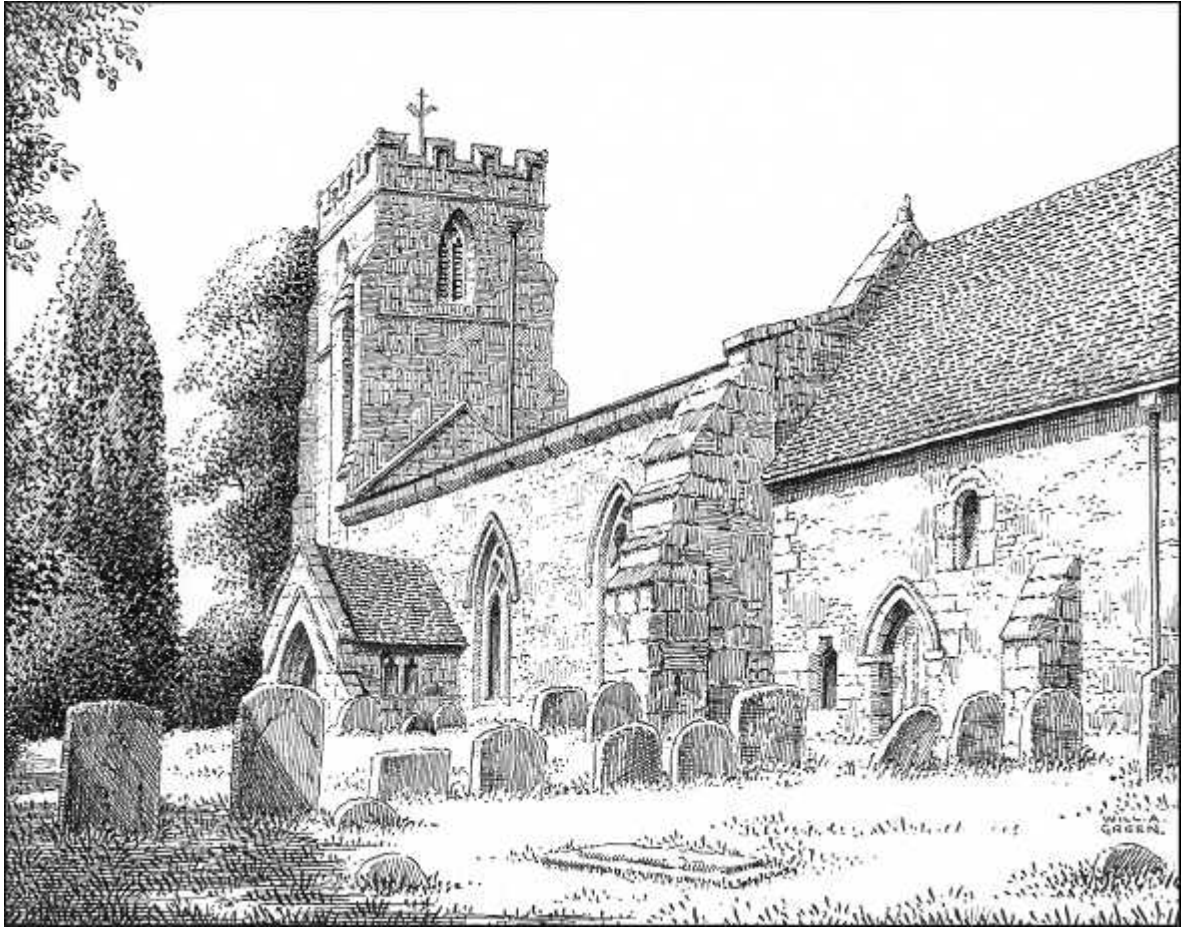


Coventry Diocesan Readers' Training Course



From King Offa to *Common Worship*

A History of Worship in England
through the story of St Gregory's, Offchurch

Richard Cooke

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Cover illustration: <http://www.ewgreen.org.uk/offchurch.htm> (William Green)

1. Introduction

Opening the door of St Gregory's Offchurch takes you into another world. The door is large and heavy, with a smaller one cut within it. Unlatching this little door, you stoop and step down into the cool, dim interior. Philip Larkin, the twentieth-century poet born just up the road in Coventry, might have been describing this church:

Once I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door thud shut.
Another church: matting, seats, and stone,
And little books; sprawlings of flowers, cut
For Sunday, brownish now; some brass and stuff
Up at the holy end; the small neat organ;
And a tense, musty, unignorable silence,
Brewed God knows how long. Hatless, I take off
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence...
(Philip Larkin 'Church Going' (1954))

There is nothing special about St Gregory's, Offchurch. It is the kind of church you can find in a thousand villages scattered across the landscape of England. But each of these ordinary churches have their own tale to tell and can illuminate for us the story of worship in England. Looking at a church just as a building is rather like going to observe a football stadium when there is no match being played; so we need to try some detective work and use our imaginations to bring the experience of past generations alive. At St Gregory's, if you know what you are looking for, you can find traces of almost every liturgical development of the last 1300 years, and can see how life and faith intertwined in this village here in the Warwickshire countryside.

We do not know when people first came to settle in this place. It lies at the crossing place of two ancient roads. One is the Roman Fosse Way, linking the legionary bases of Cirencester and Leicester. The other is older even than the Romans, a prehistoric drover's road which ran from Wales to London and retains its ancient name as it passes through the bottom of the village on the way west towards Cubbington: 'Welsh Road.' If you came this way with the Roman legionaries as they laid the Fosse around 47 AD, you would have pushed your way through thick forest. Welsh Road and the Fosse Way cross at the point where there is a natural spring and a pool. The Romans in particular venerated the spirits of water, and the later existence of a Christian shrine to St Modwenna here may suggest that the first building at Offchurch was a wayside shrine.

St Gregory's still stands in a commanding position, high above the River Leam and looking out across the countryside. After the Romans, as Saxon tribes gradually penetrated the woodlands of central England, it was an excellent defensive position on the edge of the land of the Mercians, looking west into the lands of the *Hwicce* who dominated what is now Gloucestershire. The link with Offa, King of Mercia from 757 to 796 (the village name means, unsurprisingly, 'Offa's Church') may lead us to conjecture that during his time the site of the Bury (the large house adjoining the church, whose name derives from *burg/burh*, Anglo-Saxon for fort) and the Church at the top of the hill was occupied by a royal enclosure which the king could use on his frequent journeys between his main power-base in Tamworth and his visits to London and the South-East, which were sporadically under his rule. There may have been a stockade with a large hall inside to accommodate the king and his bodyguard, and a chapel also inside the enclosure. We have no direct evidence for this, but it is a plausible interpretation. If it is correct then we can imagine a small wooden structure, built perhaps around 770, where the first Christian worship on this site took place.

2. Before King Offa (100-700)

(a) Through the round arch

When a Christian priest first celebrated mass in the little wooden chapel overlooking the woods of Warwickshire he was standing in a tradition already seven centuries old. The oldest part of St Gregory's church is the interior of the north door, a simple round arch probably dating from the ninth or tenth centuries. This is the first indication of a stone building on this site: the Anglo-Saxons most naturally built in wood (which was of course plentifully available) and some later wooden churches survive, such as Greensted in Essex. The late Saxon church at Earl's Barton in Northamptonshire is built of stone, but decorated as if it were still made of timber. St Gregory's north door, however, tells us something important. It is a Roman arch and though crude and simple its effect is to draw us back to the beginnings of Christian worship in the Roman Empire.

The earliest descriptions of Christian worship are found in the letters of Pliny, the Roman Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor (c.112), the *Didache* ('Teaching of the Apostles', c.100), and the writings of Justin Martyr (c.150). The *Didache* is especially interesting, because it was lost until the late nineteenth century, which is why the form of worship it describes has survived only in fragments into the contemporary liturgical tradition. Its

understanding of the eucharist does not seem to include a commemoration of Jesus' death, and it places the taking of the cup before the taking of the bread (as Luke's gospel does, Luke 22:17-19, cf. 1 Cor 10:16). The apparent diversity of liturgical practice in the early (pre-Constantine) church has led to recent suggestions that the variety of liturgical expression today is simply a return to the pattern of the primitive church.

By around 200 the church in Rome had become a reference point for Christians looking for guidance in right liturgical practice. The Roman church's associations with both Peter and Paul meant that it came to be seen as the repository of the traditions of the apostles. A document called *The Apostolic Tradition*, associated with the Roman presbyter Hippolytus, gives guidelines about how to conduct worship according to the pattern which the apostles were reputed to have passed down. The eucharistic prayer recorded by Hippolytus was incorporated in the third eucharistic prayer in the ASB's Rite A, and has been slightly revised to form Prayer B in *Common Worship's* Order One. However, Hippolytus also makes it clear that the eucharistic president should be able to make up his own prayer, following the guidelines set out; he was not producing a definitive text, more a sample to be followed roughly. So by well into the third century we can see patterns being established, but also that they were not yet definitive.

(b) Constantine builds the church

Constantine became Roman Emperor in 312, and in 313 his Edict of Milan gave Christians freedom of worship for the first time. Memories of persecution were still fresh: Diocletian had issued orders in 303 for the destruction of places used for worship, the confiscation of books and sacred vessels, and the arrest of all clergy (and in many cases their subsequent execution). Persecution was most systematic in the East, but even in Rome the disruption was so severe that for four years it was impossible to elect a new bishop. All



*The Corpus of
Romanesque Sculpture in
Britain and Ireland*
<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/ed/>

this changed virtually overnight when Constantine rode victorious into Rome, convinced that a personal revelation of the Christian God had been the decisive factor in his triumph.

The empire was rapidly Christianised. Constantine embarked on an orgy of church building (40 churches were built in Rome during his reign) and worship was transformed from a furtive and persecuted activity into something to be done by every respectable citizen who wished to gain credit with the authorities. In 321 Constantine set aside Sundays as a day of rest and worship. As well as physical building, Constantine also took on the task of setting solid doctrinal foundations, too. At Nicea in 325 the varied beliefs of the Christian Church were argued out and a formula of orthodox belief officially established in the Nicene creed.

With freedom and opportunity came a new era of liturgical development. Services became longer, with more biblical material integrated into them. Robes for the worship leaders became more elaborate (the chasuble often still worn by the eucharistic president is an adaptation of the normal dress of Roman citizens in the fourth century); music developed beyond the congregational chant into choral hymns; altar vessels, many of which had been confiscated during the persecutions, were replaced in jewelled gold and silver; wall paintings and mosaics covered walls and floors of the new churches; Latin replaced Greek (which had been the language of the church from the apostles until the late third century), so that all could understand. The role of clergy, previously a risky and dangerous occupation, also rose in profile as they presided over worship in the new buildings and became wealthy through exemption from taxes (in 320 Constantine legislated to prevent the rich from becoming clergy on the advice of their accountants because of the tax benefits!).

