

☪ **A Prayer Book**  
**Manual** *prepared by the*  
Boston Clergy Group of  
*the* Episcopal Evangelical  
Fellowship.

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## P R E F A C E

THIS MANUAL is commended to all who use the Book of Common Prayer. It was written by the members of the Boston Group of the Episcopal Evangelical Fellowship because their own ministry had convinced them of the need for this Manual. Each Chapter was written by a different member of the Group and read at a meeting during the winter of 1941-1942. The resulting suggestions were noted by HENRY M. B. OGILBY, Chairman of the Group, and PAUL T. SHULTZ, who served as editors, and the Manual was then presented to the Executive Committee of our Fellowship in January, 1943.

The Executive Committee gladly assumes responsibility for its publication. Our thanks are due also to DRS. W. RUSSELL BOWIE and FREDERICK C. GRANT for reading the manuscript with care and making a number of valuable suggestions.

For those who are interested in knowing more about our Fellowship, our statement of purpose is reprinted from our 1941 Year Book in the Appendix of this manual.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER is the great manual of worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church. It gives the words to be used in the various services, and it gives directions to guide minister and people in the orderly conduct of those services. At first thought further directions for conducting public or private worship and the various offices would seem to be superfluous. But worship is a living act performed by living people. Moreover, conditions in the world change from generation to generation; changed emphases need to be made to meet changed conditions; the Book itself may be revised when necessary. Customs in worship change as the thought of Christians moves into new or rediscovered channels. The Prayer Book, furthermore, does not describe all the customs which are part of services of worship, and so accessory information is necessary.

This present manual does not pretend to set a standard of custom for all time. It is intended to provide young ministers, seminarians, lay-readers and other interested persons with a brief outline of certain procedures which are normally followed in many Episcopal parishes in this year 1943. It represents the views of a group of "Liberal Evangelicals" who find a large measure of agreement as to its contents. Not every member of the group

agrees with or practices everything in it. But the group hopes that it may prove a helpful guide. Undoubtedly further helpful revision can and will be made by its readers. Its authors would welcome comment as to its usefulness.

H. M. B. O. and P. T. S.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WORSHIP

THE WORSHIP of Almighty God is for Christians their first duty and their supreme privilege. Worship holds this central place in the Christian practice because it is in worship that the living presence of the Eternal is mediated to us. Thus it is the chief means of grace. For the Christian, God is the primary reality of life. Our lives belong to Him, and only in terms of Him do they find their significance and meaning.

Worship begins with God. God is always first, always in the beginning. The initiative and the power are His. Our worship of God is but our response to His outflowing, His outpouring of Himself to us. God seeks us and through the Holy Spirit we respond.

God reveals Himself to us. God is not the object of our search, the passive one who waits for us to find Him. Of ourselves we cannot find Him, we cannot even seek Him. The initiative must come from Him, must begin with Him. And it does so come, it does so begin. God seeks us before we can begin to seek Him. God reveals Himself to man, and man's worship of God is man's response to God's self-revelation. God reveals Himself as Creator: "Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible." God reveals Himself as Sovereign: "Lord and Giver of Life." Supremely God reveals Himself as Father: "Our Father." Because the

supreme self-revelation of God is His disclosure that He is our Father, the worship of God as Father is man's supreme response to God. And such worship must be first of all corporate. A Father implies a Family. In theory it is possible for a man apart from his fellows to be aware of God as Creator and Sovereign, but it is not possible for a man apart from his fellows to receive the revelation of God as Father. A Father implies a Family, and only through and in the Family can the Father be recognized and worshiped.

In order to reveal Himself as Father, God had first to create a Family. And this God has done in Christ and His Church. God has sent Christ, His Son, the full revelation of the Father. In Christ God has gathered His Family, the Church, the Body of Christ. The Church is the sacrament of true humanity. The whole of humankind is meant to be the Family of God. The Church is that part of mankind which in its corporate worship and fellowship is seeking to realize what it is meant to be — that portion of humanity which responds to God's revelation of Himself as Father, which knows itself called to membership in the Family, and thus to be a part of God's self-revelation to all mankind. The Church is called into being by God, so that all men may know that God is the Father Almighty. And the Church's worship is the response of the Family to the Father, the realization, the expression, and hence the revelation of the Father and the Family.

Christian worship expresses the life of the human family of God as centered in Him. This is the

principle in terms of which all the forms of worship are to be judged and understood. In terms of this principle the meaning of the Holy Communion as a dramatic expression of the relation between God and the Family is self-evident. As this is true of the Lord's Supper, so it is true of all other Christian worship. Just as our earthly families express their common life in other ways, as well as in the act of eating together, so it is with the Family of God. In Morning Prayer, the Litany, Evening Prayer, the Communion, the Church is the Family of God gathered in the presence of the Father. Worship is thus the collective act of the Christian community, an act evoked by God and offered by the community in response to God's initiative. In the words of the Prayer Book - our bounden duty is "to worship God every Sunday in His Church."

#### PARISH WORSHIP

The most truly corporate form of parish worship is the main service on Sunday morning. The parish is meant to be the Christian community and the main service on Sunday morning is meant to be the collective act of the Christian community. In this service our membership in the Family of God is expressed, and because this membership is the central reality of our lives, this hour in church on Sunday morning gives meaning and significance to every other hour of the week. The Christian worships God on Sunday in the church because his life belongs to God; whatever else he may be, he first of all is a child of God, a member of God's Family,

and God and the Family must come first in order that other things may come second. If the Christian does not worship God on Sunday, then Monday and Tuesday and all the other days of the week are turned topsy-turvy. And this is just what has happened in the modern world. Man's neglect of the worship of God has turned man's days upside-down, and with man's days his world. Secondary things have been considered primary and chaos has ensued because man through his failure to worship finds himself without a center. We must not, however, make the mistake of thinking this chaos a purely modern phenomenon. It has always been thus. The Church has never been the whole or even the major part of humankind. The past reveals no golden age of faith. The world at large has always been centerless and because centerless it has always been floundering through time. The call of the Church to worship is always the call to men who are centerless to find their true center in God and His Family. The purpose of worship is to provide this center. And the provision of this center is the great intention of the main service on Sunday morning.

Other services have their place and function too. Every service, if it is a true service, is an expression of the Family Life of God and the Church. And on occasions when it is impossible for the Christian to attend the main service, these other services meet and fill a real need. Half a loaf is better than no bread at all. But these other services can never strike the corporate note as fully as the main service, and therefore their habitual use as a substitute for

the main service is to be discouraged lest the sense of Christian community become blurred and broken and the individual tend to think of himself as his Father's only child. The normal weekly worship of every Christian ought to be the main service, the service that is most truly the collective act of the Christian community, the service that most truly expresses the Family Life of God and the Church.

In many of our churches it is the custom at the main service of the Church to keep the Lord's Supper on one Sunday of the month and to read Morning Prayer on the remaining Sundays. There is sound reason for this procedure. The Holy Communion is a sublime and dramatic expression of the Family Life of God and the Church. As such it is rightfully a form which the collective act of the Christian community should frequently take. But it is not the only way in which God's self-revelation is given to us. Nor is it the only way in which the sense of Christian community is able to find expression. The media of revelation and the instruments of worship are diverse. The ministry is both of the Word and of the Sacraments. And Morning Prayer is able to provide for the ministry of the Word of God in certain ways not possible to the Holy Communion. The full expression of Christian community demands on the one hand that the Holy Communion be not neglected, and on the other hand that it yet be not invariably used as the chief service of the Church on Sunday morning. The ends of corporate worship are best served by a judicious use of a variety of tested forms.

## CHAPTER TWO

## MORNING PRAYER AND SERMON

MORE EPISCOPALIANS attend Morning Prayer and Sermon than any other service of the Church. And rightly so, for it is part of the living worship of a living Church. Christian worship expresses the life of the Family of God. The movement of worship is always double — from the Father to the Family and from the Family to the Father. Morning Prayer is a great living expression of this double movement. It brings the Word of God to the Church and it carries the prayer and praise of the Church back to God.

The comprehensiveness of the service is indicated by the three positions we assume: kneeling to pray to God, standing to praise God and sitting to learn of God. There is a frequent alternation between the three, for one does not wisely do one thing too long.

Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are as old as Holy Communion; in one sense older, for they are descendants of the synagogue and family service of the Jewish church. We are told by the writer of the Acts that in the early years of Christianity the faithful met together for the "breaking of bread" (the Holy Communion) and for "prayers" (Morning and Evening Prayer). The two types of service developed side by side, and neither has ever been totally neglected by the Church. It is significant that the monastic orders (the members of which are

experts from long experience in the use of religious services) employ the daily offices regularly.

The two daily services of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer entered the Book of Common Prayer as a simplification of the daily offices found in the medieval Breviaries and Books of Hours. Morning Prayer is a combination mainly of Prime, Lauds and Matins; Evening Prayer, of Vespers and Compline. This last development was part of the intent of the 16th century English bishops to adapt monastic worship to the needs of the ordinary laity. Enrichment of the text and worshipful rendition of Morning and Evening Prayer have been increasingly a feature of English-speaking services. As they stand today they have been hammered out on the anvil of experience. They are the net results of centuries of worship by all sorts and kinds of worshipers: what has proved valuable has been retained, while passages of temporary appeal have dropped out, and many additions have been made to meet new needs. We read from the Old Testament and Psalter as the Jews of Christ's time had already been doing for centuries. Before the morning Psalter and after each Lesson we praise God in ancient canticles, most of them so used from the early centuries: three from the poetry of St. Luke; six, from the Book of Psalms; two, pure praise from the Apocrypha (books written after the Old Testament and before the New); and finally, the magnificent *Te Deum* with its long Christian history of over 1300 years. The prayers are milestones of history: the Grace, from St. Paul; just before it the lovely Prayer of St. Chrysostom from a 5th century

liturgy; the Collect for Peace, written when the Visigoths were advancing upon Rome; the medieval Collect for Grace; the rhetorical General Confession and Thanksgiving from Puritan divines; and an alternative Prayer for the President composed only a few years ago.

The first part of the service, as far as the Lord's Prayer, is PREPARATION, and so is penitential. From there to the Creed the service is PRAISE, intermingled with the instruction of the Lessons. The third part is, of course, PRAYER, from the Versicles through the Collects to the Grace. Psychologically there is a gradually rising crescendo from the Confession through praise in the Canticles to the climax in the Creed.

The structure of the service may be described as a dialogue between God and man: God's word in sentences and exhortation, man's response in confession, in the Lord's Prayer and in the congregational praise which follows; the Word of God in Lessons, and our response in Canticles; the challenge of the Creed, and the reply of prayer; the Word of God in the sermon, our response in hymn, anthem and offertory; finally, the Word of God in Benediction.

Such in outline is the structure of Morning Prayer. The service has both constancy and flexibility. It is constant in that its fundamental structure is always the same — the parts of the service follow each other in ordered sequence, with the result that, whatever church he may be in, the worshiper who is familiar with the Prayer Book is always able to follow the service. In this sense, Morning

Prayer is a river of revelation, praise and prayer which flows steadily forward through one great, unchanging channel.

And yet, along with this constancy, the service also has great flexibility. As the river changes with the seasons and the rains, now deep and swift and turbulent with swollen waters, now calm and slow and measured as nature's reservoirs are depleted, so Morning Prayer also changes in response to the varying moods of the Christian year and the various needs of men. Its basic structure, like the river's channel, remains the same. Its content, like the river's flow, changes. Now the lessons refer to a season of the Christian year, again to some particular aspect of the Church's doctrine or life or work. Now the service has a penitential tone; again it breathes the spirit of Christian joy. Christianity is both timeless and timely. The Holy Communion expresses the timelessness of our religion. Whatever the fluctuations of men's needs and opinions, God's gift in Christ remains the same. This is what the Holy Communion tells us. Morning Prayer, on the other hand, expresses the timeliness of our religion. Its wide latitude and its abundant opportunity for variety make it possible for every service to be relevant, to bring the Word of God addressed directly to a current need.

In the Holy Communion there are few options; the daily offices offer variety in the psalms, lessons, canticles and in the prayers which follow the third collect. The seasonal note is always present in the Collect for the day and in the antiphone before the *Venite*. What a pity more parishes do not use



the latter! And there are several ways of shortening the two services or of combining them with Litany or Ante-Communion. The adaptability of the two services to varying purposes and changes in mood is one reason for their wide popularity.

Evening Prayer is similar to Morning Prayer in structure except for the omission of the call to worship in the *Venite*. However, sentences, psalms, lessons, canticles and some of the prayers are different. These changes seem to give us a quieter service, more in keeping with the hour of the day; curiously enough (though this is accidental), the evening psalms often seem to reflect a calmer atmosphere.

Morning Prayer is a missionary service which declares the meaning of the Family of God to men and women who are not always truly conscious of their membership in that Family. Sometimes these men and women are outsiders, people who have little or no connection with the Church. More often they are ourselves, who know ourselves to be children of God and yet in our living so often deny what we know. Morning Prayer recalls us to our true selves, our true life, our true center in God and the Family. As it reminds us of what we really are, so it also teaches others what and who they really are. It is thus both a service to which we can bring others and also a service to which we should come ourselves. It reminds the faithful; it teaches the unchurched.

Morning Prayer is a living service which carries within itself its present and its past. In it the religious experience of the ages is expressed. The Church of the Old Testament, the Church of the

New Testament, the Early Church, the Medieval Church, the Church of the Reformation and the Church of Today — all have had their part in the making of the service. Sometimes we forget this and make the mistake of thinking of Morning Prayer as merely a revision of the choir offices of the medieval monasteries. This approach overlooks the very real development that has characterized Morning Prayer since the Reformation. In the centuries since Cranmer “the order for daily morning prayer” has grown into the great normal Sunday service of the Anglican communion. It has done so because it has been found to be an effective instrument for the normal corporate worship of the Church. If it had not met and filled a real need it would not have so developed.

We have then in Morning Prayer a great service which comes to us out of the long past and yet speaks to us with the timeliness of the present, bringing us the Word of God and carrying back to God our response to His word. It is a service which brings men to God and God to men.

CHAPTER THREE  
*THE CONDUCT OF  
 MORNING PRAYER*

The service of Morning Prayer is intended to be read aloud by a minister in the presence, and with the active participation, of a congregation. Since it is to be read aloud, we need hardly emphasize that it should be read distinctly and intelligently. Hasty, indistinct reading, or the unpleasant use of the voice, greatly hampers the ability of the minister to lead the worship effectively. Sentimentality and dramatics should be avoided, of course, but the congregation should receive from the minister's voice and attitude the impression that what he is reading is worth reading, and that he believes in God, loves God, and seeks to worship Him in this service.

The minister is normally attired in a cassock, surplice, and black tippet or a stole of the liturgical color proper to the season. If a hood is worn it should be worn under the tippet. The minister reads from a stall in the choir of the church. For simple daily offices, he may enter the church quietly, or he may march in procession behind the choir during the singing of a processional hymn, which is the usual practice in churches on Sunday morning.

The service is rich in permitted variations. We shall first consider its use in full form and then discuss permissible changes designed to shift emphasis or to permit enrichment or amplification of the

normal content.

Morning Prayer begins with the reading of one or more sentences from the Holy Scriptures. The purpose of this beginning is first to call the attention of the worshipers to the presence of God, and to some attribute or characteristic of His being. Sentences appropriate to the seasons of the Christian Year have been selected to supplement general passages. The wise minister will use these seasonal sentences on any occasion when they help to direct the attention of the congregation to the subject or particular emphasis of the service. Needless to say, every service of worship should be a unity. If there is to be a sermon, the hymns, canticles, and prayers should be in harmony with the general topic of the service. The sentences not only recall the presence of God and particular characteristics of God, but also indicate our relationship to Him. In the normal order of Morning Prayer we go from the sentences directly to the Exhortation, long or short, and then to the General Confession. One can wisely use some of the penitential sentences to avoid precipitating the people from joy in the thought of God to the realization that they are miserable sinners. Often the penitential mood needs to be induced. At best the sentences give the briefest period of time in which to concentrate upon God's presence, and upon our unworthiness to stand before Him with complacency. We therefore choose our opening with great care and read it with deliberation sufficient to give the worshiper time for orientation.

The Exhortation is usually read facing the congregation. The invariable use of the long form can

become boring and ineffective, but its occasional use is stimulating.

The Declaration of Absolution also is usually read facing the congregation, the priest standing, the congregation kneeling. If the service is being read by a deacon or lay reader there might well be a moment of silence after the Confession, since the Declaration of Absolution may be read only by a priest. It is a custom, not rubrical however, for some ministers not priests to read instead of the Declaration some appropriate prayer or collect such as the prayer on page 62 in the Penitential Office or the Collect for the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

The minister then kneels while he leads in the Lord's Prayer and the Versicles and Responses which follow.

