

Cranmer and Common Prayer

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THE BOOK OF Common Prayer owes its character above all to one man: Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533 to 1556. While the liturgy of the Prayer Book is sometimes described as 'timeless', it is in fact rooted firmly in the time of the Reformation and in Cranmer's personal views and character. Other people contributed material to the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552, and there were substantial and important revisions later, especially in the book of 1662. But the overall character of the Book of Common Prayer as shaped by Cranmer remained, and to a large extent shapes Anglican devotion to the present day.

Thomas Cranmer was born in 1489. He studied at Jesus College, Cambridge where he became a fellow around 1515. He resigned his fellowship to marry, but was reappointed after his wife's death. He was ordained by 1520 and became a Doctor of Divinity in 1526, holding a lectureship in biblical studies. We should not presume that he entertained any sympathies with the European Reformation at this stage; what evidence we have locates him among the more conservative groups in Cambridge. He seems to have envisaged the supreme authority in the church to be a General Council rather than the papacy, but this hardly amounted to the anti-papal polemic he espoused later, let alone support of German or Swiss reform.

By 1527 Cranmer had become involved in diplomatic business, first on an embassy to Spain and then among the theologians involved in the negotiations for the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon. This involved his first published work in English, a translation of a Latin publication backing Henry's case in seeking his annulment. In 1532 Cranmer was sent on an embassy to the Emperor Charles V and embarked on a long tour of Europe in the wake of the imperial court. They visited Nürnberg, where Cranmer saw the Lutheran Reformation for himself and was sufficiently interested to find out more details of their services. Also he became friends with the reformer Andreas Osiander, whose niece Margaret he secretly married. This act, illegal in England for a priest, is the first clear evidence of his sympathy with the continental Reformation. But before he returned to England he learned that he had been nominated by Henry as Archbishop of Canterbury in succession to the deceased William Warham. He was consecrated on 20 March 1533 and was active thereafter with Henry and the King's vicegerent, Thomas Cromwell, in removing the papal supremacy in England and in subsequent reform of the church.

Henry demanded subservience from his ministers, and while Cranmer was more outspoken than most, his own desire for reform was constrained by the royal policy he had to follow. Official religious teaching in Henry's reign was determined by a series of doctrinal statements that took the form of sets of 'articles'. The Ten Articles of 1536 show links with Lutheran doctrine through the Wittenberg Articles, draft forms of agreement between England and the Lutherans. The contents of these articles were included in the Bishops' Book (*The Institution of a Christian Man*) of 1537. But neither of these was wholehearted in its support for Lutheranism. Traditionalist teaching on the sacrament of penance was maintained, and differences between traditional and Lutheran teaching were glossed over. Like many

such statements of faith, they could reveal more by what they omitted than what they determined or opposed.

In June 1539 the door to Lutheran reform was slammed shut by a new formulary, the Six Articles, which affirmed traditional teaching in such matters as transubstantiation, communion in one kind, auricular (private) confession, clerical celibacy, and monastic vows. Subsequently Cromwell was executed, Cranmer isolated. In 1543 the King's Book (*A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*) replaced the Bishops' Book as the benchmark of doctrine in England. A traditional understanding of salvation, grace, and the sacraments was maintained, although it is possible to exaggerate the reaction of the 1540s as much as the reform of the 1530s. Cranmer was able to pursue reforms in one way or another. He issued a new English litany in 1544, and towards the end of Henry's life was asked, as part of an agreement with France, to draft a Communion service to replace the Mass. This project never got any further, owing to the death of Henry and the French king. But the accession of Edward VI in January 1547 allowed the archbishop and the Council to proceed with reform with little hesitation.

Before turning to his liturgical achievement, it should be noted that this was by no means the sum total of Cranmer's plans for reform. He worked to suppress what he saw as idolatrous images and superstitious practices. He tried to bring continental reformers to England, succeeding in the case of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr Vermigli, whom he sent to represent the new theology in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. His project for a reformed canon law never prospered, but he did issue the Forty-two Articles as a statement of doctrine, together with a Book of Homilies and a Catechism to bring that doctrine to the parishes, which suffered from a desperate shortage of preachers. He wrote *A Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, setting out his own theology of the Eucharist, and then *An Answer to a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner*, defending his first book. His relationship with other members of Edward's government was not always good; he was aware of the difficulties of pursuing reform during the king's minority and was suspicious of the temptation for nobles to enrich themselves under the pretext of reforming the church.

Cranmer's Liturgical Work

There are suggestions that Cranmer was engaged in drafting services in the late 1530s, but nothing was published. As early as 1536 Hugh Latimer, in a sermon to Convocation, had called for the services of baptism and matrimony to be conducted in English. In 1538 it was stipulated that a Bible should be placed in every church, that the creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments should be recited in English, and that no one should be admitted to communion without having learnt them. A surviving draft form of the Daily Office seems to date from this period: the service was in Latin, but there was already an emphasis on the people being instructed by the readings, which suggests that vernacular scripture reading was envisaged.

Two issues were uppermost in all these moves: comprehension and the formation of a Christian people and society. In his preface to the Great Bible of 1540, Cranmer speaks of the good effect of Bible reading as a social as well as an individual good:

In the scriptures be the fat pastures of the soul. . . . He that is ignorant, shall find there what he should learn. He that is a perverse sinner, shall there find his damnation to make him to tremble for fear. He that laboureth to serve God, shall find there his glory, and the promissions of eternal life, exhorting him more diligently to labour. Herein may princes learn how to govern their subjects; subjects obedience, love and dread to their princes: husbands, how they should behave them unto their wives; how to edu-

cate their children and servants: and contrary the wives, children, and servants may know their duty to their husbands, parents and masters.