(c) Liturgy as a force for unity

Liturgy also began to assume a more standardised and common shape at this time, though there seems to have been no official attempt to enforce this. The eucharistic prayer recorded by Ambrose of Milan (c.380) is substantially the same as the form which became standard in the eighth century, but the earlier part of the eucharist was still fluid, with a variety of elements combined in a variety of orders. Regional differences continued, though the church's emergence from the shadows meant that it became possible for scattered communities to share their practices in a way that had not happened so freely before. The move towards greater unity of practice, aided by Constantine's shrewd use of Christianity to integrate his empire, was countered by other disintegrating forces at work. Through the later fourth century and into the fifth, the Empire was strained by barbarian threats from without and political disputes from within. Some of Constantine's successors tried to reverse his Christianising policy, though without ultimate success. From Constantine's time onwards, missionaries began to go beyond the boundaries of the Empire to evangelise the Barbarian tribes outside it. Many of the tribes, such as the Goths, became Christians. This meant that when the Barbarian tide became irresistible in the mid-fifth century, it was Pope Leo of Rome who was able to communicate with the invading leaders such as Attila the Hun, whom he persuaded not to sack Rome in 452. Leo consciously took on the role of authority and leadership in the power vacuum of the decaying empire (the emperors had departed from Rome to the more secure base of Constantinople some years before). The Barbarian tribes recognised in the Christian church and its worship a source of spiritual power which was at odds with the general weakness of the Roman Empire, though they tended to be Arian Christians and therefore at first differed in their understanding of doctrine. The conversion of the Frankish Barbarian king Clovis around 500 was a landmark in the story of the Western church; above all, Clovis pledged his allegiance to the Roman rather than Arian church.

(d) The Conversion of the Barbarians

By the time of Gregory the Great (Pope from 590-604) conditions in Western Europe were sufficiently settled for him to embark on a spiritual re-colonisation of the lands which had once been Roman (and Christian) but where there had been little contact with the Roman church for over a century, and where the newly installed Barbarian tribes had not adopted Christianity. Gregory had been Prefect of Rome, a high civic appointment requiring supreme organisational skills which he transferred into church government. He tidied up the rather wild growth of liturgy which he found, using the newly asserted primacy of the Bishop of Rome to establish guidelines for worship and music ('Gregorian Chant' derives from him). In particular he sent missionaries out to England under Augustine in 596. On their arrival at Canterbury in 597 they restored the ancient church they found there (established during Roman times), and found Christians already there in the form of King Ethelbert's Frankish Queen Bertha and her chaplain, Bishop Liudhard.

Augustine's task was twofold: to bring the gospel to the pagan Saxon tribes, but also to bring order to the unruly remnants of the Church which had survived among the pre-Saxon population, including the Irish missionaries who were at the same time penetrating the Saxon tribes from the north, and whose date for the celebration of Easter no longer corresponded with the Roman calculations.

Once the mission was successfully established, Augustine sent some monks back to Rome to ask Pope Gregory for items to aid the development of worship in England: vessels, altar cloths, vestments, relics of the apostles and many books. Gregory happily furnished all these, and wrote back to King Ethelbert, encouraging him to emulate Constantine as a true Christian ruler, converting his subjects by force if necessary. It seems that Gregory and Augustine underestimated the strength and deep-rooted nature of Saxon paganism, and so Gregory also wrote to Augustine with advice on how he should root out paganism (what he termed in one of his letters the worship of 'sticks and stones'), by converting pagan shrines into Christian churches. Gregory urged his missionary bishop to

destroy the idols, but the temples themselves are to be sprinkled with holy water, altars set up and relics enclosed in them. For if these temples are well built, they are to be purified from devil-worship and dedicated to the service of the true God. And since they have a custom of sacrificing many oxen to devils, let some other solemnity be substituted in its place.... On such occasions they might well construct shelters of boughs for themselves around the churches that once were temples, and celebrate the solemnity with devout feasting.

Although this policy seems to have been successful at first, it inevitably meant that the gospel came to be seen as something which could be added to ancient beliefs, rather than a decisive turning away from them. For many centuries syncretism remained a problem; a hundred years after Augustine the great poem *Beowulf*, retelling a pagan story, seems to have been put in a Christian frame without any apparent tension for its author or audience. The holy well of St Modwenna at Offchurch may be an example of the Christianising of a pagan shrine, and such wells were often used for baptisms. In such a case, however, it is quite possible that the villagers would have been confused as to the exact theological symbolism of the rite.

(e) Christianity in the English Midlands

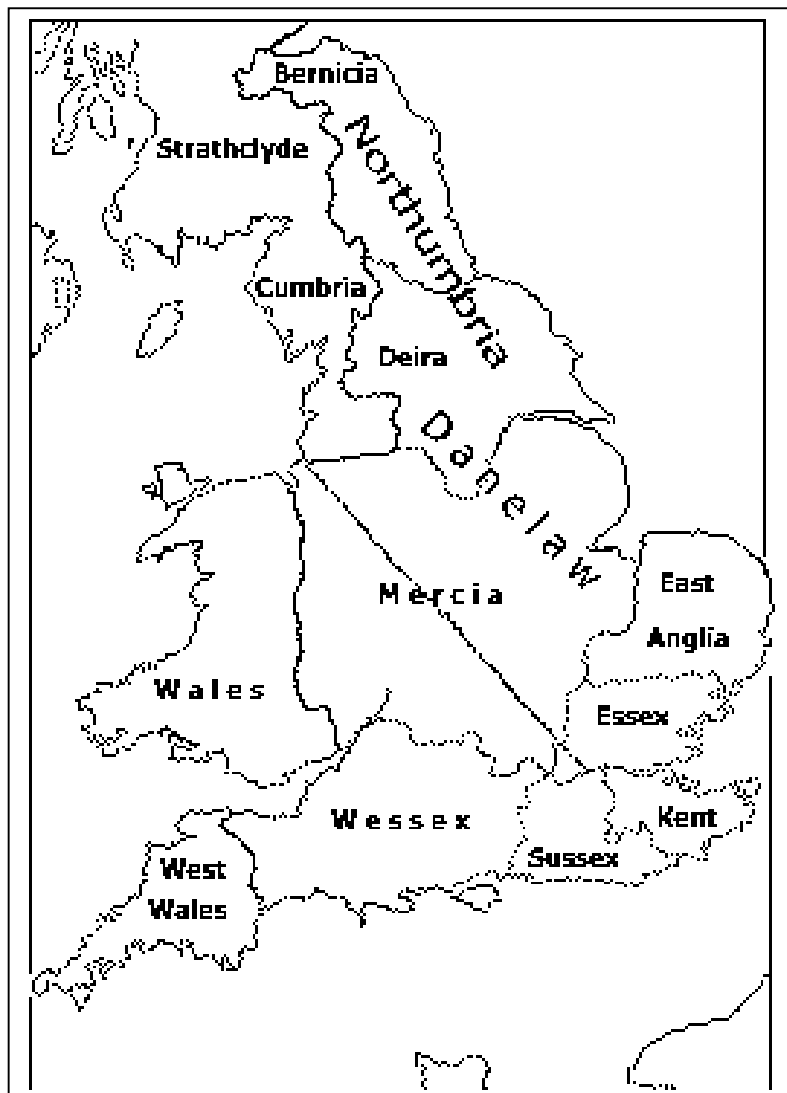
Although from a Roman perspective Augustine's mission was what led to the restoration of true Christianity to England, the actual picture of the conversion of the Saxons is much more complex. Bede, the monk of Jarrow in Northumbria who died in 735 is the main source for the conversion of the Saxons. But he was really only concerned with Christianity that was practiced rightly, and to him that meant on the Roman pattern. Hence Augustine is the hero of his story of conversion, and areas untouched by the Roman or later Irish (Celtic) mission are largely ignored by him.

Archaeological evidence suggests that, contrary to Bede, the Anglo-Saxon settlers did not descend like a plague of locusts, but rather gradually infiltrated the English countryside over the couple of centuries following the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 410, during which time Romano-British society slowly fell into decay and transition. The settlers made their way particularly up the Trent and Avon valleys, and their progress can be traced through the late fifth and early sixth centuries by their distinctive burial sites. However, from the late sixth century (that is, just before Augustine's Roman mission to Canterbury) there seems to have been a change in their burial practices. By the mid seventh century many Saxon burial sites show Christian influence, one example being just outside Offchurch on the road to Long Itchington, dated to about 650 and containing brooches in the shape of a cross. This change has encouraged some scholars recently to look for evidence that the British church, surviving from Roman times, may have been more successful in converting the Saxon settlers than Bede gave it credit for. Gloucester, Worcester, Wroxeter and Wall (near Lichfield) all show evidence of being pre-Saxon foundations which continued after the conversion of the Saxons of Mercia, which Bede dates to the years following 653. Bede does not record the conversion of the *Hwicce* who lived in what is now Gloucestershire and on the borders of whose territory the village of Offchurch stands.

The battle with paganism was particularly fierce in Mercia, according to Bede, largely on account of King Penda who ruled aggressively from 626 to 655 with a high degree of success. We know little of him from Bede, because his success was an embarrassment to Bede's desire to show how conversion to Christianity made rulers more successful. Though the chronicler Nennius credited Penda with being 'victorious by diabolical agency', Penda did allow his son, Peada, to become a Christian as well as several of his daughters.

He seems not to have been antagonistic to Christianity, but prepared to allow it to flourish, as long as traditional pagan beliefs were safeguarded as well. Such an approach was not what the Roman mission was prepared to tolerate. In 655 Penda the pagan Mercian was killed in battle with Oswy the Christian Northumbrian, ushering in a period of Northumbrian hegemony over the kingdoms of England. Nine years later, at the Synod of Whitby, the Roman way of doing things triumphed when Oswy decided to accept the Roman calculation for the date of Easter. While this may seem unimportant to us, in the seventh century it was a way of strengthening and reforming the rather *ad hoc* and uncontrolled growth of the era of conversion into a single church, unified in belief and practice.

This period also saw the building of the first churches which have survived intact: the magnificent basilica at Brixworth in Northants, built around 680, suggests an ambition to compete with the glories of Roman architecture. More characteristic of this period, however, are the little chapels of Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire and Deerhurst in Gloucestershire.



3. King Offa and the Early Medieval Church (700-800)

(a) Establishing the English Church

By the mid eighth century the kingdoms of the Saxon settlers had all been converted to Christianity, and, following the Synod of Whitby in 664, Roman customs accepted throughout what was now known as the 'English Church'. Under Archbishop Theodore (Archbishop of Canterbury 669-690) the primacy of Canterbury and the obedience to Rome in matters of doctrine and liturgy were established. Adoption of Roman patterns led to a flowering of scholarship in monasteries such as that at Jarrow, of which the polymath Bede was a brother. There were the beginnings of a vernacular Christian literature, especially in the earliest English poem, *The Dream of the Rood*, which tells of how the poet received a vision of the cross and how it told him its story. It translates the gospel story into images and concepts familiar to the culture of Anglo-Saxon England, and perhaps takes its opening from the poet's experience of richly jewelled and decorated crosses such as the sculpted Ruthwell cross (from Dumfriesshire) on which some of the verses are preserved. The consolidation of faith in England led to missions being sent to the Saxon homelands of Germany, led especially by Boniface, originally from Crediton. In all, then, by 750 we can see that the Church in England was well-established, its allegiance to Rome secure, and its future secure, at least from within.

