

(b) *For the younger type of Evangelical*, one may venture to say *Affinity*—much immediate gain from its use, with a gradual and subtle development of an attitude acclimatized and attuned to the atmosphere of the mediæval.

(c) *For the Anglo-Catholic*, *Opportunity*—no immediate satisfaction, but the chance of his life for the propagation of ideas that will one day lead to a “frank and complete legal recognition of Catholic faith and practice.”

And *for the Church of England*—which, after all, is the thing that counts—GRAVITY is the only word—a grave period of uncertainty as to whether at this solemn crisis she took the wisest course, and later on, a still more grave period of decision, when she must ultimately decide what her position is in relation to the Catholic Church, and must embody what she stands for in one permanent Prayer Book which will bring to all her sorely-tried members that unity which is vital to religious life and essential to spiritual efficiency.

THE REVISION THAT IS NEEDED:

ILLUSTRATED BY N.A. 84.

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A FEW weeks ago I came face to face in Switzerland with a chalet dated A.D. 1552. The date recalled Prayer Book Revision—even in the Swiss mountains one could not get away from it! (By the way, I did not find a 1549 chalet!) Before and behind the chalet was a well-cultivated Alp, and on one side a rushing stream of spring water, the food and water supply of the inhabitants of the chalet, through storm and sunshine, for four centuries and more. Yet even that chalet had come under revision: electric light had been introduced; telegraph and telephone wires ran near it; the peasants, at the time I saw it, were preparing the Alp for a potato crop with a plough and patent digger; the water was regulated by a system of pipes and irrigation.

Our Prayer Book is substantially that of A.D. 1552. Life in England has greatly changed since the sixteenth century; consequently there are many needs which the present book does not meet. All schools of thought within our Church demand a revision. Evangelicals will accept a revision willingly, provided it follows sound lines, nor will they expect it, when its final shape is determined, to be exactly what they wish. None of us can expect to get exactly what we like. They recognize that there must be a certain measure of give and take. We cannot pray as in A.D. 1661 (or even as before the War). In many ways our forms are anti-

quoted and deficient. Their length is often excessive—an hour seems sufficient for an ordinary Summer Sunday Evening Service; repetitions should be avoided; the Psalms are too long, and some of them obviously unsuitable for Christian worship. In the present book Sunday Morning Service really demands of us Morning Prayer, Litany, Communion, all in full, including two Creeds and several repetitions of the Lord's Prayer.

Now another kind of worship is needed—a worship that is congregational, not a duet between priest and clerk. Singing has come back to its place in worship. Repetition is tedious. Compression is demanded. The *real* needs of the age must come into it. Why should the twentieth century be tied down to the needs of 1661? I come back to my chalet. New light has come to us. We are a comprehensive body. The Holy Spirit is guiding the Church of to-day. The Lambeth Conference has met and declared that "the Catholic Church consists of the *whole body* of those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptized in the name of the Trinity." The wires run round the chalet—all kinds of new messages are being flashed along the wires of modern life. The seasoned beams are there, brown with age and beauty. We shrink from the idea of changing the prayers. They are dear to us from association and custom, and because old things are sacred and deep. Yet there is an element which needs to be more up to date.

Hence the question comes, What are the fundamental principles on which a needed revision can take place? What does our Book of Common Prayer stand for? Will the proposals of N.A. 84 help us?

- (1) Revision must be based on sound liturgical knowledge.
- (2) Revision must look to the present as well as to the past. The last four centuries are important alike with those that went before. That which is Catholic must cover all.
- (3) Revision must be based on Bible Doctrine.
- (4) Our Prayer Book is "the child of the Reformation." Our Anglican position requires that all proposals should be tested in accordance with Article VI.
- (5) Revision must not disturb the doctrinal balance of the Prayer Book, i.e. the main Anglican comprehension—a comprehension which meets the "sober, peaceful, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England."