In 1543, Tudor rationalization ordered that 'this realm shall have one use': the rite of Sarum. But thus far it was simply one medieval rite supplanting others. 1544 saw the publication of the first service in English: the Litany. Processions had been a major feature of worship on Sundays and holy days. Particular processions—at Candlemas, and especially on Rogation Day, when the procession would also be a 'beating of the bounds' of the parish—were major events. It was customary for the government to order special processions of intercession in times of emergency. These were based on the Rogation processions, which had a penitential flavour; the Litany was sung, and the seven penitential psalms as time allowed. The 1544 injunction was connected with an invasion of France. But on this occasion Cranmer provided a translation and simplification of the Latin form of procession. The penitential psalms at the beginning were omitted. Much else was simplified, and many of the petitions of the Litany were conflated. In particular the long list of saints whose prayers were invoked in the traditional Litany was replaced by a threefold invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and all the saints. Among the collects at the end, one was introduced from the Byzantine liturgy: the so-called Prayer of St Chrysostom, which was to become a classic of Prayer Book spirituality—an example of Cranmer's wide reading and ability to adapt from many traditions. The new Litany was to be used for the Rogation and Lenten processions. Cranmer attempted an English version of the procession for Sundays and festivals, but this came to nothing. In October 1545 the Litany was ordered to be used at all processions, but from August 1547 the procession itself was discontinued, leaving the Litany to be sung kneeling in church. While it is in itself a magnificent piece of writing, it is also all that is left to mark the place of what had been a popular, celebratory practice that put to liturgical use the spatial world outside the walls of the church.

Reform Under Edward VI

Other reforms, small but significant, were ventured during the last years of Henry's reign. Another draft of the Daily Office, more conservative than the first, is dated to this period, and in 1546 Cranmer secured the abolition of various ceremonies and customs as superstitious. But it was the death of Henry and the accession of Edward VI in January 1547 that allowed the English reformers to move forward. The Book of Homilies, which contained a theology amenable to the Reformation, was published in July of that year. The royal injunctions in August, which banned the processions, also ordered that the epistle and gospel at Mass should be read in English rather than in Latin. In the following January many traditional ceremonies of Candlemas and Holy Week were forbidden. Most important, however, was the 'Order of the Communion', which made provision for vernacular communion devotions within the Latin Mass, consisting of exhortations, confession and absolution, and what would come to be known as the Comfortable Words and the Prayer of Humble Access, along with a formula to be used at the administration of communion (see 'The Prayer of Humble Access [1548]'). Communion was now to be given in both kinds; that is, lay people were allowed to receive the consecrated wine as well as the bread. There was also provision for additional consecration of the cup, perhaps because the small chalices of the time were inadequate for congregational use, or to allow for communities unfamiliar with the practicalities. All these items, except for the last, would later appear in the Prayer Book.

While the country was becoming accustomed to the new communion devotions, Cranmer and his colleagues were completing a draft of the first complete English Prayer Book. In September 1548 there was a conference of representative senior clergy at Chertsey Abbey. It is hard to imagine this group examining the whole text of the new Prayer Book; rather, the meeting seems to have been intended to reach consensus on points of principle ahead of

The English Litany, 1544

The book in which the first English Litany was published began with a long exhortation, to be read before processions, and continued with the 'note' below, explaining the new form and instructing lay people how to take part. It is notable for what was probably the first use of the phrase 'common prayer'. The Litany proper followed; this excerpt has the opening invocations and the first section of suffrages, omitting the musical notation.

As these holy prayers and suffrages following, are set forth of most godly zeal for edifying and stirring of devotion of all true faithful Christian hearts: so is it thought convenient in this common prayer of procession to have it set forth and used in the vulgar tongue, for stirring the people to more devotion: and it shall be every Christian man's part reverently to use the same, to the honour and glory of almighty God, and the profit of their own souls. And such among the people as have books, and can read, may read them quietly and softly to them self, and such as can not read, let them quietly & attentively give audience in time of the said prayers, having their minds erect to almighty God, & devoutly praying in their hearts, the same petitions which do enter in at their ears, so that with one sound of the heart and one accord, God may be glorified in his church.

And it is to be remembered, that that which is printed in black letters is to be said or sung of the priest with an audible voice, that is to say, so loud and so plainly, that it may well be understood of the hearers: And that which is in the red [*here, in italics*], is to be answered of the choir soberly and devoutly.

The Litany

O God the Father of heaven: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Father of heaven: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Son, redeemer of the world: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Son, redeemer of the world: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God: have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

Holy Virgin Mary, mother of God our Saviour Jesu Christ.

Pray for us.

All holy Angels and Archangels and all holy orders of blessed spirits.

Pray for us.

All holy Patriarchs, and Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, & Virgins, and all the blessed company of heaven:

Pray for us.

Remember not Lord our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever:
Spare us good Lord.

From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation:
Good Lord deliver us.

From blindness of heart, from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness:
Good Lord deliver us.

From fornication and all deadly sin, and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil:
Good Lord deliver us.

From lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence and famine, from battle and murder, & from sudden death:
Good Lord deliver us.

From all sedition and privy conspiracy, from the tyranny of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, from all false doctrine and heresy, from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandments:
Good Lord deliver us.

The Prayer of Humble Access (1548)

In 'The Order of the Communion' this prayer is to be said by the priest, kneeling, 'in the name of all them that shall receive the communion'. It was included in the first Book of Common Prayer, and with slight changes of wording in later revisions. Its name derives from the 1637 Scottish Prayer Book.

We do not presume to come to this thy table (O merciful Lord) trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies: we be not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table: but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant us therefore gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, in these holy Mysteries, that we may continually dwell in him, and he in us, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood.

a debate in Parliament. Later, in a letter to Queen Mary, Cranmer avers that the conference was unanimous in agreeing to adopt the vernacular. Unfortunately, unanimity in eucharistic doctrine was more difficult to achieve, and disagreement between the divines spilled into public view in the House of Lords debate in December. Nevertheless, the new Prayer Book was passed by Parliament on 21 January, and was required to be in use by Whitsunday, 9 June 1549.

Despite considerable opposition to the new liturgy in many parts of the kingdom, reform continued apace. An Ordinal was produced in 1550, and in November of that year the Council ordered the removal of altars from churches: henceforth communion was to be administered from a table. Occasional references point to committees working on a revised edition of the Prayer Book through 1550 and 1551. Martin Bucer, the Strasbourg reformer resident in Cambridge, wrote a critique of the whole book for the bishop of Ely, as did his Oxford counterpart, Peter Martyr Vermigli. Bucer's work survives, but it is not certain what influence it had on the revision. On 14 April 1552 Parliament passed the revised, second Prayer Book and ordered its use beginning on 1 November. Before this authorization came into effect, however, the publication of the new book was interrupted by a dispute over

The 'Black Rubric'

This declaration on the significance of kneeling was added to the 1552 Prayer Book after printing had begun; some copies do not include it. Omitted in 1559, it was restored—with small but important changes—in 1662. To emphasize that it is not strictly a rubric, and so ought not to be printed in red as true rubrics sometimes were, it came to be called the 'Black Rubric'.

