University of
St Andrews

St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology

The Theology of the Book of Common Prayer

Drew Nathaniel Keane

First published: 30 August 2024

https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/TheTheologyoftheBookofCommonPrayer

Citation

Keane, Drew Nathaniel. 2024. 'The Theology of the Book of Common Prayer', *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*. Edited by Brendan N. Wolfe et al. https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/TheTheologyoftheBookofCommonPrayer Accessed: 7 June 2026

Copyright information

ISSN 2753-3492

The Theology of the Book of Common Prayer

Drew Nathaniel Keane

This article describes the doctrines that informed and are expressed by the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, focusing on the 1662 recension, which has been a primary vehicle for theological reflection and debate within the Church of England and Anglicanism more broadly. The article describes what the Book of Common Prayer teaches concerning the scripture, God, cosmology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology across its several liturgies and other texts. Special attention is given to how the book was widely understood during the time of its promulgation, but later interpretations are also considered where appropriate.

Keywords: Prayer, Church of England, Protestant Reformation, Book of Common Prayer, Christian doctrine, Anglican doctrine, Anglican Communion, Liturgy

Table of contents

1 Introduction

Michael Ramsey famously said that Anglicans do theology to the sound of church bells (Ramsey 1991: 9). More than perhaps in any other Christian tradition, the enforcement of a single liturgical manual has served as a primary vehicle of theological reflection and debate both within the Church of England and the wider family of churches belonging to the Anglican tradition.

The first edition of the Book of Common Prayer was promulgated by the English Parliament in 1549 as one of several instruments to reform the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England. Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, 'working in consultation with more moderate Continental reformers like Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr [Vermigli]', conceived of the idea of combining within two covers most of the texts needed to facilitate public worship (MacCulloch 1991: 6). The Book of Common Prayer, 'the most elaborate liturgy of any Protestant church in Western Europe' (MacCulloch 1991: 7), represented a unique approach to the reformation. At once radical and conservative, its liturgies not only reflect the doctrinal concerns of sixteenth-century evangelicals but also contain traces of the doctrinal conflicts of earlier periods. This is because Cranmer translated, adapted, and re-worked texts from older sources, drawing especially from Sarum Use, 'the most widespread of any' local liturgical Use in western Europe (Bailey 1971: ix). A revision was promulgated in 1552 of a more distinctively Protestant character. Although sometimes thought to reflect Cranmer's increased radicalization, the current scholarly consensus sees the 1552 revision as 'assumed in principle in the 1548 Royal Proclamation' announcing a scaffolded program of liturgical revision and realizing doctrinal changes already hinted at in the first edition (Buchanan 1976: 21).

During the reign of Mary I, the Act of Uniformity was rescinded, but was restored a few years later under Elizabeth I. The 1559 Act of Uniformity restores the second Edwardine book (which had been abolished under Queen Mary) with a small number of revisions. Though the revisions were uncontroversial (Pettegree 1996: 135–136), some were potentially 'far reaching theologically' (Lane 2005: 325). In 1604, James VI and I ordered a few modest revisions that signalled substantial continuity with the Elizabethan Settlement. Early in the reign of James, preachers began using the Prayer Book to authorize theological statements (McCullough 1998: 157). From 1645 to 1660 the Prayer Book was once again officially proscribed. Under Charles II, Parliament in 1662 authorized a new revision incorporating some 600 changes; nevertheless, it was a substantially conservative revision (Spurr 1991: 40; Bray 2023: 70). While the 1662 preface disavows doctrinal modification, some of these revisions had at least potential doctrinal implications, and fueled debates over the theology of the Church of England. Although alternative and supplemental liturgies are now more widely used, the 1662 recension remains the liturgical standard of the Church of England and 'the normative standard for liturgy' for the

Churches of the Anglican Communion (*Principles of Canon Law Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion* 2008, 55.1).

The Book of Common Prayer conveys doctrine in a variety of ways, explicit and implicit, direct and subtle. All of its statements about God and other doctrines represent the official teaching of the church, but the Prayer Book is, unlike the Articles of Religion, more than a list of doctrinal propositions, it is a means of facilitating prayer. Through repeated reading aloud of its exhortations, prayers, canticles, creeds, and prescribed biblical readings, users become increasingly inculcated in what it says – or has them say – about various theological topics. Beliefs about God can be inferred from the words addressed to God. Prayer consists of formulaic components, which allow for different kinds of inferences to be drawn. Acknowledgments, like 'Almighty', for example, express belief in God's omnipotence. A petition like 'make us to love that which thou dost command' implies that loving what is good requires divine grace (Cummings 2011: 354). The aspiration 'that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises' implies that divine grace is necessary to ensure that felicity (2011: 352). The pleading 'through Jesus Christ' teaches that Christ's mediation is vital to petitioning God. The frequency with which certain ideas, words, or actions are prescribed imparts more or less emphasis and weight to some teachings among its users. Similarly, the selection and omission of biblical content, and the liturgical framing of those selections, incline users towards certain ways of making sense of scripture. Implicit doctrinal content is also conveyed, though more subtly, through the omission of previously-authorized practices and prayers. By limiting public worship to the forms contained in the book, all once-popular beliefs and related practices which are not provided for are necessarily discouraged. Implicit teaching (from what is scripted, prescribed, or excluded) works in concert with what is taught explicitly in the Prayer Book.

This article surveys the doctrines that may be found across the full range of liturgies and other texts included within the Book of Common Prayer, organized in a manner similar how one will find the major doctrinal loci ordered in a standard dogmatics or systematic theology: scripture, theology proper, cosmology and anthropology, and soteriology, and eschatology. It focuses especially on how the book was widely understood during the time of its promulgation but also considers later interpretations. Where interpretations vary, a range of common views is noted. All quotations from the Book of Common Prayer come from the edition by Brian Cummings, *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (2011).

2 Doctrine of scripture

Because the Prayer Book, consonant with the Articles of Religion, presents scripture as the source of the church's doctrine, discipline, and worship (Articles 6, 8, 19, 20, 21, 34; Cummings 2011: 675–683), it is considered here as prolegomenon rather than under

soteriology. The Prayer Book conceptualizes scripture as ‘God’s word’, the source of ‘wholesome Doctrine’, necessary to be continuously read by both clergy and laity, and a means of grace – at least potentially – with a vital role both in activating and sustaining faith and guiding Christian behaviour. ‘Concerning the Service of the Church’ (the preface in the 1549 book) identifies the principal aim of the book as to facilitate annual public reading of (most of) the Bible in English, so that the clergy may ‘be stirred up to godliness themselves and be more able to exhort others by wholesome Doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the Truth’ and that the laity may ‘continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion’ (2011: 212). This understanding animates the approach to liturgy and is given compelling liturgical expression in the Collect for the second Sunday in Advent:

> Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. (2011: 272)

The Prayer Book teaches that the spiritual ‘profit’ of hearing scripture does not follow automatically from reading/hearing, but is contingent upon approaching it with due humility. The *Venite, exultemus Domino* (Psalm 95) warns: ‘To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts’ (2011: 242). The deprecations in the Litany unpack the biblical image of the ‘hardness of heart’, associating it with ‘sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion [...] all false doctrine, heresy, and schism [...] and contempt of thy Word and Commandment’ (2011: 260). The suffrages describe the contrasting disposition, which allows for a beneficial encounter with scripture: ‘give to all thy people increase of grace to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit’ (2011: 262). The prayer for the church militant (in ante-communion) reiterates that explanation, asking that the assembly may ‘with meek heart and due reverence [...] hear, and receive thy holy Word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life’ (2011: 395).

