

THE
PRAYER BOOK
PATTERN

A Consideration

BY
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THE EXCHANGES

"All the exchanges of heaven lie open."

Charles Williams

In the beginning GOD . . .

THIS dramatic opening of the Bible is so familiar to us that there is sometimes a danger of assuming a corresponding intimacy of acquaintance with the idea which it conveys. But indeed, there are already two ideas in the four words above quoted, for "beginning" and "God" are descriptive of two different planes of existence. God, as the word is used in Christian theology, has in himself no beginning. The book Genesis opens on the hither side of eternity: God has already, so to say, looked over the edge of eternity, and in that very act began beginning; beginning of time, since we read that there was evening and morning; and beginning of space, since God "saw", and as he saw, we may without irreverence infer that he also looked. This is not a purely academic *jeu d'esprit*, for in eternity vision occurs without looking. To look is an act; to see is an experience. For the one we use the organ, for the other the faculty, of sight; they represent different levels and different contents of consciousness. An act is a manifesting limitation, a limiting display. It is that very limitation which in certain cases causes surprise at something unexpected from previous or ordinary experience, for instance, so-called miracles. Thus God has already limited himself by the external act of looking "at" creation. We may usefully remind ourselves in this connection of the double aspect of all our own activities. They not only *reveal* the entity which lies behind them, but they also *limit* that entity in the same way that an "exact statement isolates a single aspect of fact".¹ If for instance, my fist, travelling outwards with speed and precision, finds itself sharply arrested by my neighbour's eye, my whole being may be suffused with satisfaction at the impact; but though the blow makes an open demonstration of my view of that particular matter, it also limits me to that particular activity. It allows no scope for or expression to my other capacities or predilections. Thus all my actions are imperfect in the sense that no

¹ Austin Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images*, 1949, p. 19.

single one contains the complete expression of all the possibilities of my nature. Similarly we may speak of God's "acts" as limitations of his Being. The midday hymn which addresses God as "Thyself unmoved, all motion's source" expresses the difference between eternal and contingent existence with admirable felicity. In eternity there is no "movement", not because God is static or motionless, but because he is that plenitude of life in which every movement is the complete exhibition and satisfaction of every part of his Being, and therefore, unlike partial movement, causes no displacement. In him there is no time-space limitation because every impulse is the perfection of infinite completeness.

Within this limitless satisfaction of Being, God-in-eternity conceived the splendour of a panorama of powers of his own nature, in separately-subsisting yet mutually interdependent beauty. By an act of his will he issued in creation, for creation is, in fact, God-in-action. It is still God: God limited by the isolation of certain of his own attributes in such a way that they no longer express the totality of his Being. Perhaps it bears resemblance to a scientific experiment, when, for instance, a botanist dismantles a flower in order to appreciate more fully the individual properties of the constituent parts. His action, indeed, results in death to the subject of the experiment, whereas the former was wholly destined to the framing of fresh forms of life. In the event contingency resulted: time-space appeared.

And God saw that it was good—as how could it well be otherwise? seeing that it was part of his own nature. William Law says:¹

"Time was in eternity before it became days and years . . . time is neither a part of eternity nor broken off from it, nor come out of it.

"The essences of our souls can never cease to be because they never began to be, and nothing can live eternally but that which hath lived from all Eternity."

And as creation did not issue out of nothing but out of God, so neither was it devoid of purpose. Father Benson begins a series of addresses with the contemplation of the Word in the bosom of the Father in the hidden mystery of the Triune Life; issuing thence as the Word manifest in creation for the express purpose of his own glory. It is good to remind ourselves of this primary purpose, and to remember that the Incarnation was foreordained before time began. In creation God first separated some of his inherent qualities, and finally breathed into man his own life so that the creature is "nothing else but a limited

¹ *The Pocket William Law*, 1950, pp. 78, 75, 74.

participation of the nature of the Creator".¹ And it was in order that through this creature of Divine Afflatus he might have, as it were, a point of attachment for the supreme climax of the creative act whereby the Godhead itself, by a self-limitation beyond our powers of conception, should be enabled, in the Person of the Word, to enter into creation in such a way as to reassume it into himself. The whole process is an issuing procession of glory whereby an ascending scale of Divine values is spread out for admiration and for responsive adoration till they are all caught up together into Very God himself, that they may in him re-enter the Eternity whence they came. Their whole being, from the least to the greatest, is absorbed in a continual ecstasy of worship; as how should they be otherwise? seeing that they are, in their degree, "powers of his own nature".²

This wonderful reciprocity of glory, God delighting in his act, creation responding in paeans of rapturous praise, is the background against which we have to consider the fact of the Fall. In the primal state the whole cosmos was in direct communication with God, acting under the impulse of his Will as the fingers of the trained typist will find their way about the keyboard without the intervention of conscious volition. It was "God" in essence and in response to the movements of his Being. We have not been told what may be the form or manner whereby the "incarnational" process reunites the rest of creation with eternity, but we do know that in the case of the angels and of man free choice, or free will, was the essential basis of co-operation in the Divine act; and that the terrestrial Incarnation-in-joy has become a Redemption-through-sorrow on account of the defection of man. The Fall describes the catastrophic change which occurred when man chose to ignore the stimuli reaching him from eternity and preferred to act on his own initiative. The typist's finger that persistently finds "c" instead of "r", that crosses the line from "h" to "g", affords a crude illustration of the nature of man's defiance. He was asserting an individualism which damaged his relationships both with God and with God-in-creation. He was not only falsifying the message received, but was also disfiguring the paper upon which he made the lying record. The resulting anarchy led not only to separation from God-in-eternity but also to distortion of his image in creation.

We sometimes forget the implications of the expulsion from Eden and the repelling angel with the flaming sword. Paradisial earth as God created it no longer exists in unregenerate man's experience; and

¹ Law, op. cit., p. 75.

² Ibid.

even when we make a serious effort we do not find it easy to visualize the cohesive solidarity of Eden. Man and beast were vegetarian; and of all sentient life man was given quasi-creative responsibility, for to "name" a thing is equivalent to giving it being. The relationship between man and God and between man and creation is not a double one by nature. In Eden man had direct approach to God as representative and subject-controller of all lesser forms of life; but duality, with all its involved complexities, was introduced when man betrayed his trust. Adam asserted his independence by misappropriation of a product of which he had been appointed guardian, and then proceeded further to abuse his relationship with God-in-creation by hiding behind a tree. But the shame which he inflicted on the tree by hiding behind it had to be expiated later by the second Adam displayed upon it. The tree was created neither to be a hiding-place nor a gibbet. Both uses were a violation of its primary life-giving functions. Thus Adam, by defiant insistence upon what he intended to be his own individualist advantage, made himself an obstacle both to the Creator and to the whole of creation, in the latter case bringing ruin where he had in a true sense been appointed coadjutor. Henceforth wherever he goes he finds thorns and thistles, *not* from God, nor created by God, but the product of his own misdirected creative capacity.

The most hideous disease to which man's body is prone is the cancer which is the leering external reproduction of that which every man has made, and makes, himself internally. The single cell becomes a group of cells, which exert their intrinsic reproductive capacity on their own initiative, disobeying the body's controlling impulses of restraint and thereby disfiguring instead of perfecting the organism of which they are a part; thence they continue until they have invaded not only contiguous tissues but distant regions; and this is an exact replica in method and result of the "original" sin of individualism. It is this "self"-will which was, and still is, man's own choice; his desire and determination to be separate, unique, privileged, different from others for his own advantage. Charles Williams in a nobly illuminating phrase says that "all the exchanges of heaven lie open".¹ It is imperative to grasp this intercommunication of the life of heaven, and of original and of regenerate earth. Heavenly intercourse depends upon mutual interchange to such a degree that our very virtues do not avail so much for ourselves as for others,² and our only hope of arrival

¹ *He Came Down from Heaven*, 1950, p. 76.

² Ps. 22. 30 (P.B.V.), "No man hath quickened his own soul".

in Heaven is in delighted complement with our pet aversion, whatever it (or they) may be; Protestant arms Catholic, fundamentalist the *demier cri*, as they press their happy way through Paradise. Our need of our antipathies is in direct proportion to the intensity of our distaste.

Separateness, of whatever kind, is an impossibility because there is no such thing in God himself. Not only is there no individualism in him, there is not so much as an I-Thou relationship—the very phrase betrays itself: first I, then God—for between the Father and the Son, as between the Son and the Father, there exists co-equally not a Principle but a Personality. And since in God there is no closed I-Thou, neither can there be such in God-in-creation, for God cannot create that which is at variance with his own essence. The unmediated approach to God is without Scriptural foundation. What, indeed, could be its purpose or outcome? An isolated unit, attached to God by his own efforts for himself as an end, is as impossible as is a complete physical isolationism. One could as soon imagine a myriad of separate cells in nervous contact with the brain but not integrated in the body. Their functional use would be non-existent and their support as discrete entities superfluous. Yet so precious in itself is every individual, so indispensable the deliberate choice and contribution of each, that the perfection of all awaits the ingathering of the very last.

There came a day when the Eden guardian lowered his flaming sword to the passage of the new Adam, who, entering of triumphal right, partook of the Tree of Life, which was thus restored to its original function. Thenceforward the way stands open to those who, entering into organic union with God-in-Incarnate-re-creation, pass inwards in the power of his new-imparted Life, as in the person of their original forefather they were driven out.

The reason for the possibility of this re-creation in the case of man, though not in the case of Lucifer, is suggested to us by the Scriptural accounts of the two Falls. In Revelation 12 we read that there was war in Heaven, that is, in the very presence of God himself. Lucifer's fall—by self-exaltation—was final, for he flaunted himself deliberately, open-eyed. His defiance was so complete and determined that he had to be removed by force. He was cast down to earth, which in some sort lies in his power; whence his ability to tempt man. Of the relationship between angels and men in the scheme of creation we possess few details, but their intercommunications are made evident; and Satan's jurisdiction on earth, even in his fallen state, was not controverted by our Lord. Here, indeed, lies a possible explanation at the

pictorial level of the problem raised for some minds by the undoubted presence of suffering in the world many ages before the appearance of *homo sapiens*. It may be that there was a redemptive element in the vocation even of the first Adam; that when God "put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it"¹ he was given the opportunity of releasing it from Satan's power. The creative "naming" of every creature may have deep significance. The destined closeness of intercourse between angels and men is plainly indicated both in the Old and New Testaments; and we may even feel that the instinctive craving of fallen man for sensible communion with the spirit world, through such forms of necromancy as are available to any given generation, is in itself a witness to the reality which is still sufficiently attested in the experience of holy persons throughout the ages.

The story of man's temptation is provided for us in the third chapter of Genesis; and we find that Satan was not so successful in his influence over man as he seems to have been in the case of some of his fellow-angels. Man, indeed, yielded to his solicitations, but he did so only half-heartedly: he was ashamed of himself, and, so far from munching his apple with jaunty bravado before God's eyes, when he heard the Lord God coming to receive the accustomed report of his day's stewardship, he ran away and hid. It was that very shame which became his glory, for it rendered him capable of regeneration: that act of contrition in running to the tree which spoke more loudly than words, "Here, here, have I sinned", was the earnest of his capacity for recovery, though many bitter ages were to pass before he was able to learn his utter *incapacity* to redeem himself.

It will be seen that the Scotist view is here adopted, that the Incarnation is the culminating point of the original creative act, and not a necessity superimposed by the catastrophe of sin. This seems to be both more rational and more in keeping with the dignity and majesty of God's purpose in the act of creation than the view more commonly held, which has a dangerously human ring about it. When the very Incarnation itself is held to be the result of sin it becomes so closely assimilated to the process of Redemption as to lead to the virtual identification of the two. One can well understand why this view is—and will remain—the more popular, for it is far more satisfying to the vanity and self-importance of sin-stained humanity. Where the Incarnation has no other purpose than redemption man remains the centre of the stage. However much he may smother it in crape, he is

¹ Gen. 2. 15.

still fondling Marmion's doll of self-love¹ by succumbing to the temptation of making redemption and salvation an end in themselves. Yet in fact when redemption has accomplished its purpose and has restored us to the perfection with which we were endowed in Adam, we have only come to the beginning of our course. Only now is our true function apparent and capable of being exercised. Only now can the Incarnation sweep us upwards in that climax of worship for which we were created.

Against this background of the purpose of our existence we turn to the Book of Common Prayer to see how far it provides us with worship suitable both at the Incarnational and Redemptive levels: pure praise, that is, of God for his own self alone; and also humbler, less exacting forms suited to raise and sustain the frailty of fallen man in his passage towards this supreme vocation.

¹ "Self-love is a doll which one nurses. When it is proud one dresses it up finely; when it is sad one dresses it in black, but fondles it all the more." Thibaut's *Life of Dom Marmion*, p. 8.

THE CYCLE OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

THERE are many to-day unfamiliar with the Book of Common Prayer who find its arrangement complicated and confusing. The key to the full understanding of the edifice of prayer which it contains is to realize that the centre of the book is also the focal point of its worship. In the middle, as a jewel in its setting, we find the Order of the Holy Communion, the Offering, and all the other Offices are grouped round it. This word is a convenient and accurate term to use instead of the somewhat ponderous title employed in the Prayer Book, for in fact the Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, is an Offering whichever way we look at it; whether as an Offering to God from us of the perpetual memorial of Christ's death and of ourselves in him, or as an Offering from God to us of his own self in Christ. From either aspect our Lord is the meeting-point. The other Offices do not stand alone, nor do they attain their fullness of meaning without this central act; and the various dislocations which do, in practice, occur have served very greatly to obscure the unity and coherence of the whole scheme, so that where sense has been lost, confusion of thought and incomprehension have supervened.

If, then, we start from the Offering as the centre, we shall find that the other Offices are associated with it in three easily-defined groups.

(1). *The Daily Cycle of Public Prayer and Thanksgiving*

The full daily Cycle consists of Mattins (Morning Prayer), Litany, HOLY COMMUNION, and Evensong (Evening Prayer). Schematically it may be shown as follows:

		<i>Thanksgiving and anticipatory Preparation</i>		
<i>Preparation</i>	<i>Offering</i>			
Mattins	→ Litany	→ HOLY COMMUNION	← Evensong	→

The Evening Service looks in both directions. It is a thanksgiving for the Offering of the day now past; yet although a point of rest with regard to that which has been accomplished, it is not a full stop (for God's praises never cease), but is also a point of departure for the

day that is to come. It is the "second" Evensong for to-day and the "first" Evensong for to-morrow. In Jewry the day begins at sundown, as we read in Genesis 1, "there was evening and morning" one day, not "morning and evening". Thus it is that the "Church unsleeping, While earth rolls onward into light", both rests and rises in her Evening Prayer.

This pattern, however, of Mattins, Holy Communion, Evensong, has been considerably blurred by the widespread introduction of the "Early Service", whereby it often happens that Mattins is left alone as a service complete in itself in the middle of the morning, its anticipatory character no longer apparent. Yet whatever the local problems may be, the fundamental rhythm needs to be kept clearly in mind. This daily cycle is the Christian culmination of the Jewish synagogue and Temple worship, the blending of the new and old according to Dominical injunction; therefore to be jealously guarded from innovations which destroy its character. True, the Litany and Holy Communion are not ordered to be said daily, but this does not alter the essential pattern. It merely emphasizes the primary Godward aspect of the whole cycle, that it is in its entirety a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; since Mattins and Evensong, that minimum which is in practice possible everywhere, are never to be omitted, be there any congregation or not;¹ and we have to be alive to the temptation of

¹ Mortimer, however, says as follows: "To take part in the Church's worship is the layman's highest privilege and duty. That worship is the work of the clergy and people together, each in their own role. In no sense is it the work of the clergy only. The presence and participation of the laity are an essential element. Without them, the worship offered by the clergyman alone is no more than his own private devotions—linked indeed to the worship of the Church, but not itself the worship of the Church. If the laity be not there, or no other clergyman to take their place and play their part, there has been no worship of that local church offered." R. C. Mortimer, *The Duties of a Churchman*, 1951, p. 31.

This suggests that the Daily Office, ordered by the Prayer Book to be said in church, after due ringing of the bell, could be equally well said by the clergyman in his study or bedroom if no one responds to the bell's summons. Yet there are innumerable parish priests who have supposed themselves to be set free from earning their living in secular employments for the express purpose of offering the Church's worship to God on weekdays on behalf of, and in spirit with, their parishioners deprived, by their necessary avocations, from coming themselves "bodily" to church. Are we to understand that the offering of the clergyman made in obedience to, and in conformity with, the Church's regulations, is of only private significance till an overslept arrival at the Benedictus (to mention a concrete instance) allows him to offer the *praeces* as the Church's worship in that locality on that day?

It seems incidentally to raise an interesting point in casuistry as to the relative value of virtue and villainy, if faithfulness is unavailing till reinforced by sloth.

adapting the Liturgy to the congregation instead of training the congregation into a fuller understanding of its meaning.