(b) King Offa

The first king of the English to be recognised as such by Rome was Offa, king of Mercia from 757 to 796. Offa's kingdom had become substantially Christian after the death of King Penda, about a hundred years before Offa seized power; Chad became the first bishop of Lichfield in 669. Offa was a very powerful figure. His lands included central England from Nottinghamshire to Oxford, but he also controlled East Anglia and, for a time, Kent as well. His pennies (he was the first English king to mint these) were good currency right across England. He dug a dyke separating England from Wales, of which portions survive on the borders. He also attempted to make Lichfield into an Archbishopric, at the expense of Canterbury. Offa was the dominant ruler in late eighth century England, and his links across the channel with the developing power of Charlemagne drew the lands he ruled firmly into the mainstream of Western European liturgical practice, as defined by Rome. He was the only Anglo-Saxon king to call a synod, in 786, which the Pope deemed sufficiently important to send a legate to. Offa lived in a period which was the first flowering of northern European Christian culture, and he made alliances with Charlemagne, king of the Franks from 768 to 814, who on Christmas day 800 was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Rome by the Pope. Charlemagne's rule extended across what is now France to include the western parts of Germany (Saxony and Bavaria) and the northern parts of Italy. He took the opportunity, which Constantine had missed, to standardise worship. Using a team of scholars whose achievement is often called the 'Carolingian Renaissance', Charlemagne had multiple copies made of the Latin *Sacramentarium Gregorianum* (Gregory the Great's approved liturgy), and enforced its use throughout his dominions from 781 onwards. Charlemagne was concerned to make sure that worship was conducted properly, according to the customs of the apostles. He consulted widely on such matters; in 811, for example, he circulated all the leading churchmen in his realms over the correct administration and true significance of baptism: he saw that right action and right belief had a relationship that depended upon each other. However, Charlemagne also enforced conversions among the Saxons at sword-point, and did not let his Christian convictions deter him from having five wives (with the result that his succession was very confused!); but the emphasis he laid on scholarship (he learned Latin and Greek as an adult) was his lasting achievement. Under his rule monasteries became places of education and literacy was revived. Chief amongst Charlemagne's scholars was Alcuin of York, who imported into the revised liturgy many of the customs, such as the chanting of the creed at the eucharist, where it had not been included before, which he



The Ruthwell Cross

had learned as a monk in Yorkshire. Charlemagne had, of course, no direct authority over the church in Mercia, but he did have an important influence, symbolised by his provision of bishops' robes and altar coverings for the cathedrals of Offa's kingdom in 796. Alcuin, the chief architect of the Charlemagne's church reforms, was active in Offa's court from 790-793, when he was Frankish ambassador in resolving a dispute between the two kings which led, for a while, to the prohibition of trade between their kingdoms. Perhaps most importantly, the strong alliance established between Charlemagne and Rome had a crucial influence on the development of the church in Western Europe, particularly in standardising liturgical practices.

The achievement of Offa is something of a mystery. Alfred the Great's later claim that he had restored learning to an England which he found crude and lacking in scholarship has diverted attention from the Mercian kingdom's participation in a world of European culture. As John Blair concludes:

we know very little about Mercian culture. Probably this simply means that much has been lost. Mercia had no Bede to record its achievements, and its greatest monasteries were sacked by the Vikings. Fragments of decorative art, such as the sculptures in the minster of Breedoin-on-the-Hill, suggest sumptuous physical surroundings. A noble monument to the age... is the great minster church of Brixworth, Northamptonshire. It is a sign of how much we do *not* know that this monastery fails to appear in any early document... (J.Blair 'The Anglo-Saxon Period' in K.O.Morgan (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain* (Oxford 1984) p.78.)

(c) St Gregory's

It is against this background, and strong trading and diplomatic contacts with the Carolingian empire, that Offa and his successors should be set. The building of a stone church (evidenced by the interior of the north door) in the middle of the forested centre of England is a sign of the end of the temporary phase of settlement, and the establishment of a Christian kingdom. Previously worship may have taken place in a wooden hut or in the open air, conducted by monks travelling from a nearby minster (the Anglo-Saxon form of monastery), probably at Lichfield or Tamworth. Now the chapel probably had its own attendant priest, one of the first in the area, because of the royal connections. Worship would have followed the Roman rite, adopted from the continental practice.

We do not know why Offchurch is identified with Offa. It has been suggested in the past that it was his burial place, but this seems very unlikely: Repton in Derbyshire or Bedford seem far more plausible candidates. What is particularly significant about Offa is his links with Rome and the European continent as a whole, and the dedication of the church at Offchurch to St Gregory is one of the many intriguing puzzles that the building sets us. There is no record of any other dedication (dedications were frequently changed in the medieval period) and it seems to be an indication of the Mercian King's close devotion to all things Roman. Mercia's influence waned after Offa's death, and Wessex, especially under Alfred the Great (reigned 871-899) gained supremacy.



Pennies of King Offa

4. Vikings and Saints (800-1000)

(a) The Fury of the Northmen

The eighth century was something of a golden age in England, embracing the intellectual achievements of Bede and the political integration of Offa into the ruling elite of mainland Europe. In wealth and culture England became rich in this century, yet Britain remained an offshore island and as such a potential target for those who wished to take advantage of its growing wealth. In 793, three years before Offa's death, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that 'on the 8th of June the ravages of heathen men miserably destroyed God's church at Lindisfarne.' This was the first indication that disaster might lie ahead. Lindisfarne had been cradle of the Irish mission to the Saxon tribes in the sixth century, and remained widely renowned for its scholarship and piety. It had also attracted gifts of gold and precious stones, used in church ornaments, and rich fabrics in its vestments. The fact that the 'heathen men' from across the North Sea seem to have targeted Christian monasteries suggests some religious motivation to the first Viking incursions into the British Isles. Jarrow was attacked in 794, Iona the following year; and in 806 sixty-eight of its monks were killed. From the 830s onwards the raids became relentless, culminating in 865 with the arrival of the Danish 'Great Army' which over the course of two Summers proceeded from East Anglia through Lincolnshire to capture York and terrorise Northumbria, before swinging south towards Mercia. Western Mercia failed to succumb, however, and the Vikings turned their attention to Wessex. Under the young King Alfred, however, the men of Wessex fought back. In 878 Alfred's victory over the Vikings led by Guthrum led to the latter asking to be baptized and an agreement that he would keep his men roughly east of the Fosse Way, evidence of which remains to this day in the many place names there which end in '-by' or '-thorpe').

Though this accommodation with Guthrum (who took the Christian name of Athelstan) led to a more peaceful countryside, the depredations of the Vikings continued. In general through the tenth century, however, they tended to raid and not to settle, but after a long period of confusion and fighting, the Scandinavian Cnut became king of all England and in the following nineteen years of his rule transformed himself, in the words of a medieval chronicler, from 'a wild man into a most Christian king.' From this point on, England basically found itself at peace and united by a common faith. The final act in the story was the Norman conquest of 1066. William of Normandy was descended from Duke Rollo, a Scandinavian who had founded Normandy ('the land of the Northmen') in 911. His triumph at Hastings, under a banner which had been blessed by the Pope, eventually ensured that Offchurch was able to settle into a peaceful existence at the heart of England, no longer on a frontier as it had been for several centuries.

(b) Saints

These years were ones of misery and fear throughout England. They left their mark on Offchurch in the fragmentary connection with Fremund, a shadowy figure in the story of the church. Disentangling the truth about Fremund is impossible: some sources credit him with being the son of Offa, but this cannot be the case since he seems to have died around 870. However, he may have been, as the legends suggest, a minor member of the Mercian royal house who was known for his piety, indeed may have been a hermit. What the sources do agree on is that Fremund was involved in a fight with a Viking raiding party which took place close to Offchurch at Radford Semele. This certainly could be true: at this time raiders based in Nottingham or Leicester would easily have penetrated south down the Fosse Way. The traditions suggest that though victorious over the raiders, Fremund was killed by one of his own men in a disagreement. The killer is identified as a pagan, and this may point us to the confused situation at the time. The Vikings had a strong though exceptionally bloody and vicious religious system, and there is some evidence that conversions from Christianity took place. Possibly Fremund's killer was a double-agent. Whatever happened, his body was taken to Offa's old border-post at Offchurch, where he came to be venerated as a martyr. Some of the legends strengthen the link with Offchurch by recounting the miraculous generation of a spring close to the burial place: Offchurch of course was known as a place with a holy well, later dedicated to St Modwenna, a ninth-century hermit at Burton-on-Trent who also had connections with the royal house of Offa. In 1212 the remains of Fremund were removed to Dunstable, where he was venerated through the middle ages. It is possible that the stone tomb preserved at St Gregory's has a connection with him.

During the middle ages the cult of the saints developed to a high degree. Its origins lay centuries before in the early days of the church, when the recognition that Christians formed part of a vast community, dead as well as alive, past as well as present encouraged the church to remain strong and stable during a period of

turmoil and persecution. Attitudes to death and burial were a hallmark of early Christian belief and practice. They did not cremate their dead, but buried them, and the bodies rested not in the *necropolis* ('city of the dead') but in the *cemeterium* (cemetery, 'place of sleep'). In worship heaven and earth were united, and the whole church, living and departed, joined with the company of heaven.

In the medieval period most villages and localities had their own local saints, a practice which continued to flourish in the remoter parts of Cornwall, but which elsewhere tended to be suppressed at the Reformation in the sixteenth century. John Bossy comments on the significance of saints thus:

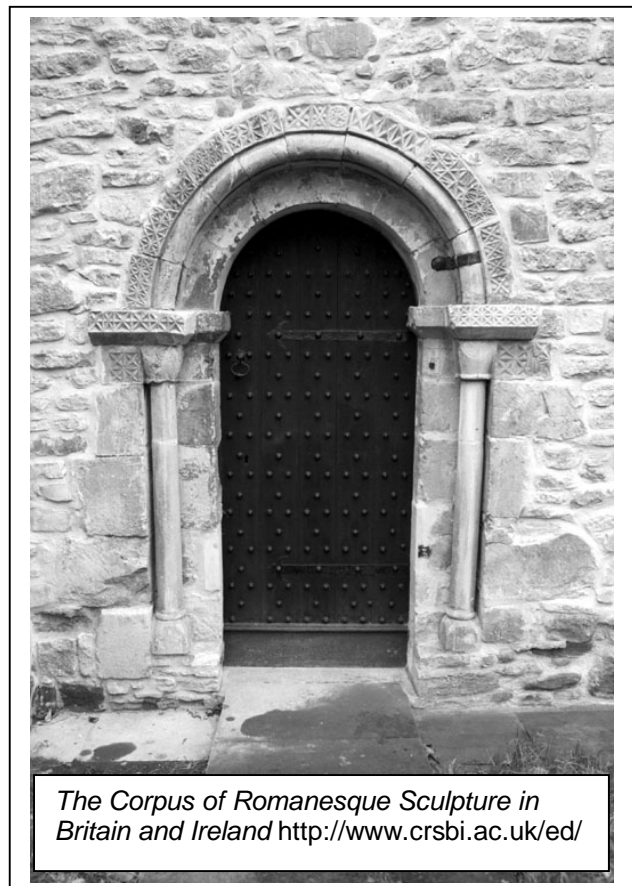
As Christ in becoming human had acquired a human family, so he had acquired human friends. The saints...demonstrated that there were various ways to the friendship of God. There were those whom during his lifetime Christ had chosen, the apostles (half of whom were his relations anyway), Mary Magdalene, St Martha, St Paul. There were those who after his death had acquired his friendship by merit, the white-robed army of martyrs whose sufferings imitated those of his Passion, earned their own recompense and might transmit it to others. To such figures from a distant past had been added those who in more recognizable times had suffered at the hands of bad kings (like Thomas of Canterbury), enraged heretics (like the scourge of the Cathars, the inquisitor Peter Martyr) or Jews. There were, and continued to be, those whose capacity to rise above the human condition and make manifest God's presence in the world marked them out as saints during their lifetimes. (J.Bossy *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford 1985) p.11.)

