

**A PLEA FOR THE USE
OF THE FIRST
REFORMED LITURGY**

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A plea for the use of the first reformed liturgy by J. R. West

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FIRST REFORMED LITURGY.

BY THE

REV. J. R. WEST, M.A.,

VICAR OF WRAWBY.

"Until it shall please God to put it into the hearts and power of such as ought to do it, to restore to us the First Service of Edward VI., or such as shall be more conformable to the appointment of Christ."—Br. Wilson.

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MDCCLXXXIII.

1396. c. 1.



REVERENDORUM IN CHRISTO PATRUM,
ECCLESIAE ANGLO-CATHOLICAE EPISCOPORUM
CHORO VENERABILI,
QUIBUS PROPRIUM EST AC DEBITUM OFFICIUM,
QUASCUNQUE REI DIVINAE SOLEMNITER PERAGENDAE SPECTANT USUM,
REGERE, CORRIGERE, AD PRISTINAE FIDEI NORMAM REDIGERE,
HUNC QUAECUNQUE LIBELLUM SUVM
'PRIMAM' (QUE VOCATUR) EDVARDI REGIS SEPTIMI LITURGIAM
TANQUAM UNICUM ET INSIGNE
LITURGIAE VERAE ANGLICANAE EXEMPLAR COMMENDASTERE,
INMO UT QUA IMPRIMIS APOSTOLICAE FIDEI VESTIGIA INHERITAT,
GNAVITER SUADEANTUR,
NON SINE SPE FELICITATIS ILLIUS EORUM TEMPORUM STATUS,
QUANDO, ADJUVANTE PRECIUSQUE ANNUNTE
ECCLESIAE CAPITE AC DOMINO,
VOTI COMPOS FVERIT,
PLENUS OFFICII DEDICAT
SCRIPTOR OBSERVANTISSIMUS, J. R. W., PRESBYTER.

A P P E A,

ETC.

THAT the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the principal act of worship which belongs to the Christian religion, can hardly be doubted by any member of the Church. For it is the one only act of public and united worship which was instituted for the constant use of all His disciples by the SON of GOD Himself when He lived as Man upon earth. This fact alone makes this to be the distinctive act of Christian worship, for every age and nation, until the LORD'S Second Advent.

So that it most plainly follows that nothing can be of greater importance than that the Church should, *first of all*, teach all her members to believe rightly in this Divine institution, and *then* provide for them such a well-ordered form of right words as shall enable them to join in its celebration with an intelligent faith.

It is most imperatively due, we must all most humbly confess, to the Divine Author of this Holy Service, that every possible care should be taken that its celebration should be made in such an Order, with such suitable Prayers, and with such appropriate and significant Ritual as shall cause its true

meaning and intention to be clearly perceived and reverently expressed by the worshippers.

As the precise words which our LORD Himself used in "*blessing*" the elements, and in "*giving thanks*" are not recorded; it is left to the Church to use such prayers and such thanksgivings as upon the most mature consideration shall be judged fittest and best for so very solemn an act. And as one express object for which our LORD instituted His Church on earth is that it should be "*the pillar and ground of the truth*," (1 Tim. iii. 15,) it is plain that the Church is called upon to discharge one essential part of this very duty in this preparation of a Liturgy for the celebration of this Divine service. For in this way more effectively than in any other the Church teaches her members the very truth of this holy Institution.

To arrange this Divine service, therefore, in a right Order, and to clothe it in a proper Form of human words, and to accompany it with a duly significant Ritual, is certainly a work worthy of the exercise of our best powers. Who, indeed, is sufficient to bring to perfection so very important a work?

It would plainly be a very serious fault indeed, if any branch of the Church were to provide for its members a form of celebration which should be erroneous, or even defective, in any material point. Because, in such a case, that branch of the Church would be teaching all its members, in the most effectual of all ways, to hold some defective or some erroneous conception of their highest act of devotion, and so to approach the Divine Majesty with some corresponding imperfection of faith, or with some misdirected devotion.

No trouble ought to be spared, it is most certain, in making as perfect as possible, first, the Order of the Eucharistic Service, and then all the Words and Terms em-

played in it; and, no less, all the particulars of its external Ritual.

This work, of course, strictly belongs to the office of the Bishops. For they alone have commission and authority, Divinely given them, to rule the Church and to set in order the things which are wanting. To them belongs the exceeding great responsibility of setting this very thing in order, that so, by this most effective means, they may regulate the faith and direct the chief worship of every member of the Church committed to their charge.

They have to enshrine this Divine institution in the most proper words possible, and to surround it with the most reverent and significant Ritual, both for the due honour and glory of God's chief worship upon earth, and for that edification of the worshippers which depends thereupon so essentially.

Accordingly this has been done by them from the earliest ages of Christianity, as some most important and interesting remains of the Primitive Liturgies, which have been preserved to us, abundantly testify.

These remains of the ancient Liturgies have in them so much that is common to them all, especially in the three most essential parts, namely, Consecration, Oblation, and Communion, that it is plain that they must have been all derived from some common source. Several of them have come down to us from the Apostolic age, and are commonly known as the Liturgy of S. James of Jerusalem, of S. Mark of Alexandria, of S. Peter of Rome, and of S. John of Ephesus.

The Liturgy which Augustine found in use when he arrived in England (A.D. 597) had been derived from the Liturgy of S. John, that is, the Ephesine Liturgy, which was the original source also of the liturgies which were in use in France and in Spain. After Augustine's arrival