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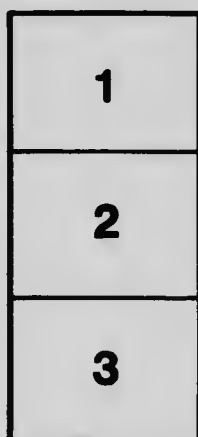
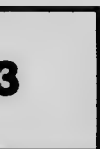
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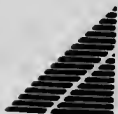
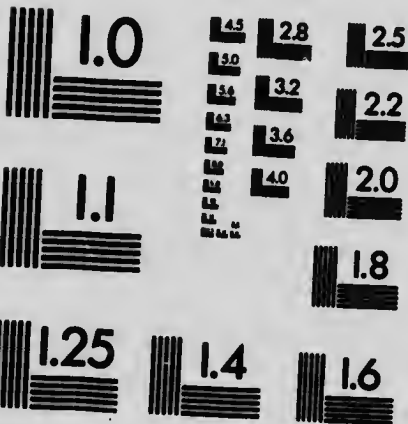
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*Aurora Church*

**Vital Questions**  
FOR  
**Canadian Churchmen**



**1.**  
**Shall We Change The Communion  
Service ?**

1950  
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1971  
1972



## Vital Questions for Canadian Churchmen

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### 1.—Shall We Change The Communion Service ?

The attempt is now being seriously made to alter in a Romeward direction the great and all important service of the Holy Communion. It is quite plain to any thinking man, that the "Mass" is the goal. At the present hour, in the Motherland, and although more secretly, yet none the less just as certainly in Canada, a carefully organized effort is concentrated on the Order of Holy Communion to change its essential features and principles. Now the most momentous of all the changes made at the Reformation was in the order of sequence in the Communion Service, so that the so-called prayer of "OBLATION" should not appear to relate, or be made by any subtilty of interpretation to relate to the consecrated elements. As a matter of fact it is a misnomer, to speak of a prayer of "Oblation." There is no such prayer in the Communion Office of the Church of England; for in 1552, Cranmer in the "fully perfect" Book, deliberately, with a definite doctrinal purpose in view, struck out the sentence in the Book of 1549, suggesting "Oblation," and turned the prayer into one of simple thanksgiving, to be used *after* and *not before* the reception of Holy Communion: in a word—as a prayer of self-dedication. "This our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," as every intelligent reader of the New Testament knows is, "a sacrifice which consists of praise and thanksgiving." (See Heb. 13, 15.) The prayer is without question one of the most appropriate in the Liturgy, but it is not an "Oblation," and is simply an alternative to the old prayer of Thanksgiving. Every idea connected with the technical theory of oblation has been most carefully excised from the prayer. Furthermore, it is a prayer which may be used at the discretion of the individual minister. It is not obligatory, and a clergyman if he so desires, may never use it throughout his ministry.

The concerted effort which is now being made throughout the Anglican Communion, not only to change the position of this prayer, but to add to it, to place it before the reception of the elements, and to make it obligatory,

is clear evidence of a desire to disturb the doctrinal balance so happily gained in 1552, and preserved through every subsequent revision of the Book of Common Prayer. It is an attempt to change the "Sacrament" into a "Sacrifice," to alter the "Communion," and make it like the Communion Service in the Scottish Prayer Book.

In the Report of Action taken by the Provincial Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada, on the Revised Prayer Book, the following resolution was passed:

"That this Synod, while recognizing with satisfaction the permission given in the Book of Common Prayer, as amended and approved by General Synod, to use both the Prayer of Oblation and the Prayer of Thanksgiving immediately preceding the Gloria in Excelsis ('Glory be to God on high') in the Communion Office, desires to express its regret that nothing has been done in the way of rearrangement of the Prayers following the Ter-Sanctus ('Holy, Holy, Holy') according to the order of the Scottish or American Liturgy, which follows the model of the Eucharistic Prayer of Consecration in the purest ages of the Church."

The fact that there was but a meagre attendance of the Laity during the greater part of the time the Synod was in session, and that it is common knowledge that most of the contentious matter was voted upon when there was but a handful present, does not alter the result reached, that the Provincial Synod of Canada placed itself on record as wishing to go behind the Reformation and, at the same time, made a most unscholarly pronouncement, for it was at once unhistorical and untrue that the "model" desired represents the purest ages of the Church.