Although no order can be so perfectly devised, but it may be of some, either for their ignorance and infirmity, or else of malice and obstinacy, misconstrued, depraved, and interpreted in a wrong part: And yet because brotherly charity willeth, that so much as conveniently may be, offences should be taken away: therefore we willing to do the same. Whereas it is ordered in the book of common prayer, in the administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants kneeling should receive the holy Communion: which thing being well meant, for a signification of the humble and grateful acknowledging of the benefits of Christ, given unto the worthy receiver, and to avoid the profanation and disorder, which about the holy Communion might else ensue: lest the same kneeling might be thought or taken otherwise, we do declare that it is not meant thereby, that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians. And as concerning the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is against the truth of Christ's true natural body, to be in more places than in one at one time.

whether congregations should receive communion kneeling or seated. In the end kneeling communion was maintained, but an explanation was added in the form of the so-called 'Black Rubric', which was appended to the book by order of Council (see "The 'Black Rubric'" and Illustration 1). This declaration on kneeling was the clearest statement of eucharistic theology in the Prayer Book, denying that there is in the bread and wine of the Eucharist 'any real and essential presence . . . of Christ's natural flesh and blood'. The official life of the second Prayer Book was short: little more than a year later, Queen Mary's Parliament restored the traditional liturgy. But for the most part use of the Prayer Book had been discontinued since her accession in July 1553.

The Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552

When compared with continental Reformed liturgies, both of Cranmer's Prayer Books retain a large amount of material from the traditional services and give the impression of a conservative reform. From the point of view of the greater part of the English population, unexposed and unsympathetic to reform, both books were radical, and closer examination revealed a major theological shift which was more ambiguous in the first book and more obvious in the second. It would seem that Cranmer had a deliberate policy of reform by planned stages through the two books.

The Prayer Book was entitled *The Book of the Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church after the Use of the Church of England* (see frontispiece). The title effectively gives three categories of service. By 'common prayer' was meant the provision for Morning and Evening Prayer throughout the year. The preface, which would seem from its position to explain the whole book, referred in its content only to those two services. A calendar and lectionary was included: a Bible (and Psalter) would be the only other books required.

Following the two daily offices were the epistles and gospels for use at Holy Communion on Sundays and holy days, together with the collects (also required for Morning and Evening Prayer) and introit psalms (omitted in 1552). Then came the order for Communion itself. The next set of services was arranged to reflect the life cycle, of baptism, confirmation, matrimony, visitation and communion of the sick, and the burial service. Only the Purification of Women (in 1552 more accurately entitled the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth) and the Ash Wednesday devotions (later named the Communion service) followed. This general arrangement leaves discreetly ambiguous which of the services count as sacraments—for reformers, only baptism and the Eucharist; for traditionalists, confirmation, matrimony, anointing of the sick, confession, and holy orders also—and which are mere ceremonies to be retained or abolished as seems fit.

We know something of the process of liturgical composition. The Chertsey Conference met before the authorization of the 1549 Prayer Book, and a committee was appointed for drawing up the Ordinal only one week before it completed its work. These were evidently final steps in a longer process. The Chertsey Conference discussed points of principle, and in the House of Lords debate on the Prayer Book concerned itself with eucharistic doctrine; it is hard to imagine detailed poring over texts in the manner of a modern revising committee. There was, however, considerable consultation earlier on. Questionnaires on matters of liturgical theology were sent to bishops and divines, and their replies survive. These must have had some effect on the process of drafting. Verbal reminiscences of the King's Book in the 1549 Prayer Book may even have been a deliberate ploy to give the new liturgy an aura of respectability. Some parts of the new Prayer Books were probably contributed by others: Peter Martyr drafted an exhortation to communion; the ordinal was largely based on new work by Bucer. No doubt others helped as well. Nevertheless the work as a whole betrays both a strong editorial control and the pastoral and theological principles of Cranmer himself; and given his known interest in liturgical composition, it is sensible to see his hand throughout.

At the Communion.

to haue compassion vpon our infirmities, & those thynges, whiche for our vnworthines we dare not, & for our blyndnesse, we cannot aske, vouchesafe to giue vs for the worthinesse of thy sonne Iesus Christ our lord. Amen.



Almighty God, which hast promised to here the petitions of them that aske in thy sonnes name, we beleeche the mercifully to encline thyne eares to vs that haue made nowe our praers and supplications vnto the: & graūt that those thynges whiche we haue faithfully asked, accordyng to thy wille, maye effectuallye bee obtayned, to the relief of our necessitie, and to the setting furth of thy glory, through Iesus Christ our lord. Amen.

Upon the holy daies, if there be no Communion, shalbe saide all that is appoynted at the Communion, vntill the ende of the Homelie, concludyng with the generall praier for the whole state of Christes churche militant here in earth, and one or mo of these collectes befoze rehearsed, as occasion shall serue.

And there shalbee no celebracion of the Lordes Supper, except there bee a good nomber to communicate with the priest, accordyng to his discrecion.

And if there be not aboue twentie persones in the parische, of discrecion to receiue the Communion, yet ther shalbee no Communion, except foure, or thre at the least communicate with the Priest. And in Cathedrall and Collegiate Churches, where bee many Priestes and Deacons, they shall all receiue the Communion with the minister euery Sondaie at the least, except they haue a reasonable cause to the contrary.

Although no order can be so perfectly deuised, but it maie be of some, either for their ignozance and infirmitie, or els of malice and obstinacie misconstrued, depraued, and interpreted in a wozong part: and yet because brotherly charitie willeth, that so muche as conueniently maie be, offences should be taken awaie, therfoze, we willyng to do the same. Wheras it is ordeined in the boke of Common praer, in the administracion of the Lordes Supper, that the Communicantes knelyng, should receiue the holy Communion, whiche thyng beyng well ment, for a significacio of the humble and gratefull acknowlegyng of the benefi-
tes

1. The 'Black Rubric' in a 1552 Prayer Book

Some copies of Edward VI's second Book of Common Prayer had already been printed when the order to add a declaration 'touching the kneeling at the receiving of the Communion' was issued. The text of this 'Black Rubric', as it would later be called, consequently had to be inserted on a separate leaf. In the copy illustrated here, which was printed after the last-minute change took effect, the declaration begins near the bottom of the page, after the third of the rubrics that follow the Communion service.