The *Venite* describes the consequence of approaching scripture with a hard heart as divine ‘wrath’, the same consequence described in the Communion exhortation for approaching the Lord’s table without repentance, faith, and charity – ‘kindle Gods wrath against us’ – indicating a parallel between scripture and the sacrament as means of grace (2011: 242, 398; see below). In light of the great potential benefits and risks, the Prayer Book scripts both the approach and response to appointed lessons and propers (collects, epistles, and gospels). The lessons in daily morning and evening prayer and the propers in

ante-communion both precede the reading of scripture with a penitential focus and follow it with expressions of faith and gratitude.

Although ‘all holy Scriptures [was] written for our learning’ (2011: 272), the selection of scriptures incorporated into the liturgy, the omission of others, and the lectionaries that determine the frequency with which certain scriptures are read suggest that not all scripture is equally profitable to be heard in church’s public liturgy. The Psalter has pride of place, being read through in daily Morning and Evening Prayer on a monthly cycle. Every Psalm concludes with the *Gloria Patri*, prompting an explicitly Christian and trinitarian reading of the Psalms. The New Testament, excluding Revelation, is read through thrice annually in the daily office, with additional doctrinally-focused selections (including four from Revelation) in the proper epistles and gospels for Sunday and holy days. Only roughly two-thirds of the (much longer) Old Testament is read aloud publicly, and that only once annually. The relative frequency with which the New Testament and Old Testament are read, and relative amounts, suggest that familiarity with the New Testament is more significant and should inform how the Old is understood. Another cycle, the proper first lessons for Sundays and holy days, reinforces this by providing a special Old Testament reading for Morning and Evening Prayer on these days keyed to the proper epistle and gospel. Some omissions are more significant than others. 1 and 2 Chronicles are likely excluded simply for recapitulating narratives already covered in other books, and some material is passed over because only an academic is likely to derive any benefit from it. Other omissions likely indicate worry about the potential for misunderstanding, such as the omission of all but a few selections from Revelation (as proper epistles) and the total exclusion of the Song of Songs.

The inclusion of selections of the Apocrypha in the Table of Lessons for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer suggests that it is regarded as scripture, at least to some degree – an implication that led to considerable protest against the inclusion of these lessons by those who insisted that the Apocrypha definitely did not belong to the canon. This reflects Article VI, which acknowledges these texts to have been read in the church from antiquity and yet to have a doubtful status. Given their ambiguous status, the use of these texts is limited to ethical instruction, excluding them from determining doctrine. The lectionary honours this limitation, including only selections from the sapiential literature within the Apocrypha and placing these in Trinitytide and on saints days, both of which focus on sanctification.

3 Theology proper

The doctrine of God expressed in the Prayer Book is Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Augustinian, consistent with the Articles of Religion (674–676). The doctrine of the Trinity is taught primarily through the creeds known as the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian (affirmed Article 8). These statements – artifacts of the church’s early conflicts over the

nature of the crucified and risen Christ's relationship to the God whom he addressed as Father and that holy Paraclete whom he said he would send when he returned to the Father – are the most simply propositional doctrinal instruments in the Prayer Book, being neither prayers, canticles, nor exhortations. Nicene trinitarianism is also expressed to varying degrees in these kinds of texts as well, as for example in the *Gloria Patri* (in its Western form, with the anti-Arian addition 'in the beginning'; 2011: 242, and throughout), the *Te Deum Laudamus*, the collect for the Nativity, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the Proper Preface for the Feast of the Trinity, and other places. The Chalcedonian understanding of Christ as one person in two natures is expressed in Athanasian but also informs the declaration on kneeling, which affirms that Christ's natural body cannot occupy two places simultaneously (2011: 407).

The Prayer Book retains the Western form of what is commonly called the Nicene Creed, i.e. the creed of which the earliest record is found in the *acta* of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (Kelly 1972: 297). The Western form includes the *filioque* ('and the son'), affirming the double-procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Like Augustine of Hippo (Kelly 1968: 275), the Prayer Book unequivocally teaches the double procession of the Spirit. It is affirmed in the *Quicunque vult* or so-called 'Creed of Saint Athanasius' – 'The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding' (2011: 258) – and, much more frequently (at least three times per week), in the Litany – 'O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father, and the Son' (2011: 260).

Of the three creeds, the Apostles' is used by far the most – twice daily – and only it is required to be memorized by every baptized person. As this is also the shortest and least theologically complicated of the creeds, it suggests the simplicity and accessibility of what is necessary for salvation. On the other hand, the Athanasian Creed – read only thirteen times annually – seems to exclude from salvation those who do not affirm its much more precise and complicated theological propositions. By the seventeenth century, explanations softening the force of these damnatory clauses were widely taught. Gilbert Burnet, for example, says

> not so as if it were hereby meant, that every man who does not believe this in every tittle must certainly perish, unless he has been furnished with sufficient means of conviction, and that he has rejected them, and hardened himself against them. (Burnet 1837: 137)

Harold Browne endorses the same explanation almost two hundred years later (Browne 1874: 232–233).

4 Cosmology

Like the doctrine of God expressed by the Prayer Book, the doctrine of creation contains no innovation, but reflects a thoroughly Augustinian doctrine aligned with the Articles of Religion (especially 1, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 17). The three creeds contained in the Prayer Book all affirm that God created 'heaven and earth' (2011: 392); this teaching is affirmed twice daily when the Apostles' Creed is said in morning and evening prayer, and is underscored in the catechism required to be memorized before confirmation (2011: 427). The confession of sin in Communion addresses God as 'Maker of all things' (2011: 399) and a collect in the marriage liturgy makes a more precise affirmation: God 'hast made all things *of nothing*' (2011: 439, emphasis added).

The fundamental goodness of creation as such and its existence's glorification of God are both affirmed in various ways. In the general thanksgiving, 'our creation' and 'preservation' are enumerated causes of thanksgiving and attributed to God's 'goodness and loving kindness' (2011: 268). The penultimate prayer in the Commination service (2011: 464) and the Lenten collect acknowledges that God 'hatest nothing that [he] made' (2011: 294), further reiterated in the third Good Friday collect (2011: 317). That creation exists to glorify God is affirmed daily in the Te Deum, 'all the earth doth worship thee' and 'Heaven, and Earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory' (2011: 243) or (implicitly) in the alternative canticle, *Benedicite*, by invoking all of the 'Works of the Lord' to 'bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever' (2011: 244), as well as in several Psalms, for example, Psalm 19, '[t]he Heavens declare the glory of God' (2011: 480), read the morning of the fourth day of every month.

The Prayer Book further affirms that creation and all within it is actively ruled by God, '[k]ing of all kings, and governor of all things', as the prayer in time of war and tumults has it, 'whose power no creature is able to resist' (2011: 266). That the 'preservation' of the creation is attributable to God's 'goodness' and a reason to praise him has already been mentioned (2011: 268). The comprehensiveness of providence is affirmed in many places, including the occasional prayer in time of dearth and famine, addressed to the God 'whose gift it is that the rain doth fall, the earth is fruitful, beasts increase, and fishes do multiply' (2011: 265). The Forms of Prayer to Be Used at Sea (though not likely to be familiar to many outside of the navy) vividly describe God's ordering of the most apparently chaotic parts of the creation. He is the God 'who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea, who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end' (2011: 612). Other prayers in that set acknowledge God as the one 'at whose command the winds blow, and lift up the waves of the sea, and who stillest the rage thereof' (2011: 612).

