

The Book of Common Prayer,  
as printed by John Baskerville

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The BOOK of  
Common Prayer,

And Administration of the

SACRAMENTS,

AND OTHER

rites and CEREMONIES

OF THE

CHURCH,

According to the Use of

The CHURCH of ENGLAND:

TOGETHER WITH THE

PSALTER

OR

PSALMS of DAVID,

*Pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches*

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CAMBRIDGE,

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(Price Eight Shillings and Sixpence, unbound.)

THE  
C O N T E N T S.

THE *Preface.*  
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*Concerning Ceremonies, why some be abolished, and some retained.*  
*The Order how the Psalter is appointed to be read.*  
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*Articles of Religion.*

THE  
P R E F A C E.

I T hath been the wisdom of the Church of *England*, ever since the first compiling of her Publick Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it. For, as on the one side common experience sheweth, that where a change hath been made of things advisedly established (no evident necessity so requiring) fundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued; and those many times more and greater than the evils, that were intended to be remedied by such change: So on the other side, the particular Forms of Divine Worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such Changes and Alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient. Accordingly we find, that in the Reigns of several Princes of blessed memory since the Reformation, the Church, upon just and weighty considerations her thereunto moving, hath yielded to make such Alterations in some particulars, as in their responsive times were thought convenient: Yet so, as that the main Body and Essentials of it (as well in the chiefest Materials, as in the frame and order thereof) have still continued the same unto this day, and do yet stand firm and unshaken, notwithstanding all the vain attempts and impetuous assaults made against it, by such men as are given to change, and have always discovered a greater regard to their own private fancies and interests, than to that duty they owe to the publick.

By what undue means, and for what mischievous purposes the use of the Liturgy (though enjoined by the Laws

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of the Land, and those Laws never yet repealed) came, during the late unhappy confusions, to be discontinued, is too well known to the world, and we are not willing here to remember. But when, upon His Majesty's happy Restoration, it seemed probable, that, amongst other things, the use of the Liturgy also would return of course (the same having never been legally abolished) unless some timely means were used to prevent it; those men who under the late usurped powers had made it a great part of their business to render the people disaffected thereunto, saw themselves in point of reputation and interest concerned (unless they would freely acknowledge themselves to have erred, which such men are very hardly brought to do) with their utmost endeavours to hinder the restitution thereof. In order whereunto divers Pamphlets were published against the Book of *Common Prayer*, the old Objections mustered up, with the addition of some new ones, more than formerly had been made, to make the number swell. In fine, great importunities were used to His Sacred Majesty, that the said Book might be revised, and such Alterations therein, and Additions thereunto made, as should be thought requisite for the ease of tender Consciences: whereunto His Majesty, out of his pious inclination to give satisfaction (so far as could be reasonably expected) to all his subjects of what persuasion soever, did graciously condescend.

In which Review we have endeavoured to observe the like moderation, as we find to have been used in the like case in former times. And therefore of the sundry Alterations proposed unto us, we have rejected all such as were either of dangerous consequence (as secretly striking at some established doctrine, or laudable practice of the Church of *England*, or indeed of the whole Catholick Church of Christ) or else of no consequence at all, but utterly frivolous and vain. But such alterations as were tendered to us, (by what persons, under what pretences, or to what purpose soever tendered) as seemed to us in any degree requisite or expedient, we have willingly, and of our own accord assented unto: Not enforced so to do by any

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strength of Argument, convincing us of the necessity of making the said Alterations: For we are fully persuaded in our judgements (and we here profess it to the world) that the Book, as it stood before established by Law, doth not contain in it any thing contrary to the Word of God, or to sound Doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good Conscience use and submit unto, or which is not fairly defensible against any that shall oppose the same; if it shall be allowed such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human Writings, especially such as are set forth by Authority, and even to the very best Translations of the holy Scripture itself.

