prayer Book, in which, ever since we began to worship at all, we have poured out our hearts in holy communion with God. Why should we either forsake it, or throw the whole Church into confusion by the admission of an alternative service?

Certainly not because the First Book is less "meagre" than the second; for, beyond all controversy, it was the more meagre of the two. Morning and evening prayer began in it with the Lord's Prayer, and therefore contained neither texts, address, confession, nor absolution. They also ended with the third Collect, and therefore contained none of the prayers for the Queen, Royal Family, &c. The "Prayers and Thanksgivings on several occasions" were not included, so that the familiar words of the "Prayer for all Conditions of Men," as well as the "General Thanksgiving," were not in it. The Commandments were not there; and the Catechism contained nothing about the Sacraments. And what has become of some importance since the subject has been mooted, there was no Ordination Service. It is well to bear this in mind, because it is the fashion with some persons to quote the 36th Article as giving a sanction to the First Book. And Mr. Wood said, in his address at Derby, that "at this very moment it¹ has the direct sanction and approval of the 36th Article." But he must have either forgotten or ignored the fact that the ordinal to which the 36th Article refers was published quite independently of the book, and was never made a part of it. In 1552 the ordinal, with certain changes, was introduced into the Second Book; but it was never made a part of the First. The Article, therefore, has no reference of any kind whatever

¹ *Guardian*, Oct. 11. I observe that the words "As regards the Communion Office" have been added in the authorized report.

to the First Book, and in that book there was no Ordination Service.

It must be clear, therefore, to the most superficial observer, that the attraction of the First Book does not consist in its richness. If our own Prayer Book is "meagre," the First Book is much more so. The changes subsequently made have been chiefly in the direction of addition, and there must be some other reason which renders it so attractive. And what is that reason? There is an expression in § 743 of Bishop Short's "History of the Church of England," which answers the question. The Bishop there says: "On the whole, this book forms a connecting link between the Missal and the Prayer Book." Now, if this be the case, it is no wonder if those who prefer the Missal desire the substitution of this book for our present Prayer Book. The time may not be come for the introduction of the Missal itself; but that may follow in time, if they can now secure the connecting link. If this be the case, the reasons which lead men now to desire it are precisely those which led the Reformers to reform it. It is nearer Rome than our English Prayer Book. Therefore it was that the Reformers reformed it, and therefore it is that they who prefer "the unreformed liturgies" desire to return to it. This may be seen very clearly in Mr. Wood's address. He enumerates several of the advantages that he considers would be gained by a return to it, such as a closer conformity to the order of "the canon" of the Mass; the omission of the Ten Commandments, and the "Dearly Beloved;" "the reservation for the sick;" "the unction of the sick;" and prayer for the dead.

To these he might have added the restoration of an altar in place of "the table" with its "fair white linen cloth;" and of the name "The Mass" in addition to the "Holy Communion;" the sanction for auricular confession in the Communion Service, combined with the omission of the General Confession in the Morning and Evening Prayer; the omission from the words of administration of the clause, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thine heart by faith with thanksgiving;" and the presence of certain other expressions which it was just possible for "mistakers" to understand as teaching the localization in the consecrated elements of the actual human person of our blessed Redeemer now seated at the right hand of God.

But there is one other result of a return to the First Book which is of supreme importance, though I have not yet seen any notice of it in the recent discussion, viz., that by returning to the First Book we should get behind the date of the Articles. The Articles were not drawn up till the year A.D.

1552, so that by adopting the First Book we should go back to a date at which the Articles did not exist, at which, in fact, the Church of England had drawn up no formal dogmatic protest against the errors of Rome. The Reformation began with the reform of the Liturgy, before there was any authoritative statement of distinctive truth, and when the minds of men were passing through a rapid transition. To this transition period the First Book belongs; and if we were to decide on adopting the Liturgy of the transition there would be a manifest inconsistency in combining with it those definite statements of truth which were carefully drawn up afterwards when the great gulf was past, and the work of the Reformation in essential points complete.

With all these facts before us, it is impossible to mistake the character of the proposal made. Whether we look at the history or the contents of the book, we are brought to the same conclusion. It is not a proposal to improve our Prayer Book or to adapt it to the special demands of the day. It is a proposal to depart from the Prayer Book altogether, and to return to the transition state through which the Church of England passed in the transition days of the Reformation. The First Book of Edward bore just the same relationship to the Use of Sarum that Basingstoke does to the city of Salisbury. The Reformers halted awhile there on the up line, but they could not rest, so they soon left it to complete their journey. We are now invited to return there; but is there any thinking man who can suppose for one moment that we are intended to remain there, when we have the public avowal of the undenied preference for "the unreformed liturgies" and the Use of Sarum? Is it not perfectly clear that the attraction to the First Book is simply this, that it is a station for the express train on the direct down line to Sarum?

And now, how will this proposal be received? or rather, how will it be received by that large body of men who wish to be considered "High Churchmen," and who mean by that expression that they entertain a loyal, loving, and faithful allegiance to the grand old Church of England, into which they were received at their baptism, and of which those who are clergymen have been its appointed officers ever since their ordination? Will they, or will they not, be prepared for this new departure? Are they prepared to abandon all the historical loyalty of their party; to give up their beloved Prayer Book as "meagre" and "open to grave objections;" to throw overboard their Articles and the latter part of their Catechism; and to go boldly back to the period of transition, when much, we fully admit, was improved, but nothing defined; when great things were done, but when much still remained to be done; and

when nothing was matured or consolidated as we now have it in our Articles and Liturgy? If they are prepared for such a movement, it will certainly be a new phase in the character of the historical, loyal, and influential High Churchmanship of England.

E. HOARE.

ART. II.—PRESERVATION OF PAROCHIAL REGISTERS.

WHAT a dry subject! Well, it is true that there is a certain dryness in any tabulated collection of bare facts. We readily admit that to few are the materials of history readable. Yet Parochial Chronicles have the charm which belongs to individuality and locality; and when they are so complete that there is scarcely a parish without its register, then in their entirety the personal and local are merged in the national, and what at first sight seemed only to appertain to individuals is found in reality to be of value to the whole nation and to be part and parcel of its history.

The written record of the baptisms, the marriages, and the burials of parishioners from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, is the only substitute we have in the past for the modern invention of the Decennial Census. In their continuous registration of particular facts these parish books describe, with a minuteness graphic to those who can understand them, the rise and fall of towns; the distribution of population; the relative importance of the South as compared with the North of England, of the East as compared with the West. With unerring accuracy they point to the recurrence of plagues; to the fat years and the lean years, and to their effect upon the lives and the marriages of the people. They throw light upon our nomenclature, and on all the curious inquiries respecting surnames and Christian names. They describe exactly the social and commercial condition of those whose names are entered. They are our only index to the average duration of life; it was by an appeal to parish registers that Sir Cornewall Lewis supported his theory that centenarians were not to be found. No pedigree can be proved in a court of law without recourse to them. They are in a very large sense the title-deeds to the landed property of this kingdom; and not the million owners of land, but the thirty millions who are their heirs at law, are deeply and personally interested in the preservation of the proofs of their title. To this dry subject we desire to call the attention of Churchmen.

In September, 1538, the first order for the systematic keeping