The three saints associated with Offchurch show the variety available: Gregory the missionary Pope, Fremund the minor royal martyr and Modwenna, the saintly female hermit. To the villagers of Offchurch there would have been a comforting sense that this trio would be watching over their affairs in heaven.

(c) Stone buildings

The interior of the north door at St Gregory's may well date from the last years of Mercian supremacy, in the early ninth century, with its plain and simple reminder of the Roman origins of the church. The exterior of the door takes us into another world, however, where faith has begun to develop an English complexion. This period immediately before the Norman conquest was one of great artistic achievement, reminiscent of the golden age of the eighth century. The north door has simple designs carved in it, which are distinct from earlier Anglo-Saxon designs by the Scandinavian influence on them. The door at Offchurch is basic in comparison to the splendours of Kilpeck in Herefordshire, for example, but it shows the church emerging from years of turmoil and strife into the middle ages.

At the time when the door was built the church probably consisted of a single stone chamber, replacing Offa's wooden chapel. With the Norman conquest the gradual destruction of the forests around Offchurch would have stopped. The Norman kings tried to bring advancing settlement to a halt in order to preserve the forests for hunting. The woods began to close in again, and Offchurch, became an insignificant village once more.



5. Norman Conquest to Reformation (1000-1500)

(a) Establishing the parish system

At some point before the Norman conquest Offchurch ceased to belong to the Earls (as they had now become) of Mercia, and was given to St Mary's Priory in Coventry. The priory also took responsibility for providing a resident priest, and for training him in the conduct of worship. In this way the practice in St Gregory's would have resembled a miniature version of the great sung offices of Coventry's original cathedral. The earliest recorded vicar at Offchurch is John the Clerk, mentioned in a charter of 1279. How different John and his successors were from the other villagers is hard to determine. Chaucer's village parson in the 'Canterbury Tales' (late fourteenth century) was brother to a ploughman from his parish. If Chaucer's parson was representative (and we don't know whether he was) then this was a very local ministry, resourced by the Priory in Coventry. The priest was probably not very learned, but would have been educated in the monastery so that he was able to read and understand the words of the mass. He supported himself by farming his own patch of the village land. He may also have had a wife and children: celibacy for priests was introduced in 1139, but was hard to enforce. From this point on, the pattern of parishes with resident priests was established.



Reconstruction of St Mary's Priory, Coventry c.1400

(b) The age of church building

The late eleventh and early twelfth century was the heroic age of church building in England. After the Conquest the strong hand of the Normans ensured peace and allowed a restoration of much that had been lost through years of Viking raids. A contemporary wrote that it seemed as if the stone buildings 'clothed the earth in the white robe of the church.' Although it seems likely that some stone building existed at Offchurch before this, it was at this time that the church in something approximating to its present form came into being, bringing with it perhaps a much stronger sense of permanence to the existence of the church and its round of worship. What had for four centuries been a mission had now definitely become a settled church. The chancel of St Gregory's was built first, and the nave soon after, with small, deep windows that survive in the chancel and can be seen blocked up in the nave. These were probably filled with horn rather than glass at this stage, giving the whole building a rather 'underground feeling', even when candles supplemented the natural light. There was no tower, and the chancel was quite short, with little distinction between priest and people, mirroring their likely social relations.

(c) The Black Death

In the fourteenth century the crisis of the Black Death (1348) had a number of consequences. Traumatic for those who lived through it, it changed the spiritual atmosphere and encouraged an almost morbid preoccupation with judgement, shown in the vogue for 'Doom' paintings of which the best remaining one is in St Thomas' Salisbury, but of which there is also a fine (largely hidden) example in Holy Trinity Coventry. The plague virtually halved the English population between 1300 and 1400, leaving some villages like Budbrooke outside Warwick empty of population; but in the long run this had economic benefits, breaking down the settled fortunes of many landowners and nobles, spreading wealth across the social spectrum, and freeing the flow of the money supply. Prices fell and wages rose, much land which had been devoted to subsistence farming was now taken over by grazing sheep, whose wool formed the basis of late medieval England's wealth. The late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were a boom time.

(d) Liturgy and Architecture

A changed economy was reflected also in church architecture and liturgy. This was a new era of creativity, the heyday of English perpendicular architecture (of which Gloucester Cathedral is a good example). This had its own humble reflection at Offchurch, where at this time the chancel arch was rebuilt, the chancel

extended and the south porch added. The original windows were altered or replaced by much larger ones, filled with either plain or coloured glass which was now available. If these were coloured, or if there were wall paintings of the sort which survive at Burton Dassett, they would have given the villagers images of Bible stories or saints' lives. The twelfth century canon lawyer Gratian wrote that 'Paintings are the Bible of the laity' (the best English survivors are the windows at Canterbury Cathedral).

Liturgy during this period tended to become more elaborate. A variety of rites flourished, and the priest now required several books to keep up with the many new feast days which had been created. At Offchurch the extending of the chancel meant that the altar moved further away from the people, the priest retreating from them with the mystery of the mass. We don't know if there was a 'rood' screen ('rood' means cross) at Offchurch, but most churches in the late medieval era had one, which emphasised the division between the two halves of the church building and provided a visual focus in the effigy of Christ crucified, often accompanied by Mary and John. The removal of the people from the proximity of liturgical ceremonial led to a flourishing of private prayer and home-based devotion in the later fourteenth century. The wealthy had 'books of hours', richly illustrated collections of prayers; the poor had simple versions of the same, often half a dozen pieces of small wooden board bound together containing simple pictures of the life of Christ. After the invention of printing in the 1490s it became possible for books to become more available. A few prayers were taught and used at home: the Lord's prayer, Hail Mary, the Nicene Creed, the ten commandments and the seven deadly sins; these were learnt in Latin and formed one of the few parts of church worship which the villagers could join in with. To learn these prayers in English was a sign of heresy. Feasts and festivals multiplied in this period, and these may have included processions and the use of images. In the larger cities (of which Coventry was one: in the fourteenth century it was the third city in the country) the local craft guilds took part in cycles of 'Mystery Plays' which domesticated the story of salvation in an easily understandable way.

(e) Approaching the Reformation

By the fifteenth century it was clear that there was a wealth of spiritual yearning that the established patterns of the church were not meeting. Private spirituality was thriving, and there was no shortage of money being spent on church buildings right up to the 1540s. At Offchurch the tower was built at this time, and a single bell replaced by two much larger ones. Offchurch was one of the two-thirds of English parish churches which were rebuilt or substantially added to in the hundred and fifty years before the Reformation, including St Michael's in Coventry (now the Cathedral ruins). Often this work was paid for not by a local landowner, but the parishioners themselves. This upsurge of building shows a society which was full of faith which the liturgical practice of the church did not allow lay people to express.

6. The Early Reformation (1500-1550)

(a) Continental and National Movements

The sixteenth century was the period of greatest religious turmoil in English history, dominated by the destruction of the monasteries and the subordination of the powerful medieval church to the even more powerful early modern state. This had a major impact on liturgy, architecture and, eventually, on people's beliefs and patterns of spirituality.

Reformation was slow to come to England. The Continental upheavals which followed Martin Luther's 'Ninety-Five Theses' detailing his demands for a papal reform of the church, nailed to a Wittenberg church door in 1517 did not touch England at first, except among the students of Cambridge and Oxford. The authorities, led by Henry VIII and Thomas More acted quickly to root out any traces of Lutheranism, and Henry received the title of 'Defender of the Faith' from the Pope because of his book defending the seven sacraments against Luther. Eight protestant sympathisers were burned at the stake in Coventry in 1520 and 1522 as part of the anti-Lutheran campaign. But Henry subsequently fell out with the Pope because of his refusal to grant an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, and found an obscure Cambridge don called Thomas Cranmer who provided him with arguments against the authority of Rome. Cranmer became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, and immediately granted Henry his divorce. It is clear that Cranmer favoured reform, but the impact of debates about authority was very limited at parish level. The actual practices of the church remained the same, but the withdrawal of good will by those (like Thomas More) who continued to accept the authority of Rome put Cranmer in a strong position to develop his reformist policies slowly by appointing like-minded episcopal colleagues.

(b) Local Echoes

In 1533 Richard Mydnight, a traveller visiting the ancient wayside shrine of St Modwenna, dropped into the inn at Offchurch and heard the villagers discussing the views of Hugh Latimer, a Wiltshire vicar who had been excommunicated the previous year for denying the existence of purgatory and the need to venerate saints. The rumour was that Latimer said all images should be destroyed, that the 'Hail Mary' was not a prayer and that fasting was unnecessary. Such views were clearly a threat to shrines like St Modwenna's, which brought an income of around £10 a year to the village, when the manor itself was only worth £40. When Latimer became, by Cranmer's influence, Bishop of Worcester in 1535, Mydnyght reported him to the authorities, and a number of Offchurch men testified that such opinions had been aired in the pub. It was clear that they wanted to show they had no sympathy with Latimer's new-fangled views.

(c) The Dissolution of the Monasteries

In 1538 Henry gave orders for the suppression of the monasteries, with the crown taking control of their wealth and lands. Strangely, for an institution which had so dominated the medieval age, monasticism subsided with scarcely a protest. Though (despite later Puritan propaganda) there is little evidence of corruption, few monasteries any longer attracted the armies of monks which had previously swarmed to them. Recent excavations at the Priory in Coventry show that by the time of its destruction the building was largely uncared for and falling into disrepair. A small number of monks, living off relatively high incomes, were an easy target. Henry was glad of the additional royal income, and proceeded to sell off his newly acquired assets. In Offchurch it meant that nearly five centuries of close association with Coventry Priory came to an end, and in 1542 the Knightley family moved into Offa's old house at the Bury. It was a sign of the times, however, that the right to appoint the vicar of Offchurch was sold separately, and came into the possession of John Hales of Coventry, a reformer who was also the founder of the Grammar School in the city.