In this connection it is of interest to note that F. E. Brightman¹ gives a description of the Bidding of the Bedes, which, though not in the Book of Common Prayer or recognized by any Act of Uniformity, is traditional and customary, and appertains to the integrity of the English Rite. The suggestion is that where a service of greater flexibility than the liturgical Offices is needed it might be possible to revive the "Prone", "a group of vernacular devotions, instructions and notifications, attached to the sermon" of which the Bidding of the Bedes has usually formed a part. A comprehensive Prone would contain the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, Biddings, and Sermon, though the order, nature, and number of components are subject to variation. There has never been a fixed form for the Biddings of universal obligation, so that scope is left for individual initiative, and throughout there would be short admonitions and explanations prefixed to the several items. The Prone is thus seen to be in some sense supplementary to the Liturgy, supplying the more homely side of man's needs. The Liturgy is impersonal, with the rather rarefied atmosphere that the concentrated attention on the supernatural tends to produce: the Prone is frankly "pew-centred", and represents that element which Nonconformity has sought to re-establish.

The results on liturgical worship of the suppression of this aspect of public prayer at the Reformation (by the discontinuance of the various ceremonies associated with the different seasons of the Church's year) have not been happy; for such is the craving of humanity for the colour and the warmth of "sensible" devotion, that in practice liturgical Offices have with considerable frequency been converted into services which are liturgical only in name, and the edification of the casual Sunday worshipper has taken precedence of other considerations. A restoration of the balance and dignity of the Liturgy proper would be more easily accomplished if the difference in nature between Liturgy and Prone were more fully realized.

(2). *Public Occasional Offices*

These Offices are not part of the Daily Cycle in the sense of being in daily use, but their "public" nature is made manifest from their relationship to this cycle when they do occur. They are embedded within its structure.

¹ *The English Rite* (2nd edn. revised, 1921), Vol. II, p. 1037.

(i) *Baptism*

This Order has a double aspect, personal and corporate. That the latter, the regeneration of the individual and his admission into the supernatural family of the Body of Christ, is the more important is seen from the position occupied by the Order in relation to the Daily Cycle. It is an integral part of Mattins or Evensong, being placed after the second Lesson and before the Creed, i.e., within the specifically "Christian" portion of the Order,¹ though necessarily before the actual declaration of Christian faith. It is the first possible moment at which the unbaptized can "pierce" the Christian cycle of Offering: this once done, the newly-baptized has both the right and the duty to take his part in the complete cycle.

There is no provision in the Book of Common Prayer for the private Baptism of any, whether children or adults, except in case of urgency. Further, the rubrics in the Order for private Baptism require that children should be baptized not "longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other Holy-day falling between, *unless upon a great and reasonable cause, to be approved by the Curate*". If a child so baptized does live, it is to be brought into the Church that "the Congregation may be certified of the true form of Baptism". The public character of the Order is being vindicated. It is the business of the Congregation. Schematically the position of Baptism in the structure of Anglican public worship is seen as follows:

Mattins or Evensong

Second Lesson—→BAPTISM—→Benedictus or Nunc Dimittis—→Creed

(ii) *A Communion*

This Order, when it occurs, follows the Litany, and is therefore a part of the preparation for the Offering.

Mattins—→Litany—→Communion—→HOLY COMMUNION

The Communion is not always considered to be an act of charity, so it may be germane to quote some words which throw a helpful light upon its use:

"S. Thomas teaches that 'correctio fratrum', brotherly correction,

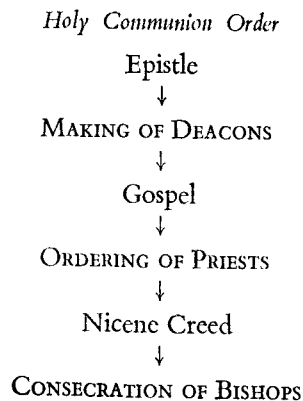
¹ Bearing in mind the fact that everything which precedes the versicle "O God, make speed to save us" is an unbalancing, and mainly unfortunate, addition attached to the primitive Office.

is one of the exercises of charity. In the Communion Service this is practised upon the world by the Prayer Book. Without equivocation, the world's standards are corrected and the sin of the world is judged. Based upon Holy Scripture, there is in this service the most solemn denunciation of such grave sins as dishonesty, injustice, immorality, lack of trust in God, unmercifulness, fornication, adultery, covetousness, idolatry, slander, drunkenness and extortion. Whatever compromise with these sins may have been made by individual Christians, so long as this service is ordered to be used on Ash Wednesday, the Church can never be accused of indifference and indecision towards them. They are stated and condemned."¹

It is, in fact, the equivalent of a buoy upon a hidden rock, or of a red triangle at a dangerous corner, the omission of which would be the very reverse of charitable. Hence its position in the Liturgy.

(iii) *Making of Deacons, Ordering of Priests, Consecration of Bishops*
(*Coronation of Sovereign*)

These, like Baptism, are personal but public Offices. As Baptism extends the frontiers of the Church by adding new members, so these set apart certain members to perpetuate its organic functioning. Their dignity and solemnity is such that they are actually within the structure



of the Holy Communion Order itself, forming an integral part of the central rite. The fact that this is indeed the centre of all our public prayer is still further demonstrated by the varying degrees of propin-

¹ H. W. E. Slade, S.S.J.E., "The Book of Common Prayer": *The Cowley Evangelist*, March 1950.

quity which they hold with regard to the climax of the service. The Making of Deacons takes place after the Epistle; the Ordaining of Priests after the Gospel; the Consecration of Bishops after the Nicene Creed. The drama unfolds itself before our eyes.

There are two other Offices in occasional use, though not incorporated in the Book of Common Prayer, which share with the Consecration of Bishops the austere dignity of taking place after the Nicene Creed, namely, the Coronation of a Sovereign, and Profession under Religious Vows. In a more solitary and individual way even than Deacons and Priests these persons have each in their degree a specialized function to perform in the economy of the Church's life. The Bishop is the Father in God, responsible for the spiritual welfare of the flock; the Sovereign is charged with the maintenance of Christian standards within his realm; the Religious is the hidden powerhouse of ceaseless and intensive prayer on behalf of all: each needs the peculiar grace which they receive for their several vocations, and of each it is especially true that in their vocations they live unto others, not to themselves.

(3). *Private Occasional Offices*

These Offices are differentiated from the Occasional Offices which we have just been considering in that they form no part of the Daily Cycle. It is expected that the Holy Communion will be celebrated in connection with them, but the two services remain distinct and are only placed in juxtaposition. The Occasional Order is not found "in the course" of the Mattins—Litany—Holy Communion—Evensong rhythm, much less within the structure of any of its component parts. This shows that these particular Orders are individual and particular, not, as in the case of Baptism and Holy Orders, an intrinsic part of the common life of the Church. They are four in number: the Solemnization of Matrimony, the Churcing of Women, the Visitation of the Sick, and the Burial of the Dead. There is no mention of Holy Communion in connection with the last in the Book of 1661, but special Epistles and Gospels were provided in 1928.

[With regard to the Burial of the Dead, it may be of interest to compare the Order of the rites as provided in 1549, 1552, and 1661. The Order of 1549 is the traditional rite reduced to its essential elements—1. Procession; 2. Deposition of the body and its symbolical covering, with intercessory prayer and thanksgiving; 3. Service of the Dead, reduced to a single Office, i.e., three Psalms, Lesson, Kyrie eleison, Lord's

Prayer, praeces, Collect; 4. Mass (as it was still called). In 1552 and 1661 this last-named (Mass) was reduced to the Collect (still so named), "O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .". The preceding prayer, "Almighty God with whom do live . . .", is the end of the Office of the Dead. In 1928 the following rubric appears: "When there is a special celebration of the Holy Communion on the day of the Burial, the Priest shall use the Collect appointed in this Order ['O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'], or the Collect of Easter Even . . .", and the new Epistles and Gospels are then introduced.

1549	1552	1661 ¹
1. Procession	1. Procession	1. Procession
2. Burial	2. Burial	
3. Psalms		3. Psalms
Lesson	3. Lesson	Lesson } Office
Our Father Praeces Collect	Our Father } Office of the Dead	2. Burial
		3. Our Father } broken up by the
		Collect } Burial
4. Mass	4. Collect (from the Mass)	4. Collect (from the Mass)

Brightman's comment on these columns is: "The first column is intelligible and excellent: the second is only the first spoiled by the omission of the Psalms and praeces: the third is unintelligible" (with the burial inserted into the middle of the Office of the Dead). There are some who would feel that the second and third columns have suffered a grievous loss in the removal of the Communion Order.

The 1928 Book follows the unintelligible order of 1661, but adds a rubric allowing the burial to take place immediately after the Procession, as in 1549 and 1552.^{2]}

The relationship of these four Offices to the Holy Communion Order is:

Matrimony	} → HOLY COMMUNION
Churching of Women	
Visitation of the Sick	

¹ The Prayer Book passed Convocation in December 1661. It was annexed to a Bill of Uniformity which, after passing both Houses of Parliament, received the Royal Assent on 19 May 1662. The Book therefore may be referred to as 1661 (its Church authority), or 1662 (when it was accepted by State and Crown).

² Tables taken from Brightman, *op. cit.*, p. ccxxi. Slightly adapted.

Burial of the Dead—→HOLY COMMUNION

or

HOLY COMMUNION—→Burial of the Dead

One Office has not yet received mention, the Order of *Confirmation*. Although it has such far-reaching effect in regulating the degree to which the individual Christian can enter into the Offering of the Holy Communion, there are no directions as to the relationship of the Order itself to the Daily Cycle. With regard to those baptized in adult life, it is ordered that Confirmation shall follow at the earliest possible moment; after infant Baptism it is to be administered to children as soon as they can say the Catechism, and have "come to that age when . . . they begyn to be in danger to fall into sinne" (1549). This latter phrase was placed in a different context in 1661, and was shortened to "are come to a competent age" (i.e., know the difference between right and wrong). The relationship of spiritual, moral, and intellectual competence to physical age is a subject of much debate; and childhood, adolescence, and maturity all have their advocates as being the optimum time for Confirmation to follow infant Baptism. In general it seems to be somewhat doubtful whether sufficient weight is given to the fact that there is no fixed relationship between physical and spiritual age. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned; and it may very well be that the prevalent over-emphasis on physical age without due regard for the spiritual development—or arrest—of the particular individual is at least partly responsible for the spiritual wreckage of lapsed first Communicants with which we are surrounded. There seems to be room here for a courageous attempt to disregard physical age altogether, and to be more alert in discerning the working and call of the Holy Spirit. It would produce shocking anomalies, not least in families; but has our strait-jacketing of the Spirit by physical age in contravention of the explicit directions of the Prayer Book been wholly satisfactory?¹

Whatever the time at which Confirmation is administered it must in all cases precede the reception of Holy Communion. A final rubric,

¹ Godparents are responsible for seeing that their charges are presented for Confirmation *as soon as* they can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vernacular, and "be further instructed in the Church-Catechism" (this need not be known by heart). Where for any reason Confirmation is not forthcoming, Communion is to be administered to those "ready" (intellectually prepared as above), and "desirous", spiritually eager. Intense spiritual longing can easily be present at 4, and it can be dormant or absent at 16.

however, contains a proviso which remains from the days when, owing to difficulties of transit, the Bishops' visits in certain localities might be of very rare occurrence, and this may be usefully studied in the three forms in which it occurs in our three authorized Prayer Books. In 1549 it ran simply: "And there shall none be admitted to the holy communion: untill suche tyme as he be confirmed." In 1552 the second phrase was expanded to "until such tyme as he can say the Catechism and be confirmed". In 1661 competence in the Catechism was no longer required, but a very significant phrase was added. The rubric now runs: "And there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed." The "ready" and "desirous" are a sufficient indication of the cases where legitimate exception may be made. To be *desirous* of Confirmation is—to be desirous of Confirmation, *and of all its implications*. This rubric excludes those who are not, and have no intention of, living within the Church, since they do not form part of its organic structure enabling them to assimilate sacramental grace.¹ It is the ontological aspect of the Church which is overlooked in services of "open" Communion.

The rite of Confirmation is so closely connected with Baptism as to form its complement. Hebert points out in *The Form of the Church*² that there are two meanings of the word "form". There is the innate principle which determines the shape of a thing, so that a fir tree does not grow from a primrose, or a butterfly from a tiger; and there is the "formative" influence which draws out and actualizes this potential form. Both are essential. Both are essential for development; and in the Church we may perhaps discern aspects of the supernatural life corresponding to these two meanings of "form". Our Anglican formularies do not preclude us from applying this analogy to Baptism and Confirmation, so that we may say that Baptism conveys the definitive form, that which causes spiritual growth to be growth in the

¹ The Christian Mysteries are the arteries conveying the bloodstream to the living Body of Christ, and promiscuous blood-transfusion is dangerous to the recipient. Even were sacraments only external forms, empty apart from the intention of each recipient, making Holy Communion simply a commemoration analogous with present-day Remembrance services in November, Confirmation would still be requisite. No one can take part at the Cenotaph except in the attire proper to his position. In the modern operating-theatre the strictest rules of asepsis must be observed by every person present. The most distinguished visitor is no more exempt than any member of the surgeon's team. Nor are we given encouragement to treat the wedding garment as a foolish fad.

² A. G. Hebert, *The Form of the Church*, Introd., Ch. I.

likeness of Christ; and that Confirmation is a bestowal of the Spirit as the formative Life-giver, in whose power that likeness may be developed through sacramental Communion. There is no life, whether natural, supernatural, or divine, which is not mediated by the Spirit, for the Spirit is not only the point of contact between the Father and the Son in the Godhead, but also between our Lord and his Body the Church; so that neither the "form" in Baptism nor the "life" in Holy Communion exist apart from his agency. Post-Baptismal gifts of the "Spirit" in Confirmation or Ordination are rather a specific bestowal of capacity for a specific purpose than an endowment of associative contact with the Spirit not already received in Baptism. The Collect in the Confirmation Order says: "Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy Servants by Water *and the Holy Ghost* . . . strengthen them . . . with the Holy Ghost the Comforter¹ and daily *increase* in them *thy manifold gifts of grace* . . .". The whole suggestion is that the Holy Ghost has already been received in Baptism, and that this is a special equipping for the task of growth in the spiritual life which is effected by Holy Communion. That such wholly supernatural activity and transformation needs special powers is not surprising, but what was the actual position occupied by Confirmation in Apostolic days is a matter at present widely discussed, though for the moment without final results.² To those who feel that to speak of Confirmation as complementary to Baptism is to add a third Sacrament to the "two only, as generally necessary to salvation", we can only say that whatever may be the mystery of their spiritual relationship, these two rites are, in the Anglican Communion, complementary in their bestowal upon the individual of the capacity to share in the two aspects of the liturgical Offering. Baptism admits us to the Offering to God of ourselves and of our gifts because we are in Christ and make our Offering in him—there being no other form of Offering *wholly* acceptable to God: Confirmation completes the Offering by allowing us to receive back from God of and through that Offering the Life which is Life indeed.³ Charles Williams says⁴: "The Passion and the Resurrection have been necessarily divided in ritual and we think of

¹ L. *confortare*, to strengthen—not to coddle.

² For an examination of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament see G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 1951.

³ See J. E. L. Oulton, *Holy Communion and Holy Spirit*, 1951, Ch. VIII, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, p. 141 ff., for a study of sacramental inter-relationships.

⁴ *He Came Down from Heaven*, p. 58.

them as separate events. So certainly they were, and yet not as separate as all that. They are two operations in one; they are the hour of the coming of the kingdom." *Mutatis mutandis*, we may not inaptly apply these words to Baptism and Confirmation.

We have considered the various Offices found in the Prayer Book, and it remains to discover how the three main groups are arranged, so that we may know roughly where to look for any given Office. Some apparent anomalies in arrangement are due to additions made in 1661. If now we open our Prayer Book in the middle, we find the Holy Communion Order; and all the first part of the Book leading up to this is occupied with the Liturgy, the Daily Cycle. First, Mattins and Evensong (Morning and Evening Prayer), followed by the Quicunque Vult or Athanasian Creed¹ (in occasional use at Mattins), the Litany, and then various prayers for special occasions. After this come the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels appointed for the Sundays and Holy days throughout the year, and then the Holy Communion Order so-called. The Collects, Epistles, and Gospels are actually the "Proper" (i.e., the parts which vary according to the day), of the Holy Communion or "Ordinary" (i.e., the parts which remain fixed), but they are printed separately for convenience. The Proper and Ordinary together are the full Holy Communion Order. This, then, is our first section, the requirements for the Daily Offering. We turn the page, and are not surprised to find that the next Office is Holy Baptism. We have a double treasure enshrined at the heart of the Book, the two great Dominical Sacraments which the Catechism tells us are universally necessary for salvation. (The word "generally" in 1661 meant "for everyone without exception", not, as it does to-day, "usually"). These two Sacraments are contiguous; but whereas the Holy Communion comes as the climax of the daily public Liturgy, Holy Baptism forms the point of departure for the Offices relating to the private needs of the individual. Both arrangements manifest a natural propriety, and we can observe the delicate balance between the corporate and the personal. Baptism is administered as a public rite, and as such comes next after the Liturgy. It is then placed at the head or starting-point of the individual life, being followed by the Catechism (which was incorporated with Confirmation till 1661, when, like the Proper of the Communion Order, it was printed separately for convenience), Confirmation, Matrimony, Visitation of the Sick, Burial of the Dead,

¹ The Prayer Book rightly makes Quicunque Vult the title of the "commonly called" Athanasian Creed, for it is neither a Creed nor composed by Athanasius.