All rise for the *Gloria Patri*. The minister (and the choir, if there be one) should rise with dignity and without haste, facing the altar if that is the custom of the parish. In every instance where changes of position are being made the people should be given sufficient time. "Step lively, please" is all right for rapid-transit trains; it is ruinous in worship.

Then follows the *Venite*, to be said or sung. If sung, it, and all the other chants, should be sung distinctly, and as musically as possible. Words or phrases should not be slurred or obliterated in an effort to make the words and music come out even. The music is servant to the words, not *vice versa*.

The *Venite* may be preceded by the saying or singing, at proper seasons, of the invitatory antiphons which precede the *Venite*. It is customary

to sing these to the same tune.

The reading of a portion of the Psalter follows. The selection may be made according to the day of the month, or according to the tables of special selection on pages vii-x at the front of the Book of Common Prayer. The Psalms are read responsively, verse by verse, or the minister may read the first part of a verse to the star, and the congregation the second part. The *Gloria Patri* is said or sung after each Psalm, or at the end of the selection of Psalms.

The First Lesson is chosen either from the Old Testament or the Apocrypha, according to the lectionary in the Prayer Book (pages xi-xxvii), or the table of lessons for special occasions, or trial lectionaries approved from time to time by the General Convention.

Its reading is followed by a canticle: either the *Te Deum*, *Benedictus es*, or *Benedicite*. Because of its length, the wise minister will use the *Te Deum* infrequently unless he is fortunate enough to have a setting in which the congregation can and will join, or unless he avails himself of the permission to use part of it instead of the whole. Some settings of the *Benedicite* are also far too long. It is fatal to the spirit of worship to keep the congregation standing through a long, elaborate setting in which they can have no part, except on festival occasions when only the full *Te Deum* will express what is in the people's hearts. Congregational participation in the singing of all canticles should be encouraged; if they cannot be sung well, let them be said.

The Second Lesson, from the New Testament, should be chosen from the same table as the First, in order that it may be in proper agreement with or

contrast to the First Lesson. Otherwise the unity of the service may suffer. Note that the morning and evening lessons may be interchanged if either service is omitted on that day. Furthermore, the Gospel for the Day may be read as the Second Lesson. This lesson is followed by the *Benedictus* or *Jubilate Deo*. Except on the Sundays of Advent only the first four verses of the *Benedictus* need be used. All canticles except the *Te Deum* must be followed by the *Gloria Patri*.

The saying of the Creed is a great act of dedication, a pledge of allegiance to God. It should be said deliberately and with dignity. Usually everyone faces the cross on the altar, just as all face the flag when pledging allegiance to their country. Or the turning of everyone toward the east may be viewed as making the minister and choir one in attitude with the congregation. To many persons there is a strong appeal in the older explanation — it turns our thoughts to Christ's resurrection and his coming again.

The worshiper by this time has come into the presence of God; has asked Him to accept his unworthy worship; has received assurance of God's love and forgiveness; has praised God in song; has listened to the Word of God read for his instruction; and has made further acts of praise culminating in his affirmation of faith in God. He is now ready to pour out his heart in prayer.

The invitation to prayer is followed by Versicles and Responses, the Collect for the day, and the Collects for Peace and for Grace. After the third Collect the service may end with the saying of the

Grace or of any prayer or prayers in the Prayer Book. Here the minister is given great latitude, and he should be familiar with every prayer in the book, so that he can plan in advance what is to be used for the greater enrichment of the service and to meet the needs of the people or of the times.

But if the Litany is to follow, it should come immediately after the third Collect. In most churches a hymn is sung between the third Collect and the Litany. This is an un-rubrical custom, but if well chosen the hymn makes a good transition to the service of the Litany.

The order for Morning Prayer may be shortened. Note the second rubric: "*On any day, save a day of Fasting or Abstinence, or on any day when the Litany or Holy Communion is immediately to follow, the minister may, at his discretion, pass at once from the sentences to the Lord's Prayer, first pronouncing, The Lord be with you, Answer. And with thy spirit. Minister. Let us pray.*"

It may be further shortened as follows: "*When the Confession and Absolution are omitted, the Minister may, after the Sentences, pass to the Versicles, O Lord, open thou our lips, etc., in which case the Lord's Prayer shall be said with the other prayers, immediately after The Lord be with you, etc., and before the Versicles and Responses which follow, or in the Litany, as there appointed.*"

These shortened forms should be used only after proper consideration of what they accomplish. We should always remember that to every service there may come at least one penitent sinner. If he is deprived of the opportunity to say the General

Confession and to hear the Declaration of Absolution, he should be given other evidence in the service that he is beloved of God, as in Litany, choice of prayers, or sermon.

Notices, if they must be given, should follow the Grace. No notices should be given which are out of keeping with the spirit of the service.

### THE LITANY

Note that The Litany may be used with Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer directly after the third Collect. It may be shortened by omitting all that follows the Lord's Prayer, except the last prayer. For this service the minister usually kneels at a prayer desk at the head of the center aisle of the nave.

### THE SERMON

In most services of Morning or Evening Prayer on Sunday it is the custom in most parishes to have a sermon and offering. The office proper is usually followed by a hymn and the sermon, then by the singing of an anthem while the offering is being taken, then by the presentation of the offering at the altar; or the offering is taken directly after the office and is immediately presented. Then comes a hymn and the sermon. The sermon is usually preceded by a prayer in the pulpit, and followed by an ascription or prayer. The service usually closes with prayer and a benediction from the pulpit or from the altar.

There may, however, be a recession during the

singing of a hymn. In some parishes the minister remains in the chancel during the recession and gives the benediction at the close of the recessional hymn.

### EVENING PRAYER

All that has been said in general about Morning Prayer applies also to Evening Prayer. The canticles are different, there is no *Venite*, and one lesson may be omitted if desired. Note also the possible choice of a shorter Declaration of Absolution in place of the longer form. Note further that an anthem may be sung when convenient, after the third Collect.

The General Thanksgiving may be said by the congregation with the minister in both Morning and Evening Prayer.

### MORNING PRAYER AND ANTE-COMMUNION

A further variation in Sunday morning worship may be secured by combining Morning Prayer with Ante-Communion. The General Confession and Absolution being omitted, the penitential note in this service is supplied by the *Kyrie*. The order may be Sentences, Versicles, *Venite*, etc., through the third Collect; the Grace; a hymn during which the minister goes to the altar; then the Collect for Purity, the Decalogue or Summary, and the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Day. Another order is for the minister to terminate Morning Prayer with the Cantic after the First Lesson and then to carry the communion office through the Creed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

THE LORD'S SUPPER OR  
HOLY COMMUNION

## 1. EXPLANATION

BOTH TITLES in the Book of Common Prayer have Scriptural origin, for St. Paul speaks of "the Lord's Supper" (*I Cor. 11:20*) and he interprets it as a "Communion of the Body of Christ." (*I Cor. 10:16*). The Order for its administration forms the Church's standard for the service which by a long process of development has arisen out of the words and actions of the Lord Jesus at the supper which He shared with His disciples on the night in which He was betrayed. This service mounts up steadily to a dramatic climax in an act essentially simple and natural, the significance of which is nevertheless profound and mystical. It is a sacrament, the outward and visible sign of which is bread and wine offered and received in Christ's name. The inward and spiritual grace given to devoutly prepared communicants is, in Prayer Book language, *the strengthening and refreshing of their souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, which are spiritually received by the faithful.*

The service is composed of four major movements: A. The Liturgy of the Word; B. The Prayers and Offerings of the Faithful; C. The Eucharistic Consecration; and D. The Communion.

A. *The Liturgy of the Word:* The dominant note of this first movement is the Word of God, affirming the priority of the divine initiative. In the action of the service, through the Commandments or the Summary, the Epistle, the Gospel and the Sermon, God is speaking to the Church, declaring His nature, revealing His will.

The Lord's Prayer stands as a survival of the celebrant's preparation, and the service really begins with the Collect invoking the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is to be the prime mover in all that we think or may say or do in worship. He it is who can cleanse our hearts, sanctify the gifts of bread and wine, and unite us in holy fellowship, that we all may be one, even as Christ and the Father are one in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Thus prepared, the people listen to the Word of God as spoken in the Old Testament and in the New. Each of the Ten Commandments is followed by a penitential litany response, or *Kyrie*. These commandments are interpreted in positive terms by our Lord's two great commandments of love for God and neighbor. Following this, the Collect for the Day prepares the congregation to receive the instruction of the Epistle and the proclamation of the Gospel, the record of the Word made flesh. The Gospel is the climax of the first movement. The people's response to it is the Creed, in which the Church affirms its faith in God and its confidence in His word.

The sermon retains its ancient place as the exposition of the Word of God given in the Scriptures, showing how God continues to reveal Himself to and

through men in every age. The sermon is a living word, born of the vital experience of a Christian prophet, who becomes a mouthpiece for the inescapable Truth of God. *Thus saith the Lord* is its authority, wrought out by wrestling sincerities into conviction. The sermon is important in the service; without the sermon the not quite-expert congregation may lose the pertinence of the eternal Gospel. The fresh rediscovery of the abiding truth demands fresh impact upon a new generation. Therefore the sermon. Thus this whole first movement is cast in the form of a dialogue in which God speaks and the worshiping Church answers.

B. *The Prayers and Offerings of the Faithful*: The keynote of this second movement is announced by a further word from God in the Scriptural offertory sentences. To this the people respond in the three-fold offering of money, of the giving of praise in hymn or anthem, and of the oblation of bread and wine, all of which are presented in union with the intercessions of the congregation in the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church. Then in response to the Word from God in the invitation to draw near to Him with faith, the prayers of the faithful are continued in the offering of penitence in the General Confession. God answers in the Declaration of Absolution and the Comfortable Words, to which the people respond by lifting up their hearts in thanksgiving. Thus this second movement constitutes the Church's self-offering in gifts and prayers, in penitence and gratitude to God, who from the beginning takes the initiative in

giving Himself.

C. *The Eucharistic Consecration*: This third movement is one single, central and continuous act of praise and thanksgiving. It begins with the *Sursum Corda*. It continues in the thanksgiving of the Preface. It reaches a supreme height in the adoration of God for creation uttered in the *Sanctus*. The closing words of the *Sanctus*, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High," are immediately taken up and carried on through the Prayer of Consecration. The opening words of this prayer, "All glory be to Thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father," echoing the tones of the *Sanctus*, introduce the thanksgiving for redemption. The act of praise and thanksgiving is carried forward, through the Memorial of the Words of Institution in which our Lord took bread and gave thanks, through the Invocation and the Oblation of the elements and of ourselves, to the final doxology of the Lord's Prayer, in which the people unite in the act of consecration. Thus it becomes clear that the *Sursum Corda* is more than simply a "preface" to that which follows it. It is rather an integral part of the whole eucharistic act by which consecration is effected and the Prayer of Consecration, far from being a collection of diverse and unrelated ideas strung loosely in succession, is in reality a unified and comprehensive paean of thanksgiving. (The fundamental importance of this observation will be seen when we come to examine the doctrine of the Sacrament.)

D. *The Communion*: In the fourth and final movement the act of worship reaches the fulfilment of its purpose in the communion of the congregation,

without which the service is incomplete and meaningless. The Word from God, the Church's offerings, the Consecration and our thanksgiving for God's gift of Himself are all meaningless unless we receive that which God offers to us. The Lord's Supper without the communion of the people is no supper; it is a denial of fellowship and community, not an expression of them.

Moreover, what goes on at the altar-rail is in no sense a private transaction between God and the individual. It is essentially an act of communion between God and the Church, between God and the Christian community. The individual is privileged to receive only because he is not simply an individual by himself, but a member of the whole Family of God, an integral part of the redeemed community which is the Body of Christ.

The communion of the congregation is a supreme instance of the double action of worship, from God to man and from man to God. We receive Him and He receives us, as the Prayer of Humble Access clearly indicates. The Church's response to God's self-giving finds utterance in the post-communion Thanksgiving and in the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Finally the people kneel for God's Word of dismissal in peace with His blessing, sending them forth commanded and empowered by Him to continue in the life of holy fellowship as members incorporate in the Body of Christ, the company of faithful people.

## 2. DOCTRINE

Doctrinally the Sacrament of Holy Communion has four main aspects: Memorial, Eucharist, Oblation and Holy Fellowship. They represent four ways by which we seek to realize more fully what God in Christ does for us and wills us to do for Him in response. We cannot adequately do this by any one of these ways alone, but only by all of them together.

A. *The Memorial of Christ's Passion and Redemption*: This interpretation of the Sacrament appears in the earliest written source for our knowledge of the Lord's Supper which has come down to us, namely, St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. It appears also in the longer text of the Gospel according to St. Luke. Even though the absence of the words, "This do in remembrance of me" from the accounts of the Last Supper in St. Mark (and St. Matthew raises some doubt concerning the place of this injunction in the most primitive tradition), nevertheless it must soon have become true that whenever the disciples met together for the Breaking of Bread the memory of that last night in the upper room returned to give this simple act a fresh and deeper meaning.

So today in every Lord's Supper there is an active recollection of the Last Supper, a remembrance of the actual historic moment in time when Jesus broke bread and said, "This is my body." This dramatic action was then, and is now, the "proclamation" of the Lord's death on our behalf, the abiding significance of which is to be interpreted against the larger



background of the entire doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ, that is, Incarnation and Atonement. What we believe about Christ determines all that we believe about and mean by this service. Differences in point of view or emphasis in our interpretation of Christ naturally create varieties of opinion about the Holy Communion.

However, there is fundamental agreement among Christians that historically the content of the Church's faith in Christ has always been essentially two-fold. It is in fact sacramental; Eternal Reality is revealed in Historic Personality. Thus in the Memorial which we celebrate we have in remembrance not only Christ's sacrificial death but also His glorious resurrection to eternal life with God. The memory of the events which took place in Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate is fused with the realization of the abiding reality of God's redeeming grace. In this way that memory becomes the effective means whereby we "practice the presence" of our living Lord. To remember Him with thanksgiving at all times and in all places brings the human soul into consciousness of His eternal presence. The Holy Communion is that particular corporate act of recollection in which the members of the Body of Christ collectively seek to realize their relation of union with Him and their unity in Him. Where two or three are gathered together in His name He is in the midst of them. He is present as Friend and Host at His table, not *on* the table. He is present among the company of faithful people who are members of His Body, not localized in the elements apart from His people. He bids us not only to keep but to be His Memorial, not only to

receive but to be His body.

B. *The Offering of Praise and Thanksgiving, or Eucharist*: This interpretation of the Sacrament also appears in the most ancient sources. The unity of the Body of Christ, of which we have just spoken, is the work of God's reconciling spirit. The Church is His creation, responding in gratitude to His revelation of Himself. He takes the initiative in redeeming both individuals and the social order, just as the initiative in creating and ordering the universe also is His. In creation He gives life to every individual soul, and provides the continuing means of life of which bread and wine are tokens and signs. These simple, necessary elements of our common life Christ took and used, not only to nourish His own body but also to reveal to His disciples certain profound mysteries of our being.

Careful study of the language in which all four evangelists describe the feeding of the multitudes strongly suggests that the "Last Supper" was the final one of many such fellowship meals shared with His disciples at which, when Jesus took bread and gave thanks, He was registering His habitual response to life, His sense of dependence on the providence of His Father in heaven. The Greek verbs meaning *to bless* and *to give thanks* are used quite interchangeably to describe our Lord's actions on these occasions as well as in the upper room. No object follows either verb in St. Mark or St. Matthew. The verb *to bless* does not occur in St. John 6, and only the Greek evangelist, St. Luke, says, "He blessed them," *i. e.*, the loaves and fishes. However, it is certain that no Jewish disciple could have understood anything else to be meant except that Jesus

blessed God, *i. e.*, gave thanks to Him. Behind this usage lies the view which is clearly stated in the New Testament (*I Tim. 4:4f; I Cor. 10:30*) that thanksgiving is in itself an act of consecration, and as Justin Martyr observed, "the bread over which thanks has been given is called a Eucharist."

