

*Hogman*

# PRAYER BOOK STUDIES

I

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

II

THE LITURGICAL LECTIONARY

# Prayer Book Studies

## I

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

## II

THE LITURGICAL LECTIONARY

THE STANDING LITURGICAL COMMISSION  
OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE CHURCH PENSION FUND

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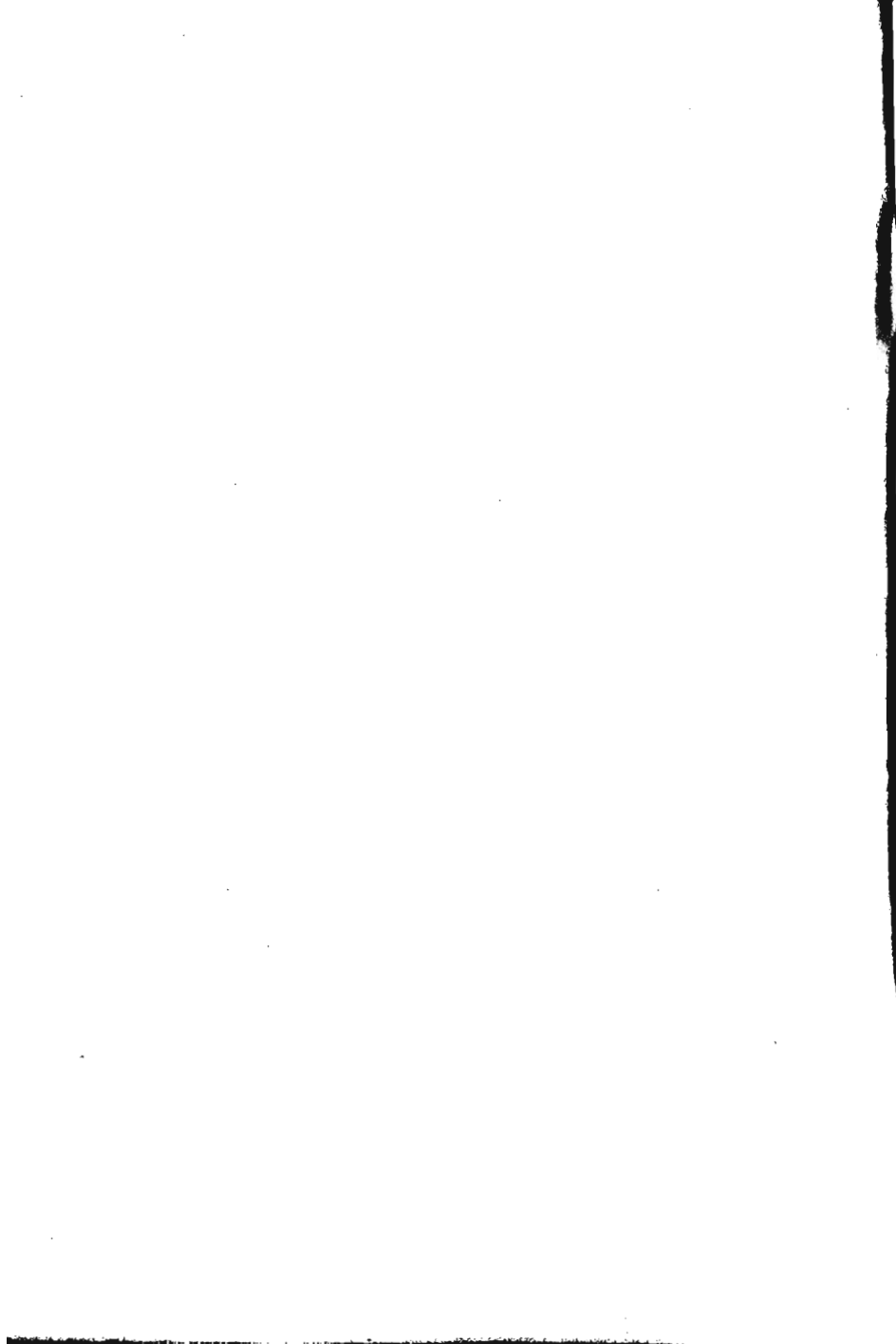
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IN MEMORIAM

HENRY McF. B. OGILBY  
BURTON SCOTT EASTON

*"Their works do follow them."*



## Preface

The last revision of our Prayer Book was brought to a rather abrupt conclusion in 1928. Consideration of it had pre-occupied the time of General Convention ever since 1913. Everyone was weary of the long and ponderous legislative process, and desired to make the new Prayer Book available as soon as possible for the use of the Church.

But the work of revision, which sometimes has seemed difficult to start, in this case proved hard to stop. The years of debate had aroused widespread interest in the whole subject: and the mind of the Church was more receptive of suggestions for revision when the work was brought to an end than when it began. Moreover, the revision was actually closed to new action in 1925, in order that it might receive final adoption in 1928: so that it was not possible to give due consideration to a number of very desirable features in the English and Scottish revisions, which appeared simultaneously with our own. It was further realized that there were some rough edges in what had been done, as well as an unsatisfied demand for still further alterations.

The problem of defects in detail was met by continuing the Revision Commission, and giving it rather large 'editorial' powers (subject only to review by General Convention) to correct obvious errors in the text as adopted, in the publication of the new Prayer Book. Then, to deal with the constructive proposals for other changes which continued to be brought up in every General Convention, the Revision Commission was reconstituted as a Standing Liturgical Commission. To this body all matters concerning the Prayer Book were to be referred, for preservation in permanent files, and for continuing consideration, until such time as the accumulated matter was sufficient in amount and importance to justify proposing another Revision.

The number of such referrals by General Convention, of Memorials from Dioceses, and of suggestions made directly to

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the Commission from all regions and schools and parties in the Church, has now reached such a total that it is evident that there is a widespread and insistent demand for a general revision of the Prayer Book.

The Standing Liturgical Commission is not, however, proposing any immediate revision. On the contrary, we believe that there ought to be a period of study and discussion, to acquaint the Church at large with the principles and issues involved, in order that the eventual action may be taken intelligently, and if possible without consuming so much of the time of our supreme legislative synod.

Accordingly, the General Convention of 1949 signalized the Fourth Centennial Year of the First Book of Common Prayer in English by authorizing the Liturgical Commission to publish its findings, in the form of a series of *Prayer Book Studies*.

It must be emphasized that the liturgical forms presented in these *Studies* are not — and under our Constitution, cannot be — sanctioned for public use. They are submitted for free discussion. The Commission will be grateful for copies or articles, resolutions, and direct comment, for its consideration, that the mind of the Church may be fully known to the body charged with reporting it.

In this undertaking, we have endeavored to be objective and impartial. It is not possible to avoid every matter which may be thought by some to be controversial. Ideas which seem to be constructively valuable will be brought to the attention of the Church, without too much regard as to whether they may ultimately be judged to be expedient. We cannot undertake to eliminate every proposal to which anyone might conceivably object: to do so would be to admit that any constructive progress is impossible. What we can do is to be alert not to alter the present *balance* of expressed or implied doctrine of the Church. We can seek to counterbalance every proposal which might seem to favor some one party of opinion by some other change in the opposite direction. The goal we have constantly had in mind — however imperfectly we may have succeeded in

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attaining it — is the shaping of a future Prayer Book which *every* party might embrace with the well-founded conviction that therein its own position had been strengthened, its witness enhanced, and its devotions enriched.

The objective we have pursued is the same as that expressed by the Commission for the Revision of 1892: “*Resolved*, That this Committee, in all its suggestions and acts, be guided by those principles of liturgical construction and ritual use which have guided the compilation and amendments of the Book of Common Prayer, and have made it what it is.”

\* \* \*

The Commission records its loss in the deaths of two of its members, whose final contributions to the Church they served are reflected in this first issue of the *Prayer Book Studies*.

The Reverend Henry McF. B. Ogilby, late Secretary of the Commission, contributed to the *Study* on “Baptism and Confirmation.”

The Reverend Doctor Burton Scott Easton, late Associate Member, in his published work on the Epistles and Gospels of the Christian Year, furnished the foundation and inspiration for the *Study* on “The Liturgical Lectionary.”

These papers are therefore dedicated to their memory.

### THE STANDING LITURGICAL COMMISSION:

G. ASHTON OLDHAM, *Chairman*  
GOODRICH R. FENNER

BAYARD H. JONES, *Vice Chairman*  
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WILLIAM J. BATTLE  
SPENCER ERVIN



## Preface

The two *Studies* presented in this issue were thoroughly discussed, and approved for publication, by the Liturgical Commission at its meetings in 1948 and 1949.

The Committee on the Orders of Baptism and Confirmation consisted of the Rev. Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., Ph.D., the Rev. Henry McF. B. Ogilby, and the Rev. Charles E. Hill. The Committee on the Liturgical Lectionary consisted of the Rev. Bayard H. Jones, D.D., the Rev. Cuthbert A. Simpson, Th.D., and the Rev. Edward Rochie Hardy, Jr., Ph.D.

BAYARD H. JONES  
*Editor of Publications*

April 28, 1950.

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## BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION



# Baptism and Confirmation

## I

### THE NEED OF REVISION

During the past twenty years, the Standing Liturgical Commission has received a voluminous corpus of suggestions and criticisms in regard to the present Prayer Book rites of Baptism and Confirmation. Careful study and consideration have been given to all the proposals received. In the present report of its findings to the Church, the Commission offers for review and study its own collation of the material which has been received. Every effort has been made to take account of conflicting interests and prejudices, without sacrificing the basic principles of our liturgical inheritance.

The Commission is agreed that the most helpful and practical way of collating its findings is in the form of complete revised services, embodying such alterations as have seemed worthy of attention. Only in this way can proposed changes in detail be viewed and assessed in proper perspective and to the best advantage, whether they be matters of phraseology in the spoken forms, or of rubrical direction. An honest attempt has been made to answer the constant demand that the structure and meaning of the initiatory rites of Baptism and Confirmation be simplified and clarified, and, where necessary, be enriched in content. Such aims are essentially practical, the fruit of pastoral experience in the use of the Prayer Book offices. In no case has the Commission proposed any alteration of the current Prayer Book rites without thorough consideration of their conformity with liturgical tradition and the authoritative doctrine of the Church.

It has not been thought necessary to repeat in detail the history of the Christian initiatory rites. This has been treated with

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sufficient thoroughness in well-known, standard handbooks of liturgics. But the problems involved in any review of the rites of Baptism and Confirmation, whether they be liturgical, theological, or practical, are of a long-standing, historical inheritance. They are principally due to the separation by the Western Church into two distinct rites, of what was originally one. No little confusion has resulted in Western theology with regard to the significance and necessity of Confirmation; and there has been an ambiguity in interpretation of the distinctive operations of the Holy Spirit in the two rites. Difficulties have by no means been diminished by the development, in both East and West, of infant baptism rather than adult baptism as the normative usage of the Church. The most ancient formularies in our present rite of Baptism derive from a time when infant baptism was exceptional.

Another factor in the problem, somewhat peculiar to Anglicanism, though derived from the Church Orders of the Lutheran Reformers, has been the delay in administering Confirmation until children have come "to a competent age" after due catechetical instruction, when they are able to "ratify and confirm" on their own responsibility the promises made for them by their sponsors at Baptism. What was originally a pre-baptismal discipline has thus become a pre-Confirmation preparation. From this procedure has come inevitably a corollary discipline, inherited from the Church in England before the Reformation, and different from the practice of other Western Churches both before and since the Reformation — the refusal of admission to the Holy Communion, except in extraordinary cases, of baptized but unconfirmed Christians.

The divergence of opinion in Anglicanism regarding the exact meaning of Confirmation, particularly as it relates to Baptism, has been signally revealed in the discussions provoked by a report entitled *Confirmation Today*, published in 1944 by a commission of the Convocations of Canterbury and York. The Report was concerned chiefly with practical problems, but it contained certain historical and theological state-

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ments that aroused considerable controversy, so much so that a new commission has been appointed to restudy the subject.

In the American Church the differences of interpretation have not as yet been so openly and sharply evident. But the considerable bulk of criticisms of our initiatory rites which the Liturgical Commission has received is certainly symptomatic of widespread dissatisfaction with the provisions of the traditional services, if not of confusion as to the exact nature of the traditional teaching of them. Furthermore, the debates of recent years over proposals of organic union between our Church and other Christian bodies have revealed that there are serious disagreements within our Church respecting the significance of Confirmation. Such differences are not due to captious partisanship, but are the inevitable result of divergent approaches of long standing.

It is obviously not the province of the Liturgical Commission of the American Church to settle the many questions and issues which have arisen in recent discussion. Nor would it be proper for one branch of the Anglican Communion to make any radical alteration in its liturgy and practice of Christian initiation without benefit of counsel from its sister Churches. It may be noted in this connection that the Church of England in Canada has recently set forth a proposed revision of Holy Baptism. Its findings have been duly considered by our Commission. All that our Commission claims for the present study is that an attempt is made to take a forward step in clarifying certain fundamental principles of our liturgical inheritance, in terms consonant with the teaching of Holy Scripture and the ancient Fathers, in the light of the best historical scholarship of the present day, and in loyalty to the truth as our Church has received the same.

The section of this discussion immediately following is designed to give a brief sketch of the historical developments in the Church's administration of initiation. It is hoped that it will serve, despite its brevity, in furnishing the proper perspective



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in which the task of revision must be set. In the third and fourth sections one will find a detailed review of the specific alterations from our present rites, and the reasons for them.

### II

#### HISTORY OF THE RITES OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

On the basis of the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus (early third century) and of scattered notices in the Fathers, it is now possible to reconstruct in considerable detail the initiatory ceremonies of the pre-Nicene Church. The evidence serves to illuminate the fragmentary and often elusive and debatable references in the New Testament, not only in the narratives of the Book of Acts, but also in the epistles of both the apostolic and sub-apostolic age, such as Rom. 6:4-6, II Cor. 1:21-22, Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30, 5:26-27, Heb. 6:2-5, and Titus 3:5. The initiation consisted of two distinct but inseparable stages: 1) the washing with water wherein the candidate received remission of sin, regeneration and adoption by God, and 2) the "sealing" with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and anointing with chrism as an earnest of eternal redemption and inheritance. So far as the evidence goes there was never any restriction regarding the minister of baptism in water. But only an Apostle — and later, after the establishment of mon-episcopacy, only a Bishop — could confer the gift of the Spirit.

At this point it may be useful to outline briefly the initiatory rite as it is given by Hippolytus, inasmuch as it clearly underlies the later forms of the Western Church. The service took place towards dawn on Easter or Pentecost, after the lengthy night vigil of scripture readings and exposition. After the blessing of the water in the font the candidates, stripped of all clothes and ornaments, gave to the presbyter the triple renunciation of Satan, his service (pomps) and his works. When the

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candidate had descended into the water, a triple confession, in the form of a paraphrase of the Creed, was put to him. At each profession of belief, in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the candidate was baptized in the font. Anointings with blessed oils were made upon each candidate before and after the baptism, but these were carefully distinguished from the chrism by the bishop which was to follow. After the baptized persons had put on their clothes they were brought at once to the bishop before the congregation. He laid his hand upon each one severally, praying for the gift of the Spirit; then he anointed and sealed each one on the forehead with the consecrated chrism and gave to each one the kiss of peace. The Holy Communion followed, beginning with the Offertory, and the newly initiated made their first communion.

Hippolytus gives no form for the Blessing of the Font. He does give the forms used by the bishop at the laying on of hands. The first is a prayer which is obviously the source of the Gelasian form still found in our Prayer Book service (page 297). It reads:

O Lord God, who hast vouchsafed these (thy servants) to be deserving of the forgiveness of sins through the washing of regeneration, (make them worthy to be filled with) thy Holy Spirit, send upon them thy grace, that they may serve thee according to thy will, for to thee is the glory, to the Father and to the Son with the Holy Spirit in the holy Church, both now and ever, world without end. Amen.

At the signing and sealing of the candidates with the chrism he says:

I anoint thee with holy oil in God the Father Almighty and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Not until the fourth century do we meet with specific forms for the Blessing of the Font. One of the earliest is to be found in the Syrian *Apostolic Constitutions* (VII. 43). After a

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lengthy exordium of thanksgiving to God for His work in creation and redemption, the blessing reaches its climax in these words:

Look down from heaven, and sanctify this water, giving it grace and power, that he who is to be baptized according to the command of thy Christ, may be crucified with Him, and die with Him, and may be buried with Him, and rise with Him unto the adoption which is in Him, that he may be dead unto sin but alive unto righteousness.

Further illustration of the early Church's tradition of initiation need not here be elaborated. One can find it in the prayers of the Egyptian bishop Sarapion (*ca.* 350-56), or in the mystagogical lectures to catechumens of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (348) or of Theodore of Mopsuestia (*ca.* 400). A great wealth of patristic evidence has been collected in the authoritative work of Dr. A. J. Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism as Taught in Holy Scripture and the Fathers* (Dutton, 1891). What is germane to our purpose is to note the gradual separation of the two elements in initiation, water-baptism and confirmation with the Spirit, which took place in the fourth century as a consequence of the rapid growth of the Church in numbers, especially in areas remote from the larger cities where a bishop resided. To meet the new need, presbyters and deacons were allowed the right of baptizing in water without the bishop's presence. The completion of the initiation, however, by the laying on of hands and sealing with chrism was reserved for such time as the bishop could conveniently perform it. Precedent for this development can be traced, of course, to pre-Nicene times, in the cases of clinical baptism of those *in extremis*, particularly in times of severe persecution; also in the decisions reached generally by the Church regarding admission to the Catholic Church of persons baptized in schismatical bodies: namely, to accept their baptism in water, but require the imposition of hands by a Catholic bishop.

Already by the end of the fourth century the confirmation

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by the bishop personally was disappearing altogether in the Eastern churches. The only relic of his ancient presidency over initiation was his reservation of the right to bless the chrism which the presbyter used in anointing the candidates after their baptism in water. This is still the custom in the Eastern Churches. But the West also was quick to take up the Eastern development. In North Africa, Spain and Gaul the direct action of the bishop in confirmation gradually disappeared, as presbyters were given the right to baptize in local parishes and to anoint with chrism. Only in Italy did the older customs prevail, thanks to the conservatism of the Roman see.

In the famous letter of Pope Innocent I to Bishop Decentius of Gubbio (416) the indefatigable pontiff wrote:

The sealing of the forehead of children is obviously a duty clearly reserved to the bishop. . . . Priests in baptizing, whether apart from the bishop or in his presence, can anoint the baptized with chrism, so long as it has been consecrated by the bishop; but he cannot anoint the forehead with this same oil. That is reserved solely to bishops, when they confer the Spirit, the Paraclete.

It should be remembered that it was easier to enforce the ancient custom in Italy than in other parts of the West, both because the dioceses in Italy were much smaller in size, and because political conditions there during the period of the barbarian migrations and settlements did not tempt the bishops to become so engrossed in matters of state and to absent themselves from their dioceses for long periods of time.

Another factor which hastened these developments was the shift from adult to infant baptism as the normative practice. This was not solely the result of the nominal Christianizing of peoples of the West and the passing of the old paganism. It was accelerated by the accent put upon the guilt and need of remission of original sin which arose as a result of the bitter controversies over the teachings of Pelagius. Indeed, the Pelagian heresy had actually come to the fore by its direct attack

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upon the traditional teaching of the Church that in infant baptism, no less than in adult baptism, there was given remission of sin, without which little infants, dying unbaptized, had no earnest of eternal salvation.

When the Roman rite was introduced by Charlemagne's efforts into the Gallican churches, with the consequence that Roman service books became the norm of liturgical usage throughout Western Christendom, episcopal confirmation was re-introduced almost as it were an innovation, and not without some confusion as to its meaning and necessity. At the same time no effort was made to restore the ancient discipline that admission to the Eucharist must come *after* confirmation. The indifference of medieval bishops in administering confirmation is notorious. Yet it reflects the uncertainties of medieval theologians about the importance and significance of the rite. Even so eminent a scholastic theologian as Alexander of Hales (*Summa* IV, q. 9, n. 1) could maintain that the rite was invented by the Church at a Council at Meaux in the year 845!

In general the teaching of Peter Lombard, expanded by Thomas Aquinas, tended to prevail. It was based on the excerpts of the teaching of the Fathers which happened to be preserved in the Decretals of the Canon Law, including the statement in the letter of Pope Innocent I quoted above. In brief the teaching of Lombard and Aquinas was that Confirmation is a sacrament distinct from Baptism, which confers "the gift of the Holy Spirit for strength." It is not necessary to salvation in the way that Baptism is, but is needed for the fullness of grace, for spiritual power, and the bringing of a man to a perfect spiritual age. Baptism gives a man power to achieve his own salvation; Confirmation gives power to witness for the Faith and to combat its enemies. The essential matter and form of Confirmation are the signing of the forehead with chrism (not laying on of hands) and its accompanying formulary: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." The normal minister is the

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bishop, but Confirmation may be delegated to priests provided they use chrism blessed by the bishop. This is the scholastic theory, in which the decrees of the Council of Trent made no essential change.

The history of Confirmation in the English Church has been exhaustively told by Canon Ollard, in the two-volume work, *Confirmation or the Laying on of Hands* (S.P.C.K., 1926-7). Cranmer made two important changes in the Prayer Book rite from the medieval practice. Children were not to be confirmed until they could say the catechism and were come to "years of discretion." In the administration of the rite the use of chrism was dropped. In the 1552 Book even the signing with the cross on the forehead was omitted, and the formula said by the bishop at the imposition of his hand was changed from "I sign thee," etc., to the familiar prayer "Defend, O Lord, this thy child," etc. Another alteration in the 1552 Book of far-reaching consequence was the revision of the prayer said by the bishop before the laying on of hands. In 1549 the old Gelasian wording was kept, and the prayer continued to be an invocation of the indwelling Spirit. But in 1552 the central petition was changed from an invocation to an intercession for the strengthening graces of the Spirit. This revision, probably more than any other, has contributed to the ambiguities in Anglican thought with respect to the meaning of Confirmation. It should be noted, too, that in the 1552 Book Cranmer dropped the anointing with chrism made by the priest after Baptism, with its reference to "the unction of His Holy Spirit." Theologically considered, Baptism and Confirmation remained very much the same in the English Church after the Reformation as they were before, except that in the Thirty-Nine Articles it was denied that Confirmation was a sacrament of the Gospel or generally (i.e., universally) necessary to salvation.

It remains to be said that the much-debated 'Confirmation Rubric' making admission to the Holy Communion dependent upon confirmation was no invention of Cranmer's, but was taken by him from the Sarum Manual, which in turn goes back

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to a decree of Archbishop John Peckham of Canterbury in 1281. That it remained largely a dead letter, not only in the later Middle Ages but after the Reformation, is a matter of history. Only within the past hundred years has the Anglican Communion as a whole revived its disciplines with regard to Confirmation and given to the rite its proper place in the Church's life.