These are principles upon which it seems to me emphasis should be laid, and within which the revision that is needed must find place. How far then do the proposals of N.A. 84 rest on such principles, and how far do they meet our needed revision? We owe tremendous thanks to the makers of N.A. 84, to the wise generalship of their Chairman (the late Bishop of Gloucester), and not least by any means to the Evangelical members. All had a contribution to give, and all alike worked with consideration for one another's views and with painstaking and long protracted labour.

N.A. 84 attempts to unite all schools. It strives to be conservative in a reasonable sense; it is soundly liturgical, literary, and devotional; it tries to meet the needs and circumstances of to-day. Lord Hugh Cecil tells us (though many disagree with him) it does not disturb the doctrinal balance nor depart from the traditional teaching of the Church of England. It certainly provides greater elasticity and enrichment. This is very much. Why should anyone keen on revision turn it down as France turned down the German offer. *Punch* last week shows how the German Goose has commenced laying, and asks, "Why despise the first egg because it is small?"

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Let us look at the proposals: I turn first to the sacraments. The Holy Communion is our highest act of worship. Here the new age would naturally demand alteration and enrichment. It is our Alp, from which we get spiritual food. New light shines on it. New messages pass over it. We have learnt a great deal since A.D. 1661 as to what the Communion Service may be like. Some desire an improved form. All of us feel the needed revision should supply it. It is well to face the question that probably there are defects in our service as it now stands, though probably all of us here are satisfied to die using it. As regards the Prayer of Consecration. In every Communion service the great prayer comes in the middle; it is the centre of the service; by all Christian tradition it is *the* prayer. N.A. 84 proposes an extended Consecrated prayer. It asks, Why stop at the Upper Room? Why cut a piece out of the wonderful story? Why not unroll the whole great story, including the mighty Resurrection and glorious Ascension? "The proposal," Mr. Albert Mitchell tells us, "emerged in the Committee after a motion to leave the service unaltered had been lost and a more serious proposal negatived. The Committee allows the Prayer of Humble Access *before* Consecration; the exclusion of the words 'before Thee' after 'remembrance,' and the negativing of any invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements." It is true, I think, that the placing of the Prayer of Oblation, with its phrase "this our sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving," *before* reception instead of *after* does give colour to the application of the phrase to the elements, but, after all, it is part of the old prayer itself. Before lightly turning down the Committee's proposal as to the canon, it would be well to read the whole prayer through *aloud* in one's study. I have done so and found it very satisfying. It unrolls a *continuous* act before your eyes; it lifts the service above any moment of magical change, such as even is possible in our present form with its climax in the words of Institution. In the present form the celebrant has only to resort to elevation and genuflection, and there is a Roman magical moment, such as *we* desire to eliminate. For me the creation of a Real Presence by an act of consecration is gross materialism and superstition such as one's soul abhors. Anything that does away with the idea of a

magical or supreme moment, in which Christ comes nearer in the elements than He may be at any other time of worship, is to be welcomed. We know the phrase "the nearer the sacred elements the nearer our Blessed Lord." This is idolatry, falsehood, and superstition.

We shall hear later of other suggested forms, like that of the Grey Book, but if revision of the canon is to take place, then the N.A. 84 proposal must not be turned down too soon. It may not be easy to get anything better.

There are other proposals in the Communion service which come into the consideration of the needed revision, e.g. as regards convenience. In these days of many more communicants and of constant celebrations, the service sometimes needs shortening. Is it necessary to have the ten Commandments read every time? Might not our Lord's description of our Duty to God and Man suffice sometimes? According to the Prayer Book the long invitation should be said *every* time, but it is dropped. Would it not be well to get authority for this? Do we find it possible always to say the words of administration to each communicant? Would not relief here, such as N.A. 84 affords, be welcome? Do we not feel the omission of the prayer for the King and sometimes of the sermon is necessary? Do we not need additional collects, epistles, and gospels, and more proper prefaces?

These N.A. 84 seeks to give us. Most of us consider there are some suggested collects, epistles, and gospels we might well refuse, e.g. those for All Souls' Day; there are others we might wish to insert.