4.1 Election

The teaching about election is practical and pastoral rather than speculative, aligned with the warning in Article 17, and compatible with a range of interpretations including both the broadly Calvinistic and the Arminian. References to God's chosen people are scattered throughout the book, as, for example, in the suffrages in the daily office, 'make thy chosen people joyful' (2011: 248). The elect are identified with the church – 'knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord' (2011: 387) – and, in the baptism service, with each baptized person – 'grant that this child [...] may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children' (2011: 412). The 'elect' thus refers not merely to a group of indeterminate size but to the individual members of that group. Whether the identification of the baptized with the elect is certain or presumed is not clarified, but it is clear that the baptized person cannot presume that, because they were identified with the elect at their baptism, they may do whatever they like without fear of damnation. The catechism (required to be memorized by all the baptized prior to confirmation) promotes a kind of assurance of salvation without antinomianism, by teaching the baptized person to describe themself as 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven' (2011: 426), whose growth in holiness is a consequence of election – 'God the Holy Ghost [...] sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God' (2011: 427) – and by teaching the elect's dependency on God – 'thou art not able to [...] walk in the Commandments of God [...] without his special grace' – as a basis for learning 'at all times to call for by diligent prayer' (2011: 429). The penultimate prayer in the burial service offers a densely-packed teaching about election. As faith is the fruit of election (Article 17), the liturgy simply regards the person who died in the communion of the church as among 'the faithful' and 'our brother' whom God has been pleased to 'deliver […] out of the miseries of this sinful world'. It emphasizes the wholly gracious nature of election and the unfolding of it in time by petitioning God 'of [his] gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of [his] elect, and hasten [his] kingdom' and describes that for which the elect are chosen: 'perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in [God's] eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord' (2011: 456).

4.2 Anthropology

Further consideration of the Prayer Book's cosmology requires consideration of humanity's place in that creation. Its anthropology is decidedly Augustinian: humanity is the special object of divine love, social, hierarchical, and (potentially) rational; yet it is also fallen, punitively subject to sin, suffering, death, and damnation, and entirely incapable of remedying that condition.

The teaching regarding social order applies to both before and after the fall: humanity is essentially social and hierarchical. There is little description in the Prayer Book of humanity before the fall – unsurprisingly, given that the Prayer Book is a tool designed

to meet the needs of fallen humanity. Genesis 1 and 2 are read as the first lessons in morning and evening prayer on 2 January and again as the proper first lessons of the morning and evening offices on Septuagesima, framing the recollection of that condition within a consideration of humanity's redemption (discussed below). Beyond those lessons, the opening exhortation in the marriage service contains the Prayer Book's fullest description of unfallen humanity. Because marriage was instituted in 'man's innocency', prelapsarian humanity is social, needing the companionship of others of the same kind, and (already) intended for union with Christ – marriage being a symbol of 'the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church' (2011: 434). The marriage exhortation also presents prelapsarian humanity as capable of rationality, which differentiates it from 'brute beasts' (i.e. non-rational animals; 2011: 434). This description alludes to humanity's potential to slide down the hierarchical conception of created life (the great chain of being) through irrationality, presented as being controlled by 'carnal lusts and appetites' (2011: 434). Thus goodness, the Prayer Book assumes, is rational, and sin irrational. After the fall, the prelapsarian institution assumes an additional dimension that tends towards the restraint of the effects of wickedness in the world.

The collect for Michaelmas addresses God as the one who has 'ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order' (2011: 384), conceptualizing the unfallen world, including humanity, as fundamentally hierarchical. A special providence is affirmed concerning kings. The daily Prayer for the King's Majesty calls God 'the only ruler of princes' (2011: 248); similarly, the collect for the king in ante-communion says 'we are taught by thy holy word that the hearts of kings are in thy rule and governance, and that thou dost dispose and turn them as it seemeth best to thy godly wisdom' (2011: 391). The emphasis placed on God's rule over kings reflects the hierarchical conception of the cosmos. Rulers serve as subordinate agents through whom part of God's ordering of the terrestrial creation is exercised, a view extending back at least to Gregory the Great, who is generally credited with the 'signal achievement' of constructing 'on a biblical and Augustinian basis a general account of government' (O'Donovan and O'Donovan 1999: 195). This conception of the role of kings in the ordering of things comes particularly into view in the state services (2011: 652–666). There is a special connection between the ruler and the ruled, so to pray for the king is a way of praying for the people who inhabit his kingdom. Thus, in the daily offices, the suffrage 'save the King' is echoed in 'save thy people'. After the fall, rulers serve to restrain the effects of sin throughout creation (discussed below).

4.2.1 Original sin

The Prayer Book frames its consideration of original sin and the postlapsarian condition within the context of humanity's deliverance. The Easter Anthems, for example, provide a clear description of the consequences of Adam's sin for his posterity, on the great

feast commemorating the overcoming of those consequences. Quoting 1 Cor 15:20–22, the Anthems affirm: ‘Christ is risen from the dead; and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death; by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (2011: 322). The baptism service illuminates the doctrine of original sin most fully. It teaches that ‘men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost’ (2011: 248). Through baptism, God gives the recipient ‘that thing which by nature he cannot have’ (2011: 408), namely, ‘mystical union’ (2011: 434) with Christ (discussed below). The catechism also teaches that such union is incompatible with humanity’s fallen nature. As noted in the above discussion of election, it teaches that one cannot follow the commandments without God’s ‘special grace’ (2011: 429). This is acknowledged in the daily confession of sin: ‘there is no health in us’ (2011: 241).

The collects strongly emphasize postlapsarian humanity’s need for grace. Many of them derive ultimately from the early Roman sacramentaries, ‘composed in the wake of the Pelagian heresy and reflect an orthodox insistence on the absolute preeminence of God’s grace, and the helplessness of man to do anything without Him’ (Devereux 1965: 50). In Cranmer’s free translations, the ‘squarely Augustinian’ doctrine of the collects is further underlined, as he eliminated any reference to human merit in the collects and made other changes to firmly close the door to any Pelagian (mis-)interpretation (Devereux 1965: 50). The collects for Trinitytide, the season focused on sanctification, contain a high concentration of this teaching; for example: Trinity I, ‘through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without [God]’ (2011: 339); Trinity IV, ‘without [God] nothing is strong, nothing is holy’ (2011: 343); Trinity IX, ‘we, who cannot do anything that is good without [God], may by [him] be enabled to live according to [his] will’ (2011: 348); Trinity XV, ‘the frailty of man without [God] cannot but fall’ (2011: 355); and Trinity XIX, ‘without [God] we are not able to please [God]’ (2011: 359).

The world, as the Prayer Book uses the word, usually refers to the present age and created order inhabited by humanity, rather than to the earth. The Prayer Book frequently mentions the world in close connection with the flesh and the devil – the three enemies of man. The sequences of resources for Christian initiation – baptism, catechism, and confirmation – are presented as renunciation of and defence against ‘the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh’ (2011: 426). This world is temporary. The form of the Apostles’ creed in the baptism and visitation services underline its termination: he who presently in session ‘on the right hand of God the Father almighty [...] shall come again *at the end of the world*, to judge the quick and the dead’ (2011: 411; 445, emphasis added).