### III

#### THE REVISION OF THE BAPTISMAL SERVICE

The changes proposed in the following revision of Holy Baptism may be subsumed under three headings: the length of the service, the clarification of rubrics to meet modern needs and demands, and the simplification of the ritual text. In all three instances the Commission has tried to deal fairly with the wealth of criticism which it has received. Problems arising from varying local circumstances and prejudices derived from partisan bias have made the task of adjusting conflicting opinion extremely delicate. It must be remembered that every alteration in detail has to be viewed in the larger context of its effect upon the service as a whole. The Commission has always kept to the fore in its discussions the principle to make no change in the rite which would imply any change in essential doctrine.

One of the most common complaints about the Prayer Book rite of Baptism concerns its length. Parish worship is unduly prolonged when the present office is used with the Daily Offices on Sundays and Holy Days, as the rubrics direct, or (following ancient precedent) with the Holy Communion, where that is the principal service of corporate worship. Yet everyone seems agreed that the practice of private baptism, except in necessary cases, should be discouraged, and that Baptism be administered according to the Prayer Book direction in the context of the public worship of the parish. It has not been

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an easy matter, however, to excise material from the rite without jeopardizing significant content.

It is conceivable that even greater shortening of the service might be made, than the Commission here proposes, by the omission of the entire introduction of the Baptism rite, so that the office, when used in conjunction with the Daily Offices or Holy Communion, would begin with the Promises. The Commission would welcome comment upon this proposal. Meanwhile it offers a rubric (the third at the beginning of the service) which allows the omission of one lesson and canticle at the Daily Office, rather than the excision of the introduction of the Baptism service itself.

We have omitted the first question in the present service ('Hath this Child been baptized, or no?'). The Minister, of course, knows the answer to that question before he asks it. In medieval times, when there was practically no pre-baptismal instruction, such a question was needed, since people often sought the grace of baptism for their children as frequently as possible. Such a superstition being no longer with us, the only practical effect of asking the question is to stun the people into not answering it at all, since they know the Minister has the answer. Nor is the question needed any longer to teach the unrepeatable character of Baptism. The general tenor of the whole service conveys that truth. To many persons the question has served only as an unexpected and unexplained stumbling-block at the very beginning.

The consolidation of the separate baptismal offices in the 1928 revision brought together the Gospel lesson from St. Mark for the Baptism of Infants and that from St. John for Adults. The new provision of the 'great commission' from St. Matthew to serve for a Baptism of both infants and adults was added at the same time. In practice, it has been found that the selection from St. Matthew makes an admirable substitute for the long and not readily intelligible selection from St. John, at a baptism of adults alone. It is therefore proposed to drop the passage from St. John. Its basic teaching has already been



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covered in the opening address or bidding to the service. Another reason for its excision — as well as for other cuts which are proposed — is to make the service more readily followed by the laity. They will not need to be instructed to turn the page in order to keep up with the Minister.

The bidding and prayer on page 276 have been dropped, but their content has not been lost. The bidding has been subsumed in the preface to the Promises, and phrases of the prayer have been taken up into the final thanksgiving. Further shortening has been achieved by putting together the Promises made by sponsors for infants and by adult candidates. The supplications on page 278 have been reduced to a single prayer, and the lengthy introduction to the Lord's Prayer on page 280 has been excised to avoid redundancy.

There have been a few slight additions, however. In some cases the purpose has been to increase congregational participation in the office, such as the addition of *Gloria tibi* and *Laus tibi Christe* before and after the Gospel, and the versicles and responses after the Promises. Many have objected that the present service does not include the Apostles' Creed, which actually originated in the baptismal service. It only makes allusion to it. On the other hand many complaints have been received that the form of the question as it now stands regarding the Creed is obscure and that it raises unnecessary scruples. After much debate and weighing of arguments the Commission has decided to adopt a further suggestion, frequently made, that the Creed be paraphrased in interrogatory form by presenting it, so to speak, by title. This is exactly the way it was done in the rite described by St. Hippolytus. Stylistically it seems more effective than the use of the entire Creed in interrogatory form, as it is found in Cranmer's rite.

One additional promise for sponsors has been inserted, which conforms to the new rubric concerning the Church status of Sponsors (the sixth at the beginning of the proposed service). Surely no justification is needed for such efforts to strengthen the Church's requirements for Sponsors. It will be noted, too,

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that the last promise for Sponsors has been reworded. The reason will be obvious. A sponsor may sincerely promise to do all in his or her power to lead a child to Confirmation. But Confirmation is the result of a person's own decision. No one can honestly promise to make that decision for another.

The new prayer, "O God, our heavenly Father," permitted to be used before the final Blessing, fills a long-felt need, as the Prayer Book has hitherto had no specific prayer for Sponsors. The use of a prayer here would seem preferable to any restoration of an Exhortation, such as the service had at this place until the 1928 revision.

The first three rubrics are designed to lay stress particularly upon the *public* character of Baptism as the normative use; and the reasons for this are given in the first rubric, the wording of which has been taken from the English Prayer Book. Inasmuch as many parishes now have the Holy Communion always at the principal service on Sundays, it has been thought advisable to suggest at what place in that service a ministration of Baptism would be most fittingly inserted, if the Baptism does not take place immediately before the service. On the analogy of the Daily Office this would seem to be after the lessons and before the Creed. Incidentally one of the reasons for not restoring the Creed in its full form to the Baptism office has been the assumption that Baptism, administered publicly, would come within the framework of a service which contained the full recitation of the Creed.

The purpose of the fourth rubric in the proposed service is to emphasize the importance of pre-baptismal instruction for parents and sponsors regarding their duties. In view of modern conditions of family and social life many clergy have become disturbed over what they call the 'indiscriminate baptizing of children.' Certainly all forethought and care should be exercised today to see that children have a chance to grow in the knowledge and love of God and of His Christ. With this in view, the Commission proposes in the sixth rubric a specific demand that Sponsors be baptized persons, and that where pos-

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sible they be communicants of the Church. This rubric is to be understood as disciplinary, and in no way questioning the validity of a baptism in which the sponsors are not professing Christians. It would be wiser to have no sponsors at all than to allow persons who cannot honestly take the vows of the service to be admitted to this high dignity and responsibility. The office of Sponsor is not necessary in Baptism, even though it be highly desirable. It is the whole faith of the Church which bears up the little infant presented unto God, as St. Augustine said (*Epistles* 98.5):

For it is proper to regard the infants as presented by all who take pleasure in their baptism, and through whose holy and perfectly-united love they are assisted in receiving the communion of the Holy Spirit.

The direction to fill the font with pure water has been transferred to a place immediately before the Blessing of the Font. This would seem to be the natural place for the ceremony, to mark off a new section in the rite. It should serve also to deter the common disobedience of our present rubric, in many places where the font is prepared some time before the minister and sponsors with those to be baptized have come to the font.

Textual changes made in the prayers have aimed at clarifying the meaning of Baptism with Water in such a way that the laity may more readily understand the office. Many alterations are purely verbal, to avoid archaic expressions or words whose connotation in modern usage is different from that originally intended. For example, in the opening bidding "goodness" has been substituted for "mercy"; in the Blessing of the Font, "Regard the supplications of thy congregation" has been simplified into "Hear the prayers of thy people"; and in the final thanksgiving, "We give thee thanks" takes the place of "We yield thee thanks." A few phrases have been dropped altogether, such as: "may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing." The idea of the phrase is adequately taken care of elsewhere in the office. Its unnatural sound makes it ob-

## Baptism and Confirmation

scure to the layman's ear. So likewise the words "regeneration" and "regenerate" have, whenever feasible, been translated into the vernacular as "spiritual birth" or "born anew." But even for the literal-minded, it should be superfluous to point out that this simplification of phrase does *not* imply any weakening whatsoever of the Church's adherence to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

The opening prayer of the service (page 274) has been much simplified, partly by reference to its Latin original in the Gregorian Sacramentary. The exordium of the prayer in the Latin has five descriptive phrases. Cranmer reduced these to four. The present revision has made them into two, but kept the essential elements of the original. The allusion to God as "the resurrection of the dead" has lost its primary relevance here, since the rite is no longer associated chiefly with the Easter season. Hence it has been dropped altogether. The invocation of the prayer was much altered by Cranmer. A literal translation of the Latin reads: "We invoke thee in behalf of this thy servant, N., who, seeking the gift of thy Baptism, desires to obtain thine eternal grace of spiritual regeneration." It will be seen at once that Cranmer interpolated the reference to "remission of sin." The Commission has considered it advisable to retain Cranmer's addition, but to restore something of the phrasing of the original — at least to make the gift of regeneration coordinate with that of forgiveness.

The Blessing of the Font has similarly been re-worked. The obscurity of the reference to the "water and blood" has been eliminated. There has been no agreement either among the early Fathers or among modern Biblical exegetes as to what the Fourth Evangelist had specifically in mind by this testimony. In place of it the new form brings out the symbolism of death, burial and resurrection with Christ which Baptism effects, and leads more logically to the recalling of the Great Commission of Christ to His disciples. The phrase, "may receive the fulness of thy grace" has been excised since it is not altogether clear in its meaning.

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Indeed, phrases such as this last one mentioned raise the fundamental problem of what gifts of grace are bestowed respectively in Baptism and in Confirmation, particularly as regards the action of the Holy Spirit in the two rites. There has been no little ambiguity in Anglican theology on this question, the result as we have seen of a long-standing historical development. It may be pertinent at this point to quote a few paragraphs from a brief brochure by the Rev. Dr. Oscar Hardman entitled "*Bishoping*" (S.P.C.K., pp. 17-18):

Some have answered that Baptism only cleanses, while Confirmation strengthens, and that the Holy Spirit acts from without in the former, and does not make His actual abode with the baptized until the laying on of hands has taken place. They suggest that the term "baptism," in its popular use as equivalent to initiation, must be held to include both Baptism in its stricter sense and Confirmation also, and that a person who has received only the baptismal washing is not yet completely baptized.

Over against this is more generally held that Baptism — that is to say, the washing alone — admits to Church membership and to fellowship with the Holy Spirit, while Confirmation adds to the gifts that the Spirit has hitherto bestowed, or, to put it in another way, brings the baptized into a still more intimate relationship with the already indwelling Holy Spirit.

Neither of these positions is really convincing. The former magnifies Confirmation at the expense of Baptism, while the latter may be pressed to mean that Confirmation is a rather superfluous supplement to Baptism; and both of them describe the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the individual Christian in terms which are symbolical, and therefore not to be accepted as anything more than picturesque generalizations in which the essential mystery and subtlety of the situation is missed.

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It would certainly be an intolerable doctrine which denied that by Baptism in Water in the Name of all three Persons of the Holy Trinity the Holy Spirit was not given to the baptized, or that He acted upon the baptized purely in an external way. One cannot become a member of Christ or of His Church, which is His Body, and not be a partaker of His Spirit. And surely the Holy Spirit is capable of influencing the growth in grace of a child after Baptism. As Dr. Hardman says later in his work (pp. 21-22):

We are bound to believe that the Holy Spirit is able to bring His personal influence to bear upon the child's development at least as soon as we ourselves are able to do the same. From the moment when the living soul is brought forth into the world there is no point in his progress at which it may be plausibly represented that the Spirit of God is powerless to influence him. The Church initiates the child into the Christian relationship with the Spirit at the earliest possible moment, and when the child has grown so as to reach at length the point where it can claim him as a third party consciously and responsibly active in association with the Holy Spirit and the Church, the process of initiation may be duly completed.

There is always the danger of theologians' attempting to over-refine in definitions what is a great mystery. All that the present revision claims for itself is that it has sought to avoid any phraseology which would foster an interpretation of Baptism with Water in such a way that it usurps or makes superfluous the normative and necessary place of Confirmation in the perfecting of the Christian, or would reduce the meaning of Confirmation to a mere strengthening of what has been received in Baptism.

The interrelation of the two rites of Baptism and Confirmation can be set forth with striking effect when the two services are used together. Hence the last rubric of the proposed Bap-

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tism rite gives direction as to the way both services may be integrated into one continuous service, when those who are to be baptized are to be confirmed immediately by the Bishop without delay. This would apply, of course, only to adults who have been prepared for the reception of full Christian initiation, Baptism and Confirmation, at one and the same time.

### IV

#### THE REVISION OF THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE

The principal feature of the proposed revision of the Order of Confirmation is the short service of corporate worship, with propers suitable to the occasion, immediately prior to the presentation of the candidates. The justification for this permissive 'enrichment' will be obvious. The present rite when used alone has seemed to many to lack a sufficient devotional preparation of the congregation for the solemnity of the rite. It begins too abruptly, and it lacks certain elements of corporate worship to make it, so to speak, a complete service of common prayer. Often it is inexpedient to combine it with one of the regular offices of the Prayer Book, whether Morning or Evening Prayer or the Holy Communion. The purpose of the accompanying proposal is to afford an adequate substitute, whenever it may be so desired, which is liturgically apt and also sufficiently flexible in form so as to make it adaptable to varying needs and circumstances.

The structure of the proposed introductory service follows in general the pattern of the Daily Office — an opening sentence, a psalm, a lesson followed by a hymn (or canticle), the Creed and prayer. One of the familiar canticles might be used after the lesson in place of a hymn, if that is preferred. The lesson has been chosen from the Old Testament in view of the fact that the Confirmation rite proper has a New Testament lesson. The Collect chosen for the service, to be used after the

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Collect for the Day, will be recognized as the one on page 182 of the Prayer Book — for the first Communion on Whitsunday.

The Renewal of the Vows of Baptism has been rephrased to make it conform to the vows taken by the candidates or their sponsors at Baptism itself. The Bishop's declaration to the confirmands immediately prior to his questions is based upon the forms to be found in the Scottish and the English 1928 Prayer Books.

The most significant alteration in the prayers which follow are designed to restore the primitive view of Confirmation as the gift of the indwelling Spirit in all His fulness to the baptized, and not merely as an added, strengthening grace. Thus, "Send into their hearts thy Holy Spirit" is substituted for "Strengthen them with the Holy Ghost" as in the present form. This brings the prayer closer not only to the 1549 form, but also to the original Gelasian wording: *immitte in eos Spiritum sanctum*. Similarly, "Confirm" has replaced "Defend" in the prayer said by the Bishop at the imposition of his hand. This change makes it clear that Confirmation means primarily the action of God in confirming His children. In our present rite the word "confirming" is confusingly used only of the action of the candidate in renewing his vows. Moreover the word "confirm" includes all that is implied in "defend" — and more!

One of the most difficult questions presented to the Commission has been the proposal to restore, permissively, the use of the ancient ceremony of the signing and sealing candidates with chrism, in conjunction with the Bishop's laying on of hands. In the 1549 Book, Cranmer kept the signing of the forehead with the cross, but eliminated the Sarum mention of chrism in favor of an apparently metaphorical "inward unction of the Holy Ghost." In 1552, all reference to 'signing and sealing' was excised. And this omission of any suggestion of the use of chrism has characterized all Anglican Prayer Books since that time, until the Scottish Book of 1929 restored the 1549 provisions.



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At the present time, many of our bishops do actually use chrism in connection with the laying on of hands. They justify this additional ceremony on the ground that in the paucity of ceremonial directions in the Prayer Book some actions not expressly ordered by the present rubrics must necessarily be added, and other traditional actions are sometimes inserted without rebuke. The difficulty of this view of the question is that there is a distinction between the employment of a mere embellishment, such as the use of incense at the celebration of the Eucharist, which in no manner affects the essence of the Sacrament, and the importation of a ceremony which may set up a claim to be the actual 'Matter' of a Sacrament itself. And it cannot be gainsaid that Anglicanism has consistently viewed the 'Matter' or essential ceremony of Confirmation to be the laying on of hands, as against the scholastic theory that it was the anointing with chrism. In this regard, Anglicanism has always claimed that it had effected a return to the conceptions of the New Testament, and of the Primitive Church.

Modern students of New Testament documents would doubtless be less dogmatic than Cranmer and his associates about primitive evidence. It is true that the actual descriptions of 'Confirmation' in the Book of Acts — upon which our Anglican formularies are primarily based — make no mention of chrism, but only of the laying on of hands. But in the Epistles, there are numerous references to Christian initiation in terms of an 'anointing' or 'sealing.' Some scholars maintain that such references are purely metaphorical. Others believe that they refer to an actual use of chrism. Symbolic significance was given by the earliest Christians to the 'anointing,' with which the ancients accompanied any 'bath.' They considered that their initiation into Christ anointed them as kings and priests unto God. Moreover, the very word *Christos* means 'anointed one.' It is instructive to analyze the play upon this idea in such a passage as I John 2:18-27.

It is true also that when we examine the liturgical evidence of the second century, we find that our two chief witnesses

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to the rite of Christian initiation, the *Didache* and Justin Martyr, make not the slightest reference to chrism — but then, they mention nothing comparable to Confirmation at all. However, by the turn of the third century, both chrism and the laying on of hands are fixed features of the rite, as may be seen in Hippolytus and Tertullian. Eventually, in both East and West, the chrism overshadowed the undoubted 'scriptural' ceremony of the laying on of hands: in the East, the sacramental rite is known only as 'The Holy Chrismation'; and in both the contact of the Bishop's hands with the candidate's head has been reduced to the touch of the tip of his thumb upon the forehead.

In view of the uncertainties of New Testament evidence about the use of chrism on the one hand, and also of the unbroken and undisputed Anglican emphasis upon the laying on of hands on the other, the Commission has considered it unwise to introduce into the proposed revision of the Confirmation Service any specific reference to 'signing and sealing.' This would leave the question of the added ceremony of the use of chrism on exactly the same basis that it is at present.

The Sarum Collect, "O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God," introduced before the Blessing in the 1662 Prayer Book, has been omitted. It adds little to the preceding prayer, and its American associations are rather with the Communion Service. It is anticlimactic.

The form of the Bishop's dismissal has been suggested by the English 1928 Book. This dismissal serves the same purpose as the excised Collect, in that it relates the liturgical action to the Christian's life in the world.

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## V

### THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM

- ¶ *The Minister of every Parish shall often admonish the People, that they defer not the Baptism of their Children, and that it should be administered upon Sundays and other Holy Days, when the most number of people come together: as well for that the Congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church, as also because in the Baptism of infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism.*
- ¶ *If necessity so require, Baptism may be administered upon any other day; but except for urgent cause, Baptism shall always be administered in the Church.*
- ¶ *On Sundays and Holy Days, Baptism shall be administered immediately after the Second Lesson at Morning or Evening Prayer, or after the Gospel at the Holy Communion; but the Minister may in his discretion appoint such other time as he shall think fit. And NOTE, That when Baptism is administered at Morning or Evening Prayer, the Minister may omit one Lesson and one Canticle of the Order of Morning or Evening Prayer.*
- ¶ *When there are Children to be baptized, the Parents or Sponsors shall give timely notice to the Minister, that he may give them sufficient instruction in the duties and responsibilities of their promises.*
- ¶ *There shall be three Sponsors for every Child to be baptized, when they can be had: for a Boy, two Godfathers and one Godmother; and for a Girl, one Godfather and two Godmothers; and Parents may be admitted as Sponsors.*
- ¶ *Sponsors shall be baptized persons, and shall, if possible, be Communicants of the Church.*
- ¶ *When any Persons as are of riper years are to be baptized, the Minister shall take due care for their examination, whether they be sufficiently instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion; and that they may be directed to prepare themselves, with Prayers and Fasting, for the receiving of this holy Sacrament.*
- ¶ *At the time of the Baptism of an Adult, there shall be present with him at the Font at least two Witnesses.*

# Baptism and Confirmation

## THE PREPARATION

¶ *Those to be baptized, with their Sponsors, shall meet the Minister at the Font, and he shall then say as followeth, the People all standing.*

**D**EARLY beloved, forasmuch as our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous goodness he will grant to *this Child (this thy Servant)* that which by nature *he* cannot have; that *he*, being baptized, may be received into Christ's holy Church, be made a living *member* of the same, and an *inheritor* of the kingdom of heaven.

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

Let us pray.

**A**LMIGHTY and immortal God, the helper and defender of all who call to thee in need, the life and peace of those who believe; We call upon thee for *this Child (this thy Servant)*, that *he*, coming to thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of sin, and thine eternal grace of spiritual birth. Receive *him*, O Lord, as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. So give now unto us who ask; let us who seek, find; open the gate unto us who knock; that *this Child (this thy Servant)*, being born anew, may be received into the company of Christ's flock, and may come into *his* inheritance of the eternal kingdom of thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Minister shall say as followeth.*

Hear the words of the Gospel according to Saint Mark.

¶ *The People shall answer,*  
Glory be to thee, O Lord.

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**T**HEY brought young children to Christ, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

¶ *The People shall say,*  
Praise be to thee, O Christ.

¶ *Or this.*

Hear the words of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

¶ *The People shall answer,*  
Glory be to thee, O Lord.

**J**ESUS came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

¶ *The People shall say,*  
Praise be to thee, O Christ.

### THE PROMISES

¶ *The Minister shall speak on this wise to the Sponsors, and to such Adults as are to be baptized.*

**D**EARLY beloved, we have prayed unto God our Father that he of his good will and favour, declared unto us in the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, would vouchsafe to forgive you all your sin, receive you into the body of Christ's Church, and give you the heritage of the kingdom of heaven.

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Dost thou, therefore, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain glory of the world, and all evil desires, so that, by God's help, thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

*Answer.* I renounce them all; and by God's help, will endeavour not to follow, nor be led by them.

*Minister.* Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; And in the Holy Ghost?

*Answer.* I do.

*Minister.* Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith?

*Answer.* That is my desire.

*Minister.* Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and serve him all the days of thy life?

*Answer.* I will, by God's help.

¶ *When the Office is used for Children, the Minister shall ask of the Parents and Sponsors the following questions.*

**H**AVING now, in the name of this Child, made these promises, wilt thou also on thy part take heed that this Child shall be instructed in the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Commandments of God, and encouraged to resist all evil, and to worship and serve *his* Saviour Jesus Christ in his holy Church?

*Answer.* I will, by God's help.

*Minister.* Wilt thou undertake to set *him* an example by the faithful exercise of the duties of a Christian?

*Answer.* I will, God being my helper.

*Minister.* Wilt thou endeavour to bring this Child, so soon as sufficiently instructed, to the Bishop to be confirmed by him?

*Answer.* I will endeavour so to do.

¶ *Then shall be said,*

*Minister.* O Lord, save thy servants;

*People.* That put their trust in thee.

*Minister.* Send unto them help from above;

*People.* And evermore mightily defend them.

*Minister.* Lord, hear our prayer;

*People.* And let our cry come unto thee.

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*Minister.* Let us pray.

**O** MERCIFUL God, grant that *this Child* may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against sin, the world, and the devil; and may so persevere in running the race that is set before *him*, that at length, with the whole company of thy faithful servants, *he* may attain unto thine eternal joy, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. *Amen.*

### THE BLESSING OF THE FONT

¶ *Then the Minister shall pour pure Water into the Font, and after that shall say,*

The Lord be with you.

*People.* And with thy spirit.

*Minister.* Lift up your hearts.

*People.* We lift them up unto the Lord.

*Minister.* Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

*People.* It is meet and right so to do.