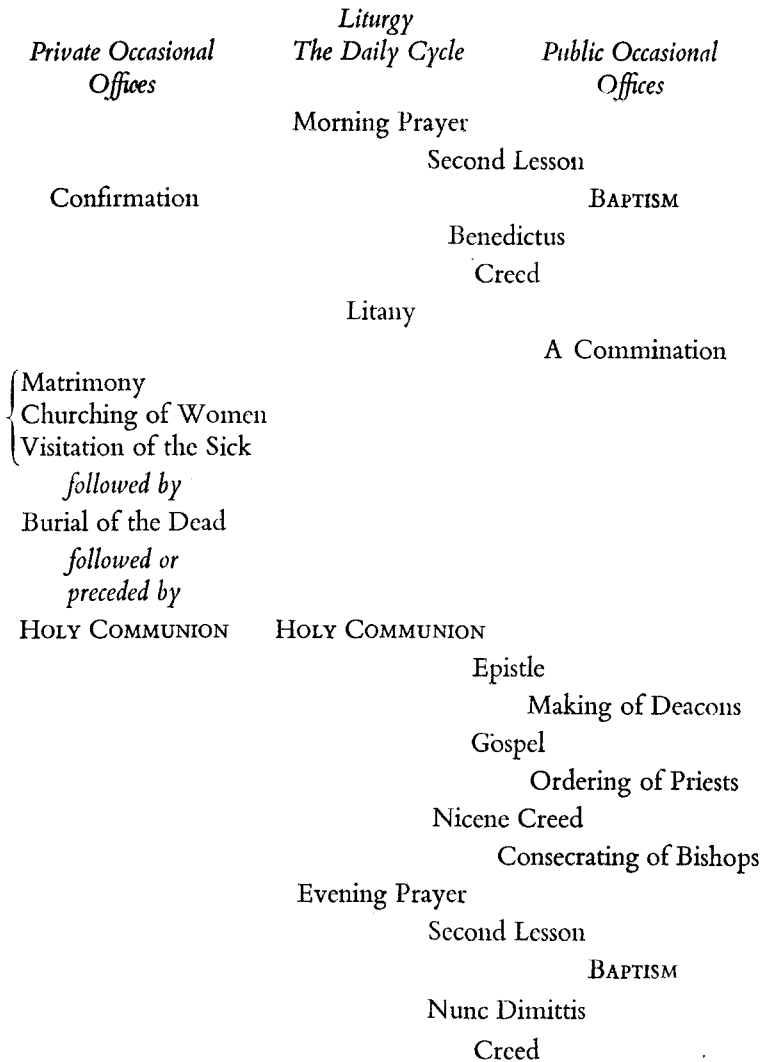
Churching of Women. The last, again, comes presumably for convenience at the end of the series, instead of after Matrimony.

The Churching of Women is followed by the Communion, which belongs to the public Occasional Offices, but is placed here, which was the original end of the Book, as it was only used once in the year. It was not till 1661 that the Book of Psalms was printed with the Prayer Book; and it was at this time also that the Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea were added. They, therefore, follow after the Communion. The Ordinal, comprising the Offices for the Making of Deacons, the Ordering of Priests, and the Consecration of Bishops, is printed separately, under its own title page, at the end of the Book of Common Prayer. These Offices are rarely used except in cathedrals, and were compiled separately after the first publication of the Prayer Book. The original Pontificals were the property of the Bishops, not of the Churches.

The general structure of the Prayer Book, therefore, is simple. There are three groups of Offices: the Liturgy; Services for individual needs; and the Ordinal; the last two groups being separated from each other by the Book of Psalms. The slight apparent anomalies are to be historically explained.

A scheme is appended to show the broad outlines of the Prayer Book arrangement. The Order of Confirmation is here placed tentatively at the head of those Offices which mainly concern the individual, to represent the personal side of the Baptismal Order, which has to be placed among the public Offices. It will be noted that the Dominical Sacraments occur at the beginning, middle, and end, of the Daily Cycle. They are both the centre and the enclosure of all our Godward life.

SCHEME TO SHOW THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE
VARIOUS OFFICES TO THE CENTRAL RITE



It is expressly ordered that the Public Occasional Offices shall be included within the Daily Liturgical Cycle. The inference with regard to the Private Occasional Offices is that they are to be attached to an independent celebration of the Holy Communion.

THE REOPENING OF THE EXCHANGES:
BAPTISM

"A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."

Catechism

SINCE no one can take part in the Church's Liturgy who has not been baptized—and the term "take part" is used advisedly, for an outsider may be present in body although having no organic spiritual link which puts him in touch with the underlying realities of the worship—it seems that consideration of a few points with regard to the various Prayer Book Offices may well begin with that of Baptism. And at the outset it may be stated that the Book of 1928 is left on one side. Not least in the 1928 variants of the Baptismal Order can we see the subtle alterations of doctrine and emphasis which that Book, probably unintentionally, enshrines. There are numerous rubrics and glosses which gravely impair the foundations of the 1661 Book. The balance of our Prayer Book is so sensitive that a small, and apparently neutral, alteration can dislodge a considerable mass. There is a widespread desire for the modernizing of archaic forms, but experiments suggest that the process is extremely liable to jettison essential doctrine enshrined within those forms. We may remember that George Herbert found it possible to make the Prayer Book intelligible to his people. The average intelligence is no lower to-day, and the educational facilities are incomparably greater. Alteration of form for each succeeding generation is far less satisfactory than drawing enshrined truth from the standard words by patient and thorough explanation. The understanding of faith transcends and is independent of the understanding of the intellect—but it must be trained and taught. There is considerable danger of assuming that the Prayer Book is out of date, and that exceptions are therefore legitimate. The thought of "exceptions" can so paralyse all effort that finally exceptions become established as authorized variants. If we could all bring ourselves to *want* to make the Book which we so magniloquently acclaimed in 1949 a working proposition, we should establish a sense of solidarity and mutual confidence which tends to be lacking when antithetic parties

are advocating alterations. It is often supposed that only one party is guilty of breaches of Prayer Book discipline, yet in fact all parties contravene its directions, and that not only in matters of convenience. Rubrics to-day may be disregarded, not because they are out of date, (which some are), but because they presuppose doctrine disagreeable to the individual or to his party. The Church, unlike Parliament, does not consist of different parties to which we owe primary allegiance. The Church is our party: sectarian over-attachments maim our own life and breed discord. A concerted effort to obey the Book of 1661 would provide valuable opportunities for the practice of obedience before the promulgation of Canons supposedly more binding than our present enactments. We are all rebels by nature, being children of Adam, be it the Anglo-Saxon who cottons to no one or the Celt who is agin the government. For all of us obedience comes only by practice, and in most of our parishes to-day fashion or fancy are followed, often in all good faith, but not the Prayer Book.

(1). *Rubrics*

The Order for the public Baptism of Infants opens with a lengthy rubric insisting upon the public nature of the rite, that it is to be administered on Sundays or Holy-days when the most number of people come together; and has another stating that it is to take place immediately after the second Lesson at Mattins or Evensong. No other time or place are countenanced by the Prayer Book for the public administration of Baptism. The whole balance of dogma and emphasis is upset by the ignoring of these rubrics, for to very many people "christening" has become a semi-private affair of the particular human family, on the same level as a wedding, instead of being recognized as the solemn public engrafting of a new member into the Body of Christ and his reception into the spiritual family of God. This aspect is safeguarded in the mission field by the use of the historic baptismal seasons of Easter and Whitsun for the baptism of adult converts; but Christian parents naturally do not wish to deprive their children of their Christian heritage for so long a period as this might involve. Possibly the provision of other public baptismal seasons, in analogy with Embertides, might meet the difficulty without losing the corporate aspect of the rite.

One of the reasons given in the Prayer Book for the "public" administration of Baptism is that "every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism".

And those who object to such reminders may nevertheless be in great need of receiving them. The number of parishes in which there would be several Baptisms every week if the rubrics were obeyed would probably be few; but in any case, since by obeying the rubrics every child will be baptized within a fortnight of its birth, there will be at least two Sundays in each month when by arrangement there need be no Baptisms. Every calendar month contains at least one Red Letter Day, which can be used for the Baptisms due to take place during the previous fortnight; and by collecting together all the children on this day, there will presumably be a large number of people come together.

(2). *Original Sin*

In a Norfolk belfry there are—or were—some old hatchments bearing the motto *Mors janua vitae*, which, for a certain child, flung wide the gate into a spacious pleasance. One hung on either side of a small door which opened into a west end gallery, so that standing between them one looked straight up the church to the altar at the far end. To this fortunate child the thought of death had been familiar from the first beginnings of memory, for there never was a time when the wonderful fact had been unknown that there are two red letter days in life, the day of one's Baptism and the day of one's death. The first bestows the gift which the second consummates after the preparatory exercises of the intervening period. Standing between those hatchments, however, it was possible to telescope physical and spiritual, and the *mors* became the Baptismal death opening the gate to the Altar of Life.

There are so many people who sit lightly to the doctrine of original sin that this is manifestly no time for any "humanizing" of our formularies which could cover a deviation from the Scriptural and traditional faith in this matter. The ninth Article would be a safeguard, but still there are some who in effect claim for the human race the exemption which Roman Catholics claim for the mother of our Lord. To such Herbert Butterfield says:¹ "Those who do not believe in the doctrine of the Fall can hardly deny that human history has always been history under the terms and conditions of the Fall." The concept may be denied, but the fact is there, and the whole historical process bears undeviating witness to it. (Whether the "Fall" was upwards or downwards, forwards or backwards, or sideways, is immaterial. It was

¹ *Christianity and History*, 1949, p. 106.

a moral phenomenon, and therefore extra-phenomenal.) The "good old days" indeed have existed, but before history as we ourselves know it "under the terms and conditions of the Fall"; being earth as God created it when he saw that it was very good. And the failure of Utopias past, present, and to come is that they do not, and cannot, reproduce the conditions of Paradise. They are not concerned with God as the centre and object of their existence, nor with his methods for the re-establishment of Eden. The Davidic acknowledgement, "in sin hath my mother conceived me", is apt to arouse resentment in our minds, partly for the apparent aspersion on our mother's virtue, and partly because it suggests an act of arbitrary injustice on God's part to start us with an unfair handicap before trying our paces. (We more rarely complain of a fair face or a brilliant brain inherited through no desert of our own, before our paces have been tried.) It is also widely assumed that the doctrine of original sin involves belief in the total depravity of man, and this belies human experience. Total depravity, however, is neither Scriptural nor traditional, and, as already suggested, redemption is possible for this very reason.

An old lady set herself the task of learning something new every year, whether it was a stitch in needlework or a line of poetry, or some hitherto unknown fact of interest. When she was in her nineties fear one day compelled the admission that she was very giddy, and she did not understand why, because she had never been like that before. By way of encouragement it was suggested to her that this was the "something new" which she could acquire. Did she not always like learning something new? "Yes," she replied in a flash, "but something of my own choosing." This was an admirable definition of original sin. It is this underlying *state* of choosing to go our own way which separates us from God. Legalistic views of satisfaction, and the obsession with actual sins, have overlaid the basic fact that the physical life which we receive from our parents contains within itself "something of my own choosing". No amount of actual righteousness, i.e., absence of breaches of the external law, alters this. It is our very life that is in fault, and it is by the introduction of a new life that remedy is made, and this gift is imparted to us in Baptism as truly and actually as our physical life is bestowed upon us by our parents. We then become a cockpit "In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side",¹ for God has not in Baptism destroyed our free will, neither can he save us unless we choose the way of salvation. If he overruled our choice we should be

¹ English Hymnal 563.

robots, not human beings, and the thing which he set out to save would not be there.¹

Western Christendom has largely lost sight of the difference in kind between original sin and actual sins. If the whole aggregate of actual sins ever committed, or ever to be committed, were to be added together, the total would still not represent the "sin" of the world. St John uses the exact word when he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"² Had our Lord made atonement only for all the actual sins committed from the Fall to the Final Judgement, he would not have redeemed human nature. The twist inherent before it issues in overt act would have remained. Real damage has been done to our minds by the substitution of the word "sins" for "sin".³

Here, as so often, we see that we are not isolated units, but personal, individual expressions of a common life. The three opening chapters of Genesis, portraying fact in poetic form, are the essential foundation of Christian doctrine and of Christian hope. God created —man fell; and there, without the Christian climax to the Old Testament, man still remains.

This is the Catholic Faith, uncompromisingly enshrined in the Prayer Book, with regard to original sin and Baptism; and its very grim implications have led many persons of goodwill to gloss and explain it away. Nevertheless, it throws needed light on the awefulness of the remedy which God had to apply. Desperate indeed was the need which demanded such redemption. But we must beware of assuming corollaries. We have no data with regard to those who die unbaptized through no fault of their own. That is a wholly different proposition. And we have the express word of Scripture that our Lord preached to the spirits in prison⁴ (where time is not).

The doctrine of the Prayer Book remains plain and Scriptural.

"All men are conceived and born in sin."

"None can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost."⁵

¹ See Dean Matthews in *Christian Belief Today*, pp. 90 ff., for an illuminating treatment of Grace and Free will.

² John 1. 29.

³ Another misquotation from Scripture is enshrined in the Litany, where we pray for the fruits, instead of the fruit, of the Spirit. Both these plurals contain defective theology.

⁴ 1 Pet. 3. 19.

⁵ Baptismal Service.

The final result of the administration of this, as of other sacraments, is not seen on this side of the grave.

(3). *The Scrutiny* (preliminary questions)

After summarizing the benefits received in Baptism from our Lord Jesus Christ, that he will "receive him, release *him* of *his* sins, sanctify *him* with the Holy Ghost and give *him* the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life", the corresponding obligations of the person to be baptized are enumerated. "This infant must . . . promise . . . that *he* will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep his commandments."

The categorical questions and answers then follow, and their order is of some significance. First comes the renunciation of evil. This in itself is a refutation of the charge of total depravity, for as yet no sacramental grace has been conferred, and still the candidate is expected in some degree to know wrong as wrong, and the active repudiation of evil is the necessary prelude to the possibility of exercising faith. Next therefore the Apostles' Creed is solemnly recited, and as solemnly we affirm our belief in it. In the mission field, our inability to believe in God while we are turned away from him towards evil is dramatized in order to bring home the essential need of "conversion". The Baptismal candidate faces west as he renounces the devil and all his works, and then shows what he thinks by turning his back on it; and facing east he recites the Creed. In the third question the high light of the whole scrutiny follows. There comes the challenge:

"Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?"

Answer. "That is my desire."

Finally comes a question as to our conduct, and we promise that we will keep God's Commandments.

So then Baptism is into the Faith of the Apostles' Creed (this point is obliterated in the Book of 1928), and the order of the several elements is:

- (a) renunciation of evil *before* there is possibility of faith;
- (b) faith in *all the articles* of the Christian Creed, and then through faith,
- (c) works, that is, the doing of God's will by *keeping* his Commandments.

This is the order, and this is the content, of the requirements laid upon those who come to be dedicated to God in Baptism; and the very use of the word "dedicated" in the prayer immediately following the promises shows what a "solemn vow, promise, and profession" is being made. We have dissociated ourselves from the "original" sin inherent in our natural being: we have repudiated the choice which separated us from God. Now we can face him and confess the truth of his complete sovereignty, that we are his, not only as creatures of his creation (which applies to all mankind), but still more as sons of his redemptive love through this sacrament of Baptism. We start in the right relationship of entire dependence. Doubtless we are weaker and less able to obey God's will than were our unfallen ancestors, but God's unmeasured bounty has given us the greater help. We are not restored merely to our natural state, but taken up into the very life of his Son. We have to remember that neither in this Order, nor in Confirmation, nor in the Ordinal, are the scrutinies the essence of the several rites. They are secondary and dependent, the setting of ourselves into that state of receptivity which is necessary for receiving an inflow of supernatural power "which by nature we cannot have",¹ because it is no more a part of our *natural* endowment than it is that of a motor-car to discuss politics.