Decay, destruction, and death are fundamentally punitive and corrective, and therefore a kind of grace. The prayer for fair weather teaches that 'we for our iniquities have worthily deserved a plague of rain and waters', but such punishment is not mere retribution but has a corrective aim, 'that we may [...] learn [...] by thy punishment to amend our lives' (2011: 265). This doctrine is explained more fully in the exhortation in the order for visitation of the sick. The sick person is addressed as 'Dearly beloved', framing the warning with a reminder of God's paternal care. The person is advised, 'whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation'. Two potential causes are named: 'to try your patience for the example of others' or 'to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly Father'. Whatever the particular cause(s) in this case, the illness serves as a reminder to 'repent you of your sins' and an opportunity to 'bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy, for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake' and is, therefore, a cause to 'render unto him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly unto his will'. The ultimate purpose in view is not harm but 'your profit [to] help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life' (2011: 443). This doctrine is visible throughout the Prayer Book, especially in the deprecations in the Litany, which conceptualizes the threats from which we seek deliverance as divine vengeance for 'our offences' and 'the offences of our forefathers' (2011: 260) and asks that God 'turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved; and grant, that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in [his] mercy' (2011: 264). This corrective aim comes particularly into view in the Commination, in which the verbs 'turn' and 'return' concentrate – referring to participants turning from sin, turning towards the Lord in 'weeping, fasting, and praying', the turning away of divine wrath, and God's turning of us in order to save us, 'Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned' (2011: 464).

4.2.2 Common grace

The preceding discussion of anthropology has already hinted at several gracious divine interventions to restrain the unfolding consequences of sin within the world. Common grace refers to divine activity that results in general benefit but does not directly pertain to the salvation of God's people (i.e. the calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification, described in Article XVII), but rather provide the context into which salvific grace unfolds (e.g. time for repentance, liberty to preach the gospel, etc.). As already mentioned above, the Prayer Book conceptualizes kings, princes, and governors as divine agents, restraining the effects of sin. The Prayer for 'the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth' (2011: 394) pleads for the grace needed for rulers to 'truly and impartially administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue' (2011: 395).

The Prayer Book testifies to a rich appreciation of common grace extending throughout all creation and humanity. The *Benedicite opera omnia* provides a vivid affirmation that God is glorified in all of his created works, and the form of prayers at sea affirm that his 'mercy is over all [his] works' (2011: 619). The prayer in time of dearth and famine affirms that it is only by the heavenly Father's 'gift [...] that the rain doth fall, the earth is fruitful, beasts increase, and fishes do multiply' (2011: 265). The thanksgiving for rain addresses the one 'who by thy gracious providence dost cause the former and the latter rain to descend upon the earth, that it may bring forth fruit for the use of man' (2011: 268). Regarding fallen humanity, the Commination teaches that God has 'compassion upon all men' (2011: 464). The daily absolution affirms that God 'desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live' (2011: 241). This is affirmed more emphatically in the Good Friday collect: 'O Merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live' (2011: 317). The Litany provides a means to operationalize this doctrine of common grace by not only offering prayers for the church but seeking divine mercy for 'all men', 'all such as have erred, and are deceived', 'all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation', 'all women labouring of child, all sick persons, and young children; and to show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives', 'the fatherless children, and widows, and all who are desolate and oppressed', and even 'our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers' (2011: 262).

4.2.2.1 Marriage

Marriage, though a prelapsarian institution, operates as an instrument of common grace within the postlapsarian world, but, unlike the late medieval Western church, the Prayer Book does not regard marriage as a dominical sacrament. The name given to this rite immediately signals this shift. It is called the order for the solemnization of matrimony, suggesting dignity – 'marriage is an honourable estate' – but not sacramental status. The title also clarifies that the marriage is not created by the church; instead, the rite is an occasion for teaching, facilitating, and witnessing the exchange of vows by the couple, which constitutes the wedding proper, and praying for God's blessing over them.

Despite retaining the name 'matrimony', which suggests only a change in status for the woman, the Prayer Book liturgy repeatedly indicates that the marriage also brings about a change in status for the husband (Stevenson 1982: 138). Nevertheless, the vows are not identical; they reflect a hierarchical picture of marriage, in which the wife vows to obey the husband. It is worth noting that although a hierarchical understanding of marriage was not unique, the obedience vow itself, carried over into the Prayer Book from the Sarum Manual, was a peculiarity of late medieval northern Europe (Jones 2015: 125). Marriage liturgies with symmetrical vows emerge as alternatives or replacements in churches of the Anglican Communion in the early twentieth century (Stevenson 1982: 150–151).

The scriptural justification given in the opening exhortation indicates its dignity, utility, seriousness, and (implicitly) the non-sacramental status of marriage. This aligns with the understanding of sacraments provided in the catechism (see below). The three causes of marriage given in the preface derive ultimately from Augustine, though they are not identical to the three goods the latter named (Stevenson 1982: 135). Medieval divines (e.g. Lombard) emphasize it as a remedy against sin; reformers, by contrast, placed a new emphasis on 'companionate marriage' (2011: 712), the third of the three causes given in the preface. The second, however, remained a strong emphasis long after the reformation. John Donne, for example, warned in a marriage homily about turning the remedy into an occasion for too much pleasure, thereby making marriage 'a continual fornication, sealed with an oath' (Donne 1839: 30). Martin Bucer recommended (in his *Censura* on the 1549) that the third cause be listed first instead of procreation, picking up on Augustine's work *Of the Good* 1.1, which identifies procreation as a means towards the good of friendship (Stevenson 1982: 140). The preface, however, remained unchanged, perhaps because the vows, blessing, and prayers strongly emphasize the third cause (mutual society) and the subsequent two references to procreation were already optional (Stevenson 1982: 138).

5 Soteriology

The doctrine of salvation is presented frequently throughout the Prayer Book in a variety of ways that draw out different dimensions of the doctrine and aim to operationalize it in the hearts and lives of the book's users, which is an essential purpose of Christian liturgy. The gospel taught by the Prayer Book affirms that salvation comes by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone, on the basis of his atonement. The Prayer Book describes 'lively faith' as necessarily accompanied by repentance and charity. As seen above, postlapsarian human beings are incapable of faith apart from special divine grace, over and above the general grace that benefits humanity generally, and that grace operates both invisibly by the Spirit and through visible means ordained by God for that purpose, including the church and her ordained ministry, by whom the scriptures are preached and the sacraments administered.

5.1 Atonement

The fullest expression of the doctrine of the atonement is found in the propers for Passiontide and Eastertide, the church's annual commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the doctrinal core of the church calendar even as it is the core of the gospel. The sacramental liturgies – baptism and communion – as forms for the effectual symbolic reenactment of Christ's death also provide considerable doctrinal interpretation. For example, the 'prayer of consecration' emphasizes its effectiveness, sufficiency, uniqueness, and un-repeatability:

> Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine onely Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. (2011: 403)

Christ's death is characterized as redemption, sacrifice and satisfaction, purchase (2011: 266), example (2011: 301), ransom (2011: 382), and victory (2011: 322, 454–455) without treating any of these as mutually exclusive.

The universality and particularity of the effect of Christ's atonement are both affirmed. Jesus is hailed as the 'Redeemer of the world' (2011: 260) and 'Lamb of God: that takest away the sins of the world' (2011: 267). The faithful are 'redeemed with [Christ's] precious blood' (2011: 243), their souls 'washed through his most precious bloud' (2011: 402), and, through 'the precious blood of [his] dear Son', God has 'purchased to [himself] an universal Church' (2011: 266; cf. also references to his 'precious bloud', 2011: 260, 398, and 447). How these two scopes relate to each other is left unaddressed, and no definite permanent consensus on that question emerged among English divines (see e.g. Hampton 2021: 69, 74–76, 103–107).

