Jesse D. Billett

"The Scriptural Catholicity of the Prayer Book"

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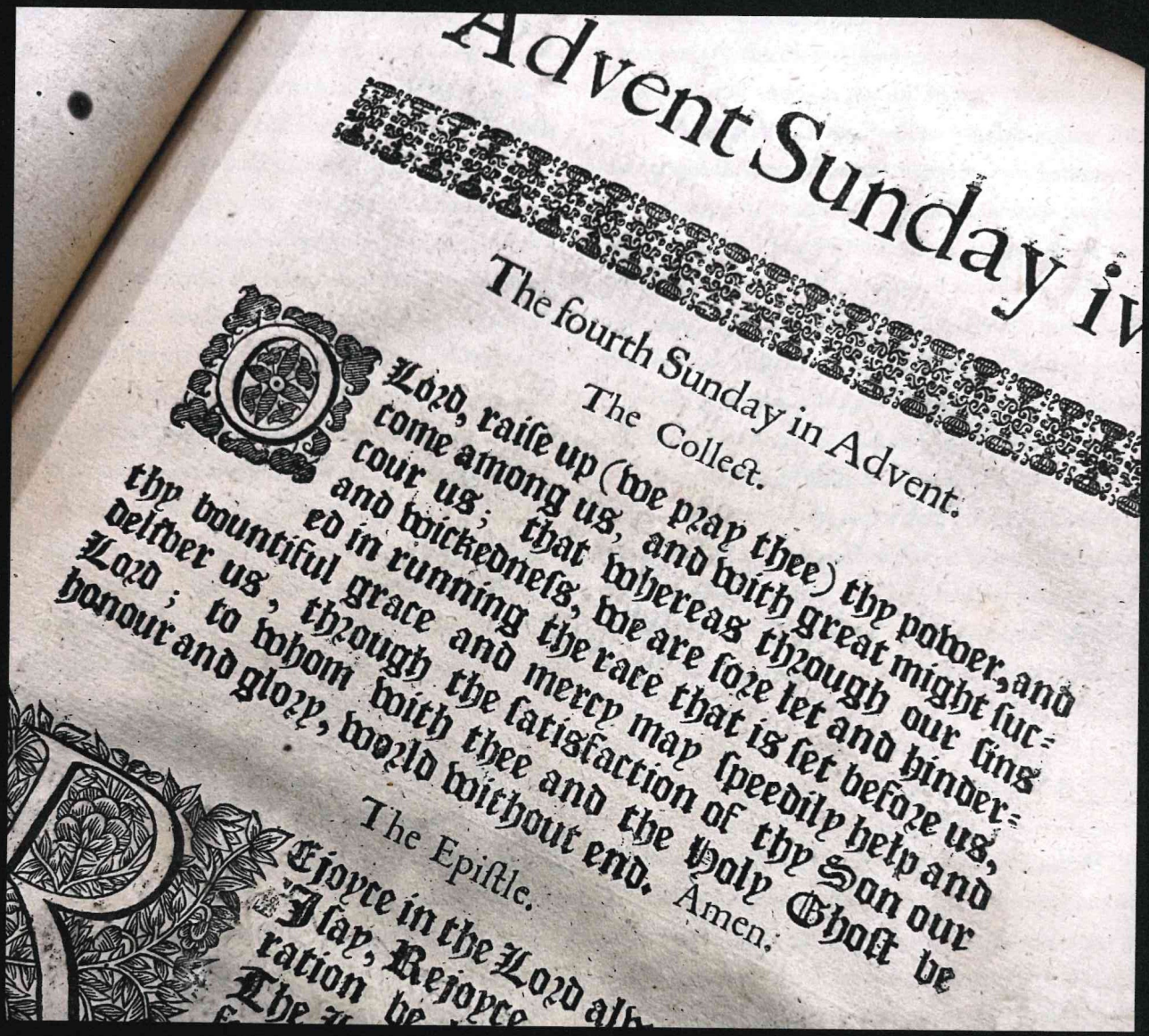
THE SCRIPTUAL CATHOLICITY *of the* PRAYER BOOK

by

JESSE D. BILLETT


Advent Sunday iv

The fourth Sunday in Advent.

The Collect.

Lord, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and
come among us, and with great might suc-
cour us; that whereas through our sins
and wickedness, we are sore let and hinder-
ed in running the race that is set before us,
thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and
deliver us, through the satisfaction of thy Son our
Lord; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be
honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle.

Rejoyce in the Lord alw
Pray, Rejoyce
ration be
The

THE COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

1662 printing of the Book of Common Prayer

My intent here[1] is to speak to the Catholic side of Anglicanism's inheritance, Catholic and Reformed. As a historian of liturgy, it seems best that I do this with a defence of the Catholicity of the Book of Common Prayer. My remarks will be divided into four unequal sections. First, I shall explain why my task today is exceptionally difficult. Second, I shall advance a recklessly simple hypothesis that I call "Cranmer's Scriptural Criterion," according to which the Prayer Book is best read as the Catholic tradition expressed within the language of scripture. Third, I shall explain why I think this quality of the Prayer Book can be defended as "Catholic," noting its roots both in late medieval Catholic humanism and in a more ancient understanding of the Church and Scripture as co-inherent. And lastly, I shall say four brief things about how this understanding of the Prayer Book can offer us direction and encouragement in the present day.