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

**I**T is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God, for that thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did suffer death upon the Cross, and was buried, and did rise again the third day, that we might live unto thee in newness of life by the power of his Resurrection; and gave commandment to his disciples to go teach all nations, and baptize them In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Hear, we beseech thee, the prayers of thy people; Sanctify this Water by thy Spirit for the mystical washing away of sin; that *this Child* (*this thy Servant*), now to be baptized therein, may be numbered among thy faithful children, and may grow in thy grace and favour until *he* come unto thine everlasting kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee, in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and evermore. *Amen.*

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## THE BAPTISM

¶ *Then shall the Minister take the Child into his arms, or take the Adult by the hand, and shall say unto the Sponsors or Witnesses,*

Name this Child (Person).

¶ *And then, naming the Child or Adult after them, he shall dip him in the Water discreetly, or shall pour Water upon him, saying,*

**N**I baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

**W**E receive this Child (Person) into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign † *him* with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter *he* shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto *his* life's end. Amen.

† *Here the Minister shall make a Cross upon the Child's (or Person's) forehead.*

## THE THANKSGIVING

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

And now, as our Saviour Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

**O**UR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

**W**E give thee hearty thanks, O heavenly Father, that thou hast vouchsafed to call thy people to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee; Increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us evermore; and grant that *this Child* (*this*



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thy *Servant*), now born again by Baptism, and incorporated into thy holy Church, may so die unto sin and live unto righteousness, that finally *he* may come unto thine everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *The Minister may add,*

**O** GOD, our heavenly Father, who hast wonderfully made the earthly family after thy likeness, and hast blessed it with the joy and care of children; Assist with thy grace, we beseech thee, these thy servants, who have brought *this child* to thy holy Baptism, that they may bring *him* up in thy faith, fear, and love; that as *he grows* in years *he* may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of thee and of thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

**T**HE Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; Strengthen you with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that, Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith, ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. *Amen.*

¶ *Every Adult, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop, so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be; nor shall an Adult be baptized, except for weighty cause, unless he signify his desire to be confirmed without delay, and to be admitted to the Holy Communion.*

¶ *When Adults are to be confirmed immediately after their Baptism, the Minister shall conclude the service with the signing of the Candidate upon the forehead with the Cross; and the Bishop shall proceed at once with the Order of Confirmation, beginning at the Versicle, Our help is in the Name of the Lord.*

# Baptism and Confirmation

## VI

### THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION

OR LAYING ON OF HANDS UPON THOSE  
THAT ARE BAPTIZED, AND COME TO  
YEARS OF DISCRETION.

¶ *This Service may be used by itself, or after Morning or Evening Prayer, or at the Holy Communion.*

¶ *And NOTE, this service may be shortened by beginning with the Presentation of the Candidates.*

#### INTRODUCTION

¶ *The Minister appointed shall begin the service by reading the following Sentence.*

**Y**E shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

¶ *Then shall be read the following Psalm,*

*Psalm 27. Dominus illuminatio.*

**T**HE Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? \* The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?

One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require; \* even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his tabernacle; \* yea, in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me, and set me up upon a rock of stone.

Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness: \* I will sing and speak praises unto the Lord.

Hearken unto my voice, O Lord, when I cry unto thee; \* have mercy upon me, and hear me.

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My heart hath talked of thee, Seek ye my face: \* Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

O hide not thou thy face from me, \* nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

Thou hast been my succour; \* leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, \* and lead me in the right way, because of mine enemies.

I should utterly have fainted, \* but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

O tarry thou the Lord's leisure; \* be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

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.

¶ *Then shall be read the following Lesson from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, in the thirty-sixth Chapter, at the twenty-fifth Verse.*

**T**HEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

¶ *Here may be sung a Hymn.*

¶ *Then shall follow the Apostles' Creed; and after that, the Minister shall say,*

The Lord be with you.

*People.* And with thy spirit.

*Minister.* Let us pray.

**A**Lmighty and most merciful God, grant, we beseech thee, that by the indwelling of thy Holy Spirit, we may be enlightened and strengthened for thy service, through Jesus

## Baptism and Confirmation

Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end.  
*Amen.*

### THE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

¶ *Here may be sung a Hymn.*

¶ *All that are to be confirmed shall be presented by the Minister to the Bishop, sitting in his chair near to the Holy Table or at the entrance to the Choir, the People all standing until the Lord's Prayer; and the Minister shall say,*

**R**EVEREND Father in God, I present unto you these persons to receive the Laying on of Hands.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

Have you examined them, and found them ready and desirous to be confirmed?

¶ *And the Minister shall answer,*

I have examined them, and believe them so to be.

¶ *Then the Bishop, or some Minister appointed by him, shall say,*

Hear the words of the Evangelist Saint Luke, in the eighth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

**W**HEN the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

### THE RENEWAL OF THE VOWS OF BAPTISM

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

**Y**E who are to be confirmed must now declare before this congregation your stedfast purpose, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to follow Christ our Master, and to fulfil the Christian duties to which your Baptism pledged you.

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of

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heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;  
And in the Holy Spirit?

*Answer.* I do.

*Bishop.* Will you then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and serve him all the days of your life?

*Answer.* I will, by God's help.

### THE CONFIRMATION

*Bishop.* Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

*People.* Who hath made heaven and earth.

*Bishop.* Blessed be the Name of the Lord;

*People.* Henceforth, world without end.

*Bishop.* Lord, hear our prayer.

*People.* And let our cry come unto thee.

*Bishop.* Let us pray.

**A**LMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Spirit, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; Send into their hearts, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Bishop lay his hand upon the head of every one severally, saying,*

**C**ONFIRM, O Lord, this thy Child with thy heavenly grace; that *he* may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until *he* come unto thine everlasting kingdom. Amen.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

The Lord be with you.

*Answer.* And with thy spirit.

*Bishop.* Let us pray.

## Baptism and Confirmation

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say the Lord's Prayer, the People kneeling and repeating it with him.*

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

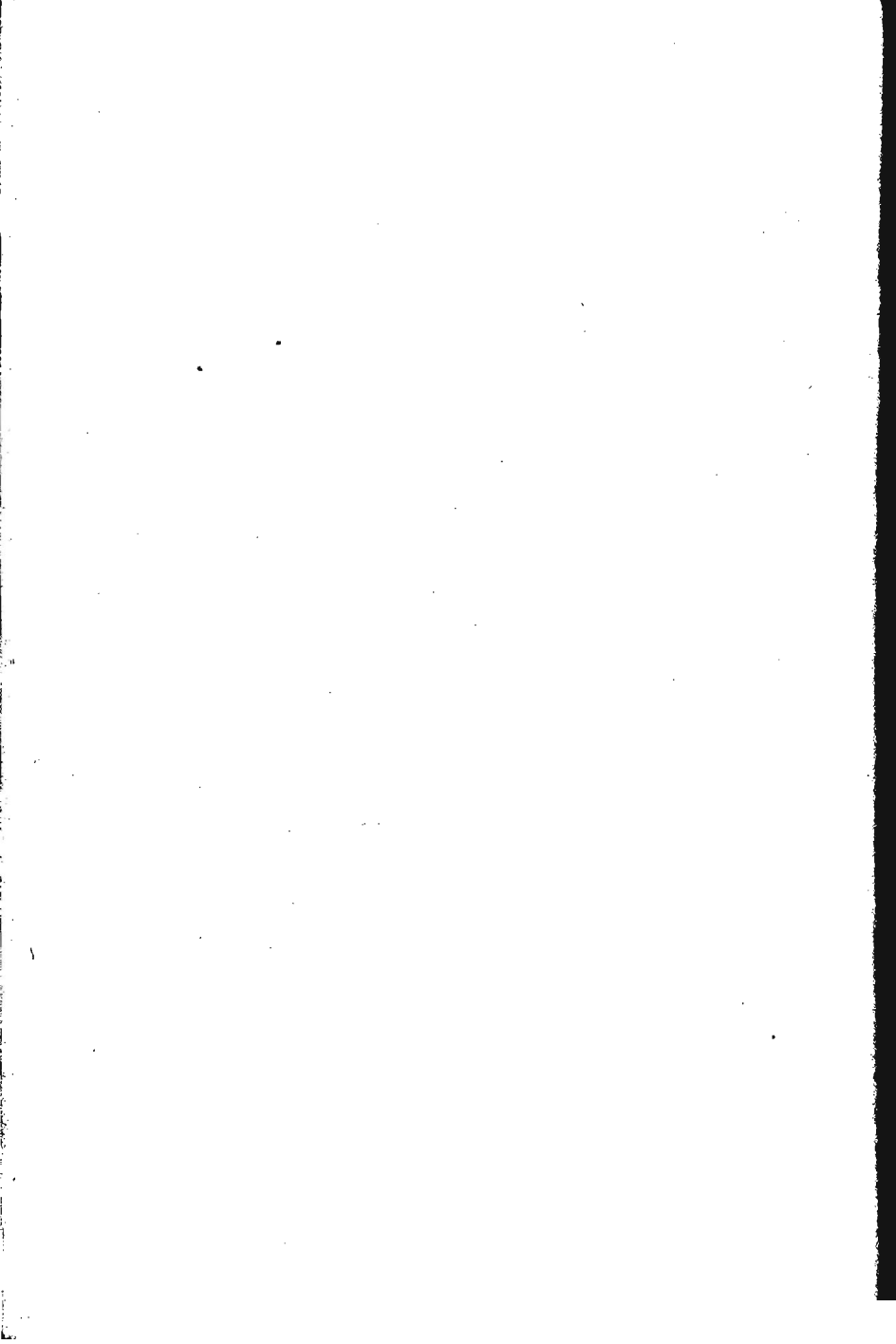
ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who makest us both to will and to do those things which are good, and acceptable unto thy Divine Majesty; We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom, after the example of thy holy Apostles, we have now laid our hands, to certify them, by this sign, of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them. Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them; let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee and the same Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Bishop shall bless the newly-confirmed, saying thus,*

GO forth in peace: be of good courage: hold fast that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; And the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

¶ *The Minister shall earnestly move the Persons confirmed to come, without delay, to the Lord's Supper.*

¶ *And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.*



THE LITURGICAL LECTIONARY  
OF THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS  
READ AT THE HOLY COMMUNION





# The Liturgical Lectionary

## I

### THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

#### 1. *Importance of the Liturgical Lectionary*

The Christian Year is one of the most valuable possessions of the Teaching Church. As is well known, during the first half of its cycle, from Advent to Trinity Sunday, its primary emphasis is upon the Christian Belief, taking up the great assertions of the Creed clause by clause, and even phrase by phrase, and dramatizing them in a series of Festivals. Then in the remaining half, from Trinity Sunday to Advent again, the moral implications of the Faith are carried into the living of the Christian life.

The content of this teaching is conveyed in the Liturgical Lectionary of the Epistles and Gospels read at the celebrations of the Holy Communion throughout the year. It is this basic Lectionary which gives the Christian Year its actual substance, and determines the quality of its varying seasons. Moreover, until very recent times it was the only Lectionary of any kind and of any branch of the Church which was so ordered, since the system of Lessons at the Daily Offices in every Church was an altogether subordinate scheme, based upon a somewhat mechanical method of reading the Bible in course: a plan which took very little account of the distinctive character of the particular seasons. In the Roman Church, even this has been reduced to the very slightest dimensions, being little more than a mere 'token' outline of a former comprehensive plan. In the Anglican Prayer Books, however, there has been an increasing awareness of the Christian Year, and a growing tendency to bring the lessons at the Offices into harmony with the Scriptures appointed for the centrally important Eucharist. The

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most recent American Lectionary, adopted by General Convention in 1943, carried out this objective completely and systematically.

### 2. *Defects of the Liturgical Lectionary*

This undertaking to correlate the Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer with the Scriptures read at the Holy Communion throughout the Christian Year necessitated some extensive investigations of the origins and growth of the Church's Calendar, and of the Liturgical Lectionary used therewith.

One primary authority thus utilized was the book entitled *The Eternal Word in the Modern World*, by Burton Scott Easton and Howard Chandler Robbins (Scribners, New York, 1937). This admirable guide to expository preaching on the basis of the Epistles and Gospels of our Prayer Book contained critical notes by Dr. Easton on the sources of the Church Year and its lections, which, taken together, amounted to the first adequate historical estimate of the Liturgical Lectionary ever to appear. Dr. Easton's outspoken exceptions to some of the less adequate assignments have had a considerable influence on the minds of the clergy of our Church, and are to be recognized in many of the suggestions for revision which have come to the Liturgical Commission. Therefore the Committee on the Liturgical Lectionary used this book as the starting-point of their considerations, and checked every proposal against Dr. Easton's important findings. Frequent references to these will be made in the following discussion.

The result of this and other studies was to establish the fact that the Church's cycle of commemorations was not a system which was systematically planned and executed at any one time, but a collection which was gradually piled up through many centuries.

Easter and Whitsunday were primordial, and were attested from the beginning of the second century. Lent, Easter-tide, and the Ember Seasons date from the third century; Christmas from the fourth; Advent and Pre-Lent from the sixth. Thus

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far, other Sundays were merely 'common Sundays,' with no more thought of proper provisions for them than if they had been so many weekdays. Lists of lessons for them began to appear in the seventh century, at first in undifferentiated blocks, and were gradually assimilated into fixed patterns and sequences up to the eleventh century. Trinity Sunday, originating in the tenth century, was not adopted at Rome until the fourteenth. Even then, the development was not at an end: proper lessons were assigned for our Epiphany VI in 1662, and for our Christmas II in 1928!

This unplanned development resulted in an accumulation of scriptural provisions from many sources. Some were chosen specifically for their places with the highest intelligence, and to the utmost effect. Some perpetuate the protocol of the papal court, or local Roman circumstances, or the passing events of the times when they originated; others represent borrowings from the Orthodox East, or contributions from the eager Gallic spirit. And so down to the uninspired efforts of medieval systematizers of small information and ability to fill gaps and reconcile divergencies, which have left us with unsatisfactory assignments for such supremely important occasions as Christmas, Easter, and the season of Lent.

The eventual result is now justly venerated for its centuries of use. It is full of curious interest for the technical student of liturgical origins. It is even very fairly representative of the best passages available in Holy Scripture for its purposes: since the very variety of its sources have assured that it would not be a solo on a single string.

It would be out of the question to abandon this traditional pattern, and extremely unwise to change its emphases. But it is quite worth while to use the information now available (which is more than was in possession of any previous age), in order to search out any demonstrable defects in the details of its execution, and to consider what may reasonably be done to remedy them.

For example, consider the repetitions of the same essential

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themes, in identical but overlapping passages from the same book, or in doublets of the same incident from the accounts of different Evangelists, in the following duplications: the three 'Miraculous Feedings' on Lent IV, Trinity VII, and the Sunday before Advent; *The Signs of the End* on Epiphany VI and Advent II; St. Luke's *Great Supper* on Trinity II, and St. Matthew's *Marriage Feast* on Trinity XX; St. Matthew's *Healing of the Centurion's Servant* on Epiphany IV, and St. John's *Healing of the Nobleman's Son* on Trinity XXI; the very similar warnings against carnal sins in the Epistles for Lent II and III; St. Paul's joy in his converts, and hopes for their perseverance, in the 'salutation' passages of his Epistles to the Philipians and the Colossians, on Trinity XXII and XXIV; the repetition of the whole of the Epistle for Easter Monday on Whit-Monday; and the borrowing of part of the Epistle for Palm Sunday for the Feast of the Circumcision.

Lections whose intrinsic excellence does not justify a place in the plan are certainly two very rabbinical arguments from Galatians, on Lent IV and Trinity XIII. The appropriateness of the Gospels for Lent II and V has also been challenged in some quarters.

There are also some inadequate assignments: perfectly good as far as they go, but needing supplement of one sort and another. Such are the provisions for Easter Day, which stop with the negative fact of the Empty Tomb, without adding the positive evidence of the Appearances of the Risen Lord. Consider also the Gospel for the First Sunday after Easter, which stops with the events of the evening of Easter Day, without continuing the occurrences of one week later, which other historic Churches, Eastern and Western alike, have always regarded as proper to this date. With this may be ranked the Epistle and Gospel for the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, which make no reference whatever to that event, but are merely proleptic to Whitsunday.

Finally, there are otherwise unexceptionable passages which are widely felt to be out of their proper place in the pattern

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of the Christian Year. These are the Triumphal Entry before the Passion, on Advent Sunday; and the Flight into Egypt on Christmas II, where it occurs actually before the Epiphany.

These all deserve careful consideration: and at least some of them seem to demand action. Besides these major matters, there are also a few relatively minor considerations of the exact length of the assignments, questions of the translations of particular phrases, and the like, which will be discussed later. Nevertheless, the foregoing list represents approximately the total dimensions of the changes which we are disposed to consider advisable at this time.

### 3. *No New System Proposed*

We must emphasize at once that there is no purpose in the mind of anyone connected with the Standing Liturgical Commission to embark on a general revision of the traditional Liturgical Lectionary, so as to supplant it with an essentially different scheme, thus embodying his own ideas of what he would like to see taught in the Church.

No doubt it would be perfectly practicable to pick out some selections from the Epistles which would be more striking than some of those now employed. And certainly there are passages from the Gospels which would carry much more weight than some now in use.

Likewise, there might be a temptation to try to bring one's own ideas of order into the absolute chaos — there is no other word for it — of the Gospels in Trinity-tide. Twenty-three of the twenty-four are chosen from the Synoptics; but there is no arrangement of them whatever, whether sequential, biographical, chronological, or theological. Neither in the Roman collation of these Gospels with the series of Trinity-tide Epistles, nor in the Sarum (which is older), is there any actual relevance between the Epistle and the Gospel of any Sunday, save by way of sheer coincidence. And much the same is true of the Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter: even when both lessons have been chosen 'topically' to fit the

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season, they very commonly exploit quite divergent themes. Only sporadically does one find the close coördination of subject which characterizes the great feasts commemorating specific events of our Lord's life.

It is a curious fact that no Lectionary of any Church ever made a systematic attempt to secure a definite 'liturgical harmony,' featuring a single common theme between all the portions read at each service, until the American Lectionary of 1943. This plan has the obvious advantage of integrating all the teaching of a given service upon a single emphasis. But the older method — or more often complete lack of method — has its points too, in providing two or even more subjects, which are available for exposition on the same occasion in different years. This sort of variety is attainable in the Office Lectionary by offering complete alternative sets of lessons. The Liturgy, however, should retain a single system of prescriptions; alternatives are quite out of place. And if it does, any attempt to correlate the subjects of the Epistles and Gospels would simply narrow the available coverage of teaching in the words of Holy Scripture.

Projects of this order, however attractive, must be rejected. The fact is that the temple of the Christian Year is a structure which we have inherited from our forefathers in the faith, not something which we own, and may treat at our own will. It would be folly to pull it all down, and erect in its place a modernistic edifice in the current fashion. Some few corners of it may need repairs, because its first builders or subsequent remodelers, improvising according to the best of their ability at the time, did not in fact choose the most durable materials to be placed upon the securest foundations. Consequently, these elements no longer express the purpose of their makers, nor are they adequate for the uses for which they were intended. We are justified in touching the traditional edifice, hallowed by the devotion of many generations, only at those details which have broken down: and even then, we should be at pains to preserve the plan of the founders.

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In other words, it is none of our concern to impose any individualistic idea of our own as to what the Christian Year is, much less to reform it to what we might like to make it. As a matter of fact, we know what the Christian Year is only by studying what it has been: and any emendations we may make should be limited to those which will actually enable it to say better what it is evidently trying to say.

### 4. *The Western Tradition*

Even under these conservative limitations, there will be those who will express a fear of diverging from 'the Great Liturgical Tradition of the West' — i.e., of getting out of step with the provisions of the Church of Rome. This fear is by no means confined to those who look to that communion as the sole fount of all things authentically Catholic. This fear is based upon an entire misapprehension.

The fact is, that though the Anglican and the Roman systems of Epistles and Gospels are both descended from the same seventh-century sources, they have pursued their own separate evolution ever since. They have remained in substantial and essential harmony with each other as to underlying plan, total coverage, and general effect. Yet since the seventh century, one or the other of them has adopted alterations in the length of the selections, in substitutions of other passages, or transfers to other occasions of the year, to such an extent that they now actually coincide at very few points indeed. It will probably astonish nearly every member of our Church to learn that it is only on six Sundays out of 55, and on six Holy Days out of 37, that we read precisely the same Epistle and Gospel as those in the Roman Missal. Eleven more Sundays, and ten more Holy Days, have substantially the same assignments, differing only the precise length of the Epistle or Gospel, or both: making altogether 17 Sundays and 16 Holy Days where differences are only *de minimis*. If we disregard not only these questions of length, but also the matching of the same Epistle with the same Gospel, practically the same Epistles are used on 23 Sundays



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and 20 Holy Days; the same Gospels on 17 Sundays and 30 Holy Days. Entirely different Epistles are used on six Sundays and 14 Holy Days; different Gospels on seven Sundays and five Holy Days. Equivalent selections are transferred to other occasions in the case of 26 Epistles and 31 Gospels for Sundays, and for four of each on Holy Days.

These divergencies arose first of all in the fact that the Reformers followed the Sarum list in the main, though they have been increased at each of four revisions since. The Sarum provisions were wholly derived from the seventh-century Roman assignments, which they actually preserved in much more nearly their original form than the present Roman does: so that the dislocations are to be charged chiefly to the not very intelligent method with which the Roman Missal has assimilated the ancient material. The modern Roman differs from Sarum in three Epistles and six Gospels on Sundays, and five Epistles and four Gospels on Holy Days; transfers the same assignment to a different day in the case of 31 Epistles and 32 Gospels for Sundays, and one Epistle on Holy Days; and coincides with Sarum only for 21 Epistles and 18 Gospels on Sundays, 33 Epistles and 35 Gospels on Holy Days.

The First Prayer Book of 1549, besides making seven alterations in material which was Sarum but not Roman, eliminated one set of propers from a Sunday, and two from Holy Days; substituted two Epistles and one Gospel on Sundays, 15 Epistles and one Gospel on Holy Days; and transferred two Sunday Epistles and Gospels, and two Holy Day Epistles and four Gospels. On the other hand, Cranmer preferred the Roman sequence for the first five Sundays after Epiphany to the Sarum, and similarly with the Roman length of the Epistle for Pentecost XXIII (Trinity XXIV), and the Roman selection of the Epistle for St. Barnabas' Day, which he adopted in part; though this last may have been thought up independently.

The Second Prayer Book in 1552 eliminated the alternative provisions for Christmas and Easter, and added the pre-Reformation Gospel for Whitsunday to the Gospel for the Vigil,

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which was all that was given for this day in 1549. The revision of 1662 made new assignments for Epiphany VI, and restored the old Epistle for the Purification, both of which had been lacking since 1549; and adjusted the length of six Gospels. The American Book of 1892 restored the alternative services for Christmas and Easter (dropped in 1552), and also the Feast of the Transfiguration (eliminated at the Reformation), with the Roman Epistle and an altered Gospel. Our last revision in 1928 made new provisions for an alternative celebration on Whitsunday, and for the new liturgical day of Christmas II (taking its Gospel from the Roman Vigil of the Epiphany); restored the pre-Reformation Gospel for Maundy Thursday as an alternative; transferred two Epistles on Sundays and two on Holy Days; made substitutions for two Epistles and three Gospels; and altered the length of three selections. At the same time, the English and Scottish revisions made still further changes, which will be noted below.