(d) Changing the Religious Culture

Despite the dissolution of the monasteries, the only real victory for reform in Henry's reign was the English Bible which was made available in all churches in 1539. At the same time Henry passed the Act for Abolishing Diversity in Opinions, which threatened anyone denying the creed or showing contempt for the Mass with burning at the stake. But after Henry's death in 1547 the boy king

Edward VI gave Cranmer and the other reformers a virtually free rein to change the face of worship in the Church in England for ever. The first acts of Edward's rule were the provision of homilies written by Cranmer in each parish church, advocating a mild Protestantism. Each church was required to provide a pulpit and to light no more than two candles on the altar. Communion was to be received in both kinds (bread and wine) in line with the practice of the Continental reformers, and against that of the medieval church. Parliament appointed Commissioners to travel through the realm to make sure that these instructions were enforced. In 1547 Chantries, which were chapels established for the sole purpose of praying for the release of the souls of the dead from Purgatory were abolished (these were often magnificent buildings like the Beauchamp Chapel at St Mary's

Warwick). In 1548 'images' were ordered to be removed from churches, paintings were whitewashed, and crucifixes removed from rood screens. Candles at Candlemas, Ashes on Ash Wednesday, Palms on Palm Sunday, holy bread and holy water, all part of the fabric of medieval Christianity, were suppressed.

These reforms would have had an immediate effect even in small parish churches such as St Gregory's. But the Mass was still in Latin, and the priest still dressed as his predecessors had done for centuries. In many churches wise churchwardens, perhaps aware that on the Continent the tide was turning back in favour of Papal authority and Catholic practice, carefully stored away images and relics in case religious policy should change. The greatest change occurred in 1549, when, on Whit Sunday, the use of a new Book of Common Prayer was enforced. This was revolutionary because it was in English and required churches throughout the land to use just one form, so that 'now from henceforth all the realm shall have but one use' (previously usage had differed from diocese to diocese).

(d) Cranmer's Prayer Book

Cranmer had been working on this Prayer Book since the first English litany had been produced in 1544. Liturgical work suited his scholarly personality and perhaps gave him relief from the nerve-wracking intrigues of court politics. It was the vocation for which he had been waiting all his life. He radically simplified the medieval patterns of worship, adapting what was best in his eyes and removing all that was opposed to Protestant doctrine. He believed that he was fulfilling Gregory the Great's instructions to Augustine, to 'select... whatever is devout, religious and right; and when you have arranged them into a unified rite, let the minds of the English grow accustomed to it.' In Cornwall there was a bitter rebellion against the new services; they did not understand this 'London English', they complained, it was not their language and they preferred the old familiar Latin. The rebellion was suppressed with brutal force.

The 1549 Prayer Book's main achievement was worship in English, but the structure of the Communion liturgy still broadly conformed to the pattern of the Mass. It was the more radical revision of 1552 which finally broke theologically with medieval Christendom, cutting the thanksgiving by removing the prayer for the consecration of the bread and wine, and emphasising instead that it is in the receiving of the elements by



the faithful that they become holy. The approach of the 1552 Prayer Book is perhaps best symbolised in the ordinal: where the medieval ordinand received a chalice and paten as a sign of sacramental ministry, the 1549 Prayer Book provided for him to be given a Bible also; by 1552 the vessels had vanished, leaving the Bible the sole sign of authority.

The theological niceties of reform, though they caused a storm amongst the clergy, probably had limited effect in the village of Offchurch. What did make an impact was Cranmer's imaginative re-ordering of the choreography of the service. In 1550 orders had been made for the destruction of medieval stone altars, and their replacement by simple wooden trestle tables. In 1552 these were to be brought to where the people were, turned at right angles to their previous position and for the priest was to stand on the north side. Cranmer wrote an invitation into the service which asked the people to 'draw near with faith' before the prayer of thanksgiving, and they literally did that, often sitting around the table on stools or benches. The priest was also to wear the same robes for communion as for morning or evening prayer: visually this was the greatest change, as the white linen surplice replaced the rich colour and texture of eucharistic vestments.

Cranmer's critics protested that he had debased the holy mass into 'a Christmas game' like Blind man's buff, but the key to understanding Cranmer's achievement is that it was a pragmatic revolution. Cranmer's own journey to becoming a reformer had been a slow one, and his vacillations around the time of his death show that he was perhaps never wholly sure of his convictions. Yet he survived at court for an almost unprecedented length of time amongst his contemporaries, and by a gradual process introduced Protestant doctrine, little by little, into the bloodstream of the Church of England. Liturgical imagination, not statements of faith, was the means of change.

7. The Later Reformation (1550-1600)

(a) Counter-Reform

The reformation under Edward was short-lived. The boy king died in 1553, aged only fifteen, to be succeeded by his elder half-sister Mary, who tried to reverse the reforms of both her father and brother. Where Henry and Edward used the legal authority granted them by parliament to become heads of the Church of England for reform, Mary used the same means to restore the authority of Rome. In 1553-5 many of the most zealous reformers fled England and set up a reformed Church of England in exile in safely-Protestant Geneva, where John Calvin, the leading Reformation theologian, lived. After 1555 Mary enforced an increasingly brutal return to Catholicism. Three hundred Protestants were burnt to death, three of them in Coventry. For a time it seemed that a full-scale return to the situation before 1533 was about to happen. If Mary had lived for as long as her half-sister Elizabeth, that might have happened; but she died in 1558, with her work less than half achieved.

The situation at Offchurch is unclear during this time, but between 1557 and 1561 there were three vicars appointed to the parish. One, in Mary's time, bore the name Gregory Stapullz, which we may speculate showed the influence of continental Catholicism. Almost certainly Stapullz would have supervised the restoration of images which had been hidden away in the cottages of Offchurch and worn new, bright vestments imported from France as he celebrated the Latin Mass back in the chancel away from the people.

(b) Elizabeth and the Settlement

Elizabeth came to the throne after a period of religious turmoil which had lasted ten years. The daughter of Anne Boleyn, whose family were genuine Protestants, she seems to have had theological sympathies with the reformers, but also to have retained a taste for Catholic ritual and ceremony (her Chapel Royal was full of more candles than her Protestant advisers cared for). Elizabeth's upbringing had emphasised Protestantism, especially during the formative teenage years which she spent as part of the household of Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's last wife. However, after the accession of her sister Mary she was required to conform to Catholic rituals and practices. Her biographer, David Starkey believes that these years left a lasting impression upon Elizabeth: 'they imbued her with a taste for religious ceremonial – if indeed she had ever lost it, since the days when her father had left her with such an opulently equipped chapel..' (David Starkey *Elizabeth: Apprenticeship* (Chatto & Windus, London, 2000) p.261) Instead Elizabeth emphasised the essentially inward nature of religious experience: 'True religion, *her* religion, lay between Man and his Maker. The outward forms, on the other hand, were the work of human hands. Still worse, they were primarily the work of clerical hands. And Elizabeth had an abiding contempt for the clergy.' (Starkey p.262) She managed to keep clergy off the privy council for thirty years.

The settlement of 1559 was a compromise that (probably accidentally) lasted for centuries. Elizabeth revived Henry VIII's legislation against Roman authority (though she took the title of 'Supreme Governor' rather than 'Head' of the Church of England). She reintroduced the 1552 Prayer Book, but in a classically ambiguous phrase required that Parish Churches should be reordered to be as they were 'in the second year of King Edward VI' (1548-9). That was a year of great liturgical change, so parishes were safe with either a moderate or thoroughgoing Protestantism. Elizabeth was the mistress of ambiguity. During her early life she had learned to keep her convictions to herself simply in order to remain alive. An example of the way she used her wits to hide her opinions lies in the rhyme attributed to her regarding the harsh debate over the symbolic or actual presence of Christ in the bread at communion. Elizabeth said:

God's was the word that spake it;
he took the bread and brake it.
And what his word doth make it
That I believe and take it.

Discussions in parliament about the prayer book in 1559 made a small but significant change: at the administration of communion the 1552 receptionist formula: 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving,' was augmented by the 1549 words which allowed for belief in the real presence: 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.' This deliberate ambiguity seems to have reflected Elizabeth's own preferences: she told Count Feria, Philip of Spain's envoy to her, that 'she differed very little from us [i.e. Catholics] as she believed that God was in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and only dissented

from three or four things in the Mass.' (Of course, there may be some exaggeration on both sides here!) Elizabeth also made sure in a royal proclamation that clergy preach against 'the vice of damnable despair' by referring as often as possible to 'such comfortable places and sentences of scripture as do set forth the mercy, benefits and goodness of Almighty God towards all penitent and believing persons.' (Starkey pp.287-8). This represented a middle way between the extremes of 'damnable despair': for the Catholics in a regime of penance and discipline which might never be enough to satisfy God; for the Calvinists through the doctrine of predestination which left the believer with the nagging doubt that his or her salvation was not assured, for they might not be one of the elect. While others attacked Elizabeth's church as one of 'leaden mediocrity' she herself was convinced that 'her "mean" or middle way was "golden" not "leaden", and that it promised the precious metal of inclusiveness and unity, rather than the base of clerically inspired extremism.' (Starkey p.288). Elizabeth also, unlike Henry or Mary, avoided the trap of making martyrs. Heresy was narrowly defined, fines were prescribed on a sliding scale and treason was only deemed to have been committed if someone asserted the papal supremacy on at least three separate occasions. Starkey concludes that

The Elizabethan Church...was a Goldilocks settlement: neither too hot nor too cold. As such, it pleased neither the orthodox Roman Catholics, for whom it went too far, nor the hotter sort of Protestants, later known as Puritans, for whom it did not go nearly far enough. (p.313)

Elizabeth's settlement thus satisfied neither wing of the reformation, but it enabled an often uneasy peace. Further attempts at reform did not succeed, despite the efforts of the Puritans in Parliament later in Elizabeth's reign, who wished for a more obviously Protestant liturgy. Elizabeth was content that so long as people were outwardly conformist, she did not mind what their private opinions were. She declared that she did not wish to 'Windows into men's souls'. Many of reformers who had been exiled under Mary returned and accepted Elizabeth's settlement in exchange for freedom to preach the gospel. John Jewel, who had been in Geneva and became Bishop of Salisbury, followed the principle that matters of dress, moderate ceremonial and even episcopacy, were 'things indifferent' (*adiaphora*) which were not essential to salvation, and on which legitimate differences of view were possible.

(c) The Settlement in Offchurch

From 1542 the manor of Offchurch had been owned by the Knightley family; through the changes of the rest of the century, they remained Catholic. In 1592, towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, Edward Knightley of Offchurch was imprisoned at Warwick for 'obstinate recusancy', which in plain language meant that he had fallen foul of the 1581 Act of Uniformity which imposed heavy fines on those who did not attend services in their parish church. In an ironic twist, Edward was released on bail from his brother Richard, an extreme Puritan who had himself had a brush with the law in 1588 for being implicated in the 'Marprelate Tracts', which attacked the 'profane, proud, paltry, popish, pestilent, pernicious, presumptuous prelates [bishops]' of the Church of England. Edward Knightley lived the rest of his life under effective house arrest at the Bury, allowed to believe what he liked so long as he paid for the privilege in substantial annual fines and was quarantined from the rest of the village. The extremes of belief in one family were marked in the Knightleys, (both brothers were deeply unhappy with the Church of England) but not entirely unusual. Nor did Edward's Catholicism prevent him from sending arms and men in 1581 to the army waiting to resist invasion by Philip of Spain's Armada which aimed to restore Papal authority in England. The importance of the crown was shown by the erection of Royal Coats of Arms in all churches, often above the chancel arch.