THE PROBLEM OF CALLING THE PRAYER BOOK "CATHOLIC"

For the first three centuries of the Prayer Book's existence my task today would have been easy, because it was never doubted that the Prayer Book was Catholic. The only question was whether it was sufficiently Protestant. The Puritan *Admonition to Parliament* in 1571 called it "an unperfecte booke, culled & picked out of that popishe dunghil, the Masse booke full of all abhominations."[2] In the eighteenth century, William Pitt the Elder sardonically remarked, "We have a Calvinistic creed, a Popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy."[3] The Oxford Movement highlighted the Catholicity of the Prayer Book; several of its leaders had attended lectures in the 1820s by the future bishop of Oxford, Charles Lloyd, which demonstrated the survival in the Prayer Book of many medieval Catholic liturgical texts. In 1841, in his explosively controversial *Tract 90*, John Henry Newman argued that a Catholic reading of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion would "bring them into harmony with the Book of Common Prayer."[4]

This was a tipping point for Evangelical and Latitudinarian Churchmen. If such pernicious doctrines as baptismal regeneration, the Real Presence, and priestly absolution could find support in the Book of Common Prayer, some said, then clearly the book had to be revised. But others attacked the assumption that Prayer Book was inherently Catholic. For example, in 1890 the Canadian priest Dyson Hague, a professor at Wycliffe College in Toronto, published *The Protestantism of the Prayer Book:*

> I shall not only proceed upon the principle that omission and alteration are practical prohibition, and an index of the teaching of the Church, but also upon the fundamental, the most indispensable, principle, that the true guide to the interpretation of the Book of Common Prayer, as it now stands, is not falsely so-called Catholic usage, and Catholic doctrine, but the teaching and rationale of the Reformation in its more perfect development, and of the age that followed, not the age that preceded it.[5]

In the same year there appeared *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, by two Roman Catholic scholars, Aidan Gasquet and Edmund Bishop. Unlike Charles Lloyd, Gasquet and Bishop compared the Book of Common Prayer with Lutheran and

Swiss Reformed liturgies. The Prayer Book, they concluded, transmitted a Swiss Reformed theology in the dress of a Lutheran church order. It made no sense, therefore, to read the book as a Catholic document or as patient of a Catholic interpretation. "In a word," they wrote, "it must be . . . illustrated from the writings of those who composed it, . . . and not by the productions of those centuries the doctrine and practice of which it was the avowed aim and intention of its authors to destroy."[6]

My own copy of Gasquet and Bishop's book was in fact formerly owned by Dyson Hague, and it is full of his exuberant underlinings and marginal annotations. Beside a remark about how, in expunging the doctrine of Eucharistic Sacrifice from the Prayer Book, Archbishop Cranmer had been forced to reject the testimony of the earliest Church Fathers, Hague scribbled that only through the Holy Spirit's guidance could Cranmer have identified and rooted out an error that had crept into the Church so soon after the death of the apostles.

And we heard several times in the course of the 2018 Prayer Book Society conference of the devastating effect of Gregory Dix's 1945 book *The Shape of the Liturgy*, which argued that Cranmer's Eucharistic theology was thoroughly Zwinglian (that is, employed a doctrine of the "real absence"). Only those who shared this theology, said Dix, could in conscience use the rite.

By the time Dix was writing, altar books had long since appeared with "private devotions" for the priest that were really interpolations into the Prayer Book from Roman or medieval missals. Hymnals supplied similar texts for the laity. So, for example, after the 1662 Prayer of Consecration, which ends with Christ's Words of Institution, the priest might inaudibly add the prayers of oblation and intercession that follow these words in the Roman Missal, while the congregation sang a hymn based on the same prayers :

> Wherefore, O Father, we thy humble servants
> Here bring before thee Christ thy well-belovèd,
> All-perfect Offering, Sacrifice immortal,
> Spotless Oblation.[7]

Some Anglo-Catholic clergy candidly treated the texts of the Prayer Book as supplements to a properly Catholic "Western Rite." There is a wonderful story of a priest who scrupulously followed the Roman rubric requiring that the maniple be worn only during the celebration of the Mass. He would remove his maniple whenever he was compelled to recite one of Cranmer's own compositions.[8]

At the first of the now venerable Atlantic Theological Conferences in 1981, a paper on liturgics from a Catholic perspective all but disavowed the Prayer Book:

> We are painfully aware of Cranmer's deficiencies, both liturgical and theological. We regret much of the extraneous reformation material which Cranmer introduced into the liturgy, and we deeply regret his impoverished eucharistic theology, which is reflected in the Prayer Book rite.[9]

And he went on to welcome the publication of the 1979 Episcopal Prayer Book, which was being hailed as "the most Catholic of the official prayer books in the worldwide Anglican communion."[10]

Scholarship on the Prayer Book today takes for granted that the book must be interpreted in accordance with the views of its compilers and revisers.