Thus it is evident that there is nothing either unprecedented or improper in now making some needed adaptations of the Liturgical Lectionary as it has come down to us. Indeed, at several important points our present Prayer Book is decidedly behind the development of the latest British books. If the changes now suggested are more numerous than at any time since Cranmer, that is because this is the first time that the whole subject has been systematically studied for its own sake. As for a fear of further divergence from Roman standards, that has been appreciably counterbalanced by the proposed adoption of a considerable number of the Roman provisions, wherever they show distinctive merit.

Thus we are not advocating anything like a new system: only a more effective form of essentially the same system as that which prevails throughout the West, and which is in living continuity with that which St. Augustine brought to England.

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## II

### THE SEASONS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

#### 1. *Advent*

In the First Prayer Book, Cranmer followed the Sarum arrangement of the Sundays in Advent, which had stood unaltered from the seventh-century Roman lists. Rome, however, has since found the ancient provisions unsatisfactory, and made a radical rearrangement. While the Roman changes in some respects have caused worse evils than they cured, there are grave reasons for thinking that some changes are advisable.

Advent is really a season of twofold meaning, reflecting both the First and the Second Comings of our Lord. Primarily, and properly, it is a preparation for Christmas. Rome always rejected the Gallican tendency to make Advent a penitential season — a second Lent — and originally called these Sundays merely those Before the Nativity. It is significant that Sarum always observed them in white, not violet. Then the theme of the Second Advent at the end of the world was added, to provide an august background and the cosmic setting for the annual commemoration of the First Advent of our Lord in the flesh. But these overtones of reflection upon the Last Things were strictly secondary, and have been still further subordinated by the later development of the season in both Anglican and Roman lectionaries.

In the seventh century, Rome began the season with Matt. 21:1-9, the Triumphal Entry, selected as the most stirring and significant narrative available to dramatize the theme of the Advent of our Lord to his redeeming work. As such, it has of course to be treated in a quasi-allegorical rather than a strictly historical way. When, however, in the ninth century, the Church of Rome adopted this same Gospel for the Palm Sunday liturgy, in its true historical setting in the chronology of our Lord's life, they found themselves unable to think of it in

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a merely typological way, but only as the specific Coming of Christ to *Jerusalem*, and to *his Passion*. So they removed this Gospel from Advent Sunday, set the whole Advent series back one week, and filled in Advent IV with Luke 3:1-6, a *third* Gospel of John the Baptist as the Forerunner, and a doublet of the other two. This last is anything but a satisfactory solution.

Sarum, however, clung to Matt. 21:1-9 to the end of its days. The Reformers in the first English Prayer Book eliminated the Palm Sunday liturgy, along with all other interesting anomalies which had formerly distinguished the various seasons; so they had no reason to fault the Triumphal Entry here as a duplication. They displayed, perhaps, a slight uncertainty as to the entire appropriateness of this lection in this season, by lengthening it to verses 1-13 to include the Cleansing of the Temple — thus making the added point that this incident was a typical Coming to *Judgment*. If this Gospel is to be retained, and used typologically, this must be regarded as a successful move.

The Liturgical Commission has frequently been petitioned to initiate steps toward authorizing the present Advent Sunday Gospel as an alternative on Palm Sunday — a provision which has been made in the English and Scottish books. More requests have been made for this change than for any other in the entire liturgical lectionary. Yet if this were done, in precisely this form, it might well be predicted that our Church would have the same experience that Rome has had, and that the continued use of this passage on Advent Sunday would become a practical impossibility. The Committee on the Epistles and Gospels originally proposed to deal with this problem in advance, rather than see the Church forced to do so at a later date. But the suggestion of any substitute for the Gospel of the Triumphal Entry on Advent Sunday met with determined opposition by the rest of the Liturgical Commission, as well as of most others whom we consulted. Admitting the general undesirability of what amounts to an allegorical use of historical

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narratives, they still felt that the 'typical' value of this incident made it the best possible beginning of the Christian Year. If Sarum could preserve it, so could we; and we had best cleave to our native Anglican tradition.

Consequently, the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday is now proposed in the simpler and more factual form of Mark 11:1-11; and the Cleansing of the Temple, that pivotal turning-point which actually precipitated the great tragedy of the Crucifixion, in Matt. 21:10-17, upon the Monday in Holy Week upon which it originally occurred. Both of these selections for Holy Week are preferable on their merits for that place; and employing them would reduce an outright duplication to a 'concord.'

But there are other problems in the Advent Gospels which are not so easily met. Our Gospel for Advent II (for Advent Sunday in the Roman), is Luke 21:25-33, the Signs of the End, the one absolute apocalyptic passage in the season. But since 1662, we have had a direct doublet of this in the form of Matt. 24:23-31 on Epiphany VI. The Matthæan version is distinctly the better of the two; and moreover, it is virtually indispensable for the last Sunday after the Epiphany, which, as one of the two 'Wandering Sundays,' has an interesting dual use in the Calendar. It is only with the last four dates of Easter that it occurs in its nominal place as a Sunday after the Epiphany, where this Gospel presents our Lord's Coming at the end of the world as the final and supreme 'Epiphany.' But with the first twelve dates of Easter — i.e. something more than three-fourths of the time that it actually appears in the scheme for the year — Epiphany VI is employed as a Second Sunday Before Advent. Hence it may occur either three weeks before Advent II, or ten weeks thereafter. Now certainly the use of doublet passages is to be avoided in the limited provisions for the Sundays of the Christian Year; and even if any such doublets as now occur should be retained, it is intolerable that they should appear at any such close intervals. In other words, either the Gospel for Epiphany VI or for Advent II ought to be re-

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placed. Rome uses Matt. 13:31-35, the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven, for Epiphany VI: but this, though in a vaguely apocalyptic context, is much too slight in content to be at all desirable.

For Advent II, we propose the finest of all passages on the moral meanings of the Second Coming, Matt. 25:31-40: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him," with all the august pageantry of the Last Judgment, and the deeply significant application, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." This is a saying that in sublimity and profundity is not matched anywhere else in the Gospel — a perfect synthesis of faith and conduct, translating the Christian's mystic yearning for personal contact with his Lord into the most potent of all motives for effectual beneficence of life. This magnificent passage was unaccountably missing from the liturgical lectionary until the American revision of 1928 adopted it for marginal use for the Common of Saints. It is undoubtedly the best possible expression of the apocalyptic element of the Advent season, suited alike to the temporal expectation of the Incarnation, and to the cosmic and eternal significance of that event as well. We originally proposed it for Advent Sunday itself; and have no doubts whatever about the advisability of substituting it for the doublet Gospel on Advent II.

Incidentally, even if the Gospel of the Second Sunday were not a doublet, its concluding words contain an expression which makes it anything but suitable for an occasion which has been distinguished as 'Bible Sunday' ever since the Reformation brought in a new Collect for this day. The expression is: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." It is one of the more serious problems of scriptural interpretation that the early Church's expectation of a speedy end of the world, so vividly set forth in this very lection, was not fulfilled. It is a distinct inconvenience

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to have to avoid that issue, which stares us in the face in the present assignment for this 'Bible Sunday.'

There is also a real question about the Gospel appointed for Advent IV. John 1:19-28 appears in the earliest Roman lists of the seventh century. As this is the only Sunday following an Ember Week which did not stand 'vacant' of any provisions whatever at this period, it is evident that this is a pre-Christmas rather than an Advent or an Ember selection, chosen probably for the rather dim reason of its mention by St. John Baptist of one "who coming after me is preferred before me."

There are two objections to it: one is that it is in the wrong order, since it belongs to a stage of the Gospel narratives much anteceding the other lection on St. John Baptist, Matt. 11:2-10, for Advent III. The latter, which is quite effective, must of course stay where it is, since its mention of "my messenger, which shall prepare thy way before thee," has been incorporated into the Reformation Collect for that Sunday. The other reason is that the Johannine passage, when it is not paralleling the Gospel of the Sunday before, is a doublet of Mark 1:1-11 which our last revision adopted for Epiphany II. This new Gospel of our Lord's Baptism was an excellent addition to the Epiphany sequence; but it does not seem to have been realized that its version of "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" in a better setting, deprived the Gospel for Advent IV of the one really distinctive contribution which it made to the picture of the Precursor.

The net result has been "too much of John the Baptist." It was all very well for the American Lectionary of 1892 to fill up three Sundays of Advent at Morning Prayer with lessons on St. John Baptist as preparation for Christmas: indeed, this feature, partly discarded in 1928, was restored in the Lectionary of 1943. But enough is enough. The new Epiphany-tide Gospel has so impaired the effectiveness of that for Advent IV as virtually to compel the selection of some better choice to conclude this significant season.

A real enrichment, and an important strengthening of the

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great theme of the Incarnation, would be effected by doing in this sequence of Advent Gospels exactly what we are now doing in the course of lessons at Morning Prayer, and incorporating the Gospel of the Annunciation, in the form of Luke 1:26b-38 (beginning, "The Angel Gabriel").

This move would certainly be in accord with the natural trend of the Advent Sundays. In all lectionaries, the nearer we come to Christmas, the less stress there is upon the subordinate 'Second Advent' theme, and the stronger is the sense of an immediate expectation of the Incarnation. Hitherto, however, there has remained a distinct hiatus of thought between the *Vox clamantis* of Advent IV and the events of Christmas Day. Who has not felt this; especially when this Sunday actually falls upon Christmas Eve? (Rome evades this last, by the way, by permitting the mass of the Vigil of Christmas, containing the Annunciation to Joseph, to supplant that of Advent IV when Christmas occurs on Monday.)

True, the Annunciation occurs as a festival at its relative chronological place in the year. But as this is always in Lent, the rules for precedence prevent its ever being celebrated upon a Sunday. It seems a pity that this Gospel, in some ways the very strongest of all those bearing upon the Incarnation, should never be read "when the most number of the people come together": since under modern conditions attendance at any weekday service of however exalted a rank is unhappily (save for Christmas itself) a marginal matter.

What we are proposing is actually to take for Advent IV the Roman Gospel for the Advent Ember Wednesday, just as Rome has filled up this Sunday with the Gospel for the Ember Saturday. This Ember Wednesday indeed was the native Roman commemoration of the Annunciation, before the adoption of the feast on March 25 from the East. The 'Liturgical Movement' in the Roman Church makes much of what they call 'the Golden Mass' on this day, for pre-Christmas services for their young people. This Gospel also has other strong associations with the season in the Roman missal, being assigned to all



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votive Masses of the Blessed Virgin in Advent; the Franciscans and some Spanish churches use it for the festival of the *Exspectatio partus* on December 18; and it occurs in part on the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, which outranks Advent II in Roman use.

Disregarding any side-issues of 'Mariolatry,' which in any event have nothing to do with the position of our Church, the important fact remains that there are three figures which point the way to the Coming of our Lord: Isaiah, John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary. Isaiah dominates the weekdays of Advent; the Precursor is featured on two of the Sundays; and it would seem very well to conclude the season with the mention of the mother of our Lord, and with that prophetic event without which Christmas itself would not bear its Christian meaning.

Therefore, despite the boldness of these measures, these re-assignments of the Advent Gospels are recommended, in order to integrate the teaching of the season, and to present it in a consistent order. We consider that they would bring out the message which the seventh-century assignments were evidently trying to present, but with considerable indirection and obscurity, and which the distinctly inept Roman attempts to clarify resulted only in transforming into a confusion worse confounded.

For one further detail in this season: Dr. Easton comments on the Epistle for Advent III: "The opening verse is an admirable text for preaching on the ministry, though it is often egregiously misused as if it taught the dignity instead of the humility of the clergy. If used for an ordination sermon it should be taken in connection with 3:21-23 which it immediately follows."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, a better balance of teaching would be obtained by lengthening this Epistle from I Cor. 4:1-5 to 3:21b-4:5 (beginning, "All things are yours").

<sup>1</sup> B. S. Easton and H. C. Robbins, *The Eternal Word in the Modern World* (Scribners, 1937), 35.

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## 2. *Christmas*

The arrangement of the Gospels in Christmastide, which set forth the events connected with the Nativity, leaves a great deal to be desired. It is distinctly unfortunate that we should commemorate the Massacre of the Innocents before the Circumcision, and the Flight into Egypt and Return to Nazareth on Christmas II before the Epiphany; to say nothing of the incident of Christ in the Temple at the age of twelve on Epiphany I, before the Feast of the Purification on February 2.

### a) *Ancient Development of the Christmas Season*

The observance of Christmas Day seems to have originated somewhere near the year 300 in Rome. The narrative lections were confined to the Gospel of St. Luke, which was itself of Roman provenance. Luke 2:1-14, the proclamation of the Nativity to the Shepherds, was read at the midnight Vigil service, and Luke 2:15-20, the Visit of the Shepherds to the Manger, on Christmas Day. Then the Octave of the Nativity continued with Luke 2:21-32, the Circumcision and the Presentation in the Temple, to the end of the Song of Simeon. This plan was of course perfectly simple, and sufficiently comprehensive, so far as the Lucan account was concerned.

In the course of the fourth century, this native Roman observance on December 25 was brought into competition with the parallel and independent Eastern celebration of the Nativity on January 6. The Eastern Church in like manner based its commemoration on the Antiochene Gospel of St. Matthew, originally reading Matt. 2:1-12, the Visit of the Magi, on its Nativity Day, and Matt. 1, the Genealogy, Annunciation to Joseph, and the Birth and Naming, on the Sunday before.

This conflict was eventually resolved by each region's adopting the other's festival. The East accepted the date of December 25, and transferred the Visit of the Magi to it; continuing with St. Matthew's account of our Lord's Baptism on January 6. The West accepted the original Eastern Epistles of the

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Nativity, in Titus 2 and 3, which still remain on January 6 in the Eastern rite, for two of its masses on Christmas, and the Eastern Gospel of the Magi for the new feast of the Epiphany.

The Western reconciliation of these doublet festivals, and of the added Gospel narrative, was as acceptable as any could be. St. Matthew certainly intimates that the formal Naming of the Child took place before the Visit of the Wise Men — i.e., the Circumcision should come before the Epiphany. The only anachronism, so far, in the pattern, was the fact that the Gospel for the Octave of Christmas went on from the Circumcision to the Presentation in the Temple forty days after — an event which was certainly later than the Visit of the Magi. But the content of this matter was something which was desirable to read in the Nativity Season, and the chronological difficulty could hardly be said even to have appeared before the adoption of the Purification in the sixth century, and even then it was not felt until the Reformation.

The first real confusion was introduced by the new Feast of the Holy Innocents on the third day after Christmas, which came in from the Carthaginian Calendar in the fifth century. Its Gospel was originally Matt. 2:13-23, comprising not only the Massacre of the Innocents, but the Flight into Egypt and the Return to Nazareth. All this follows the story of the Magi in the text of St. Matthew, but was made to precede the Circumcision in the order of observances!

By the sixth century, a third mass was added to the provisions for Christmas Day. No more narrative matter being available for this purpose, the purely 'theological' passage of John 1:1-14 was adopted. That it was of later origin than the other Gospels for Christmas is shown by the fact that it was, and is, not this Gospel, but that for the second celebration on Christmas, Luke 2:15-20, which is employed in the Roman use for a vacant day within the Octave.

Though the Innocents' Day still had its extended lection, by this time the latter part of it, Matt. 2:19-23, the Flight into Egypt and the Return to Nazareth, had been appropriated also

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for the Vigil of the Epiphany, as something which was already there in the tract between Christmas and Epiphany, and certainly associated with the Visit of the Magi — though unfortunately as a result rather than a preparation for that event.

The Feast of the Purification on February 2 had also come in, reading Luke 2:22–32 from the Gospel of the Octave of Christmas. And a continuation of that passage, Luke 2:33–40, Simeon and Anna, concluding with the Return to Nazareth, had been imported to serve for the only Sunday without other provisions for a coinciding feast which could occur in the Roman Calendar between Christmas and Epiphany, thanks to their observance of St. Silvester on December 31 and the Vigil of the Epiphany on January 5. This final confusion of the chronology of the period was perpetrated in all innocence, and in fact made the situation which already existed no worse. The Presentation material was employed on the Octave of Christmas, and had been so used from the beginning, and found congruous with Christmastide. Its continuation was equally unobjectionable (even if not particularly valuable in itself), except for the final Return to Nazareth: and that really bad chronological contradiction had implanted itself on the Epiphany Vigil, and went back to the one primary and irremediable blunder of the North African Church in attaching the Day of the Holy Innocents to the Feast of the Nativity, instead of putting it after the Epiphany.

In the course of the next century or two, Matt. 1:18–21, the Annunciation to Joseph, was prefixed to Christmas Day as the Gospel for a Vigil in the new sense of a service the previous morning. The Gospel for Holy Innocents' was shortened to its present dimensions, to avoid duplicating the portion already appropriated for the Vigil of the Epiphany. And the Gospel for the Octave of Christmas, now first called the Circumcision, relinquished the long portion for the Purification, and was thus reduced to the unprecedented dimensions of the single verse Luke 2:21.

Such was the evolution of the provisions for the season of

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the Nativity as they appeared in the Sarum Missal, and remain to this day in the Roman. They do not represent a consistent plan, but a rather haphazard growth. The later occasions of the Epiphany Vigil and the feast of the Purification were supplied simply by a division of the extended lections formerly provided for the Holy Innocents and the Octave of Christmas; and the Christmas Vigil furnished with a logical supplementary passage, and the Sunday after Christmas with an illogical one. The successive changes were most conservatively made, in strict accordance with the provisions in effect at the time. It is neither necessary nor possible to blame anyone for making them. But this does not alter the fact that the final result is very unfortunate.

It would help immeasurably for the removing of chronological contradictions and the presenting of the whole 'harmonized' narrative in something like a consistent order, if the Calendar could be altered, and the Holy Innocents placed in the Octave of the Epiphany instead of the Octave of Christmas. That, of course, cannot now be done. We cannot interfere with that triad of feasts which follows Christmas, and which has been enshrined in the hearts of Christians for a millennium and a half. Of these feasts, it seems that St. Stephen and St. John were actually observed before Christmas was, since the Armenian Church, which has always clung to the earliest Eastern celebration of the Nativity on January 6, nevertheless keeps these two commemorations in December. The Innocents' Day, of course, was intentionally added to the Calendar on the nearest day to Christmas available. But this triad has now been assimilated into a unit of thought — as by the rather fanciful but devotionally useful classifying of St. John as a Martyr 'in will but not in deed,' of the Innocents as Martyrs 'in deed though not in will,' and St. Stephen as a Martyr 'both in will and deed' — so that it is not now possible to separate them. Certainly the children of our Church Schools would not thank us for removing the Innocents' Day from its proximity to Christmas, just to satisfy some fussy adults! And it does not seem

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there is much we can do, with both the Church of the Past and the Church of the Future against us.

### b) *Assignment of Gospels*

At the Reformation, the Epistle and Gospel for the Sarum midnight mass was retained for the first celebration on Christmas Day, those for the third mass for the principal celebration; but the provisions for the mass at dawn were dropped, apparently because Cranmer wanted its Gospel, Luke 2:15-20, to supplement the single verse of Luke 2:21 which, as we have seen, was all that was left of the former Gospel on the Feast of the Circumcision after the transfer of nearly all its matter to the Purification.

The Prayer Book of 1552 dropped the early service also (leaving only the 'theological' Gospel of John 1:1-14 on Christmas Day): and the Church of England has never really got it back yet, save in the optional provision in the appendix of the Proposed Book of 1928; though the American Book of 1892 restored it for us, and the Scottish of 1929 did the same.

But a number of requests have been received for the restoration of the Epistle and Gospel for the dawn service in the Sarum Missal, namely Titus 3:4-7 and Luke 2:15-20. It would certainly seem valuable to have the Visit of the Shepherds read on Christmas Day, confirming and completing the prophecy of the Angels at the first celebration. It might be hoped that this move would do something to restore interest in the services of Christmas Day itself, now often thrown out of balance by the attention drawn to the midnight celebration in many parishes.

Incidentally, these three propers for Christmas, as well as the two provisions for Easter and Whitsunday, should be arranged in the Prayer Book in the order in which they will be used: not those for the principal service first, and the early celebration afterward — a backward scheme confusing in some degree to everyone, from the laity who try to follow them, to liturgical students who desire to refer to them.

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For the Sunday within the Christmas Octave, Cranmer rightly rejected the Sarum Luke 2:33-40, Simeon and Anna and the Return to Nazareth, which, as we have noted, was inconsiderable in content, and chronologically out of place. Instead, however, he prescribed something of a liturgical monstrosity, namely all 25 verses of Matt. 1, including the formidable genealogy from Adam to Joseph! It was not until 1662 that this was shortened to Matt. 1:18-25. This represents the Sarum Gospel for the mass of the Christmas Vigil, containing the Annunciation to Joseph, lengthened to cover also the Birth and Naming of the Child. But even this is not altogether satisfactory. On this Sunday after Christmas, it is not quite in order to make a new start, harking back to events considerably before the Nativity,<sup>1</sup> especially in the quite independent account of another Evangelist from the one we have been following for the Christmas narratives; nor yet to anticipate the feast of the Circumcision with St. Matthew's record of the Naming. It would be better to reserve this passage to introduce the Epiphany, as we shall see presently; and for Christmas I simply to repeat the Gospel of Luke 2:15-20 which we have newly restored to the second celebration on Christmas Day. It will be remembered that this, as the original Western Gospel for the day of the Nativity, is the one which Rome still uses for any unappropriated weekdays in the Octave: so that it may be assigned to this Sunday with equal justice. It must not be forgotten that in Christmastide the customary priorities of the rest of the Christian Year are actually reversed: it is the Fixed Days which are primary in both origin and importance; the Sundays are entirely derivative and dependent. And the repetition of this Gospel from this one of the three Christmas services can hardly prove burdensome, since four of the seven days upon which it can fall are already occupied by festivals which will displace its reading upon this Sunday. Even where there is a daily celebration, it would not be used upon more than five

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Easton and Robbins, *The Eternal Word*, 40.

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weekdays: which surely does not seem too much for the rehearsing of this basic narrative.

The reader will have gathered that we do not propose to continue including this passage on the Feast of the Circumcision. Cranmer was perfectly right about one thing — a one-verse Gospel is not to be regarded as a liturgical possibility. But it does not seem a good idea to retain this narrative which precedes that one verse in St. Luke's account, which will be so much more significant on Christmas Day itself, and so much more useful on the Sunday within the Octave, than it ever has been on this Octave Day. It would be so much better to do precisely what the earliest Western lectionary did, and continue the one verse proper to the day with the material which follows it, reading Luke 2:21-32. This would restore completely the original scheme of the fourth century, whereby Luke 2:1-32, containing all the significant parts of the narrative of the Nativity by this Evangelist, was read in its entirety upon Christmas and its Octave Day.