Edward Knightley's arrest meant that he probably never saw the lowering of the Nave roof in St Gregory's in 1592 (see the date on one of the beams). This had the effect of emphasising the now Protestant character of the church, adapted for a meeting focussed on the reading of the Word rather than the celebration of the sacrament. Cranmer's dream of the village faithful gathering for a meal round the Lord's table proved too contentious to take root. Morning and Evening Prayer became the staple of weekly worship, and the Edward Knightley's Catholic children could probably attend these services without compromising their consciences too much. Perhaps they received the sacrament from visiting undercover priests like Thomas Campion, who flitted between the great houses of Warwickshire maintaining the ancient faith.

Elizabeth's long reign established the 'reformed catholic' nature of the Church of England. Had it ended any time before 1588 that might not have been the case. But the succession was passed to the boorish but impeccably Protestant James VI of Scotland in 1603, guaranteeing a continuation of Prayer Book worship in the parish churches of England.

8. The 'Steady State' (1700-1800)

(a) Early Seventeenth-century tensions

During the seventeenth century the tensions of the previous hundred years continued to cause strain, culminating in the Civil War of 1642-9, which was as much about whether the Reformation had been completed as about wider political issues. With the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, and the revised Prayer Book of 1662, the Church of England and its parish churches settled into something approaching a 'steady state'.

Although the Puritans like Richard Knightley had great hopes of James VI and I, the new king disappointed them. They asked him to repudiate 'papist abuses' such as the wearing of surplices, wedding rings, the sign of the cross in baptism, the marking of holy days and words such as 'absolution' and 'priest'. James met them at Hampton Court in 1604, but the only substantial concession they achieved was the authorisation of a new translation of the Bible, which appeared in 1611.

In contrast to the Puritans, a party developed from the 1580s which, while remaining Protestant in doctrine, sought gently to restore some of the ceremonial which Cranmer had thrown out. They wanted to emphasise the English church's place in the tradition of catholic and orthodox Christendom. William Laud (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1633-45) encouraged the use of chancels and the fencing off of communion tables (to keep dogs away), and the use of stained glass. He persecuted Puritans and enforced the use of the Book of Common Prayer without exceptions. Echoes of this can be found in the Churchwarden's Accounts at Offchurch, which show payments for an expensive 'booke of Common Prayer and a book of homilies' in 1635 (the price was 18s 6d!).

(b) Civil War

The conflict between Laud and the Puritans contributed to the explosion of the Civil War in 1642. The opening battle of the war was fought near Offchurch at Edge Hill, and the Churchwardens paid 1s 4d to John Cox, Nicholas Gobbs and John Arnold 'for guiding the King's Carriage.' They also paid 6d for 'two fat hens for the King' and 2d for 'a maimed soldier.'

The Knightleys continued in the Catholic faith, and it was the fear of many on the Parliamentary side that Laud and Charles I were intending to restore the authority of the Pope. This was never a serious policy, but the existence of such as Andrew Knightley, youngest son of Edward, who became a Catholic priest and Papal Vicar General in England, must have added fuel to their fears (Andrew died in 1660). The Knightleys succeeded in purchasing the right to appoint the vicar of Offchurch in the 1620s: this too must have seemed strange (and perhaps ominous) to many of the villagers who might have heard Puritan preachers in the market places of Warwick or Coventry.

(c) Protectorate and Restoration

By 1649 Charles I had lost the civil war, the kingdom, and finally his head. Parliament made the Book of Common Prayer illegal, and published instead *A Directory for the Public Worship of God* which gave directions rather than texts to use. Many clergy were ejected from their livings, and bishops were abolished. England became officially Presbyterian. Some churches were substantially reordered at this time, with the sanctuary area being panelled and the communion table surrounded by benches (there is a good example at Crick). But the Commonwealth was an uneasy and short-lived settlement. Oliver Cromwell refused to become King, but also fell out with Parliament which was the source of his power. Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660, and in 1662 the Prayer Book was reinstated. Pleas for reform in both Laudian and Puritan directions effectively cancelled each other out, and the 1552 order of the Prayer Book was largely retained, as Elizabeth had done a century before. In this way the words of Cranmer's compromise prayer book became definitive. 936 ministers refused to accept the 1662 order on the grounds that it was not protestant enough, notably Richard Baxter of Kidderminster, who also declined a bishopric. There were further attempts at revision in 1689, but these were unsuccessful (they did form the basis of the American Episcopal Church's Prayer Book in the eighteenth century, however).

(d) The 'Steady State'

There is little sign of turmoil at Offchurch during this time. Sir John Knightley who inherited the Bury in 1655 was the first non-Catholic head of the family. It may be that he had seen that there was little future in the Catholic faith in England. Ralph Flexney remained vicar throughout the period. How far he was affected by the theological and ecclesiological debates is hard to gauge. By the late seventeenth century village life had settled into a 'steady state' of which Morning and Evening Prayer according to the Book of Common Prayer was the liturgical heartbeat. The vicar had definitely become one of the gentry, a change which followed the attraction of noblemen such as the poet George Herbert into the ordained ministry earlier in the century. The vicar owned 70 acres of land in the village, and farmed most of it himself. He owned his own horse which he used for visiting, though the parsonage was still indistinguishable from the other larger farmhouses in the village.

Perhaps in contrast to the emotion and change of the period between 1550 and 1650, the church settled into quietude. In a will of the 1670s, Sir John Knightley provided £100 for the repair of the church and the communion table. It may be that this shows that the altar was disused. The chancel itself was rarely needed at this time, and may have become a glorified store house.

(e) Eighteenth Century – reason and enthusiasm

There was, though, a vogue for preaching. The eighteenth century was the time of 'rational religion', a reaction to the emotion and excitement of the Reformation and an attempt to gain agreement by careful argument. The pulpit at St Gregory's represents this era, with its emphasis on cool and measured religion.

The population was rising too, and signs of this can be seen in the addition of galleries and extra windows at St Gregory's. The gallery may have housed a village band to accompany psalms and occasional hymns. But rather as in late medieval times, a gulf began to exist between lay spirituality and the practice of the church. From the 1740s onwards, John Wesley (left) and George Whitefield preached their brand of 'experimental religion' which was not afraid of emotion, in the open air. Charles Wesley's hymns spread doctrine in a way that Cranmer had dreamed his liturgy might do. For those touched by the Evangelical Movement, the focus of Christian devotion once again became the home, and 'Family prayers' were said (often using the Prayer Book) in many houses, high or humble. The absence of any other visible signs of the eighteenth century in the church, apart from family monuments, shows a church that was low in spiritual vitality, though which continued the round of observance.



John Wesley

The two eighteenth century hymns printed on the next page show the opposite extremes of faith during that century. and consider how different are the kinds of faith they represent. Consider the differences between them. Which seems to be the more representatively 'Anglican'?

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heav'n's, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

Th'unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;

While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine."

(Joseph Addison)

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

(Charles Wesley.)

9. The Factory Age and the Oxford Movement (1800-1900)

(a) Sons of Evangelicalism

The Catholic Revival in the Church of England was largely a movement to re-unite head and heart in liturgy and church ritual, in a way that had not really been done since the heady days of the sixteenth-century Reformation. The long-term effects of the Oxford Movement were to be felt in almost every parish church in England, and still form the shape of liturgy and spirituality today.

Evangelicalism was a movement which did not set much store by church-based liturgy. Some of those who grew up under its influence and were then touched in the early nineteenth century by the Romantic novels of Walter Scott and his vision of the middle ages as an era of faith (such as John Henry Newman and Henry Manning, both Anglican clergy who later became Roman Catholic Cardinals), yearned for light and colour in the rather drab services of the Church of England. In many ways they were the heirs to the 'enthusiasm' of Wesley.

(b) Church restoration

In the 1830s there was an impetus for reform, and Parliament reformed the Church of England financially and pastorally. Many churches were built at this time, especially in new towns like Rugby, which was now a major railway junction. St Gregory's participated in this movement with a 'restoration' of the fabric in the 1830s (during which the north door was uncovered and 'Offa's coffin' found). The early years of the Oxford Movement, which took its lead from John Keble's Oxford Assize Sermon in 1833, were devoted to a revival of the catholic spirit in the Church of England. The worship of God and its setting should be reverent and beautiful. Out of this movement came the restoration of chancels, adorned altar tables, candles, clergy vestments, robed choirs, organs and stained glass windows, all of which came to St Gregory's between 1860 and 1880. 'Restoration' emphasised the link with the past, pre-industrial communities of faith and tried to re-connect with their all-encompassing faith.

(c) Practical Theology

Liturgical practice changed, but there was also a deeply practical side to the Oxford Movement and its aims. In Wantage, for example, a Tractarian vicar reformed first the worship in the parish church, then organised the gas supply and drainage system in the town, finally establishing schools for the children, thus bringing, as he said, 'the beauty of holiness to the town. One of the leaders of the movement summed up their thinking when he said, 'the more I believe in the incarnation, the more I believe in good drains;' meaning that in the incarnation of Jesus we see the dignity which God gives to every human being. ' Such an emphasis ensured that Britain was the only European country where socialism was not seen as opposed to the church, and allowed convictions about worship to spill out on to the streets. The same emphasis also led to a new appreciation of the dignity of work, and this was expressed liturgically in the revival of harvest festival.

10. The Twentieth Century (1900-2000)

(a) The Liturgical revolution

The Church of England in the early twentieth century retained a significant influence politically and socially, a position it held until the 1960s. Since then the drop in numbers attending services or professing any recognisably Christian faith has plummeted, to which one characteristic reaction has been liturgical revision.

Through the twentieth century a quiet revolution in English parishes occurred. In 1900 most parishes held an early (usually 8am) Communion service, followed later in the day by Matins and Evensong. In 2000 many hold a single main service on a Sunday morning which is eucharistic. The Parish Communion movement, which gained strength after the First World War, sought to reinstate the primitive Christian emphasis on the eucharist. The Liturgical Movement, an ecumenical impulse to restore worship as the primary task of the church, has had a major impact in bringing about common texts across denominations. The Roman Catholic Church accepted vernacular worship after Vatican II in 1962.

In the Church of England there have been moves towards liturgical revision since the 1928 Prayer Book, which tried to reinstate the catholic 'shape' of the eucharist over Cranmer's 1552 pattern. An alliance of Evangelicals and jingoistic MPs ensured that Parliament threw it out. In the 1960s the present era of liturgical reform began, with a period of 'loose-leaf liturgy', with Series 2 and Series 3 booklets culminating in the ASB in 1980.