And those views are held to be thoroughly Protestant—though there remains some debate, for example, about whether Cranmer should be grouped with Martin Bucer or Heinrich Bullinger. Can then an argument be credibly mounted that the Prayer Book is a "Catholic" document?

CRANMER'S SCRIPTURAL CRITERION: TRADITION IN SCRIPTURAL LANGUAGE

It is my contention that important aspects of the compilers' intentions have been overlooked and misunderstood. Out of many possible avenues of inquiry, in this paper I wish to examine Cranmer's methodology in adapting texts he drew from medieval and Continental Lutheran sources, and in composing his own prayers. A simple principle seems to operate throughout. When Cranmer is translating a pre-existing prayer, he carefully screens it to see if its text says anything that cannot be defended by a straightforward appeal to scripture. If he finds something that does not meet this criterion, he either simply deletes it or introduces his own scriptural substitute. The result is not a *sola scriptura* liturgy.[11] Rather, we encounter the Catholic tradition of the Church expressed within the compass of scriptural language.

A simple and obvious example of this methodology can be seen in the evolution of the collect for the feast of St. Andrew:[12]

> ***Sarum*** - We make our humble supplications unto thy majesty, O Lord, that like as the blessed apostle Andrew was set to be both a preacher and ruler of thy Church, so he may be the perpetual intercessor before thee on our behalf.

> ***1549 BCP*** - Almighty God which hast given such grace to thy apostle Saint Andrew that he counted the sharp and painful death of the cross to be an high honour and a great glory: Grant us to take and esteem all troubles and adversities which shall come unto us for thy sake as things profitable for us toward the obtaining of everlasting life.

> ***1552 BCP*** - Almighty God which didst give such grace unto thy holy apostle Saint Andrew that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay: Grant unto us all that we, being called by thy holy word, may forthwith give over ourselves obediently to follow thy holy commandments.

The Sarum original was unacceptable, because it spoke of Andrew as a "perpetual intercessor." In 1549, Cranmer replaced this with a collect based on the beautiful account of Andrew's martyrdom by crucifixion that was formerly read on his feast day. This new collect was doctrinally irreproachable; but Cranmer was still unsatisfied, because it took as its premise an episode not recorded in scripture. For the 1552 Prayer Book, he devised a collect based on the calling of Andrew and Peter in Mark 1:16–18.

This example makes clear that Cranmer was principally concerned, not to make his texts conform to an external doctrinal standard of "Reformed" theology—that had already been achieved for St. Andrew in 1549—but to give them a clear basis in scripture. Failure to recognize this basic principle has led some commentators into needless difficulties. One, for instance, flagged the collect for Easter Day as a place where Cranmer seemed to go against "Reformed the-

ology" by taking some initiative for the performance of good works away from God. Where the Latin original has an imperative verb addressed to God, "by your help, bring to good effect (*prosequere*) the desires you have given us," Cranmer's has a first-person subjunctive: "so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect":[13]

> *Deus qui hodierna die per unigenitum tuum*
> O God, who on this day, through thine only-begotten,
>
> *eternitatis nobis aditum devicta morte reserasti:*
> with death having been overcome, hast laid open to us the gate of eternity:
>
> *vota nostra que preveniendo aspiras,*
> those desires of ours which you, by going before, have inspired,
>
> *etiam adiuvando prosequere.*
> **bring-to-good-effect** them also, by helping.
>
> Almighty God, which through thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ
>
> hast overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life:
>
> we humbly beseech thee that as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put in our minds good desires;
>
> so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect.

The commentator suggested that Cranmer was here "obliged by the circumstances of his life to concern himself less with the theory of the reformed faith than with its orderly practice by the king's subjects."[14] But it would be more straightforward to say that in translating this collect Cranmer was influenced by Hebrews 13:20–21, an obvious passage for an Easter collect, since it refers to the resurrection: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to *do* his will."[15] What seemed suspiciously Pelagian turns out to be purely scriptural.

A more substantial example is found in the rite of Infant Baptism. Following the example of Martin Luther, Cranmer chose just one out of the many complex prayers that preceded the water baptism in the medieval rite (and which came originally from the early Church's three-year catechumenate):[16]

Medieval/Luther

M: O God [*ie* the Son],
[**L:** Almighty and eternal God,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,]

M: the immortal defence of all that beg,
the deliverer of all those that beseech,
the peace of those that ask,
the life of those that believe,
the resurrection of the dead,

M/L: I invoke thee upon this thy servant N.,
who, seeking [**L:** praying for] thy gift of baptism,
desires to obtain eternal grace by spiritual regeneration.

Receive him, O Lord,
and because thou didst deign to say,
Ask, and thou shalt receive,
seek, and thou shalt find,
knock, and it shall be opened unto thee,
grant the reward to him that asks,

and open the door to him that knocks,
so that having obtained the eternal
blessing of heavenly washing,
he may receive the promised kingdom
of thy bounty,

M: who livest and reignest with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God,
throughout all ages.
[L: Through Christ our Lord.] Amen.