This is of itself bad enough, and sufficient to cause widespread alarm in the Church. But the worst feature lies in the fact that the Provincial Synod of Canada placed itself on record as willing to break the solemn compact made by the General Synod, that there should be no change in text or rubric which would involve or imply a change of doctrine or of principles in the Revision of the Prayer Book. "Regret" is expressed that the General Synod did not stultify itself at the very point and place where the safeguard was most essential—the Communion Service of the Church.

This most serious and mischievous proposal of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada, to break up the Order of Holy Communion, is fraught with grievous peril in every direction. It is an attempt to alter the doctrinal centre of gravity upon which our service rests, and an attempt along lines opposed to Scripture precedent, the practice of the Primitive Church, and the principles of the Reformation ; a three-fold testimony to our Anglican position, which no sound Churchman should ever forsake, and which no faithful, and certainly no well-instructed, Churchman will ever allow anyone to disturb or destroy.

- (1) What are the exact terms used in the Scottish Office ?

THE OBLATION is as follows : "Wherefore, O Lord, and heavenly Father, according to the institution of Thy dearly beloved Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, we thy humble servants do celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make . . . ."

THE INVOCATION is as follows : "We thine unworthy servants beseech thee, most merciful Father, to hear us and to send thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that, being blessed and hallowed by his life-giving power, they may become the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son . . . ."

- (2) Is there any difference in the use of the "American Church ?"

The Oblation is in the same form, but the Invocation differs considerably from the Scottish Office. The INVOCATION is as follows : "And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us ; and, of thy almighty goodness, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine ; that we, receiving them 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."

The OBLATION in both Scottish and American Services is utterly unscriptural. Christ Himself is our only guide. And our blessed Lord did not offer the elements either of the Paschal Supper or of His own "Institution" of the Lord's Supper, to God, but to His disciples. The great Catholic principle of antiquity is, that the Holy Scripture

is the one authority binding on the whole Church. The only vouchers the Church possesses for the "Institution" are found in the New Testament. And there we clearly find that the bread and wine were not offered unto God at all, but were offered by God as the spiritual food of His believing people. There is absolutely no analogy to the Old Testament sacrifices. They were not elevated, nor were they consumed by fire, nor were they sacrificed in any sense whatever like the meat offerings or memorials of the Levitical dispensation. The "Memorial" was never eaten by any worshipper. And it would have been abhorrent to the Jewish mind to pretend in words to offer anything to God, and then to eat and drink every crumb and drop of the thing so offered.

No sacrilege could be greater. And yet under another form this is proposed in the Christian Church.

It is abundantly clear from the New Testament that our Lord Jesus Christ did not offer the elements either of the Paschal Supper or of His own institution of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, to God, but to His disciples. And nothing is more certain than that we have nothing of our own to offer, save "ourselves, our souls and bodies," and of this self-surrender, our alms and other devotions, and above all, "our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" are but the symbol and pledge.

That this is the clear and well defined teaching of the Church of England is put beyond question or cavil, by the direct act of our Reformers, in placing the prayer, sometimes called the prayer of oblation, because in it we offer the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving, and also of ourselves, in the Post-communion instead of before the Consecration. In the most emphatic way possible, louder than any words, the Church of England shows that it does not recognize any OBLATION of the consecrated elements.

The INVOCATION in the Scottish Liturgy is replete with error from beginning to end. The first sad error is in seeking the Holy Spirit's action to effect changes in the creaturely elements, quite apart from their reception, instead of as in our service in the Communicants, whose sanctification is the very object and direct mission of the "Lord the life-giver." The petition runs: "that they may become the body and blood," an expression at which the American revisers balked, and which they refused to accept. The words of the Scottish form are not only patient of the interpretation, but give large room for the

inference, that there takes place an objective change of the bread and wine quite independent of their use, in fact that they "become" the flesh and blood of Christ. The language allows the whole doctrine of Transubstantiation, to be grafted on the words: "become the body and blood," both in the literal meaning and in the spirit of that most unscriptural and dangerous Popish doctrine.

Now it is morally, if not indeed absolutely certain, that our Saviour Christ used no such words. Indeed, it is a remarkable fact, and of deep significance that the word for "Consecrate" is not once used in the Gospels concerning the elements in the Lord's Supper. Nor is it found in the early Christian documents (see the Didache, Ch. IX.; Justin Martyr Apol. 85). There is much loose thinking abroad in regard to "Consecration" which sadly needs to be corrected. For "Consecration" properly understood means that buildings, bread, wine, and whatever else, are solemnly set apart for exclusively sacred uses. It does not mean that the material thing undergoes some intrinsic change in the thing concerned itself, but only in relation to its use. The Church of England distinctly declares that "the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances." (Black Rubric.) The work of the Holy Spirit relates only to the living souls of men, and operates in the spirit-world alone.

