

**CHURCH SERVICES AND  
SERVICE-BOOKS BEFORE  
THE REFORMATION**

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Church services and service-books before the Reformation by Henry Barclay Swete

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**HENRY BARCLAY SWETE**

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BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

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1896.

THE following pages are based upon a course of lectures delivered to candidates for Ordination. They are published in the hope that the subject may be of interest not only to young students of Theology, but to the many lay members of the Church of England who thank God for the Book of Common Prayer.

The best thanks of the writer are due to the Librarian of Cambridge University, for permission to reproduce pages from two of the MSS. under his care; and to the Rev. Chr. Wordsworth, Prebendary of Lincoln and Rector of Tyneham, who has read the proofs, and suggested some valuable additions to the notes.

H. B. S.

CAMBRIDGE, *Whitsuntide*, 1896.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER AND THE OLD SERVICE-BOOKS.

WHITSUNDAY, June 9, 1549, witnessed the beginning of a new era in the public worship of the English Church. On that day throughout the land 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Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church after the Use of the Church of England" superseded all Service-books previously allowed. From that day "all and singular Ministers in any Cathedral or Parish Church or other Place within this Realm of England, Wales, . . . or other the King's Dominions," were "bounden to say and use the Mattins, Evensong, Celebration of the Lord's Supper, commonly called the Mass, and Administration of each of the Sacraments, and all their common and open Prayer, in such Order and Form as is mentioned in the same Book and

none other or otherwise<sup>1</sup>." Before the end of the year a royal proclamation required the surrender of the Service-books hitherto authorized, and all that were surrendered were defaced or destroyed, with the view of securing the complete abolition of the ancient services<sup>2</sup>.

The Act of Parliament which legalized the new book was entitled "An Act for the Uniformity of Service and Administration of the Sacraments throughout the Realm." Uniformity in public worship was its professed end, and the uniformity at which it aimed was the establishment of a truly national rite. During her previous existence of nearly a thousand years the Church of England had failed to provide a national Use. She might have possessed one from the first had Augustine of Canterbury followed the advice which, if Bede may be trusted, he received from Gregory in answer to a question which he had himself addressed to the Pope upon this very point. The members of the Roman mission had heard the Gallican mass during their sojourn in Gaul; and the services chanted at St. Martin's, Canterbury, in the presence of

<sup>1</sup> 2 & 3 Edw. VI. c. 1 (Jan. 22, 1547).

<sup>2</sup> Maskell, *Men. Rit.* i. p. clxxii f.

Queen Bertha by her Gallican chaplain, Bishop Liudhard, were doubtless of the same type; whilst early associations led the missionaries to prefer the offices which they had used at Rome. Augustine, eager for uniformity, inquired why it was that, the Faith being one, the customs of Churches differed so widely. Gregory took a larger view of the whole question. He was so far from desiring the triumph of a single Use, that he proposed to add to the existing varieties one especially adapted to the wants of the new Church. Uniformity was desirable in a national Church, but not uniformity based upon rigid adherence to the customs of either Gaul or Rome. "It is my pleasure<sup>1</sup>," he replied, "that anything you find which is likely to be especially acceptable to Almighty God, whether in the Roman, Gallican, or any other Church, be pressed into the service of the Church of England while she is still young in the Faith. Things are not to be esteemed for their connexion with places, but places for the sake of things. Whatever things in the several Churches are godly, helpful to devotion, or right in themselves, let these be collected and delivered to the

<sup>1</sup> Eede, *H. E.* i. 27 (Notes, p. 211).