Cranmer seems to have preferred to work from an earlier text, not only in writing prayers and exhortations but even in prefatory material. The academic search for his sources has been derided, and of course the results must remain largely hypothetical, but with Cranmer it is a much more fruitful approach than with most composers of liturgy. First we see an innate conservatism which makes full use of the traditional English service books: the Missal, the Manual and Pontifical, and the Breviary as well as vernacular material in the Primers (*see* Stevenson, 'Worship', pp. 10–16). At first glance, a contemporary reader may well have supposed the 1549 Prayer Book to be a translation and rationalization of the old services, both of which would have been widely welcomed. Other traditions were included: a certain number of texts come from the Greek Orthodox and the old Spanish (Mozarabic) rites. Many would have seen these as being properly catholic but not popish, a real advantage in a country which under Henry had espoused Catholicism without the Pope. Then there were contemporary sources: Cardinal Quiñones' work on the Daily Office; a wide range of Lutheran texts, including some by Luther himself; and local orders such as those from Albertine Saxony and Brandenburg–Nürnberg. A very important source was the still-born reform of the church in Cologne by its archbishop, Hermann von Wied, in 1543, which drew considerable comment from all quarters. But whatever the source, the material was handled in a way that reveals the editor's concerns and views, and often the changes are more revealing than the imitations.

Cranmer's conservative use of sources generally produced a type of service which encouraged more congregational participation than did some other contemporary rites, retaining as he did comparatively short prayers and a large number of congregational responses. Also the musical aspect of liturgy was largely retained, though less so by 1552 (*see* Leaver, 'Noted', pp. 39–42). Musically the greatest loss was of hymnody, reflecting Cranmer's own acknowledged lack of compositional skill. His literary style is discussed elsewhere, but here some comments are appropriate on its importance for the theology and spirituality of the Prayer Book. While Cranmer could produce the most majestic phrases and seem to imply much by them, he could also be deliberately vague. At times his language resembles a kind of verbal incense that offers an attractive religious haze but no clarity of meaning. This may well have contributed to the way in which the Prayer Book has served as a vehicle of prayer and worship over many centuries and in many cultures. In his own time, this ambiguity served the purpose of obscuring his radical theology: in several places a close reading of the text reveals that much less is going on than meets the eye! Also the composition misses things we might wish for. Commentators have observed that in his translations and adaptations Cranmer substitutes the obedience of servants for the privileges and joy of God's children. The piety is genuine, but it is often in a more subdued tone from that of the originals.

Cranmer's theology has been much studied, though his style does not allow easy answers. He had his own position, which developed over the years, and was no mere disciple of others. Probably he was sympathetic to Lutheran views in the late 1530s, but by the time the Prayer Books were published he was closer to the views of the Reformed theologians like Bucer and Bullinger. In any case some basic principles underlie his liturgical work.

The reformation of the church and the correction of abuses

Behind the Prayer Book lay the perceived need to reform the church. The authority of the papacy had already been annulled in England, but the reformers felt the need now to remove what they saw as the effects of popish corruption on church life. Idolatry had to be extirpated and ignorance dispelled by teaching in the true faith. The doctrine of the Mass as a sacrifice to God had to be replaced by the evangelical teaching of its being a service of thanksgiving for the unique sacrifice of the cross and a spiritual communion with Christ. What was derided as a magical attitude to sacraments and ceremonies needed to be enlight-

ened by a true knowledge of God's word in scripture. Purgatory and the abuses connected with it were to be rooted out.

A Christian society

In many ways the society envisaged by Cranmer was simpler than the one he grew up in. Of the two great powers of medieval society, church and monarchy, the former was by the end of Cranmer's career totally subservient to the latter. Papal authority was excluded, the abbeys dissolved, and the bishops and convocations totally subservient to the king. But this was no mere secularism. The supremacy of the monarch was that of a 'godly prince' who orders society and the lives of subjects. Obedience, the proper response of the people, was inculcated through the liturgy. Within the local community too the liturgy had a narrower focus. The remembrance of the dead, formerly prominent in the services and the furnishings of churches, was all but extinguished. The saints were evicted, except for some of the ones who appear in the Bible, and these few were retained as examples to be followed, not because their prayers could benefit worshippers. In the public discourse of the liturgy, the deceased and infants tended no longer to be spoken *to* but spoken *of*, reference to them now being almost entirely in the third person.

Public worship as communicating the true faith and forming the faithful

The new liturgy was the centrepiece of the Reformation in England. Foreign reformers were surprised at the comparative lack of priority given to preaching and education. Cranmer seems to have expected that the services of themselves would form people in the faith. First and foremost, the vernacular reading of the Bible and of the services was meant to give everyone familiarity with the tenets of Christianity. The congregation was expected to pay attention and participate in the service through the responses. The medieval custom of saying private prayers during the service was strongly discouraged. The ability to recite the Lord's Prayer, the creed, and the Ten Commandments was required of communicants, and confirmation, the normal gateway to receiving Holy Communion, was accompanied by the Catechism, which taught these texts.

The Prayer Book services themselves had prefaces and exhortations that summarized authorized teaching (see 'Exhortation at the Visitation of the Sick [1549]'). These were supplemented by the Book of Homilies, which compensated for the dearth of licensed preachers. Ever since the Bible had been made widely available in English, how to interpret it

Exhortation at the Visitation of the Sick (1549)

The Order for the Visitation of the Sick prescribed in the two Prayer Books of Edward VI begins with versicles and responses, followed by two prayers and a lengthy exhortation. A rubric provides that 'if the person visited be very sick', the minister may use the following shortened form of the exhortation, which is about a third of the whole.

Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord over life, and death, and over all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness is sent unto you; whether it be to try your patience for the example of other, and that your faith may be found, in the day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honourable, to the increase of glory, and endless felicity: or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you, whatsoever doth offend the eyes of our heavenly Father: know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy, for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, and render unto him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly to his will; it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life.

became an even thornier issue than it had been, and the homilies promoted the new 'correct' interpretation. With lengthy readings from scripture in Morning and Evening Prayer, there was a strong didactic element throughout the services. Finally, the importance of education was underlined by the public teaching of the Catechism to children on Sundays before Evensong.

Sacraments as signs

How, according to Cranmer, does worship bring worshippers into relationship with God? An important key to understanding this question is his affirmation that a sacrament is the 'sign of an holy thing'. It signifies or points to what it represents, but must not be confused with it. Thus baptism is 'a figure of our burial', even though it is not the case that 'every man be corporally buried in deed when he is baptised'. So likewise the physical body and blood of Christ, if they are signified by the sacrament of the Eucharist, need not be present—and, for Cranmer, they are not. They are present spiritually, to the elect. Worship expresses and nourishes relation to God but does not determine it: that is God's work alone.

Grace, predestination, and election

Ashley Null has shown how central to Cranmer's thought is the doctrine of justification by God's predestined grace. In justification God grants faith and love to the one who is redeemed—faith, which claims the righteousness of Christ, on the basis of which the sinner is pardoned; and love, in grateful response to God. Although this doctrine was not stated explicitly in Cranmer's Prayer Books, it underlay their theology throughout. And while the liturgy was that of a Christian society under a Christian monarch, Cranmer had no illusions that every individual was a faithful Christian elected by God to salvation.

Sacraments signify grace, but confer it only in the case of the elect

Cranmer adopted a position, which was commonly held in Reformed (as opposed to Roman Catholic and Lutheran) churches, that an 'unworthy' recipient of the sacrament, in effect one who is not one of God's elect, receives the outward form of the sacrament, being washed in baptism or eating and drinking the elements at the Communion service, but receives no grace as a result. Water, bread, and wine remain empty signs. Only the elect, redeemed by God's will and love, receive the grace as well as the sacramental symbols. Faith, as a gift of God, unites the outward sign and the inward grace, and the sacrament is then described as truly efficacious:

Would you resemble a knave playing in a prince's coat, in whom nothing is inwardly wrought or altered, unto a man being baptised in water, who hath put upon him outwardly water, but inwardly is apparelled with Christ, and is by the omnipotent working of God spiritually regenerated and changed into a new man? Or would you compare him that banqueteth at a feast to represent an anniversary, or triumph, unto that man that in remembrance of Christ's death eateth and drinketh at his holy supper, giving thanks for his redemption, and comforting himself with the benefit thereof? . . . The marvellous alteration to an higher estate, nature, and condition, is chiefly and principally in the persons, and in the sacramental signs it is none otherwise but sacramentally and in signification. (*Answer to Gardiner*, 2)

The distinction between the sign and the signified, between the sacrament and the grace, pervades the Prayer Book. One way or another, the theme of its prayers is that the recipient of the sign may also receive the grace signified.

With this proviso, Cranmer was happy to use figurative or 'sacramental' language that might seem to imply that *everyone* received the grace prayed for. For example, in the baptism service the priest says, 'Seeing . . . that these children be regenerate', although Cranmer himself would have applied that assertion spiritually only to the elect, and figuratively to others. Similar language can be found in the funeral service, suggesting that the deceased is one of the elect whatever his or her actual character or lifestyle. This use of language, sometimes difficult to follow, would cause controversy in years to come.

Morning and Evening Prayer; the Litany

Cranmer's concerns and methods are exemplified in the structure and wording of the services appointed in the two Prayer Books of which he was the principal architect. English translations of some of the Latin daily services were already to be found in the Primers, semi-official devotional books published for the use of the laity. These provided texts for Cranmer to use and improve upon. He was much influenced both by Lutheran orders and by a revision of the Daily Office by the Spanish Cardinal Quiñones. But the structure of the services was Cranmer's own, and they exemplify his concern to simplify the complications of the traditional office and to establish the centrality of scripture.

The whole service was in English, the many offices (which tended anyway to be said joined together) being reduced to Morning and Evening Prayer. After the introduction, which in Morning Prayer included Psalm 95, the entire Psalter was recited in order over the course of each month. A chapter from the Old Testament, and another from the New, were read at each service. Both offices had a canticle after each reading: at Morning Prayer the *Te Deum* or *Benedicite* following after the Old Testament reading, then the *Benedictus* after the New; at Evening Prayer, the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*. The Apostles' Creed was said with the Lord's Prayer, suffrages, and collects. Hymnody disappeared. In 1552 both of the daily offices were prefaced by a lengthy exhortation, confession, and absolution. Lengthy intercession was served by the Litany, taken from Cranmer's 1544 form minus the invocation of saints, which was to be used on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays after Morning Prayer. Thus the service became predominantly one of education and prayer, intended to ground a Christian population in the knowledge and practice of their faith. Cranmer expected a congregation to attend the services daily and to profit from them.

Holy Communion

The Eucharist in Cranmer's Prayer Books kept much that had belonged to the medieval service books, and would have seemed conservative by the standards of other reforms on the Continent. For example, the collect, epistle, and gospel for each Sunday maintained the overall structure for the proclamation of scripture and (where there was preaching) its exposition, whereas in many Reformed churches the readings were fewer and longer, to allow for systematic exposition in the sermon. In the 1549 Prayer Book even the title of the service carried an air of compromise between the traditional and the reformed: 'The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass'. Much of the traditional apparatus of the medieval rite was retained: the stone altars were still in place, the clergy wore traditional vestments, and the clerks sang much of the service (*see* Leaver, 'Noted', p. 40). At the time, the immediate impression would have been one of somewhat stark simplicity, and of course accessibility in that the service was now in English rather than in Latin.

After the Lord's Prayer and Collect for Purity (survivors of the traditional priest's preparation prayers), the clerks would sing the introit psalm appointed for the day, the *Kyries*, and the *Gloria*. The priest would say the collect of the day, followed by a collect for the king. The epistle and gospel were read, then the creed sung. A sermon or reading from the Book of Homilies would follow; then, after an exhortation to devout communion, the offertory.