Now the present Communion Service of the Church of England is not only the most primitive, but it is also the most perfect in Christendom. This high praise could only be claimed because it is at the same time the most scriptural of all Communion offices. The most recent research has also shown that it is a return to the most primitive practice, and the most ancient order.

The theory of those who wish to restore the form of the first Prayer Book (which in its day pleased nobody) and assimilate the Church of England use to that of the Scottish and American Prayer Books, that this is a restoration of the use of the Primitive Church, is not true to fact, nor can it face the fierce fire of historical criticism. It falls to the ground on the first count that it is not true to fact, for the Scottish Liturgy is very far from being the "ancient order of the Prayer of Oblation and the Invocation of the Holy Ghost." It is a pure development of much later date, an accretion which grew up in a superstitious age, an alteration of the ancient order.

It was a wise warning on the part of Bishop Maclean the learned Scottish liturgiologist, when he said in his "Recent Discoveries Illustrating Early Christian Life and Worship" (p. 124): "We cannot for instance, appeal to what are called the "Ancient Liturgies" as a proof that a certain custom is Apostolic, for the great Liturgies date from not before the fifth century." (Second Edition Revised, 1915.) Bishop Maclean, in his preface (p. viii.) has this clear cut statement in regard to "the Invocation of the Holy Ghost": "There is no certain evidence of the Holy Spirit being mentioned in the Epiclesis till the Fourth Century." And a greater authority still, even Mr. Edmund Bishop, a devout Roman Catholic, collaborateur with the eminent Cardinal Gasquet, in his liturgical researches, treats the kind of Epiclesis which became universal in the East and common in the West, "as an invention of the 4th century." (App. to Connolly's *Lit. Hom. of Narsai*, p. 136.)

The learned Anglican scholar, Dr. J. H. Srawley, in his "Early History of the Liturgy" (Cambridge, 1913), calls attention to the importance of "The Ethiopic Church Order" in any study of the subject under review. Now Bishop Maclean does not hesitate to declare that it contains "the oldest extant form for celebrating Holy Communion." (R.D.E.C.L. & W., p. 119.) Woolley places it not later than 250, probably a little earlier (Liturgy of the Primitive Church, 1910, p. 15). Its "archaic features," as Srawley notes, are full of significance and value, one of which is: "The early form of Invocation, and the absence from it of any distinct form of prayer that the elements may become the Body and Blood of Christ" (The Early History of the Liturgy, p. 80). In one of the most valuable discoveries of recent years, the Syrian manuscript of The Testament of our Lord, published in 1899, its discoverer, Mgr. Rahmani, placing its date as early as the end of the second century, but placed by Professor Cooper and Bishop Maclean between 350 and 363, by Bishop John Wordsworth and Professor Harnack about 400, and by Dr. Funk, the fifth century or later; the Epiclesis or Invocation is addressed to the Holy Trinity, and its purpose is not for the "bringing about of the Sacramental change in the elements but that the partakers may duly receive the benefits of the Holy Sacrament" (Woolley, Liturgy of the Primitive Church, p. 104). The Prayer Book of Sarapion, a Bishop in the Nile Delta about the middle of the fourth century, the friend of Athanasius, which was found at Mount Athos, and pub-

lished in 1890, shows the development of the Invocation, but it is the Divine Word who is invoked and not the Holy Spirit (Woolley, pp. 81, 88, 105).

The development of the Epiclesis or Invocation is well summed up by Woolley. Its primitive object from its earliest form down to the finally developed liturgies of the Eastern Church was "*the communicant*" (p. 112). This was its "original sole purpose" (p. 112). "Unless indeed the liturgical forms which are still extant do not represent the general use of the Church," "it is impossible to hold" that the view of the Eastern Church from the time when the Epiclesis definitely asks "for the coming of the Holy Ghost or the Word that he may make the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ," "is the purpose of this form in the earliest times." (Woolley, Liturgy of the Primitive Church, pp. 108, 109.) There is an illuminating statement from the pen of Mr. Edmund Bishop, the colleague of Cardinal Gasquet, and one of the most learned liturgiologists of the Roman Church, in the Appendix to Vol. VIII. of "Texts and Studies," edited by Dr. Robinson, Dean of Wells, one of the foremost scholars of the day, as follows: "On looking at the consistent tenor of the various forms of Invocation of the Eastern Liturgies brought together in Mr. Brightman's convenient volume, we have to ask ourselves whether these can, in regard to the particular prayer for the illapse of the Holy Ghost, possibly be primitive, or anything else but a late development; that is not earlier than the 4th century, and as concerns a wider diffusion, the second half of that century" (p. 138).