Herein lies the rationale of Infant Baptism, to which people sometimes object both on the score that such solemn promises cannot be undertaken by proxy, and also that it is not "fair" to lay such heavy obligations on children without their own consent. The root difficulty in such cases is nearly always a disregard or ignorance of God's promises, or a misunderstanding of our own. Our renunciation of evil has no Manichean flavour in it. The Catechism is careful to say that we eschew the superficial unrealities ("poms and vanities") "of this *wicked* world", but *not* the real pleasures of God's good gifts; "all the *sinful* lusts of the flesh", but *not* their ordered use and enjoyment. God has given us our existence and all its capacities and he wishes us to use them, not to wrap them up in a napkin so that they atrophy; our promises are that we will develop them to the utmost of our capacity in the power of the new Baptismal life under the guidance of his Will.

There is no call here for the postponement of Baptism, but there is great need for faithful godparents, who will train the children for whom they have made themselves responsible, both by their example

¹ Baptismal Order.

and by word. It is indeed a solemn responsibility, and it is no wonder that such a transaction must take place in public. No wonder that we all need to be reminded of our own vocation and consequent obligations. All of us know the date of our birthday; few of us fail to remember it, if only in passing, as the day comes round. How many of us know, much less celebrate, the day of our Baptism, that red letter day which is the high light of our whole earthly pilgrimage? This is a useful test of our scale of values, a guide not only to the region where our heart is fixed, but also to our grasp of the stupendous spiritual event which then took place, which far outdistances the importance of our physical birth.

(4). *Christian Life*

It is worth while to take next a phrase from the final exhortation to the Godparents, since there is a parallel in the sequence of events. The Godparents are exhorted to remember always "that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and *to be made* like unto him".

Here again we see the balance between our own efforts and the work of grace. As we were unable to believe the Christian Creed, much less to obey God's will, until we had repudiated the devil, so now we have first to follow Christ, and *then be made* like him. To be made like unto Christ is to obey till obedience becomes the mainspring of our character as it was of his. As he obeyed the Law, notwithstanding his opinion of its guardians, so must obedience to the Church's discipline, the law of the New Covenant, live and grow in us. Our duty towards God and our duty towards our neighbour are admirable outlines of the rule of life which the Prayer Book lays upon us. Our "Duties", carried out through Prayer and Sacrament, fashion us as we follow them.

(5). *Sacraments and Sacramentals*

A sacrament, as the Catechism tells us, is a covenant issuing from God and dependent for its efficacy on God alone. The disposition of the recipient does not affect the *sacrament*, though it does affect his own personal benefit or otherwise in receiving it. The sacrament exists in its own right when the ordained form is observed, the external part being the means and the pledge of the interior gift which our Lord has expressly conditioned by the given outward means. A cheque represents the inscribed sum of money and "is" that sum, and it depends for its validity solely upon the will and the material substance of the

person drawing it, though it must be accepted and endorsed in proper form by the recipient before the latter can appropriate the benefit received. To deny that there is any sacramental Presence apart from the faith of the recipient is to deny that the sacrament depends upon God, and makes it depend instead upon ourselves.

Such a thing is a different, though analogous, matter, and is called not a sacrament but a sacramental. The sacramental principle, indeed, is found to underlie the whole of our created existence, outward form and inner meaning expressing a relationship between different levels and types of existence and unifying into an harmonious whole what would otherwise be non-related or even antagonistic. We may adapt Butterfield's dictum with regard to the Fall, and say that those who deny the God-created nature of sacraments do yet in fact live in a sacramentally-conditioned world. A sacramental is a bridge, linking up the exchanges to avoid a sudden jar, much as the contours of a landscape fade imperceptibly into neighbouring parts. Even a wide expanse of Norfolk fen cut up by drains into great squares resembling a chess-board is unified rather than divided by these arterial waterways. There is an otherness over and beyond the visible which knits the seen both with itself and with the unseen. Every experience at a given level can be used as the token and expression of something greater and fuller than itself. But the outstanding difference between this use of creatures and a sacrament lies in the fact that it depends for its efficacy upon ourselves.

There are, in addition to such private exercises, many ceremonies of so universal a nature that they have a public signification; such as bowing the head in honour of the most Holy Trinity at the Gloria, or at the Holy Name of Jesus; or of making the sign of the Cross. Now, as the introductory paragraph "Of Ceremonies" in the Prayer Book tells us, "the keeping or omitting of a ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God", so this question of the making of the sign of the Cross is in itself indifferent, but is in fact one of the ceremonies which has been deliberately retained in the Prayer Book; and that in the most public and dramatic manner in the Baptismal service. Immediately after baptizing the infant (or adult) in the Trinitarian formula, the priest adds, "We receive this Child [or, this person] into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign *him* with the sign of the cross" . . . at which words the priest makes the sign of the Cross upon the forehead

of the newly-baptized, which, when reverently and devoutly done, is seen to be a solemn sealing of the new servant of God, who henceforth has Christ's name, and the name of his Father written on his forehead.¹ Further we note that where an infant is baptized privately and lives, it is brought to church later on, and after due scrutiny as to the validity of the private baptism, it is received into the congregation with the sign of the Cross in exactly the same form as if it had been publicly baptized. This signing with the Cross is never omitted.² Henceforth one who bears this mark in his body is authorized and expected to use it upon ceremonial and private occasions, as an act of loyalty and thanksgiving to God who has given us this family device. The fact that it can be made carelessly is no argument for its omission. The value of a habit lies largely in its automatism, and in the moment of death, when consciousness can no longer modify our actions, there are less desirable forms for our habitual movements to take than to proclaim the faith of Christ crucified. It is prescribed in the Prayer Book, therefore a Prayer Book mind must include it, for it is not a party label but the very treasurable badge of our profession. Its non-use, the Prayer Book suggests, "is no small offence before God".

(6). *Baptism and Confirmation*

In considering the relationship of Baptism and Confirmation we note that there is no blessing at the end of the Baptismal Order. When performed as directed in the Book of Common Prayer, after the Exhortation to the Godparents the Priest returns to his place in the chancel, and continues the Order of Mattins or Evensong with the Benedictus or Nunc Dimittis, as the case may be. In the case of infants it ends with an exhortation to the Godparents to see that the child is confirmed as soon as it can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; in that of adults with a rubric to say that Confirmation is to follow as soon as possible. If we read the Confirmation

¹ Rev. 7. 3; 14. 1.

² It is not to be supposed that Baptism is in any sense incomplete without it. Water and the Trinitarian formula are the outward and visible sign by which the recipient is regenerate. The signing with the Cross is, rather, a sacramental, expressing the personal, reciprocating side of the Baptismal transaction, the outward symbol of the promises. The Baptism with water was the sacrament of admission, the cross is the "sacramental" witness of the life which the newly-baptized intends to lead, the "token that hereafter he shall [will] not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified".

See Lampe, *op. cit.*, for a history of the interpretation of the use of the sign of the Cross, esp. p. 273; also the summary, pp. 320-2.

Order directly after the Baptismal Order we find that it is virtually an appendix to the Baptism. It is extremely short, and follows on from the Baptism in a perfectly orderly way. It consists essentially in the Laying-on of the Bishop's hands. This is preceded by a simple "I do" from the candidates in response to the question whether they accept the obligations undertaken for them by their Godparents at their Baptism, and is followed by the Lord's Prayer, two Collects and a Blessing. Nothing could be shorter or simpler or a more natural climax to the more detailed Baptismal Order. When we view the two Orders together, we see that Godparents have in some sense the function of proposers of a new member to a society. He cannot propose himself, but once he has been admitted, he gives his own guarantee that he will keep the rules. He then receives investiture which admits him to the full freedom and exercise of his membership. It is unfortunate that the customary separation of Baptism and Confirmation has led to a gross distortion of the latter rite from padding with addresses and other extraneous matter in order to convert it into a "service" in its own right. In Prayer Book phrase, "it is much to be desired" that the Prayer Book pattern should be restored.

THE CREED

"Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith?"

Baptismal scrutiny

IN THE introductory chapter it was stated that the Book Genesis begins on the hither side of eternity. The Creed, on the contrary, both begins and ends in eternity. The first phrase is "I believe in God"; the last "I believe . . . in the life everlasting". Between these two phrases the drama of Creation, of the Incarnation, of Redemption, and of final Consummation is enfolded from the point of view of God. It is revelation, not research.

For this reason alone the Creed must be taken as a whole. The Catechism specifically requires us to believe *all* the Articles of the Christian Faith, and it expressly requires faith, not credulity or appraisal; which is to say, neither that which is contrary to reason nor that which is the result of reasoning. Faith is the faculty which enables us to take a leap in the dark, to transcend the limits of reason when we have reached the stage at which we are compelled to say, I do not know. There will be "reasonable" presumptions up to a point, but after that a dead blank. It *may* be true, and according to our temperament and predispositions we shall either be "reasonably" ready to take the plunge or, with forefeet firmly planted and head down, resolutely refuse every carrot blandishment. The act of faith takes us beyond the limits of our natural endowments; where they fail, faith enables us to make the necessary effort to reach the supra- or extra-rational plane in which the revelation is set. And this effort is essential. When we have said, I believe, and have abandoned ourselves to the void of darkness which lies beyond sensory perception, then, and then only, shall we find ourselves able to add the wonderful, I know. Not only will the light of revelation dawn, but we shall find that all our faculties remain intact and still capable of functioning within the limits of their several spheres; even, it may be, with increased efficiency. God does not demand the violation of our capacities, for that would be to contradict himself, to stultify his own "reasoned" creation. He *does* require our acceptance of that which it is

beyond our competence to know or to discover by the use of our natural faculties, because that is proper to the limitations of our creation, and an acknowledgement of our dependence upon something beyond ourselves. We have to begin by "taking it on trust" from those who are empowered to teach us, though our acceptance is not complete while it is purely passive. There comes another stage when, like all healthy children, we begin to say *why*? One of the features of the Jewish Passover celebrations is the question that the youngest member of the assembled company has to ask, "What mean ye by this service?"¹ thus sanctifying the spirit of inquiry at the very heart of their religious life. Our Lady at the Annunciation showed a practical grasp of her problems and a direct simplicity in stating them. The first occasion upon which we hear of our Lord after his babyhood, he is asking as well as answering questions. We cannot plead ignorance if we have taken no steps to inform ourselves. It is from inquiry and personal consideration that we pass on to the vital positive stage, when we no longer believe on the testimony of others, but make our own willed act of faith. And the surrender once made has to be continually renewed and deepened, for every day there are fresh mysteries for our growing consciousness to apprehend and assimilate, since under the influence of one revelation we are able to attain to another, to lay hold of some fresh fragment of the immeasurable truth which was all there present from the beginning.

Here is at least one "reason" for a credal formula. It is both our gold standard and our touchstone. It is the minimum and the maximum required for thinking right thoughts of God, and it saves us from debasing his revelation by partial truths which, when unbalanced, become error. Jewish monotheism before the Incarnation was God's supreme self-revelation. To-day the most exalted Unitarianism is heresy,² from which now-inferior worship our Creed protects us. Those who wear glasses know that they have to turn their head if they wish to see anything clearly which is at one side of them; the sideways look which is possible without glasses is either blurred or blank. We have to test our vision of any aspect of truth by *all* the Articles of the Creed, and if any of these are dim or blurred, we may feel "reasonably" certain that our own vision is in fault. We have turned our heads to look at something beside the mark, and we must return to that position in which the Creed as a whole and the whole Creed is clearly

¹ See Ex. 12. 26.

² Heresy—a portion of truth distorted into error.

in focus. It developed gradually¹ in response to the various heresies which, fortunately, showed themselves in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic ages. These heresies are still with us, though their make-up is different. In essence they are still the same, as human nature is still the same. And as neither human nature nor heresies change anything beyond their appearance, the Creed is as up to date to-day as it was when first minted.

If we examine the Apostles' Creed we shall see that it is an expansion of the threefold Baptismal formula. Its three paragraphs relate respectively to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Thus it is concerned wholly with God. Man enters in only as an object. It is of first importance to realize that it is entirely God-centred, for the summary in the Catechism, admirable in its balance, may yet leave the impression that the chief object of God's existence is ourselves. We may remind ourselves that the summary runs as follows:

Question. "What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?"

Answer. "First, I learn to believe in God the Father,
who hath made me, and all the world.
Secondly, in God the Son,
who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.
Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost,
who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people
of God."

We see that the "who" phrases are qualifying and explanatory, and that the primary statements can perfectly well stand alone, though the additions depend upon the primary statements. It is worth while to set the Catechetical and Credal phrases opposite one another.

<i>Catechism</i>	<i>Creed</i>
"First, I learn to believe in God the Father,	"I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Secondly, in God the Son,	and in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost."	I believe in the Holy Ghost."

¹ The Apostles' Creed enshrines primitive Baptismal teaching and profession of faith. The Nicene Creed was drawn up from a slightly different point of view to be a test of orthodoxy.

There are two points which are clarified by the slight readjustment of wording in the Catechism.

(a) It is made quite clear that the Godhead is not confined to the Father, but applies equally to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. It is a shortened form of the safeguard in the Quicumque Vult, "the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one . . . the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God."

In the Creed the first phrase runs, "I believe in God". The unity of God is proclaimed, and the diversity of Persons follows. This theological concept is carefully maintained wherever the Creed is sung to an ancient setting. The single voice of the Priest proclaims the single divine nature, "I believe in One God", and the choir joins in with "the Father Almighty . . ." announcing his Trinal Being. The One in Three is worshipped by the very nature of the liturgical division. Where the congregation is encouraged to join in after "I believe" the theological concept is blurred; and not a few are left with the impression that the phrase runs, "God-the-Father", instead of "God, the-Father", and for those who stop to think there is often a sense of puzzlement.¹

(b) The insistence upon the unity of Godhead with complete equality of Being among the differentiated Persons does not lead to complete identity of function. In the "who" phrases of the Catechism we are told that "the Father" created the world and all within it; that "the Son" redeemed mankind: that "the Holy Ghost" sanctifies the elect (i.e., the baptized). Thus there is distribution of activity without division of essence; and if we examine more closely we find that there are concentrating spheres of operation from that of the Father creating the world to that of the Spirit perfecting the baptized. Thus creation, redemption, and sanctification, though separable, are not isolated, but find their fullness in the unity of Godhead, which, acting through one Person, acts *in all*.

Let us, for a moment, return to the Oneness of God. This is God alone, in the fullness of being, in the undivided plenitude of all his powers, having neither beginning nor ending nor any flux of change; Sole, for there is no existence other than himself. It is not, as in the

¹ There is a widespread similar confusion from the lack of a comma in the Nicene Creed, where the Holy Ghost is supposed to be the Lord-and-Giver-of-life instead of the Lord, and Giver-of-life. Here again the Quicumque Vult gives the true interpretation, "The Father is Lord, the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord."

fairy stories of a bygone youth, "once upon a time". It is before time. God is pure IS, pure NOW, in the consummation of all his own perfection, to which nothing can be added, from which no power, not even his own, can take away. Sometimes a sense of the immensity of nature overwhelms us, the almost pitiless extension of space seems to crush our puny littleness; and at such moments we may steady our mental balance by remembering that God was, and is, there first, and that the presence of space in no way displaces or incommodes him. A lady had a friendly ghost who used to come in at the front door, run up the stairs and go into the back drawing-room on the first floor. He was well known to her servants and visitors, as many people had heard him, and the case-history made him rather one of the family than a source of alarm. One night the lady returned home late, after all the household were in bed, and went upstairs to go into the back drawing-room. As she had her hand on the door handle, the ghost knocked on the door. The shock of realizing that he was occupying *exactly the same space as herself* for a moment overcame her. We need not believe this particular experience unless we wish, but it is at least a faithful illustration of the theological truth that spirit does not occupy space as we do. We are circumscribably "here"; but God, being pure spirit, is both "here" and "not-here", for he is not spatially-conditioned. Thus farthest distance and our own immediate persons are equally in him, and *contiguous* through him.

Antithetic, though the same, complementary and identical, God's immanence waits on our creaturely weakness in compassion and tender love; his transcendence annihilates us with the burning fire of his holiness. He talks to Moses face to face, as a man with his friend; but none can see his face and live. Yet not two Gods, but one God. And the "difference" is the Spirit, which proceedeth from the Father in the Name of the Son.¹

For in the mystery of this Being, this IS-ing of God, we contemplate "the Father", the Source, Fount, and Origin of Godhead, yet in no way separable from it; neither superior, exterior, nor antecedent, but of identical substance and simultaneous equality with "the Son" and "the Spirit". The doctrine of the Trinity is, in a sense, easy; easy, that is, in comparison with an undifferentiated Godhead. The conception of pure Deity lends itself to philosophic speculation, wherein we become embogged in our own processes of ratiocination. The doctrine of the Trinity, on the other hand, as embodied in the glorious loftiness

¹ John 15; 16.

of the phrases of the Quicunque Vult, rises, like Everest, above all thought, yet fulfils it with the energizing peace of its own vital but satisfying contradictions.

