

THE CANADIAN REVISION.¹

SOME NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS.

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THE fact that at the present time the Church of England is contemplating a revision of her formularies tends to increase our interest in the new Canadian Prayer Book. These notes do not profess to be entirely exhaustive, but I have noted most of the changes and have ventured a few opinions, which must be taken for what they are worth, the opinions of one who has no pretensions to be an expert in Liturgiology. The first observation one has to make will allay the fears of some. The doctrinal position of the Church in Canada is unaltered by this revision. Indeed the fact that in these days of varying opinion among Churchmen the Prayer Book has been overhauled, and with this result, seems rather to strengthen the Evangelical position.

The Lectionary is the one now proposed for us in England, but the lessons from the Apocrypha on Sundays, to which so many have objected, have been omitted, and even for weekdays further alternatives for such lessons have been provided. Thus, at least in my judgment, our Canadian friends have "gone one better!" In the *Calendar* are some unexpected changes—Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Clement of Alexandria and several other notables disappear, but six others are accorded a place, including Justin Martyr and Thomas of Canterbury.

The notes which precede Morning Prayer are considerably extended and the Ornaments Rubric is retained. This is followed by explicit directions as to when and how the permissible shortened form may be used. An entirely new feature is a list of four possible "combinations of services" (e.g., Morning Prayer and Holy Communion, etc.) and one fears lest the fact that there is no suggestion of Holy Communion in conjunction with Evening Prayer may possibly be urged as an argument against it.

Morning and Evening Prayer.—Here it may be noted that the terms Mattins and Evensong are retained in the Tables of Proper

[¹ The new *Canadian Prayer Book* is published in England by the Cambridge University Press in various editions and at various prices.

Psalms and Lessons. The introductory sentences are increased in number and some are also provided, as in the Scottish book, for Festivals. There is no permission to shorten the exhortation in the morning, but its abbreviation is allowed in the evening, "in Churches where Morning Prayer has been said." The Scottish book permits the shortened form to be used at either time and, in addition, provides a further alternative, "Let us confess our sins to Almighty God." Special anthems, in place of the Venite, are provided for the chief Festivals, and these are printed with the Collect for the day. After the Creed comes an innovation, in the form of a note explaining the meaning of the words, "He descended into hell." An alternative to the State prayers is provided, based on one in the Scottish book, which includes the King, the Royal family, the Governor-General and Parliament, and in the prayer for Clergy and People, instead of "Who alone werkest great marvels," we have—"the giver of all spiritual gifts." The Prayer for all Sorts and Conditions of Men and the General Thanksgiving are removed from their place in our book and embodied in Morning and Evening Prayer, and an expanded rubric, before the latter, says that it may be recited "by the Minister alone or by the Minister and people together."

To the title *The Creed of Saint Athanasius* are added, in brackets, the words "commonly so-called," and the Lambeth re-translation is adopted in which the three verses which cause regret to many are separated from the Creed itself, of which they really form no part. But why not omit them altogether? Instead of doing this the revisers have merely made the use of this confession permissive, and they have added an explanatory rubric "for the removal of doubts and to prevent disquietude." But Canadian Churchmen will still, when they recite this formula, have to say "without doubt"! Will it, we wonder, drop into desuetude?

The two sections—*Prayers* and *Thanksgivings*—are greatly enriched and the rubric permits the introduction of any of the former into the Litany. *The Litany* itself has four new petitions, but is otherwise unaltered. The rubric directs that it be used "at least once a month on Sunday," and there are regulations for its use "as a separate service." Thus it will be seen that there are no very striking or significant changes in the daily office. There are some things we might have expected. Why should not the mistranslations in the Canticles have been set right, as for instance

“candidatus” and “munerari” (the most authentic reading) in the Te Deum? Considering the circumstances of the Church in Canada, I think a good many people will be surprised to find no alternative form of Evening Service. And then, after reading in the Preface to the new revision that among the “results” is the revision of the Psalter, one is astonished to find it untouched!

We turn next to the *Communion Service*, and here again we see the conservative spirit in which the work has been done. The alterations are few and unimportant. Before the Gospel we have the now very general “Glory be to Thee, O Lord” and “Thanks be to Thee, O Lord.” The ten commandments are to be said once each Sunday, but the Lord’s summary of the Law may be used as an alternative when there is a second celebration. In the rubric before the Offertory sentences the publication of banns is ordered and here “excommunications and other Ecclesiastical notices are to be read.” In the prayer for the Church Militant the word “indifferently” is replaced by “impartially,” and in several places the word “lively” becomes “living,” and “damnation” “condemnation.” One new Proper Preface appears,—for Epiphany and seven days after. The rubric before the first of the three longer exhortations is slightly altered, and while the use of the first paragraph (Dearly beloved, on Sunday next, etc.) is permitted, it is ordered that *the whole* shall be read “upon some Sunday before Christmas Day, Easter Day and Whitsunday, the people all standing.” There are three additional Offertory sentences. The post-communion rubrics are all retained. Collects, Epistles, and Gospels are added for Rogation and Ember Days and the date of each Saint’s Day is given in a footnote. Perhaps I ought to have said that it is permissible to pass from the Benedictus or Jubilate to the Communion Office, which saves a great deal of quite unnecessary repetition.

