

The 1549 Book of Common Prayer,

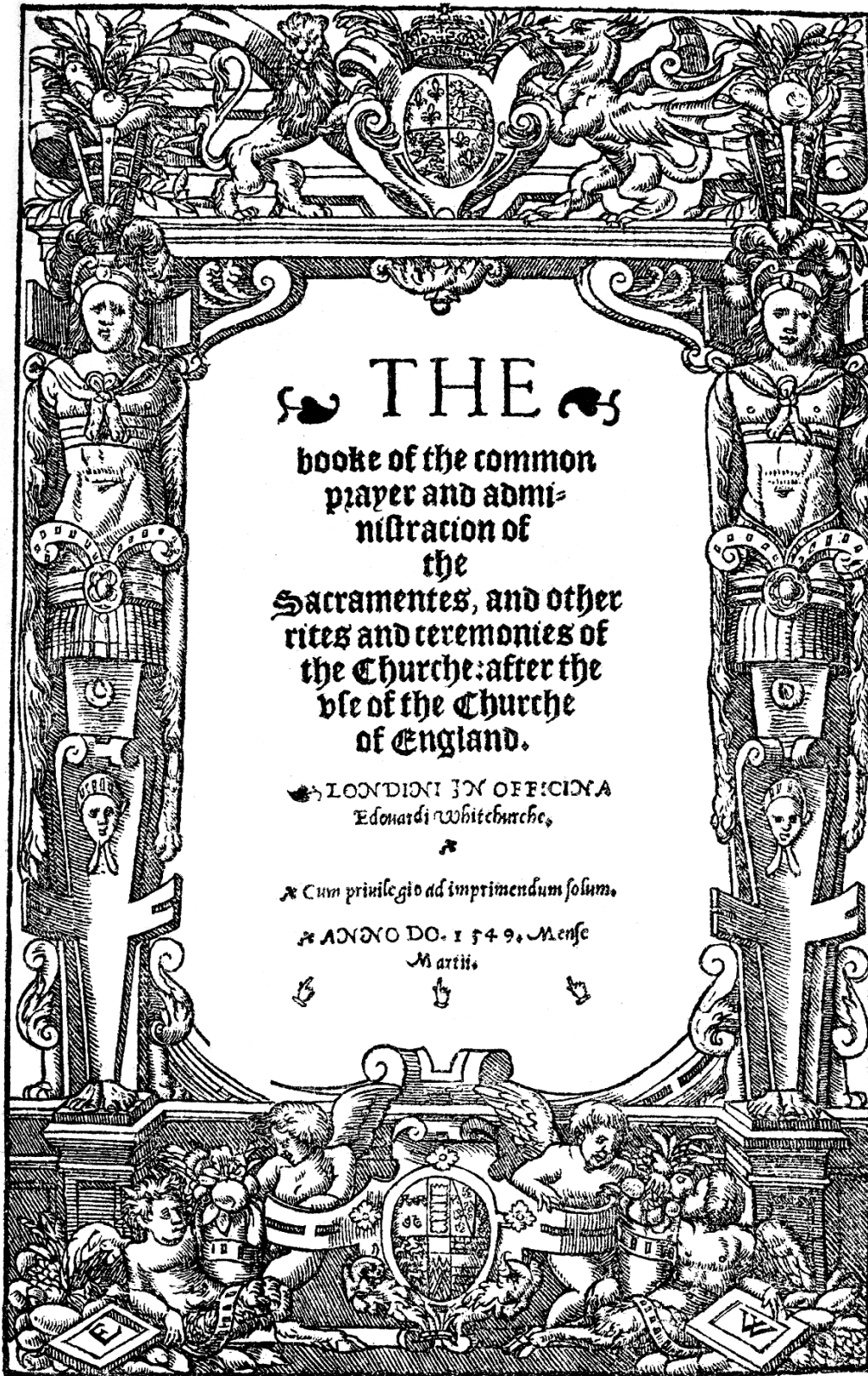
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THE
booke of the common
prayer and admi-
nistracion of
the
Sacramentes, and other
rites and ceremonies of
the Church: after the
vse of the Church
of England.

LONDINI IN OFFICINA
Edouardi Whitchurch.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.

ANNO DO. 1549. Mense
Martii.

THE CON-

tentes of this Booke.

- i. A pzeface.
- ii. A table and Kalendar for Psalmes and Lessons, with necessary rules pertainyng to thesame.
- iii. The ordre for Matins and Euen-song, throughout the yeare.
- iiii. The Introites, Collectes, Epistles and Gospelles, to be used at the celebracion of the lordes Supper and holy Communion throug the yere, with proper Psalmes and Lessons, for diuerse feastes & dayes.
- v. The Supper of the Lorde and holy Communion, commonly called the Masse.
- vi. Of Baptisme, bothe publique and priuate.
- vii. Of Confirmation, where also is a Catechisme for children.
- viii. Of Matrimony.
- ix. Of visitacion of the sicke, and Communion of the same.
- x. Of Buriall.
- xi. The purification of women.
- xii. A declaracion of scripture, with certein prayers to bee vse the firste daye of Lent, commonlye called Ash-wednesdaie.
- xiii. Of Ceremonies omitted or reteyned.
- xiiii. Certein notes for the moze plain explication and decent ministracion of thinges contained in this boke.