The desirability of having this very lovely and very meaningful passage read within the Octave of the Nativity quite outweighs the minor difficulties of chronology. The restoration of this passage would indeed restore the duplication of its matter on the Feast of the Purification, which the eighth and ninth centuries conscientiously removed after the introduction of that festival in the sixth or seventh centuries. But that matter is of no great importance, since the Circumcision and the Purification fall upon different days of the week, and hence both cannot appear upon Sunday in the same year.

We have here in fact a conflict between two different systems of commemoration of the events of our Lord's life, which might be called anniversarial, and biographical. The one attempts to observe the incidents associated with the Nativity on their relative dates of the year: the Annunciation nine months, the Nativity of St. John Baptist six months, before Christmas, and the Circumcision eight days, the Epiphany twelve days,



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and the Purification forty days, thereafter. The other devotes itself to furnishing a condensed summary of the salient facts of Christ's redeeming work in the space from Christmas to the Ascension. Each system has its own peculiar effectiveness; because of their different bases, each is capable at times of seeming to jar with the other; yet this should not be allowed to preclude the best use of either. We have urged that the anniversary date of the Annunciation should not inhibit the biographical employment of this matter for the immediate foreshadowing of the Nativity in the Advent season. On the other side, we find Dr. Easton complaining that the Purification, interjected into "the orderly sequence of Christ's manifestations" in the post-Epiphany season finds us "recalled suddenly to the Infancy," and stigmatizes it as "a blunder, which is particularly grave in those years when the Purification follows Septuagesima."<sup>1</sup> Yet obviously we can hardly obliterate this anniversary on such grounds. We may well, however, counterbalance this by duplicating this 'Infancy' passage on the Circumcision, where it will be most effective in rounding out the biographical summary. There is a particular appropriateness, which perhaps the early Western Church was in better position to appreciate than medieval times, in conjoining the two formal rites of the Circumcision and the ceremony of the Redemption of the Firstborn at the Presentation in the Temple.

We have observed that the Western use of the seventh century had no need for separate provisions for a Second Sunday after Christmas. At the time of the Reformation, the Sarum Missal, like the present Roman, had only one day, December 30, on which even Christmas I would be regularly used, "sive Dominica sive non"; and none at all for Christmas II, as the dates January 2-4 were completely filled by the Octave Days of the Christmas triad of feasts, and January 5 of course was the Vigil of the Epiphany. The simplified Reformation Calendar, however, cleared January 2-5; but no provision was made for a Sunday in this period, other than the direction to

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 258.

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use the Epistle and Gospel for the Circumcision until the Epiphany, on a Sunday or weekdays alike. The Prayer Book of 1662 made the entry of Christmas II in the Calendar of Lessons; and our revision of 1928 erected the Sunday into a full liturgical day. We have noted that the Gospel then adopted, Matt. 2:19-23, the Flight into Egypt and the Return to Nazareth, is painfully out of chronological course, containing matter which, if used at all, ought to come after the Visit of the Wise Men on the Epiphany, and not before it. We have also seen that there was perhaps some excuse for putting this lection on the Epiphany Vigil in the seventh century — it would be no worse having it there than on the Innocents' Day, from which it was taken; but it was much too trustful of our revisers to follow the lead of Rome by bringing back into the sequence a chronological contradiction of which we were well rid.

Accordingly, the English and Scottish books, not seeing any further narrative material which would fit into the pattern, have provided for Christmas II the short section of John 1:14-18, linking on some further teaching on the theological meaning of the Incarnation to that already given at the principal celebration on Christmas Day. But it is doubtful if more theology is needed in a season where the events themselves are so charged with their own significance.

Yet there is in fact a narrative selection which is perfectly suitable for the Sunday between the Circumcision and the Epiphany. This of course is Matt. 1:18-25, which we have been reserving for this place. Used here, it gives a brief and effective summing up of the preceding events of the Birth and Naming of the Child, and also furnishes the best of introductions to the supplementary story of the Visit of the Magi, which follows immediately upon it in the text of St. Matthew.

The result of the foregoing reassignments would be, not only that the primitive Western account of the Nativity according to St. Luke would be read in its right order on the Western festival of Christmas and its Octave, but that the original Eastern account according to St. Matthew would be concentrated

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upon the Eastern festival of the Epiphany, and the Sunday immediately before it. The two narratives would be completely disentangled from each other, and their inversions entirely straightened out — with the single exception of the day of the Holy Innocents, which must perforce be left 'out of course.'

### c) *Assignment of Epistles*

There are only two of the Epistles in this tract which seem to need any attention. On Christmas II, our revisers in 1928, who adopted the Sarum Gospel for the Epiphany Vigil, found nothing there to serve as an Epistle, since Sarum simply repeated the Epistle for Christmas I. Apparently they derived no inspiration from the incident of the Flight into Egypt: which really (with all respect) might have given them some pause as to the value of that lection in this place. Be that as it may, they wound up by making a new selection of their own, Isa. 61:1-3, designed simply to give an arresting keynote to the first Sunday of the civil year.

Having restored a really significant Nativity Gospel to Christmas II, we now propose as its Epistle the wonderful passage in I Pet. 2:1-10, not now used at the Liturgy, as an effective interpretation of the moral meanings of the Divine Infancy and the importance of the Incarnation as the Corner Stone of Holy Church; and in both senses a strong selection suitable to this 'New Year's Sunday.'

This would release Isa. 63:1-3 for the Feast of the Circumcision, which is likewise New Year's Day. The Church of Rome in the seventh century took distinct account of the fact that the Octave of the Nativity fell upon the first day of the civil year, by providing a special *Missa ad prohibendum ab idolis*, in protest against the license of the pagan orgies ushering in the New Year — a license which we must regretfully admit is still with us thirteen centuries later.

We have seen that the original observance of this day was as a generalized Octave of the Nativity, with two incidents of the Infancy, which we now propose to restore entire. It has been

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only since about the ninth century that the Purification has been allowed to impoverish this day in the Western use of all but the single verse recounting the Circumcision 'on the eighth day,' which has resulted in a considerable emphasis upon a not very edifying fact.

The Sarum and Roman Epistle for this occasion was for the Nativity Octave only, repeating that for the Dawn Mass of Christmas Day. Cranmer, with the laudable idea of securing both variety and coverage of Scripture, substituted Rom. 4:8-14: a selection which has been justly criticized as an essay on the practice of circumcision, quite unsuited to the Feast of the Circumcision of *our Lord*.

The English and Scottish books in their last revisions propose instead Eph. 2:11-18. This, no doubt, is the most elevated and spiritualized of all the various Pauline rationalizations of this Jewish custom, and a very weighty passage, with, if anything, almost too many important new ideas suggested. We may note Dr. Easton's comment on this day: "In the Pauline theology the fact that Christ was born under the Law is utilized for certain incidental arguments but is no vital part of the Apostle's thinking. Reformation hyper-Paulinism endeavoured to go further and make Christ's circumcision essential to soteriology; an attempt not to be commended."<sup>1</sup> It is questionable whether just this kind of 'hyper-Paulinism' would not be given a new lease of life by such phrases in the British selection as "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ . . . having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," and so forth.

Whether or not our revisers in 1928 knew of this British substitute, the fact is that they decided to reject altogether any attempt to stress the 'circumcision' theme in the Epistle, and instead selected Phil. 2:9-11, whose import is entirely upon the 'Holy Name' of Jesus. This idea was excellent in itself; but the passage is not suitable. In the first place, it is used in a

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 253.

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highly 'accommodated' sense, which in fact relies upon a very widespread but very fundamental misconception. As Dr. Easton says, "Traditional miscomprehension has created the only real difficulty by taking 'the name of Jesus' to mean 'the name which is Jesus' instead of 'the name which Jesus received' at His exaltation. This name is 'Lord'; it is in recognition of his Lordship that every knee bows."<sup>1</sup> Besides, this selection is only a snippet or fragment of an august argument of St. Paul's, which is much more adequately represented in the Epistle for Palm Sunday, from which this mere excerpt was somewhat injudiciously torn. Borrowing from one Epistle to make another Epistle is in general as little laudable as the 'scissors-and-paste' manufacture of a Collect out of phrases from other Collects: certainly it should be avoided when possible.

But though there are some magnificent *phrases* in the New Testament about the Name of Jesus, there does not appear to be any other *passage* which is suitable for an Epistle here. Some who have objected to so abusing the passage from Philippians have suggested Acts 4:8-12, which is the Roman Epistle for the Feast of the Holy Name. But though this selection culminates in the incomparable verse, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," nevertheless it is a part of a narrative which neither in this form nor in the full text of the Acts is completely told, so as to appear both abrupt and irrelevant. The sudden appearance of the vigorous personalities of St. Peter and the Jewish Rulers, and the (unexplained) figure of the Impotent Man, would certainly be felt to be an intrusion upon the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord.

Hence it seems best to abandon the idea of 1928 of making the Circumcision a sort of Anglican Festival of the Holy Name; and, as before suggested, simply to transfer Isa. 61:1-13 from the New Year's Sunday to this New Year's Day.

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 124.

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## 3. Epiphany

The Gospels for the Sundays after the Epiphany present an intelligent plan, as they all set forth significant 'Epiphanies' or Manifestations of the Incarnate Life. The only one at all questionable is that for Epiphany III, the Miracle of Cana, which can hardly be taken as factual by any modern mind; but it has so embedded itself in the popular idea of the season, and in what might be called the poetry of religion, that any proposal to touch it would meet with an impossible amount of protest.

As for the Epistles, ever since the seventh century there has been a short course from Romans 12 on Epiphany I to III; to which Cranmer added Rom. 13:1-7 on Epiphany IV to express that Royal Supremacy on which he relied so heavily, and in the end, so tragically for himself. The purpose of this course is very obscure — indeed, it may be said that its basic appropriateness to the season is hardly understood at all in the Church: and there has been a certain amount of pressure to alter it, from two different points of view.

Dr. Easton has criticized the division of Romans 12 into verses 1-5, 6-16a, and 16b-21, which has remained unaltered since the seventh century, as not corresponding to the units of thought, and indicated a preference for the paragraphing of the Revised Version, which consists of verses 1-2, 3-8, and 9-21.<sup>1</sup> But this would cause the Epistles to be of very uneven length; and though this alteration has been carefully considered, the Committee reached the opinion that for any purpose except perhaps for exhaustive exposition as wholes, the passages are in actually better balance as they are. In other words, it is quite possible that the man who made the liturgical assignments knew his own business quite as well as the paragrapher of the Revised Version, if not better.

Others have expressed some discontent with this 'mere course-reading' of essentially 'moralistic' matter, and ad-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 50, 55, 60.

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vanced the suggestion that these four Epistles be supplanted in whole or in part by selections from the two preceding chapters of Romans, which afford some very fine passages on Christian Missions, which might carry out the idea of the Day of the Epiphany, in our sub-title of the Feast, "The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." This idea looks very attractive: and indeed Rom. 10:1-12, Rom. 10:13-18, and Rom. 11:25-27, 33-36 would furnish Epistles admirably suited to this end.

Nevertheless, this would be doing precisely what we have said before that in principle we ought not to do: it would be remoulding the Christian Year to what we might think it ought to be, instead of confining ourselves to a better interpretation of what it is. And understood or not, there is in fact a reason for the ancient provisions. These Epistles were not, as might be thought, a mere lazy relapse into 'course-reading' for a tract of 'common Sundays' which did not matter: they were vitally integrated to the idea of a passage which was the original Epistle for the Day of the Epiphany, and which we still have, at the head of the lections on the Incarnation.

That passage is Titus 2:11-15, which now appears at our first celebration on Christmas Day. To this day it is the Epistle for the Epiphany in the Eastern Church, where it originated. As early as the fourth century, it was so used in the West, being transferred to the first mass of Christmas after the 'doublet' festivals of Christmas and Epiphany were discriminated. Indeed, it was this Epistle which is probably responsible for the adoption of the term 'Epiphany' in the West (the East calls it the 'Theophany'): note the first word, *ἐπεφάνη*, and the word *ἐπιφάνειαν* in verse 13.

Now the key-note of this Epistle is an extremely practical application of faith to morals: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." It is these *moral consequences* of the Manifestation of our Lord in human life which are so well expanded and applied in the little series from

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Romans, radiating from the comparable point of departure in its exordium in Rom. 12:2: "And be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds."

While all this ancient history is not commonly known in the Church, nevertheless it may be said with some confidence that the appropriateness of the underlying idea has always been felt instinctively: that the religion of the Incarnation must be applied in practice, or it is no religion; that the new divine forces manifested in the human life of Christ must be manifested in our lives also. Without this effective series of passages on applied religion, this tract of the year would stand in some real danger of being merely theological: so we should resist the specious temptation to change them. The themes contained in these four Epistles are some of the most incisive, and most practical, anywhere in Scripture outside the Sermon on the Mount. They certainly cannot be spared from the plan for the Christian Year: and as certainly they should not be removed from this portion of it, where they give so adequate and so needed an application of the great event of the Incarnation to the circumstances of our daily lives.

As to the 'Gentiles' theme, that has been adequately taken care of by 'seeding' a number of the best lessons for missionary purposes in the provisions for Morning and Evening Prayer on the Sundays after Epiphany. In the Lectionary, that can be done by way of enriching the meaning of the season, without changing its traditional character; but an alteration of the plan of the Epistles would be a definite impoverishment.

### 4. *Lent*

Some concern has been expressed about the fact that the Epistles for Lent II and III are both closely concerned with carnal sins — so closely indeed that these Epistles almost appear as doublets of each other, saying much the same thing in slightly different terms.

There is really something in this criticism. No one can doubt the advisability of warning even the most proper and most



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cultured people of the 'deceits of the flesh' in the bluntest and frankest terms — particularly in the season of Lent. But it is a serious question whether the same theme is profitable for reiterated treatment on two successive Sundays.

Of the two, the Epistle for Lent III is on the whole decidedly preferable; especially as in that for Lent II, certain gloomy speculations on the part of the commentators have attached detrimental and not well authenticated meanings to such words as 'matter,' and 'vessel,' which may color the mind of the expositor, even when he rejects them.

It would be a real enrichment if, instead of this reiterated emphasis on carnal sins, we replaced the Epistle for Lent II with one of the 'missionary' passages from Romans which we were reluctantly unable to accept for Epiphany-tide. This message is present, but obscurely, in the present Gospel for this Sunday. If that Gospel is to be retained (which we will discuss in a moment), it would need exactly this sort of support. If it is to be supplanted, this theme is nevertheless in place on an 'Ember Sunday'; and in any case, it would seem most desirable to present it in the season of Lent, with its full congruence in Lent; and many have been unable to escape a feeling of acute gations. To go with the present Gospel, perhaps Rom. 10:12-21 would be the best selection.

But a suggestion has been made to us that we might displace the Gospel, Matt. 15:21-28, the incident of the Woman of Canaan, which comes down to us from the Sarum list, in favor of the Roman choice for this Sunday, which is Matt. 17:1-9, the account of the Transfiguration. It is true that the present Gospel is rather unsatisfactory: it has the least content of any discomfort at the open affront with which our Lord saw fit to try the woman's faith. It was an awkward moment! And it is likewise true that this is the only Gospel in Lent which is out of its proper chronological sequence in the events of our Lord's life. All the rest throughout the season are chosen in strict biographical order. But the Gospel for Lent II on this pattern ought to come between those for Lent IV and V. The reason

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for this irregularity in the time-scheme, as well as for the inadequate character of the Gospel, is that it was never designed to be a Sunday Gospel at all. Sarum probably derived it from a former weekday service (Rome still places it on the preceding Thursday) to fill up what originally had been an actually 'vacant' Sunday, with no liturgical provisions of its own, which was the case in early Western use for all of the Sundays following the Ember Weeks, except that in Advent.

But in these respects, the Transfiguration is not one whit better. It also belongs in the chronological interval between Lent IV and V. It also was a filling of the vacant Sunday with weekday matter — in this case merely repeating the Gospel for the Ember Saturday the day before. There is of course not the slightest objection to helping ourselves to a Roman assignment, when it is a good one. But apart from the concluding mention of the coming event of the Resurrection (which, by the time the Transfiguration actually occurred in our Lord's life, was very near), there is nothing proper to Lent in this incident. Thus the source of this lection was just as accidental in the Roman scheme as in the English; its place in the continuous synopsis of the life of Christ is precisely as dislocated; its contribution to the teaching of the season just as remote. It may be predicted that an attempt to introduce into Lent matter which we have always regarded as purely festal would be felt to be a violent and gratuitous intrusion.

If one desires to fill this original *lacuna* with something which exactly fits the time-pattern of the rest of the Lenten Sundays, and which has some appropriateness to the general tenor of the season, about the only suitable choice would seem to be Matt. 7:24-29, the telling conclusion of the three chapters of the Sermon on the Mount with the parable of 'the House on the Rock and the House on the Sand.' This, in our judgment, would be a very considerable strengthening of the Lenten teaching. This parable is one of the strongest of the Gospel lections which the unplanned evolution of the Christian Year has allowed to be omitted from the Liturgical Lectionary.

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It might best be placed in this location; though it could go on Trinity XXI, where there is a case of supplanting a doublet lection. If it is to go here, then the best 'missionary' Epistle to accompany it would perhaps be Rom. 11:25-27, 33-36.

On Lent IV, the Epistle is the notorious 'Hagar-Sinai' passage, which has provoked a maximum amount of objection from the clergy of the Church. It was originally chosen at Rome for the occasion of the papal 'Station' or official Bishop's Visitation to the local parish church which bore the name of *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*: the purpose being to pay it a discerning compliment in the form of the beautiful verse, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Unfortunately, this verse is dearly bought at the expense of the contentious and intensely rabbinical argument in which it is embedded, and which most clergy and all laity find simply bewildering.

The English and Scottish books offer the alternative of Heb. 12:22-24. This preserves the allusion to the 'heavenly Jerusalem'; but it concludes with the note of 'the blood of sprinkling,' which would be much more appropriate to Passion Sunday than to this traditional 'Refreshment Sunday' on Mid-Lent.

Why should an Anglican Church be at pains to preserve that early local Roman note at all? Its value, after all, is only archeological, and its interest the monopoly of the historical liturgiologist. What is really needed for this Sunday is a passage for the Epistle which strikes the 'Refreshment' note; which contributes a genuine thought of its own to the teaching of the Lenten season, without overdoing it by anticipating Passion-tide; and which will make a good introduction to the Gospel of the Sunday, which is the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and which, as we shall observe later, the Church originally intended to be a picture and an allegory on the largest scale of the Eucharistic Feast. All of these *desiderata* will be found in Isa. 55:1-7: one of the supreme prophetic passages, one which has always been one of the chief glories of the

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Lenten lessons at the Offices, and one which most thoroughly deserves inclusion in the Liturgical Lectionary.

On Passion Sunday, a good many people seem to be distinctly uncomfortable about the Gospel. It must be admitted that its setting is most unfortunate, being a violent quarrel between Jesus and the Jews, exacerbated by the employment of unrestrained abuse on both sides. These characteristics would have been fatal to the use of a passage of lesser weight. But the very heat of the argument is made to distill that supreme assertion, "Before Abraham was, I AM": setting forth our Lord's claim to share in the eternal being of God. The sublimity of that statement is unmatched in the New Testament. Its value for Christology cannot be exaggerated. From it we properly infer the infinite and eternal significance of the Passion. Yet that is only an inference, and not an immediate one by any means. If we examine carefully the text of this Gospel, it will be found to contain very little that is directly appropriate to Passion Sunday. In that respect, perhaps its most significant statement is "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death," which conveys — though again indirectly — the idea of the redemptive power of the Passion.

A passage lacking these grave defects, and much better adapted to express the real meaning of this day would be John 12:23-32, containing not one but many such sayings of the greatest cogency: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified; . . . Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die; . . . For this cause came I unto this hour; . . . I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." However much one may regret the awe-inspiring climax of the present Gospel, there would seem little doubt that the one proposed would be found of much greater spiritual profit.

### 5. *Holy Week*

The provisions for Palm Sunday and Holy Week present some problems. We have preserved most of the main outlines

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of the ancient plan, but with some modifications which have not proved altogether successful in practice.

The most important matter, in both the Sarum and the Roman Missals, was to secure the reading of the narratives of the Passion entire, according to each of the four evangelists. This was done by assigning all (or nearly all) of two chapters to each day: St. Matthew to Palm Sunday, St. Mark to Tuesday, St. Luke to Wednesday, and St. John to Good Friday. Palm Sunday was further distinguished by prefacing the Mass of the Passion by the liturgy for the Blessing of the Palms, containing another Epistle and Gospel, of which the latter was the Triumphal Entry according to St. Matthew. Monday in Holy Week had most of John 12: the incident of Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus 'against the day of his burying,' the Triumphal Entry again, etc. Maundy Thursday (which, like all other Thursdays of the year, had no service of its own before the eighth century — Thursday was 'Jupiter's Day' in classical use, and the early Christians avoided that day completely) was filled in with John 13:1-15, Jesus' washing his disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Easter Even had a long vigil service, ending with the first mass of Easter: originally held at midnight, though now anticipated to Saturday morning.

At the Reformation, Cranmer, in the name of simplicity, swept away all the special ceremonies and features of these services, and reduced them to the same uniform pattern as the rest of the year. Thus all mention of the Triumphal Entry vanished from what Cranmer called simply the Sixth Sunday in Lent — though the popular name survived, until it was restored in our Prayer Book of 1928. The Passion according to St. Mark was divided between Monday and Tuesday, that according to St. Luke between Wednesday and Thursday; and on Easter Even Cranmer invented an entirely new commemoration of the Burial of Christ, which was a chronologically correct commemoration of the day in the Tomb, and had useful connections of thought with the Easter Eve Baptisms; but

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its Scriptures had no precedent except for a like individuality in the Mozarabic Rite in Spain.

In 1662, the two-chapter Gospels which Cranmer left on Palm Sunday and Good Friday were lightened by transferring the first chapter of each to Morning Prayer. The early Church may have been conditioned to stand for a four-hour service; but everyone seems agreed that twenty minutes is too much to demand of our degenerate age to stand for the reading of a liturgical Gospel. The Church of Rome takes care of that by appointing all but a very few verses to be read simply as a Lection, during which the people may be seated, exactly as they may during a Gospel lection at the Offices. Only the last of each Holy Week Gospel is proclaimed with the accustomed liturgical ceremonies.

But although we have preserved Cranmer's plan, as modified in 1662, on paper, it has been rather seriously broken into in practice. Cranmer removed the Blessing of the Palms from Palm Sunday, with the result that there was no mention of the Triumphal Entry on that day in any Anglican Prayer Book until our American book of 1892 restored the Johannine version of it at Evensong. 1928, however, put the Marcan account of it at Morning Prayer, thus depriving the Sunday of the first half of the complete Passion according to St. Matthew. Matt. 26 has been restored to the 1943 Lectionary, but, necessarily, as one of the plural options provided for every Sunday. It is very dubious as to how many churches use it. Most of the interest seems in the other direction: witness the repeated requests for permission to use the Advent Sunday Gospel, containing the Triumphal Entry, as an alternative at the Eucharist.