Here the new emphasis of the reform became clear. In the medieval Mass, the offering was focused on the bread and wine that were to be consecrated as the body and blood of Christ. In the rite of 1549, the language of offering was curtailed so as to refer only to offering thanks and praise for Christ's one sacrifice, and the offertory was solely a collection for the poor. The congregation would move into the chancel and place their money in the 'poor men's box' which was near the high altar. Again, in the traditional rites everyone would remain for the whole Mass but receive communion very rarely, perhaps only at Easter, reckoning their participation to be in prayerful attendance on the consecration and offering of the body and blood of Christ. In the new service, communion was inseparable from participation.

After the offertory, those not receiving communion were expected to leave. Communicants would remain in the chancel, gathered near the altar for the whole of the eucharistic prayer and communion. If there were no communicants, the service was to end at this point, the priest saying one of the collects printed at the end of the rite. That is how it generally did end, despite the reformers' hopes that people would receive communion more frequently, and the abbreviated service became known as Ante-Communion.

The eucharistic prayer in the 1549 Prayer Book was quite long. Based on the medieval canon of the Mass, it began with the *Sursum corda*, preface, *Sanctus*, and *Benedictus*. Then prayers of intercession brought together similar items scattered through the old canon; they also replaced the traditional vernacular 'bidding of the bedes' that formerly had come after the sermon. The words of institution, widely regarded as words of consecration, were prefaced by the prayer, 'with thy holy spirit and word, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved son Jesus Christ'. This is a classic example of Cranmerian ambiguity: despite the high language, and even the signs of the cross made over the bread and wine, Cranmer in his own writings made it clear that to bless something was only to set it apart for a holy use. The bread and wine will now 'be unto us' the body and blood of Christ, that is, represent them. As he said in his *Defence* (I.16), 'This spiritual meat . . . is received with a pure heart and a sincere faith. . . . And this faith God worketh inwardly in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and confirmeth the same outwardly to our ears by hearing of his word, and to our other senses by eating and drinking of the sacramental bread and wine.'

To confirm this Reformed theology, Cranmer directed that there be no elevation of the bread after the words of institution. This had been the high point of the medieval Mass, at which the consecrated bread, now the body of Christ, was worshipped by the congregation. By omitting it, Cranmer struck at the heart of traditional devotion and made the theology of the new rite unmistakable. Just as the offertory had removed all sense of offering the bread and wine, so the eucharistic prayer removed all sense of offering the consecrated bread and wine to God, and replaced it with making a memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, together with the offering of praise and thanksgiving and the self-offering of the worshippers. Often the language evoked that of the medieval canon, but its theology was very different. The only sacrifice was that of Christ on the cross, 'who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world'.

The service continued with the Lord's Prayer and communion devotions, repeated with little change from the 1548 'Order of the Communion'. The words of administration, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life', were deliberately ambiguous. They could be understood either as referring to the bread then administered, or (following Cranmer's own theology) as a prayer for spiritual communion, asking that the communicant receiving the bread might also receive by faith the body of Christ. Unlike the 1548 'Order of the Communion', there were no directions for additional consecration if the wine should run out. The service concluded with a thanksgiving prayer and blessing.

Despite protests against this new service, in the 1552 Prayer Book it was revised more radically, to make the Reformed theology more explicit. In the meantime stone altars had been removed and replaced by communion tables, which were directed to be placed in the chancel, lengthwise, so that communicants in the chancel stalls could kneel around. The priest was to stand on the north side of the table, and the medieval Mass vestments were replaced by the surplice.

The first half of the service, now entitled 'The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion', had changed little. The main difference was the removal of the sung items. Instead of the introit psalm and *Kyries* (both were gone) and the *Gloria* (it was moved to the end of the service), the Ten Commandments were recited by the minister, with responses by the people, as a kind of litany. After the collection for the poor (the language of offertory was suppressed) came the intercessions, much as they had been found in the 1549 eucharistic prayer but now as a separate prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth': prayer for the departed was no longer included! The intercessions being in this position had the double advantage for Cranmer that they would be said whether or not there was a communion (which was becoming increasingly rare through lack of communicants) and that they were not associated with the communion and its medieval sacrificial connotations.

The remainder of the service was radically reshaped to focus clearly on communion and leave no room for traditional theology or spirituality. First came the confession, absolution, and Comfortable Words; then the *Sursum corda*, preface, and *Sanctus*, which with their theme of lifting the worshippers' hearts on high appealed to the Reformed theology of meeting Christ spiritually in heaven. The priest then said the Prayer of Humble Access in the name of the communicants, asking for grace to receive communion rightly. The prayer that followed would later, in the 1662 Prayer Book, be entitled the Prayer of Consecration, but it had no such title in 1552. Properly speaking, it was a prayer of invocation for the communicants, rather than a prayer of blessing the bread and wine. Its key phrase asked that 'we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood.' The words of institution followed, as a warrant and remembrance. The communion followed immediately—there was no 'Amen'—and the new words of administration starkly eliminated any description of the bread and wine: 'Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving'; 'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful'.

As in the 1549 rite, there was no provision for additional consecration. Since, for Cranmer, nothing happens to the bread and wine, extra could be added without further prayer or ceremony. Moreover, a note provided that any bread or wine left over from the communion could be taken by the minister for his own use. Although they had been set apart for a holy use in the service, Cranmer ascribed no holiness to them in themselves, and saw no reason why they could not be used domestically after the service just as well as before. Communion was followed by the Lord's Prayer and one of two alternatives: either a thanksgiving prayer, as in the first Prayer Book, or a prayer offering praise, thanksgiving, and self-oblation in words which in that book had belonged to the eucharistic prayer. The *Gloria* was said or sung before the blessing. Its new position may be a reminiscence of Jesus and the disciples singing a hymn at the end of the Last Supper.

Baptism

The core structure of the eucharistic service—invocation prayer, administration of the sacrament, Lord's Prayer, and thanksgiving prayer—was parallel to that of the baptismal service. This formal feature emphasizes that there are two dominical sacraments: Holy Communion was no longer, as in traditional theology, seen as the chief sacrament, different from all others, and at the same time a new understanding of baptism was given liturgical expression.