Cranmer (1549/1552)

Almighty and immortal God,

the aid of all that need,
the helper of all that flee to thee for succour,
the life of them that believe,
and the resurrection of the dead,

we call upon thee for these infants,
that they coming to thy holy baptism,
may receive remission of their sins,
by spiritual regeneration.

Receive them, O Lord,
as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son,
saying, Ask and you shall have,
seek and you shall find,
knock and it shall be opened unto you;
so give now unto us that ask,
<let us that seek find,>
open the gates unto us that knock,
that these infants may enjoy the everlasting
benediction of thy heavenly washing,
and may come to thy eternal kingdom,

which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord. Amen.

The basic difference between the medieval prayer and Cranmer's revision is that in the medieval prayer it is the *infant* who "seeks" (or "prays for") the gift of baptism, who "asks," who "knocks." Cranmer instead makes the seeker to be the praying congregation. The only action of the infant is that he "comes" to God's holy baptism. Why this difference? In his excellent recent book on Cranmer's sacramental theology, *Signs of God's Promise,* Gordon Jeanes has argued that whereas Luther was convinced that an infant could have saving faith and could, according to its own capacity, desire the grace bestowed in baptism, Cranmer's relocation of this faith in the assembled congregation is best understood as a more "Reformed" approach—with especially close parallels in the thought of Martin Bucer—which thinks in terms of sacramental signification rather than sacramental realism.[17] (Luther advised new parents that it would be better to have a baby baptized by a papist than by a Swiss pastor.)

But whatever Cranmer actually believed happens in infant baptism, the change in the Prayer Book can again be very simply explained by his scriptural criterion. Scripture could not authorize language about an infant actively seeking baptism. But unlike Anabaptists, who for this reason rejected infant baptism altogether, Cranmer's goal here was to express the

Catholic tradition—what the Church actually does—in the language of scripture, and scripture provided an obvious source of language for infant baptism, namely Mark's account of Christ receiving little children and blessing them (which is read in full later in the rite): "Suffer little children to *come* unto me" (Mark 10:14). In Cranmer's revision of the prayer, the medieval phrase "who, seeking thy gift of baptism" is changed to "that they, *coming* to thy baptism." The children are described as doing exactly what Jesus invited them to do. (You will notice also that they come to receive, not eternal grace, but remission of sins, which is what St. Peter says we receive in baptism in Acts 2:38.)

When composing a new ritual prayer, Cranmer's procedure seems to have been to catalogue every scriptural passage directly relevant to the action being described, and then to craft a prayer that gave to the scriptural themes a coherent theological organization. Cranmer's masterpiece in this regard is the General Confession at Mattins and Evensong, which draws on at least sixteen separate scriptural texts about sin, repentance, and confession, and arranges them in a perfectly balanced structure to contrast our life apart from Christ with our life in Christ.[18]

The same procedure is evident in the Prayer of Consecration at the Eucharist. Here more than anywhere else we might expect to see a direct negation of the medieval Catholic tradition. The Reformation endlessly controverted the nature of the Eucharist as real presence, as sacrifice, as sacrament. Concerning the real presence, all reformers denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which holds that the consecrated bread and wine cease, metaphysically, to be bread and wine at all, and are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Concerning sacrifice, all reformers denied the doctrine of the Eucharist as a propitiatory sacrifice conferring benefits on the living and the dead. Concerning sacrament, all reformers denied that the Eucharist ought to have a devotional function outside its immediate use (that is, there should be no Eucharistic reservation). Cranmer's prayer could be read to reject all of these things too: there is only one sacrifice, *once* offered; the bread and wine are described as "creatures"; and all the consecrated elements are to be consumed immediately. But our impression changes when the prayer is read alongside what I take to be the obvious scriptural inspiration for each of its phrases:[19]

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, which of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ

> God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son (John 3:16)

to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption;

> That Christ should suffer (Acts 3:18). Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Having made peace through the blood of his cross (Col. 1:20). In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7)

who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered)

> Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10). Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (Heb. 9:28). We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:10)

a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction,

> This man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12). For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified (Heb. 10:14).

for the sins of the whole world;

> He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory

> This do in remembrance of me (Luke 22:19).

of that his precious death, until his coming again:

> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come (1 Cor. 11:26).

Hear us, O merciful Father, we beseech thee; and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion,

> Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me (1 Cor. 11:24–25)

may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood:

> The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break [NB: it's still bread!], is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread (1 Cor. 10:16–17).

who, in the same night that he was betrayed . . .

> The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed . . . (1 Cor. 11:23).

What we notice right away is that we are confronted inescapably with a discourse of Sacrifice, Presence, and Sacrament. It is as if Cranmer has said, "The tradition speaks of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Here are the words that the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us about Christ's sacrifice. The tradition speaks of a transformation of the bread and wine. Here is what I Corinthians says about that transformation. The tradition calls this rite an adorable sacrament. Here is what Christ in the Gospels commands us to do." In other words, this prayer (and, I submit, the whole of the Prayer Book) does not in any way negate the Catholic tradition: it simply sets the language of scripture as the boundary of legitimate liturgical expression, in disputed matters about the tradition.