The three phrases uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal, define the relationship of the Godhead with regard to time and space; uncreate, therefore both before and after time, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life";¹ incomprehensible, therefore through this illimitability unconfined by the bounds of space; eternal, "before the world was".² After these, so to speak, external relationships have been defined ("so to speak", for in reality there is nothing that is truly external to God), phrases are formed with regard to the inner Being of Godhead, and his relationships with himself. The three Persons are almighty, they are God and Lord. In these things they are equal, though not identical; for there follow the verses which describe in allusive phrase those conditions of Being which differentiate the three Persons each from other.

"The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor begotten, but proceeding."

Since we are attempting to describe in language that which language cannot contain, we have to speak of the Father as the origin of life in the Godhead, although the word origin does not here connote a beginning of existence, for by definition God has no beginning. Yet the moment we have spoken the word "life" we remember that the Spirit is the Life-Giver, so that even in that origination the Spirit has his part. St Augustine's conception is that of a circulating life within the Godhead, which originates in the Father, is derivative in the Son, and proceeds in the Holy Ghost. However, "in this Trinity none is afore, or after other"; and we must bear in mind that we are speaking of the eternal existence within the Godhead so that the term "procession" does not mean going forth outwards into any created relationship. This is the life which is "neither made, nor created".

The mysteries here expressed with regard to the equality and fundamental inseparability of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity are so profound that, being beyond our comprehension, we stray outside the

¹ Heb. 7. 3.

² John 17. 5.

formal wording at our peril. Which also the Quicumque itself recognizes by returning triumphantly without further explanation to its original proclamation, but uttered in reverse form, "the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped".

Having availed ourselves of the help of the Quicumque in speaking of the Holy Trinity we proceed to set out the Apostles' Creed in a schematic form.

<i>Transitions</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Description or Activity</i>
<i>Eternity</i>	"I believe in GOD the Father Almighty,	
(i) Time-space	and in his only Son	Maker of heaven and earth: Jesus Christ our Lord,
Earth.....		Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried,
Hades		He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead,
(ii) <i>Eternity</i>		He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
(iii) Earth	I believe in the Holy Ghost;	The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body
(iv) <i>Eternity</i>	And the life everlasting. Amen."	

In the middle column we have the subject matter of the Creed, which is GOD. On the right are the descriptive phrases of his activities, on the left an indication of the alternations in media which occur in the course of the Creed.

[The words "Jesus Christ" have been placed in the right-hand column rather than in the centre in order to show more clearly the defect in those post-Reformation endings of Collects which proceed to a final ascription of praise to the Trinity. All pre-Reformation Collects had the double ending:

(a) "Through Jesus Christ i.e., through whose mediation, and in company with whose prayer, we can alone approach the Father.

(b) Thy Son our Lord,
to whom with thee
and the Holy Ghost
be all honour and glory world without end. Amen."

Or

"Who liveth and reigneth
with thee and the Holy Ghost,
ever one God world without end. Amen."

i.e., adoration of the Trinity.

Space was saved by writing these endings shortly "Through, to whom" or "Through, who liveth". Everyone knew the complete phrases, and the words "Thy Son" were never omitted.

Now, as far as the phrase (a) is concerned, our Collects are perfectly correct in saying, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord", for "Lord" in the phrase "our Lord" has not the exact connotation of the word "Lord" in the Quicumque, v. 17. His human name does not belong to our Lord in virtue of his Godhead, but of his Manhood, so that if we are to give glory to the Holy Trinity, we must use the Trinitarian formula, Father, Son, Spirit. To omit the words "thy Son" is to bypass God uncreate. *Qua* Son our Lord is equal to the Father, *qua* Christ he is inferior. It is defective theology, and therefore defective worship.

The wording of the Creed would have made this clearer if the order had been "I believe in. . . his only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" instead of "in . . . Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord", but in fact

the Credal order is much to be preferred, since it lessens the danger of dichotomy and of ascribing to our Lord not only two natures but two Persons.]

Eternity, we note, occurs three times, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end, reminding us of the similar interpenetration of the Dominical Sacraments into the Daily Cycle. Following the first of these three mentions of eternity we find the following movements:

- (i) The introduction of time-space, *Creation*—
- (ii) The return to heaven, *Redemption*, complete, but unapplied—
- (iii) The re-entry of Eternity into time, *Santification*, by incorporation into the Body of Christ
for the purpose of
- (iv) The taking-up of creation into God, the final consummation in Eternity.

(i) *The introduction of time-space: Creation and Incarnation*

Within the time-space limits of creation we note first that we are concerned with "heaven" as well as earth, that is, with the angelic hierarchies as well as all other created phenomena whether known or unknown to us in our present state. We are not allowed to concentrate our whole attention upon ourselves, even in the subsidiary state of creatures. We are merely a part of the whole creative plan. Again, when we pass from the statement with regard to the primary creation, and come to the six phrases regarding the redemptive process in "earth" and "Hades", the creaturely and derivative state of mankind is even more arrestingly seen. The only mention of man in general is contained in the little word "our", which is itself dependent upon the "Lord" which it qualifies. As we glance down these short but brim-packed statements we see that they are wholly concerned with the Incarnate God. Between the first two phrases and the middle pair we have the Incarnate life on earth stretching from the account of his birth to that of his death; in the last pair we have the descent of his disembodied soul into Hades for the period which elapsed between his death and resurrection.

There is no reference in this Credal synopsis to his Ministry, or to any event between the Birth and the Passion and Death. Rattenbury¹ voices his regret: "Sometimes one wishes that one sentence had been

¹ Ernest Rattenbury, *The Adoration of the Lamb*, 1950, p. 58.

inserted in the Apostles' Creed after 'Born of the Virgin Mary' and before 'Suffered under Pontius Pilate'—Peter's words: 'He went about doing good.' The actual evidence that Jesus gave of his Messiahship . . . is not that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, but that he healed the sick and preached the Gospel to the poor." The moment that the difficulty is stated in that form one sees where the misapprehension lies. The Creed deals with facts, not with evidence. The Creed states the facts relating to the Incarnation; the Bible furnishes us with some of the reasons which our Lord and his disciples gave in substantiation of his claims. The relative functions of Creed and Bible are easily misapprehended. We cannot be too clear that the Creed is not "evidence". It is axioms.

The fact of sin is intimated for the first time in the phrase "suffered under Pontius Pilate", but with splendid concentration on essentials the Creed compels us to recognize that God's response to man's sinful rebellion is of infinitely greater importance than that very rebellion. Even here we are not allowed to be the centre of the picture. Surely any man-derived Creed would have phrased things differently. The essential steps in Incarnation and Redemption stand out in all the dignified splendour of their Divine origination; yet equally the principle of free will (and therefore of man's co-operation) is indicated in the otherwise curious juxtaposition of the names of Mary and Pilate. Mary's Fiat opened the way to the Incarnation: Pilate's drugging of his conscience set the seal on our need of Redemption. They epitomize respectively the response of grace and of self-will.

The Virgin birth has been subject to heart-searching possibly even greater than the mystery demands. The first Adam was created without parentage, and should therefore be subject to at least an equal degree of suspicion. The inbreathing of the Spirit into "man" was a type of the birth of the second Adam. Adam, we are told, was created in the image of God. This is the norm: an initial gift of the Spirit, creating a new form of life. If we bear this origin in mind, we shall have less difficulty in accepting the Virgin birth of the second Adam by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation. It was a new creation, no less mysterious, if more wonderful in its revelation of the character of God, than was the original formation of man in his own image. And from this new creation a new type of life has arisen with which the third paragraph of the Creed is concerned. The first Adam was begotten of God by the Spirit; but since, by his sin, Adam had forfeited his fatherhood, the new "man" entered into the

continuity of the human race through the woman, conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. And at Pentecost the Bride of Christ, the Naos¹, was born, by a similar initial inrush of the Holy Spirit. First in the man, then through the woman (since there is neither male nor female in heaven), the complete humanity assumed from both being perfected at the right hand of the Father is now poured out by the direct mediation of the Spiritual Life-giver.

With regard to the miraculous, we may remember that the births of Isaac and of St John Baptist were contrary to all natural expectation. Our knowledge is so partial that we resemble the small child, who, on making his *début* at church, saw his father in a surplice for the first time, and cried out in his consternation, "Why, there's Daddy in his nightgown." We can, if we like, rationalize all revelation that transcends our very limited natural knowledge, and call it a nightgown—but we thereby miss church, and with it the life of the Spirit. We shut ourselves up in our bedroom and our souls remain earth-bound.

In a statement as rigidly condensed as the Apostles' Creed our attention is arrested by the apparent superfluity in the description of the Passion and death. "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

"He suffered", that is, he offered himself in sacrifice. The voluntary sacrificial nature of this dread drama is the essence of the whole transaction. It is the fulfilment of the great prophetic vision of the Suffering Servant, the Shepherd who gives himself for the sheep. The crucial point of the redemptive process lies in the willingness of the offering. If it is not irreverent to speak of germane issues in this connection, we see here the supreme example of the right exercise of free will. Free will is our only possible contribution in any matter, it is the only thing that we possess which is our own. Body, soul, heart, intellect, are part of our creaturely dower. Gethsemane should cure us for ever of imagining that our feelings, our emotions, are any legitimate test of conduct, or that honesty compels us to follow them. The whole moral value of any action lies in the will (since apart from that we have left *ourselves* outside it), though our emotional revolt lead even to sweat of blood.

"Was crucified." In this and the subsequent phrases the objective reality of the human nature is asserted in all its "natural" details.

"Dead." There may be those who find difficulty in the miraculous Virgin birth, and yet are not troubled by the equally miraculous

¹ See below, pp. 128-131.

death of God. Yet it is here that we confront the awfulness and finality of sin-earned death. It is not easy to grasp the *reality* of the death on the Cross, partly because we know the sequel, partly because, in so far as we have any grasp of the Divinity of our Lord, we do secretly evade the actuality. To speak of the death of God seems to be equally blasphemous and meaningless, yet as long as we translate *Theotokos* as Mother of God we are not left with an alternative. Probably in both cases the more accurate term would be "He who is God", but whatever word we use the death did actually occur. Those who have waited at the bedside of one dear to them know the devastating difference between the last breath and—no breath. *Anything* is better than that no breath—opening the impassable gulf between *that* existence and this blank; between that moment ago and the vast void of formless emptiness that looms in front of us, here, now, in this very room, and for ever. Similarly, he really died, and let those who remember their own dead know that, *qua* death, this was the same. All this had to be; we are passing through the redemptive process; and every step is of paramount importance and is the necessary precursor of its follower.

"And buried." Why? Well, how else are we to be certified of the resurrection of the body? Again we have the embellishing Biblical details of the women buying spices before the Friday sundown so that they might lose no moment on Sunday for lack of necessaries in order to complete the embalming required for final entombment. We cannot forget that this was an Eastern country, and that Martha has told us what happens to a (presumably) undamaged and properly embalmed body in four days. It was little short of heroic devotion on the part of these women to face their grim undertaking. They might well desire to waste no time on that third day; and it is a striking proof of their certainty of the death, and of its finality, that they acted as they did.

Leaving, then, the body in the tomb, we leave earth and descend with the next credal clause into Hades. Of this existence we know little, but that little gives no support to the common supposition that death, *per se*, changes us from what we are to what we should like to be. Indeed, those who most decry miracles do on occasion share the popular opinion that death is a conjuring trick, effecting for us that which we have been at no pains to struggle for here ourselves.

"The third day he rose again from the dead." Not from Hades. The last time we met the word "dead" was on the Cross, on earth,

and for the Resurrection he returned to earth in order to reassume his body.

The Church has been fully aware of the value of "visual aids" for many hundreds of years, and the so-called Easter garden has a very pressing lesson to demonstrate. It is a visual aid capable of correcting much erroneous devotion and not a little defective theology. Its great value lies in the fact that it draws together the two events which form the climax of our Redemption. In the background we see the hill of Calvary with its three empty crosses. In the foreground is the equally empty tomb: empty, that is, of the corruptible earthly body, but full, even to bursting, with spiritual portent conveyed to us by the flattened, spice-filled grave clothes and the head-shaped napkin an exact neck's length away. This is the essence of the "garden", the empty cross and the empty tomb. Everything else is embellishment. The contiguity of Calvary and the tomb is a matter of real theological importance, as is also St Paul's order of events regarding our own right approach to Christ, "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings".¹ We must ever contemplate the death in the light of the resurrection. The tomb is in the foreground, and we look through and past it to Calvary in the background. The separation of Calvary from the empty tomb can have dangerous results. The death was once-for-all, never to be repeated; but it was the gateway, the *mors janua vitae* and therefore a perpetual memory—a most sacrificial word, laden for Jews with sacrificial meaning—because of the present life in which it has issued. By itself alone the Cross was *not* a sacrifice. Its completion lay in that near by tomb. Only on the third day did it become a "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice", and without that consummation it would have availed nothing.

(ii) *The return to Eternity: Redemption complete but unapplied*

From the climax of Passion-Resurrection we pass away from time-space, where the work has been accomplished, back into Eternity. "He ascended into heaven." This transition is laden with import. If we study the cycle as revealed hitherto, we shall see that here it forms a completed circle, Eternity-earth-hades-Eternity. Redemption has been accomplished, but it is unapplied. If this were all, we should still be where we were, for earth is still earth, and our Lord has left it. There is no means of reaching him, or of making contact with him.

¹ Phil. 3. 10.

He is as far off as he was before the Incarnation. Yet the circle, though complete, has attained a difference. Our Lord has returned to heaven, but he is no longer the same as when he left it.

He "sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty". We come again to the value, and the danger, of poetic expression. There is nothing inherently anthropomorphic in speaking of God's right hand, nor in such phrases as sitting or standing or being in the midst of the throne. We can, if we like, imprison ourselves in literalness as we can wrap ourselves about in a nightgown, but if we do, we miss the sacramental means of transit to another plane. The truth underlying this phrase is that of the permanent reality of the Incarnation. Our Lord in leaving earth has not left his humanity—hence the importance of the raised *body*—and in so far as he is still man, he is only at God's right hand. As God, he is, and has always remained, God, without any spatial relationships; but as Man, in great mystery, he is in the closest juxtaposition to the Deity as That-which-is-not-God can be. How the splendour splashes out for us in this and in the following phrase, "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead"; for here we learn categorically that not only has our humanity been carried into heaven, but also that in the day of judgement He-who-is-God will judge us in the character of He-who-is-man. *From thence*, that is, from the position of inferiority where he is something less than God, he will come to judge. If we wonder how a "lesser" judgement can be final, we seem to find that this judgement-in-humanity consists in the providing of an absolute, concrete standard of perfection. He is that for which humanity was created, that to which each of us ought to attain. Now indeed we see that we have no need to await God's judgement, for we have judged ourselves. In the presence of He-who-is-man, unless we are in him, how shall any be found perfect? He comes as our Saviour, true, *but* also as our Judge. We minimize the inseparability of these two aspects at our very great peril.

If the Creed had stopped here we might well question God's character. There is another term than all-loving which would be rightly applied to One who set a standard of perfection before us by which our own failure is measured with pitiless clarity, and then decreed that by that standard we should be judged. Could anything be more calculated to drive to despair exactly those who, struggling most after a higher ideal, are most filled with awareness of what they might have been?

(iii) *The re-entry of Eternity into time: Sanctification*

It is significant that this last section of the Creed starts afresh with "I believe", for with it there is a fresh development, a re-entry of eternity into time comparable with the original act of creation.

We may note first of all that the paragraph is an entity, not merely a collection of haphazard and discrete sentences fortuitously strung together.¹ It is a statement of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church which is the consummation carried on throughout time of his descent upon the Virgin Mary. It is the means whereby we are enabled to share in the life of the risen and ascended perfect-Man Lord. This Mission of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost is the climax of the Creed as far as it concerns God's activities towards creation, and its importance cannot be overrated. We may, if we will, see a certain parallelism between this and the preceding paragraph. For as the Holy Spirit was the creative power of our Lord's earthly life, so he descended at Pentecost as the power from on high², promised by our Lord, to create his mystical Body, the Church. It is from our Lord himself that we learn that this was to be productive of greater works than his own; this process of sanctification, underlined in the Catechism by the use of the present instead of the past tense, outweighs in importance his own earthly life and activities which were only the prelude to the means whereby the miracle of the Church was to be accomplished. As in the Communion Order³ we shall find that there is a twin climax, the zenith being reached a moment before the consummation, so we may say that in the Creed the zenith is reached in the second paragraph with the mystery of the Incarnation, but that the more glorious consummation is found in the third paragraph with the creation of the Church.