The other meritorious acts of Christ are either directed towards or follow from the atonement. The Nicene Creeds says that Christ's coming into the world and all that he did in his incarnate life was 'for us men, and for our salvation' (2011: 392). The Litany – which addresses Jesus as 'God the Son, Redeemer of the world' (2011: 260) – provides a fuller account in the form of pleading for deliverance from the consequences of sin (that is, obsecrations). Deliverance from 'all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from [God's] wrath, and from everlasting damnation', the Litany teaches, comes through both Christ's active and passive obedience:

> the mystery of [God the Son's] holy Incarnation [...] Nativity and Circumcision [...] Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation [...] Agony and Bloody Sweat [...] Cross and Passion [...] precious Death and Burial [...] glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost. (2011: 260)

These named salvific acts are commemorated annually in the Prayer Book's propers for Sundays and holy days. The collects, epistles, and gospels provided for that annual cycle of feasts and fasts include (to varying degrees) teaching or, at the least, indications as to how these relate to the general scheme of redemption, which sermons (required by the liturgy for ante-communion, 2011: 393) are intended to explicate further.

The Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds affirm Christ's descent into hell among these salvific acts. Although this is affirmed, it is not explicated in the Prayer Book or the (final form of) the Articles. The 1553 text of Article III (drafted by Cranmer, but never authorized by Crown and Parliament) included a fuller explanation, including a reference to 1 Pet 3:19, where Christ is said to have preached to the souls in prison, but the Articles as ratified (1563/1571) omit this explanation and subsequent commentaries by English divines do not reveal a definite consensus.

5.2 Faith

Article 11 affirms: 'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works, or deservings' (2011: 677). That faith in the gospel is the essential and principal means by which the benefits of Christ's meritorious work are applied to individuals is spelled out in many places, as in the *Te Deum*. Addressing Christ, it says: 'When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven *to all believers*' (2011: 243, emphasis added). In the absolution in the daily offices, the minister assures participants that God 'pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly *believe* his holy Gospel' (2011: 241). The 'comfortable words' read following the confession and absolution in the communion service quote John 3:16, 'So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (2011: 400).

The three creeds both provide a summary of the content of the 'the Catholick Faith' – as the Athanasian Creed says (2011: 257) and a means for the person saying them to express his or her faith in the gospel, that is, God's 'promises declared unto mankind In Christ Jesu our Lord' (from the daily confession of sin, 2011: 241). This second sense is clear in the name 'creed' derived from the Latin incipit, *credo*, meaning 'I believe'. This personal sense of faith is particularly brought to the fore by the Catechesis, when the child is asked to affirm that they believe the 'the articles of the Christian faith' affirmed on their behalf by godparents at their baptism, and to '[r]ehearse the Articles of *thy* belief' (2011: 426, emphasis added).

5.2.1 Prevenient grace

Following from the teaching on original sin (see above and Article 10, 2011: 676), human beings are seen as incapable of exercising saving faith apart from particular divine intervention, distinct from the common grace from which all people benefit. The catechism says, 'know this, that thou art not able to [...] walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him without his special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer' (2011: 429). Likewise, the daily absolution treats repentance as activated by grace, bidding participants to 'beseech [God] to grant us true repentance and his Holy

Spirit' (2011: 241). Yet, even that – reaching out to God for mercy and the 'desire to pray' – are 'given' by God (2011: 342). The Easter Collect teaches that, by God's 'special grace preventing us', 'good desires' are 'put into our minds' and brought 'to good effect' (2011: 322). The Litany treats the fear of the Lord, repentance, love of God, acceptance of his word, amendment of life, and obedience to God's commandments as all within God's gift (2011: 236). The collects for Trinitytide frequently reiterate the need for prevenient grace: 'Because of the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee' (2011: 339); 'we who can not do any thing that is good without thee' (2011: 348); 'Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh, that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service' (2011: 352); 'Lord, we pray thee, that thy grace may always prevent and follow us' 'That we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command' (2011: 357); 'O God, for as much as without thee we are not able to please thee' (2011: 359).

5.2.2 Repentance and good works

While faith is the sole basis of justification, the essential and principal means by which elect sinners are saved, faith does not operate in isolation (cf. 'the homily of the salvation of all mankind' in Bond 1987: 86). The Prayer Book treats repentance and charity as fundamentally inseparable from faith. This essential inseparability is apparent in the communion exhortations (2011: 395–399); for example, would-be communicants are advised: 'repent you truely for your sins past; have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men, so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries' (2011: 398). So too is it seen in the catechism's description of the requirements for communion. Communicants must 'repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men' (2011: 430).

Repentance and charity are so inseparable from faith that they too are described as conditions of pardon. The daily offices bid participants to confess their sins to 'obtain forgiveness of the same, by [God's] infinite goodness and mercy' (2011: 240). The absolution assures participants that God 'pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel' (2011: 241). Likewise, the Quinquagesima collect addresses God

> who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth' and asks that he, by his holy Spirit, would 'pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity [...] without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. (2011: 293)

The second post-communion prayer identifies communicants as ‘members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people’, as that God would ‘assist us with [his] grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as [he] hast prepared for us to walk in’ (2011: 404); in other words, apart from such good works there is no assurance that one belongs to ‘the blessed company of all faithful people’. Repentance and charity evince the liveliness of what the Prayer Book calls ‘lively faith’ (in contrast to mere intellectual assent to a proposition). They are not causes of justification, as Article 12 (2011: 677) explains, but consequences of justifying faith, caused by the interior operation of Christ’s Spirit within the faithful.

5.3 Ecclesiology

The church has been mentioned several times in the preceding doctrinal loci so that something of its doctrinal significance in the Prayer Book should already be apparent (see especially the discussion of election [II.2.B] and atonement [II.4.A]). Salvific grace is not only interior and invisible, working within the hearts of the elect, but ordinarily operates through outward and visible means including the church and its sacraments. The Prayer Book does not, therefore, conceive of faith as independent of the church; all those who have faith in Christ are necessarily ‘very members incorporate in the mystical body of [God’s] Son’ (2011: 404).

The creeds affirm belief in the church (not as an independent authority, but a subordinate one) and several characteristics of it. It is ‘holy’ (2011: 247), that is ‘set apart’ by God, having in view its election (2011: 387), the election of its members (2011: 412), and its redemption or purchase by Christ’s ‘precious blood’ (2011: 243; 266). It is ‘Catholick’ (2011: 392); first in the sense of being spread ‘throughout all the world’, (2011: 243), ‘universal’ (2011: 266), and consisting of ‘all sorts and conditions of men [...] that profess and call themselves Christians’ (2011: 267–268); and second in the sense that it is the body that upholds the ‘Catholick Faith’ (2011: 257) defined by the creeds. It is ‘Apostolick’ (2011: 392) in that it is ‘built [...] upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone’ and follows ‘their doctrine’ (2011: 386) and that its ‘Orders of Ministers’ consist of those that have been ‘from the Apostles time’ (2011: 622) who are admitted and commissioned ‘following the example of our Saviour Christ, and his Apostles’ (2011: 647). It is ‘one’ in the sense of being a singular unitary body, ‘the mystical body of [God’s] Son’ and ‘the blessed company of *all* faithful people’ (2011: 404, emphasis added) who hold to a single, common faith (2011: 257).

