

**THE PRAYER-BOOK
OF QUEEN
ELIZABETH, 1559**

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The Prayer-Book of Queen Elizabeth, 1559 by Church of England

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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Church of England.
THE PRAYER-BOOK

OF

QUEEN ELIZABETH

1559

*TO WHICH ARE APPENDED SOME OCCASIONAL
FORMS OF PRAYER ISSUED IN HER REIGN*

THE WHOLE PRINTED FROM ORIGINALS IN THE BRITISH
MUSEUM, AND OTHER PUBLIC LIBRARIES

With an Historical Introduction



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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

WITH the death of King Edward VI., the Reformed Liturgy of the Church of England came, for the time being, to an end. The elections which followed the accession of Mary were favourable to her party; Cardinal Pole was invited to England as Papal Legate, two members only of the House of Commons, out of 360, voted, and that silently, against his proposal of reunion with Rome. On St Andrew's Day 1554, the reconciliation was formally made at Westminster, and the Roman Mass was restored. The history of the Reformed Liturgy is continued indeed in the "History of the Troubles at Frankfort," the controversy which was carried on abroad among the English refugees and the Continental Reformers. Within both these were those on one side who were bent on still further Protestantising the Prayer-book, and on the other the moderates. This chapter in the history of Religion, however, forms no part of our present subject. Worse troubles followed in England. Mr Froude holds that in spite of the apparent spontaneity of the English reunion, the people were at least indifferent on the subject and that the whole proceeding was hollow (Froude, v. 416-500). The indifference was changed into a more active feeling by the Marian persecution, the result of which has been that from that day to this the Roman Catholic religion has been associated in the popular English mind with tyranny and revolting cruelty. The death of Mary (Nov. 17, 1556) was felt as a relief by the nation, and the accession of her sister Elizabeth was hailed with joy.

Elizabeth's first efforts were all directed towards the maintenance of peace in religion. The Mass, as by law established, was celebrated at her coronation, though the Londoners had already shown unmistakably their hatred for it, and the Protestant clergy, coming out of their hiding places, began to read the Edwardian service again, and an English Litany was used in the Royal Chapel. That Litany is given in the present volume, pp. 1-6. Cecil put forth enquiries among the leaders of the different parties as to the course to be taken with respect to the National Religion (See Froude, vi. 124-5). The result showed that there was no longer such hope as there had been of unity. Gardiner and even Warham before him had consented to the doctrine of the Royal supremacy, combined with Roman dogma, and the policy of Henry VIII. had rested on this. But now the Marian bishops

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were uncompromising in their desire to maintain things as they were, and the Protestant divines were for the most part hot Zwinglians. They had passed beyond Luther and even Calvin. But there was a large secular party, who agreed with neither, and of these the greater number would have preserved the Roman system, simply on the ground that the people, at any rate in the country, would prefer this. "The Catholics," they said, "are in a majority in every county but Middlesex and Kent." The Queen herself was opposed to both extremes. Her views were probably like those of her father, and she certainly would have preferred her brother's first Prayer Book to the second (Froude, vi. 115). She was bent now on setting the religion of the country on a basis which should be national and not Zwinglian. Cecil's queries had pointed to the restoration of the book of 1549, but the answers of the Protestant divines were hostile. Thus Dr Guest, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, one of the most moderate, who took the lead in consequence of Archbishop Parker's illness, even proposed to leave open the posture of the communicants at reception. The steps taken all indicate the caution with which the Queen and her Council found it needful to proceed. Thus on December 27, 1558, a Proclamation was issued, addressed to the Lord Mayor of London, in which all preaching was forbidden. It allowed the Gospel, Epistle, and Ten Commandments to be read in English, but without exposition, and commanded that no other form of public worship should be used except that by law received, or the Litany at present used in her Majesty's Chapel, and the Lord's Prayer and Creed in English, until consultation may be had by Parliament. Nevertheless, it is certain that the zealous Protestants continued to preach in churches [Zurich Letters, pp. 21, 57], and to use the Edwardian Prayer Book.

The result of the queries of Cecil and the deliberations of the divines appointed to consider the great question, was that the second Book of Edward was adopted as the basis of the new Liturgy. When it was sent up by them to the Queen's Secretary, Guest wrote an explanatory letter explaining why. Ceremonies once taken away, he said, ought not to be restored. If a surplice was sufficient for baptizing, preaching, and praying, it should suffice for the Communion. Non-communicants ought to depart before the consecration. Prayers for the Dead should not be used, because it appears to make for sacrifice. The Prayer at Consecration, "Hear us, O merciful Father," &c. [A. and M. L. Edition, p. 203], was omitted, because Petition is no part of Consecration, Christ in instituting having made no petition but only a thanksgiving. The old use of the Church was to stand at reception, but kneeling was lawful, and therefore the posture should be left to men's own choice.

