

**A CATECHISM ON THE SERVICES OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND; COMPILED CHIEFLY  
FROM THE NOTES OF BISHOPS MANT'S BOOK  
COMMON PRAYER, PEARSON ON THE CREED,  
WATERLAND ON THE CREED OF ST.  
ATHANASIUS, WHEATLEY'S ILLUSTRATION OF  
THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, &C. &C.**

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A Catechism on the Services of the Church of England; Compiled Chiefly from the Notes of Bishops Mant's Book Common Prayer, Pearson on the Creed, Waterland on the Creed of St. Athanasius, Wheatley's Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer, &C. &C. by S. W. Dowell

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**S. W. DOWELL**

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WHEATLEY'S ILLUSTRATION OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, &c. &c.  
AND  
PROVING, BY TEXTS FROM HOLY WRIT,  
THE SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION OF THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED  
IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

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BY THE  
REV. S. W. DOWELL,  
VICAR OF GOSFIELD, ESSEX.

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THE PROFITS,  
IF ANY, TO BE DEVOTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT  
OF  
Gosfield Church.

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## CATECHISM,

§c.

## ON SET FORMS OF PRAYER IN GENERAL.

1. Why does the Church of England use a precomposed, or set form of prayer, in the public worship of Almighty God?

In this the Church follows the example of the Jews, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the universal Church of Christ.

2. On what authority do you assert that the Jews used set forms of prayer in their worship?

Bishop Bull, in his Sermon on 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, says, "All the learned know that the ancient Church of the Jews before Christ had set forms of prayer, which they used in the Temple and synagogues, as the Jews do at this day."

3. Have you any other authority?

Dean Comber says, "For the saints in the Old Testament prayed by forms, and so did Christ in the New, and He taught his disciples a set form to pray by." And he instances the set form wherewith Aaron was to bless the children of Israel: "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." (Num. vi. 23—26.)

4. What does Wheatley, in his Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer, say upon this subject?

"Innumerable proofs might be brought, both ancient and modern, that the Jews did always worship God by precomposed set forms." And Dr. Lightfoot not only asserts that they worshipped God by stated forms, but also set down both the order and method of their hymns and supplications.

5. What may we conclude was the custom of Jesus Christ upon this point?

That as He always continued in communion with the Jewish Church, and attended their worship, He was accustomed to use their form of prayer.

6. What was the practice of the Apostles ?

It was doubtless the same till Christ's ascension ; and it is plain, that after his departure from them, they continued to use both set forms and hours of prayer. (Acts i. 24 ; ii. 24 ; iii. 1 ; iv. 24 ; xii. 12 ; xx. 36.)

7. What was the custom of those Churches which existed nearest the times of the holy Apostles, and which are called the primitive Churches ?

We have every reason to believe that the primitive Churches used set forms of prayer, from the Liturgies ascribed to St. Peter, St. Mark, and St. James, which, though corrupted by later ages, are doubtless of great antiquity.

8. Has it not been thought that there was in the Apostles' time one original Liturgy, from which the others were compiled ?

Yes ; but we have no positive proof of this. Most of the ancient Liturgies have, however, some parts common to all ; and it appears therefore probable, that there might have been one common model. Some of these Liturgies can be traced to the primitive ages.

9. Has it not been the custom since those times to use a set form of prayer ?

Certainly : for the greatest enemies of a precomposed set form of prayer do acknowledge that in the fourth and fifth centuries, and ever after, till the Reformation, the joint use of them was general over the whole Christian world.

10. Are we not justified, from these examples, in using a set form of prayer ?

Certainly : the example of the Jews, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Universal Church of Christ, is amply sufficient authority of our custom.

11. Why is a set form better adapted to the use of a congregation than extempore prayer, or prayer spoken without preparation, and without book ?

A set form of prayer prevents any extravagant addresses or irreverence in the solemn worship of God, is profitable to the less gifted minister, that he may have a manual of devotion always ready for his use in leading the congregation, and in administering the holy Sacraments, and rites of the Church ; and for the gifted minister, lest his prayer be turned into vanity. It prevents the introduction of false doctrine into this part of public worship, and is necessary for this end ; viz., that all the members of the Church may know the condition of public communion, and understand beforehand what prayers they are to join in, which they cannot do without a set and prescribed form of prayer.

## ON THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

1. WHAT authority have we for using our present Book of Common Prayer in the public service of the Church ?

It was agreed upon by the Bishops and Clergy in Convocation, and afterwards confirmed by the two Houses of Parliament. It has, therefore, the sanction and authority, both of the ecclesiastical and civil powers, of Church and State.

2. Is the Book of Common Prayer now used in the Church of England a translation of the Latin Liturgy used by the Roman Catholics before the Reformation ?

No : that was a collection of prayers partly made up of some ancient forms used in the primitive Church, partly of others accommodated to the superstitions which had crept into the Church of Rome ; and as these were mixed with addresses to the saints, adoration of the host, &c., a great part of the worship was in itself idolatrous and profane.

3. Did the Reformers then introduce a new form of worship into the Church ?

No : their design was to correct and amend the old, and to purge it from those gross corruptions which had gradually crept into it, and to render the service more agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church.

4. In what language was the form of Common Prayer used by the Roman Catholics before the Reformation ?

In the Latin tongue ; so that the unlearned could not join in it, nor pray with the heart and understanding.

5. What does the 24th Article say upon this point ?

"It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people."

6. What was first done towards reforming the Prayer Book ?

The Convocation appointed a committee in 1537, to compose a book called "The Godly and Pious Institution of a Christian Man," containing a declaration of the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the holy Sacraments ; and this was again altered and corrected.

7. What further alteration was accomplished in the reign of King Henry the Eighth ?

A Committee of Bishops and Divines was appointed to reform the Rituals and Offices of the Church, in 1540. Afterwards the prayers and other parts were put into English, and in 1546, "The King's Primer" came forth, containing, amongst other things, the Lord's