I would note in passing that in Cranmer's solution, and particularly his use of Romans 12:1 in the first post-communion prayer ("And here we offer

and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee,"[20]) we see both an Augustinian movement from the physical to the spiritual, from the lower to the higher, from the outward to the inward,[21] and also a clear anticipation of the revolutionary work of the Lutheran theologian Hartmut Gese and the Roman Catholic Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) on the meaning of the Eucharist as the *todah*, the thanksgiving sacrifice, of the Messiah, which is a sufficient sacrifice precisely because it is an offering, not of a separate victim, but of the whole of Christ's self, and by extension, of ourselves in him.[22] Cranmer was already there 450 years ago.

IS THE SCRIPTURAL CRITERION CATHOLIC?

In summary, what I am arguing today is that the Book of Common Prayer is not, as Gregory Dix alleged, "the negations of Zwingli" clothed in beautiful Cranmerian prose.[23] There is no negation; only affirmation of the Catholic tradition, expressed within the compass of scriptural language and a clarified Augustinian theological structure.

But is Cranmer's approach sufficiently "Catholic"? The influential liturgical historian E. C. Ratcliff felt that it was not:

> [I]n defence of the Second Book (of Common Prayer), Cranmer would argue that it should be judged in accordance with its success in conforming with an axiom which, upon his view of the matter, should control all liturgical expression. The axiom is that of Scriptural sanction. What cannot plainly be seen to possess Scriptural sanction should not be found in a Prayer Book. The perfect Prayer Book should provide people and ministers with forms of worship which the Apostles and first believers could acknowledge and approve. The objection which can be brought against the assumptions of this idea is, by modern criteria, insuperable; but, within the circumstances of the knowledge available to him, Cranmer could not be aware of the difficulty, or impossibility, of devising such an ideal Prayer Book."[24]

Many scholars have shared this view that Cranmer's intention was to restore a state of apostolic purity to the Church of England. Most scholars think this was fundamentally misguided on our reformers' part:

> In the realm of facts, the Elizabethan Reformation [like the Edwardian] stands or falls on a simple historical question. Did the Anglican Fathers actually restore the primitive Church order? Jewel was convinced of it. Today, however, no responsible historian could endorse such a view. The religious ethos of the first Anglicans was more medieval than they knew. Far from restoring a patristic Church it perpetuated a number of late medieval conceptions. This was done unawares.[25]

I have been arguing that Cranmer's scriptural criterion was not a negation of Catholic tradition. Others have argued[26] that he was restoring an earlier Catholicism. But it may be fairly asked: Can we say that the fruit of Cranmer's efforts was legitimately Catholic, if his new Church could only claim to be apostolic on

grounds that were entirely imaginary?

I respond to this challenge in two ways. First, Cranmer's intent in the Book of Common Prayer was not to recreate an apostolic liturgy; he was demonstrably working within a late medieval Catholic humanist tradition of thought about liturgy. And secondly, his scriptural criterion—expressing the Catholic liturgical tradition within a scriptural compass—was itself a profound implementation of genuinely Catholic teaching about the relationship between the Church and scripture.

On the first point, Cranmer unmistakably draws on a late medieval Catholic humanist approach to liturgy, which derives from the thought Erasmus, and which was clearly expounded by the Tudor scholar and courtier Thomas Starkey in a 1536 treatise, published with Henry VIII's approval, called *An Exhortation to the People Instructing Them to Unity and Obedience.*[27] In the Exhortation, Starkey distinguishes first between the immutable essentials of "true religion"[28] (that very Cranmerian phrase) and "ceremonies," human ecclesiastical traditions, which may and should be changed to suit the contemporary needs of the Church.[29] Starkey further identifies two contrary errors—or, as he calls them, blindnesses: the blindness of superstition (which out of a servile fear raises human traditions to the status of divine commands) and the blindness arrogant contempt (which imagines that true religion can exist without the support of human traditions).[30]

Cranmer's use of these categories will be clear to anyone who has ever whiled away a boring sermon by reading Cranmer's essay "Of Ceremonies," which originally appeared at the end of the 1549 Prayer Book. First there are the opposite blindnesses of superstition and arrogant contempt:

> In this our time, the minds of men be so diverse that some think it a great matter of conscience to depart from a piece of the least of their ceremonies (they be so addicted to their old customs), and again on the other side some be so new fangle that they would innovate all thing, and so do despise the old that nothing can like them but that is new.[31]

There follows the explanation of his own working method:

> As those [ceremonies] be taken away which were most abused and did burden men's consciences without any cause; so the other that remain are retained for a discipline and order, which (upon just causes) may be altered and changed, and therefore are not to be esteemed equal with God's law. And moreover, they be neither dark nor dumb ceremonies, but are so set forth that every man may understand what they do mean, and to what use they serve. So that it is not like that they, in time to come, should be abused as the other have been.[32]

During the course of the 2018 PBS Conference we heard several times about the mythical Anglican *via media* between Geneva and Rome. Thomas Starkey and Thomas Cranmer present us with the real Anglican middle way, between fearful superstition and arrogant contempt for religion.