Thus the first mystery of our being which Christ revealed in the Breaking of Bread is our dependence upon God. We are living creatures, yet our life must continually be renewed from its Source. Nor can we live by bread alone; our life is two-fold, is sacramental; our souls rely on the impartation of the word of God. In Christian worship, therefore, we give thanks for every gift of nature and of grace, but above all for God's "inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the act of thanksgiving which is the real consecration. The importance of this doctrine is clearly stated by Parsons and Jones in their definitive work on *The American Prayer Book*, from which we quote:

"The words 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood,' . . . were employed by our Lord at most as words of *administration*. The actual *consecration* at the Last Supper consisted of those prayers which Scripture does not record and the historic Liturgy does not rehearse, when Jesus 'blessed' or 'gave thanks'" (p. 154).\*

When this is clearly understood it becomes impossible to think of any one miraculous moment when

\*Quoted, permission of the publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons

consecration takes place. We lift up our hearts in thanksgiving to God, offering Him ourselves and our gifts, and He receives us and them. God answers the Church's invocation of His Word and Spirit. At the hands of Christ, the great High Priest, and through the Holy Spirit, God accepts that which we confess we are not worthy to offer of ourselves. This is the consecration.

*C. The Oblation of a Life:* The second mystery which Christ reveals in the Breaking of Bread is the mystery of Sacrifice. It appears in some form in all the New Testament sources for this service: "This is my body which is given on your behalf," (*I Cor. 11:24; St. Luke 22:19b*, longer text). "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood," (*I Cor. 11:25*) . . . "shed on behalf of many" (*St. Mark 14:24; St. Matthew 24:28*). To treat this important aspect of the Sacrament would require a review of the history of the doctrine of the Atonement, a doctrine which has been subject to the widest latitude of treatment, inasmuch as it never received authoritative formulation by any general council. In fact the medieval scholastics, following Anselm, felt no difficulty about rejecting the patristic theory of the Atonement which had been current in the Church for a thousand years. However, careful reference to certain key passages in the New Testament will disclose the fundamental principles which appear in the phraseology of the Church's liturgy, and will furnish a reliable guide to its interpretation.

*First*, the emphasis is always laid on the divine initiative in Redemption. The difference between

Jesus and contemporary Judaism lay right at this point. The rabbis recognized God's constant readiness to forgive the repentant sinner, but they held that He waits for the penitent to take the first step. Our Lord, on the contrary, not only taught that the heavenly Father seeks out the lost, but He made this redemptive search the central mission of His own life. Seeking to save the lost sheep of the House of Israel, He was continually criticized because He received sinners and ate with them. Loving men notwithstanding all their sin and loving God in all His holiness, He refused to give up either. Not condoning sin and not compromising holiness, He yet forgave sinners and for their sakes sanctified Himself. Finally He went to His death as the direct result of the atoning life He lived. The power of God's love to draw all men home to Himself is clearly revealed in the lifting up of His Son upon the Cross.

All this the Prayer of Consecration fully acknowledges in its opening words. Christ's precious death and sacrifice proceeds from the tender mercy of Almighty God our heavenly Father; it is not offered to turn His mind from wrath to mercy. In addition to the Gospel record already referred to, the key passages in the New Testament are those which speak of "reconciliation" and "reconciling." Wherever these words occur in the New Testament it is always men who are reconciled to God, never God who is reconciled to men. This is all the more striking when one considers that in certain Jewish writings exactly the opposite rule prevails. (*e.g.*, *II Macc.* 1:5, 5:20, 7:29). The good news which

Christ's ambassadors can proclaim is that God has already taken the first step. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (*II Cor.* 5:14ff, *cp.* *Col.* 1:20ff). "God commends His love to us in that even while we were yet sinners Christ died on our behalf" (*Rom.* 5:8-11).

*Second*, Christ's sacrifice is the willing offering of Himself to do the will of His Father. Just as God does not passively wait for the sinner, but actively seeks him, so His son actively gives Himself; He is not a passive victim. Although throughout the Bible the idea of sacrifice is accompanied by the most varying interpretations, one point remains constant: a sacrifice is an offering to God. It may be thought of as a penitential offering for the expiation of sin, the view prevalent in Leviticus, or it may be a joyous offering of praise and thanksgiving, as some of the best minds in Israel conceived it and expressed it, for example in the Psalms (*27:6*, *50:7-14*, *116:17*). It may even be a sacramental meal of charitable sharing not unlike the early Christian Agape, as in Deuteronomy (*14:23*, *29*; *26:1-11*). The paschal lamb to which St. Paul compared Christ's death was just such a sacrifice of thanksgiving for redemption initiated by God, a fellowship meal of which all the worshipers partook. All these types of sacrifice were current at the time of Christ, and His attitude toward them is precisely that of the prophets. While they are not condemned as such, they are declared to be worthless apart from repentance and the dedication of one's self to the life of holy fellowship. "First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy

gift." "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

Thus in the invitation to the Holy Communion the worshiper is instructed that earnest repentance and an attitude of love and charity together with the intention to lead a new life are the necessary moral accompaniments of acceptable worship. Our Lord's one oblation of Himself once offered as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world only places a more exacting moral imperative upon the conscience of those whom He has redeemed. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, *therefore* let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (*I Cor. 5:7*). "Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God . . ." (*Ephes. 5:2*), and that offering is acceptable to God precisely because of the character of the Person who makes it.

Nowhere is this more strongly emphasized than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There it is clearly indicated that the New Covenant ratified by Christ's sacrifice is "better" than those offered by the priests of the Old Covenant, because He has been made perfect through suffering, and being tempted in all points like as we are He remained without sin, a high priest who is holy, harmless and undefiled, who does not need to offer up daily sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people, having once and for all offered Himself without spot to God. All this is seen by the writer of the epistle as the fulfilment of the best in Old Testament thought: "Sacrifice and offering for sin thou wouldest not . . . in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin

thou hast no pleasure. Then said I . . . Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." This perfect self-oblation of Christ cannot and need not be repeated, and the only offering which the Christian has to bring is the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of the lips giving thanks to His Name. But he must not forget "to do good and to communicate" (the word means to share in fellowship) "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

This is exactly the thought running through the Prayer of Consecration, in which the grateful remembrance of Christ's self-oblation gives rise to the Church's response in an offering of praise and thanksgiving, the giving of money, and the religious sharing of the consecrated elements, and culminates in the offering of our selves our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to God. Our lives as well as our gifts are sin-stained and unworthy by themselves, but in union with Christ, as very members of His mystical body, we consecrate ourselves anew to the doing of God's will, the cause for which Christ gave His life. Here, then, we see in fresh light the root meaning of the verb "to sacrifice;" it is "to make sacred," to dedicate and set apart for God's service, to make above all the oblation of a life devoted to Him. And that Christ expected His followers so to share His sacrifice, He Himself made clear. "The cup that I drink, ye shall drink" (*Mark 10:39*). "Drink *ye all* of it" (in Greek the word "all" plainly refers to the disciples, not to the contents of the cup).

D. *A Holy Fellowship*: The third mystery of our being which Christ revealed in the Breaking of

Bread is our inter-relation and need for fellowship, both human and divine. When Jesus took bread, He broke it because only thus could it be shared among many, even as He gave His body to be broken that men might learn from Him the wonder of the love that gives itself to the uttermost. This is the very nature of true love, and its goal can never be comprehended within the life of the individual. Love's purpose is always the creation of a fellowship, a family, the uniting of many members in one body. At no place should this family oneness be more deeply felt than when all the members acknowledge their common dependence and mutual interdependence as together they share their daily bread. It is so in God's great family. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*i.e.*, the fellowship or the sharing) of the Body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (*I Cor. 10:16f*). And again, "We who are many are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another."

So it is that each individual soul can confidently say, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me" only if at the same time he never forgets to say, "And God so loved the world." The Church is that portion of the world which responds to God's seeking, self-giving love as revealed in Christ, by the giving of itself in worship and by living the life of holy fellowship in the world. The Church has a mission to the world, not only to proclaim by word and sacrament that God's Kingdom is at hand, but to demonstrate by its own life the unity which is God's will for all mankind.

When we, as members of the Church, come from the world to take our part in the worshiping congregation we bring with us some outward sacramental token of that world in which we live. We offer some portion of the worldly goods over which we exercise stewardship under God, that it may serve the shared life of the Christian community. We come to give; we also come to receive. When we go back to the world we are to carry with us renewed vision and strength given by God. We receive a revelation of God through His Word, that we may not live by bread alone, but by faith may feed on that Life which God gives for the world. Then we are sent out, charged with a part in the Church's redemptive mission, to spend the life which we owe to God making that part of the world where we live conform more nearly to the revelation God has given of His Kingdom and His will.

The bread and wine which we offer are symbols of our thanksgiving to God for all His gifts in nature and providence. They point us back to the wheat-stalk and the grapevine, and these in turn are representative of all living, growing things which God has given for man's sustenance. But it is significant that we offer, not grape and grain, but bread and wine. We offer God's gifts, not in the form in which He created them, but in the form into which we have made them, symbols of man's partnership with God in the continuing process of creation. Human labor transforms grain and grape into bread and wine. Thus in offering bread and wine, we are offering ourselves and our activity, our whole social order, our common life and all the means by

which men get their daily bread. We are offering the totality of what man does to nature. That offering is consecrated by the grateful, unselfish love and sacrifice of men and women. It is also profaned and stained by human sin, by our private misuse and waste, and by our social injustice and oppression. The bread and wine as we give them are tokens of our common life as it is, as we have made it. In Holy Communion God takes the bread and the wine which we offer, consecrates them and gives them back to us as tokens, no longer of things as they are but rather of things and ourselves as they can be, as God wills them to be; changed, redeemed, made new by the power and presence of the Living Christ. What we offer is a symbol of the world, broken and divided by human sin. What we receive is a living share in the communion of the Body of Christ, the community redeemed and reconciled by God's love.

The rubric at the end of the Confirmation service, "*And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed,*" was added to the English Prayer Book in 1662. It was taken from a rubric in the old Sarum service, which in turn derived it from the Constitutions of Archbishop Peckham of 1281. As Parsons and Jones point out (*The American Prayer Book*, p. 246), this rubric has no bearing whatever on the practice of "occasional conformity" or the admission of non-Episcopalian baptized Christians to the Holy Communion. It simply "defines admission to the full and permanent privileges of the *status* of a communicant in the

church." Since it comes at the end of the Confirmation service, it is obviously designed to make sure that children are properly prepared before coming to the Lord's table; and it was meant, originally, to forbid administering Communion to infants — not to Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE ADMINISTRATION OF  
THE HOLY COMMUNION

This chapter deals with the practical details of the administration of the Holy Communion. Amidst wide variations of ritual the norm is, perhaps, not rigid and definite, but this norm does always imply such a general atmosphere of simplicity, reverence and freshness of appreciation as will recall the upper room of the Lord's Supper so long ago. Our endeavor is to re-create that hour with all its simple beauty, simple symbolism and simple spiritual clarity. The outward and visible form will reveal the inward and spiritual grace of our Lord. This service is no complex magic of patterned acts, but a joyous and inspiring spontaneity. The minister must surely feel this before his conduct of the service will convey it.

1. *The Preparation of the Altar.* The Altar Guild members assigned to prepare for a given service will have placed the empty chalice or chalices and the paten at the center of the fair linen on the altar, on the corporal (a square of linen, the front of which may hang over the edge of the altar toward the congregation). If such is customary, the paten contains the priest's wafer. On the chalice is the pall, a square or oblong of glass or cardboard covered with linen, and over this, draped to the altar, the silk or linen veil. On this is the burse (not always used) containing the linen veil. Laid on the altar

nearby are two or three purificators. Also on the altar may be a silver or glass bowl and a small cruet of pure alcohol, and, of course, the service book on its tilted rack or cushion. Some ministers prefer that the service-book should be on the epistle side of the altar until the gospel is read, but there is no rule about this. Flowers and candles are according to preference.

On the credence table are placed the flagon or cruet of wine and the ciborium or bread-box containing bread or wafers. If wafers are used they may be round in shape, or squares in perforated sheets. If bread is used, its crusts are removed and it is scored in squares. It is very convenient if the Altar Guild member will leave a slip of paper beside the ciborium with a notation of how many loose wafers there are in it, the remainder of the wafers being in their rolls of fifties or squares of twenty-fives. If water is to be added to the wine there will also be a cruet of fresh water on the credence. There is no real authorization for a mixed chalice in the Prayer Book rubrics, but a very general custom permits it.

2. *The Ante-Communion.* The priest enters, clothed in his usual vestments and wearing the stole of the season. His assisting minister, if any, goes to the epistle side of the altar and kneels. The celebrant stands before the Lord's Table for a moment of silent prayer.

The Lord's Prayer at the beginning of the service is usually offered silently. The Collect for the purity of hearts is said audibly. Then the officiant turns to the congregation to "rehearse distinctly"

the Commandments. The Ten Commandments had best be said in their shortened version, but they are perhaps more wisely omitted at the usual service. Of course, the two commandments which Jesus said include all the meanings of the ten, and may never be omitted if the Decalogue has been omitted.

The prayer that comes next in the Prayer Book is optional. The versicles are not. Then follows the Collect for the day, the Epistle and Gospel. It is usual that the Epistle be read to the now-seated congregation from the side of the altar to the celebrant's left as he faces the people, and that the Gospel be read from the right. It helps if the announcement of the Epistle includes the mention of the particular day of the Church calendar, *e.g.*, "The Epistle for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity is written in the ..... chapter, etc." It is very seldom that a hymn or anthem is sung between the Epistle and Gospel. The congregation stands during the Gospel and Creed.

The Nicene Creed is rubrically obligatory only on the specified feast days, but it is more frequently used than the Apostles'. In the saying of the Nicene Creed and in the interest of doctrinal but non-controversial accuracy one should make definite the semicolon before the phrase "By whom all things were made," to make clear that the phrase applies to Christ, not merely to "The Father," the words just preceding.

The service will be much more devotional if no notices are given. But if notices are unavoidable they come here, despite the fact that it is awkward to seat the people and get them again to their feet for the usual hymn preceding the sermon. The

rubric permitting special prayers at this point is usually ignored, since a much better time for them is obviously later, as will be noted.

After the sermon hymn and the sermon comes the Offertory. It is well not to expand the ceremonialism of the Offertory beyond necessity and dignity. During the collection of the alms the priest (or his assisting minister) brings from the credence table the bread and the wine for the Communion. The chalice or chalices should now be filled with the approximate amount of wine estimated for use and the requisite number of wafers be made ready. (It will be found of great convenience if an appointed person will count the congregation which remains after the Ante-Communion and convey word to the officiant before the Consecration.) At the presentation of the alms, a sentence or the *Doxology* is usually sung.

Then follow such special prayers as may have been requested and the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church. During this prayer the minister may move from the alms basins still on the altar (*alms*), to the bread and wine (*oblations*), to the altar book (*our prayers*), to indicate the three-fold offering presented. If special intercessions are requested it may seem wiser not to use whole collects but to say, *e.g.*, "in particular for the sick for whom our prayers are desired" at the end of the fifth paragraph. ("In particular" is much better than "especially," since it is devoid of the implication of favoritism).

At the close of this prayer which ends the Ante-Communion it may be wise at larger celebrations to allow those who will not stay for communion to



withdraw. This has ancient precedent. At services where it may be taken for granted that all who attend are communicants there surely need be no pause. As a practical procedure, if it seems best to let the semi-affiliated depart, this is the best point, and for the following reasons: (a) It is a definite division-point in the service, and it is much better to have such persons go out together than straggle out all through the subsequent time; (b) strangers and non-communicating attendants will increasingly stay away from the whole service if their presence is not thus clearly accommodated. But if a concept of open communion be adopted, there should be some indication of our invitation either printed or spoken at an appropriate time, perhaps before the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church. This notice may be variously worded. A possible form is: "We welcome to the Table of the Lord all Christ's disciples, by whatsoever confession of faith they have made known their allegiance to him who is our Lord. The Table is the Lord's, not ours, and to it lovingly are bidden all those who aspire to be accounted his." At this division, if thus observed, the organist will play, or a hymn will be sung, and the minister wait until no more are leaving.

3. *The Communion Proper.* A. In the reverent hush which now ensues comes the Exhortation. It may be all the more impressive if the celebrant comes down to the choir steps to say it. The people stand. The "humbly kneeling" of the priest and people for the general confession will be the more evident if the priest kneels at the choir steps, nearer

the people, and also if there is a moment of silence before or after the Confession.

The priest will then stand and go to the altar steps and say the Absolution, probably raising his hand in a symbolic gesture of blessing. The Comfortable Words lead up to the *Sursum Corda*, which should be said in tones colored with gladness according to its tenor, which in turn leads into the glory of the *Sanctus*.