Our general aim therefore in this undertaking was, not to gratify this or that party in any their unreasonable demands; but to do that, which to our best understandings we conceived might most tend to the preservation of Peace and Unity in the Church; the procuring of Reverence, and exciting of Piety and Devotion in the publick Worship of God; and the cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of cavil or quarrel against the Liturgy of the Church. And as to the several variations from the former Book, whether by Alteration, Addition, or otherwise, it shall suffice to give this general account. That most of the Alterations were made, either first, for the better direction of them that are to officiate in any part of Divine Service; which is chiefly done in the Calendars and Rubricks: Or secondly, for the more proper expressing of some words or phrases of ancient usage in terms more suitable to the language of the present times, and the clearer explanation of some other words and phrases, that were either of doubtful signification, or otherwise liable to misconstruction: Or thirdly, for a more perfect rendering of such portions of holy Scripture, as are inserted into the Liturgy; which, in the Epistles and Gospels especially, and in sundry other places, are now ordered to be read according to the last Translation: and that it was thought convenient, that some Prayers and Thanksgivings, fitted to special occasions, should be added in their due places; particularly for those

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at Sea, together with an Office for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years: which, although not so necessary when the former Book was compiled, yet by the growth of Anabaptism, through the licentiousness of the late times crept in amongst us, is now become necessary, and may be always useful for the baptizing of Natives in our Plantations, and others converted to the Faith. If any man, who shall desire a more particular account of the several Alterations in any part of the Liturgy, shall take the pains to compare the present Book with the former; we doubt not but the reason of the change may easily appear.

And having thus endeavoured to discharge our duties in this weighty Affair, as in the sight of God, and to approve our sincerity therein (so far as lay in us) to the consciences of all men; although we know it impossible (in such variety of apprehensions, humours and interests, as are in the world) to please all; nor can expect that men of factious, peevish, and perverse spirits should be satisfied with any thing that can be done in this kind by any other than themselves: Yet we have good hope, that what is here presented, and hath been by the Convocations of both Provinces with great diligence examined and approved, will be also well accepted and approved by all sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious Sons of the Church of *England*.

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### ¶ Concerning the Service of the CHURCH.

HERE was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: As, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called *Divine Service*. The first original and ground whereof if a man would search out by the ancient Fathers, he shall find, that the same was not ordained but of a good purpose, and for a great advancement of godliness. For they so ordered the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over

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every year; intending thereby, that the Clergy, and especially such as were Ministers in the congregation, should (by often reading, and meditation in God's word) be stirred up to godliness themselves and be more able to exhort others by wholesome Doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the Truth; and further, that the people (by daily hearing of holy Scripture read in the Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion.

But these many years passed, this godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers hath been so altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in uncertain Stories, and Legends, with multitude of Responds, Verses, vain Repetitions, Commemorations, and Synodals; that commonly when any Book of the Bible was begun, after three or four Chapters were read out, all the rest were unread. And in this sort the Book of *Isaiah* was begun in *Advent*, and the Book of *Genesis* in *Septuagesima*; but they were only begun, and never read through: After like sort were other Books of holy Scripture used. And moreover, whereas St. *Paul* would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same; the service in this Church of *England* these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit and mind, have not been edified thereby. And furthermore, notwithstanding that the ancient Fathers have divided the *Psalms* into seven portions, whereof every one was called a *Nocturn*: Now of late time a few of them have been daily said, and the rest utterly omitted. Moreover, the number and hardness of the Rules called the *Pie*, and the manifold changings of the Service, was the cause, that to turn the Book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out.

These inconveniences therefore considered, here is set forth such an Order, whereby the same shall be redressed. And for a readiness in this matter, here is drawn out a Ca-

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alendar for that purpose, which is plain and easy to be understood; wherein (so much as may be) the reading of holy Scripture is so set forth, that all things shall be done in order, without breaking one piece from another. For this cause be cut off Anthems, Responds, Invitatories, and such like things as did break the continual course of the reading of the Scripture.