(b) Informal Approaches

The rise of the parish communion also posed problems for those who did not wish to be so committed, and 'Family Services' were in effect invented to deal with this issue from the late 1960s onwards. They were further influenced by the Charismatic movement in the 1970s and later which encouraged a new spontaneity and freedom in worship. The *Patterns for Worship* resource book (1994) and the *Service of the Word* which is a directory not a text, were signs of significant change which recognised the inflexibility and often inappropriate nature of the ASB in an increasingly 'missionary' context. The late twentieth century was also marked by experiments in 'alternative' worship aimed at teenagers and early twenties but not appealing exclusively to them. This movement's strength was shown in its ability to survive the scandal associated with its initial leading example, the 'Nine o' clock Service' in Sheffield.

(c) St Gregory's – a time capsule?

There are signs of all the centuries in St Gregory's, but it would be fair to say that the future remains hard to predict. *Common Worship* attempts to retain some coherence in Anglican worship by emphasising the 'family likeness' of its liturgy. Is it possible that we may be in a situation similar to the late fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, where spirituality is largely focused outside the rituals of the church? If so, will *Common Worship* make the difference? At St Gregory's there are interesting signs too of a closer link with the natural world through the Church yard project, recovering an emphasis on creation-spirituality which was officially lost at the Reformation but which has remained significant in popular spirituality ever since. The Millennium window reflects the celebrations that marked the beginning of the third Christian millennium, but its very abstraction raises questions about the meaning of the future.

(d) The postmodern renewal of ritual

Many today see a revival of ritual responses at the expense of the word, which has dominated since the invention of printing in the sixteenth century and helped give rise to the Reformation out of which the Church of England was born. It may be that the influences of the Catholic revival in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries makes much clearer the relationship of Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, situating the Church of England between Catholic and Protestant in a new way. But what liturgical provision will help to express the fragmented spirituality of twenty-first century England? The sociologist Andrew Walker reflects:

We are on the way to postmodernity, and already we are caught in an electronic field of blinding imagery and synthesized sound. Where are our candles, smells and electric bells? Where are our images of light and shade, our music of splendour, our divine dramas, the sacred dance? We have a story, but no one can see it...We lost our comfortable familiarity with rites and liturgies in the

literary age, but we are out of that now. It is time to sing again the sacred song and tell the ancient story to the gathered throng. Christians still doubt this, but New Agers already know it to be true. Already they dream of Avalon, these spiritual nomads looking for home. (*Telling the Story* (SPCK 1996) pp.197-8)

The advent of *Common Worship* may make us ask again, 'How do we tell the tale of God today?'

Postscript: *lex orandi, lex credendi*

T.S.Eliot wrote that

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a Winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.

('Little Gidding' V)

Standing, sitting or kneeling in a church like St Gregory's Offchurch the sense of the past seeping from the walls, tangible and with its own characteristic smell can be almost overpowering. Christianity, it is universally agreed, is a religion of the word; its teachings are recorded in the Bible, its theological traditions handed down in writing, a practice dating from its earliest years, when the letters of Paul and other apostles were preserved and collected together. But Christianity is also more than a religion of the word. As John said, it is about the 'word made flesh', incarnation, and the expression of words and thoughts, doctrines and beliefs in ritual and symbol, painting and architecture, is perhaps the most significant way in which the faith has been communicated for the majority of worshippers down the centuries. In a church like St Gregory's, the word is made stone, it is made symbol, it is made colour, it is made light, it is made bread and it is made wine.

The Church of England has always understood itself, since its inception in the sixteenth century, as a liturgical church, which follows a set pattern in its worship. In doing so it has always seen, as Crammer did, the vital truth that actions speak louder than words.

How should we understand the activities that contribute to make up our worship? The American writer Eugene Peterson speaks of prayer as a tool, mostly made of words: 'All the tools are essential: the plow for farming, the book for learning, pots for cooking, prayers for believing.' But prayers are tools, unlike other tools, for being and becoming, not doing or getting like washing machines or computers. 'At the center of the whole enterprise of being human, prayers are the primary technology' writes Peterson. 'Prayers are tools that God uses to work his will in our bodies and souls. Prayers are tools that we use to collaborate in his work with us.' It is the Psalms, he suggests, that are the 'toolbox. The Psalms are the best tools available for working the faith – one hundred and fifty carefully crafted prayers that deal with the great variety of operations that God carries on in us.' (Eugene Peterson *Answering God: Learning to Pray from the Psalms* (Harper Collins 1989) pp.1-3.) If the psalms were the toolbox of ancient Israel, so our own liturgy can usefully be seen as the toolbox which we have inherited from two thousand years of Christian worship. It is the collection of things that have enabled a Christian encounter with God to take place and sustained that encounter in the past. They may not serve today. Or ancient things may serve again. Often we try to reinvent them. But always we must remember for whose benefit they are: 'Tools are not the most important thing about us; God is' (Peterson)

Before we leave the Psalms, it is worth reflecting that they are themselves liturgical. Three things point to this: fifty-five Psalms have the heading 'to the choirmaster/leader', which implies that someone was in charge of their use within worship; twenty-nine psalms have instructions specifying the sort of instruments to be used; finally, in thirty-two of the Psalms the word *selah* occurs as some sort of notation (though nobody is quite sure what it means).

To change the analogy, George Guiver, a member of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield asks this question:

Why do two friends play cards? For the sheer pleasure of it. But wherein lies the pleasure? Perhaps in the challenge and the sense of competition. But why should that be enjoyable? Ultimately, it must be because you are coming to grips with another person. A game of cards is distinguished from playing patience in that the game is raised into the more quickened level of *relationships*. Games are a way of relating. (George Guiver *CR Faith in Momentum* (SPCK 1990) p.9)

Guiver sees liturgy and ritual also as a way of relating. He notes that

A card game is essentially rigid in its rules and competitive in spirit. It seems to be superficial and stuck, a rigmarole for whiling away the time. A card game *can* be all of those things. But it can also be a powerful and gripping way of relating to another or to a group, engaging such vital levels that it leaves us pleased, refreshed and changed. This is largely through the come-and-go with other people which it enables.

In exactly the same way in the life of the Church, rituals, routines and conventions can seem rigid, nonsensical and childish. This may, however, be because we fail to see their capacity to foster the chemistry of being human, a capacity that can transcend more ordinary ways of relating to each other and to God. (p.12)

Guiver argues that is by praying *together* and experiencing the presence of God as a group, as the body of Christ, that we go deeper in our understanding of God. The 'card game' of liturgical forms, inherited from the past, will help us to know God better, and at the same time link us with the church of the past and the future.

Michael Ramsey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote in one of his early books that 'If...the Lord's prayer and the phrase "through Jesus Christ" be interpreted in the whole light of the New Testament, then clearly Christian prayer is primarily...*liturgical*. It is the sharing by men in the one action of Christ, through their dying to their own egotisms as they are joined in one Body with his death and resurrection.' (A.M.Ramsey *The Gospel & the Catholic Church* (Longmans 1936) p.94.) So liturgy's main focus is not (or should not be) our 'worship experience,' which is the act of using the tools, or playing the card game. The important part of liturgy is the telling the story of God's acts, again and again and again, as the Psalms did and as Christian worship has done since its beginning, supremely in the eucharist. The New Testament scholar CFD Moule once wrote: 'the solid fact of what God has done is always the "perch" (so to speak) from which Christian prayer takes its flight and to which it returns.' Liturgy, then, may be described as a tool for telling the tale of God.

In the Anglican tradition a key concept is *lex orandi, lex credendi* a Latin phrase which means 'the law of praying establishes the law of believing' or, 'what we pray forms what we believe.' This is a phrase coined in the mid fifth century; the principle it seeks to establish is that worship and liturgy reflect and express doctrine. But which is the dominant partner? Does theology determine liturgy or *vice versa*? In general in Anglicanism, liturgy has determined theology from Thomas Cranmer onwards, and therefore a set and approved form of liturgy has been seen as a safeguard for the telling of the tale of God. Cranmer himself is the major figure in establishing this understanding: 'if it can be said that anyone is the definitive Anglican theologian, then that person is Thomas Cranmer. Cranmer, however, was not a theologian in the sense of somebody who produced systematic reflections upon theological topics. He was, rather, a priest and a pastor; and, as Archbishop of Canterbury, an administrator and politician...His theology is formulated (1) in terms of the selection, arrangement, and composition of the prayers that are prayed constantly by Christian people, and (2) in terms of the rubrics which stipulate the permissible variations in the prayers and the ceremonial practice which accompanies them.' (W.Taylor Stevenson 'Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi' in S.Sykes & J.Booty (eds) *The Study of Anglicanism* (SPCK 1988) p.175).

The Declaration of Assent is made by Clergy and Readers when they are licensed by a bishop. The preface to the Declaration mentions three historic formularies of the Church of England:

1. The *Book of Common Prayer*
2. The Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons (that is, the ordination services)
3. The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

Significantly, the first of these two are liturgical texts. The Church of England has traditionally associated its doctrine very closely with its worship. The connection can work both ways: belief influencing worship and worship influencing belief.

Although we are speaking here of Anglican worship, the Reformers, especially Cranmer, saw themselves as standing within a stream of tradition which reached back to the Apostles. There was no sense that they were inventing liturgy afresh, though as we have seen, for doctrinal reasons they took liberties with the arrangement of the material which they had to hand.

As we have told the story of St Gregory's and used it as a lense through which to focus the history of worship in England there is a single stunning fact which remains to be brought out: in this place for at least 1300 years, people have encountered God. Used rightly, liturgy can make us more aware of the presence of God, but there is also a sense that it is just the wrapping which we must penetrate through in order to feel him. The Anglican tradition has a long history of priests who are also poets. Perhaps it is appropriate to leave the last word with the twentieth-century Welshman, R.S.Thomas, in his poem 'Kneeling', which reminds us of the power of silence in an ancient and holy place:

Moments of great calm,
Kneeling before an altar
Of wood in a stone church
In summer, waiting for the God
To speak; the air a staircase
For silence; the sun's light
Ringing me, as though I acted
A great role. And the audiences
Still; all that close throng
Of spirits waiting, as I,
For the message.
 Prompt me, God;
But not yet. When I speak,
Though it be you who speak
Through me, something is lost.
The meaning is in the waiting.

Further reading

This is not a definitive list of books, but simply those that I have found stimulating to read in the past!

General

- Chadwick, H. (ed.) *Not Angels but Anglicans* (Canterbury Press 2000) is an excellent and highly readable collection of short chapters about the history of the Church of England. Easy to 'dip into'.
- Collins, M. & Price, M. *The Story of Christianity* (Dorling Kindersley 1999) A 'coffee table' book which gives a concise overview of 2000 years.
- Edwards, D.L. *Christian England* (Collins 1989) A very readable history.
- Earey, M. & Myers, G. *Common Worship Today* (London, GROW, 2001) A well-illustrated guide to *Common Worship* with substantial well-presented material on the history of worship.
- S.Gilley & W.J.Sheils (eds) *A History of Religion in Britain* (Oxford 1994) attempts, in a series of short essays, to give an impression of what religious life was like in different eras.
- Howse, C. *AD – 2000 years of Christianity* (SPCK 1999)

In addition, the books accompanying Simon Schama's recent TV series *A History of Britain* provide a wealth of well-told material on the general history of Britain (BBC 2000/2001/2003).