B. *The Canon.* The veil is removed from the vessels, they are conveniently and quickly arranged for the manual acts to follow, and the priest at once begins the Consecration. This is the focal point of the service and should be read with earnestness and great reverence. Every word should be clearly audible and unhurried. Since ancient times the customary position of the celebrant has indicated the mood of the paragraphs, the first beginning with hands outspread, the Oblation with palms upward, the Invocation with raised hands, palms down, the final paragraph with hands lowered. But these gestures are far from an unanimous usage; they are therefore optional. The manual acts are done as indicated by the rubric; genuflexions are not recommended, as seeming to denote some degree of belief in transubstantiation. It may not be unnecessary to caution against the frequent misphrasing of "Drink ye all of this," which should be, "Drink ye all — of this" not "all of this." It really means, "Drink all ye." The Lord's Prayer, which is the people's participation in the Consecration, ends the so-called Canon of the service.

C. *The Communicating.* The Prayer of Humble

Access really prefaces our receiving of the bread and wine. There should be a brief pause before it. After it at larger celebrations a hymn usually follows, a kneeling hymn, sung softly. During the hymn the celebrant may administer the elements to himself, kneeling humbly, and to any who may be assisting. He then turns to the congregation, and the communicants come forward.

If administration by intinction is preferred, the best method is as follows: (a) by the use of wafers, placed in the hands of those receiving, and (b) by the use of two chalices, one the usual common cup and the other, preferably identical in size and with a shallower cup or saucer fitted into its rim, for intinction, with only a small amount of wine in it. (It seems more dignified to have a full-sized chalice thus adapted than to have a tiny chalice for intinction, so conspicuously diminutive.) Those who do not desire to receive by intinction are not forced to do so: they will consume the wafer and the ministrant will give the desired chalice. Those who desire to receive by intinction will hold their wafers until the ministrant comes with the chalices and he will present the one prepared for dipping the wafers. As for the former or shared chalice, note that it should be given into the hands of the communicant, or the communicant should be instructed to guide the chalice with one hand. There is inept lack of naturalness and accuracy if the ministrant has to place the rim of the cup to the lips of the communicant and tip the chalice to the exact angle for the wine to be reached, particularly with women who wear brimmed

hats or veils. The whole implication of the evangelical point of view is in the unwithheld chalice. The used chalice should be cleansed where lips have touched it, with the moistened purificator. If there is initial difficulty in carrying two chalices and cleansing, a little practice with the purificator held in the fingers of the hand which holds the stem of the intinction chalice will soon bring sufficient ease.

If the consecrated wine proves insufficient, more may be consecrated. But many authorities would seem to allow its dilution with unconsecrated wine or water, saying that the consecrated wine consecrates this. It is thus possible at larger services to make sure that not too much wine remains unconsumed. If wafers become too few, they must be subdivided as soon as it appears how many communicants still remain.

When all have received, the vessels are returned to the altar. The minister may consume the remaining elements then, during the Gloria hymn, or after the Benediction.

4. *The Post-Communion.* Communicants must be taught to stay through the service. It is not fitting that any should go straight home from the communion rail without staying to express their gratitude for the privilege of communion. It is selfish not to share in the fellowship of all the other communicants. By printed notice or by occasional instruction, the minister should bring this to the attention of the congregation. The Post-Communion section of the service is thanksgiving.

As for the celebrant's routine there is little to say. The Prayer of Thanksgiving explains itself. The

*Gloria in Excelsis* is the only option for festal services, but at small services or non-festal ones a hymn is perhaps better. When there is no choir this hymn can be said kneeling. The last two stanzas of *O Little Town of Bethlehem* have often been suggested. If a hymn is sung by the choir, it can be used as the recessional, with the Benediction, as is rubrically right, ending the service. In this case the minister would remain at the altar for the Benediction and then retire.

If there are candles on the altar the congregation should remain kneeling until they are extinguished.

5. *After the Service.* The Altar Guild will care for the communion vessels after the service. Each church should have a fitting sacristy where their cleansing will be quietly and reverently cared for. The sink (*piscina*) in the sacristy may best have a drain which goes down into mother earth. The linens will be laundered after each using. The altar will be covered. The flowers will be sent to the sick. The silver will be put into its safe.

The service is over. The blessing continues.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM

THE SERVICE of Baptism is of peculiar value for us. Since before the day of John the Baptist it has been a rite by which the group accepted an individual and the individual the group. The trinitarian formula was never used before the crucifixion, and was not required until much later; but the rite has been continuous and persistent. Almost all branches of the Church Catholic use Baptism today; most agree as to what is essential for validity -- far more than of any other sacrament. Baptism, therefore, which in First Corinthians was a source of division, is for us a possible stepping stone toward unity; by wide agreement it is a sacrament of the disciples' succession. We should, therefore, be careful that all parents, godparents and candidates see it as a Church service. In the minister's planning, this involves three preliminaries: the time, the place and the godparents.

The natural place for Baptism is the Church building. It is the normal meeting place of the Family of God and the ceremony is a meeting of that Family, to assume certain responsibilities. The natural time is a stated service; the usual meeting time of the Family. By the rubric, it normally follows the Second Lesson; if so, the service may be kept to the usual length by omitting one lesson (by

rubric in Evening Prayer, by custom in Morning Prayer). The people of the congregation are assuming their responsibility to God, by their example and through their organizations, for the training of the candidate in the ways God would have him go; a realization of this is as valuable as any Scripture lesson.

The very catholicity of the rite makes us hasten to add that, of course, it may be performed at any place or time; the wisdom of doing so might ordinarily be questioned. In any emergency, of course, the questions of time and place are in abeyance. So also is the question of the baptizer; it is well that people should know that if any person desires Church recognition for himself or for a child, baptism may be administered by any child of God, who then acts for the Family of God. There are many adequate reasons why the ceremony should be desired in the home, as when a parent or godparent is a permanent invalid. In the normal case, parents are glad to come to church, but are shy about "interrupting the service." Gradually a parish may learn that this is a real part of the service, not an interruption. Meantime, such cases are most commonly handled immediately after Morning Prayer is over, or during Sunday afternoon. In some parishes, a set time on a particular Sunday each month is stated as a time for baptisms. This makes it more likely that the gathering will be representative of the Family of God, not merely of one human family. Special times (as Easter Eve) also make memorable Family occasions.

### THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

The office for the Ministration of Holy Baptism can hardly be assumed to be self-explanatory to the average modern man. Therefore a few words as to its meaning and purpose, such as the following, might well be addressed to the candidates for Baptism, if adults, or, if children, to their parents, sponsors, and others present at the service.

The Christian sacrament of Baptism presupposes three things: faith, worship and responsibility. *First*, it implies creed or confession of faith — in God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, and in man as a child of God. Whether it is an adult seeking Baptism for himself, or Christian parents bringing a little child, this act gives public acknowledgment to the conviction that no human being is simply an animal organism whose needs are predominantly physical, but rather a personality, embodied to be sure, but possessed of an inner life to be nourished and developed by regular use of the means which God provides. Thus man's deepest desire for himself or for one of His children is "that all things belonging to the spirit (all that is like God) may live and grow in him." And since it is spiritual *growth* which we are seeking to nurture, we do not look upon Baptism as a mechanically or magically effective rite, but as an important first step in a lifelong development of Christian faith and character, a personal relationship to a living Person. Nevertheless, because this life of the spirit, no less than physical life, is the gift of God's

grace, there is always an element of mystery about it, which defies rationalistic analysis and calls forth our reverence and the recognition of our dependence upon God.

*Second*, this acknowledgment of dependence upon God involves prayer and worship, and Christian worship is essentially corporate or social, as witness the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father . . . Thy Kingdom . . ." Hence, Baptism is the sacrament of membership in the Family of God, the confession by the individual that he belongs to the Family and the acceptance of the individual by the Family. If we are asked how a baby all unknowingly can be "received into Christ's holy Church and be made a living member of the same," we can only ask in turn how that same baby, again unknowingly, can be a member of a family. For he *is* a member by birth, although in the fullest sense such membership can only be achieved by growth. Every child learns what it means to be a member of a family, related to parents, brothers and sisters, by growing up within the circle of their loving care. So, too, a child of God may best come to realize the meaning of God's love, to which he is bound to respond in love for God and for neighbor, by growing up within the fellowship of a worshiping congregation, a household of faith and mutual service.

*Finally*, membership in a family always involves responsibilities. Just as every well-ordered family has its rules and traditions, so too the Family of God has received from Him certain commandments — not only the negative Decalogue, but positive duties as well. Those who become members of the Christian

fellowship in maturity assume such obligations by the promises which they undertake in Baptism and Confirmation. Younger members of a family learn to take responsibilities chiefly through the teaching and example of their elders. So for those who are baptized in infancy, Christian obligations are undertaken by their parents and sponsors, who also on their part promise to provide for the religious training of the child. As the child grows in age, we pray that he may grow in grace, and that he may be helped by both precept and example to a growing love and loyalty to God and His Kingdom.

#### PARENTS AND SPONSORS

The rubric calls for three sponsors for a child, two of the same sex as the child; for an adult, two as witnesses. As a matter of practice the number varies from one to four. It is better to have one person who will take the vows comprehendingly than to have three, only one of whom has his heart in it.

It is not safe to assume that parents and godparents know what baptism is all about. Time should be allowed for preliminary instructions of the godparents as to the duties they assume. This can very effectively be based on the vows they will take during the service. Where a godparent cannot be present, a proxy is asked to stand and respond for him.

It is wise for parents to take the sponsors' vows along with the godparents. In olden times, people

stayed settled. At least two out of three godparents could be counted on to live near enough to see the child frequently until the time for his confirmation. People are now more transient. No one can guess whether a year later he may be so far away that his sponsor's duties will be impracticable. Parents should take the promises realizing this, understanding that the child's religious training is always their job and may become wholly their job.

Whenever possible have the parents fill out in advance a baptismal blank giving the necessary information which must be entered in the Parish register. The baptismal certificate and the sponsors' certificates may then be prepared in advance and given out directly following the service. Sponsors' certificates are particularly helpful in these modern days when people are so transient and when unavoidable circumstances compel so many sponsors to be represented by proxy.

Before the service, learn the child's name so that you will not get it wrong if he cries. Have pure water on hand (some like to bring it from a running stream); if there are infants, have it warm. When possible, put candles and flowers on a table, or children's altar, if one be near the font: the more evidence there is that the minister considers it an important occasion, the more likely it is that the laity will feel likewise. One or more small towels may be laid on the edge of the font in case of need. The minister may prefer to meet the baptismal party (if it is not during a stated service) in his cassock; a surplice and white stole are appropriate for the service at any church season.

## THE SERVICE

Candidates gather about the font with their parents and godparents. Adults, with prayer books open at the proper page, may be requested to speak audibly when joining in the service, especially when accepting their vows. Other persons may also come around the font unless it makes such a crowd as to frighten the child. The minister then faces the gathering and asks whether or not the child has been baptized. This question may be asked of each group of sponsors or of all groups together.

There follows the statement of the nature of Baptism and a prayer that it may be used as God intends. As all stand throughout, heads should be bowed for prayers and thanksgivings. Three selections of the Gospel are offered. The one from St. Mark is particularly appropriate for children (and for most adults); from St. John, for adults; that from St. Matthew indicates the awe and humility we experience in being counted into the company of Christ's disciples. Decide beforehand which is the best for that service.

The Gospel assures us of God's loving care for those who are coming to Baptism. After giving thanks for this assurance and praying for its continuance upon the person to be baptized, we ask the godparents (and parents) to promise to walk in those ways into which God's loving care shall lead them. It is commonly supposed that a sponsor's responsibility is to the parents or to the child — or

to no one in particular. That is not so. He is an officer of the Church and is responsible to the Church — also to God. In a court of law executors or trustees may be nominated by interested parties. They are however appointed by the court — which may reject every nominee, though commonly it does not. They must file accounts in court and are responsible there. So parents may nominate sponsors. They are appointed by the Church; they are responsible to the Church to bring up their ward to understand and love the Church, to desire to undertake his own responsibility within the Church when he is fitted to do so.

The first vow is the negative one to give up worldly excess. Not to give up everything worldly; that would be absurd. A nine-year-old boy is often hungry; that is a “desire of the flesh” but not a “sinful” one. Overeating, especially as a habit, is sinful. So with all fleshly desires. The sponsor promises to try so to guide the child that fleshly desires shall not rule his spirit, but rather that his spirit shall control his desires.

The two questions following foreshadow the trinitarian formula of Baptism. Into the Family of God, who makes Himself known to His children through the three Persons, the candidate wishes to be admitted. The final promise of this section is to be always a child in the sight of God: the perfect service.

The godparent then takes two promises on his own account. The three statements named which the child must be helped to know (the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments) are

essentials, especially if they are to be learned by the heart, not merely by the mind. Still it is a pity that no reference to the Bible or to the Gospel is made; that will have to be included under “all other things.” The last vow is one of religious maturity, couched in Episcopal language. It is fulfilled if and when the child joins any branch of the Church Catholic, assuming his own responsibility as a member in the Family of God. It expresses a natural hope that he will find his home in that branch which has meant so much to us; still the sponsor should be assured that his promise is fulfilled if and when his ward takes an oath of loyalty to Christ in the denomination of his own choice. No further comment is needed on the following questions to adults, which are so similar to the ones that godparents first take. If only adults are being baptized, be careful not to start on the child's questions; if both children and adults are being baptized, question first the godparents, then turn to the adults. Witnesses for adults like to be included and to answer with their candidate.

The brief prayers for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and thanks for the means of calling upon Him, now precede the actual baptism. During the prayers, give the congregation comfortable time to join in the Amens; during the latter, it is significant to stretch a hand over the font (perhaps even dip it in the water) with the phrase sanctifying the water.

If there are many children, they should be taken in that order which will best preserve calm; young children or restless ones first. Those who walk easily, from 4 years or so on, had best be left on their

own feet, the minister holding a hand while they stand beside the font. The rubric permits you to "dip the child in the water discreetly." If you want to try it, practice it at home on your own child first, to be sure you can hold him without slipping. Be sure that you have the child's (or adult's) name correctly, repeating it before use in baptizing if in any doubt. Then with the right hand (a spoon or shell if that is desired) carry water from the font three times and sprinkle it on the head — once with each of the names of God. Then dipping a finger or thumb again in the font, rehearse the subsequent Dedication. The brief baptismal formula is easily memorized, so that the Prayer Book may be left open on the font edge at the Dedication. Give back the child with the same care as in taking it. Parents and sponsors alike appreciate any little word or gesture of kindness or praise toward the child.

The subsequent prayers are the first act of the newly enlarged Church, and of the godparents as holding new responsibilities therein. The minister should be particularly mindful of this unity, even in the Benediction, which is directed especially toward those newly baptized, but very definitely includes all, since all alike are baptized.

Must godparents be members of the Church? of the Episcopal Church? All life, especially Christ's life, shows us how potent as a teaching force is example. If a potential godparent has never had both desire and courage to take a vow of loyalty to God as a member of some branch of the Church of Christ, how can he promise to bring up anyone

else to do so? How can he teach what he does not know? Can the blind yet lead the blind? But must he be an Episcopalian? Hardly, any more than the baptizer must be an Episcopalian before we can recognize the child as a child of God. It is well that at least one of the group should be an Episcopalian; it is important that all shall have accepted joyfully their loyalty to Christ in His Church and shall be glad to undertake to transmit that joy to their godchild.

There is widespread feeling that the present phraseology of the service is not throughout as beautiful or as satisfying as it might be — or as in the next revision of the Prayer Book it may become.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONFIRMATION

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT concerning what Confirmation is, and does, has changed more through the centuries than the thought about any other Prayer Book service. Out of the welter of changing belief and interpretation only one thing has remained constant: the connection of Confirmation with the sacrament of Baptism. All else has varied from time to time.

The germ of the Confirmation service in earliest times was the action of the Apostles recorded in the Book of Acts, from which account we gather that there was an ordinance or ceremony which consisted of the "laying on of hands" by an apostle on the heads of those who had been baptized previously, and a prayer added for the reception of the Holy Ghost ("as yet he had fallen on none of them").

Two or three centuries later the rite of Confirmation was firmly established in the post-Apostolic Church. Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine all refer to the rite and the outstanding features of the "laying on of hands" and the invocation of the Holy Ghost. Hermas speaks of the "Seal of the Lord" as one of the rites associated with Baptism.

In medieval times the rite seems to have taken a turn for the worse. Anointing with oil was added and elaborate ceremonial introduced which obscured the original idea of Confirmation. The theology of the rite was little better than magic. There was

little trace of a public profession of faith in this pontifical ceremony, which consisted of signings of the cross, anointing and other obscure ritual acts most often performed on little children.