While Thomas Starkey was content that competent authority should alter the Church's ceremonies when this was necessary, Thomas Cranmer was determined to devise a liturgy that would not be abused by superstition in the future. The means to

this, apart from simplicity and clarity, is of course his scriptural criterion:

> Here are left out many things whereof some be untrue, some uncertain, some vain and superstitious, and is ordained nothing to be read but the very pure word of God, the holy scriptures, or that which is evidently grounded upon the same.[33]

Cranmer's goal, in other words, was to achieve a fusion of "true religion" and the "ceremonies" of the Church. In this he is acting the part of Thomas Starkey's ideal "true preacher":

> [A]boue al the trewe preacher euer besyly endeuoreth hym selfe aboute the groundes of scripture, and suche as be of necessytie necessarye vnto mannes saluation, theym to stable in all chrystian hartes, and of theym to make sure ground and fundation.[34]

This brings me to my second response in defence of the catholicity of Cranmer's approach. There exists for some Catholic Anglicans a temptation to say that scripture on its own is not enough, to say that *sola scriptura* is a Reformation heresy and that we must ascribe an equal authority to the unwritten traditions of the Church. But here again, commitment to scripture alone was not an invention of the Reformation. It was, at the very latest, part of the Renaissance *philosophia Christi*, the "philosophy of Christ," taught by Erasmus. For Erasmus, the scriptures far exceeded the authority of any theologian. Furthermore, the scriptures were accessible to the simplest and could absorb a lifetime of study by the wisest:

> This doctrine in an equal degree accommodates itself to all, lowers itself to the little ones, adjusts itself to their measure, nourishing them with milk, bearing, fostering, sustaining them, doing everything until we grow in Christ. Again, not only does it serve the lowliest, but it is also an object of wonder to those at the top. And the more you shall have progressed in its riches, the more you shall have withdrawn it from the shadow of the power of any other. It is a small affair to the little ones and more than the highest affair to the great.[35]

But this attitude was not new in the Renaissance. John the Scot Eriugena, in the ninth century, could pray as follows:

> O Lord Jesus, I ask of Thee . . . no other joy than this: to understand in all purity and without being led astray by faulty contemplation Thy Words which are inspired by the Holy Spirit. . . . The rational and purified mind shall find nothing beyond this for beyond it there is nothing. For as there is no place in which it is more proper to seek Thee than in Thy words, so there is no place where Thou art more clearly discovered than in Thy words. For therein Thou abidest, and thither Thou leadest all who seek and love Thee.[36]

This view was not a rejection of the theology or the traditions of the Church. On the contrary, as George Tavard so beautifully demonstrated, in the patristic and early medieval periods, Scripture and the Church were entirely co-inherent:

> The core of the Revelation was not the teaching of a doctrine. It was the coming of a Presence among men. . . . The tradition of the Gospel did not consist in giving a book to read, but in telling others of that Presence. . . . Tradition is no substitute for the Gospel. The Gospel does not replace the Living Word. The Word is the presence that is experienced when we read the Gospel in the books that the Church has preserved.[37]

Both the scriptures and the institutions of the Church are mirror-image embodiments and carriers of the one Gospel of the Living Word. Thus Nicetas of Remesiana could say in the fourth century, "My single appeal will be to the Holy Scriptures."[38]

In the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, scripture and Church tradition became detached in theological thought, so that in polemical debate Reformers alleged the authority of scripture alone, and Catholics alleged two separate authorities: scripture and unwritten tradition. Tavard observes that it was Anglicans in the Reformation period, especially Cranmer and Jewel, who came closest to the patristic position, since they saw scripture and the Church of the first six centuries as genuinely co-inherent.[39] And Richard Hooker may be seen to hold the full patristic doctrine, because he is able to account for the role of the contemporary interpreting human community with his notion of "ancient continuance."[40] (And more recently, Michael Ramsey espoused the same patristic doctrine in his book *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*.[41])

What I hope I have demonstrated today is that the Prayer Book, too, is, in a remarkable way, founded on this classical Catholic doctrine of the co-inherence of the Church and Scripture. Not only does the Church encounter scripture in all its fulness in the context of prayer and praise through the Prayer Book's lectionaries; the very prayers themselves uniquely unite the words and images of scripture to the actions of the Catholic liturgical tradition. While the Prayer Book will say no more about the action of worship than what scripture says, it is in fact the action of worship that discloses what those words of scripture really mean.

CONCLUSION: THE SCRIPTURAL CRITERION TODAY

Let me close with several points about what all this means for the Church today. First of all, if my understanding of Cranmer's scriptural criterion is correct, we cannot make any intelligible use the Prayer Book at all unless we bring to it a deep knowledge of the Bible, especially a knowledge acquired through the daily offices of Mattins and Evensong. Secondly, our understanding of what the Prayer Book means will necessarily grow as we come to understand the scriptures themselves, both through the encounter with them in the liturgy, and through our study of the whole stream of Catholic scriptural interpretation. Thirdly, we should have confidence in this scriptural Catholicity of our traditional Anglican formularies. It may sometimes feel like a limitation, or an ecumenical barrier. Sometimes we wish to say more than our liturgies will let us say; I think particularly of our ordinal, which has been an obstacle to communion with other churches. But we will serve the wider Church most faithfully by remaining true to those limitations and living into them. And lastly, if we are willing to be faithful to Cranmer's scrip-