This indicates the principles upon which the Protestant party acted. But these did not, as we have seen, commend themselves

to the Queen. Nor in all probability did they to Archbishop Parker. Had they been carried out, there would have been no chance of their acceptance with those, who, though they were no friends of the Papal power, were also not prepared to cast in their lot with the destructives of Geneva and Zurich.

The result was a compromise. The book was accepted, but with certain significant and important modifications. Mr Gladstone has admirably put the matter as follows :—"Had the divines had their way, there might at once have been a conflict with the whole Roman Catholic party, a crisis in the foreign policy of the country, possibly a war, both civil and foreign. Apart from any ritualistic and theological leanings of the Queen, she did what the national safety and unity evidently required. The spirit of nationalism, generally dominant under Henry VIII., had given way first in one direction under Edward VI., apparently without reserves, then in the other direction with some reserves, to political interests and passions. In her it found a restorer and a champion. Elizabeth admitted the Protestant claim in the gross, but admitted it with serious discounts. Yet those discounts were adjusted with extraordinary skill." (*Nineteenth Cent.*, Nov. 1888, p. 767).

The book thus modified was presented to Parliament, and a new Act of Uniformity, passed April 28th, 1559, enacted that it should be used from and after St John Baptist's Day. The Queen, in her zeal, so far broke the law, that she anticipated this date, and ordered it to be read in her chapel on Sunday, May 12. And on the day appointed, out of the whole body of 9,400 clergy, only 189 refused to conform.

This book is presented to the reader in the present volume, but with this slight difference from those of King Edward in the same series, that the Epistles and Gospels are not given in full. They will be found in the preceding books, and the printing of them at length would have necessitated enlarging the size and price of the volume.

We have now to note the differences between the Second Book of King Edward and that before us. Less than two pages of print will cover them all, and yet, as we have said, they are of great importance. The first, and by far the most weighty, will be found on page 41, the famous "Ornaments Rubric." The reader comparing this with that at page 29 of 2 King Edward, will see the vast difference. The "accustomed place of the Church, chapel, or chancel," is substituted for the place where "the people may best hear." And the prohibited vestments, "alb, vestment and cope," are restored. Mr Gladstone, remarking on the drawing up of this measure, is of opinion that it was intended to conciliate the rural districts, where there is every reason to suppose it would at the time be popular. And he adds, with a moderation and straightforwardness which will commend themselves to all unprejudiced minds, "I am not aware of any evidence to show that it was ever

enforced against unwilling clergymen, or that it supplied a prominent topic for the controversies of the day. In the matter of clerical habits, these turned mainly on the use of the surplice. It was as much as the Queen and Government could do to hold this narrower ground with success against the determined opposition of the Puritans in mass, and the leanings of a large proportion of the bishops. But they did hold it; and the experience of the Cromwellian and Restoration periods shows that they rightly gauged the general tendencies of the nation, which did not favour a naked Protestantism, they suffered the ornaments rubric to lie partially dormant, but they kept it in force, and they sternly resisted all attempts to alter the Prayer Book in the sense of the Swiss Reformation."

The next change to note is the omission of the petition in the Litany against "the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities." Compare 2 Edward, p. 42, and present vol., p. 55. No doubt the devout feeling of Christian people would acquiesce in this omission. There are also a few additional words in the suffrage for the Queen. The addition of the prayers for the Queen and Clergy at pp. 59 and 60, and a few other variations, are also to be noted.

More important is the difference in the words of administration in the Holy Communion. The words in the first book of Edward had been totally different from those in the second. Elizabeth's book took them both (p. 103), and to this day they so remain. And lastly, in this service the "kneeling rubric" of 2 Edward (p. 172) was omitted in Queen Elizabeth (p. 106). In the Ordinal, "the Oath of the King's Supremacy (2 Edward, p. 223) becomes "the Oath of the Queen's Sovereignty" (Elizabeth, 165), and the alteration of the opening words of the oath itself has much significance as indicating the desire for peace and charity.