In the Middle Ages baptism was celebrated soon after a child's birth on any day of the week. A baby born of a noble family would be baptized with public pomp, and a bishop might be present to confirm the child at the same time. The church service of baptism was lengthy, complicated, and repetitious, being a conflation of a long series of rites administered in the late Roman Empire to adult converts, and entirely in Latin with the exception of an exhortation to the godparents. But since baptism was regarded as absolutely essential for salvation, if there was any risk at all to the health of the child the midwife would baptize it immediately.

For Cranmer, the pressing need was to simplify the baptism service and make it accessible to understanding. On the one hand, he wished to define its importance as a dominical sacrament, equal to the Eucharist, but on the other hand, given his Reformed theology, he did not believe it to be absolutely necessary for salvation. He would have held that it was ordinarily necessary, and that anyone who spurned the sacrament of salvation would be reckoned to have rejected the grace; but since he believed that salvation depended on God's prior election and grace, omission of the sign of baptism did not affect the child's hope of salvation. And he wanted to make it clear that baptism was a sign of the whole Christian life, and not simply a removal of original sin, as it was often taken to be. Accordingly, he directed that baptism should ordinarily be celebrated on Sundays or feast days, at Morning or Evening Prayer, when the congregation might witness the event and call to mind their own baptism. There was provision for emergency baptism at home in case of necessity, but in 1552 it was emphasized that this was permissive.

The 1549 service of Public Baptism seems to have been largely based on Luther's baptism service, itself a simplification of the medieval rite. It began at the church door, with a prayer for salvation based on the theme of Noah's deliverance from the flood. The child was signed with the cross on the forehead and breast to represent faith and obedience to Christ, but references to the candidate's having a personal faith (a relic of the ancient baptism of adults, of which Luther approved with regard to infants) were replaced so as to emphasise the faith of the congregation. They were bidden to pray for the child being baptized, and also to call to mind and appropriate in faith their own baptism. The medieval rite had also contained numerous prayers of exorcisms; these were reduced to one prayer in 1549. A different theme now came to the fore. A prayer, another ancient one, picked up the theme of God *receiving* the child, and this was continued through the gospel reading (Jesus blessing the children and saying that anyone who receives the kingdom of God must receive it like a child) and the following exhortation to the congregation, affirming Christ's acceptance of children. (We may see polemic against early Anabaptist teaching here.) The Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed were then recited as core texts of the Christian faith.

Then the service moved indoors to the font. There the devil, the world, and the flesh were forsaken, and belief in God attested through the words of the Apostles' Creed (again!). The child was baptized, then clothed in a white garment and anointed. A final exhortation on the duties of godparents concluded this office, and the congregation would return to the main service to which the baptism had been added. For the most part the baptism itself represented a simplification of the medieval rite. It left a few of the many symbolic actions and repetitive prayers of the original. As with Holy Communion, it was a very conservative form, by the standards of the day, including even a blessing of the water of the font, which was to be used at least monthly. The content of this blessing, compared with the eucharistic rites of 1549 and 1552, illustrates Cranmer's theology of the two dominical sacraments.

In 1552 there was further simplification of the baptism service. The whole office was now to be held at the font. The exorcism and the post-baptismal robing and anointing were omitted. The sign of the cross was moved from the beginning to immediately after the baptism—a change that would lead to confusion down the years as to what constitutes baptism, as many have been taught that the sign of the cross, not washing with water, is the distinctive baptismal sign. The recitations of the Lord's Prayer and creed in the early part of the

The Structure of Holy Baptism in the First and Second Prayer Books

1549

At the church door

exhortation
 'Noah' prayer
 naming by godparents
 signing of candidate's forehead and breast
 prayer for receiving of candidates
 exorcism of unclean spirit
 salutation and gospel (Mark 10)
 exhortation on the gospel
 Lord's Prayer
 Apostles' Creed
 prayer for the Holy Spirit
procession to the font

At the font

exhortation to godparents
 renunciation of devil, world, and flesh
 affirmation of Apostles' Creed (by articles)
 affirmation of willingness to be baptized
 blessing of font*
 petitions for those to be baptized*
 salutation and
 prayer for those to be baptized*
 naming of each candidate
 dipping (three times) of each candidate
 clothing with chrisom
 anointing with prayer

exhortation to godparents

**If the water in the font has been changed.*

1552

At the font

exhortation
 'Noah' prayer

 prayer for receiving of candidates

gospel (Mark 10)
 exhortation on the gospel

prayer for the Holy Spirit

exhortation to godparents
 renunciation of devil, world, and flesh
 affirmation of Apostles' Creed (entire)
 affirmation of willingness to be baptized

petitions for candidates

prayer for candidates
 naming of each candidate
 dipping of each candidate

signing with the cross, reception into the congregation
 Lord's Prayer
 prayer of thanksgiving
 exhortation to godparents

service were omitted; the latter was now used only after the rejection of devil, world, and flesh, and the former recited after the administration of the sacrament, in a position parallel to the Lord's Prayer in Holy Communion. Likewise in parallel, an invocation prayer for the recipients of the sacrament was inserted, the words having been used in the 1549 blessing of the font, and a thanksgiving prayer completed the rite.

Confirmation

Confirmation in the Prayer Book changed enormously, not in the rite itself but in its context. Before the Reformation people were confirmed whenever a bishop was available, and the service was seen as conferring grace for the Christian life after baptism. Cranmer adopted the view of fellow reformers, such as Bucer and Calvin, that in the early church confirmation provided an opportunity for the baptized to profess their own faith. Historically this was wrong, but pastorally it was appropriate in an age now sensitive to the issue of

a personal affirmation of faith. It was on this point, for example, that the Anabaptists had criticized the baptism of infants.

The Prayer Book service was preceded by the text of the Catechism, which was to be taught regularly in church on Sundays. The child would rehearse and accept the baptismal promises made by his or her godparents. Then followed the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, along with a discussion of duty to God and neighbour. These formularies were meant to be known to everyone as a qualification for receiving communion, but on communion itself the Catechism had no teaching until 1604, perhaps because the topic was too tendentious in the first years of the Reformation. The confirmation service itself was very brief, and was modelled on the traditional rite. The bishop presided. In 1549 the only substantive change was that the oil of chrism was omitted. After praying for the 'inward unction of thy Holy Ghost', the bishop made the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and laid his hand on the head. In 1552 the signing was omitted altogether, leaving just the hand-laying. Reference in a new prayer to following the example of the apostles (Acts 8) is satisfying but, again, historically tendentious. The prayers also made it clear that what is asked for is not a new gift of the Holy Spirit—that is granted already by God—but the daily increase of the Spirit throughout the person's life.