The word "Church" in the Creed means the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Body vivified at Pentecost. The mystery of the two aspects of form which we saw adumbrated in Baptism and Confirmation meets us again here, as we see the definitive germ of supernatural life imparted to the Twelve at the Last Supper, already uniting them in some sense with our Lord in his Passion; on which "dry bones" he breathed on the evening of Easter Day so that they came together in

¹ This fact—of such fundamental import—is gravely blurred in the 1928 Book, where the Revisers have introduced a fresh paragraph into the Nicene Creed in the Alternative Order for Communion. It may be noted that there is no paragraphing of either Creed in their Latin forms.

² Luke 24. 49.

³ See below, p. 130.

the form of his mystical Body, in common with the other disciples then present (the Apostles being already the foundation bonds in virtue of their Communion preceded by the "Baptismal" foot-washing¹, on Maundy Thursday); to which nucleus of organic structure the Pentecostal descent imparted the power of self-subsisting life, creating that new functional entity the Church, the Body of Christ.

We see this Church with his eyes stretching not only forwards through his Person to embrace those yet unborn, but also backwards to Abraham and to the Church in the wilderness, also through his own Person. The Credal Church has its beginnings in the Old Testament. This embryo stage reaches its climax in our Lord, through whose Person it is transformed into a higher state of existence. He becomes not only the possessor of a physical Body and a spiritual inheritance, but the Head of that mystical organism which is the predestined crown and consummation of created life. The Church is indeed a new creation but she holds within herself all that has gone before. The human embryo recapitulates the stages of its development, and even the adult body shows signs of vestigial remains, once of value but now superfluous. Surely the reason is not so difficult to grasp. These are the hallmark of our descent, and of the ascent through us of all that has gone before. The crown of creation is the image of God; and of that image, Christ in his Church. But the image on the mystical plane includes the visible and is expressed through it. If the Church is to be invisible, why not the human race? The second paragraph of the Creed, and the use of the word "body" in this connection, alike defy disembodiment.

"The Communion of Saints." By our incorporation into Christ's Body at our Baptism we are simultaneously made members of one another. When we think of the Church at any given era, whether our own or at some previous date, we seem to be faced with confusion; nor should this surprise us, for such a view is a cross-section of the whole, and any cross-section is a dead end, severed from its anterior and subsequent connections, thereby blocking out its functional relationship to the organism as a whole. We may think, perhaps, of a cross-section of the spinal-cord which conveys much information with regard to its constitution at that particular level; but unless we relate it to a longitudinal section many of its component parts will be meaningless. So

¹ See Fr Benson, *The Discourse at Capernaum*, Ch. XXIX, p. 303 ff., for a consideration of the non-glorified Body imparted to the disciples at the Last Supper.

then the Church also in any given Anno Domini is only a cross-section of its whole being; and its viability depends upon its connections through the ascending stages with Christ its Head, its virility upon the fullness and richness of the life which it is handing on to successive generations. This life is Christ himself, since he is not separable from the life which he imparts; therefore there is never any impairment or lack in the transmitted life, however much certain aspects may be overlaid or underemphasized in any given cross-section.

For descriptive purposes the Church is commonly spoken of under three heads, and these relate to its longitudinal, not to its transverse, existence. The Church Militant comprises those members who are still clothed in soul and terrestrial body. It is the cross-section here alive on earth at the present moment. The Church Expectant is, presumably, the largest numerically, and consists of those whose soul has been severed from its terrestrial body without having as yet been re-embodied in the heavenly places; the Church Triumphant is those blest souls whose purity enables them to gaze unveiled upon the Lamb. These three divisions together are the Church, and we have but a poor conception of it if the word "Church" habitually conveys to our mind only the idea of the Church Militant, that numerically—and increasingly—minute portion here on earth now. It is the whole Church, Triumphant, Expectant, and Militant, in which we profess our faith when we say that we believe in "The Communion of Saints".

"The Forgiveness of sins." The Nicene Creed says in greater detail, "I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." We note that the Church comes first, and then the means of entry into it. By Baptism we are taken into that which already exists independently of ourselves. Perfect and complete in its Head from the first moment of its being (Fr Benson says somewhere, "The Church has never been more holy or more perfect than she is now"), the Church is that form of visibility which corresponds with our Lord's own human Body when he was on earth. Even of him in his perfection there were very many doubters, and large numbers among those qualified to judge rejected his claims. It is not surprising that such doubts should be accentuated a thousandfold with regard to his mystical Body. On earth it is frankly a nursery school, and most of us are young hooligans. Baptism conveys forgiveness of original sin¹, and of sins, when it is not administered in infancy. Post-Baptismal sins are forgiven by public and private absolution on the same conditions under which

¹ See p. 23 ff.

Baptism is administered. The sacramental principle governs our whole existence.

"The Resurrection of the Body." Our bodies as well as our souls have to be redeemed and drawn into the life of Christ (hence the need both of the Incarnation and of Sacraments), our sensible natural life being spiritually transformed by spiritually-vitalized natural means. With the putting-off of our natural bodies not only do sacraments become superfluous, but our natural senses no longer exist. Sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are organs of our earthly bodies and determine our relationships on this plane. When we no longer have a terrestrial body we can no longer make "sensible" contact with our fellow-departed or with those on earth. The disembodied spirit of man is as incapable of movement as is the breath-bereaved body which it has evacuated. Has not our Lord told us that the angels come to carry it to Abraham's bosom? which is the Scriptural authority for the beautiful petition in the 1928 Prayer Book that the soul may go forth upon its journey from this world ". . . aided by Angels and Archangels, and all the armies of the heavenly host".

The medium of our life in God is charity, but charity is not a functioning instrument. It is not an organ whereby one human personality makes itself known to another. For such intercourse we need a "body", but in our present state we cannot grasp what disembodiment and re-embodiment really entail, which is probably the main reason why we are told so little of the hereafter. That material transformation can and does occur has been demonstrated by our risen Lord in taking and eating fish before the assembled disciples. There ought to be very little difficulty over material particles to-day, when scientists have transcendentalized the materiality of matter into something approaching nothingness.¹ Of our future shape we may remember that nothing unholy can find any place in the holy Body of Christ. Precisely how much of us is "in" him in this life it is perhaps better not to speculate.

(iv) *The taking-up of Creation into God*

"The life everlasting." There is an idea current in some circles that other-worldliness, that is, a belief that this world is not the end of our existence, leads people to despise this present life and in particular to be

¹ Sir James Jeans has said when speaking of matter and radiation that "these concepts reduce the whole universe to a world of light, potential or existent, so that the whole story of creation can be told with perfect accuracy and truthfulness in the six words: God said, Let there be light."

indifferent to the welfare of others, since everything will come right when we die. The Creed lends no support to this thesis. If we compare the paragraphs dealing with our Lord's earthly life and that of his mystical Body we find that there is no mention of death in the latter. We pass straight from Baptism to resurrection. There is no Hades in this part of the Creed. Death has been finally dealt with, and those who are in Christ have already passed from death into life. His mystical Body cannot undergo death because that which is one with him lives with his risen and ascended life. Here is the rationale of speaking of Baptism as a "death". The death of the Cross is imparted to us by mystical cleansing from sin in order that we may be engrafted into the life of the mystical Body. There is no room here for "pie in the sky when we die" because we are already dead, and our true life is the life of Christ, so that we view this earthly existence with his eyes. And this life was to him worth both Incarnation and Passion,¹ therefore in so far as we are growing into him we shall share his mind with regard to it and feel the same. "The life everlasting", the great finale of the Creed, is the splendid *raison d'être* of the whole of the dispensation recorded in the phrases placed in the right-hand column of our diagram. It is the sublime motive which makes even the awfulness of the Passion gloriously worth while, and makes sense of every effort after holiness.

So tremendous is this destiny that the phrase moves from the dependent clauses towards the midline,² not to the centre, for the eternal life of the creature is not the same thing as the eternal existence of God; but it is a true gathering-back of creation from the time-space detour which is effected by its incorporation through man into the Body of Christ, itself the comprehending expression of all created forms. This is the object of the Incarnation, to which the making of this world into a place fit for heroes to live in is subsidiary. There is no suggestion in the New Testament that it will ever become such: quite the reverse: but the only hope of an even partial realization of that ideal lies in keeping it in its place. Only by seeking God and *his* kingdom will these things be added. Fr Benson says³ that Christ came "into the world to seek the glory of God as his only end in life. He willed not the salvation of men more feebly because he willed the glory of God supremely." It is the proclamation of this truth both in word and deed which is the only "good" that a Christian can do. This is Christian good, Christian glory. The character built on God can live

¹ He came "to minister, and to give his life" (Matt. 20. 28).

² See diagram above, p. 38. ³ *Advent*, 4th edn, p. 261.

anywhere. The character becoming Godlike will of necessity be growing in selflessness and therefore be looking increasingly with God's eyes on its neighbour. By looking at God we see our neighbour in true focus because we see God's thoughts in regard to him. When we look *primarily* at our neighbour we only see our own ideas for him—and they are so seldom God's.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord."¹

No wonder the world is in a sorry plight.

¹ Isa. 55. 8.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"MY GOOD CHILD", says the Catechism with comforting placidity after the recitation of the Duties explanatory of the Ten Commandments, "know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself." No, indeed! And to meet this impasse the Catechism proceeds to the recital of the Lord's Prayer.

Before, however, we examine the relationship of the Lord's Prayer to the Commandments and their correlative Duties, we may note the settings provided for it in the New Testament by St Matthew and St Luke.

St Matthew

The Lord's Prayer forms part of the Sermon on the Mount, and is introduced in an instruction on Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting. 6. 5 "When ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they . . . pray . . . that they may be seen of men"

7 "And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. . . . 9-13 "After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father
which art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, as in heaven so
on earth.

Give us this day our daily bread.

St Luke

10. 38 ff. Our Lord pays a visit to Martha and Mary. The last words "Mary hath chosen the good part . . ." are followed immediately by 11. 1, "And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say,

Father,

Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
(Thy will be done as in heaven, so
on earth. *A.V.*)

Give us day by day our daily bread.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. And bring us not into temptation. (For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen. *A.V.*)

14 "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

5-8 "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

The difference in atmosphere between the brusquely didactic St Matthew and the bedside suavity of St Luke seems to be reflected in the differences found in their two versions of the Prayer, as well as in the commentaries which their respective arrangements provide. How characteristic for St Matthew to think of sin as "debts", and to make the writing-off of an I.O.U. the test of penitence;¹ whereas St Luke, facing sin as sin, makes the patient co-operate in his own rehabilitation by a tale of importunity followed by direct exhortation

¹ And if St Matthew is not himself the author, the tithing of mint and anise gave ample opportunity for the prevalence of such an attitude in Jewish circles.

to vigorous effort. We find, by dovetailing the two accounts, that repetition and persistence are a fundamental element in prayer (witnessed by St Luke in his Ask . . . seek . . . knock); and that the *vain* repetitions of St Matthew are equivalent to wanting "something for nothing", the hope that mere words of request will be enough without any real effort. Of St Matthew's sophistry we are all of us guilty from time to time; that interior craving for approval which we secretly feel that we deserve, the comfortable glow which puts us right in our own eyes. It is in something of that spirit that in the Lucan account the disciple asks for instruction in prayer, "teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples". What a self-revealing phrase! the desire to "show off" what *their* Master can do in the matter. In St Luke's sequence our Lord's commendation of Mary precedes a verse recording his own prayer, and into these high august regions comes the nearly jealous demand for a short cut to the same heights. Our Lord gives the formula; but he accompanies it with the pictorial warning of the importunate friend, which he further underlines with the emphatic "I say unto you, Ask . . . seek . . . knock". Prayer, in fact, is an all-out, not a short-cut, business; and if we desire to approach God in prayer it will not be done by the mere use of words, nor by the desire to gain human approval or a sense of personal well-being.

There are two minor points which may be noted here. The Lord's Prayer in its various parts can be so far paralleled with Jewish prayer that there have not been wanting those who deny any element of originality in it, contending that he merely told his disciples to use the prayer said daily by himself and by generations of Jewish children both before and after him. That the Jewish formula has been surcharged with profound originality is, however, undoubted; and what an anti-climax the similarity of the phrases must have been to the disciples looking for some striking pronouncement! As upon other occasions, they had added a costing interioriness to their already-existing obligations instead of securing a coveted labour-saving device.

The other point concerns the final doxology, which appears only in the Authorized version of St Matthew's Gospel, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen." They are an appendix, like the Gloria at the end of the Psalms, and not an integral part of the Prayer, and the Prayer Book very wisely restricts their use to certain times of special praise and thanksgiving. They occur only five times in the Prayer Book: before the Psalms at Mattins

and Evensong (the Psalms being the central act of praise in these Offices), after the Communion in the Communion Order, at the Churching of Women, and during a storm at sea.¹ At other times there is a simple Amen after the words "deliver us from evil"; and it would add greatly to the dignity of the Prayer to restrict the use of the doxology, both in public and in private, according to the Prayer Book pattern. When it is added upon all occasions, children, and perhaps others, are misled into supposing that it really forms part of the Prayer. The Prayer is, however, complete as it is given for us to learn in the Catechism; and there is a certain incongruity in appending a special act of praise on ordinary everyday occasions, or in times of mourning and calamity.

We are not in this place considering the differences which exist between the two Biblical versions of the Lord's Prayer, but are confining our attention to that third form with which the Prayer Book has made us most familiar. It consists of an address, a qualifying phrase, and seven petitions. The petitions may be divided into two sets of three with a bridge petition between them. They then suggest a pattern not unlike that which was found in the Creed, and they have, in addition, a certain congruity with the Gifts of the Spirit.

"Our Father,			
which art in heaven,			<i>Gifts of the Spirit</i>
I. Hallowed be thy Name.	} Heaven		Wisdom
II. Thy kingdom come.			Understanding
III. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.			Knowledge
IV. Give us this day our daily bread	} Bridge		Counsel
V. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us.			Godliness
VI. And lead us not into temptation;	} Earth		Ghostly Strength
VII. But deliver us from evil."			Holy Fear

The address, in one felicitous word, brings God within our reach: "Father". But before there is a moment for familiarity or presumption we are sternly drawn up into eternal realities; "which art in heaven".

¹ We may note, however, that this doxology did not find its way into the Prayer Book until 1661, and we may well wonder whether it was not a doubtful benefit.

Father, yes: but, God first. For with the contact made, our true relationship appears; and creaturely adoration of his intrinsic Being, his infinite Dominion, and his unalterable Purpose of existence demands our instant and whole-hearted attention. And as the Creed started in eternity and midway returned thither again, so also does this opening section of the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven."

Earth is drawn up into heaven in the same breath which mentions it, exactly as at the outset the homely "Father" was rapt into the same region. But now having established its foundation and background, a bridge is thrown out from heaven towards earth in the words, "Give us this day our daily bread". Our double life, lying between earth and heaven, needs nourishment in both regions; and the heavenly manna as well as the requirements of our physical existence are equally comprised in this petition. Now having our eyes enlightened by the preceding heavenly vision, and with body and soul equipped for the ensuing day, we realize as we descend to our earthly relationships that our first requirement is charity. "Forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us." "As we forgive." Looking at our surroundings we see how all too easy it is to damage them by selfish use, how even easier through the same selfishness (or uncharity) to grudge forgiveness for damage received. Yes certainly "forgive us", and in equal measure give us that charity which can make Divine forgiveness operable. Finally, as we grow in consciousness of our frailty, we add, "Lead us not into temptation", shield us from tests before which presumption must be worsted; and, "Deliver us from evil", let not external assaults wear us down.

The Gifts of the Spirit have been divided by Holden¹ into three and three with a bridge between: and thus divided they acquire a functional bearing on the clauses of the Lord's Prayer. We can envisage them as the several helps of the Comforter towards the realization of that for which we pray.

¹ G. F. Holden, *The Holy Ghost the Comforter*, 1908, p. 47.

"Hallowed be thy Name"	The Gift of Wisdom enables us to apprehend in our creaturely measure the mystery of the great Name of God, the utterance and the embodiment of his very Being;
"Thy kingdom come"	by Understanding we may learn to pray for, or rather to enter into, the meaning of the coming of his Kingdom:
"Thy will be done"	through Knowledge of the action of his Will in heavenly places we can visualize its counterpart in the things of earth. Then comes the great transition, the watershed, where we look both ways, upwards and downwards, forwards and backwards, the place where above all sound judgement is required; and for our aid is given the
"Give us this day our daily bread"	Spirit of Counsel, the adjuster, whose operation allows a smooth, unbumpy grounding as we run down to earth. This is the only petition which is concerned with our individual needs. The three which we have just considered are wholly God-centred, and the three which follow concern our external relationships. It is at this meeting-point of the specific duties towards God and man that so many of our problems arise. "Our daily bread", not our luxuries and self-indulgences, fleshly or spiritual, but our bread, our necessity. With counsel taken we go forward, following of our Saviour Christ by
"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"	a "daily proceeding (i.e., increasing) in all virtue and godliness of living", as prescribed in the Baptismal Order. This power is imparted to us by the Spirit of Godliness, however slow and however fitful our growth may be, cleansing us from sin and enduing us with charity to forgive like God.
"Lead us not into temptation"	By the Spirit of Ghostly strength, we are enabled to persevere with faithful endurance;
"Deliver us from evil"	and by the Spirit of Holy Fear we learn to hate, with a shuddering horror, "even the garment spotted by the flesh" ¹ ; and to fear "the slightest trace of irreverence towards holy things as an unbearable insult to the Love of God".