THE PREFACE.



There was neuer any thing by the wit of man so well deuised, or so surely established, which (in continuance of time) hath not been corrupted: as (among other things) it may plainly appere by the common prayers in the Church, commonly called diuine seruice: the firste originall and grounde whereof, if a manne woulde searche out by the auncient fathers, he shall finde that thesame was not ordeyned, but of a good purpose, and for a great aduancement of godlines: For they so ordred the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest parte thereof) should be read ouer once in the yeare, intendyng thereby, that the Cleargie, and specially suche as were Ministers of the congregacion, should (by often readyng and meditacion of Gods worde) be stirred vp to godlines themselves, and be moze able also to exhorte other by wholsome doctrine, and to confute them that were aduersaries to the trueth. And further, that the people (by daily hearyng of holy scripture read in the Church) should continuallye profite moze and moze in the knowledge of God, and bee the moze inflamed with the loue of his true religion. But these many yeares passed this Godly and decent ordre of the auncient fathers, hath bee so altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in vncertein stozies, Legendes, Responses, Verses, vaine repetitions, Commemoracions, and Synodalles, that commonly when any boke of the Bible was began: befoze thre or foure Chapiters were read out, all the rest were vntread. And in this sorte the boke of Esaië was begon in Aduent, and the booke of Genesis in Septuagesima: but they were onely begon, and neuer read thorow. After a like sorte wer other bokes of holy scripture vsed. And mozeouer, whereas s. Paule would haue suche language spoken to the people in the church, as they mighte vnderstande and haue profite by hearyng the same; the seruice in this Church of England (these many yeares) hath been read in Latin to the people, whiche they vnderstode not; so that they haue heard with theyr eares onely; & their hartes, spirite, and minde, haue not been edified thereby. And furthermore, notwithstanding that the auncient fathers had deuised the psalmes into seuen porcions, wherof euery one was called a nocturne, now of late tyme a fewe of them haue been dailye sayed (and ofte repeated) and the rest vtterly omitted. Moreouer the nombze & hardnes of the rules called the pie, and the manifolde chaunginges of the seruice, was the cause, yt to turne the boke onely, was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times, there was moze busines to fynd out what should be read, then to read it when it was faunde out.

These inconueniences therfoze considered: here is set furth suche an ordre, whereby the same shalbe redressed. And for a readines in this matter, here is drawen out a Kalendar for that purpose, whiche is plaine and easy to be vnderstanded, wherin (so muche as maie be) the readyng of holy scripture is so set furth, that all thynge shall bee doen in ordre, without breakyng one piece therof from another. For this cause be cut of Anthemes, Responses, Inuitatozies, and suche like thynge, as did breake the continuall course of the

THE PREFACE.

readyng of the scripture. Yet because there is no remedy, but that of necessitie there must be some rules: therfore certain rules are here set furth, whiche as they be fewe in nombre; so they be plain and easy to be vnderstanded. So yt here you haue an ordre for praier (as touchyng the readyng of holy scripture) muche agreable to the mynde & purpose of the olde fathers, and a greate deale more profitable and commodious, then that whiche of late was vsed. It is more profitable, because here are left out many thynges, wherof some be vnttrue, some vncertain, some vain and superstitious: and is ordeyned nothyng to be read, but the very pure worde of God, the holy scriptures, or that whiche is evidently grounded vpon thesame; and that in suche a language & ordre, as is moste easy & plain for the vnderstandyng, bothe of the readers and hearers. It is also more commodious, bothe for the shortnes thereof, & for the plaines of the ordre, & for that the rules be fewe & easy. Furthermore by this ordre, the curates shal nede none other bookes for their publique seruice, but this boke and the Bible: by the meanes wherof, the people shal not be at so great charge for bookes, as in tyme past they haue been.

And where heretofore, there hath been great diuersitie in sayng and synging in churches within this realme: some folowynge Salbury vse, some Hereford vse, some the vse of Wangoz, some of Yorke, & some of Lincolne: Now from hencefurth, all the whole realme shal haue but one vse. And if any would iudge this waye more painfull, because that all thynges must be read vpon the boke, where as before, by the reason of so often repeticion, they could saye many thynges by heart: if those men will waye their laboz, with the profite in knowlege, whiche dayely they shal obtain by readyng vpon the boke, they will not refuse the payn, in consideracion of the greate profite that shall ensue therof.

And forsomuche as nothyng can, almoste, be so plainly set furth, but doubtles maie rise in the vse and practisyng of the same: to appease all suche diuersitie (if any arise), and for the resolucion of all doubtles, concernyng the maner how to vnderstande, do, and execute the thynges conteyned in this booke: the parties that so doubt, or diuersly take any thyng, shal alwaye resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discrecion shal take ordre for the quietyng and appeasyng of the same: so that the same ordre be not contrary to any thyng conteyned in this boke.

¶ Though it be appointed in the afore written peface, that al thinges shalbe read and song in the churche, in the Englishe tongue, to thende yt the congregacion maie be therby edified: yet it is not meant, but when men saye Matins and Euen song priuatelpe, they maye saie the same in any language that they themselues do vnderstande. Neither that anye man shalbe bound to the sayng of them, but suche as from tyme to tyme, in Cathedrall and Collegiate Churches, Parithe Churches, and Chapelles to the same annexed, shal serue the congregacion.