The Public Baptism of Infants.—The opening rubrics are considerably expanded and increased in number from three to five. There are several new possibilities. “When three sponsors cannot be had, one Godfather and one Godmother shall suffice.” Permission, too, is given for parents to act as sponsors for their own children, “if necessity so require.” Baptism is to be administered “after the last lesson or after the third collect” and a new rubric at the end of the service allows the omission of the remaining prayers, save that of St. Chrysostom and the Grace. It is worth noting that

the question "Hath this child been already baptized or no?" does not form part of the service in the Scottish book, but is put back into a rubric.

Private Baptism.—To this is appended a new rubric permitting lay baptism "if no lawful Minister may be had, and the child is in danger of death." It is a little surprising that no provision is made for the shortening of either service, both of which always seem to be unnecessarily long, and we might have expected to find the Apostles' Creed in its more familiar form, the resurrection of "the body" instead of "the flesh." The expression "the vulgar tongue" is retained in a rubric, but disappears from both the addresses to sponsors.

The Catechism.—This is usefully divided into five sections, boldly headed in block type—(1) The Covenant, (2) The Faith, (3) The Commandments, (4) Prayer, and (5) The Sacraments. The only alteration I have discovered is *not* unimportant. The comma is restored to its proper place, after the word "grace," as in the Sealed book. The Scottish revisers failed to insert it, and why it is omitted from our Prayer Book remains a mystery.

The Order of Confirmation.—Here a good many alterations and additions will be found. The service opens with a short form of presentation to the Bishop, and the exhortation begins, "Dearly beloved," and is considerably expanded. Three short lections from Scripture are introduced—a useful feature. The question "Do ye here, etc." is slightly altered by the addition of the words "all those things which you then undertook," obviously to meet the case of persons who were baptized in maturer years. There is also an alternative form provided which requires three replies from the candidate. From this point onwards there is no change.

The Solemnisation of Matrimony.—This is prefaced by the Table of Kindred and Affinity, and a new rubric forbids any clergyman solemnising a marriage within the prohibited degrees, while another forbids the marriage of divorced persons. By the way, the title "clergyman" is unusual in the rubrics, and it is strange that in these particular rubrics we should have no less than three different descriptions of the officiating minister—viz. Curate, Clergyman, Priest! The wording of the opening address has been happily altered and a Collect, Epistle, and Gospel are appended.

The Visitation of the Sick.—Here is some enrichment, but other-

wise the service is substantially unaltered. The exigencies of space forbid quotations.

The Communion of the Sick.—The introductory rubric permits the substitution of the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the day and, at the end, a new rubric appears, permitting, when the person "is very weak," a further curtailment of the service.

The Burial of the Dead.—To the opening sentences is added "Let not your heart be troubled, etc." and the passage from Job xix. is shortened, the words "yet in my flesh shall I see God, etc." being omitted. The reason for this is not very obvious seeing that elsewhere (Baptismal service) "the resurrection of the flesh" is retained. There is an alternative psalm (xxiii.) for use at the burial of children. It seems a pity that the revisers did not give some alternative lessons. At a funeral people are often in such a frame of mind that they are unable to enter into St. Paul's elaborate argument for the resurrection. The Scottish book gives no fewer than seven short lections, and the writer must confess that he very often uses one or more of them. It is, however, only fair to say that there are, for the burial of children, two alternative readings from Scripture. In the prayer of committal, the somewhat unreal expression "it hath pleased God of His great mercy to take" has been allowed to remain, though with strange inconsistency the similar sentiment in one of the final prayers—"we give Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to deliver" disappears. The alternative form in the Scottish book seems to me so greatly preferable that I venture to produce it.

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God in his wise providence, to take unto himself the soul of our brother here departed; we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subject all things unto himself.

In the Canadian book "vile" is changed to "corruptible." There are some additional prayers which may be used "at the discretion of the Minister," and without any prefatory rubric, an Epistle and Gospel (2) are added, presumably for a Communion, but this notwithstanding there is no word that can be construed into a prayer for the departed.

The Ordinal remains unaltered, save for the additions to the Litany already noted. Finally, there are some *entirely new services*. In a special form for Dominion Day and other occasions of National Thanksgiving, there is a pleasing Thanksgiving "for our goodly heritage" and several other prayers that we like much. There is a wisely compiled Service for Children and a Special Service for Missions. For ourselves, we shall certainly make use of the excellent Form of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Harvest. There are also forms of Institution and Induction, also for the Laying of a Foundation Stone and the Consecration of Church or Churchyard. Last, but not least, we have Family Prayers.

The Canadian revisers may well be thankful that their task is accomplished. They have kept off the rocks, and have, with sound judgment, tact, and above all with loyalty to truth, brought the venerable Book of Common Prayer up to date without disturbing the balance of doctrine. To have done so cannot have been easy. With this book the Canadian Church hopefully faces the future.

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THE REASON OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE : or, Why I am a Christian.

By the Rev. E. H. Archer-Shepherd, M.A. London :
S.P.C.K. 6d. net.

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A BOOK OF PRAYERS. Written for use in an Indian College. London : *The Challenge, Ltd.*

Often beautiful in expression as well as varied in subject these prayers represent the searchings after God of men belonging to several differing religious systems. As such they stir our sympathies, and we feel that those who have learned to use these prayers cannot be far from the Kingdom. Nevertheless we miss the Name that is above every name. Yet as we turn the Hebrew Psalms into Christian hymns by the addition of the Gloria, so surely many Christians will be able to adapt these graceful, reverent supplications for use in private devotion or family prayer.