The Church of England in Canada must be careful lest it should appear to adopt the theory of the Roman casuists of development, as first suggested by the German theologian Mohler, in his "Symbolik," and boldly adopted by Cardinal Newman in his "Development of Christian Doctrine," which he published at the time he submitted himself to the Pope of Rome. The suggestion has been made that as the Invocation of the Scottish Church is an ancient order, it should be included on that ground in the Canadian Prayer Book. Edmund Bishop, a very learned Roman Catholic writer, a master of the subject, calls it "*a late development*," not earlier than the fourth century. And 400 years is a long time. It is a much longer time than that which has elapsed since the English Reformation and the publication of our First Prayer Book of 1549, and what changes in opinion and practice have taken place since then, what strange vagaries in the way of ritual and



belief have been suggested in the Church during that long period ! Is it not safer to keep to the primitive teaching and practice of the Church, for the first three centuries than to embark on the questionable sea of the next thousand years which saw the introduction of many false lights which almost made shipwreck of the Church of Christ ?

In order to understand more fully the significance of the work performed by our Reformers in altering the Communion Office, so that it would bear no semblance to the Roman "MASS," let us make a brief study of the opinions of scholars of different schools of thought.

Procter, who was a moderate High Churchman, and whose "History of the Book of Common Prayer" was for many years the standard Text Book in our theological colleges, and also used by our Bishops almost universally in the examination of all candidates for Holy Orders, gives a clear and concise statement of the reasons which led to the placing of the different prayers as they are in our present Prayer Book. He says : "This Thanksgiving was originally the conclusion of the Canon, where coming after the Consecration, and before Communion, it was taken to imply an oblation of the consecrated elements, or a material, though commemorative, sacrifice. In King Edward's Second Prayer Book, therefore, it was removed into a position where it can have no such meaning, but implies a strictly spiritual sacrifice of praise, and an oblation of the worshippers to the service of God." (IXth Edition, p. 366.) It is worthy of notice that Dr. W. H. Frere, who edited Procter, altered the text in such a way as to prevent students of to-day from obtaining this information during their College course from the prescribed Text Book.

Archdeacon Wilberforce, who was in his time an advanced High Churchman, has stated the position from his own standpoint with great precision : "It was only consistent, therefore, to accommodate the usages of the Church to its new doctrine. The Service, consequently, was divested of its sacrificial character, and no longer bore witness, as in early times, to the great event which is transacted at the altar. This was done both by mutilating the Prayer of Oblation, which had been retained in the Book of 1548, and by placing it after, instead of before, the Communion." (Doctrine of the Eucharist, 438-40).

There is perhaps no clearer statement of the case to be found anywhere than that from the pen of Dr. Thomas



Brett, the eminent Nonjuror, who was consecrated to the episcopate by the Nonjuring Bishops (1716).

Dr. Brett says of the OBLATION: "That it is omitted in the Communion Office of the Church of England, is evident to all that are acquainted with that liturgy, and that it was not casually, but wilfully, left out there, is no less evident." But it is when Dr. Brett comes to the transposition of the prayers, and the reason which lies behind their sequence and setting, that the point he makes becomes illuminating to a degree. "The words, 'to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving' . . . as they are now placed in the post-communion, can by no means be applied to the material elements, for it is absurd to pretend that we may offer to God that which is not, or present to him that which we have eaten and consumed. . . . This omission and transposition could not be made otherwise than with design." (See *On the Eucharist*, London, 1736; Dean Goode's *Rule of Faith*, vol. II., p. 362.)

Dr. Blakeney, a representative Evangelical, says of the first thanksgiving, which follows the Lord's Prayer after Communion: "This is the only prayer which refers to sacrifice, but this cannot refer to the elements, and moreover, it need not be used at all, the minister having his choice of this or the next, which, in itself proves that it cannot refer to the sacrifice of the elements, for, in that case, it would be essential to the service." (Blakeney on *Common Prayer*, p. 422.)

It is clear, from Dr. Blakeney's statement, that to add this prayer as is proposed, to the Consecration Prayer, would not only alter the doctrinal standard of the Communion Service, but it would make a prayer which is now an alternative, and may never be said, a matter of obligation on the part of every clergyman of the Church. If the Church were to accept such a change, it would mean that she made a complete, right-about-face, from the Reformation position, in the direction of a Romeward movement, and a surrender of the principles for which she has stood since 1553. The Prayer Book was purged most effectively by our Reformers of false sacrificial teaching, and it must not be allowed to re-enter by a back door, or for that matter through any other door.