Notwithstanding this essential unity, the Prayer Book also recognizes that the church is a distributed body. The preface distinguishes between ‘the Church of England’ and ‘the whole Catholick Church of Christ’ (2011: 210); the former is a subset of the latter. The

church consists of different jurisdictions, including realms (2011: 213) – as in ‘this Church and Realm’ (2011: 637) referring to the Church and Kingdom of England, understood as a coextensive body – metropoliticum (2011: 647) or Provinces (2011: 646), dioceses (2011: 213) or Sees (2011: 646), and ‘every Parish-church’ (2011: 214).

Any one of these parts of ‘the whole Catholick Church of Christ’ may be referred to as the church, as may the buildings in which the faithful assemble for public worship (2011: 239, 389), and the assembly itself, the congregation.

The Prayer Book is the church’s book, and teaches that prayer is a necessary and primary activity of the church. The whole church is embodied whenever ‘two or three are gathered together in [God’s] Name’ to ‘make our common supplications unto thee’ (2011: 249). What they ask of God ‘with one accord’ ‘in [his] name’ he grants them, because then it is Christ the head of the body, who asks. The faithful ‘assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul’ (2011: 240) – these are the perpetual service of the church until the Lord returns ‘to judge the quick and the dead’ (2011: 247). These functions or constitutive activities of the church are understood as means of salvific grace. The catechism warns the baptized ‘thou art not able […] to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him without his special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer’ (2011: 429), which the Prayer Book and the ministers of the church are to facilitate. This understanding of the church’s ministries, including prayer and preaching, as means of grace is also apparent in the charge to godparents to ensure that the baptized ‘hear Sermons [...] learn the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the ten Commandments […] and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his souls health’ (2011: 413).

Every Sunday and holy day, in the culminating act of antecommunion, the congregation is bid to ‘pray for the whole state of Christ’s Church Militant here in earth’ (2011: 395). This alludes to the medieval distinction between the Church Militant, Suffering (or Penitent, or Expectant), and the Triumphant. In 1549, this prayer was for the church generally, and included a petition for the dead. In 1552 the scope of the prayer was emphatically narrowed to the ‘Church Militant here in earth’ (2011: 395; Consistent with Article 22, the concept of the Church Suffering – i.e., souls in Purgatory – was omitted from the Prayer Book. The petition for God to have mercy upon the faithful departed was changed to a thanksgiving for the faithful departed and a prayer for the living to follow their example. The Church Triumphant is acknowledged daily in the *Te Deum* when the praises of the Church Militant are described as united to theirs in heaven. Moreover, the alternative morning canticle, *Benedicite omnia opera*, includes a bidding addressed to three saints in heaven, to join in the hymn, which may be read as addressing the whole Church Triumphant by

metonymy. Invocation of the saints in heaven for aid, however, has been excluded from the Prayer Book since 1549 (again, consistent with Article 22).

5.3.1 Sacraments

The catechism says that Christ ordained sacraments 'in his Church' (2011: 429), indicating that, although they are essentially ecclesiastical, part and parcel of their function within the divine plan of redemption, what they are and how they operate is not subject to the authority and discretion of the church. The catechism defines a sacrament as 'an outward and visible signe of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof' (2011: 429). This definition excludes several institutions that the late medieval church counted among the sacraments, all of which to a certain degree were retained by the Prayer Book, but not as sacraments. The Prayer Book has two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper or holy communion, both of which (as observed above) picture the atonement in some dynamic way as a means of both assuring participants that its benefits are applied to them and of actually conveying those benefits to the faithful.

5.3.1.1 Baptism

The normative form of baptism in the rubric is a single immersion in the water, though pouring is permitted for children if there are health concerns or as a general alternative for those 'of riper years' (2011: 412; 424). The liturgy uses a number of complementary biblical images/terms to describe the grace of baptism: remission of sin (2011: 410); spiritual regeneration (2011: 413); reception as a child of God by spiritual adoption (2011: 413); incorporation into the church, the body of Christ (2011: 413) ; identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, sanctification (2011: 412); and everlasting felicity in the resurrection (2011: 412). Reception and regeneration (and its cognate 'born again') are the dominant characterizations: the former word is used ten and the latter six times. It is also said to 'represent our profession' (i.e. the faith that we confess) in the sense of being a public statement of our identity and allegiance and a definite means of assuring recipients that they belong to God in Christ; therefore, the Prayer Book requires the sacrament to be administered publicly in the church except in cases of necessity (2011: 408). While intended to provide assurance, it does not promote presumption. The post-baptismal bidding that cues saying the Lord's Prayer urges prayer 'that *this child* may lead the rest of *his* life according to this beginning' (2011: 413, emphasis added). The Prayer Book's favoured form of address for Christians, 'dearly beloved' (and its cognates) also, unsurprisingly, finds its highest concentration in the baptism liturgy; it is used seven times, three referring to Jesus – identified as the Father's well-beloved son at his baptism – and three times to the assembly. This is, then, the rite that authorizes the minister to address the assembly as 'dearly beloved' – not as a friendly salutation (though it may be),

but as a theologically precise one, implying certain privileges and obligations on the part of the addressees.

The catechism identifies the conditions for baptism as repentance and faith (see above). Nevertheless, as Article 27 says, '[t]he baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ' (2011: 608). The Prayer Book provides three complimentary justifications for infant baptism. The first (found in the opening exhortation of the baptism liturgy) is that 'all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and the holy Ghost' (2011: 408). The second (implied) reason is provided by the assigned lesson, Mark 10:13–16, the account of Jesus' blessing of young children. Though the pericope does not mention baptism, it was strongly associated with the baptism of infants in patristic sources (Jeremias 1960: 48–55). The implied rationale is underlined by the frequent repetition of the word 'reception' – as Jesus received infants in his earthly ministry, so he receives them now in baptism. The third, found in the catechism, points to the role of godparents, who answer on behalf of the infant in the ceremony and promise to ensure that the baptized child receives the instruction necessary to renew the baptismal vows personally in confirmation.

It is clear in the catechism that the teaching on baptism, like that on election (and the two are tied together in the catechism, see above), was intended to provide assurance of salvation. But the Prayer Book does not specify how precisely they relate to each other and, unsurprisingly, different explanations flourished. Some divines (e.g. William Perkins and Richard Hooker) maintained that only the elect receive all of the spiritual benefits of baptism. On this reading, the identification of the baptized with the elect would only be a gracious presumption. That the liturgy includes five prayers for the efficacy of the sacrament before administration (in contrast to the one in Communion) could lend support to such a reading, but the statement 'seeing now […] that *this child is* regenerate' (2011: 412, emphasis added) in the post-baptismal bidding poses a problem for that reading. Others (e.g. John Davenant) followed Augustine's teaching that baptismal regeneration secures the remission of original sin (its guilt, not its consequences) for all who receive it, the elect and the non-elect, but only that – the baptized non-elect would then be punished for their actual sins (Hampton 2021: 159). This reading presents difficulties for the baptismal prayers that characterize the grace conveyed in terms that do not seem limited to original sin, and for the Confirmation prayer, which maintains that in baptism God 'hast given unto them forgiveness of *all* their sins' (2011: 432, emphasis added). Arminians maintained that baptism imparts justification and regeneration, and incorporates recipients into the elect, but that this provides no guarantee that anyone would remain in that state. This reading presents a problem for Article 17 by making election conditional and potentially temporary and, in the view of those holding to one of these other readings, also presents a problem for the Prayer Book's teaching on salvific grace (see above;

Hampton 2021: 55–58). The Prayer Book will not admit a definitive answer to the question of how we should understand the efficacy of baptism in the case of a person who finally apparently refuses to repent and rejects faith in Christ.