tural criterion, then we need not fear liturgical revision. Of course, faithfulness to his criterion rather undermines any argument that the liturgy needs to change! But given that the Prayer Book is the preeminent locus of Anglican identity and communion, it must be in principle open to development. The late Robert Crouse, spoke of the Book of Common Prayer as an Anglican *Consensus Fidelium*, "the common mind of the faithful in relation to the Word of God revealed." That consensus, that common mind, contained in the Prayer Book tradition, is the only real source of authority for the common life of Anglicans, and that consensus must today address questions of which Archbishop Cranmer could hardly have dreamt, and not just questions of liturgical revision. I close with a quotation from Crouse about our way forward:

The authority of consensus is not easy to live with. It involves learning and deliberation, debate and controversy, when we would prefer, perhaps, the peace of easy compromise. It involves the patience which must sometimes think in terms of centuries instead of months or years. It involves reverent, careful, and humble attention to the past when we are, perhaps, inclined to be preoccupied with the latest findings of Biblical Criticism or the Social Sciences or with the latest popular causes. And in the divided state of Christendom, the divided state even of our own communion, it involves, or should involve, the frustration and self-discipline of refraining from local decisions which are not clearly justified by the *Consensus Fidelium* as more universally conceived in time and space.[42]

If we will rededicate ourselves to the Catholic tradition expressed in the language of scripture, as we have it in our Prayer Book, then we will once again be fit to participate in the living and ever deepening *consensus* of all the faithful. ✠

Dr Jesse Billett, is a Fellow of Trinity College Toronto and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Divinity, he also teaches at the Centre for Medieval Studies. Before taking up his current post he studied Music at Harvard University (AB 2001) and Medieval History at the University of Cambridge (MPhil 2003, PhD 2009) after which he held several post-doctoral Fellowships. Dr Billett is a member of the Board of the Prayer Book Societis of both the United States and Canada

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Endnotes

1.This article is closely derived from a paper presented at the 2018 Conference of the Prayer Book Society in Savannah, GA which was originally to have been addressed by the late Bishop of Gibraltar (the Anglican Bishop for Europe) the Rt. Revd. Dr. Geoffrey Rowell who was not able to be present on account of health challenges. In his opening the author paid a warm tribute to "the great Bishop Rowell's" work and scholarship at the outset of his presentation.

2. *An Admonition to the Parliament* (1st ed. 1571), in *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt,* ed. W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, Church Historical Society 72 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1907), 1–55, at 21.

3. James Prior, *A Life of Edmund Burke* (London: Bell, 1891), 307

4. John Henry Newman, "Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles," in *Tracts for the Times*, vol. 6, no. 90, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1841): 80.

5. Dyson Hague, *The Protestantism of the Prayer-Book* (First publ. Toronto: Bryant, 1890; English ed., rev. and enlarged, London: Church Association, 1912), xx–xxi.

6. Francis Aidan Gasquet and Edmund Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, 3rd ed. (London: Hodges, 1891), xx (Preface to the 2nd ed., 1891).

7. W. H. H. Jervois (1852–1905), in *The English Hymnal with Tunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), no. 335.

8. John Hunwicke, "Maniples: The Finer Points," *Fr. Hunwicke's Mutual Enrichment* (blog), March 31, 2011, http://liturgical-

notes.blogspot.ca/2010/07/maniples-finer-points.html.

9. G. R. Bridge, "A Paper on Liturgics," in *A Need for a Catholic Voice in the Church Today* (Charlottetown, PEI: St. Peter Publications, [1981]), 24–37, at 28–29.

10. Ibid.

11. That is to say, Cranmer does not look to scripture expecting to find there a template for what the liturgy should look like. Such was the approach of the more radically Protestant "Puritans" of a later generation.

12. *Missale ad usum insignis et praeclarae ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. Francis Henry Dickinson (Burntisland: Pitsligo Press, 1861–83), 660: "Majestatem tuam, Domine, suppliciter exoramus, ut sicut Ecclesiae tuae beatus Andreas apostolus exstitit praedicator et rector, ita apud te sit pro nobis perpetuus intercessor." F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*, 2nd ed. rev., 2 vols. (London: Rivingtons, 1921), 2:552–53. For the source of the 1549 collect in the sixth lesson of Nocturns on St. Andrew's day, see *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1879–86), 3:11.

13. Brightman, *English Rite*, 1:396.

14. James A. Devereux, "Reformed Doctrine in the Collects of the *First Book of Common Prayer*," *Harvard Theological Review* 58, no. 1 (1965): 49–68, at 52.

15. We might equally look to Phil. 2:13, which neatly encompasses the collect's double emphasis on God's initiative in both will and deed: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to *do* of his good pleasure."

16. Translations of the Sarum *Manuale* and of Luther's second *Taufbüchlein* (1526), from J. D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*, Alcuin Club Collections 48 (London: SPCK, 1965), 158–79, at 161, and the same author's *Christian Initiation: The Reformation Period*, Alcuin Club Collections 51 (London: SPCK, 1970), 23–29, at 23–24.

