

taste or preference of individual clergymen or congregations should be discouraged. I have noticed, with regret, a growing disposition to use the General Thanksgiving in Morning and Evening Prayer in an unauthorised way, i.e., by the minister and congregation together, as an audible act of worship common to both.

Besides the enactment of positive law by the Church, there are several reasons which may justify the introduction of some change of custom. (1) It may be a matter which is not ordered or forbidden, not provided for at all by any existing rubric, and something which has such strong inherent reasonableness that it is commonly regarded as permissible, at least until the Church makes some ordering. An example of this is the practically universal custom of singing some anthem or sentence at the presentation of the alms. (2) Or, again, a change of common usage may come about through the introduction of something permitted by rubric, but hitherto largely neglected. Such, for example, is the growing practice of saying the Nicene Creed in the Eucharistic Office. (3) Again, a rubric may be ambiguous, and the common interpretation of it not the best, and then a change may well be made which will bring our practice into conformity with the history of the Prayer Book or with ancient liturgical use. Such a case is the repetition by the people of the *Sanctus* proper—the priest saying alone all that precedes the words, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” &c. (4) Lastly, there are extreme cases where mercy must be preferred to sacrifice by directly contravening an existing rubric. This may be occasional or habitual, but in the latter case should, of course, be with the permission of the Ordinary. Under this head would come the omission in certain cases of the Warning of the celebration of the Holy Communion, or of the longer Exhortation, or of the Offertory, as well as the shortening or adapting of the services for the use of Missions, Schools, Chapels, &c.

But the saying of the General Thanksgiving with or after the Minister can be justified on none of these grounds. There is no reason why the people should say this particular prayer aloud rather than many others which are equally general in the character of their petitions, and where, as here, the Church directs that the minister shall be the mouthpiece of the congregation. Nor can this be justified under the second head, for there is no rubric which ever gave permission for such a practice, and of which advantage could now be taken. Nor, thirdly, is it a case where there is the slightest ambiguity of rubrical direction; and even if there were, the appeal to history for the best usage would condemn this. The General Thanksgiving was inserted in the Revision of the English Book of Common Prayer in 1661; and neither then, nor since, has any rubric directed common repetition. Fourthly, on the contrary such a usage is distinctly unrubrical and illegal.

The true ruling on the subject is stated clearly in Blunt's Annotated Prayer Book [American Edition, p. 240], as follows: “There is no authority whatever for the congregation saying the General Thanksgiving with or after the minister. Wherever this is intended the several clauses of the formulary are printed with capital initials.” An examination of the Standard Edition of the American Prayer Book will show that this is the case. The following are the only parts of any services which the people are directed to say with or after the minister, and in each and every case the several clauses are printed with capital initials,—the *General Confession*, the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Credo* in the Morning and Evening Offices, the *Lord's Prayer* in the Litany, the *Confession*, the *Trisagion*, the *Lord's Prayer* in the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion, the *Confession* in Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea.

In the Office for the Public Baptism of Infants it is not explicitly stated that the people shall say with or after the minister the Supplication

following the Exhortation, but the fact that each clause of this Supplication is printed with an initial capital shows conclusively that this is expected. The Lord's Prayer is printed with initial capitals at the beginning of each clause throughout the Prayer Book.

The *General Thanksgiving* is general in the sense that it is for all men, just as the prayer which precedes it is for all conditions of men*. So far as I know, the saying by the people of the *General Thanksgiving* with the minister is a comparatively recent innovation. Quite naturally, and properly, those who favor this must be expected to give some acknowledged authority for it. I know of none, and have never heard of any beyond the taste and liking of individual clergymen. It is thought, I have been told, by some, that this use renders the prayer more impressive. All who have any desire to maintain uniformity, where diversity is not authorized by the Church, will certainly regard this as a very insufficient reason, a reason which, if widely acted upon, would plunge our worship into utter confusion. Clearly, as has been shown, the Prayer Book contains an explicit or manifestly implied direction on this subject, and those who respect its ruling will not encourage a practice that finds no countenance there.—A. N. Littlejohn.

