

**A KEY TO THE
KNOWLEDGE AND
USE OF THE BOOK
OF COMMON PRAYER**

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A Key to the Knowledge and Use of the Book of Common Prayer by John Henry Blunt

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BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

BY

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*"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also
I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."*

1 COR. xiv.


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John Harvey Treat.

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CHAPTER I

The History of the Prayer Book

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"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."—JER. vi.

THE English Book of Common Prayer is chiefly derived from the Latin "Breviary," "Missal," and "Manual," which were used in England for many centuries before the Reformation. The Pre-Reformation "Breviary" contained the Daily Services Service-books (including the Lessons); the "Missal" contained the Service for the Holy Communion (including the Epistles and Gospels); and the "Manual" contained the Offices for Baptism, the Visitation of the Sick, Burial, &c.

These ancient Prayer Books of the Church of England had their origin in Apostolic times, Their Primitive having gradually grown up out of Services origin. which were brought to France by Apostolic missionaries, who came from Ephesus and Smyrna. The Services thus transplanted from the East were used in common by the Churches of France, Spain, and England; but additions peculiar to How differing each country gradually gathered around Liturgies arose.

the original formularies, and in course of time the devotional system of each became so far different from that of the others as to be a *national rite*, though bearing abundant marks of relationship to the rest. Just as Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Englishmen differ from each other in some respects, and yet have the common characteristics of the European family of nations: so their ancient devotional systems plainly come from the same original stock, though differing in many particular features.¹

But by far the greater proportion of the Services of the Church is (and always has been) taken from the Psalms and other portions of Holy Scripture.

§ 1. *The Latin originals of the Prayer Book.*

THE Eastern missionaries, St. Pothinus and others, who brought over to France the devotional forms of the Eastern Church, brought them in the Greek language; and Greek words (such as *Kyrie Eleison*) were retained in the Latin services in reverent memory of the ancient liturgical language, as the Latin headings of the Psalms and Canticles are retained in our English Prayer Book. But as Latin was

Greek superseded by Latin. the universal language of the Roman Empire in Europe, the services were soon translated out of Greek into Latin; and they were used in the latter tongue in England as well as elsewhere until the

¹ The Roman Breviary, &c., was not introduced into England until about a century and a half ago, when the priests of the Roman sect were chiefly Jesuits, and so bound to use it. It was never used therefore in the Church of England. Nor was it generally used in France until after the Revolution.

English language became compacted out of Saxon, French, and Latin into its modern form².

The Service Books which were in use before the Conquest were revised by St. Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, and his revision, the ancient "Sarum Use" mentioned in the Preface to the Prayer Book, was adopted in the Diocese of Salisbury in the year 1085. Other dioceses had similar Service Books of their own, known as the "York Use," the "Hereford Use," the "Lincoln Use," &c. ; but the "Sarum Use" was extensively adopted throughout the South of England, in Durham, in some parts of Scotland, and even on the Continent ; and it was the principal source from which the Prayer Book "according to the use of the Church of England" was taken in the sixteenth century.

§ 2. *Early English Prayers, &c.*

WHILE the public Services of the Church of England were said chiefly in Latin, persons who could read had Prayer Books called "Primers," in which a large portion of the Psalms and the Prayers were translated, and arranged in Services similar to those which were used in Latin at the Cathedrals and large Monastic or Collegiate Churches. This

² French, or "Norman French," was the language used in this country by educated persons until the end of the fourteenth century. Latin was the official language, and was very generally understood. Saxon, or "Anglo-Saxon," was in a continual state of change until the time of Chaucer (A.D. 1328—1400), and about his time it began to be amalgamated with French and Latin forms of words into our present national language. Mediæval English is represented at the present day by what is called "Broad Scotch."