However, in spite of the words of the proposed rubric on the dress of the celebrant, viz. "for the avoidance of all controversy and doubtfulness," rather, I should say—just because *there is* so much "controversy and doubtfulness," and not only about the dress of the minister, but also about the canon and Reservation; because, too, our age has not produced very many liturgiologists; because Anglo-Catholics think N.A. 84 does not express their conception of Catholic worship and, generally speaking, will have none of it, and Evangelicals think it seriously affects the doctrinal character of the office, and are not satisfied with it therefore.

In view of all such acute controversy (where controversy is most of all to be deplored) it is perhaps best to divide this Measure in such a way that the Communion Office is left untouched until a more favourable time, when the Church is able to exercise and enforce its proper authority and make alterations which may secure a more ready and general acceptance. In an able article following a letter of Bishop Knox on May 4 last *The Times* newspaper says: "We ourselves would suggest that for *the present* the Holy Communion service should be allowed to remain as it is, and the task of revision deferred." In the same strain the Bishop of Ripon, speaking at the Birmingham Diocesan Conference: "I think the time is not ripe for the revision of the Prayer of Consecration."

RESERVATION.

A proposed rubric in the Communion of the Sick provides for *Guarded Reservation* of the consecrated Bread and Wine for the Communion of the Sick and for no other purpose whatsoever. We must not give ourselves away by being averse to allowing the Sacrament to be taken to the sick. If Reservation were demanded in the interests of the sick no sensible person would oppose it. But no sensible person for a moment supposes that this is the reason why the demand for Reservation is made. "A very slight knowledge of the psychology of religion," says some one, "suggests the potency of devout contemplative adoration to fasten itself upon external objects of acknowledged sanctity."

In a needed revision we must oppose adoration, exposition, benediction, worship of the tabernacle, and that unwholesome idea "the nearer you get to the elements the nearer to Christ." When the elements are kept there is nothing magical about them. We have a right to insist on the right keeping of the new form, if allowed. Evangelicals have a right to ask for guarantees. If Anglo-Catholics are asking for a Reservation for the purpose of adoration, and will give no guarantee, then we had better let it wait with the Communion service, and be satisfied for the time with the rest of N.A. 84. In any case efforts to limit Reservation have so far been singularly unsuccessful.

HOLY BAPTISM.

The proposed alterations in the service for the other sacrament, that of Holy Baptism, are not many, but the provision of a shorter alternative form makes for the revision needed. We welcome the rubrics requiring that Baptism be not deferred except upon "a great and reasonable cause"; that it is convenient, where possible, that Baptisms should be administered upon Sundays and other Holy Days, though upon any other day for sufficient cause; that when administered at evening all the prayers after the third collect, except that of St. Chrysostom and the Grace, be omitted. We welcome too the simpler exhortation at the end of the alternative service and the omission of archaic words like "vulgar" and the change of words like "damned" in the exhortation of the gospel in the service for those of riper years. We welcome too, as needed, the provision that parents may be sponsors for their own children, provided there is one other sponsor. With such small changes and the new proposals of Convocation for Private Baptism, this service of Holy Baptism should go on, like my Alpine stream, much the same as ever.

MORNING PRAYER.

Turning to daily prayers, we find a large number of suggestions about which there is no controversy, certainly no controversy on principle, though there may be differences of opinion as to method and content. There is much elasticity and enrichment such as revision needs. If Morning Prayer is followed by Holy Communion

it may begin with the versicle "O Lord, open Thou our lips," and end with the canticle after the Second Lesson. Think of the advantage of this on Sundays when there is a mid-day Celebration, but especially say on Christmas Day, when most members of the congregation have either communicated or are present to do so, and so join in the Confession and Absolution of the Communion office; when too, the service must be short, and when praise is naturally emphasized. Needed revision is met too by a discretionary use of the shortened exhortation "Let us confess our sins to Almighty God," and an alternative absolution; the invitatories to the *Venite*, for Special Days; the *Te Deum* printed in three paragraphs; the rubric before the Apostles' Creed which runs: "Then shall be sung or said the Apostles' Creed by the Minister and People, standing; except only upon Trinity Sunday, *if* in place thereof the Creed of St. Athanasius be read." N.A. 84 suggests much enrichment in new prayers and thanksgivings for special occasions as need may arise. The Bishop of Worcester thinks "this need for enrichment more obvious than a need for revision."