5.3.1.2 Communion

In 1549 three names are given for this rite, '[t]he Supper of the Lorde, and the holy Communion, commonly called the Masse' (2011: 19) and the word altar is used in rubrics, though never in the liturgical script. After 1552, the words mass and altar were dropped entirely. A Holy Table was ordered to be relocated to stand in the middle of the chancel or church (2011: 727–728), which Cummings calls 'the most striking visual image of the religious changes wrought on the post-Reformation parish church' (2011: 728). Stone altars, however, remained 'in the royal chapels and in several cathedrals' (2011: 728). Another 'dramatic statement of religious change' (2011: 728) was the order for the priest to stand 'at the north side of the Table' (2011: 389). To avoid 'superstition' (2011: 406), either traditional wafers or ordinary loaves of bread were permitted (2011: 704). The 'central experience for the laity' in the medieval mass was adoration of the elevated host (2011: 727); by contrast, the Prayer Book excluded elevation and required administration of Communion 'in both kinds' (i.e. both the bread and the wine) to all present, 'into their hands' (2011: 403) immediately following the reading of the dominical biddings '[t]ake, eat' and '[d]rink ye all of this' (2011: 402). Taken together, these changes signalled a break with the late medieval understanding of the mass as a propitiatory sacrifice offered by the priest, and emphasized that the rite answers to the dominical institution.

The chancel – the east end of the typical church building where the high altar is located, separated from the nave by a screen – was reappropriated as a room for communion proper. From 1549, communicants were bid to gather in the chancel to take the sacrament (following the offertory); non-communicants were to depart the church. Having a dedicated space for communion and dismissing non-communicants emphasized the sacrament's holiness, reinforcing the communion exhortations' message. The exhortation prescribed to be read ahead of occasions on which the Lord's Supper was to be administered encouraged frequent communion, and rigorous preparation to avoid profaning the sacrament and inciting divine wrath. A rubric after the liturgy required that communicants receive the sacrament thrice annually, including at Easter – tripling the previous requirement (2011: 407; note on 773). Until 1662, Communion was required following the solemnization of a marriage and, given the frequency of weddings, provided one of the more frequent occasions for people to communicate. However, this requirement was dropped in 1662, one of the only substantial concessions to puritans. MacCulloch argues this rubrical change 'was perhaps the most spectacular and far-reaching change in the 1662' (MacCulloch 2022: 375) and had a profound effect on church interiors. Without wedding communions, chancels were used less often (only at Christmas, Easter, and

Whitsun in many parishes), minimizing their importance and leading to the demolishment of many chancel screens in the subsequent century.

The ‘most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ’ (2011: 395) is variously described as ‘our spiritual food and sustenance’ and ‘a heavenly feast’ (2011: 396), ‘the Lord’s Table’ and ‘the banquet of that most heavenly food’, ‘pledges of his love’ and ‘a continual remembrance of his death’ (2011: 398), ‘a perpetual memory of that his precious death’ (2011: 402), ‘our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving’ (2011: 403), ‘holy mysteries’, and ‘the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ’ (2011: 404). The benefits of receiving the sacrament ‘rightly, worthily, and with faith’ (Article 28; 2011: 681) are described in the catechism as ‘strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine’ (2011: 430). The language in the liturgy goes further, emphasizing union with Christ. The Lord’s Supper, ‘assure[s] us [...] that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of [God’s] Son’ (2011: 404). When ‘we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood’ in the sacrament, ‘then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us’ (2011: 398). The minister, in the prayer of consecration, asks God that those who receive the bread and wine ‘according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ’s holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood’ (2011: 402). Likewise, the catechism characterizes the ‘inward part, or thing signified’ (2011: 430) as ‘[t]he Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful’ (2011: 430), specifying (in line with Article 28) that the reception of the Lord’s body and blood in the sacrament and the benefits of that are not automatic, but limited to the faithful (cf. Article 29; 2011: 682). This feeding on the Lord’s body and blood occurs ‘in [the] heart by faith’ (2011: 403). Since 1559, the formulae prescribed for the administration of the bread and wine emphasize both an objective and subjective aspect of the sacrament by combining the objective 1549 formulae with the subjective 1552 formulae, ‘the single most important revision to the Communion service in the Elizabethan BCP’ (2011: 733). The bread given to each communicant is described simply as ‘[t]he body of our Lord Jesus Christ’ and the communicant is bid to ‘feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving’ (2011: 403).

In 1662 a requirement was added that, if there were any remaining consecrated bread and wine, these were to be reverently consumed immediately after the liturgy without carrying any of it out for other use (2011: 406). This change suggests that consecration imparts an indelible change. A final ‘peculiar’ (as Cummings calls it) rubric or note was added following the Communion service to exclude drawing a particular conclusion from the requirement to kneel for communion (2011: 407; see note on 773–774). Kneeling, the note explains, does not imply adoration because the consecrated bread and wine ‘remain still in their very natural substances’, Christ remains locally in heavenly session at the Father’s right hand (as affirmed in the three Creeds and the *Te Deum*), and his

human flesh cannot be present in multiple places simultaneously. Eucharistic adoration is prohibited in the strongest possible terms as ‘abhorred [...] Idolatry’ (2011: 407; cf. Articles 25, 28, 29; 2011: 680–682). A nearly identical ‘declaration on kneeling’ had been added to the Prayer Book in 1552 in response to John Knox’s objections to kneeling for communion but was thereafter dropped. As re-inserted in 1662, there was a change in wording – instead of denying ‘anye reall and essencial presence there beeyng of Christes naturall fleshe and bloude’ the new rubric denies ‘any Corporal Presence’ – as Cummings explains, ‘distinguishing itself from the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation without denying the real presence’ (2011: 774). Kneeling remained a hotly contested requirement until 1662, when clergy who could not conform to the Prayer Book were ejected from their livings.

The Prayer Book requires that communicants not only be baptized but also confirmed or, at least, ‘ready and desirous to be confirmed’ (2011: 433). Access to the table is regulated because ‘as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament […] so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily’ (2011: 398; cf. Article 25; 2011: 680). To be confirmed, one must learn the catechism, which ends with instruction concerning what is required to communicate. Would-be communicants must

> examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men. (2011: 430)

5.3.2 Ordained ministry

The Ember Week prayers teach that, among his ‘good gifts’, God ‘appointed divers orders in [his] Church’ that ‘both by their life and doctrine they may set forth [his] glory, and set forward the salvation of all men’ (2011: 267). These orders of ‘sacred ministry’ (2011: 267) are commissioned to preach the gospel, call all people to repentance and faith, teach sound doctrine and serve as examples of godly living, provide ‘ghostly counsel’ to those whose consciences are disquieted, absolve (that is, declare God’s mercy), and administer the sacraments which exhibit, apply, and assure the faithful recipient of that divine mercy in Jesus Christ. These ministries are the ordinary means whereby the benefits of the atonement are applied to individuals, inwardly, by the Spirit. The liturgy presents both the willingness to serve in the ministry and ‘the strength and power to perform the same’ as derived from God through Jesus Christ and applied to the minister by the Holy Spirit (2011: 638–639).