¹ Jude 23.

This is the whole of the prayer for which the disciple asked; but where the poorer Matthean version is followed, and a doxology is added, the parallelism with the Credal pattern is completed by returning once again to the worship of and in the heavenlies.

Our short, but compendious, Catechism, after a preliminary series of questions in which individual responsibility is firmly stressed—"What is *your* name?" "*You* promised"—sums up the Christian profession as a repudiation of evil, a right faith, and an outward life corresponding to these inward dispositions. Then follow the Creed, as the standard of faith; the Ten Commandments with their explanatory elaborations in the "Duties" as the standard of life; and finally, the Lord's Prayer, with its commentary, and the Sacraments, as the means whereby this life of inward faith and outward actions is to be conducted.

If then, we correlate the Lord's Prayer with the Commandments, we find that the first four Commandments, together with My Duty towards God, are summed up in the three opening petitions; the last six commandments and My Duty towards my Neighbour in the remainder. My duty towards myself, "Give us this day our daily bread", is found in the last phrase of my Duty towards my Neighbour; "to learn and labour truly to get my own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me". This phrase is sometimes quoted in perverted form, which is unfortunate, since as it stands it is an admirable vindication of the fact that work is as varied in its forms as the vocations to which God *may call* us: that however much our outward circumstances may change, our duty is to fulfil honestly the obligations of our present position.

The version of the Tenth Commandment that appears in the Catechism in the Prayer Book of 1549 begins like that found in Deuteronomy,¹ "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant . . .". In 1552 (at which date also the Commandments were first added to the Communion Order) our present version was substituted. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." Even a non-feminist may concede that if so much detail is to be given, the 1549 order is more seemly in a Christian book. This version (neither in the Exodian nor the Deuteronomic form, as we have them) carefully excludes mention of the inanimate, except in general terms. It runs: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wyfe, nor his servant, nor his mayde, nor his Oxe, nor his Asse,

¹ Deut. 5. 21.

nor any thyng that is his." The Oxe and the Asse are dignified with capitals, a fitting tribute of reverence towards those honoured worshippers at their Creator's cradle. Their inclusion by inference in the Gospel narrative at that point as well as in the Mosaic law¹ may well remind us of our abiding duty and responsibility towards all sentient creation.² It is not a matter of sentiment, but a recognition of our essential oneness with them as created creatures, and of our very real responsibility in God's scheme for all "below" us in that scheme. Two sparrows for a farthing is man's estimate of their worth—but God's:

Our progress in prayer may probably be indicated to some extent by discovering at which petition of the Lord's Prayer we habitually become alert. It has been said that for schoolboys the pregnant phrase is "Forgive us our trespasses". This is a good, sound, and excellent beginning; still for many years we probably fail to realize that all our sins are finally sins against charity, in spite of the fact that our Lord has placed beside this phrase the very terrible test, "as we forgive". It is as we painfully struggle from the natural level of complaint and self-justification, the "I have been very jealous for the Lord . . . the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant . . . I, even I only, am left"³ of Elijah; or the, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the observances thereof"⁴ of Nehemiah; to the "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"⁵ of St Stephen, that we begin to move into the higher levels of the Lord's Prayer. While our minds first become interested at "Give us this day our daily bread" or at "Forgive us", we have still much struggle before us, though this must not daunt, and need not surprise us. It is, however, a real step upwards and forwards when we begin to rest in "Thy will be done" though it is probably many more years before we realize that "Thy kingdom come" is a still purer prayer. Yet even here there is complexity, a dual outlook. We have not really risen to the upper plane of prayer till we rest in the first phrase, "Hallowed be thy Name", recognizing all the succeeding phrases as a radiant radiating commentary. Nor can we remain there except under the terms of that covenant-petition which governs all our relationships in earth and in heaven. "Forgive us our

¹ Deut. 25. 4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." Cf. also Prov. 12. 10, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."

² Our discharge of this obligation as a nation is less perfect than we like to imagine. Consult UFAW, 284 Regent's Park Road, Finchley, London, N.3.

³ 1 Kings 19. 14.

⁴ Neh. 13. 14.

⁵ Acts 7. 60.

debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"; "Forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us." If we are beginning to find God, our charity towards our neighbour is increasing. This is something entirely independent of physical contiguity, and can be exercised under every possible external condition; as also it can be absent in a life apparently overflowing with good works.

We have noted the differences in the framework provided for the Lord's Prayer by St Matthew and St Luke. Both, indeed, are needed. St Matthew's systematic treatise of dogmatic theology is a very necessary background for St Luke's more advanced ascetical teaching. We cannot pray well without a thorough grounding in sound theology and we observe that St Matthew places prayer between the supporting duties of almsgiving and fasting. Until almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, these three elementary requirements of all religious life, are the established basis of our existence, we shall never make any progress in what are called the higher reaches of prayer. Indeed, very many people remain content and spiritually satisfied with a very elementary degree of prayer-life because the dependence of prayer upon self-discipline is either unrecognized or denied. But the arrangement in St Luke suggests deeper things, in harmony with the interior arrangement of the Prayer itself. The significance of the Lucan Bethanic prelude, followed by the definite introductory setting of our Lord's personal devotions, is too obvious to be missed. When he had ceased praying, he said, "When ye pray, say: Father, Hallowed be thy name". The same order is carefully followed in the Duty towards God: My Duty is "to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him", a very fair description of the four categories of vocal and formal prayer: Adoration, the worship of God purely and only for what he is in himself; Thanksgiving, for his myriad manifestations of his truth, beauty, and goodness; Intercession, in sure faith that we are heard; Petition, for whatever cause we desire his helping benediction. It is true that in experience we begin the other way round: our first conscious prayers are petitionary: but though "that comes first which is natural, that is first which is spiritual".¹ "Prayer" so often actually means to us "cadging", whether altruistically or for ourselves. The child of 5 says, "Please, Mother, give me an apple". At 10, having secured the apple, it gives it generously instead to Mummy. But at 15, there is neither request nor offering, because the

¹ See 1 Cor. 15. 46.

greater privilege of ascertaining, and of collaborating with, the Mother's wishes has overshadowed both the more selfish previous stages. The 5-year-old's prayer is a perfectly legitimate one—as Fr Benson says, "That which is an object of legitimate desire is a legitimate object of prayer"¹—but it is a pity for the over-70's to be still mainly engaged in the prayer of the under-5's. The soul that is growing in its knowledge of God finds matters of greater value for its concern, having discovered by experience the truth of our Lord's words that those who really put him first find these things adjusted for them. Again Fr Benson says, "People often think of prayer as getting something from God. Christ's way of thinking of it is 'that God may be glorified' (S. John xiv, 13)."² This, besides securing our own necessities according to God's dispensation, is also the most fruitful prayer that we can offer for our neighbour, because in it we are no longer instructing God in our ideas for their welfare, but are bending our will and our mind to attend to his. It may be very exhausting, it has none of the glamour or the feeling of *empressement* that is often attached to our own initiative, nor does it need any details to "pray about", but if and when we can thus subordinate ourselves, however momentarily, we allow God's will to have that unhindered flow for which we pray when we say, "as it is in heaven".

Our Duty towards God closes with an ascription of praise, "to honour his holy Name and his Word", whereby it sums up all the varied aspects of the prayer life as being together an honouring of God's holy Name—his Being in Trinity—and his Word—the Incarnate Lord: in the power of which we are enabled "to serve him truly all the days of my life", for it is in these twin foundation doctrines of the Christian faith that we can alone render him true service.

Fr Benson has written:³

"It does seem to be the root evil of the present day, the want of pure theology. People are full of disputes about sacraments, eternal punishment, inspiration, and the like; and yet the people who know a great deal about these controversies know next to nothing about the Holy Trinity. But this is the Creed. The others are only corollaries of the Creed, and are helpful or hurtful just in proportion as they are made subservient to this fundamental doctrine—valueless, even when rightly held, if their connection with the eternal relationships of the Blessed

¹ *Cowley Evangelist*, July 1948.

² *Ibid.*, June 1948.

³ *Further letters of Richard Meux Benson*, ed. W. H. Longridge, 1920, p. 220.

Trinity is not recognized. Our doctrine, teaching, experience of the Church, must be, so to speak, in a comatose state, unless there be an active, experimental, loving knowledge of the Name of the Holy Trinity, which is the living power wherewith the Church is bound together by the Holy Ghost sanctifying all the elect people of God.

“It is the want of this knowledge which is the strength of unbelief, heresy and prayerlessness.”

6

SPECIAL VOCATIONS I:
HOLY MATRIMONY

HITHERTO the Prayer Book has been concerned with the foundation which is common to every member of Christ; for Baptism, Catechism, Confirmation is a triad which applies to us all, and is a “common” requirement. Within that foundation framework we now come to three specialized forms of work or service, which certain individual members may be called upon to perform.

Holy Matrimony

The description of this Office in the Prayer Book is “The form of Solemnization of Matrimony”, and a dispassionate perusal of the said form leaves solemnity as its most striking feature. The whole outlook and emphasis is almost the antithesis of that emotional reaction which the thought of a wedding commonly raises. Indeed, such is the language used that it might well be termed repellent rather than welcoming. After a reminder that monogamy is the law of humanity, coextensive with man’s existence as man, “instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency”, the Prayer Book asserts that for Christians its holiness is infinitely increased, because it signifies “unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church”; and adds very bluntly that it is not intended “to satisfy men’s carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding”.

Three reasons for Matrimony follow.

“First, it was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.”

That is, Matrimony is primarily a co-operation with God in the extension of his glory. It is a hallowing of his name through the often arduous work of bringing up children for his service. It is *work* for God and for society. The theocentric and social aspect of Matrimony has been unduly neglected in this post-Romantic age.

“Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body.”

The married life is not a life of self-indulgence but of self-discipline, perhaps as austere as that of the celibate.¹

"Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity."

The need for a reasonable possibility of "mutual society" is often overlooked among persons who have come to regard the emotional complex of "romantic love" as the sole foundation and requisite for married life. C. S. Lewis² points out that before the eleventh century "falling in love" was an unrecorded condition; and it is not required by the Prayer Book for those desiring to offer themselves, in response to a call from God, for the work of the married state.

The three causes for Matrimony being stated, the Prayer Book calls on any persons present who know an obstacle to the proposed union to enter a protest. This public appeal is followed by a solemn adjuration to the couple themselves "as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed" to confess any known impediment even now, before it is too late. There is little here to suggest the lightheartedness of ignorance or superficiality, but there is a similarity with the twin vocation, that to the Religious Life. There also the Aspirant is received with a certain indifference, and, as in this Marriage rite, much is made of the difficulties of the life which is desired. In both cases, for those who have a true vocation from God, this solemn note strikes down through the upper regions of happiness and raises a response in the wellsprings of joy: for those who have come "unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly" it may well be the transfixing, premonitory herald of unguessed woe.

These two complementary vocations—and the call to the Religious State is more widely recognized as a "vocation" than is the Married State, to the great loss of the latter—have a further point in common, that both in the Life of Rejection and the Life of Affirmation, the contracting parties are themselves the ministers of the sacrament. Like the Religious, men and women are not "made" married, they marry themselves, and that in a form which is explicit and detailed. Before the actual taking of their Vows, there is a scrutiny (as before Baptism, Confirmation, Religious Vows, etc.). The man is asked:

¹ The Levitical rule of birth-control may for some natures involve heroic self-discipline. It is at the opposite pole from the modern devices for contraception, which are expressly designed to allow uninhibited self-indulgence.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 1951, p. 44.

"N. Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the Holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her,
comfort her,
honour,
and keep her, in sickness and in health:
and forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?"

The man shall answer,

"I will."

That is, he gives his word, with the utmost solemnity, to God, and through his representative, to the Church, in the presence of his friends and neighbours, that he

will live *after God's ordinance* (already stated at the beginning of the service),
and will love, comfort (be a strength and support), honour and keep (protect) whatever physical or mental changes time may bring,
and will forsake *all* other while *both* still live.

It seems clear. We may for the moment leave aside the controversial "obey" which the woman adds ("obey him and serve him") to her otherwise similar declaration; though it may be permitted to wonder whether there is not something lost when the complementary nature of the sexes as indicated by the man's "comfort" and the woman's "obedience and service" are obliterated in a flat uniformity which in no case ever exists. The balance of equality with variation in this scrutiny is what modern colloquialism calls realistic; whereas the automatism introduced into the 1928 Prayer Book is not. And as old-fashioned chivalry would consider suitable, the better part is reserved for the Christian wife. Obedience and service are the choice privilege of followers of him who came not to do his own but his Father's Will, and who announced to the creatures whom he had made "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth".¹

The exchange of Vows follows, words largely familiar, but so comprehensive and irrevocable that they cannot be passed over without any comment.

¹ Luke 22. 27.

"I N. take thee N. to my wedded wife (husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish (and to obey) till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight (give) thee my troth."

"I take thee . . . to have and to hold." It is primarily a free choice, a going-out of oneself to enter into possession of that which we desire both to have and to retain.

After that come the conditions under which this mutual having is to be accomplished. (For in this part of the Vow the wording is identical except for the words "wife" and "husband".) They are grouped in a series of three antitheses.

"For better for worse"—here is certainly included all that is comprehended in the word "character", together with all the hitherto unknown or undeveloped potentialities of being (and reactions under the new conditions of life) whether of higher or lower nature. The "taking" is not only of the obvious and of the already known. It is also a holding of all that is, and of all that will show itself in time to come.

"For richer for poorer"—not only the character and person as they now are, but as they will be under any given external circumstances which may arise.

"In sickness and in health"—this includes sickness of mind as well as of body, changes which may distort—or transform—into something unrecognizable and unimaginable.

The taking and the having are so intimate that future separation is as impossible as it would be to separate oneself from one's own character and being. These phrases are the charter of stability. Each solemnly undertakes to be as true, as unvarying, to the other, as God himself—therefore, no sin by one against the other can alter the outlook of the offended partner. Together they play the part of God, and remain as bound by vows as God is by his own Being.

"To love and to cherish." The New Testament might without any impropriety be called the Drama or the Book of Love; for all the separate components of the volume which we call the New Testament have the manifestation of love for their foundation. And the Marriage rite makes it clear from the outset that the man and woman

who come to use it are to model their love on New Testament lines. St Paul has a good deal to say about human love; and this phrase to love and to cherish in the marriage vow points more especially to the Ephesian description¹ with its daring and humbling comparison that a man should love his wife as his own body, which he "nourisheth and cherisheth" "even as Christ also the Church".² Authority and obedience are not only replaced in the natural (and therefore perfectly-adjusted) relationship of original creation, but they are also infused with their own peculiar portion of that Spirit which is the life of Christ in his Church.

"Till death us do part." The married state is an image of the divine creativity. Death destroys this image, since both partners are needed for its exhibition, and thus leaves the remaining partner free, if occasion require, to enter into another similar union. Nothing is broken by death except this image, neither can anything else obliterate it.

"According to God's holy ordinance"—not according to, or condoning, man's fallible misusings of his grace.

"Thereto I plight thee my troth"—so speaks the man. The intense solemnity of the word plight is demonstrated by its primary meaning of incurring danger; it is an engagement over and above mere giving; it is a giving even "to one's own hindrance". And troth is but a derivative of truth, that which can never vary.

When the woman has made a similar declaration there follows the giving of the ring, accompanied by a form of words which makes this the loveliest moment of the rite, but it needs to be taken in conjunction with the slight alteration in wording of the woman's vow. She promises to love, cherish, and *to obey*, and closes by saying "thereto I give thee my troth". Something is happening during this exchange of Vows. A new organism is in process of creation. The man has formulated his contribution, he has declared his readiness to subordinate his personal good to the needs of that-which-is-coming-into-being. To this already existent thing the woman gives—her obedience; for only so can she be constructively grafted into it. Now incorporated within it by her obedience to its laws (one cannot swim by standing on one's head), she *gives* it her troth, her faith, her honour. Before this mystery the man bows down, *in persona Christi*, as Christ in loving humility offers himself to his church.

¹ Eph. 5. 22 ff.² 5. 29.

“With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

We have met that formula already, in the Baptismal Order. In conjunction with water it there created a new member of the Body of Christ. Within that Body, of two of those members, it here creates as new, as real, as permanent an entity: a family.