EVENSONG.

Evening Prayer may be shortened by an abbreviated exhortation, confession, and absolution. An alternative ending to the service gives opportunity for larger variation between service and service. Repetition is avoided, and undue length restrained. There is a good deal of simplification. The circumstances of to-day, as they differ from the time of the last revision, are taken into account in these services. There is no loss of the dignity and respect of the old services, no introduction of absurd services.

THE LITANY

may be shortened, when the Holy Communion follows, by the omission of all *before* the Lord's Prayer; at other times, as an alternative, *after* the Lord's Prayer, when one or more of the prayers for special occasions, which are provided, may be said. This meets a very urgent need. A much-needed suffrage is added for the work of the Church in all the world, and for sending forth labourers into the harvest.

The occasional prayers and thanksgivings include a considerable, though still insufficient, choice to supply the life, liberty, and progress of to-day, e.g. Missions, Convocations of the Church, the National Assembly, Electors, Industrial and Social Problems, increase of the Sacred Ministry, Candidates for Ordination, Vacancies in Bishoprics and Parishes, Universities, Schools, Hospitals, Harvest, a Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, etc.

CONFIRMATION.

The new order of Confirmation is a typical illustration of the change of circumstances since the last revision. The order as it stands at present tacitly assumes that all those who are confirmed,

are children who have been baptized in infancy in the Church of England. Large numbers of our Confirmation candidates to-day have not been so baptized. The new order takes that fact into account. The changes proposed are few: the old preface is changed into an opening rubric; the new preface is based on Acts viii., with its teaching that Confirmation is an outward sign, the laying on of hands with prayer, the effectual token of an inward grace which is the strengthening gift of the Holy Spirit to those who rightly receive it. The question to candidates is divided into the three parts of the Baptismal vow, to each of which the candidate is required to answer "I do." There is no reason in the new order *as there is not* in the old to read into it any mechanical theory.

THE SERVICE OF HOLY MATRIMONY.

supplies needed revision in a new form of exhortation stating the objects of marriage, and also in the prayer for the gift of children, and a collect, epistle, and gospel for use at marriage.

THE SERVICE FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

is greatly enriched by the addition of a prayer for the bereaved, such as all revision must require. *The order for the Visitation of the Sick* is largely new. It is divided into six points, which the curate shall "say" or use "in like manner." Few of us use the form exactly as it is printed in the present book. All of us feel the need of such special prayers, exhortations to repentance, faith, and prayer, psalms and portions of the Holy Scripture to be read in the home, as are here suggested.

Looking at the proposals of N.A. 84 as a whole, we may believe that we have in them the beginnings of a revision, an enrichment, and an elasticity such as is needed. Worship in its varied forms depends much on temperament, but the question is not "Do I like, or object to, this or that in worship," but what is needed or not needed to help or hinder my worship in the eyes of God.

We cannot fix our Liturgy this time in an unbreakable mould. We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. We must all be prepared to countenance things of which we disapprove. If not, as the Bishop of Peterborough says, "We may as well bid farewell to peace in the Church, and still more to any hope of reunion with other Churches."

The Houses of Clergy and Laity will, in the week preceding the next meeting of the National Assembly, viz. July 2-7, meet to consider the proposals in Committee. The time seems too short to expect completion of the work, for presentation, for acceptance or rejection, to the National Assembly at its next session, especially as the findings of the Houses of Clergy and Laity must first be revised by the House of Bishops and presented by the Bishops in a final form.