The Reformers viewed with alarm the rite which had come into being, so they attempted to get back to apostolic practices so far as these could be discovered. Rubrics forbade the use of oil and the sign of the cross and required that persons presented for Confirmation be instructed in the Articles of the Faith and that persons so presented shall have come to years of discretion.

So our modern service is a public profession of faith by instructed persons who are of competent age. It is a rite in which the baptized profess and renew their vows and pray for the gift and the guidance of God's Holy Spirit which is symbolized by the laying on of hands. Confirmation is a sequel to the sacrament of Baptism, not a sacrament in its own right. However, it is a rite with merit and importance when used as public profession of faith by instructed competent persons.

The Bishop's first question refers back to the baptismal vows and asks if the persons presented are willing to confirm and ratify their baptismal vows, made originally by themselves or their sponsors. The sponsor's promise in Baptism (1929) suggests Baptism as the first step in full Christian responsibility and membership. "Wilt thou take heed that this child, so soon as sufficiently instructed, be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him?"

Confirmation was a ceremony for adults, as was Baptism in apostolic times. As second generation

Christians came along in a darkened pagan world, infant baptism seemed to Christian parents the best way to guarantee the hard won heritage of their children. So also Confirmation came to be extended to small children and infants. In the East today, infants are usually confirmed at their baptism. The idea of Confirmation as a responsible act of the candidates who were to be prepared by knowing a catechism and by being of proper age was an innovation.

The age for Confirmation is a matter of difference among Christian people. The rite is usually connected with adolescence. Some say that Confirmation should take place on the threshold of this uncertain transitory age, and that it should be the last great childhood experience by way of introduction to grown-up responsibilities. For the age of twelve we can go back and cite the custom of the Jewish Church in which our Lord submitted to a rite making Him a "Member in Israel" at that age. There is something about solemn rites at this particular time that makes for a helpful stabilizing influence.

There is a tendency to present candidates at a much earlier age than twelve; sometimes as young as eight. In other cases Confirmation is delayed until fourteen or even sixteen. It is true that children vary in their spiritual growth as well as in their physical and mental development. The parish priest should be so well acquainted with his flock that he can present adolescents for Confirmation at that point in their lives when the experience will be the most helpful and most lasting. Suffice it to say that the

candidate should be of an age competent to sense the responsibilities involved in this important step.

#### CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION

There ought to be special preparation for those to be confirmed. Dragging a few adults off the street at the last minute in order to impress upon the Bishop what a lively parish he is visiting is a practice which ought to be discouraged, for it merely adds to the "deadwood." Thoughtful preparation will make lasting and thoughtful Church members.

The preparation of candidates for Confirmation is something which the rector should personally undertake if humanly possible. There may be lay leaders in the parish who are competent to take over the instruction, and it may seem to ease the burden on the rector to have it so, but the rector is missing an opportunity of being close to his people at an important stage in their spiritual development. Yet some parishes are so large and other duties so exacting that the rector must delegate most of his work.

The happiest arrangement of the Confirmation instruction class is to separate adults and adolescents. The methods of approach will be different, or ought to be. The adult class could be more of an open lecture course for the confirmed as well as for the candidates: an informational and "refresher" course for all those who desire to be better informed about their Church and their Christian responsibilities. For the adolescents, the Church school

curriculum should provide a *backlog* with courses pointing to Confirmation. These courses should be reviewed by way of preparation.

### THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE

The person planning to present a class should consult the Bishop and make sure he has fixed in his own mind the manner in which the Bishop prefers the service to be conducted. Some prefer to divide the service, having the candidates leave the rail as soon as they are confirmed. Others prefer to sit in the chancel and confirm candidates singly or in pairs, sometimes having the rector call out the Christian names of the candidates. It is well for the candidates to go into the church the night before the ceremony and rehearse the service, much the same as a wedding rehearsal. While the candidates are in the church, there is a golden opportunity for a brief service of preparation.

There should be a reserved seat section at the Confirmation service. The class should sit in the front pews. Parents and sponsors should be given an opportunity for a clear view, for they are discharging a trust. Some have the sponsors bring the candidates to the chancel in keeping with the baptismal vow. Members of the Church school or in case of limited seating capacity, representative classes from the Church school should also have an opportunity to observe this important rite closely. It is a step they may soon be taking.

There is the matter of veils. Local custom usually dictates whether or not they shall be used.

It is the opinion of some that they create more problems than they solve, and the accompanying white dress is often an unnecessary expense. Hats may be left in the vestibule, for Confirmation is such an important step that exceptions to customs should be made for the occasion.

Confirmed, the candidate should not be allowed to think of himself as "graduated" and slip away into that invisible multitudinous army of nominal Christians. He should often be reminded of his new responsibilities. A ceremony may be made of the "first" Communion and certificates (Confirmation) be given out by the rector at the altar. An occasional corporate Communion will provide opportunities for further spiritual awakening and additional instruction. A letter on the anniversary of Confirmation helps to keep the candidate aware that he has made an important step in his spiritual pilgrimage.

Confirmation instruction should aim above all else to give the candidate an understanding of the Christian way of life and assist him in learning how to practice its discipline. Preparation should present the meaning of Confirmation in terms of a deeply spiritual conversion or rededication. Without this inner, spiritual emphasis Confirmation is of no value.

Instruction should include knowledge of the following subjects, given in the simplest and most practical form:

1. The nature of God and His relation to the world;
2. The principles of prayer and instruction in

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- how to pray;
3. A modern approach to the Bible and instruction in how to read it intelligently;
  4. A knowledge of the main events in the life of Christ and His teaching;
  5. Interpretation of the meaning of the Kingdom of God in terms of both personal and social ideals;
  6. Introduction to the contents of the Prayer Book and instruction in the services, to enable the candidate to feel completely at home in the chief services of the Church;
  7. Understanding of the service of Holy Communion and some training in the mechanics of reception;
  8. An outline knowledge of the history of the Church, the present organization as well as an interpretation of its most common features;
  9. Some interpretation of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments as well as other matters included in the Offices of Instruction.

Confirmation instruction is probably most helpful when it is least cut and dried. A definite attempt should be made to share experiences in personal religion. Candidates should be given as real an introduction to the Church as a living organism as is possible, and the more relevant the material can be made to the lives of those in the class, the more helpful it will be. For example, such matters as the belief of the Church concerning evolution, the ecumenical movement, sex, missions and money should be set forth. The candidate should be asked to adopt at Confirmation a definite rule of life which may well include: (1) attendance at Church every Sunday; (2) reception of Communion at least once a

month; (3) daily prayer; (4) determination to nurture the spiritual life in some specific way; (5) sharing in the work of the Church financially and if possible in some special activity or organization. The clergyman has a real opportunity to present to the class a deeper understanding of the work of the minister, so that in case of need the candidate will turn without hesitation to the minister for advice and assistance.

The reading of appropriate books may well supplement the Confirmation instruction.

The candidate should be informed of the importance and means of transferring his membership from the Parish Church in which he was confirmed to another parish in case of removal to another community.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*THE FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION  
OF MATRIMONY*

THE PRIMARY object of marriage is a lifelong companionship in which an increasing mutuality of affection, of respect, of interests, should attain, and in which each partner finds the other supplementary and complementary. Resulting from this companionship will normally come the rounding out of the trinity of the family in the birth of children. Without them, without the discipline in love, in unselfishness, in foresight and wisdom which they bring to the parents, any full measure of development is difficult. A couple may become as selfish as any individual, but is less likely to do so if there are children. On the other hand, the procreation of children should be undertaken not in any thoughtless fashion or as if it were only the act of God when and as He pleases. While one of the natural and normal results of marriage, it should be undertaken in love and with consideration of the health and welfare of both mother and children.

## CIVIL REQUIREMENTS

Marriage is a relationship deeply affecting the civil status of the contracting parties. It has very properly been placed under the aegis of the State and enters into the vital statistics of the State and of the Nation. It is necessary, therefore, that a

clergyman who is to officiate at a marriage ceremony realize that he is a representative on such occasions not only of the Church but also of the State. He must, accordingly, carefully observe the laws of the state in which he is to officiate. And to this end, he must familiarize himself with those laws which have to do with this matter.

To be more specific, he must first of all register his name and credentials with the proper authorities, and, if a license to officiate be called for, must obtain such. This is necessary not only when first establishing his residence in a parish, but also whenever he is called upon to take that part of the service in which a couple actually take their bridal vows in any state other than that of his legal residence. Again, before the ceremony, he must be presented with the "license to marry" by the interested parties, for without it he has no authority to officiate, and the license is an official means of identifying them. And after the service, he must make a return, on the form provided, to the civil authorities. Failure to observe this requirement will involve him in legal difficulties, with penalties attached. Again, he should see that the principals have arranged for at least two official witnesses, who, in formal weddings, are the best man and the maid (or matron) of honor. Although the law does not so state, these should be provided by the bridal couple and not be people called in casually by the minister; this serves as an aid against hasty or ill-advised marriages. Once more, many states require a pre-marital medical examination. A clergyman should know about and be able to advise in this matter,

although he is not responsible for it. He must also keep informed regarding any interval required by the State between the application for the marriage license and its issuance, and likewise regarding arrangements for the waiver thereof.

### CHURCH REQUIREMENTS

The Church likewise has certain requirements with which a clergyman should most certainly be familiar. Important among these are the following:

*First*, it is a rule that he must have a notice of a marriage at least three days before he is to officiate, a possible exception being allowed in cases where one or both of the parties are well known to him. This is an effort on the part of the Church to eliminate the Gretna Green type of marriage.

*Next*, some instruction by the clergyman to the bridal pair is required. This does not include physical instruction, for the giving of which, if desired, a competent physician is far better qualified than most of the clergy and will speak with an authority greater than theirs. As an alternative to this it is well for a clergyman to be able to recommend some books containing sane and accurate information of this kind, which the couple should read together. But he should also be competently prepared to give instruction regarding the nature and importance of the married state, some of its personality difficulties and the adjustments of these.

The man and the woman marry each other and the marriage is declared legal by the clergyman acting by virtue of the authority vested in him by

the state. As a clergyman and by virtue of the authority given him by the Church he adds the Church's blessing to the marriage. In consequence, he must explain to the couple that there is no magic in the Church's blessing which insures in and of itself a happy and successful marriage, but that they must make a determined and persistent effort to keep vital and strong the spiritual bond which unites them and which has been sanctified "before God and this company." It is the clergyman's privilege to instruct them in practical ways of accomplishing this in their life together. Furthermore, in reading the first two paragraphs of the service, the clergyman bears witness to the fact that so far as is humanly possible he has ascertained that the couple who stand before him are deserving of the blessing of the Church and are entering into their new relationship "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God," thus recognizing the sacramental character of the marriage.

In relation to a marriage where one or both of the principals has been divorced (at this time of writing, June, 1943), the gist of the Canon adopted by General Convention in 1931, and still in force, is as follows:

The clergy are not permitted to solemnize the marriage of any person who has been divorced and whose husband or wife is still living, where the divorce has been for any cause arising after marriage. An exception to this is allowed in the case of the innocent party in a divorce for adultery, where a year has elapsed from the granting of the divorce before the application for remarriage. In such case,

the Canon rules that satisfactory evidence in the matter, with proof that the defendant was personally served or appeared in the action, shall be laid before the Ecclesiastical Authority, who, after taking legal advice, shall render his judgment in the matter. But always a clergyman has the right to refuse to officiate. For causes arising before marriage, where the marriage has been voided by a civil court, a person may apply to the Bishop, who, after taking legal advice, may declare the person eligible for the marriage service. Where such decisions have been rendered in favor of one who has been divorced, or whose marriage has been annulled, such person may be married by the clergy of the Church. A real difficulty arises, of course, in the case of one who has obtained divorce on other grounds technically, with adultery as the real reason but not declared. A clergyman's hands in such case are tied, according to our present laws.

#### ARRANGEMENTS

There remain sundry other matters to be touched upon before considering the ceremony itself. Arrangements for decorations, floral and otherwise, should be made in ample time with a representative of the Church. Florists so frequently overlook the proprieties or necessities of a church wedding in their professional zeal that it is wise for the minister or someone instructed by him to see that flowers are not placed inconveniently or inappropriately.

Wedding rehearsals are frequently asked for and are often a necessity for the smoothness of the

ceremony itself, especially in the case of a large wedding in a church. If there is to be one, the clergyman should be notified in ample time, as also the organist, if his presence is desired. Flippancy on the part of those present at a rehearsal should be ruled out. The chief item in rehearsals would seem to be the processions. But it is well to have definite instructions given to all the active participants, and especially to the principals and their two immediate attendants, as to where to enter, where to stand and when and what to say and do.

The signing of the parish register by the bride and groom and by their two attendants as witnesses is taken care of in some parishes immediately after the ceremony. But in many parishes it is found convenient to attend to this at the time of the rehearsal, or immediately before the ceremony, since the bustle and excitement following the service may make it difficult, or the delay incident to the signing afterwards may throw other arrangements out of gear. The other spaces in the register should be filled out and the officiant's name signed in the register as soon after the service as possible, so that no mistakes may be made.

Where two or more clergymen are to take part in the service, it is the right of the rector of the parish in which the service occurs to reserve for himself that part in which the marriage vows are exchanged. Courtesy would demand that he be asked to take that part. But special circumstances arise at times when after being so asked, he may prefer to take a secondary part.

In "house weddings," local conditions of course

govern such details as entrance, positions, etc. The whole service is customarily said at one place. Arrangements for a small and quiet church wedding are also very simple, the principals and their two attendants entering where most convenient and being met at the chancel steps by the clergyman.

### PROPER POSITIONS

All weddings have this in common: the congregation rises at the entrance of the procession or participants, and remains standing until all of these have left the church or, in a home, until the ceremony is completed.

At an elaborate church wedding, when the bride is ready, and the organist, having received his signal, has begun the wedding march, the clergyman takes his place at the chancel steps. At the same time the ushers enter in procession, two by two, taking their places in the chancel in front of the choir stalls or (especially if there is not room in the chancel) to the right of the position of the groom and best man. The bridesmaids follow the ushers similarly and take corresponding positions. The maid or matron of honor, if there be one, comes next, taking her place corresponding to that of the best man. A flower girl may come next, immediately preceding the bride, and taking her place to the left of the maid of honor. Finally comes the bride, on the arm of her father or friend who is to give her in marriage. There is difference in opinion as to whether she should take his left arm or his right, with no established

rule prevailing. Some clergymen prefer the bride to be on the right of her father, since a gentleman usually gives his right arm to a lady when escorting her to a seat. Others prefer the bride to be on her father's left arm. This, according to old-time ideas, is the side symbolizing his affection for her. Also, for the sake of convenience, when the bride is given in marriage, the father may more easily place her right hand in that of the minister without either reaching across in front of her or else stepping across her train (with the dangers involved) to a more central position if he has brought her in on his *left* arm. Meanwhile and in ample time, after the beginning of the wedding march, the groom and best man enter from the vestry or side door and take up position at the chancel steps in such fashion as to permit those in the procession to reach their appointed places with ease. The bride having taken her position, her father or friend usually drops back a pace, leaving those immediately facing the clergyman (reading from their right to left) the best man, groom, bride and maid of honor. This leaves the bride in front of her family and friends, who have been seated on the left side, facing the chancel, and the groom in front of his family and friends on the right.

### THE SERVICE

The first part of the service takes place at the chancel steps and is preparatory in nature. The opening paragraph, the "Dearly beloved," is addressed to all who are present, and should be so read.



There can be no excuse for a clergyman not familiarizing himself with the service and stumbling and mumbling over it, instead of reading it in a manner that is audible and intelligible to all who are present. And, after all, the congregation is an actual, if silent, participant in this service, the officiant being their representative in both his legal and religious capacities. It is unrubrical to make changes in the service. But there are many who would prefer omission of the word "dreadful" in relation to the "day of judgment" in the second paragraph, and an alteration in the first one of the reference to Cana so as to read simply, "which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence in Cana of Galilee."

The second paragraph is addressed to the bridal couple and may well be read in somewhat lower and more intimate tones, yet carrying to them the realization that they are being challenged, if impediments do stand in the way. The two questions that follow are, in our present service, identical, and using the first name of each, as is the case all through the service, are addressed to the groom and bride in turn. The answer given by each is *not* "I do," as thought by some, but, "I will," to conform to the question.

The giving of the bride in marriage comes next. With the question, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" her father or friend steps forward and takes her right hand and places it in the hand of the officiant, who, in turn, places it in the right hand of the groom, signifying that she has been placed in the hands of the Church of God,

which in turn, and in the Name of God, gives her into the loving care and protection of the bridegroom. After this, the father or friend retires to his appointed place among the congregation.