17. Gordon P. Jeanes, *Signs of God's Promise: Thomas Cranmer's Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 165–71.

18. See the list of scriptural parallels in Massey Hamilton Shepherd, *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 5–6. A much larger collection of parallels and allusions is proposed in Henry Ives Bailey, *The Liturgy Compared with the Bible*, 2nd ed., 2 vols.(London: SPCK, 1835), 1:5–9.

19. Text of 1552, from Brightman, *English Rite*, 2:693.

20. Gregory Dix, developing his theory of the meaning of the offertory, complained that "ourselves, our souls and bodies," is "tautologous" and that Cranmer should have said "our lives and labours" (*Shape of the Liturgy*, 693n1). Dix had read every early liturgy; but I wonder how carefully he had read the Epistle to the Romans.

21. W. J. Hankey, "The Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation," in Conference Report 1982: Christian Initiation (Charlottetown, PEI: St. Peter Publications, 1982), 30–43, at 39.

22. Hartmut Gese, "The Origin of the Lord's Supper," in *Essays on Biblical Theology*, trans. Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981), 117–40; Joseph Ratzinger, *Collected* Works, vol. 11, *Theology of the Liturgy*, ed. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 299–318, 333–37.

23. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 677.

24. E. C. Ratcliff, "The Liturgical Work of Archbishop Cranmer," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 7, no. 2 (1956): 189–203, at 200.

25. George H. Tavard, *Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation* (London: Burns and Oates, 1959), 238.

26. Including speakers at the 2018 PBS Conference in Savannah.

27. *Thomas Starkey's An Exhortation to the People Instructing Them to Unity and Obedience* (1536), ed. James M. Pictor (New York: Garland, 1988).

28. Starkey, *Exhortation*, fol. E3v (ed. Pictor, 128): "True religion is this, with syncere and pure spirite to honour god, and with most reuerent loue and ardent affection of harte and mynde to worshyppe the diuine nature, by Christ in our dayes to mankynde declared, as author of al thinges, fountayne of all goodnes, and gouernour of al."

29. *Eg* Starkey, *Exhortation*, fols. G3v–G4r (ed. Pictor, 147): "rites, ceremonies, and customes of the churche, accordynge to tyme, place, and nature of the people may be varied, as thinges of them selfe nother sure nor stable, ye and necessite it doth require"; and fol. F2v (ed. Pictor, 135): "politike thinges . . . in processe of tyme by littell and littell euer grow to iniuste extremitie, in so moch that of necessitie they require prudent reformation."

30. Starkey, *Exhortation*, fols. E2r–Gv (ed. Pictor, 125–42).

31. Brightman, *English Rite*, 1:40.

32. Brightman, *English Rite*, 1:44.

33. Brightman, *English Rite*, 1:36.

34. Starkey, *Exhortation*, fol. Z4r (ed. Pictor, 291).

35. Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraclesis*, trans. John C. Olin, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 100–101.

36. Eriugena, *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature)* 5 (PL 122:1010), trans. I. P. Sheldon-Willilams, rev. John J. O'Meara (Montreal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1987), 700.

37. Tavard, *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, 4.

38. De spiritus sancti potentia, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, Fathers of the Church 7 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1949), 23.

39. Tavard, Holy Writ or Holy Church, 235–37.

40. Ibid., 241: '[For Hooker,] In practice, . . . Scripture is safer than uncertain traditions. Yet whether men have once and for all comprehended the entire contents of Scripture is another matter. . . . Hooker thus reopens in Anglican theology an indefinite perspective of development of doctrine, of growth in the understanding of faith. . . . He accordingly restores a connected point: the authority of man in matters of religion."

41. Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (1956; repr. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1990), 208¬–209: "[I]f our reading of the New Testament and especially of the Pauline Epistles is correct, these two truths—the Evangelical and the Catholic—are utterly one. To understand the Catholic Church and its life and order is to see it as the utterance of the Gospel of God; to understand the Gospel of God is to share with all the saints in the building up of the one Body of Christ. Hence these two aspects of Anglicanism cannot really be separated. It possesses a full Catholicity, only if it is faithful to the Gospel of God; and it is fully Evangelical in so far as it upholds the Church order wherein an important aspect of the Gospel is set forth... 'Catholicism' and 'Evangelicalism' are not two separate things which the church of England must hold together by a great feat of compromise. Rightly understood, they are both facts which lie behind the church of England and, as the New Testament shows, they are one fact. . . . In every parish the Prayer-Book entitles the laity to hear the Gospel preached, and the scriptures expounded, and also to receive the full sacramental teaching of the historic Church including the ministry of Confession and Absolution for those who desire it. For the Anglican church is committed not to a vague position wherein the Evangelical and the Catholic views are alternatives, but to the scriptural faith wherein both elements are one."

42. Robert D. Crouse, "The Prayer Book and the Authority of Tradition," in *Church Polity and Authority*, ed. G. Richmond Bridge (Charlottetown: St. Peter Publications, 1985), 53–61, at 56.