Marriage

The marriage service was altered very little from its medieval predecessors. The vows had previously been said in English and were carried through with minimum change. The first part of the service—an exhortatory preface, provision for objections, and the vows—was conducted in the nave of the church, not the porch as before. Then the couple would move into the chancel for the prayers. It remained the requirement that the couple then receive communion. Theologically the service made it clear that marriage was not a sacrament dispensed according to the rules of the church, but an ordinance of God regulated by scripture. Hints of sacerdotalism in the old service were played down: the true ministers were the couple. The use of the ring was retained, but it was not blessed—the couple were blessed, in line with Cranmer's thinking that blessing pertains to people, not things. The opening exhortation, setting out teaching on marriage, was somewhat traditional in giving its reasons as the procreation of children, the avoidance of fornication, and mutual support—in that order (*see p. 515*). Bucer in his *Censura* wanted the third reason to come first but his advice was not taken up until the twentieth century. Overall Cranmer produced a service which rationalized the medieval form, was richer in content than many Reformed counterparts, and (apart from a few infelicitous phrases) has retained popular affection ever since.

Visitation of the Sick; Confession

The modern reader can only wonder at the stamina of the sick in former times. Even the 1552 form, which was much abbreviated from 1549, would tax many a healthy person. Both forms included brief prayers, a lengthy exhortation, an examination of the faith and conscience of the sick person, and if necessary the writing of a will. The sick person might wish to make a special confession, and in 1549 a form of absolution was given for the priest to use in this instance and also 'in all private confessions'. In 1552 the reference to private confessions was omitted. Evidently Cranmer had no wish to give sacramental status to what he no longer regarded as a sacrament. Likewise, the 1549 rite provided for anointing of the sick, with a strict distinction between the outward anointing of the visible oil and the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit, but 1552 omitted it altogether.

Communion of the sick in 1549 could be administered either directly from a celebration of Holy Communion elsewhere (reservation of the sacrament was forbidden), with a brief form of the communion devotions, or with an abbreviated celebration in the house. In 1552

At the buriall.

Then the priest casting earth vpon the Corps, shall saye.

Commende thy soule to God the father almighty, and thy body to the grounde, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certayne hope of resurrection to eternall life, through our Lord Iesus Christ, who shall chaunge our vile body, that it may be lyke to his glorious body; accordyng to the myghtie workyng wherby he is hable to subdue all thynges to himselfe.

Then shalbe sayed o; song.

Apoc. xiiii.

I heard a voyce from heauen saying, vnto me: wryte, blessed are the dead whiche dye in the Lorde. Euen so sayeth the spirite, that they rest from theyr labours.

Let vs praye.

Commende into thy handes of mercy (moste mercifull father) the soule of this our brother departed. R. And his body we commit to the earth, besechyng thyne infinite goodnesse, to geue vs grace to lyue in thy feare and loue, and to dye in thy fauoure: that when the iudgemente shall come which thou haste comytted to thy welbeloued sonne, both this our brother, & we may be found acceptable in thy sight, and receiue that blessing, whiche thy welbeloued sone shall then pronounce to all that loue and feare thee, saying: Come ye blessed children of my father: Receyue the kingdome prepared for you before the beginning of the worlde. Graunt this mercifull father for the honour of Iesu Christe our onely sauioz, mediator, and aduocate. Amen.

This prayer shall also be added.

Almightie God, we geue thee hertie thankes for this thy seruaunte, whom thou haste deliuered fro the miseries of this wretched world; from the body of death and all temptation.
And

2. The Burial Office in the First Book of Common Prayer

Much of the wording on this page from a 1549 Prayer Book changed when the service for the burial of the dead was revised. Here the soul of the deceased is commended to God by 'the priest casting earth upon the corpse', and again in the prayer that follows the sentence beginning 'I heard a voice'. These commendations were both omitted in the 1552 Prayer Book, together with the prayer that starts at the bottom of the page.

even this was curtailed; only a celebration in the house was provided for, and that only if other people were willing to receive communion as well. 'Private' celebrations could not be allowed. If the conditions for a 'public' celebration could not be fulfilled, the sick were reminded that by true faith, repentance of sins, and thanksgiving for God's mercy, they spiritually ate and drank the body and blood of Christ even without receiving the sacrament.

The Burial of the Dead

The funeral rites were curtailed radically from their traditional antecedents, omitting the service in the house and much of the processions. The Prayer Book of 1549 provided only for a procession through the churchyard to the church or grave, burial, a service in church, and Holy Communion. In 1552 even that was abbreviated by omitting the psalms from the church service and making no provision for communion. The longest part was the reading of 1 Corinthians 15, setting out the Christian hope of the resurrection.

In recent years it is perhaps this part of Cranmer's reform that has attracted the most stringent criticism. Theologically he was intent on removing prayer for the departed, in particular any reference to purgatory. In 1549 he was happy to commend the soul of the departed to God, but in 1552 the prayer looked firmly to the accomplishment of the number of the elect, and to express the hope that 'we with this our brother and all other departed in the true faith . . . may have our perfect consummation and bliss'. The presumption of the liturgy was that the death is a blessing and something to thank God for. The sentences of the procession and burial expressed a sense of mortality, but nowhere do we find the pain of loss or grief.

The death of Edward VI and the accession of Mary in July 1553 brought the end of Cranmer's hopes for reform. He protested against the restoration of the Latin Mass, but the tide was against him at every level of the state. Arrested and tried for his part in promoting Lady Jane Grey's claim to the throne, he was not executed but kept in prison for a heresy trial. He signed several recantations, and seems to have been regarded by the authorities as something of a 'show convert' to Marian Catholicism. However, when it was clear that he would be burned for heresy in any case he renounced his recantations, affirmed his evangelical faith, and when he came to the stake on 21 March 1556, famously held his hand in the flames saying, 'This hand hath offended'. He died too soon to witness Mary's decline and to anticipate the return of the Prayer Book under Elizabeth only two years later.

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