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I cannot give my opinion on the use of this prayer more concisely than in the weighty words of Blunt, in the last edition of his Annotated Prayer Book. He there says: “There is no authority whatever for the congregation saying the General Thanksgiving with or after the minister.

“Wherever this is intended the several clauses of the formulary are printed with capital initials.”

Thus in the General Confession, to be said by the whole congregation after the minister, “the clauses which are to be said with one inspiration begin each with a capital initial, as follows: “Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. * * * And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy Holy Name.”

And thus is the Lord's Prayer printed: “Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. * * * And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom,” &c. And thus is printed the Special Confession for Ash Wednesday, which the people are to say after the minister; “Turn Thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned. Be favorable, O Lord, Be favorable to Thy people, Who turn to thee in weeping, fasting and praying,” &c.

And thus is printed the General Confession in the Communion Service: “Almighty God Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed. By thought, word and deed, Against Thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly, Thy wrath and indignation against us.” &c.

The General Thanksgiving was composed or compiled by Reynolds, Bishop of Norwich, for

*In the English Prayer Book the following clause is bracketed after the words “and to all men,” thus: “particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them.” With this note,—“This is to be said when any that have been prayed for desire to return praise.” It is scarcely conceivable that a part of the service intended to be said by all, would have a portion which was to be said on one occasion and omitted on another. One can imagine the confusion arising from the use of such a *General Thanksgiving*.

the revision of 1661, and has never been printed with Liturgical clauses beginning with a capital initial, to indicate their use by minister and people in common. If the thanksgiving had been intended for joint use, the several clauses would have been printed with capital initials, somewhat as follows: “Almighty God, Father of all mercies, We, thine unworthy servants, do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks For all Thy goodness and loving kindness to us, And to all men,” &c. And that the bracketed addition from the English Book may be used, we should find it very difficult to say that addition with the minister.

The printing of the *Amen* to the General Thanksgiving in italics is another liturgical proof that this prayer was to be said by the minister alone, and the *Amen* was to be the response of the people. If both were intended to unite in saying this prayer, the *Amen* would be in the same type as the text, as it is in the General Confession and in the Lord's Prayer.

The only possible excuse for this fanciful innovation of saying the Thanksgiving in common is in the title “General” prefixed to it, but this evidently does not mean “by all,” but “on behalf of all men,” as the preceding prayer is “for all conditions of men,” and this prayer might be said in common quite as consistently as that of the thanksgiving.

It is to be hoped that we may yet have the proper punctuation of the General Thanksgiving restored, as in the Photozincographic copy of the original from the folio of 1536, to wit, a semicolon after the word “thankful;” and a comma (as in the Sealed Books too) after the word “lives,” and thus the phrase “we show forth,” without the interpolated “may,” would seem to have some meaning.

It may not be amiss to refer to a typographical change which has lately been made in our Prayer Book, and which bears upon liturgical principles connected with the subject under consideration. In the office of Public Baptism of Infants, and in that of Adult Baptism, the *Amen* at the end of the prayer following the exhortation upon the words of the Gospel is to be printed hereafter in Roman type, “to indicate it is affirmed, “that the prayer is to be said by minister and people.”

This is a change from the Sealed Books, and from our last Standard, and necessitates a change also in the printing of the prayer in liturgical clauses each beginning with a capital initial, which latter change has not yet been ordered.

If the General Convention desires to change the use of the General Thanksgiving; and to order it to be said by minister and people, the Convention must direct the *Amen* after the thanksgiving to be printed in Roman type, and its liturgical clauses to begin with a capital initial.

The change in the *Amen*, and in the use of the prayer in the Baptismal Offices, is, in my judgment, a liturgical mistake. This is an ordinary prayer, and in the First Book of Edward VI was ordered to be said by the priest alone: “The priest shall add also this prayer.” What has misled our recent revisers is the introduction to this prayer, to wit, “let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks unto Him, and say,” which introduction originally preceded immediately the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and then followed this prayer. Since the Lord's Prayer and the Creed have been omitted, the introductory words, being before an ordinary prayer, need mean no more than the usual form *Let us pray*. The printing of this prayer without liturgical clauses, and the *Amen* being in italics, clearly indicated the intention of the Church heretofore.—Frederick Gibson.

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When the General Thanksgiving, composed