Most medieval divines identified the three major orders of ministry as sub-deacon, deacon, and presbyter (cf. *Summa* Suppl. 37.2, 3), with the bishop seen (following Jerome) as a distinction within the order of priest. This reflects the essentially sacerdotal understanding

of the ministry – priests who offer propitiatory sacrifices – as in medieval ceremonial, where these three orders stand at the altar for the mass. That sacerdotal view is rejected by the Prayer Book, and the preface to the Ordinal teaches that that the scriptures and patristic literature show that 'from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons' (2011: 622). The intention that these orders 'be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England' is maintained, without asserting its necessity for the whole church catholic. A doctrine of *jure divino*, 'by divine law', polity emerged, first among presbyterians within the Church of England in Elizabeth's reign and later in favour of episcopacy among conformists. However, although the latter was standard among conformists by the reign of James VI and I, Anthony Milton (1995) notes that 'there were implicit disagreements about what the term actually signifies' (2011: 458). The Prayer Book did not codify a *jure divino* doctrine, but it does require episcopal ordination for the Church of England, without commenting on the non-episcopal ordinations in the churches of other realms.

Some have read a distinction into the 'making', 'ordaining', and 'consecrating' of the title, but this is extremely unlikely. The Preface refers to those who are 'to be Ordained or Consecrated Bishops' (2011: 622), and while the title refers to 'making' deacons, a rubric uses 'ordained' and 'admitted' (2011: 623). The presentations of candidates for deacon and priest both use 'admitted' (2011: 623, 633), and the presentation of a candidate for episcopacy has 'Ordained and Consecrated' (2011: 640). No consistent distinction between these verbs is maintained. The ordering is effected with the consent of the church – an opportunity to object to a candidate's qualifications is built into the liturgy for ordering deacons and priests – through prayer and the imposition of hands, 'following the example of our Saviour Christ and his Apostles' (2011: 647; cf. the epistle for ordaining deacons, 2011: 629).

To be ordained, the Preface maintains, one must be 'called [by lawful authority], tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same' (2011: 622). The liturgy for ordaining deacons includes an oath of loyalty to the monarch as 'only Supream Governour of this Realm [...] as well in all Spiritual or Ecclesiastical things, or causes, as Temporal' and a renunciation of any foreign allegiances (2011: 629–630). The Prayer Book treated the three orders as progressive: one must be made a deacon first before one can become a priest, and a priest before one can be made a bishop. Moreover, the effect is indelible, so that a bishop is necessarily also a deacon and a priest. Consistent with the hierarchical view of creation discussed above, the authority of bishops, priests, and deacons is to be understood as under that of the crown. This is also evident whenever prayer for the church is offered – in the daily suffrages, the litany, and antecommunion – by the hierarchical arrangement of the petitions (see above).

5.4 Eschatology

The teaching about the last day is simply that of the creeds, while teaching on the status of the dead before that time reflected a radical departure from the doctrine and purgatory-dominated piety of late medieval northern Europe. Consistent with Article 22's (2011: 679) rejection of the doctrine of purgatory – and so, by implication, prayers for the dead – the liturgies lack any indication that prayers and charitable actions can assist the faithful departed or that they need such help.

The fullest account of 'the dreadful day of judgement when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed' (2011: 435) is found in the Athanasian Creed. It teaches that when the Lord Jesus returns there will be a general bodily resurrection of the dead to give an account before him of how they lived, after which 'they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil into everlasting fire' (2011: 259).

The souls of the faithful departed, those 'that love and fear [God]', who among the number of God's elect, the Prayer Book teaches, are 'delivered from the burden of the flesh' and 'live' with the Lord 'in joy and felicity' (2011: 456). They await the general resurrection in 'heavenly habitations, where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity' (2011: 448). When that dreadful day comes, they will be 'found acceptable' by the Lord who comes 'to judge the quick and the dead' (2011: 247). For them, it is 'the resurrection to eternal life' when the Lord Jesus Christ 'shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself' (2011: 455). And, therefore, it is to be sought for by prayer:

> accomplish the number of thine elect, and [...] hasten thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory. (2011: 456)

Attributions

Bibliography

Further reading

- Bradshaw, P. F. 1971. *The Anglican Ordinal: Its History and Development from the Reformation to the Present Day*. London: SPCK.
- Bray, Gerald. 2023. *A Companion to the Book of Common Prayer*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd.
- Brightman, F. E. 1915. *The English Rite*. 2 vols. London: Rivingtons.
- Cummings, Brian (ed.). 2011. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hefling, Charles, and Cynthia Shattuck. 2006. *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jeanes, G. P. 2008. *Signs of God's Promise: Thomas Cranmer's Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer*. London: T. & T. Clark.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. 2016. *Thomas Cranmer: A Life*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Milton, Anthony. 2017. *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity c.1520-1662*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Null, Ashley. 2006. *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power to Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rowell, Geoffrey. 1977. *The Liturgy of Christian Burial: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Development of Christian Burial Rites*. London: SPCK.
- Spinks, Bryan D. 2017. *The Rise and Fall of the Incomparable Liturgy: The Book of Common Prayer, 1559–1906*. Alcuin Club Collections 92. London: SPCK.

Works cited

- Anglican Consultative Council. 2008. *The Principles of Canon Law Common to the Church of the Anglican Communion*. London: The Anglican Communion Office.
- Bailey, Terence. 1971. *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.
- Bond, Roland B. 1987. *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547): And, A Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570): A Critical Edition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Browne, Harold. 1874. *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles: Historical and Doctrinal*. Edited by J. Williams. New York: E. P. Dutton. First published 1850.
- Buchanan, Colin. 1976. *What Did Cranmer Think He Was Doing?* Grove Liturgical Study 7. Nottingham: Grove Books.

- Burnet, Gilbert. 1837. *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*. Edited by James Robert Page. London: Scott, Webster, and Geary. First published 1699.
- Cummings, Brian (ed.). 2011. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Devereux, J. A. 1965. 'Reformed Doctrine in the Collects of the First Book of Common Prayer', *Harvard Theological Review* 58, no. 1: 49–68.
- Donne, John. 1839. *The Works of John Donne, D.D., Dean of Saint Paul's, 1621–1631. With a Memoir of His Life, Volume 4*. Edited by Henry Alford. London: John W. Parker, West Strand.
- Hampton, Stephen. 2021. *Grace and Conformity: The Reformed Conformist Tradition and the Early Stuart Church of England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jeremias, Joachim. 1960. *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Jones, T. W. 2015. 'Love, Honour and Obey? Romance, Subordination and Marital Subjectivity in Interwar Britain', in *Love and Romance in Britain, 1918–1970*. Edited by A. Harris and T. W. Jones. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 124–143.
- Keane, D. N. 2018. 'A Reconsideration of the Continued Practice of Confirmation in the Episcopal Church', *Anglican Theological Review* 100, no. 2: 245–266.
- Kelly, J. N. D. 1968. *Early Christian Doctrines*. London: Adam and Charles Black. 4th edition.
- Kelly, J. N. D. 1972. *Early Christian Creeds*. New York: David McKay. 3rd edition.
- Lane, Calvin. 2005. 'Before Hooker: The Material Context of Elizabethan Prayer Book Worship', *Anglican and Episcopal History* 74, no. 3: 320–356.
- Pettegree, Andrew. 1996. *Marian Exiles: Six Studies*. Hampshire: Scholar Press.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. 1991. 'The Myth of the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies* 30, no. 1: 1–19.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. 2022. 'Roods, Screens and Weddings', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63: 368–381.
- McCullough, Peter. 1998. *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Milton, Anthony. 1995. *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Donovan, Oliver, and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan (eds). 1999. *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Ramsey, Michael. 1991. *The Anglican Spirit*. London: SPCK.

◦ Spurr, John. 1991. *The Restoration Church of England*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
◦ Stevenson, Kenneth. 1982. *Nuptial Blessing: A Study of Christian Marriage Rites*. London: SPCK.