Cranmer's division of the complete Passion according to St. Mark between Monday and Tuesday remains, untouched and unthreatened — but, of course, with smaller attendance than any other days of Holy Week. The first half of St. Luke's narrative also survives on Wednesday; but 1928 introduced the Sarum Gospel, John 13:1-15, as an alternative to the second

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half on Maundy Thursday, with the result that nearly everyone avails himself of the shorter provision, and the really important part of the witness of St. Luke goes unread. The pattern of 1662, dividing St. John's Passion between Morning Prayer and the Eucharist, is undisturbed on Good Friday: but here the Prayer Book provisions have been unthinkingly, and unwisely, passed over by very many churches, in favor of the entirely unliturgical Commemoration of the Three Hours.

All of this represents a somewhat serious breakdown of ancient customs, whose value surely no one could deny. It is very evident that rather radical methods will have to be adopted to clear up the accumulated confusions of both plan and practice. The primary necessity is to restore the reading of the Passion in the Four Gospels complete, according to the original purpose, and for the greatest effect upon the minds of the people. And the obvious and perfectly feasible method to do that is to put a special rubric under the days in question, allowing the reading of the great bulk of the narratives as a special Lesson, interposed between the Epistle and such portion of them as is to be read with the honors of a Liturgical Gospel.

This method is recommended for Palm Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Good Friday. Maundy Thursday may be left with what is now its alternative Gospel in possession of the field. Since 1928, it has approved itself in use. As for Monday, Rome has cut the Sarum use of 36 verses of John 12 to the first nine verses, the Anointing at Bethany. But this incident is recounted in the Passion narratives both of Matthew and Mark, and the repetition serves no useful purpose. It would seem far better to take Mark 11:11-12a, 15b-19 (reading "And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, Jesus went into the temple," etc.) We have here an obviously careful chronology, ignored by the other Evangelists in their interest in other phases of the story, which fixes the Cleansing of the Temple as the major event of this Monday. Since, as before remarked, it is also absolutely pivotal to the whole story, it seems strongly to be recommended that it be placed here.

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The only remaining question is what part of the long passages of the Passions shall be set apart for a formal Liturgical Gospel. Rome in every case uses the narrative of the Burial, which Anglican use appropriates to Easter Even, and omits from the Passion entirely. The most satisfactory alternative seems to be to adopt the very beautiful conclusions of the story, after the moment of our Lord's death, in the form of Matt. 27:51-54, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:47-49, and John 19:31-37.

The use of a Lesson of the Passion narrative is allowed by rubric of the English book of 1928 for Palm Sunday and Good Friday, but with the Roman division of the special Liturgical Gospel: a half-measure not to be commended.

Another feature of both the English and the Scottish revisions is the permission to use the Advent Sunday Gospel of the Triumphal Entry, Matt. 21:1-13, as an alternative on Palm Sunday when there is more than one celebration on that day, *provided* the Gospel of the Passion is used at one service. This seems to be a very good idea. The Passion certainly should be read entire upon this last Sunday in Lent, as well as on Good Friday. It should not be supplanted by the attractive pageantry of the Triumphal Entry, which, however significant in its setting, is certainly no substitute for the tremendous drama of Calvary.

Subject to that important qualification, there seems nothing to be lost and much to be gained by providing an alternative Epistle and Gospel on Palm Sunday. The Roman Epistle, Exodus 15:27-16:7a, was apparently chosen for the incidental mention of the seventy palm-trees at the oasis of Elim, and goes on to the gift of manna. There is not much use in that. Zech. 9:9-12, which is actually echoed in the Gospel, and which is already familiar to us by use in the Lectionary, would be a much better selection. We have also used in the Lectionary since 1928 the version of the Triumphal Entry according to Mark 11:1-11. This has a superior simplicity and convincing directness, over the Matthæan parallel. This there-



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fore, rather than the Advent Sunday Gospel, is now proposed for use in this place.

### 6. *Easter*

Perhaps the most crucial of all the defects of the present Liturgical Lectionary lies in the provisions for Easter Day. Both of the Gospels now provided convey nothing beyond the purely negative message of the Empty Tomb. Dr. Easton comments:

During Easter Week services were held every day, in the course of which the accounts of the resurrection were read through. Hence the Gospels for Easter Day itself contain only the preliminary sections, describing the discovery of the empty tomb but not the appearances of the risen Christ. Thus both the present Easter Gospels end on a note of sheer perplexity, something that is most unfortunate. In any future revision of the Prayer Book this defect is entitled to primary attention.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of the Church of Rome, Easter was celebrated with a Midnight Mass; as is still the case with the conservative Eastern Orthodox Church. The Gospel at this service was Matt. 28:1-7, which is perhaps the most striking and dramatic of all the accounts of the Resurrection, the narrative which best expresses the glory, wonder, and power of that great event, and the one which probably most moderns would agree with the ancients should be employed upon the principal service of the feast.

About the year 400, however, this midnight service, together with the very lengthy preparations for and solemnization of the Easter Baptisms, was anticipated to Saturday morning. This was the first of the Roman 'Vigils,' afterward prefixed to other important festivals; all now celebrated on the morning of the day before, although, as the name indicates, reminiscent of a time when they were 'watch-services' during the night hours

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 127.

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of the Eve, culminating in a Midnight Mass. Christmas, for example, has a Vigil Mass the morning before in the Roman rite; although this day has also alone preserved the old custom of an actual celebration at midnight.

The anticipation of the original Easter celebration to 'Holy Saturday' actually left Easter Day itself 'vacant': which vacuum was hastily, and not very judiciously, filled by coöpting Mark 16:1-7 from one of the Easter Week services. To this day this remains the only Gospel of the great feast in the Roman use.

At the Reformation, Cranmer kept the Marcan lesson for the principal celebration, though he added verse 8, thereby much accentuating that "note of sheer perplexity" of which Dr. Easton so justly complains, with its disheartening final "for they were afraid." But Cranmer also added for an early celebration John 20:1-10, which tells precisely the same story of the Empty Tomb. In the Roman rite this is the Gospel for Saturday in Easter Week, and it is used on Easter Day in the Mozarabic; but it is doubtful if Cranmer knew about that. With this Gospel, Cranmer assigned as Epistle Col. 3:1-7 — again an unwise lengthening of Col. 3:1-4, which was the Sarum and Roman Epistle for 'Holy Saturday,' and hence, as we have seen, of the primordial Roman Easter Mass.

The Second Prayer Book of 1552 dropped the provisions for Cranmer's principal service, retaining only the very ancient Epistle and the very modern Gospel which he had allotted to the early celebration. Our Prayer Book of 1928 quite wisely shortened that Epistle to its original length; and restored Cranmer's principal service for use at an early celebration — attracted, no doubt, by the very appropriate note of verse 2, "And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun."

If one were to proceed on a purely Anglican basis, in the light of the provisions to which we are accustomed, it might look very logical to drop the Marcan Gospel, as the least impressive of those at hand; to put the present Johannine passage

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on the Empty Tomb at the early service; and for the chief service to supply John 20:11-18, which records the first definite Appearance to Mary Magdalene, and effectively continues the narrative up to the Appearance to the Disciples, which is the Gospel for the Easter Octave Day of Low Sunday.

But if this were done, we would be parting company again with the Roman Church: since in 1892 we restored for the early service the passage which is the only Roman Gospel on Easter Day. We may cordially admit that this might be the barest possible Gospel for a principal service, and that the Romans of the fifth century who adopted it as their *only* Gospel for the day made a disastrous blunder, which, after all this time, is probably irretrievable for them. But for a first service, as we use it, this earliest account of the earliest events of the day is very nearly ideal. All that it needs to be perfect for its purpose is to remove that last verse which Cranmer injudiciously included.

Likewise, the Appearance to Mary, unique as it is and lovely as it is, in itself is little more than a kind of 'Easter idyll.' It simply does not adequately express 'the power of his Resurrection.' Rome felt this, by making it the last of the Gospels to be assigned to Easter Week (on Thursday).<sup>1</sup> Definitely, it belongs upon a weekday in the Easter Octave, and as such we recommend it to the Committee on the Calendar which is minded to propose optional proper services for those weekdays. But it is not sufficient for the chief celebration on Easter Day.

The history of the Easter observances which we have reviewed to explain the poverty and ineptitude of the present Roman provisions, and in nearly equal measure, of our own, perhaps holds the key to the best attainable solution of the problem. The primordial Gospel of the earliest Western Church for the feast of Easter was on the whole very much the most adequate for the purpose. It is open to us to redress

<sup>1</sup> Cf. what has been said on p. 74 as to the liturgical use of Thursdays in the early Church.

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the regrettable mistake of the fifth century, which banished the great Gospel lection from St. Matthew from Easter Day: continuing the pericope, however, to comprise Matt. 28:1-10, with the Appearance to the two Marys, to meet the objection that Easter now mentions *only* the Empty Tomb.

A possible further defect of the provisions for Easter Day lies in the inadequate character of the Epistles. The ancient assignment of Col. 3:1-4, which Rome has on the Vigil, and we at the principal celebration of the Day, is extremely fine, though it is, and must remain, extremely brief. (We have noted that the well-meaning Reformation attempt to provide it with a more adequate 'liturgical length' was definitely a blunder, which we in America have redressed.) Its greatest value is that it stresses the very important fact that the meaning of the Resurrection is not only doctrinal but moral, in an application of religion to practical living.

But the Epistle for the early service (the Roman for the Day) is little more than a portion of the familiar Anthem 'Christ our Passover,' which replaces the *Venite* on Easter at Morning Prayer. We have been urged to replace this with I Cor. 15:1-11, the Epistle for Trinity XI, as the first written account of the Resurrection Appearances. But it is questionable whether this is just the sort of thing we want on Easter Day. The Roman instinct was to choose *minima* for Epistles both on the Vigil and the Day, leaving the principal scriptural emphasis to be carried by the Gospel narratives. Especially an early service, where there would normally be no sermon, would be a somewhat futile place for such an Epistle, which indeed is rather too homiletical in itself to belong there. The plan of the old lectionary was to put it in the neutral ground of Trinity-tide, where one might review as thoroughly as he liked the whole historical evidence of the Resurrection Appearances. Easter Day certainly has neither the time nor the mood to go into all that.

Perhaps the best balance could be obtained by replacing I Cor. 5:6b-8 at the early service with Col. 3:1-4 from the late

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one; and for the principal celebration, adopting a still stronger passage, Phil. 3:7-14 (in the Revised Version, for the sake of a minor detail of taste, and one question of clarity). This selection is certainly the strongest possible Epistle to express 'the power of his resurrection,' as well as the most effective of all interpretations of its meaning as applied to the Christian life; and should prove a fruitful point of departure for Easter sermons.

On Easter Tuesday, Acts 13:26-41 does not have a proper *incipit*; it is overlong; the accumulation of Jewish proof-texts does not help the argument to the modern mind; and its conclusion is unpleasant. The Sarum and Roman version of this Epistle was Acts 13:16a, 26-33a, concluding with "in that he hath raised up Jesus again." The passage could, of course, be continued through verses 34, 37, or 39, though there is little to be gained by doing so: but in any case it seems to us that this Epistle should be provided with the Sarum *incipit*, and should stop short of verses 40-41.

On the other hand, the Gospel for Low Sunday should certainly be extended from its present John 20:19-23 to at least verse 29, to include the Appearance to the Disciples *with Thomas, on the eighth day*. What we have now recounts only the events of the evening of Easter Day. The Sarum and Roman since the seventh century continued the Gospel through verse 31: and although the last two verses are not relevant to the occasion, the other matter certainly is. The Reformers seem to have been self-conscious about verses 24-29 (31), as already having occurred on the feast of St. Thomas. But we need not be: not only is that feast at some distance in the year, but it is another Holy Day which can never be celebrated on a Sunday. Dr. Easton comments: "Verses 26-29, in fact, are so obviously appropriate to this day" — i.e., Low Sunday — "that their use seems to be almost universal outside of Anglicanism; this is one of the very few instances where the Eastern and Western Churches agree in their selections."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 132.

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Dr. Easton comments adversely on the Epistle for Easter IV: "This is a poorly selected passage, containing the end (verses 17-18) of one section and the beginning (verses 19-21) of another, which is only vaguely connected with the first"; and goes on to intimate that the units of thought are really James 1:12-18 and 19-27.<sup>1</sup> Likewise in his exposition of the Epistle for Easter V, he is compelled to go back to matter read the Sunday before.<sup>2</sup> Properly to utilize this valuable matter from the Epistles-General, the assignments for these two Sundays should be adjusted to the logical divisions as Dr. Easton has given them.

### 7. *Ascension and Whitsunday*

Rightly to evaluate the provisions for this short but important period, we shall have to bear in mind the developments which gave it birth, and which have affected its character.

It happened that the early Church did not speak of *Easter-tide* (*Tempus Paschale*), but of *The Pentecost*: meaning thereby not the original *Fiftieth Day*, but the entire *fifty days* from Easter to Whitsunday. This continuous festal season between these two termini goes back to the most primitive stratum of the Christian Year, as early as we have any information about it. It was not until the fourth century that the festival of the Ascension was interposed, marking off a definite Easter Season comprising the Forty Days of the Risen Life; and it was not until the twelfth century that the Ascension was dignified with an Octave of its own.

This rather laggard development of the present pattern accounts for the very extensive anticipations of the ideas of the Ascension, and of the Coming of the Spirit, during the Sundays between Easter and Whitsunday. The season was influenced by both poles: it first looked backward to Easter, then forward to Pentecost. The events connected with the Resurrection were thoroughly exploited during the Easter Octave only. Easter II was devoted to a characteristic 'pictorial' summing up of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

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Redemption by presenting the figure of The Good Shepherd, "which," as Dr. Easton says, "captured the imagination of the early church and dominated its iconography, as in the catacombs at Rome, where representation of the crucifixion does not appear for several centuries."<sup>1</sup> But from Easter III through Ascension I, all is anticipation of Pentecost. During these four Sundays, John 15:26-16:33 is read virtually complete, in the order 3 2 4 1.

This rearrangement of the scriptural order is very skillful, in the interests of a logical development of thought. Easter III looks forward to the Ascension: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. . . . Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." Easter IV further unfolds the teaching of the necessity of the Ascension as integral to the plan of the Redemption itself: the termination of Christ's *local* presence with his Disciples under conditions of the flesh was indispensable to secure his *universal* presence with his own at all times and places *through the Spirit*: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. . . . He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you." Easter V concludes this Ascension theme by making it the final proof of the Lordship of Christ: "I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, . . . by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." Then Ascension I picks up again the notes of "the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth," already adumbrated on Easter IV, in immediate preparation for Whitsunday.

If therefore Ascension I has nothing really suitable to the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, but is a mere 'Expectation Sunday' looking to the coming Pentecost, the historical reason for this undesirable situation is plain: it was never designed for the Sunday within the Octave, since that Octave

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 137.

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was a feature added some eight centuries after the pattern of the Gospels was fixed. Perhaps also, they may have felt that this did not so much matter, as the theological significance of the Ascension had been quite fully set forth on the three Sundays preceding.

This does not alter the fact that it would be highly desirable to have some final word on this subject on this Sunday: especially since under modern conditions few churchmen, however devout, are able to attend the service of this great feast upon the weekday on which it is solemnized.

Postponing the solution of that problem for the moment, let us look at the provisions for Whitsunday. Since the seventh century, the Latin lectionary has divided the passage John 14:15-31 between the Vigil and the Feast, with verses 15-21 on the former, 23-31 on the latter. As a matter of fact, in the last-named, verses 23-26 are all that are really germane to Whitsunday: the remaining verses of the chapter being apparently appended to secure a more suitable 'liturgical length' for so important a festival.

The first English Prayer Book of 1549 took only the Sarum Gospel for the Vigil for Whitsunday itself; 1552 combined the two: a result that has continued ever since. Dr. Easton objects: "The Reformation lengthening of this Gospel was a mistake, since it is now too long for orderly exposition."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this statement is a little too sweeping. If we should now limit this Gospel to John 14:15-26 — which contains all the matter that is actually apropos to the occasion — it will be found that such a Gospel is not too long for a major feast; and further, that Cranmer's combining the passages for the Vigil and the Feast is really most fortunate, in bringing together the salient texts which unite to make the great point that the Holy Spirit has been sent not to be the Vicar of Christ's absence, but the effectual means of his presence to the end of the world: "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you. . . . I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . My father will love

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.



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him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him": together with the final summary verse about "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," whose mission is to "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Once this desirable shortening has been carried out, then the *rest* of the chapter, John 14:27-31a, which we shall have removed from this place as something which never really contributed anything on Whitsunday save as filling and ballast for a former Sarum selection which was really *too* short, will be found to be very well adapted to supply a Gospel for Ascension I which will be much better than the mere anticipation of Whitsunday which now occupies it: "My peace I give unto you. . . . Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice!"

The Epistle also for Ascension I is purely pre-Pentecostal — though barely and rather inferentially even that, since it is not a particularly strong passage. Its exordium, "The end of all things is at hand," strikes a note which does not seem at all at home in this festal season. A selection much better adapted to the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension would be Eph. 1:15-23: which is not only a worthy expression of the Heavenly Session, but in verses 17-18 retains also the old message of the 'Expectation Sunday' idea much better than any of the present assignments.

While the foregoing constitute perhaps the major problems of this tract of the Calendar of the year, there are four more points which really stand in need of a better treatment.

One is Ascension Day itself. This is one of the few occasions, so striking when they occur, where the Epistle actually outweighs the Gospel, and is the primary carrier of the scriptural narrative of the event. Until 1928 the Gospel was Mark 16:14-20 — the entirely unauthentic synoptic paraphrase of matters in other Gospels which was got together at some very early date to replace the 'lost ending' of St. Mark. At the last revisions, England (optionally) and America (absolutely) re-

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placed this with Luke 24:49-53. But this has not proved very satisfactory. It is not useful to have the story told twice over, and *by the same author* at that, in the Gospel and the Acts. A number of the best qualified students of the New Testament have united in suggesting to the Commission that a better choice would be Matt. 28:16-20, which happens to avoid recounting the actual occurrence of the Ascension, but unmistakably identifies itself with that incident, and provides the dynamic interpretation of the meaning of our Lord's farewell to his Disciples, in the form of the Great Commission.

The new assignment to the early celebration on Whitsunday is not satisfactory. Certainly it was a blunder to appoint Luke 11:5-13 to the Rogation Days, and Luke 11:9-13 to this service on Whitsunday, both of which appeared in 1928. Perhaps this action originated in different committees, and passed unremarked because the portions were far apart in the text of the Prayer Book; but the duplicate Gospels are actually read within less than two weeks of each other. This passage does well enough on a Rogation Day; but it is quite inadequate for any service on Whitsunday. Its only connection with Pentecost is the concluding "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" The appositeness of this phrase is very tenuous, and almost purely verbal — this mention of the "Holy Spirit" is the Lucan variant of the more germane "good things" of St. Matthew's version. And the fact that it rests on a confused textual tradition, and is not in the Vulgate at all, makes it no better. We should much prefer to substitute the strongest of the unappropriated passages on the Spirit, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," in John 4:19-24, in this place.

The provisions for the two days following Whitsunday also need some attention. We have noted (p. 42 above) that the Epistle for Easter Monday, Acts 10:34-43, is repeated entire as part of that for Whit-Monday, Acts 10:34-48. The Sarum and Roman assignments for these two days attempted to avoid

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that, by apportioning Acts 10:34a, 37-43 to the former, and 10:34a, 42-48a to the latter. This provides the same needed *incipit* to both, which is very well: but on Whit-Monday it leaves verse 42 without any antecedents to its pronouns: the two *he's* referring respectively to God and to Christ. But in fact St. Peter's summary of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord is really indispensable to motivate that acceptance of the Lord by these Gentiles which made possible the outpouring of the Spirit upon them.

This Easter selection therefore must be a part of the Whitsuntide lection. In fact, St. Peter's little discourse here is actually a very effective condensed *précis* of his great sermon on the Day of Pentecost. It can hardly be further abbreviated, without giving a fatally mutilated form of his argument: which is exactly what the Sarum-Roman version of this Epistle is. The best that can be done would seem to do something which it was hardly worth while to suggest for Easter Monday, and to follow Sarum in removing the rather irrelevant exordium of St. Peter's remarks, reading for the Whit-Monday Epistle Acts 10:34a, 36-48a (ending with the words, "to be baptized in the name of the Lord.")

Then Dr. Easton comments on the Gospel for Whit-Monday (John 3:16-21): "This Gospel has nothing to do with Whitsunday. On this day the Station was at St. Peter-ad-Vincula, the Prefecture church; hence the 'judgment' theme."<sup>1</sup> However, it might seem desirable to have the 'Little Gospel' of John 3:16 on the liturgical list; and the missing theme of the Spirit could be very readily supplied by adding to the present assignment the verses 31-36a from the same chapter: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

The Gospel for Whit-Tuesday is now John 10:1-10, Christ as the Door of the Sheep: a passage which appears as a Lesson on Easter II, sidelighting the 'Good Shepherd' Gospel for that Sunday. But it has no note of the Spirit, and the best Dr. Easton can make of it is to suggest that it *may* have been in-

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 309.

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tended to convey some sort of reference to the newly baptized.<sup>1</sup> But since Whitsuntide baptisms are now only a reminiscence of the remote past, why retain it? Especially since we should have available the Gospel due to be displaced from Ascension I, John 15:26-16:4a, with its definite mention of "the Comforter, the Spirit of truth."

### 8. *Trinity-tide*

#### a) *Adjustments of Length*

In this long season, there are six questions about the exact length of the pericopes: five quite small readjustments of Epistles, and one more extensive possible alteration of a Gospel.

On Trinity II, Dr. Easton criticizes the Reformation lengthening of the Epistle from I John 3:13-18 to 13-24 as making it "rather cumbersome, but at least public reading is secured for the important verses 19-22."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is not the actual length of the passage which is at fault, so much as the author's method of repeating the conclusion of each sentence as the basis for a fresh assertion, which is reiterated in its turn. And the termination of Cranmer's passage attempts to finish off this kind of 'chain-stitch' with a rather clumsy knot, in which the word 'commandment' is repeated four times over, giving an undue emphasis to that particular idea, and leaving us with a somewhat blurred notion of the real message of the lection. This could be obviated, and a satisfactory conclusion obtained, by stopping with the words "love one another," in verse 23.

On Trinity VII, Dr. Easton remarks of the Epistle, Rom. 6:19-23, "This section unfortunately begins in the middle of a sentence, and the expositor will have to go back to verse 15 to gain clarity."<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, verse 16 makes a better liturgical beginning; and Rom. 16:16-23 is recommended.

The first verse of the Epistle for Trinity XV, Gal. 6:11-18, is really quite irrelevant: and its use would become practically impossible if the text should be corrected to the more accurate

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

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translation of the Revised Version.<sup>1</sup> There would be no loss in eliminating verse 11.

On Trinity XVI, Dr. Easton comments on the Epistle, Eph. 3:13-21, "The inclusion of verse 13 was unfortunate, and gives an entirely wrong force to 'for this cause' in verse 14."<sup>2</sup> It would make a better *incipit* anyhow to begin at verse 14.