A family in germ certainly, but a spiritual unity, the completest “image” of the Divine Being which is possible in created form. Not for many years, not in all cases, does the family personality show itself outwardly; nor, for the matter of that, does true individual character appear very often till life is well advanced. But the new existence is real, even in cases where the disharmony of its elements might be expressed in physical terms as having a limp or a withered arm or different-coloured eyes. We may deplore our own appearance: there may be many necessary and legitimate steps which we may take for its improvement: but we may not take into our own hands the date of our own death. And a sundering of the two primary constituent parts of the family other than by death is akin to suicide: it is a similar violation of entity.

Thus we see, even if somewhat dimly, that whatever apparent catastrophes overwhelm certain individual family groups, something is involved over and above the sum of the individuals concerned. No fault of character, no mental or physical disability, interfere with the family relationship any more than they de-Christianize the baptized. Separation may be needed on occasion, as may be excommunication, but the way of return may never be closed. Eternal, not temporal, welfare is concerned in both cases; and for groups, as for individuals, our Lord’s word is the same. Be ye perfect. He never offers alternatives, he presents choices. There is nothing short of the ideal for anyone. Its actualization may, in some cases, bring little of what is popularly called happiness, but that does not affect the reality of its success as a Christian marriage if it is being effected in the spirit and power of the marriage rite. No Christian is called to be “happy”. All are called to be saints. The example of St Monica is not to be lightly despised or ignored.¹

With regard to the vexed matter of obedience there is an aspect which does not always receive its full weight, either in this context or

¹ St Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk IV, Ch. IX.

in general. God has made us mutually interdependent because we reflect his own essential Being. The utter dependence upon each other by total self-giving between the several Persons of the Blessed Trinity is reflected in our like dependence upon each other, whether by the obedience of authority or the authorization of obedience. (For Christian authority is not arbitrary, but is to be exercised within the lawful limits of its jurisdiction.) “He saved others, himself he cannot save” is literally¹ true, and in his supreme example we see that lawful authority is to be obeyed even when it is evilly exercised, because the complementary aspect of obedience may avail to save the faulty exhibition of authority. Two wrongs merely destroy the whole foundation of our interchanging existence.

The Church’s representative in this rite (known in kaleidoscopic alternation as the Curate, the Priest, and the Minister) directs its form, and announces its proper completion, after he has joined the hands of the contracting parties with our Lord’s words, “Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder”.² It is worth while to notice how careful the Church is to make clear that the contracting parties are the ministrants. The Priest says, “*Forasmuch* as N. and N. have *consented together* . . . and have witnessed the same . . . and . . . have given and pledged their troth . . . I pronounce that they be man and wife . . . In the Name of the Father”, etc. After which pronouncement, he bestows the Church’s Blessing (in the same form as that which is used in Religious Profession).

In the early Christian Church, unlike Jewry, divorce was not allowed. In the Jewish Church in our Lord’s day there were two schools of thought, the rigorists, who allowed divorce only for adultery, and the laxists, who allowed it “for every cause”.³ Our Lord was faced by the Pharisees with the laxist version⁴ and, in answer to their query whether

¹ Matt. 27. 42.

² Matt. 19. 6.

³ On this question see Lindsay Dewar, *An Outline of New Testament Ethics*, 1949, pp. 87-98.

⁴ Matt. 19. 3 ff. “There came unto him Pharisees, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh? 6 So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:

a man may put away his wife "for every cause", he promptly went behind the Mosaic divorce laws and asserted the principle that monogamous marriage dated from the creation of man. It is a "natural" law, a law of man's being; before the call of Abraham, before the Law, and therefore applying to all men, everywhere, not only to the Chosen People, not only to professing Christians. And then he used the solemn words which are included in our Marriage rite. His hearers, however, asked "why did Moses *command* to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?" Our Lord's answer now was so devastating that the disciples cried out against its severity. If we read his reply as at present it stands in St Matthew's account, their reaction is puzzling. Why should it be "expedient not to marry" if all that our Lord had done was to adopt the current rigorist Jewish enactment under which men were marrying every day? If we read the story without that little phrase, "except for fornication", we have a coherent picture: our Lord's assertion of principle; the pertinacious inquiry; his restatement in unequivocal language of the impossibility of a remarriage during the lifetime of the original spouse. To the disciples this absolute prohibition, not of divorce but of remarriage, seemed to cut at the root of all reasonable happiness. If a man cannot send a woman packing—why—where is the use in being a man? (And let us not forget what sex means to a Jew.) This reaction was so profound, that, according to St Mark, the disciples went back over the matter again in private. St Mark tells us:¹ "And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery. 10 The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. 11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

13 Then were brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

16 And behold, one came to him and said, Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? . . . 21 If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me. 22 But when the young man heard the saying, he went away . . . "

¹ Mark 10. 10 ff.

It can be so dangerous to ask our Lord questions. Not only is remarriage again roundly condemned, but, scandal of scandals, the woman is given equal rights of divorcing her husband, on condition that she, also, does not remarry. It was well, indeed, that this alteration in the woman's status was announced in private, but it can hardly have been acceptable to a Jewish audience.

Our Lord follows up the law of absolute monogamy with its twin counterpart, the vocation of celibacy. In a beautiful passage he describes the condition of those to whom marriage is physically impossible, whether naturally or from operational interference, persons frustrated against their will, and points out that there is no frustration for those who accept the state of celibacy voluntarily, as God's call.¹ Here is his answer to the divorce problem. For the physically impotent, for the compulsorily divorced, there is still a life to be lived "for the kingdom of heaven's sake".¹ And then with a touch of yearning human tenderness, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it", knowing in his pitifulness how many in their weakness would spurn it; a weakness which in individuals he ever showed himself so reluctant to condemn.

St Matthew completes this picture with an acted implication of its content in the bringing of little children to our Lord for his blessing. Our Lord, having just spoken of the "kingdom of heaven" in connection with celibacy, now adds the heavenly conclusion of pure marriage. "Of such", he says as he blesses the children, "is the kingdom of heaven".¹ Marriage as God ordained it, and celibacy, whether enforced or vocationally accepted, are equally contributions to its life. And as marriage failures have been envisaged, St Matthew concludes the series with the account of the young man unable to rise up to the call to make himself an eunuch for the Kingdom of heaven's sake. The whole passage Matthew 19. 3-22 hangs together, and rings true. It is in keeping with our Lord's character: he remains God Incarnate.

If now we introduce that little phrase "except for fornication", not only is the argument of the whole passage rendered pointless, but the atmosphere is radically changed. "There came unto him Pharisees, tempting him." *And he fell into the trap.* "I side with Shammai—except for fornication" . . . We can imagine the ensuing pandemonium, "We've caught him at last." Our Lord is no longer God, he is no longer Man; he is a man, and has made a *faux pas*.

There is a further consideration. This supposed "Matthean exception" has been eagerly grasped by many whose sensibilities have been wrung

¹ " . . . that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me." Catechism.

by the difficulties of a post-war world, as an opportunity for giving temporal happiness to those whose lives have been shattered on their very threshold. It has seemed to countenance a little irregularity in exchange for devastating war experiences.¹ There is no trace of this attitude in the New Testament. In the midst of difficulties comparable with our own the cry of the New Testament is that Christians should set a different standard, not fall to that of the world around them. The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking of "divorces and consequent remarriages",² says plainly that these "are by their nature, though not in law, correctly described as bigamous". That is, they are bigamous whether entered into by the guilty or innocent party (so-called). There is some confusion of thought with regard to the "innocent" party. That term is being stretched even when applied to the divorce, since when a Christian consents to divorce he repudiates the creative image which was voluntarily accepted in the Marriage Vows. To enter into another contract while still under the original vows adds a violation of the Third Commandment, and produces a state devoid of Godlikeness. Further, each "remarriage" after divorce adds its own quota to the coarsening of the public moral conscience in exactly the same way that every act of sin in the individual life deepens and hardens the habit of evil. And a happy living-together of "remarried" persons may be directly responsible for the break-up of other homes by sapping the courage of those too weak in the face of such success to continue the struggle to be faithful to their own marriage vows.

Unsuccessful marriages will always be encountered, and there may perhaps be an analogy here with similar breakdowns in the Religious Life. Life under vows must at times be searching, whether the vows are those of marriage or of celibacy, for the whole object of vows is to raise the individual into a new relationship to God. For this reason alone vows must in all cases be voluntary, taken with a full understanding of their implications, because any state entered into on the basis of vows is not a state of obligation, but a response to the call of God to serve him in a particular and more exacting manner. The vows are made to God: the conditions under which they are to be carried out are provided by the marriage partner or by the Community. If now it is found that the celibate cannot live in Religion it may be necessary as a last resort to allow a return to secular life. The conditions of life in

¹ For a consideration of this attitude see Michael Furse, *Stand Therefore!* 1953, pp. 156-72 and Appendix, p. 196.

² *Canterbury Diocesan Notes*, No. 262, April 1951.

Community are suspended: *the Vows remain*. A Religious returning to secular life is *not* free to marry. The vow of celibacy has been made to God, and though the conditions under which the vows were to be realized have been abrogated, the promise to God remains. The same is true of marriage vows: the conditions of married life may be cancelled; *the Vows remain*. Those undertaking marriage need as careful grounding in the nature of vows as do Religious, and to realize that their state equally is governed by the dominant consideration "for the kingdom of heaven's sake". The first reason for marriage is the procreation of children to be brought up as citizens of that Kingdom, and how can those who are living in contravention of its laws fulfil this task? The children of illicit unions do not have a home in the Christian sense of the word.

Now that the first principles have been reasserted by the Archbishop, we have to face the disquieting fact that many Christian people accept divorce as a normal part of life, and have no scruple in meeting and entertaining bigamously married Christian persons. In this matter, however, Christians, whatever their station, can show where their true allegiance lies. And there is also imperative need for making it clear beyond any doubt to Christian boys and girls that they cannot take the liberties which in to-day's society their friends and companions think normal. In particular they should be warned that married persons of the opposite sex, no matter what the conditions, are completely outside the range of their interest or altruism. Our Lord, far from being a milk-and-water humanitarian who came on earth to make things smooth and pleasant and to ease everyone's difficulties, offered a fairly savage remedy to would-be adulterers. "Everyone that *looketh* on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already . . . if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, . . . *for it is profitable for thee* that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell . . . every one that putteth away his wife . . . maketh her an adulteress; and *whosoever* shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery."¹ The chain of reasoning is clear. When the look has begun to engage the feelings, gouge out the eye. If the hand has touched the form, cut it off; that is, so place yourself that the dangerous

¹ The phrase "saving for the cause of fornication" has been omitted above, as, even if it is genuine, it has no bearing on the adulterous nature of any subsequent union. The R.V. paragraphing of the whole passage is a real psychical help in recognizing its cohesion (Matt. 5. 27-32).

contact *can never again occur*. It is better to mutilate one's capacities—as is done by total abstainers—if self-control has become impossible. Otherwise there is adultery, and the body will be consigned to hell, Gehenna (*not* to the place of departed spirits).

Bishop Walter Carey relates¹ that he asked a certain sailor how he did, and the reply was that he was on a good ship because the captain was both strict and just. "A slack ship is an unhappy ship." So is a slack body. It is a *happy* body when it is kept strictly and justly, and for such there is opened the joy and the stimulus of Platonic friendship. This has always been possible between choice spirits, yet in an era when mingling of the sexes is not only permissible but compulsory, special training is needed to replace the old-fashioned safeguards. Over a hundred years ago Miss Nightingale watched a friendship through which "she acquired a belief in the possibility of a daily intimacy, a close friendship between a man and a woman on terms which did not include passion, and which did not provoke scandal".² Charles Williams, speaking of morals, says, "The Rigorous view is vital to sanctity; the Relaxed view is vital to sanity." Our youth needs them both.

We are approaching the opposite problem from that with which our Lord was called upon to deal. In the early stages of Christian enthusiasm there were those who in the radiance of their faith sought to bypass the physical altogether, and to live in subliminal company on a basis of the third cause for Matrimony alone, but with much higher intent than is suggested in the Prayer Book. It was not at that time destined to survive, but Charles Williams has a passage³ in which he suggests that the Church lost an opportunity in the possible uses of sex when she entirely suppressed the *subintroductæ*. One cannot but wonder whether some of those ineligible for Christian marriage at the present day may not be called by the Spirit to "the use of sex, in this experiment . . . to pass below itself and release the dark gods of D. H. Lawrence directly into the Kingdom of Messias". That is, instead of living in false marriage for the sake of their personal temporal pleasure to use the whole energies of their creative capacities for battle with the spiritual wickedness so signally martialled to-day for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Christ. It is, indeed, in itself a state of singular danger, inevitable wherever singular conflict is involved, for there is always the risk of falling from the height of the ideal, and becoming involved in

¹ *Goodbye to my Generation*, 1951, p. 40.

² Cecil Woodham-Smith, *Florence Nightingale*, 1950, p. 30.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 12-14.

the secondary, which in this instance is the normal impulses of sex. It was in this connection that St Paul decreed that marriage was no sin; it was wiser to marry than to have distracting strain. In the earlier part of the chapter in which various states are treated¹ he significantly says that "it is better to marry than to burn", thus echoing our Lord's statement that destruction in Gehenna is the inevitable end of a violated body. The conditions are precisely opposite: our Lord spoke of illicit union, St Paul of the attempt to live together in continency: the penalty of abuse is the same.

Perhaps it is no longer a matter of surprise that the Prayer Book does not include the Marriage rite as an occasion upon which it is suitable to add the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer.

The final rubric in 1661 runs: "It is convenient that the new-married persons should receive the holy Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first opportunity after their Marriage." Both in 1549 and 1552 the wording was, "The newe married persones (the same day of their marriage) must receive the holy communion."

An echo of this "must" remained even within living memory when the wedding breakfast had still not been wholly superseded by the afternoon reception. Now that weddings can be conducted at the Registry offices, it may perhaps be hoped that the Prayer Book rite will be restricted to the use of Church people, that is, to those who are taking their full share in its liturgical and sacramental life, who will therefore naturally wish to make their Communion at the earliest possible moment after the inauguration of their new life. The Book of 1928 is printed in such manner as to indicate that the Communion normally follows.

The structure of the rite is more clearly brought out in those cases where the register is solemnly signed immediately after the Vows and Blessing, thus forming yet another link with the Profession of Monks and Nuns, where immediately after the Profession of Vows the signature is made and placed upon the altar.² It is clear when this procedure is adopted that the marriage proper is over, which fact is also demonstrated by the procession from "the body of the church" to the altar

¹ 1 Cor. 7.

² At the Coronation of a Sovereign the signature is made immediately after the taking of the Oath, but in this case it is the prelude to the sacramental act of Anointing. In Marriage and Profession the signature is rather the formal ratification of the Vows, which have in these rites constituted the sacrament.

rails. This procession is the beginning of the Nuptial Mass and an Introit Psalm is appointed to be sung. The newly-married pair remain at the altar rails till after their Communion, and receive a special blessing before the final benediction of the whole congregation. The *raison d'être* of the procession to the altar is lost when there is no Communion, and one wonders how many of the myriads who have so processed have understood the implication of their action. Without the Communion, this is indeed a piece of ceremonial which "obscures rather than reveals".¹

¹ See below, p. 142.

SPECIAL VOCATIONS II: THE VISITATION OF THE SICK

IT HAS to be confessed that the diction of this Office in the Book of 1661 is to our ears archaic and sententious, though whether some of the forms substituted in 1928 are more desirable is open to question. A footnote to the title of this Office in the Book of 1928 reads: "The Order in the Form of 1662 is not reprinted here, being, for the most part, contained in the Order following." A comparison of the two Orders shows that this note is misleading. The decade was still so thoroughly impregnated with Pelagic humanism that the Revisers failed to perceive that their liberalistic removal of archaic language was in fact subtly altering the fundamentals of faith. As an example of such alteration one may cite the careful elimination of references to personified evil. The devil, possibly to his own amusement, was outmoded in 1928. The opening versicles and responses in the omitted version ran as follows:

Minister. "O Lord, save thy servant;"

Answer. "Which putteth *his* trust in thee."

Minister. "Send *him* help from thy holy place;"

Answer. "And evermore mightily defend *him*."

Minister. "Let the enemy have no advantage of *him*;"

Answer. "Nor the wicked approach to hurt *him*."

Minister. "Be unto *him*, O Lord, a strong tower,"

Answer. "From the face of *his* enemy."

In 1928, "Let the enemy have no advantage of *him*; Nor the wicked approach to hurt *him*" is omitted, and subsequent direct mentions, e.g., "the fraud and malice of the devil", are also removed. There is further a subtle alteration of emphasis, sliding over the note of judgement and of just punishment. Where the old Order quotes the writer to the Hebrews on the difference in treatment of sons and bastards, the new Book speaks of sickness as a "gracious" means of correction, with other phrases of like kind; in lieu of the exhortation to take in good part the chastisement of the Lord we are encouraged instead to self-esteem