Yet, because there is no remedy, but that of necessity there must be some Rules; therefore certain Rules are here set forth; which, as they are few in number, so they are plain and easy to be understood. So that here you have an Order for Prayer, and for the reading of the holy Scripture, much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers, and a great deal more profitable and commodious, than that which of late was used. It is more profitable, many things, whereof some are untrue, because here are left out some uncertain, some vain and superstitious; and nothing is ordained to be read, but the very pure Word of God, the holy Scriptures, or that which is agreeable to the same; and that in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers. It is also more commodious, both for the shortness thereof, and for the plainness of the order, and for that the rules be few and easy.

And whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity in saying and singing in Churches within this Realm; some following *Salisbury* Use, some *Hereford* Use, and some the Use of *Bangor*, some of *York*, some of *Lincoln*; now from henceforth all the whole Realm shall have but one Use.

And forasmuch as nothing can be so plainly set forth, but doubts may arise in the use and practice of the same; to appease all such diversity (if any arise) and for the resolution of all doubts, concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute, the things contained in this Book; the parties that so doubt, or diversity take any thing, shall always resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same; so that the same order be not contrary to any thing

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contained in this Book. And if the Bishop of the Diocese be in doubt, then he may send for the resolution thereof to the Archbishop.

“ **T**HOUGH it be appointed, that all things shall be  
“ read and sung in the Church in the *English* Tongue,  
“ to the end that the congregation may be thereby edified;  
“ yet it is not meant, but that when men say Morning and  
“ Evening Prayer privately, they may say the same in any  
“ language that they themselves do understand.

“ And all Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morn-  
“ ing and Evening Prayer either privately or openly, not  
“ being let by sickness, or some other urgent cause.

“ And the Curate that ministereth in every Parish-Church  
“ or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise  
“ reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish-  
“ Church or Chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause  
“ a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he  
“ begin, that the people may come to hear God’s Word,  
“ and to pray with him.

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¶ *Of CEREMONIES,*

*Why some be abolished, and some retained.*

**O**F such Ceremonies as be used in the Church, and have had their beginning by the institution of man, some at the first were of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet at length turned to vanity and superstition: Some entered into the Church by indiscreet devotion, and such a zeal as was without knowledge; and for 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: other there be, which although they have been devised by man, yet

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it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent Order in the Church, (for the which they were first devised) as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the Church (as the Apostle teacheth) ought to be referred.

And although the keeping or omitting of a Ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common Order and Discipline is no small offence before God, *Let all things be done among you, faith Saint Paul, in a seemly and due Order:* The appointment of the which Order pertaineth not to private men; therefore no man ought to take in hand, nor presume to appoint or alter any publick or common Order in Christ's Church, except he be lawfully called and authorized thereunto.

And whereas in this our time, the minds of men are so diverse, that some think it a great matter of Conscience to depart from a piece of the least of their Ceremonies, they be so addicted to their old customs: and again on the other side, some be so newfangled, that they would innovate all things, and so despise the old, that nothing can like them, but that is new: It was thought expedient, not so much to have respect how to please and satisfy either of these parties, as how to please God, and profit them both. And yet lest any man should be offended, whom good reason might satisfy, here be certain causes rendered, why some of the accustomed Ceremonies be put away, and some retained and kept still.

Some are put away, because the great excess and multitude of them hath so increased in these latter days, that the burden of them was intolerable; whereof St. *Augustine* in his time complained, that they were grown to such a number, that the estate of Christian people was in worse case concerning that matter, than were the Jews. And he counselled that such yoke and burden should be taken away, as time would serve quietly to do it. But what would St. *Augustine* have said, if he had seen the Ceremonies of late days used among us; whereunto the multitude used in his time was not to be compared? This our excessive multitude of Ceremonies was so great, and many of them so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than

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declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us. And besides this, Christ's Gospel is not a Ceremonial Law, (as much of *Moses'* Law was,) but it is a Religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit; being content only with those Ceremonies which do serve to a decent Order and godly Discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified. Furthermore, the most weighty cause of the abolishment of certain Ceremonies was, That they were so far abused, partly by the superstitious blindness of the rude and unlearned, and partly by the unfeeling avarice of such as sought more their own lucre, than the glory of God, that the abuses could not well be taken away, the thing remaining still.