The bridal couple now follows the clergyman up through the chancel and stands before him again as he takes his place in the gate of the communion rail. Their two attendants usually follow them and again take the same relative positions as previously. This is a convenient and proper time for the bride to hand her bouquet to the bridesmaid, that she may have both hands free; and also to make sure that the ring finger is bare. There now follows the heart of the service.

Groom and bride in turn assume the initiative in the marriage vow. Taking her right and his, the groom repeats after the clergyman, a few words at a time, the vow, ending with his "I *plight* thee my troth," and the loosing of hands. The bride then repeats the action of the groom, her vow ending with "I give thee my troth." Each in turn by assuming the initiative indicates before the congregation that he and she are entering into the married estate of their own volition. People occasionally ask why the difference of that one word between the vows of the groom and bride. The difference really lies in this: the man, with whom more of the initiative rests in the ceremony, pledges, "plights," his troth or loyalty, first. The woman responds to this promise of his by giving her loyalty in return. It is simply the initiative and the response which that initiative evokes.

It is customary, though not necessary, for the

best man to carry the ring. At this point the clergyman turns to him, or to the groom — whichever happens to be carrying it — for the ring. It is usually placed by him, for convenience, upon the open service book held by the minister. The latter may now use the brief prayer for the blessing of the ring, appropriately turning towards the altar for this purpose, since he is praying not over and directly for the bridal couple but for the spirit of unity and peace which the ring symbolizes. He then places the ring in the groom's hand to slip upon the bride's ring finger as he repeats after the minister, a few words at a time, the ring sentence. There are occasions where a bride wishes to give the groom a ring as well as to receive one from him. Since the service provides no place for this, it is left to the minister to use his discretion. He may take the ring for the bride, bless it, and give it to the groom to place on the bride's finger, with the ring sentence, and then repeat for the ring for the groom. Or he may receive both rings at the same time and use the prayer for the two together, with the proper plurals, *e.g.*, "Bless, O Lord, these rings, that they who give and who wear them may abide in thy peace, etc." He may then have the rings placed by the groom and then by the bride, using the same ring sentence in each case.

With the summons "Let us pray," it is advisable to make no particular pause, as all present are still to remain standing, but to begin the "Our Father" immediately. This is followed by the next prayer in order, and this again may be succeeded by one or both of the remaining prayers. Since in Christian

marriage children are regarded as a hoped-for result, it would seem that the prayer for the gift of children should not be omitted as frequently as it is in these days.

The minister then joins the right hands of the couple, with the sentence, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Some of the clergy wrap one end of their stole around the joined hands, others place their right hand upon the joined hands, as an emphasis upon the declaration; some do both. But in any case it should be remembered first that if the marriage be truly of God and approved by Him, this declaration assumes the form of a challenge against worldly standards in behalf of the Christian ideal of a lifelong union; and second, that many go through this service and become legally man and wife who are not truly joined by God in the bonds of true understanding and love. There is no magic in merely going through the rite.

Having conformed with the requirements of State and of Church in this service, and having the approval, by its silence at least, of the congregation, the minister, while the couple's hands are still joined, pronounces them man and wife, addressing himself primarily to all the others who are present. And finally upon the two, as they now kneel before him, he asks God's blessing and preservation in such a manner of living here that they may have life everlasting. Sometimes the minister's hands are simply raised over them in the act of blessing. But often it brings home to the pair a fuller realization of their new estate if the hands in blessing are allowed to

rest for a moment lightly upon their heads.

Frequently a couple asks if it is proper to exchange a kiss immediately after the blessing and before leaving the chancel. If marriage is what we believe it to be, surely this is permissible. Accordingly, if the couple so desires, they should be informed that a kiss is permissible as soon as they rise to their feet, but that it should not be prolonged unduly.

#### AFTER THE SERVICE

As they rise to their feet, the bride receives her bouquet back from her bridesmaid and then turns to take the arm of her husband. They may pause for a moment to allow the bridesmaid to arrange the bride's train, and then they proceed from the chancel to the door of the church, leading the recessional, and followed in order by the best man and maid of honor together, the flower girl, bridesmaids two and two and ushers two and two. As the bridal couple reach the door, it is a fitting time for the minister to leave the chancel.

When the principals have left the church, the ushers return to the front to escort from the church the members of the two families whom previously they had shown to their seats, the rest of the congregation remaining in their places until these have departed.

Occasionally the bridal couple may desire a celebration of the Holy Communion following immediately upon the marriage service. In cases such as this, of course the Collect, Epistle and Gospel appointed to be read "At a Marriage" would be

used. It would seem convenient and for the avoidance of unseemly bustle that, if the bride has a long train, the couple should remain at the altar rail for the celebration. Otherwise they could well take their places with the congregation.

Frequently a couple wishes to have some singing at their wedding. If their selection consists of silly sentimentalism, it is well to remind them that the Church requires music of a definitely religious nature in its services and that there is ample room for choice from music of this type.

In the matter of head-covering for the women present, it would seem that a great deal of latitude is reasonable. The original reason alleged for head-coverings would call for a veil rather than a hat, and in any case it rests on a belief long ago abandoned. The custom remains, but it could well be abated to some degree.

If a couple has been married otherwise than as provided for by this Church, it occasionally happens that they come to one of our clergy for a blessing upon their marriage. When this happens, it is usually after a ceremony by a justice of the peace, or under certain circumstances by a clergyman of the Roman Church. If, upon inquiry, the minister of the Episcopal Church finds that a blessing has been given previously by any other minister, no further blessing would seem to be in place. If there has been no blessing, but the other essentials of a marriage service have been fulfilled, it would seem sufficient to use only the Lord's Prayer and the blessing from the Prayer Book, if all other requirements of the Canon on Marriage have been observed.

The proper vesting for the clergyman at a marriage is the white stole with his accustomed cassock and surplice. A hood, if worn, should be underneath the stole, as at any other time.

On some occasions a couple will desire to have their banns read, according to the provision in the Prayer Book. Custom varies in this, in some parishes banns being read after the Second Lesson, in others at the time of announcements. The period covers the three Sundays immediately preceding the date of the marriage. Since in some states the banns are accepted by the law in place of the securing of a license, the proper return being made by the officiant, while in other states this situation does not obtain, it is necessary for a clergyman to acquaint himself with the legal requirements on this point.

## CHAPTER NINE

### VISITATION OF THE SICK

WHEN ANY OFFICE of the Book of Common Prayer falls into such general disuse throughout our Church as has the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, we can expect the cause to be not too hidden from our view. And when the occasion for which the office is intended is one common to the daily experience of every parish clergyman, we can be fairly sure to find the difficulty with the office rather than with those who are supposed to use it.

Without even beginning to be comprehensive in analyzing this office, some general observations can be made which seem to be shared by many of those who ignore it, and which should affect whatever substitute ministry to the sick is devised.

*First*, there is wide disapproval of the use which this portion of our Prayer Book makes of the punishment theory as a general explanation of bodily illness. The clergymen who are preaching a gospel of unwavering retributive justice these days are as few as those who use the office in its present form. Granted that medical research is presenting more and more evidence showing a profound and far-reaching relationship between emotional unrest and physical disability, it is still true that the punishment theory of illness does not gain clear expression in any other phase of our ministry to persons when in good health. That being so, whether we favor the theory or not, most of us would agree that the

sickroom is not the place to *begin* teaching it.

*Second*, there is a feeling on the part of some that no special or unique liturgy is needed as a worship medium for the sick. The worship forms already dear to a person are the ones that will be most helpful in the midst of illness. Adaptations of Morning and Evening Prayer, and the celebration of the Holy Communion involving the use of familiar opening sentences, versicles, responses and Collects, are often much more meaningful than a new and unfamiliar service. Even the weak and fainting patient will have strength to make a familiar and beloved Collect his own, whereas a new one will be only so many words.

A *third* defect of the present office is its tendency to intensify the sick person's already too dominant concern about himself. Except for those portions which are given to praise, the office is in the nature of an intercession, with the ill person both its object and its subject. An intercession for one who is sick ceases to be that when the sick person is himself a part of the praying company, particularly so when the sick person is the entire congregation. It becomes a prayer for one's self, for which, of course, there is a need and without which we should be failing to bring into the presence of God one of our principal desires. Yet most of us can be trusted to do that in the acute moment of our need. And when the total impact of the clergyman's visit is a further intensification of this self-absorbed yearning without helping the patient to feel identified with the whole of God's people in adoration, thanksgiving and true intercession, even in the hour of one's own need,

the clergyman has overlooked his most fundamental service to the sick. The fact that this help is not easily accomplished, and that it is never accomplished against the will of the patient, is small justification for permitting one's ministry to be basically of the other sort.

Having said all this in criticism of the office, we shall yet be the losers if we never use any of it. The last two Psalms included, Psalms 138 and 103, are true songs of praise which can have many a use in the sickroom if the proper preparation is made. One suspects that they were included here at the end of the office for use only after the signs of recovery become apparent, but they should be restricted to no such particular use. The Collects which begin "Sanctify, we beseech thee, O Lord . . ." and "O God, the strength of the weak . . ." and the final prayer before the Benediction, "The Almighty God, who is a most strong tower . . ." can be put to many a good use. Likewise the prayer "in behalf of all present at the Visitation" has a wise usage. There will also be times when it will be helpful to read the "Commendatory Prayer When the Soul is Departed." The ability of the family or friends to enter into such a prayer will determine its use.

It should be said in passing that penitential and petitionary psalms have their place in work with the sick, but they must be used in their place and not incessantly. When they play a seasonal function, thus strengthening the patient's participation in the corporate life of the Church, or serve a personal need involving some comprehension and desire on the part of the patient, they are most certainly in

order. Otherwise they are like the waters of a flood, not wanted and most exasperating. Not to be overlooked are the great psalms of praise such as the *Venite* and the 145th, and the psalms of faith such as the 121st, the 23rd, the 33rd and portions of the 139th.

There are some throughout our Church who make use of that portion of the office entitled "Unction of the Sick." Some confine their exercise of the healing ministry to the first prayer, "O Blessed Redeemer, relieve, we beseech thee . . ." Others make more specific use of this form of faith-healing by reading the second prayer either in connection with anointing with oil or by the laying on of the hand.

When prayer is used with the sick, and it should only be used when the patient desires it or after the proper atmosphere for receiving it has come into being, there is a wealth of material elsewhere in the Prayer Book upon which to draw. If the patient is one who is familiar with Prayer Book services, whose physical condition permits a series of prayers, there can be real wisdom in using the traditional three Collects, followed by selected prayers of a more specific nature. If the visit is in the later afternoon or evening, one should not miss the opportunity to read the Collects for Evening Prayer, so seldom heard by the average churchman, on occasion closing with John Henry Newman's prayer, "O Lord, support us all the day long . . ." found in Family Prayer.

Other prayers in this same closing section of the Prayer Book not to be overlooked in our general ministry, but especially helpful in the midst of ill-

ness are those entitled "For the Spirit of Prayer" and "For Quiet Confidence."

Where there is confusion of spirit, the well known Prayer for Guidance, "O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment . . ." is a pathway to peace to many a disturbed soul. The Prayer for Trustfulness that immediately follows has a wide use where there is fear or devastating sorrow: "O most loving Father, who willest us to give thanks for all things . . ." When visiting in a hospital where patients are separated from their families, or where there is any concern about loved ones, we should not fail to include the Collect "For those we love," which begins "Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us . . ." Or if there is any conscious striving for growth, two indispensable Collects are those for the 9th Sunday after Trinity and the fourth Sunday after Easter. A careful and frequent reading of the Prayer Book will reveal many another prayer that will have a very ready place in the sickroom.

While there are many good collections of prayers available to the clergy, there can be little doubt that their value is limited if they bring us to the place where we seldom use the Prayer Book forms and prayers. In most of our work with the sick the traditional prayers are not only adequate but indispensable. When an occasional extended ministry of prayer is conducted with a given parishioner, involving a succession of calls, there is a real place for supplementary prayers. Suited to this purpose are such collections as *Prayers — New and Old*, *A Chain of Prayer Across the Ages* and *Prayers*,

published by the Church Service League of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

Extempore prayers are likely to be more effective when used with non-Episcopal patients who are not accustomed to hearing prayers read. They can be very meaningful, however, with any patient if used at a climactic moment when to produce a book and finger for a page would break the spirit of the moment. When so used, one who has come to love the Collect form of prayer will never forget that since our feelings at any one moment are usually related primarily to *one* thing, we shall do well to see that every extempore prayer bears the same construction.

In all of work with the sick, if there is one general truth to be kept in mind above all others it is the fact that our primary task and opportunity remain the same in the presence of a sick person as they do with any parishioner we encounter in the living room or study. We are there fundamentally to assist in moving beyond the bounds of self into the presence of God. There are innumerable specialized needs of the sick person, worthy of more careful inspection in a longer manual, which can lead one to the primary need, but they can also divert a minister from ever reaching the deeper levels of tension and strain. Such services as the supplying of companionship, cheer and reassurance to stem the tide of loneliness, sense of defeat and fear are often the first demands of a sickroom situation, yet if they become our total ministry to a sick person ours has been chiefly a secular ministry. The principal value deriving from any ministry of this sort is not in the lasting

effects secured, for these are most infrequent, but in the opportunity it allows for the building of a firm pastoral relationship and for penetrating to a deeper knowledge of the real forces that are an obstacle in the patient's outreach to God. If our ministry to man's superficial needs leads to this, it will have had real purpose, but it has a way of never reaching these deeper levels unless the purpose is consciously a part of us. There can be little doubt that any ministry which consists chiefly of rendering specific services to people is apt to be very fleeting in its effect if it is not preceded in most cases by the careful building of a pastor-parishioner relationship and the diligent striving for a full understanding of the personality of the parishioner.

## CHAPTER TEN

THE ORDER FOR  
THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

THE BURIAL SERVICE has three great characteristics: *its awesome simplicity, its noble beauty and its spirit of triumphant conviction.*

The service opens with the confident declaration of the familiar sentences, "I am the resurrection and the life . . ." "I know that my redeemer liveth" and the great affirmation of faith by Job in the face of life-crushing catastrophe, closing with the words "Blessed be the name of the Lord." The sentences are followed by a series of Psalms expressing our confidence in God as our refuge in time of trouble and our strength in time of need.

The Prayer Book then provides three selections for Scripture reading. If the lesson from the First Epistle to the Corinthians is read, we are so lifted by St. Paul's majestic argument for the life everlasting that when we hear his affirmation that death is swallowed up in victory we want to join in proclaiming, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, scarcely any passage in the Bible is more fully persuasive than the alternate lesson from the Epistle to the Romans, concluding with the triumphant affirmation that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The third selection is Jesus' simple exhortation to His disciples to believe Him when

He says, "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you." We are ready to walk in the presence of God in prayer, and we should be ready to commit our beloved into His keeping "in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is worth while to pause and look at the prayers a little more carefully. Of the eight suggested prayers, not including the Lord's Prayer, there are only two very brief prayers for the soul of the departed; because we believe that our dead are in the hands of God, and that after we have commended them to God it would be presumptuous for us to continue our requests. We are confident that God's mercy will exceed anything that we can either ask or think. The other prayers are for those of us "who are still in our pilgrimage," that we may be worthy of the Kingdom which God has prepared for us. Two prayers contain thanksgiving for the good examples of those "who have finished their course in faith," while one prayer teaches us "not to be sorry as men without hope." The fundamental purpose of our burial service is to lead those who mourn into the presence of God so that they will be upheld by the consolation and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit and be filled with new confidence and hope in the Life Eternal.

## CONDUCT OF THE SERVICE

The first rubric assumes that the service will take place either in the church or at the grave, and the



service is so divided that the first part is written for use in the church, and the second for the briefer committal to take place at the grave. The placing of the service in the church is as it should be. The church is not only the most appropriate place for the service of one of its members, but also is the most beautiful place to have such a service. The beauty of the church will lift the thoughts of the congregation above worldly considerations and will create the atmosphere of triumphant spirit. To create a similar atmosphere in the home is almost impossible.

According to the rubric, the clergyman meets the casket at the front door of the church and proceeds in front of it down the main aisle of the church, reciting the opening sentences of the service. If there is a choir, the choir may sing as the casket is borne down the aisle, and the sentences may be said from the chancel. However, it is customary in some parishes to have the casket placed at the crossing or in the chancel before the service begins.

The Psalms may be read by the clergyman or may be said responsively. If most of the people attending the service are not familiar with the Prayer Book, it is probably better for the minister to read. If, on the other hand, the service is largely attended by Episcopalians or people familiar with the Prayer Book, the responsive reading adds a sense of reality to the service and affords the opportunity of participating in the service. If the Psalms are to be read responsively, the clergyman should always announce the pages upon which the Psalms are found in the Burial Service of the Prayer Book.