On Trinity XXI, the Sarum Epistle was Eph. 6:10-17, which Cranmer lengthened through verse 20. Dr. Easton says: "The expositor should close with verse 18 and its impressive final exhortation to intercessory prayer. The pre-Reformation section ended too abruptly, but the Reformers went to the opposite extreme."<sup>3</sup> We therefore recommend Eph. 6:10-18.

The Gospel in question is that for Trinity IX, where the last revision of our Prayer Book substituted Luke 15:11-32, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, for the former Luke 16:1-9, the perplexing Parable of the Unjust Steward. No one thinks it anything but great gain to have secured this, one of the most magnificent and affecting of the Parables, for the Liturgical Lectionary. And yet a good many clergy have expressed the feeling that this passage, which is completely satisfactory as a Lesson on Ash Wednesday, is quite unaccountably something of an infliction as a Gospel on Trinity IX.

One reason for this feeling is no doubt its length of 22 verses, which makes it much the longest of the Sunday Gospels, with the exception of the 54 verses of the Passion according to St. Matthew on Palm Sunday. Whitsunday has 17 verses, Septuagesima 16, and Lent III 15. The average length of the Sunday Gospels, including Palm Sunday and Trinity IX, is a little over 10½ verses; excluding them, a little over 9½. And it may be noted that for intrinsic reasons we have proposed to shorten the Gospel for Whitsunday, and to convert most of the Passion narratives to an intermediate Lesson, so that their actual rendering as liturgical *Gospels*, to a standing congregation, would be brought to a very brief compass.

Another reason may be that the Prodigal Son is virtually a

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

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sermon in itself, with a definite homiletical 'application' in the concluding instance of the Elder Brother. It seems actually to be too complete for its own good, in the company of numerous other parables which occur as Gospel lections, brief and pungent, inviting and indeed expecting expansion at the hands of the expositor, instead of providing their own sermon.

If it should develop that this expressed opinion of a few clergy, that this Gospel as it stands is somewhat overloaded, represents the general sentiment of the Church, and is not merely the reaction of some individuals who may be hyper-sensitive, it is of course true that this Gospel could be brought into much more compact form by reducing it to Luke 15:11-24a (. . . and is found.), stopping at the actual Return of the Prodigal, and leaving the appended contrast and application of the case of the Elder Brother to be treated, or not, by the preacher. However, it may be observed that the Greek Church, which uses this passage on our Septuagesima Sunday, and the Roman, which has it on Lent II Saturday, both give it entire as we have it now. One scholar whom we consulted observed: "As you say, it is a short sermon in itself; and it seems to me that having invited our Lord to preach to us, we should hear him to the end. As a matter of fact, I do not think the Prodigal Son story seems long when read, owing to its dramatic character; its appearance on the page merely suggests to the anxious clergyman that it would." That is sound reasoning; but not quite so final as to prevent our presenting this question to the judgment of the Church.

### b) *Replacements*

Trinity-tide also contains two Epistles and four Gospels for which outright substitutions have been suggested.

#### 1) *Epistles*

On Trinity XIII we have Gal. 3:16-22: a passage on Abraham and his 'seeds,' the Law and the Covenant, what is a Mediator? etc. This is another very rabbinical passage of St.

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Paul's, which has been viewed by our clergy with almost as much distaste as the other passage from Galatians on Lent IV. The English and Scottish books register this objection by providing an alternative. But the selection which they offer, Heb. 13:1-6, appears to be most ill-advised.

In the first place, it is a flagrant breach of the ancient pattern, surviving from the seventh century to the present day, of a course-reading from the Pauline Epistles in their scriptural order on the eighteen Sundays from Trinity VI to XVII, and XIX to XXIV, which is broken only on Trinity XVIII (which was originally the Sunday attached to the September Ember Days, and which has another Pauline passage, though out of sequence.) To be sure, there is nothing absolutely sacrosanct about this particular method, which is discontinuous enough to be a list rather than a true series. It represents a somewhat random choice from the seventh-century list of 42 selections — and not by any means the best of them. It has been altered from time to time: for example, our present assignments contain three which were not even in the parent list of 42. Yet all the alterations managed to preserve the pattern of Pauline Epistles in the same order in which they appear in the Bible: which would seem to show that the medieval revisers were aware of that pattern, and recognized its value enough to respect and retain it; and it would appear that our British cousins did neither.

Moreover, it is very difficult to detect what merit they thought they found in that particular bit of the final miscellany of practical advice in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Perhaps someone thought — and very rightly — that there ought to be some place in the list which might not only invite but virtually compel a sermon on Holy Matrimony, in our troubled times, and chose this section for the verse "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God shall judge." Really, we can do better than that, from any point of view!

For a substitute on Trinity XIII, let us do what the British

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revisers failed to do, and take a look at the unexhausted resources of the seventh-century list; remembering that some of the very finest gems still remain in that mine. And of the three pericopes in that list intervening between its #10, which we have on Trinity XII, and #14, which is our Trinity XIV, it may be said that #12, consisting of II Cor. 5:1-10, is one of the finest in the whole ancient *Epistolarium*: mentioning "an house not made with hands . . . Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life . . . the earnest of the Spirit . . . Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord . . . We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body." That all this has nothing to do with the Gospel of the Day, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, is of no importance: neither has the present Epistle; nor in fact any other in Trinity-tide, save by sheer coincidence.

The remaining substitution of an Epistle is by no means as necessary as that on Trinity XIII; yet there is much to recommend it. It happens that on Trinity XXII we have the exordium of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, and on Trinity XXIV similarly the beginning of his Epistle to the Colossians; and further, that the Apostle had very much the same things to say on the two occasions. In spite of the lack of notable coincidences of phrase, so that a man might preach from particular texts on the two Sundays without any great sense of the repetitions of thought, these passages must be ranked as virtual doublets, in that it would be impossible to treat them homiletically as wholes without realizing the essential duplications.

Of the two, that for Trinity XXII is perhaps preferable; besides, our seventh-century list offers a great number of choices for Trinity XXIV. Of these, the best in this place seems to be II Thess. 2:15-3:5: "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught . . . Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself . . . stablish you in every good word and work . . .



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that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified . . . And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." This final note seems particularly in place on a Sunday so very near the end of the official Christian Year, and the consequent approach of Advent.

### 2) *Gospels*

The proposed substitutions of Trinity-tide Gospels are all designed to remove needless repetition of doublet passages, the telling over again of what is recognized to be the same incident in the 'concordant' version of another Evangelist.

On Trinity VII, Mark 8:1-9, the Feeding of the Four Thousand, and on the Sunday Next Before Advent, John 6:5-14, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, comprise a doublet, and an outright reiteration, respectively, of the use of John 6:1-14 on Lent IV.

While to the modern mind it seems perfectly extraordinary that these narratives of the so-called 'Miraculous Feedings' should be allowed to preoccupy no less than three of the limited number of the Sundays of the Christian Year, the historical cause of this peculiarity happens to be something which serves to explain another outstanding anomaly of the Liturgical Lectionary: namely that the historic Churches, which center all their worship in the Holy Eucharist, apparently make not the slightest reference to that rite in the Scriptures provided for any Sunday. The fact that simultaneously solves both these striking riddles is that where the present age would look for a definitive narrative, like that in I Cor. 11, or a direct theological exposition, like the long latter part of St. John 6, as a scriptural background for the Church's teaching on the Eucharist, the primitive Church preferred to bring before the people a sort of living picture and parable. For this purpose the early Church coöpted not only these three stories of the great Cultus Meals (as we now recognize them to have been), but also still another pair of essential doublets, St. Luke's 'Great Supper' on Trinity II, and St. Matthew's 'Marriage Feast' on Trinity XX.

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Thus at the time of the framing of the Liturgical Lectionary, the Church was so far from ignoring the heart of its worship in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, that it considered that it was devoting no less than five Sundays – a tithe of the year – to setting the stage for expounding and enforcing its teaching on this subject.

It has seemed well to leave one example of the great Cultus Meal on Mid-Lent Sunday, where it has always been thrown into the highest emphasis, and become thoroughly familiar to the maximum number of lay people, whose attendance at Church is about at its height in that season. Removing it from that place, even in favor of a version of the same ultimate theme which might seem more direct and profitable to our modern habits of mind, would not be desirable: certainly the passage would be sadly missed by many there. But there can be no excuse for keeping it also in the other two places in Trinity-tide.

If now we desire to carry out the intent of the primitive Church to provide Gospels for Trinity VII and Advent – I which shall present the Christian Eucharist for consideration, the available material is as follows:

1) The Synoptics give the bare narrative of the Institution, in its Passion-tide setting, without comment or explanation of any sort. As this narrative is incorporated in the Consecration Prayer, there is nothing left to be added as a liturgical Gospel.

2) The Fourth Gospel, which found it otiose to repeat the Institution Narrative, as contained in the Synoptics, and already in constant use in the Liturgy, does give some very extended passages on the meaning of the Sacrament: a) in the sixth chapter, a long *haggadah* or homiletical exposition on the significance of the rite, based on the incident of the Feeding of the Five Thousand; and b) five whole chapters, 13–17, containing our Lord's discourses to his Disciples during, and after, the last *Agapé*.

Of these five chapters, in the 13th, our Lord's washing the Disciples' feet before the Supper has been appropriated to

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Maundy Thursday, and the balance of it is concerned with the Betrayal. The 14th and 16th chapters contain the forecasts of the Ascension and the coming of the Spirit, and, as we have seen, are used up almost completely between Easter III and Whitsunday. The 17th is the 'High-Priestly Prayer' of intercession for the Church: and though a grand example of 'giving thanks for all men,' it is too closely knit to be divided, and much too long for liturgical use as a whole; it can be used for a Lesson, but is really not available as a Gospel.

This leaves chapter 15, which falls into three divisions: 1) The Vine and the Branches; 2) The Commandment, That ye love one another; and 3) The servant is not greater than his Lord. These are all employed in our Prayer Book, as they were in the Sarum Missal, for the festivals of SS. Mark, Barnabas, and Simon and Jude — not in the light of any particular appropriateness, but essentially as 'commons'; any of them might be used on the feast of any Saint. Rome in fact uses other 'commons' for the first two, coinciding with the Sarum assignment for the third. The Gospel for any one of these Saints' Days could be used on either of the Sundays in question, if not at too close an interval, or another assignment made for the Saint's Day.

In none of these three passages is the bearing upon the Last Supper direct and commanding. But the first of them, which is the most individual and striking, happens to have two very strong ties of an indirect character with the Eucharist. The little allegory of 'the Vine and the Branches' is entirely unique to the Fourth Gospel. It has every indication of being an expansion of the idea of 'the Vine of David' from the prayer in the *Didaché*, just as this in turn was a Messianic version of the thanksgiving for 'the fruit of the vine' at every Jewish table. Moreover, the moral application to the purpose of the Holy Communion is complete, in the thought of the life of the Branches depending on their union with the Vine. In the light of these considerations, we recommend using John 15:1-8 as the Gospel for Trinity VII.

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Much more room for choice exists in the long argument in John 6. The cumulative reasoning there seems confusing to some, giving an impression of going around in circles. Actually, it is not: it is going up in spirals! We would hardly choose to fill up both the 'Eucharistic' Sundays in question from this passage, as the resulting Gospels would give most people the impression of being entirely equivalent, even though they had really been taken from different levels. For a single Gospel, we should be well advised to select the topmost loop, and the final summary of the whole argument, in the form of John 6:47-58, for the Sunday Next Before Advent. In that place, it goes very well with the Epistle, and has the advantage of tying in to the season with the eschatological note, "I will raise him up at the last day."

With regard to the doublet of the 'Great Supper' on Trinity II and the 'Marriage Feast' on Trinity XX, there is no absolute necessity to do anything about that for their own sake. They are five months apart in the year; and besides, their emphasis in detail is sufficiently different that few clergy have been conscious of constraint even when preaching on both Gospels the same year. The chief complaint about Trinity XX seems to be that the structure of the parable as St. Matthew tells it is not well put together, and that there would be a palpable absurdity in rebuking a man just haled in off the street for not having on a 'wedding garment.' As Dr. Easton says, St. Matthew's addition "voices early post-apostolic experience. The Apostles went out into the highways and hedges and compelled them to come in — but the result was sometimes unfortunate. The allegory is not skillful; how could a man pressed into the palace under such conditions be expected to appear in proper clothing? . . . But . . . this does not trouble the Evangelist; every one knows that converts are expected to amend their lives, and this man did not try to do so."<sup>1</sup>

This objection, which seems particularly to trouble one logical type of mind, could of course be met by shortening the

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 221.

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Gospel to Matt. 22:1-10. But if this were done, one of the most valuable lessons of the passage, and one of the chief reasons why some might like to retain this later version of St. Luke's account, would be lost.

We have, however, mentioned that there is a deep and widespread feeling in the Church that there ought to be some Sunday on which the dominant theme is directly that of Holy Matrimony. Of course, any clergyman can preach on that subject at any time. But at present, the best the Liturgical Lectionary offers him by way of a scriptural point of departure therefor would seem to be to take a very sharply tangential line on Epiphany III, with its Marriage at Cana, or here on Trinity XX, with the Marriage Feast.

Trinity XX, however, presents its own invitation to improve upon that. It is almost with a touch of awe that we note that the Epistle for a Nuptial Eucharist, Eph. 5:20-33, actually slightly overlaps the Eph. 5:15-21 which has come down to us from the seventh century for this Sunday, and realize that it would not interfere in the slightest with the overall pattern of the Epistles if we substituted Eph. 5:18b-33 (beginning, "Be filled with the Spirit").

It may be that this, read together with the Gospel of the Marriage Feast, would be enough. But all those whom we have consulted thought not. They felt so profoundly the need of our times for the strongest and directest teaching on Christian Marriage, that they voted for a suggestion which had been made to substitute for this Gospel something of the order of Matt. 19:4-6, 13-15. This is the present Gospel at a Marriage, together with the further sayings about the 'little children,' which round out the Christian family. The parallel passage in Mark 10:6-9, 13-16 is still more appealing, and is therefore recommended. The Marcan passage could, of course, be read without omission of verses. But this does not seem desirable in a Sunday Gospel. In the first place, it is better to present the positive side of the matter alone, as is done at the Nuptial Eucharist. And also, it is the opinion of some recent scholars

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of considerable weight, that St. Mark's version of the *divorce* question is less authentic than the independent tradition recorded by St. Matthew: verse 12, for instance, which reflects the actually higher marital ethic of Roman society, is plainly incompatible with a Jewish setting.

The final doublet to be considered is the Gospel for Trinity XXI, John 4:46b-54, the Healing of the Nobleman's Son, which is on the whole an inferior and less authentic version of St. Matthew's story of the Healing of the Centurion's Servant, which is the Gospel for Epiphany IV.<sup>1</sup> The Johannine rendering has, of course, its distinctive merits in detail: and it is a fact that this is the least obvious, and hence least objectionable, of all the 'concords' of parallel Gospels which have found their way into the Liturgical Lectionary. But it is a question whether it is best to retain this passage, which on any reckoning is of rather secondary importance, when there are so many first-line selections from the Gospels which are now excluded from the list.

Place has been found for a good many of these passages on previous occasions of the year. Certainly, however, if Matt. 7:24-29, the House on the Rock, is *not* to be substituted for the Gospel on Lent II, it would undoubtedly outrank the Nobleman's Son in value and interest here. If it is put on Lent II, then perhaps the best choice for this place, beside the very stirring Epistle on the Armour of God, would be Luke 17:5-10, where 'the faith that moves mountains' would form a desirable connection of thought with the note "above all, the shield of faith," in the Epistle.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Easton's comments in *The Eternal Word*, 233.

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## III

### THE FIXED HOLY DAYS

The Epistles and Gospels for the Fixed Holy Days received no attention whatsoever in the Anglican Prayer Books between 1549 and 1928, except that in 1662 the Purification was provided with an Epistle, which it had previously lacked entirely, and its Gospel was (injudiciously) lengthened. The last American revision furnished new Epistles for St. Thomas, SS. Simon and Jude, and the Circumcision, and omitted the 'Twelve Tribes of Israel' from the middle of the All Saints' Epistle, with a compensating addition at the end.

The assignments in the First Prayer Book were based upon the Use of Sarum, and comprised nine Epistles and 20 Gospels which are identical in both the Sarum and the Roman Missals, one Epistle and three Gospels which are Sarum but not Roman, and one Epistle which is Roman and not Sarum. But there were eleven Epistles which were new in 1549; and two Epistles and seven Gospels were lengthened at the Reformation.

#### 1. *Adjustments of Length*

Some of these lengthenings were slight, others proportionately considerable, and one (St. John Baptist) really formidable. A collation with the original pericopes shows that in a majority of instances the Sarum-Roman form was actually better. The following readjustments are therefore recommended:

<i>Holy Day</i>	<i>Epistle</i>	<i>Instead of:</i>	<i>Gospel</i>	<i>Instead of:</i>
Andrew	Rom. 10:9-18	Rom. 10:9-21		
John Evangelist			John 21:19-24	John 21:19-25
Purification	Mal. 3:1-4	Mal. 3:1-5		
Barnabas	Acts 11:21b-26 and 13:1-3	Acts 11:22-30		
John Baptist			Luke 1:57-68	Luke 1:57-80
Luke	II Tim. 4:5-13	II Tim. 4:5-15		

The Reformation lengthening of the Epistle for St. Andrew, comprising three verses to the end of the chapter, does nothing

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ing but provide an unpleasant conclusion. For St. John Evangelist, the addition, again to the end of the chapter, is only one verse; but it is irrelevant to the occasion. Both remarks — irrelevance, and a rather dispiriting ending — apply to Bishop Wren's lengthening by one verse of the old Epistle for the Purification, which he very properly insisted on restoring: from 1549 to 1662, this feast had no Epistle of its own, but was directed to use that for the preceding Sunday!

At the Reformation, the Sarum Gospel for the Purification, Luke 2:22-32, was curtailed to end with verse 27a. Bishop Wren in 1662 lengthened it to verse 40, which concludes St. Luke's account of the Infancy, and brings us up to the incident of our Lord's boyhood which we read on Epiphany I. This Gospel is fairly long, and it might be some temptation to shorten it, as far as the interests of this particular commemoration are concerned. But the Reformation dropped from the Sarum provisions for Christmas I the reading of Luke 2:33-40, which recounted the Return to Nazareth before the day of the Circumcision; we now propose to do the same with the parallel from St. Matthew, which presented the same event before the Epiphany. The conclusion of St. Luke's narrative of the Infancy certainly ought to appear somewhere, and the Return to Nazareth ought not to be omitted completely, even though it is a dislocating factor in the actual Nativity Season. Unquestionably this is the place for it.

But the 24 verses of the Gospel for the Nativity of St. John Baptist are something of a liturgical monstrosity. Most clergy moreover have felt that the reading of the canticle *Benedictus* entire conveys a minimum of spiritual profit, especially in view of the conflict of its 'King James' text in the Prayer Book Gospel with the more familiar 'Great Bible' version in which it is sung at Morning Prayer. Therefore the Sarum-Roman device of introducing it only by title, as it were, and concluding the Gospel with the first verse of that canticle, seems altogether to be recommended.

The Epistle for St. Luke's Day was new at the Reformation.



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Dr. Easton comments: "It is a pity that the Reformers did not end the selection with verse 11a, for what follows has no expository value."<sup>1</sup> But perhaps to conclude with "Only Luke is with me" would be too abrupt. Hence we recommend that we continue with the personal notes, which are not without their interest, through verse 13; but in any event to omit the ominous figure of Alexander the Coppersmith!

The suggested provision for St. Barnabas' Day adopts the Roman form of the Epistle exactly, where Cranmer deserted the Sarum norm to follow it only diffidently and in part. Dr. Easton says of the latter: "The inclusion of verses 27-30 was a mistake, since the mention of Barnabas at the end of verse 30 does not associate him with the contents of the paragraph."<sup>2</sup> Rome realized this, it seems, if Cranmer did not; and furthermore here, as elsewhere, was not to be intimidated by a 'discontinuous' passage, but boldly leaped from chapter 11 to the beginning of chapter 13, which had something *really* significant to add about Barnabas — namely his solemn commission, with St. Paul himself, to commission others as ministers in the churches they were being sent forth to found. These three verses, perhaps the most significant in the New Testament on the basic principle of the Apostolic Succession (and incidentally a passage most unjustly and unaccountably ignored or even belittled by Anglican apologists) are not in our Liturgical Lectionary anywhere: and surely it will hardly be disputed that they ought to be.

It may also be remarked that there is another reason for omitting Acts 11:27-30 from the Epistle for St. Barnabas, and that is that these four verses are repeated on the feast of St. James, a little over six weeks later. As the *rest* of St. James' Epistle (Acts 11:27-12:3a) has also been read on St. Peter's Day, less than four weeks before, the present assignment leaves nothing whatever actually proper to St. James' Day. Now Acts 12:2 records his martyrdom — he being the only Apostle whose death is recorded in the New Testament. The Reformers there-

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 293.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

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fore did well in appointing this Epistle, instead of the generalities of the older Commons of Apostles in the Sarum and Roman rites; even though it is true that the first verses of Acts 12 form a necessary introduction to the narrative of St. Peter's imprisonment on his festival. Dr. Easton, however, criticizes the inclusion of Acts 11:27-30 on St. James' Day, saying, "Unfortunately, to gain better liturgical length they prefixed the last four verses of Acts 11, which are wholly irrelevant to the theme of the day."<sup>1</sup> Yet it can be maintained that this stricture is not altogether true. Acts 12 begins, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church." Now the expression, "about that time," would have no meaning without the previous verses which define it as the time that Paul and Barnabas brought the charitable offerings of the Gentiles to Jerusalem. While this, of course, has no ideological connection with the martyrdom of St. James, it does *date* it, and it does supply a realistic background in its picture of the living society of the Church in those times. It may be said that these four verses, which do not happen to mention St. James, are actually needed for his festival, not for mere mechanical reasons of 'liturgical length,' but in order to contribute a sense of the historical reality of the story; but while they do mention St. Barnabas, they are quite aimless and superfluous on his day.

### 2. *Replacements*

Besides these adjustments of length, there are five substitutions which seem advisable in the Propers for the Holy Days.

The Gospel for the Conversion of St. Paul is of the nature of a mere Common of Apostles. It not only contains nothing particularly appropriate to St. Paul, it is, as Dr. Easton pointed out,<sup>2</sup> actively inappropriate to him, since the allusion to the "twelve thrones," while perfectly applicable to the twelve Disciples to whom these words were originally addressed, would

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

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*ipso facto* exclude St. Paul, and may even have been deliberately added to the Antiochene Gospel of St. Matthew to do so — this note being lacking in the parallel passage in St. Luke, which is the Gospel on St. Bartholomew's Day. The Prayer Book rightly lists St. Paul as one of *fourteen* Apostles whom we commemorate; but certainly he was never one of the Twelve.