Before the new Prayer Book was two years old some alterations were made in the Calendar, not of great importance (*cf.* pp. 21-40 with pp. 185-205). The Puritans were from the first eager to bring the book into fuller harmony with their own views, and in 1566 a Bill was brought into Parliament with that intention. It was frustrated by the Queen laying it down that such a bill cannot pass without approval of Convocation. But so much was conceded to them that certain "Advertisements" were issued in 1566. The Act of Uniformity, after repeating the Ornaments Rubric, had gone on to say, "until other order shall be therein taken by authority of the Queen's Majesty with the advice of her Commissioners . . . or of the Metropolitan of this realm." And now these Advertisements declared that the surplice was sufficient, and, by consequence, the alb, vestment, cope were so far set aside. They were not abolished, for the Ornaments Rubric remained. And the Advertisements did not become law; the Queen connived at them, but they had no statutory authority, and they did not satisfy the

Puritans. But they went far to lead to the disuse of the vestments, though certainly in a few cases there are proofs of their continuance.

Following the Prayer Book will be found in the present volume a collection of "Godly Prayers" (p. 147). So far back as the days of Henry VIII. the Reformers had provided books of private devotion for the people, following herein the *Horæ* of previous days. The Primers of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. were such volumes; there were many editions varying more or less in detail. And the Godly Prayers before us are one form of these. They were not, therefore, a part of the Liturgy, but almost from the beginning were bound up with some editions of it; not with the folios, which were specially prepared for church use, but with smaller editions. At a later date was added another collection of private prayers, composed by the exiles abroad at the time of the Marian persecution. And with these were bound up the Metrical Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins ("The Old Version") with musical notation.

The Appendices to the present volume require a few words. After the New Calendar of 1561, of which we have already spoken, they comprise Occasional Forms drawn up for special occasions in the course of Elizabeth's reign, and are of great historical interest. There are many more of these, which are little more than repetitions with variations; we have selected the most characteristic, and those connected with the most important events of this wonderful reign.

That at p. 206 is the commonest of all the forms which were drawn up at the visitation of the Plague which in the 16th and 17th centuries desolated England from time to time. The form before us was drawn up by Grindal, Bishop of London, in 1563. The plague of that year was brought hither by the English Army from Havre, the French Protestants having put us in possession of that district.

Appendix IV. (p. 217) owes its origin to the attack upon Malta by the Turks, who, it will be remembered, were then the terror not only of Eastern Europe, but of the Mediterranean. Malta was at this time in possession of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, and, one might almost say, the fate of Southern Europe depended on their being able to hold it. There is another form, which we have not given, of thanksgiving for their success against the invaders, and also for the defeats of the same barbarians in Hungary.

Appendix V., "The Prayer" was occasioned by the rising of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, on behalf of the Queen of Scots, in November 1569. (See Froude, ix., ch. 52.) A homily was put forth "against disobedience and wilful rebellion," to which this prayer was appended.

The form of prayer for the anniversary of the Queen's Accession, p. 227, is interesting as being the first of the kind which we have.

Such forms were begun at the Reformation and have been continued until now. It is noteworthy that James II. commanded the bishops to compose one for his accession, which was founded on this. It is said that the first of these services was drawn up by Cooper, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, in 1567.

Appendix X. was written at a time when the nation was dreading the Spanish Invasion, and also afflicted with a dearth.

Appendix XI. marks the period when the Armada was almost in sight. The form was originally drawn up in 1572, but was reissued by the Archbishop (Whitgift) with alterations and additions on July 10th, 1588. Nine days later the great fleet was visible off the Lizard.

This form is appropriately followed (p. 254) by the Thanksgiving for the defeat of the Armada. Probably there was never before, or since, such a burst of joy and devout thanksgiving as that which England poured forth then. The first public service was held at Paul's Cross, August 20th. They followed everywhere in a few days.

Appendix XIII. (p. 258). Henry IV. of France was fighting the League. Elizabeth sent four thousand men to his assistance, as well as "a greater sum than, as he declared, he had ever seen before." There are two or three of these forms of prayer belonging to the year 1589-90. The present is of the latter date. There is another form for the Plague which was again heavy in 1593, twenty thousand persons dying in London.

Appendix XIV. Occasioned by Spanish machinations against the Queen's life, and the treasons of her fugitive Roman Catholic subjects in the Netherlands.

Appendix XV., XVI. Philip II. was making fresh preparations against England, in consequence of which the English Government took the aggressive, and a powerful fleet was sent to Cadiz in 1596, and captured it on the 21st June.

Appendix XVII. Philip next planned a descent on Ireland, and the fleet which Elizabeth sent against him is the subject of this service.

Much of the information given in this Introduction is taken from Mr Clay's admirable edition of the Elizabethan Liturgy, published by the Parker Society, but is supplemented from later works on the same period. Every form, however, here given, has been collated with the originals in the libraries of the British Museum, Lambeth Palace, and Cambridge University. W. B.

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