

**THE GENESIS OF THE AMERICAN
PRAYER BOOK: A SURVEY OF
THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT
OF THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES. PP. 1-167**

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The Genesis of the American Prayer Book: A Survey of the Origin and Development of the Liturgy of the Church in the United States. pp. 1-167 by Various

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The Genesis of the American Prayer Book

A Survey of the Origin and Development
of the Liturgy of the
Church in the United States

BY

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Bishop of Albany

With an Appendix

on Changes Incorporated into the Prayer Book

BY THE

REV. SAMUEL HART, D.D.

Edited with an Introduction

BY THE

REV. C. ELLIS STEVENS, LL.D., D.C.L.

NEW YORK:
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TO
John Williams, D.D., D.D.,
WHO AS
PRIMATE OF THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES,
AND AS A LEADER IN THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A
STANDARD PRAYER BOOK,
HAS PROVED HIMSELF SO WORTHY A
SUCCESSOR OF THE VENERABLE
Bishop White,
THIS VOLUME—
WHICH GOES FORTH FROM THE HISTORIC FANE
WHERE THE AMERICAN PRAYER BOOK
WAS FIRST ADOPTED AND WHERE
RESTS THE SACRED DUST
OF THE
FATHER OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH—
IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

R. L. W.
2000
7-22-97
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INTRODUCTION.

THE American Book of Common Prayer is historically associated with one sacred spot. The venerable fane of Christ Church, Philadelphia, is, in a special sense, its birthplace. And on that spot the American Church itself—as an independent national body owing no allegiance, save of love, to the Mother Church of England—came into organic being.

It was there that the first effort toward liturgical revision was made, at the first of the General Conventions of the Church—a Convention presided over by the then rector, William White. Dr. White had been a moving spirit in the measures leading up to this memorable council, and himself had formulated the principles on which the Church sought and attained organicism. He and Dr. William Smith—also intimately associated with Christ Church—were chief promoters of the work of revision; and after the Convention they were left to complete and issue the “Proposed Book.”

It was on that spot that the second General Convention met in 1786, and the third in 1789.

The last, which opened its sessions under the presidency of Bishop White, and later organized into a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies,¹ completed the Constitution of the Church, and formally set forth the American Prayer Book. At that altar the Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Dr. Smith, according to the form in the first Book of Edward VI., as adapted in the Scottish Use—the adoption of our present Communion Office immediately following the celebration. Before the same altar now rests the sacred dust of the Patriarch of the American Church.

It was there in 1883, that the opening session was held of that General Convention which began the work of the new liturgical revision and enrichment, now ended by the adoption of the Standard Prayer Book of 1892. And as the beginning of this latest revision was marked by services in the ancient church, so the completion of the revision was also marked. For during October, 1892, while the General Convention was in session in Baltimore putting final touches to the new Prayer Book, Bishops of the Church, held in reputation for liturgical scholar-

¹ The Secretary of the House of Deputies—the celebrated Francis Hopkinson, a vestryman of Christ Church—had been Secretary of Continental Congress.

ship and counting among them those officially connected with the revision work, went from the Convention, Sunday after Sunday, to Christ Church, Philadelphia, and delivered an historical course of sermons intended to go forth in published form, as, in some sort, a popular introduction to the new Book.¹

Reference to such facts as these—facts sufficiently familiar to most Churchmen—may not be altogether amiss, as furnishing an explanation of the present volume, and adding point to its pages. Rather naturally, the course of sermons was retrospective. For scarcely a more fitting introduction of the new Prayer Book could be given, than that supplied by a study of origins. And the treatment of the theme thus selected has not been limited to American, or even English sources, but widens into the liturgic past of the Christian Ages, and stretches on and back, even to the day of Apostles and Prophets.

The volume now given to the public is not merely one of published preaching, but has been carefully adapted for general readers—so

¹ In this course, Bishop Doane, of Albany, as chairman of the committee on revision, gave the first general public announcement of the results of the liturgic action of the Convention.