"Everything between consecration and reception was removed, most significantly, to some other place." (Hole's *Manual of English Church History*, p. 195.)

Canon Carter admits that "its removal from this place was intended probably to do away with the close

connection of those words with the Consecrated Element.  
(Carter-Marriott Correspondence, p. 89.)

There is probably no public man living, who is better able from the double standpoint of legal knowledge and parliamentary experience, to express an opinion on the merits of the question, in the light of modern conditions than the great English layman, Sir Edward Clarke. No Sir Edward is not only a devout Churchman, but he is a lawyer of the greatest distinction, long the leader of the English bar, and a publicist of the widest experience. Sir Edward Clarke, speaking of the proposal to re-arrange the Service of Holy Communion, says: "It is idle to imagine that any English Parliament will give fresh powers to a Church whose rulers are trying to undo the work of the Reformation, and to change the Protestant Communion Service into the Roman Mass."

The opinions of a number of the Bishops of the Mother Church have a value of their own.

Dr. Chase, the Bishop of Ely, one of the most eminent of living scholars, says: "The proposed alteration would, however, introduce a very important doctrinal change. It would lay a new emphasis on the idea of sacrifice in the Holy Communion. There was a grave fear that it would introduce disunion into the practice of the Church in regard to the one service where unity was most to be desired."

Dr. Kennion, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, is of opinion that any such proposed change would shift to some extent the pose of teaching and practice in the Church.

Dr. Ingram, Bishop of London, is on record that in his opinion the change suggested is one concerning which the Evangelicals in his Diocese are most afraid of, and that as a body they were dead against it. He saw in it one of the greatest obstacles in the task of reconciling parties in his Diocese; it would offend the "Evangelicals," and not satisfy the "Catholics."

Dr. Ditchfield, Bishop of Chelmsford, says that there is very strong feeling against the proposal, and that it would accentuate divisions which existed and create fresh discord, tending to emphasise the sacrificial idea, and to increase non-communicating attendance.

It is true that in some instances the Bishops concerned have since voted in a contrary sense to the opinions here expressed. They did so mainly on the argument advanced

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by Bishop Gore, of Oxford, that the practice referred to is widespread, and "the current running in the direction of this use was strong." But the dangerous character of the proposal is none the less in evidence, and is in no way lessened by the permissive rather than the compulsory use of the practices desired. For it is nothing short of a reversal of the Reformation settlement on a point of vital principle. In a word, it is an undoing of the Reformation Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper, and a practical restoration of the Canon of the Mass.

The most recent action taken in the matter was that of the Cheltenham Conference, held in London on June 8th, 1918, when a large and representative gathering of Evangelical Churchmen offered a most earnest and resolute opposition to the proposal to derange and dislocate our incomparable Communion Service, and unanimously passed the following resolution :

"That this meeting of Churchmen desires to place on record its determined opposition to the proposed changes in the prayers in the Communion Service, as being calculated to support a doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper which this Church rejected at the Reformation, and as constituting a grave hindrance to reunion with other reformed Churches."

This is no abstract question, much less is it a quibble about words. It is intensely practical. It is the greatest issue our beloved Church has had to face in many generations. It involves nothing short of a battle royal between truth and error. As Lord Beaconsfield foretold, we have to fight the battle of the Reformation over again ; for at this very hour a thousand priests of the mother Church of England have publicly claimed the right in a formal document of "free access to the Blessed Sacrament," that is to the "Reserved" Sacrament, to worship IT and to pray to IT. Our Church in the last rubric of the Communion Service warns us against any such practice and calls it "idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians." In the face of such gross idolatry, which is fast spreading, we are now asked to alter the safeguards, and not only to reverse that transposition of the order of the service by which our Reformers obviated both the "sacrifice" and the idolatry of the Mass ; but to introduce language in the office which involves the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation, which our Church in her xxviii<sup>th</sup> Article declares : "cannot be proved by Holy Writ ; but is

repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrow the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions."

It is an issue which is forced upon us by men satisfied with Reformation principles, and the scriptural formularies of our Church, but who long for the mediaeval practices and materialistic teaching from which Reformers so happily set us free in our incomparable services. When Cranmer, and our English Reformers gave us our Communion Service, revised, altered, translated, they placed in our hands the most primitive and scriptural of all services, entirely freed from that vast accumulation of error which had grown up in dark and corrupt ages. It is our unspeakable privilege to possess it, and now it becomes our clear duty to defend it against all adversaries either within or without the Church. Here we take our stand ; we can do no otherwise. God help us. Amen.



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