The Roman Missal for its observance of the Martyrdom of St. Paul on June 30 very appropriately uses our Lord's prophecy of the persecutions of the Apostles, which is part of his Charge to them, immediately after the formal Call of the Twelve in Matt. 10. It would therefore be entirely in order to follow this lead in the case of the Conversion of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, by taking for the Gospel the continuation of this Charge, in the injunctions to the Apostles to preach the word, in Matt. 10:24-32: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord. . . . What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. . . . Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

On St. Mark's Day, we have noted that there is nothing whatever proper to this Evangelist in the present Gospel, John 15:1-11, 'The Vine and the Branches,' which we have inherited from the Sarum Rite. We need this passage for Trinity VII. The Roman is no better, being Luke 10:1-11, the Sending of the Seventy, which we have on the feast of St. Luke. It would seem that a selection from his own Gospel, Mark 13:9-13, would be eminently suitable to this man who fulfilled in his own life all that is there set forth in the words of our Lord as to the qualification of the preachers of the Word; as an exile and a Martyr, a witness and an Evangelist, speaking with the assistance of the Holy Ghost. This substitution would avoid the repetition of the same Gospel on Trinity VII, which would be eleven to thirteen weeks away, on the occasions when St. Mark's Day falls on a Sunday.

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The Feast of the Transfiguration was dropped at the Reformation, but restored in the American Book of 1892: an action followed by the latest English and Scottish provisions. The Scottish Book has the Sarum and Roman propers, II Pet. 1:16-18 and Matt. 17:1-9. Our Prayer Book has the same Epistle, but has substituted Luke 9:28-36 for the Gospel. Dr. Easton observes, "The Markan section would have been preferable to either."<sup>1</sup> That is perfectly true: the earlier and simpler narrative actually has a greater verisimilitude; the version in St. Luke, and still more, that in St. Matthew, carrying certain 'literary' embellishments which inevitably impart a slightly mythological tone to the incident. Evidently the English revisers felt as much also, for they put Mark 9:2b-7 for the Gospel. But Mark 9:2b-9 would be more complete.

The English book also rightly rejected the passage from II Peter for the Epistle. We may thoroughly understand that a bygone age had quite different standards of literary integrity from our own: that in perpetrating something which modern critics would call by the abhorrent name of a *forgery*, they had no more intent to deceive or corrupt than did W. S. Landor in his *Imaginary Conversations*, or Andrew Lang in his *Letters to Dead Authors*; that the author of this Epistle wrote with all simplicity and sincerity what he believed St. Peter *would have said* about this event, or perhaps even what he may have felt that the Apostle from heaven was desiring him to say on his behalf! Yet no modern man can read out to the people with a quiet conscience a passage which he knows to be a fiction, however pious: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. . . . And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

The English substitute for this is I John 3:1-3, which is the beginning of the Epistle on Epiphany VI. While quite appropriate to this occasion, it is fragmentary, with an abrupt end-

<sup>1</sup> *The Eternal Word*, 262.

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ing. A far better choice would be II Cor. 3:12-18, not otherwise used in the Liturgical Lectionary.

For St. Bartholomew's Day, Acts 5:12-16 was adopted at the Reformation in lieu of the Sarum Eph. 2:19-22, 'the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.' This Sarum selection was only a 'Common of Apostles,' and our 1928 book adopted it for SS. Simon and Jude, to match the collect of that day. But the passage from Acts is just another such 'Common,' on the apostolic gifts of healing: St. Peter is the only one mentioned by name - St. Bartholomew, if present at all, is hidden behind him. It would seem much better to take another ancient Common which the Roman Missal assigns to this day: I Cor. 12:27-31a ('first Apostles,' etc.).

### IV

#### OCCASIONAL SERVICES

Following the assignments for All Saints' Day, the Prayer Book presents a sort of appendix, with provisions for celebrations on some special occasions not belonging to the cycle of common worship throughout the Christian Year. This collection is somewhat miscellaneous, and falls into three classes: 1) Optional services, which may be added at discretion to the Church Year, comprising a Common of Saints, the Dedication of a Church, and single provisions for the Ember and Rogation Days - these falling into the category of services which the English Prayer Book describes as "permitted, but not enjoined"; 2) two National Days, Independence and Thanksgiving, which are not Holy Days, but patriotic occasions recognized by the Church; and 3) Propers for Eucharists at a Marriage and a Burial.

The two last might profitably be transferred to immediate connection with the Marriage and Burial Offices, as the Communion of the Sick accompanies the Office of Visitation. The

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other classes should be maintained where they are, and considerably extended. A single Epistle and Gospel does not make an adequate provision for any and every kind of Saint's Day: Commons for various classes of Saints, such as Martyrs, Confessors, etc., are needed. The Committee on the revision of the Calendar has such suggestions in hand. That Committee also has proposals for proper Epistles and Gospels for a considerable list of marginal commemorations for both Movable and Immovable days: the more outstanding Saints of the history of the Church, and Octaves, weekdays in Lent, the twelve Ember and the three Rogation Days, and the like. Such material, as 'permitted, not enjoined,' might well appear in this part of the Prayer Book. It is designed, however, that the Epistles and Gospels in question should simply be indicated in the same manner as the Lessons in the Lectionary tables, not printed out in full.

Hence this Committee will offer no comment on the assignments for a Saint's Day, which are due to be replaced by more flexible provisions; in the light of which, our proposal to use its Gospel for Advent Sunday does not matter.

But it is doubtful if the lections for the Eucharist at a Marriage are the best obtainable. We are proposing that its Epistle and Gospel be used in a somewhat different form on Trinity XX. They will really do much better as addressed to the instruction of a general congregation, than upon the occasion of a wedding. The Church of England has made a distinctly better choice for the latter purpose, in the form of Eph. 3:14-21 (borrowed from Trinity XVI), and John 15:9-11.

The Gospel for Thanksgiving Day would be improved by dropping the last verse. The text should be completely conformed to the Revised Version in this passage, as on Trinity XV, instead of the partial and compromise corrections which now appear on Thanksgiving.

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## V

### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

In the following Table, the selections are distinguished by these conventions:

*New Matter*, not in the present Epistles and Gospels, is *italicized*.  
 (Omitted Matter) of lections to be eliminated, by (parentheses).  
 Omitted) (Verses, of lections to be shortened, by half) (parentheses).  
<sup>1-4</sup> Transferred matter, by exponential figures before the citations.

Day	Proposed Epistle	Present Epistle	Proposed Gospel	Present Gospel
Advent 2			<sup>1</sup> Matt. 25:31-40	(Luke 21:25-33)
3	I Cor. 3:21-4:5	I Cor. 4:1-5		
4			<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:26b-38	(John 1:19-28)
Xmas B	<i>Titus 3:4-7</i>		<sup>3</sup> Luke 2:15-20	
John Evangelist			John 21:19b-24	John 21:19b-25
Xmas 1			<sup>3</sup> Luke 2:15-20	<sup>4</sup> Matt. 1:18-25
Circumc.	<sup>5</sup> Isa. 61:1-3	(Phil. 2:9-11)	<sup>6</sup> Luke 2:21-32	<sup>3</sup> Luke 2:15-21
Xmas 2	<i>1 Pet. 2:1-10</i>	<sup>6</sup> Isa. 61:1-3	<sup>4</sup> Matt. 1:18-25	(Matt. 2:19-23)
Lent 2	<i>Rom. 11:25-27, 33-36</i>	(I Thess. 4:1-8)	<i>Matt. 7:24-29</i>	(Matt. 15:21-28)
4	<i>Isa. 55:1-7</i>	(Gal. 4:21-31)		
5			<i>John 12:23-32</i>	(John 8:46-59)
6A	<i>Zech. 9:9-12</i>		<i>Mark 11:1-11</i>	
Lent 6B		[ <i>Lection: Matt. 26:1-27:50</i> ]	Matt. 27:51-54	Matt. 27:1-54
. . . Mon.			<i>Mark 11:11-12a, 15b-19</i>	<sup>7</sup> Mark 14
. . . Tue.		[ <i>Lection: <sup>7</sup>Mark 14:1-15:37</i> ]	Mark 15:38-41	Mark 15:1-39
. . . Wed.		[ <i>Lection: Luke 22:1-<sup>8</sup>23:46</i> ]	<sup>8</sup> Luke 23:47-49	Luke 22
. . . Thu.			John 13:1-15	<sup>8</sup> Luke 23:1-49
. . . Fri.		[ <i>Lection: John 18:1-19:30</i> ]	John 19:31-37	John 19:1-37
Easter A	<sup>9</sup> Col. 3:1-4	(I Cor. 5:6b-8)	Mark 16:1-7	Mark 16:1-(8)
B	<i>Phil. 3:7-14 RV</i>	<sup>9</sup> Col. 3:1-4	<i>Matt. 28:1-10</i>	(John 20:1-10)
. . . Tue.	<i>Acts 13:16a, 26-33a</i>	Acts 13:26-(41)		
Easter 1			John 20:19-29	John 20:19-23
4	James 1:12-18	James 1:17- <sup>10</sup> 21		
5	James 1: <sup>10</sup> 19-27	James 1:22-27		

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Day	<i>Proposed Epistle</i>	<i>Present Epistle</i>	<i>Proposed Gospel</i>	<i>Present Gospel</i>
Ascension			<i>Matt. 28:16-20</i>	(Luke 24:49-53)
Asc. 1	<i>Eph. 1:15-23</i>	(I Pet. 4:7-11)	<sup>11</sup> John 14:27-31a	<sup>12</sup> John 15:26-16:4a
Whitsunday A			<i>John 4:19-24</i>	(Luke 11:9-13)
	B		John 14:15-26	John 14:15- <sup>11</sup> 31a
... Mon.	Acts 10:34a, 36-48a	Acts 10:34()-48	John 3:16-21, 31-36a	John 3:16-21
... Tue.			<sup>12</sup> John 15:26-16:4a	(John 10:1-10)
Trinity 2	I John 3:13-23a	I John 3:13-(24		
7	Rom. 6:16-23	Rom. 6:19-23	<sup>12</sup> John 15:1-8	(Mark 8:1-9)
13	<i>II Cor. 5:1-10</i>	(Gal. 3:16-22)		
15	Gal. 6:12-18	Gal. 6:11)-18		
16	Eph. 3:14-21	Eph. 3:13)-21		
20	Eph. 5:18b- <sup>14</sup> 33	Eph. 5:15)-21	<i>Mark 10:6-9, 13-16</i>	(Matt. 22:1-14)
21	Eph. 6:10-18	Eph. 6:10-(20	<i>Luke 17:5-10</i>	(John 5:46b-54)
Trinity 24 Before Advent	<i>II Thess. 2:13-3:5</i>	(Col. 1:3-12)	<i>John 6:47-58</i>	(John 6:5-14)
Andrew Paul	Rom. 10:9-18	Rom. 10:9-(21	<i>Matt. 10:24-32</i>	(Matt. 19:27-30)
Purification Annunciation	Mal. 3:1-4	Mal. 3:1-(5		<sup>8</sup> Luke 2:22-40 <sup>2</sup> Luke 1:26b-38
Mark			<i>Mark 13:9-13</i>	<sup>12</sup> John 15:1-11
Barnabas	Acts 11:21b-26 and 13:1-3	Acts 11:22-(30		
John Baptist			Luke 1:57-68	Luke 1:57-(80)
Transfiguration	<i>II Cor. 3:12-18</i>	(II Pet. 1:13-18)	<i>Mark 9:2b-9</i>	(Luke 9:28-36)
Bartholomew	<i>I Cor. 12:27-31a</i>	(Acts 5:12-16)		
Luke	II Tim. 4:5-13	II Tim. 4:5-(15		
Marriage	Eph. 5:14-21	<sup>14</sup> Eph. 5:20-(33	<sup>12</sup> John 15:9-11	(Matt. 19:4-6)
Thanksgiving			Matt. 6:25-33	Matt. 6:25-(34)
A Saint's Day				<sup>1</sup> Matt. 25:31-40



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### 1. *The Question of Alternatives*

It will be noted that in the foregoing Table, as in the previous discussions, it has been recommended that any alterations determined upon shall be made outright, without retaining the present assignments as alternatives to the new ones.

It seems altogether desirable that such perfectly clean-cut action be taken when general agreement has been reached, and a majority approval obtained, rather than that an attempt be made to conciliate conservative inertia by allowing those wedded to the old selections to continue to use them. This, after all, would be only a sort of crab-like and sidling effort at progress by compromise. Changes in the Liturgical Lectionary were made absolutely in all Revisions before 1928, in accordance with the sound old practical motto, "Be sure you are right — then go ahead!"

But the latest attempt to revise the Prayer Book of the Church of England was faced with divided counsels — which indeed proved insuperable to its adoption. In an endeavor to put all the evidence fairly before the Church (which was most laudable), and also to satisfy everybody (which is forever impossible), the revisers produced what was really a dual Prayer Book, presenting the old and the new material side by side — and in the case of the new liturgical lections, retaining the old even for employment in the new rituals. As a book for study, such a work is valuable; as a manual for the people's use, it is all but intolerable.

At the same time the Scottish Church, which hitherto had always known its own mind, and had been bold enough in making what it considered desirable changes, in this matter followed the English lead in retaining for alternative use lections surely marked for ultimate deletion, such as the Unjust Steward Gospel and the Hagar-Sinai Epistle, from a dutiful desire not to get out of step with English standards.

This fear of being smitten for the sin of Uzzah affected even the American revisers in one place, where a new Gospel for Maundy Thursday was offered as an alternative rather than a

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substitute. In this case they were doubtless moved by the fact that they did not at all know what to do with the Passion according to St. Luke in that particular place, and passed the responsibility to the users. We now know how that experiment came out, and are prepared to recommend the very bold measures which seem indispensable to deal with the resulting situation.

Now obviously the adjustments of the length of the lessons, and the transfers of material from one occasion of the year to another, as shall have been agreed upon, will have to be made absolutely and at one stroke. It would certainly be preferable to carry out substitutions likewise at the same time and in the same way. To leave supplanted lections as alternatives merely clutters up the Prayer Book in a very cumbersome way, to the confusion rather than the edification of the laity. It would be better to get the whole matter thoroughly discussed until the mind of the Church is unmistakably evident, and then to adopt a single straightforward course of Epistles and Gospels without alternatives.

### *2. Effect on the Correlation with the Western Tradition*

We may be allowed to repeat that the whole aim of the present proposals has been not to innovate with a new scheme of our own invention, but at every point to enable the existing plan for the Christian Year to say more effectively what it is evidently trying to tell us. This, we trust, has been evident enough in the foregoing detailed discussions. But the sight of the accumulated result in the preceding Table may again arouse some qualms, as to just what the total effect would be in causing us to diverge further, perhaps, from the traditional standards of the Western Church, especially as somewhat roughly but sufficiently represented in the current Roman Missal.

In the first place, thirteen of the proposed alterations would have no effect whatever one way or the other, since they are changes in matter adopted at or after the Reformation, or in

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provisions where Rome and Sarum had already gone their separate ways before that time. For instance, we can do anything we like with the Epistle for Christmas II, and the Epistle and Gospel for the early service on Whitsunday, without altering the relative situation, since Rome has nothing to correspond with these novel assignments which we adopted in 1928. Substitutes for the Sarum Gospels for Lent II, the Sunday Next Before Advent, or the feast of St. Mark, or for Epistles for Trinity XV and St. Luke's Day and Gospels for Christmas I and the Monday before Easter, adopted in 1549, or for the Epistle on the Circumcision and the Gospel on the Ascension, which date from 1928, again would not matter, since Rome has different assignments to begin with. Changing the present Gospel of the Transfiguration from St. Luke's version to St. Mark's, where Rome has St. Matthew's, would leave correspondences just where they are.

In the rest of the list, to put the matter at once at its worst: seven Epistles and eight Gospels contained in the Roman scheme for both the Christian Year and the Fixed Holy Days as a whole have been marked for deletion, as against only two Roman Epistles and three Gospels which we propose to restore. However, only five of the seven Epistles and three of the eight Gospels now occur on the same day in the American and the Roman patterns. Therefore, on a point-to-point collation of the provisions for the same occasions, the net 'adverse balance' would be only three lections.

Moreover, the effect of these shifts is distinctly mitigated by the results of the proposed alterations in the length of the selections. Some of these, as in the case of the Epistles for St. Barnabas and Trinity XX, and the Gospels for the week before Easter, on Low Sunday, and St. John Baptist's Day, are so considerable as to be about as important, one way or the other, as outright substitutions. And of these, seven Epistles and eight Gospels have been brought nearer to the Roman assignments, as against six Epistles and two Gospels which have been altered in the opposite direction.

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Therefore, counting both kinds of changes together, we find that out of services which both Churches now hold on the same day, seven Epistles and ten Gospels have been brought into closer correspondence, as against seven Epistles and five Gospels which are in greater divergence. In the entire scheme, taking corresponding lections wherever found, nine Epistles and eleven Gospels are closer, thirteen Epistles and ten Gospels are more remote. This again presents a total 'adverse balance' of three lections. However it is reckoned, it cannot be said that any of these figures, out of the total number of 190 lections involved in the pattern, could be considered as a serious assault against the 'great liturgical tradition of the West.'

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## VI

### THE TEXT OF THE LITURGICAL SELECTIONS

Consideration also must be given to the text of the Scriptures printed in the Prayer Book for the liturgical Epistles and Gospels.

The original text of the Bible used in the Book of Common Prayer was that first officially 'authorized' version known as the 'Great Bible' of 1539. This version still remains the underlying Prayer Book standard for the Psalter, the Decalogue, Offertory Sentences, Comfortable Words, Burial Anthems, etc. But in 1662, the new Authorized Version of 1611 was adopted for the Epistles and Gospels.

The American Prayer Book of 1928 made a number of changes in scripture texts in various parts of the book, incorporating readings from the Revised Version. Much the most striking of these was a very thorough overall recension of the Psalter, whereby a very large number of the more precise renderings of the R. V. were incorporated directly into the rich and poetical text of the Psalms in the 'Great Bible,' without destroying its matchless rhythm and rhetoric.

The Epistles and Gospels were touched much more sparingly; but some of their more glaring inaccuracies and infelicities were remedied. For instance, the textually spurious 'Three Witnesses' verse was eliminated from the Epistle for Low Sunday. The Hebraic allusion to 'bowels,' where we would say 'heart' — disconcerting to modern taste, however correct as a matter of physiological psychology — was altered in two of the Epistles where it occurred, those for Epiphany V and Trinity XXII; though not in two others, for Trinity II and Monday in Holy Week. The Gospel for Trinity XV, 'Anxiety for the Morrow,' was adopted in the Revised Version throughout; though, as we have noted, substantially the same passage on Thanksgiving Day was corrected only in part.

The English and Scottish Prayer Books of the same year car-

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ried out minor emendations of phrase within the general framework of the Authorized Version in a considerable number of places which were not altered in our revision.

It would appear that the present undertaking to review the whole Prayer Book systematically now affords us a unique opportunity to do this sort of thing comprehensively, instead of casually and sporadically, as in previous revisions. Hitherto Prayer Book revision has been a patchwork process, directed to glaring faults: as the popular expression goes, "It's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease!" While we are about it, we ought to seek to amend every expression in the Epistles and Gospels which is obscure or erroneous, not merely those which affront our taste.

In the existing assignments, there are a rather surprising number of cases where the English words have shifted their meaning, so that a quite wrong understanding is conveyed by them when they are read. For example:

<i>Word</i>	<i>Sense</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>Sense</i>
armour	weapons	meat	food
blaspheme	revile	at meat	at table
charity	love	notable	notorious
coast	region	offend	cause to sin
corn	grain	patience	endurance, steadfastness
conscience	consciousness	power	authority
convenient	befitting	prevent	precede
conversation	conduct	prove	test, try
creature	creation	purge	purify
doctrine	teaching	quick	living
evil speaking	slander	scrip	bag
fasting	lack of food	tempt	try, prove
fowls	birds	temptations	trials
glass	mirror	testament	covenant
his, her	its	wanted	lacked
honest	honourable	watchings	sleeplessness
lively	living	worship	kneel before, reverence, honour

The fact that these and other apparently perfectly simple words, used in archaic and obscure senses in Scripture, are perfectly intelligible to a highly literate body of clergy in the Church, does not justify their being read in this form to the

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people, to whom they no longer convey their original meaning, or even convey a wrong meaning entirely.

Certainly our Church places the greatest possible weight on the importance of its teaching through the public reading of the Holy Scriptures; and of all such teaching, the solemn proclamation of the Word of God in the liturgical Epistles and Gospels occupies the highest ritual rank, and carries with it the maximum effect upon the minds of the hearers. Can we, in conscience, continue to offer them chaff along with the wheat? Must conservative inertia bind us to the archaisms of time past, which now serve only to obscure what the Prayer Book calls the 'clearness and excellency of God's holy Word'?

For this purpose, we should proceed along the lines of what has been done before in the previous revisions which have been mentioned, and as carefully and comprehensively as possible correct the particular readings in the interests of the greatest attainable clarity and force.

The new revision of the New Testament known as the 'Revised Standard' is a great help in this. Its renderings take advantage of much new knowledge of the vernacular used in the time of the New Testament which was not previously available; moreover, it measurably attains its announced goal of the literary tone and quality of the 'King James' Bible, a standard which former Revised Versions sometimes culpably neglected in favor of crabbed pedantries of expression.

Our last General Convention added the Revised Standard to the versions authorized by the Church for reading the Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer. But it cannot be adopted outright for the text of the Epistles and Gospels. Its modernization of its language, which eliminates the *thee's* and *thou's*, simplifies sentence-structure, and sometimes flattens language lifted by emotion to poetic levels down to a prosaic quality, would make Epistles and Gospels in this idiom suffer drastically by comparison with the prayers of the Liturgy wherein they are set, which prayers carry on the glories of former versions. In this hieratic background, the lections at the Eucharist

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should proclaim their message in the most stately and most exalted terms. A slightly archaic style only bestows on them a certain elevation and distinction. The only point is that this style must not obscure their meaning.

Dr. W. K. Lowther Clarke, commenting on the changes of readings proposed in England in 1928, sums up the whole matter by saying that "the ideal is a Corrected Authorized version, that is to say, the traditional Bible of the English-speaking race with such changes only as are needed to remove serious misconceptions."<sup>1</sup>

The project therefore of reviewing the present text of the 'Authorized Version' of the Epistles and Gospels to be printed in the Prayer Book, and of making judicious modifications of obscure or misleading phrases in the present translation, has been and is being prosecuted in conference with able scholars in the text and meaning of Holy Scripture, as well as with working parish clergy with a fine sense of phrase, and a love of our great classical version of the Bible as it is.

Since this matter is voluminous, detailed, and necessarily technical, it does not seem desirable to publish the present stage of this investigation at this point. Of course it must be submitted at the time that any actual process of Prayer Book Revision is in hand, just as the 1928 version of the Prayer Book Psalter was printed in a separate Report of its own.

The only objective here is exactly the same as that governing other phases of the review of the Liturgical Lectionary, as has been several times noted before: to enable the Scriptures assigned to be read at the Holy Communion to present more clearly and forcefully what the Church is trying to convey by them.

In this spirit the foregoing examination of the history and content of the Liturgical Lectionary is submitted to the consideration of the Church: in the hope that it may yield the fruit of better understanding of the Church's teaching in the present, and perhaps may pave the way to the attainment of still more valuable provisions in the future.

<sup>1</sup> *Liturgy and Worship* (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1932), 301.