But now as concerning those Persons, which peradventure will be offended, for that some of the old Ceremonies are retained still: If they consider that without some Ceremonies it is not possible to keep any Order, or quiet Discipline in the Church, they shall easily perceive just cause to reform their judgements. And if they think much, that any of the old do remain, and would rather have all devised anew: then such men granting some Ceremonies convenient to be had, surely where the old may be well used, there they cannot reasonably reprove the old only for their age, without betraying of their own folly. For in such a case they ought rather to have reverence unto them for their Antiquity, if they will declare themselves to be more studious of Unity and Concord, than of Innovations and New-fangledness, which (as much as may be with the true setting forth of Christ's Religion) is always to be eschewed. Furthermore, such shall have no just cause with the Ceremonies reserved to be offended. For as those be taken away which were most abused, and did burden men's consciences without any cause; so the other that remain, are retained for a Discipline and Order, which (upon just Causes) may be altered and changed, and therefore are not to be esteemed equal with God's Law. And moreover, they be neither dark nor dumb Ceremonies, but are so set forth, that

*The Order how the Psalter is appointed to be read.*

every man may understand what they do mean, and to what use they do serve. So that it is not like that they in time to come should be abused as other have been. And in these our doings we condemn no other Nations, nor prescribe any thing but to our own people only: For we think it convenient that every Country should use such Ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's Honour and Glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without Error or Superstition; and that they should put away other things, which from time to time they perceive to be most abused, as in men's Ordinances it often chanceth diversely in divers Countries.

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¶ *The Order how the PSALTER is appointed to be read.*

THE Psalter shall be read through once every Month, as it is there appointed, both for Morning and Evening Prayer. But in *February* it shall be read only to the twenty-eighth, or twenty-ninth day of the month.

And, whereas *January, March, May, July, August, October,* and *December* have one-and-thirty days apiece; It is ordered, that the same Psalms shall be read the last day of the said Months, which were read the day before: so that the Psalter may begin again the first day of the next Month ensuing.

And, whereas the CXIX Psalm is divided into XXII Portions, and is over-long to be read at one time; It is so ordered, that at one time shall not be read above four or five of the said Portions.

And at the end of every Psalm, and of every such part of the CXIX Psalm, shall be repeated this Hymn,

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; world  
without end. Amen.*

*The Order how the holy Scripture is to be read.*

Note, that the Psalter followeth the division of the Hebrews, and the translation of the great English Bible, set forth and used in the time of King *Henry* the Eighth, and *Edward* the Sixth.

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¶ *The Order how the rest of holy Scripture is appointed to be read.*

THE Old Testament is appointed for the first Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer, so as the most part thereof will be read every year once, as in the Calendar is appointed.

The New Testament is appointed for the second Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer, and shall be read over orderly every year thrice, besides the Epistles and Gospels; except the Apocalyps, out of which there are only certain proper Lessons appointed upon divers Feasts.

And to know what Lessons shall be read every day, look for the day of the Month in the Calendar following, and there ye shall find the Chapters that shall be read for the Lessons both at Morning and Evening Prayer; except only the Moveable Feasts, which are not in the Calendar, and the Immovable, where there is a Blank left in the Column of Lessons, the Proper Lessons for all which days are to be found in the Table of the Proper Lessons.

Table of Lessons from the four Gospels.

And note, That whensoever Proper Psalms or Lessons are appointed; then the Psalms and Lessons of ordinary course appointed in the Psalter and Calendar (if they be different) shall be omitted for that time.

Note also, That the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel appointed for the Sunday shall serve all the Week after, where it is not in this book otherwise ordered.