Either of the lessons from St. Paul may be read, but almost always it is customary to read in addition the words of Jesus quoted from the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. Following the lesson a hymn may be sung. If the deceased was a faithful member of the Church, it is customary to say the Apostles' Creed, and if there are many people present at the Church service who will not be present at the grave, it is wise to include the Lord's Prayer in the prayers which follow the Creed. This again gives the congregation an opportunity to participate in the service. In such case the Lord's Prayer might best be omitted from the committal service, even though the practice is not strictly rubrical.

After the Benediction, the clergyman precedes the casket to the front door of the church. The family customarily follow the casket into the church and sit in the front pews, and then follow the casket out of the church and immediately enter waiting vehicles which take them to the cemetery. Not infrequently, families at their own request, instead of following the casket in and out of the church, make their entrance and exit by a side door.

The rubric in the Prayer Book suggests that "*other fitting prayers as are elsewhere provided in the Book*" may be used, and custom has always permitted the use of appropriate prayers which are not found in the Prayer Book, but which may be requested by the family or chosen at the discretion of the clergyman.

The Prayer Book also provides a special Collect, Epistle and Gospel for a service of Holy Communion "At the Burial of the Dead." If used as a requiem

celebration the Holy Communion customarily follows the lesson in the Burial Service, the final prayers of the Burial Office being said as post-communion collects. Many people who find the consequent lengthening of the Burial Service too great a strain are frequently profoundly helped by a celebration of the Holy Communion particularly for those who were closest to the deceased and at a convenient time for them. It is usually desirable to have such a service private so that all present may feel a real sense of oneness with their departed loved one and the communion of Saints may become a living reality.

### MUSIC

A question which invariably arises in making arrangements for a funeral is "What music shall we have?" Unless it is desired to have a trained choir, it is wiser to have no singing. It is better to have the organist play before and after the service the themes of some of the great hymns of the resurrection and immortality, such as *The Day of Resurrection* or *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*. In the home as a general rule the service is more beautiful without music. If music is desired, hymns whose thought is in keeping with the triumphant spirit of the service should be chosen. To hear *Lead On, O King Eternal* or *The Strife is o'er, the battle done, the victory of life is won, Alleluia*, ring out through the church will help the congregation catch the victorious note of the service in a way not possible through such a hymn as *Lead kindly*

*light amid the encircling gloom* or *Rock of Ages*, with its "Should my tears forever flow, should my zeal no languor know."

### AN UNFORTUNATE CUSTOM

An unfortunate custom which has been allowed to thrive in connection with funerals is that of "viewing the remains," following a service in the home. In the church the casket is always closed; and so far as possible this should be true in the home. Some dioceses require that the casket be closed during the service wherever it is held, and this is rapidly becoming the custom in all dioceses. The reason for this is easy to see. The essential purpose of the service is to bring comfort and strength to the bereaved. One of the hardest wrenches for many people is to take their last look at their departed. Consequently, if the casket is closed before the service, the service itself will help the bereaved to achieve new inner strength and calm against the visit to the cemetery and the lonely hours ahead. More and more frequently people are leaving word that after their death they do not wish their body to be viewed except by the family and intimate friends. In addition many people prefer to remember a friend, particularly if they did not see him during his final illness, as they knew him when he was in good health.

## PALL AND FLOWERS

Some Episcopal Churches do not allow flowers in the church for a funeral except in the altar vases. The Church of God should be the last place where an individual or a family can make a display. After the casket is brought into the church a pall, which is a blanket, often of purple cloth with a cross emblazoned on it, may cover the casket, symbolizing the Christian character of the deceased and the fact that God is no respecter of persons. The Church does not require the use of the pall, but we urge it both because of its appropriateness and because of its convenience.

The easiest arrangement is for the flowers to be sent to the home or funeral parlor as desired, and then directly to the cemetery so that they may be in place about the grave before the family arrive with the casket. A further reason why many of our parishes abide by the rule that no flowers shall be placed in the church is that not infrequently in some neighbourhoods when someone dies, collections are taken along the street in order to buy flowers for the deceased, irrespective of whether the people from whom the collections are made knew the deceased. People do not like to decline such requests, and in some districts it has actually become a most unfortunate and unnecessary economic drain on some of the poorer families.

## THE SERMON

Our burial office very wisely makes no provision for a funeral sermon or eulogy. A sermon as a rule fails to add to, in fact detracts from, the simplicity, beauty and triumphant spirit of the service.

## VESTMENTS

Vestments are always worn at a funeral in the church. Some parishes have a rule that vestments be worn only in the church; in other parishes, vestments are worn in the home or funeral parlor and at the grave. A white stole is most appropriate, being the color which reminds us of Easter and the resurrection, but black and violet are also appropriate.

## FURTHER DETAILS

Every funeral must be recorded in the parish register. As a rule no charge is made for the use of the church, and the rector should see that the family of the deceased know this. Frequently a funeral home is chosen because the family mistakenly believe that the church would be more expensive.

The use of the thank offering or "funeral fee" given the minister by the family is left entirely to the dictates of his conscience. Some ministers refuse to accept gifts from members of the congregation. As a rule ministers never use such

gifts for themselves, but place them in the Rector's Discretionary Fund. If a clergyman has had to incur expenses in connection with the funeral, such as railroad fare, the expenses may be paid out of such a gift. Usually the family will be receptive to suggested memorials as a thank offering to God after the funeral service. There is always considerable danger in refusing a gift. It may cause some individual to think that he is a charitable case in the eyes of the Church and it may discourage the impulse to generosity in an individual which up to that time has been given little opportunity to develop. By using the money for a good cause and by telling the individual how much good is accomplished by his gift, the minister may thereby encourage him to greater generosity.

In the home or funeral parlor or at the grave, the clergyman, in reading the service, stands at the head of the casket.

In case a lodge service is desired, it is better to have the minister request the lodge to hold its service the evening preceding the service at the church, or following the interment at the grave.

The rubrics in the Burial Service provide that the whole service may be said either at the church or at the grave, where the situation demands it. Furthermore the rubrics point out that the service is to be used "only for the faithful departed in Christ." But at the same time the rubrics provide that the minister may at his discretion use such parts of the office as may be fitting at funerals for those who have not confessed faith in Christ. Surely no clergyman could refuse to hold a burial service

for anyone when the rubrics allow him to compile such a service from the Prayer Book as he may deem fitting.

Attention should be called to the sentences of committal for the burial of the dead at sea at the end of the office in the Prayer Book, and also to the special service "At the Burial of a Child." The structure of the latter service is the same as the regular office, but the passages of scripture are simpler and more appropriate and the service is extremely brief.

#### CONSULTATION WITH THE FAMILY

When a clergyman is called to a family on the occasion of a death he is presented with a great spiritual opportunity. Even those who are most callous and insensitive to spiritual life will be more receptive to religion in the face of great sorrow and shock than at practically any other time. Hence the minister must be particularly sensitive to the opportunity, and try to be a medium through which the spirit of Christ may reach these bereaved souls in their need, and quicken them, not momentarily but for the rest of their lives. He should anticipate a period of very earnest prayer, both for the soul of the departed and for strength for the bereaved to carry on. Usually he will find questions arising in the minds of the bereaved which will afford him opportunity to interpret spiritual life and religious faith to them with a reality and relevance they never had before. Often he can suggest having prayers with the family at home

before the service, and in such case the prayers for *Quiet Confidence*, for *Trustfulness* and for *Those We Love*, in Family Prayers, in the back of the Prayer Book are helpful.

The clergyman should also go over every detail of the funeral with the family to make sure that as far as possible everything will be in accordance with their wishes. The average family has not had much experience with funerals, while the minister has had a great deal; and consequently they will usually look to him to suggest the most appropriate and easiest way of making arrangements for the service. He should see that the funeral director understands both the customs of the Church and the way in which the Church and the family wish the arrangements to be carried out.

The clergyman has an opportunity at this time both to save the family unnecessary expenditure of money and to suggest that the money be used for useful memorial gifts rather than for an expensive lot or casket. He may also be able to suggest an undertaker who will show understanding consideration in the matter of expense.

#### EXPENSE

Some years ago a survey by a large insurance company showed that the average cost of adult funerals in thirty-six states over a five-month period for 7,871 policy holders was \$363.00, compared with \$309.00 of insurance carried. Many families have their first experience of debt through unnecessary expense at funerals. Often families will decide upon an expensive funeral, costing hundreds of dollars,

which might better have been saved for the support and education of children of the deceased whose lives are still in the future. This frequently happens against the advice of the undertaker himself, who usually has considerable knowledge of the family's financial situation. If the family will tell the undertaker the amount above which the funeral expenses must not go, the undertaker will almost certainly be able to keep the expense within the desired sum. A funeral may be just as beautiful and dignified at a low cost as at a high cost.

Frequently people are disturbed by the enormous number of flowers which are showered on a family at the time of a death. Consequently there are always people who prefer to give money which might otherwise be spent on flowers for some good purpose as a memorial to the deceased. This is done in many parishes and other institutions through the use of a printed card which would read as follows:

<p><b>All Saints' Church</b>          Louisville, Kentucky</p> <p>The Rector and Vestry gratefully acknowledge          the receipt of a contribution to the</p> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>in memory of</p> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>from</p> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 10px auto;"/>
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The custom of encouraging such memorials is better than having in the funeral notice "Kindly omit flowers," because the latter usually puts people in a serious quandary as to sending flowers or not, and if they decide not to, as to what they can do to show their respect for the deceased and sympathy for the bereaved.

Frequently a person will hesitate to talk with the clergyman about a memorial because he does not feel that he can spend a sufficiently large sum to secure a suitable memorial. No one should feel so, however, since there are many inexpensive memorial gifts which may be of real value to the Church and suitable tributes to those who have entered eternal life. These vary from a chancel prayer book or hymnal, properly inscribed, costing less than ten dollars, to an organ costing twelve hundred dollars and up. Or money may be left to the endowment fund of the parish church, the diocese or national Church as a memorial gift.

### CREMATION

Cremation is a very ancient method for the disposal of the body. Of late, it has been more and more commending itself, particularly to people dwelling in cities, as the available cemetery space is limited and burial frequently must take place at a great distance from the city. In case cremation is desired, a body may be sent directly upon death to the crematory and a memorial service can be held in the church at whatever time is desired, or the body may be embalmed and the service held as if

the body were going to be buried, except that the second half of the service is held at the crematory chapel instead of at a grave. The ashes may then be buried or scattered as desired. The customary committal service may be used, or if it is preferred, the word "elements" may be substituted for the word "ground." In cremation the body is not burned; no flame touches it. But the heat hastens the natural process of dissolution which takes place in the ground, so that what might last for weeks or months or years happens in the space of a few hours. The body is returned again to the dust from which it came.

NOTE: Every Clergyman will find extremely useful a small volume entitled *Burial Service* compiled by Joseph Buchanan Bernadin, published by Edwin S. Gorham, Inc. (1936), which contains not only the service in the Prayer Book, but an extremely rich collection of sentences, Biblical passages and prayers appropriate for use at a funeral.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## THE SERVER

THE PURPOSE of having servers in the church is two-fold: *first*, to deepen the religious life of those boys and men of the parish who desire to express their devotion by serving at the altar; and *second*, to assist the rector or clergyman in charge of the parish in the services of the Church. While the conduct of any of our services does not require the presence of a server, the privilege of assisting in a service may be the means of creating a vital religious life in young men who otherwise might have but a casual interest in the Church.

While there is no age limit for servers, the practice of encouraging young men between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four to volunteer for this work has grown up in the Church largely because this is the age when boys are most readily prevented from drifting away from the Church by being given definite responsibilities to fulfill. No Church with a boys' choir should fail to have a Servers' Guild. When a boy finds himself graduated by a changing voice from a boy choir in which he has sung for several years, and attends Church as a member of the congregation, nine times out of ten he feels utterly lost. As a result, and because during his years in the choir he has lost touch with the Church school, he knocks off attending Church entirely. When, however, this same boy, on leaving the choir, is able to join a Servers' Guild, he may not only

become of great assistance to the rector in his work with young people, but also achieve a religious faith and loyalty to the Church that will continue for the rest of his life. Furthermore, the rector will have a greater opportunity of making religion real and vital to these boys than to almost any other group to whom he ministers, because of the sacred character of the servers' work and his constant contact with the servers themselves.

## THE SERVERS' GUILD

If servers are to be used at all, the importance of having them formed into a Servers' Guild cannot be overemphasized. To have a number of boys attached to a parish without having them formed into a guild may work so far as rendering assistance in the services is concerned, but it usually has little value so far as the development of the religious life of the boys is concerned. If a boy feels that the work he is doing is of so little importance that it is allowed to function on a casual basis, it will neither increase his respect for the Church nor deepen his religious life.

The Guild should be a fellowship in religion and friendship in which the members are bound together by their appreciation of the privilege of serving at the altar of God and their loyalty to their parish church. One of the main purposes of having a guild should be to develop and maintain a lofty *esprit de corps*, for without it the Guild will simply become another boys' club. This *esprit de corps* is maintained in large measure by the knowledge that

the guild members are a special group chosen out of many to render a service that no other group in the parish renders. Hence the best results are secured when only boys are selected who have definitely indicated their desire to serve.

Once a guild has been formed, the new boy, after he has expressed his desire to join and has been approved by the rector, is elected by a regular meeting. He is finally admitted to membership at a service of induction or admission conducted by the Guild Chaplain or someone appointed by him. Three other important features of the guild are (1) its meetings, (2) its officers and (3) its rule of life.

#### MEETINGS

It is essential that the Guild have regular and carefully planned meetings at least once a month, preferably on a weekday evening when the meetings can be leisurely. These meetings should consist of:

1. A service or period of devotion, preferably in the church or chapel.
2. A business meeting to arrange the ensuing servers' schedule and provide an opportunity for discussion and instruction.
3. A talk or religious discussion designed to enable the group to grow in Christian knowledge and understanding and to share their spiritual experiences. These discussions must deal with some aspect of religion relevant and vital to their own lives, and not simply be a discussion of ritual and ceremony. Indeed the reason that many parishes have not formed Servers' guilds is that the rectors

have seen many guilds concentrate so completely on the mechanics of serving that the boys developed into Christian ritualists rather than Christian laymen, or in other words, were interested primarily in perfecting form and ceremony rather than in laboring for the extension of His Kingdom and preaching the Gospel to every creature.

#### OFFICERS

It is important that the officers of the guild be chosen with the greatest care in order that they may be selected from the most responsible and reliable boys. Many guilds have found three officers sufficient as follows:

The *President*, ordinarily a senior member of the guild, whose duty it shall be to preside at meetings of the guild and assist the rector in instructing the members of the guild in their duties.

The *Secretary*, whose duty it shall be to notify members of the guild of their assignments and keep a record of the meetings in a secretary's book.

The *Chaplain*, who shall have charge of the opening devotions at the meetings of the guild and shall arrange for the services of admission of new members and special devotions such as corporate communions in consultation with the rector. Frequently it has been found wise to have the president and secretary elected by the guild and the chaplain appointed by the rector, as the chaplain is frequently a layman who is as interested in the guild and its members as is the rector himself.



### RULE OF LIFE

The third essential feature of the guild is a Rule of Life. We speak of this third rather than first, because if a guild is being inaugurated in a parish, it is better for the rector not to superimpose a rule of life on the guild but rather to allow the Rule of Life to develop gradually out of the spiritual experience and fellowship of the group. The following is a simple guild Rule of Life:

1. To worship God in church every Sunday unless really prevented from so doing.
2. To attend Holy Communion regularly, and at least once a month.
3. To pray daily.
4. To read "Forward Day by Day" or at least a few verses of the Bible each day.
5. To be a contributing member of the Church unless unemployment makes it impossible.

### DUTIES OF SERVERS

The chief duties of servers are to act as crucifers and to serve at the altar at Holy Communion.

*The Crucifer.* The crucifer arrives ten minutes before the service, vests, secures the cross, and takes his place at the point from which he will lead the procession of the choir into church. He should hold the cross well above his head, and with his right hand above his left and his arms in a perfectly normal position, avoiding any showy frills such as the not unusual custom of extending the forearm

at right angles from the cross and making the elbow protrude in a most unnatural way. The crucifer walks slowly so that the choir may be close enough physically to keep together musically. He takes his place at the gate of the sanctuary and remains there either until the choir and clergy have taken their places, or until the Amen of the hymn, according to the preference of the rector. He then places his cross in the designated holder, which is usually on the end of one of the choir stalls.