On Offchurch this is invaluable:

Swanzy, K.T. *The Offchurch Story* (Abbey Press, 1968). Available in the 'Old Library'.

The Early Church

- Bradshaw, P. *Early Christian Worship* (SPCK 1996) Excellent short introduction.
- Chadwick, H. *The Early Church* (Penguin 1967) has a solid final chapter on the development of early worship.
- Hurtado, Larry *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Paternoster 1999) Chapter 2, 'Features of Early Christian Worship' is a very helpful summary of the NT evidence.
- Martin, Ralph *Worship in the Early Church* (2nd ed. Marshall, Morgan & Scott 1974) remains a thorough survey of the NT material, though now out of print and becoming dated. More recently Martin has contributed a substantial article on 'Worship and Liturgy' to R.P.Martin & P.H.Davids *Dictionary of the later NT and its developments* (IVP 1997) pp.1224-1238 (this book is available in the Bridges-Readers' Library).

The Conversion of the English

- Bede *A History of the English Church and People* is a wonderful book, available in a number of editions. The most accessible is probably the translation by Bertram Colgrave published by Oxford World's Classics. The Penguin edition is still worth reading, though the translation by Leo Sherley-Price is rather stilted. Beware, though, Bede has a number of theological axes to grind, and should be read with care!
- Fletcher, R. *The Conversion of Europe: from paganism to Christianity 371-1386AD* (Harper Collins 1997) is a very readable account of how the whole of Europe became Christian. Chapters 1, 4 and 6 deal with Britain.
- Walker, I.W. *Mercia and the Making of England* (Stroud 2000) largely concentrates on the period after Offa.
- Zaluckyj, S. *Mercia: the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Central England* (Logaston 2001) is a fascinating though slightly haphazard account.

The Medieval Church

- Duffy, E. *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale UP 1992) Part I is a superb and very detailed examination of the spirituality of late medieval England.
- Platt, C. *The Parish Churches of Medieval England* (Secker & Warburg 1981) is a social history of the medieval parish and its church.
- In addition it is well worth visiting the following web-sites which are concerned with Coventry's 'lost' medieval cathedral:
- <http://www.coventryphoenix.org.uk/phoenix/project.nsf/pages/archaeology.html>
- <http://www.channel4.com/history/timeteam/archive/2001cov.html>. The site, close to the present cathedral, now with an excellent visitor centre, is also well worth a visit.

The Reformation and Seventeenth Century

There are many recommendations here, because it is useful (if you have time) to grasp the issues and processes of the Reformation since we still live with the consequences of some of them!

Chadwick, O. *The Reformation* (Penguin 1964) is a standard textbook introduction to the Reformation in Europe. Chapter 4 deals with England to 1559.

Dickens, A.G. *The English Reformation* (Batsford 1964) is now a generation out of date, but well written and still worth reading.

Duffy, E. *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale UP 1992) Part II provides a highly detailed argument that the reformation was a massive disruption of popular piety.

Duffy, E. *The Voices of Morebath* (London 2001) is a wonderful exploration of the Reformation in a single Exmoor village through the records of its parish priest.

Haigh, C. *English Reformations* (OUP 1993) is now probably the standard textbook on the Reformation.

MacCulloch, D. *Thomas Cranmer* (Yale UP 1996) A superb biography of Cranmer which gives a real flavour of the period and the issues. Shows what lay behind the Prayer Books. Perhaps a bit detailed unless you already know some of the background to the Reformation (which could be gained by reading Chadwick).

MacCulloch, D. *Tudor Church Militant* (Penguin Books 1999/2001) More detailed, though shorter, than MacCulloch's Cranmer biography, it explains well the impact of and programme behind the reformation of Edward VI.

MacCulloch, D. *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490 – 1700* (Allen Lane 2004) an excellent, though large, picture of the Reformation as a whole, setting England in a European context. Note that MacCulloch sees the reformation as extending right through the seventeenth century.

Marsh, C. *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England* (Macmillan 1998) an accessible and even-handed introduction to recent Reformation studies.

Munden, A. *The Coventry Martyrs* (Coventry Archives 1997) is a booklet available from the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum.

Nicholson, A. *The Power and the Glory: Jacobean England and the making of the King James Bible* (Harper 2003) a beautifully written and fascinating introduction to the people and personalities behind the making of the Authorised Version.

Procter, F. & Frere, W.H. *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (Macmillan 1901) No longer fulfilling the 'New' part of its title, nevertheless remains a useful guide to the compilation of the Prayer Book. Often to be found cheaply in second-hand bookshops.

Scarlsbrick, J.J. *The Reformation and the English People* (Blackwell 1984) was the first 'Catholic revisionist' attempt to look at the reformation as less than inevitable, and remains helpful.

Starkey, D. *Elizabeth: Apprenticeship* (Chatto & Windus 2000) Highly readable biography of Elizabeth, but dealing only with the years up to 1567. Chapters 41 to 43 deal with the religious settlement. Starkey comments that 'If the result reads like a historical thriller I shall be well pleased.'

A wide range of internet resources on the Reformation is available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook02.html>, and at http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/state/church_reformation/index.shtml

The Eighteenth Century and after

Bebbington, D.W. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London 1989) is the definitive history of the Evangelical movement.

Brown, C.G. *The Death of Christian Britain* (Routledge 2001) suggests that the real decline of Christian Britain has only happened since the 1960s, and makes the reader recognise the huge change in religious culture since then.

Chadwick, O. *The Victorian Church* (London 1966, 1970) is beautifully written, though now rather dated. Still worth reading.

Hastings, A. *A History of English Christianity 1920-2000* (revised ed. SPCK 2001) A wonderfully written book with a wealth of learning lightly worn.

Hoppen, K.T. *The Mid-Victorian Generation (1846-1886)* (Oxford 1998) Chapter 12 gives a good short introduction to the Victorian religious mentality.

Newsome, D. *The Victorian World Picture* (London 1997) Chapter 4 is a helpful impressionistic introduction to Victorian faith.

Trollope, A. *The Barchester Novels* remain a delightful contemporary evocation of the Victorian provincial church. *The Warden* is the first and easiest (as well as the shortest!).

There is an excellent web-site on 'The Wesleys & their times':

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/index.html>

The following web-site offers a wealth of material and references:

<http://65.107.211.206/victorian/religion/relov.html> – religion in Victorian Britain

Keble's assize sermon which began the Oxford Movement, is available at:

<http://65.107.211.206/victorian/religion/sermons/apostasy.html>

Charles Miller's brief history of the Oxford Movement is at

<http://www.littlechurch.org/oxford.html>

Appendix – the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Declaration of Assent

The Thirty Nine Articles, 1571, 1662

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in the unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

III. Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died for us, and was buried; so also it is to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

IV. Of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

V. Of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The First Book of Esdras, The Second Book of Esdras, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Preacher, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less.

And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras, The Fourth Book of Esdras, The Book of Tobias, The Book of Judith, The rest of the Book of Esther, The Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Story of Susanna, Of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees.

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

VII. Of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

VIII. Of the Creeds.

The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

The original Article given Royal assent in 1571 and reaffirmed in 1662, was entitled,

"Of the Three Creeds; and began as follows, "The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed.ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

IX. Of Original or Birth Sin.

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, **fro/nhma sarko/s**, (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

X. Of Free Will.

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

XI. Of the Justification of Man.

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. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely expressed in the Homily of Justification.

XII. Of Good Works.

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII. Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

XIV. Of Works of Supererogation.

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they not only render unto God as much as they are bound to, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

XV. Of Christ alone without Sin.

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin (as Saint John saith) was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

XVI. Of Sin after Baptism.

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XVII. Of Predestination and Election

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.

XVIII. Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

XIX. Of the Church.

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

XX. Of the Authority of the Church.

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

XXI. Of the Authority of General Councils.

[The Twenty-first of the former Articles is omitted; because it is partly of a local and civil nature, and is provided for, as to the remaining parts of it, in other Articles.]

The original 1571, 1662 text of this Article, omitted in the version of 1801, reads as follows:

"General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture."

XXII. Of Purgatory.

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

XXIII. Of Ministering in the Congregation

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

XXIV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understandeth.

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people.

XXV. Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments are not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

XXVI. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments.

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

XVII. Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.

The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

XVIII. Of the Lord's Supper.

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XXIX. Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

XXX. Of both Kinds.

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

XXXI. Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.

The Offering of Christ once made in that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

XXXII. Of the Marriage of Priests.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

XXXIII. Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided.

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath the authority thereunto.

XXXIV. Of the Traditions of the Church.

It is not necessary that the Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others

may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

XXXV. Of the Homilies.

The Second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

Of the Names of the Homilies

- 1 Of the right Use of the Church.
- 2 Against Peril of Idolatry.
- 3 Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches.
- 4 Of good Works: first of Fasting.
- 5 Against Gluttony and Drunkenness.
- 6 Against Excess of Apparel.
- 7 Of Prayer.
- 8 Of the Place and Time of Prayer.
- 9 That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue.
- 10 Of the reverend Estimation of God's Word.
- 11 Of Alms-doing.
- 12 Of the Nativity of Christ.
- 13 Of the Passion of Christ.
- 14 Of the Resurrection of Christ.
- 15 Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.
- 16 Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
- 17 For the Rogation-days
- 18 Of the State of Matrimony.
- 19 Of Repentance.
- 20 Against Idleness.
- 21 Against Rebellion.

[This Article is received in this Church, so far as it declares the Book of Homilies to be an explication of Christian doctrine, and instructive in piety and morals. But all references to the constitution and laws of England are considered as inapplicable to the circumstances of this Church; which also suspends the order for the reading of said Homilies in churches, until a revision of them may be conveniently made, for the clearing of them, as well from obsolete words and phrases, as from the local references.]

XXXVI. Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

The Book of Consecration of Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, as set forth by the General Convention of this Church in 1792, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it any thing that, of itself, is superstitious and ungodly. And, therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to said Form, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

The original 1571, 1662 text of this Article reads as follows:

"The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it any thing, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered."

XXXVII. Of the Power of the Civil Magistrates.

The Power of the Civil Magistrate extendeth to all men, as well Clergy as Laity, in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the Gospel, to pay respectful obedience to the Civil Authority, regularly and legitimately constituted.

The original 1571, 1662 text of this Article reads as follows:

"The King's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England, and other his Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction. Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers."

The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England.

The Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offenses.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars."

XXXVIII. Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common.

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same; as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXXIX. Of a Christian Man's Oath.

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge, that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching in justice, judgment, and truth.

The Declaration of Assent

The Declaration of Assent is made by deacons, priests and bishops of the Church of England when they are ordained and on each occasion when they take up a new appointment. Readers make the declaration when they are admitted and when they are licensed.

Preface

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. In the declaration you are about to make, will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care?

Declaration of Assent

I [A, B] do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.