After the Amen of the prayer or benediction before recessional, or in cases where the benediction customarily comes after the recessional, following the Amen at the end of the closing prayers, the crucifer secures his cross and takes his place facing the altar. At the end of one of the verses of the hymn, as designated by the rector, the crucifer faces about and proceeds slowly at the head of the choir in the same manner in which he entered the church. After the choir's closing prayer, he replaces the cross. If the cross is kept in the chancel he should not replace it until after the server has extinguished the candles and the organist has started the postlude, in order not to disturb the worshipers.

### THE SERVER AT COMMUNION

*Before the Service.* The server at Communion arrives ten minutes before the hour of service, vests, and lights the Eucharistic candles. The candle on the Epistle side should be lighted first. An easy rule to remember is: The Epistles were written before the Gospels and therefore the Epistle candle

is lighted first. Or: The Gospels were written after the Epistles, therefore the Gospel candle never burns alone.

In *The Servers' Handbook* Dr. Percy Dearmer says that "it does not matter which candle you light first." The custom in some parishes is for the Gospel candle to be lighted first because the Gospels are more important than the Epistles, but I believe that the rule I have suggested prevails in most parishes.

The server should see that the proper vessels are on the altar and credence. In some parishes these are placed there by the server, but more frequently they have already been placed there by the Altar Guild well in advance of the service. The wine cruet is placed on the right and the water cruet on the left, with the ciborium in between and the handles of the cruets turned toward the side.

*During the Service.* The server enters the church preceding the rector (if there is a choir, at the end of the choir procession), stands aside, outside the sanctuary gate until the rector and other clergy have entered, then enters the sanctuary and kneels in his place, usually on the Epistle side near the credence. Ordinarily he sits, stands or kneels according to the rules governing the action of all the worshipers in the church, and makes the proper responses in an audible voice. After the Creed and notices, or sermon, if there be one, the celebrant is ready to place the bread and wine on the altar. The server takes the ciborium from the credence and after removing the cover, holds it in readiness to present to the Priest when he moves to the end of the altar. When the Priest takes the wafers or

bread from the ciborium, the server should tell him the number of persons present. At a small service when few people are present the server can usually count the people. At a large celebration arrangements should be made for one of the ushers to count the congregation and communicate the results when the offering is presented. The server next replaces the ciborium on the credence; and after taking the stoppers out of the cruets, returns to the altar with them, holding the wine cruet in his right hand and the water cruet in his left hand, with the handles toward the celebrant. When the Priest takes the wine cruet the server transfers the water cruet to his right hand and receives the wine cruet back in his left hand. He then transfers the wine cruet to his right hand and receives the water cruet back in his left, thus returning the cruets to the credence in their proper places. He replaces the stoppers in the cruets. The server then closes the sanctuary gates. In many churches at the same time he places a special kneeling cushion before the gates.

After the blessing, or after the administration, according to the preference of the celebrant, the server takes his place by the credence, ready to present the cruets to the celebrant when he comes to the end of the altar. After the cleansing of the Communion vessels, he replaces the cruets on the credence, and kneels until the end of the service.

*The Offering.* Frequently either the server or the crucifer presents the offering plates to the ushers directly after the offertory sentences and later receives them in a large alms basin and presents the same to the rector at the altar. If the altar is small,

the server may take the plates from the rector and put them in some designated spot in the sanctuary, but not until after the Prayer for Christ's Church. These arrangements vary so much in different churches that little more than this can be said.

*After the Service.* The server secures the snuffer and extinguishes the candles, beginning with the Eucharistic candle on the Gospel side, according to the rule mentioned in the instruction for lighting candles.

#### DIVISION OF DUTIES

If it is desired to increase the number of servers at any service the various duties may be readily divided among several servers. For example, one may light the candles before and put them out after the service, while the other serves at the Communion itself. Or the candles on either side of the altar may be lighted simultaneously by two servers coming from opposite sides of the sanctuary.

#### VESTMENTS

The server ordinarily wears a black or red cassock and a cotta from the time he enters the church until the time he leaves it. The crucifer may be similarly vested, or in some churches may wear the crucifer's alb, a single white garment, ordinarily over a black cassock, with a white girdle and a special collar called an amice. The server should wear black shoes (polished), white shirt or white collar, with dark necktie; he should be sure that he is well groomed.

#### ADDITIONAL DUTIES

If it is desired to have more work for the servers, the following is a list of items and activities which are assigned to the servers in some parishes:

1. Placing and removing the numbers on the hymn boards.
2. Seeing that the Prayer Books and Hymnals are in their proper places in the clergy stalls.
3. Finding the appointed lessons for Morning or Evening Prayer.
4. In cathedrals or other large churches, conducting pilgrimages around the church.
5. Assisting people up and down chancel steps as they go to and from the altar rail in the Communion Service.
6. The altar Prayer Book may be moved by the server after the Epistle is read, to the Gospel side of the altar. Frequently, however, especially in small churches, this may prove more of a distraction or interruption than an aid to the worshipers. The custom of moving the book has no special significance and evidently grew up when there was only one book in the church and it had to be carried from a Priest standing near a lamp or candle on the Epistle side to the Priest standing near a lamp or candle on the Gospel side.
7. Servers may be used at special festival services: for the collection of gifts at Thanksgiving and Christmas; or Lenten Offering boxes at the presentation service. They may also serve in lighting candles at other services such as weddings, funerals, etc.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO SERVERS

Always try to enter the church aware of the fact that you are chosen to serve at the altar of God. Pray that you may be worthy of this service. Act with the utmost reverence and dignity in the church. Walk slowly. When seated or kneeling do not slouch. Do not stare at the congregation. Follow the service in the Prayer Book and make the responses in an audible voice. Always remember that whether the congregation is small or large, you are in the presence of God.

No rules will be found to apply in all parishes, as most parishes have their own customary way of doing things. We commend the following general admonitions from Dr. Percy Dearmer's *The Servers' Handbook*:

"Do not think that this or that small thing is necessary to correctness; when anyone says that every little detail is absolutely essential, you may be sure that he does not know very much about the subject of ceremonial. The rubrics of the Prayer Book are necessary to correctness, but other things are only for decency and order, and need not always be the same in every place. The Server has in these matters to obey the parson in charge of the parish."\*

\*Quoted permission of the copyright holder.

CHAPTER TWELVE  
CHURCH CUSTOMS

THE CHURCH is meant to be the Family of God: not a group of people who think alike, but a Family, the members of which love each other in spite of their differences. This chapter deals with some of the customs and practices of the Church which are observed in different ways in different places. In none of these matters is uniformity required by either canon or rubric. Each parish is free to choose what it will do.

*The Christian Year* is kept throughout the Church. The great seasons and festivals are observed in every congregation. On this there is no divergence. But in the matter of the lesser days there is a wide variety of practice. The question "Which holy days shall be observed and how?" is a very real one in many parishes and missions. The canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States do not require the clergy to read the daily offices or to conduct any service without a congregation. Therefore in this matter we are dealing with something not required by law but largely determined by custom.

A good general rule is this: Follow the Prayer Book as fully as is practical. Keep the Lord's Supper on every holy day on which it is possible to have a proper congregation. In practically every parish this means at least Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day and All

Saints' Day. In most parishes it also means Circumcision and Epiphany. The problem of the other holy days must be governed by local conditions.

It is questionable whether the Lord's Supper should be celebrated when the congregation consists of only one person. The rubrics are not clear on this matter. In many parishes it is the custom in such a situation simply to read the Ante-Communion and conclude the service with Collect and Benediction.

In the Communion of the Sick as suggested by the rubric, it is wise always to have present at the service at least one person in addition to the patient.

*The Keeping of Holy Week* is a problem in many places. Although the Prayer Book provides a Collect, Epistle and Gospel for every day in Holy Week, it is questionable whether it be wise, save in cathedrals and large parishes, to keep the Lord's Supper on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Some parishes find it helpful on these three days to read Morning and Evening Prayer. On Maundy Thursday in many parishes the Lord's Supper is observed both morning and evening. The evening celebration, commemorating the institution of this sacrament, can be a beautiful and inspiring service.

*Good Friday:* It is not the custom of the Church to celebrate the Holy Communion on Good Friday. The type of service for this day varies widely. In some places Morning Prayer and Ante-Communion are read in the morning. The custom of the Three Hour Service has been growing in recent years. To many it seems that the hour from two to three is the most sacred of all, and that at the very least

there should be a one hour service from two to three. In many places it is customary to cooperate with the other Protestant churches of the community and to make the Three Hour Service a union service.

Some parishes observe Good Friday evening with a cantata. There may be places where no service in the evening is needed, but usually in every church there are some members who by reason of their work have not been able to attend a service during the day; for the sake of these it may be well to have an evening service, either musical or otherwise, perhaps again in cooperation with other churches.

*The "Liturgical Colors"* for the various seasons and days of the Christian Year furnish another illustration of a practice sanctioned not by law but by custom. The Prayer Book nowhere mentions colors. In the Middle Ages various diversities of color custom prevailed. The normal use at the present time calls for violet in Advent; white from Christmas through the octave of the Epiphany; then green; violet recurs from Septuagesima until Maundy Thursday, when the color is white; Good Friday, black. from Easter Even until Whitsunday, white; from Whitsunday through the following Saturday, red; on Trinity Sunday, white; then green until Advent. This general scheme is broken by the holy days: the rule is red for a martyr and white for a confessor. On All Saints' Day and throughout its octave the color is white.

In some parishes this "normal" use is varied by a change to red in late Lent from Passion Sunday on. In others the color for the first part of Lent up to Passion Sunday is gray, in keeping with the spirit

of Ash Wednesday.

*The Use of Candles:* In the beginning candles were functional; today they are ornamental. It does not matter how many there are or where they are placed. The custom of placing two Eucharistic candles on the holy table, one at either end, is widely observed. In some parishes they are lighted only for the Lord's Supper; in others for every service.

There is no rigid rule for lighting or extinguishing, but it is wise to adopt one method and stick to it. In many places the custom is to begin on the Epistle side, lighting from the center out until all the candles on that side are lit; then the same on the Gospel side. In extinguishing, the procedure is reversed: the candle farthest from the center on the Gospel side is extinguished first; the others on that side in order; then likewise on the Epistle side. Or it is possible to employ two servers simultaneously, in which case both sides are covered at the same time.

*Vestments:* There are no rubrics regarding vestments. The family custom of the Anglican Communion is for ministers to wear cassock, surplice and the stole of the proper color for the day or season. In choir offices the hood and tippet are often worn in place of the stole.

*Altar Cross:* In most of our churches a cross is placed on the center of the holy table. The empty cross is a symbol of the Risen Lord; as such it is preferred to the crucifix because it is more in keeping with the reality of the Church's faith. There is no need to drape the cross in late Lent; this custom is Roman and to many of us seems out of place in our tradition.

In recent years some of our churches have been reintroducing the use of a cross on which there is a representation of Christ the King. This type of crucifix was widely used in the early Church, and has a valuable symbolism in that it reminds us of the transcending imperative of the Kingdom of God.

*Facing East:* In many parishes it is the custom at various parts of the service for the choir and minister to face the east. This is most widely observed at the Creed and the Presentation of the Offering. In some parishes it is done also at the *Gloria Patri*. Its purpose is to express the unity of the Church, not to acknowledge the altar. As an exercise it tends to lose its effect if it is done too frequently in any service.

*Processionals:* In many parishes the vested choir begins and ends the service with a sung processional; in others the procession is silent.

*The Processional Cross* is widely used today; but there are some parishes where this custom is not observed.

*The Litany Desk:* The Litany may be read either from the same place as Morning Prayer or from a desk placed in the nave. The purpose of the latter is to emphasize the fact that in the Litany the minister as one of the people presents the people's supplication. The Litany desk is usually placed at the head of the nave in front of the chancel steps; but it may be placed anywhere in the nave.

*The Offices of Instruction* have not been mentioned in this manual. The authors recommend the use of these offices in public worship from time to time, especially with children.

## APPENDIX

### FOR FURTHER READING AND STUDY

- The American Prayer Book*, Edward L. Parsons and Bayard H. Jones (Scribner's)
- A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, Francis Proctor and Walter H. Frere (Macmillan)
- Liturgy and Worship*, W. K. L. Clarke, Ed. (S.P.C.K.)
- Prayer Book Interleaves*, William P. Ladd (Oxford University Press)
- The Teachers Prayer Book*, The Rt. Rev. Alfred Barry (Thomas Nelson)  
Out of print, but occasionally can be found in second hand stores.
- The Romance of the Book of Common Prayer*, Francis G. Burgess (Morehouse)  
This is a very readable 134-page introduction to the history and composition of the Prayer Book.

### THE EPISCOPAL EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP

THE EPISCOPAL EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP is a twentieth century Christian fellowship for men and women of the Episcopal Church. It is a fellowship of American Churchmen to preserve the values of our Anglican heritage, Catholic and Reformed, and to give them contemporary expression in the life and thought of the ecumenical movement through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

WE BELIEVE that God wills the Church to be:

Catholic in its inclusiveness,  
 Liberal in its essential spirit,  
 Evangelical in its witness for the Gospel of Christ.

WE BELIEVE:

1. In the interpretation of the Christian religion in contemporary terms,
2. In the rigorous application of the principles of Christ to our social life,
3. In simplicity and dignity of worship,
4. In immediate action towards Christian unity.

WE BELIEVE that discussion of these principles must be accompanied by adventurous action.

WE WELCOME into our fellowship all members of the Episcopal Church who stand for these principles and work for them.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We are a fellowship within the Protestant Episcopal Church of those who cherish and desire to increase the warmth of personal religion within our communion through co-operation in prayer, study and action.

As *Evangelicals* we would keep central the Gospel of the divine redemption offered us in the life and death of our Lord. We would stress the simple, inward, personal faith by which alone we can draw near to God and experience His power in a rebirth to His purpose for our lives and in a rededication of

ourselves to the duty of winning others to that purpose. This evangelical spirit is the essential guardian of the Church against the constant temptation to revert to a lower and easier level of religious life which expresses itself in various forms of externalism, ritualism, institutionalism and intellectualism. We must guard against the substitution of an act for a spirit.

As *Liberals* we would bear witness to the Church's need for the freedom of an open mind. Because of the hunger for assurance which is characteristic of man, there is a tendency for his thinking to issue in narrow and set dogmatisms which lose sight of the manysidedness of truth and hinder the acceptance of an ever deepening understanding of the whole truth as we grow in knowledge under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We desire freedom in the Church for historical study, for theological interpretation and for reverent experimentation in worship. We seek this liberty not in the interests of an irresponsible individualism, but to set the Spirit free to reveal the truth of God to our own time. We rejoice in the wide inclusiveness and the broad reasonableness of our inheritance in this Church and pledge ourselves to every effort to maintain it. We further believe that only by strengthening this liberal approach can our democratic institutions be preserved in these critical days, when democracy's back is to the wall in the face of powerful totalitarian systems.

As a fellowship, *ecumenical* in its sympathies and emphasis, we believe that we stand at the threshold of a creative period of Christian understanding and



co-operation. We see around us a world restless with change. That change may be catastrophic. It may, on the other hand, be creative. It is the business of the Church so to understand the timeless power of the Gospel that it may be related to the life of these times in such a way as to build into it the values of the Kingdom of God. The great ecumenical gatherings in Oxford and in Edinburgh in 1937 and the organization of the World Council of Churches show that the future will increasingly belong to those who are actuated by that wide and inclusive Christian spirit which we believe has always characterized our fellowship. We deeply believe that the opportunity offered by the present crisis in human affairs calls for a concrete expression of this ecumenical spirit now, so that men may have evidence of the fact that co-operative fellowship is possible.

We are *catholic* in the meaning of the great words of the Creed, in faithfulness to those unchanging essentials of Christian loyalty which in all centuries are the real mark of Christian discipleship. We prize the great tradition of our own communion, and we yield to none in the honor we give to that living continuity of inspired lives which has handed on to us the torch of faith from earliest times. We are interested in proving our apostolic succession by a greater faithfulness to apostolic daring in the service of human needs by new methods and in new forms as occasion and increasing knowledge may require.

We believe that our Church has a great role to play in Christendom if it is first humble and then wise. We want the Church unity which grows out

of fellowship in Christian understanding and Christian adventure now. While we desire to find ways of increasing the understanding and co-operation that alone lead to stronger bonds of unity with Christians of every name, we desire particularly to discover the path toward closer fellowship with those great bodies of American Protestant Christianity whose actual ideals and purposes are so much like our own, and with whose members we find ourselves constantly joining in co-operative social enterprises.

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