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A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jts-os\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article]

## ‘COMMON PRAYER.’

COMMENTATORS on the Book of Common Prayer have not, so far as I have observed, been at the pains to attempt to trace the history of the most characteristic<sup>1</sup> phrase in its title-page or, except quite incidentally, to illustrate the use of it. It is true that writers from Jewel and Hooker downwards have supplied in passing some materials for the illustration of it; but thirteen years ago it was still possible for Dr Gasquet and Mr Bishop to feel justified in saying, in reference to ‘common prayer’ as it occurs in the Injunctions of 1547, ‘this word since so familiar was then a novelty.’<sup>2</sup> It may therefore be of use and not without interest to collect and classify, in what will be only too much like an article in a dictionary, such examples of the use of the phrase as I have been able to light upon; examples which, perhaps, will be sufficient to suggest that the phrase was no novelty, but a quite familiar one, and that these examples are

<sup>1</sup> Characteristic, but not specially prominent: for there is no justification for the current practice of printing the words ‘Common Prayer’ in larger type than the rest of the title-page, as if the rest were subordinate to it, or as if ‘The Book of Common Prayer’ were the essential title of the book and not, as in fact it is, a merely convenient, if inevitable, abbreviation. The practice is comparatively modern and has no authorization except the ‘typographorum audacia et temeritas’. So far as I have noted, the case stands thus. In the books of 1549, 1552, and 1559 the title is printed throughout in uniform type, except that, from the first, some editions have the words ‘The Book of’ or merely ‘book of’, apparently for some aesthetic reasons, printed larger than the rest; and this continues in the 1604 revision and down to 1661, except that Ogilby’s folio of 1660 prints ‘prayer’ in larger type, but this is only the caprice of an artist. The Book Annexed and the Sealed Books vary their types as between the lines, but give no prominence to ‘common prayer’, and if in the first issue of the last revision the words are a little prominent to the eye, this is because the initial capitals are rather large and the minuscules rather thick in their down-strokes, but this is balanced by the fact that ‘sacraments’ and ‘rites and ceremonies’ are in capitals throughout. The first edition which I have noticed in which ‘common prayer’ is in distinctly larger type than the rest is an Oxford issue of 1790, and even here the type is very little larger than that of ‘sacraments’, which in turn is very little larger than ‘rites and ceremonies’.

<sup>2</sup> Gasquet and Bishop *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, 1st ed., p. 54, note 2.

themselves only a few out of an indefinitely larger number which it would be possible to collect without any very laborious search.

## I

I. 'Common Prayer' is, in the first place, collective, as distinguished from individual, prayer: in its most absolute form, 'to pray commonly is for a multitude to aske one and the selfe thing with one voyce, and one consent of minde' (*Homily of Common Prayer and Sacraments*, ed. 1623, p. 136). Thus in 2 Macc. viii 29 ταῦτα δὲ διαπραξάμενοι καὶ κοινὴν ἱκετείαν ποιησάμενοι τὸν ἐλεήμονα Κύριον ἠξίου ἐἶς τέλος καταλαγῆναι τοῖς αὐτοῦ δούλοις, the 'common supplication' is that of the assembled army of Judas or of the assembled people generally. In the *Testament of the XL martyrs of Sebaste* I (ap. Gebhardt *Ausgewählte Märtyreracten* p. 166) ἐπειδὴν τῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι καὶ ταῖς κοιναῖς τῶν πάντων εὐχαῖς τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα τελέσωμεν, the 'prayers' are rather the prayers of individuals, rendered 'common' by the identity of their purpose and object<sup>1</sup>; as in S. Basil's ἡ ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς κοινωνία (*Ep.* cli 2) or ἡ κοινωνία τῶν εὐχῶν (*Ep.* lxxiv, *Hom.* xiv 8); or in S. Innocent I's letter to Aurelius and Augustine (S. Aug. *Ep.* clxxxiv), 'Gaudere ergo in Domino vestram germanitatem amantissimi cupimus et pro nobis paria ad Deum vota rependere precamur: quia ut bene nostis communibus et alternis plus agimus orationibus quam singularibus aut privatis'; or again in the maxim, 'Wenn ein fürst jedermans gunst und das gemeine gebet verleurt, so ists mit ihm geschehen' (G. Henisch *Thesaurus linguae et sapientiae germanicae*, Augsburg 1616, p. 1388 l. 28),<sup>2</sup> where the 'common prayer' is apparently the scattered but unanimous prayers of the prince's subjects. Or a particular form of prayer may be 'common' as enjoined upon all and fitted for 'common' use, as expressing what are or ought to be the aspirations, desires, and needs of all: as in the *Declaration of the Lollard Walter Brute* in 1392 (ap. Foxe *Acts and Monuments*, ed. 1570, p. 593) 'Christ being desired by his disciples to teache

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Clem. Al. *Strom.* vii 6 § 31 τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἀνακειμένων μίαν ὡσερ ἔχον φωνὴν τὴν κοινὴν καὶ μίαν γνώμην.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Grimm *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s. v. Gebet, ii 2 c. Cp. the imperial acclamation in Const. Porphyrog. *de Caerim.* i 92 αὐται κοιναὶ εὐχαί· αὐται αἱ εὐχαὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης.

them to pray, gaue them the common prayer both to men and women, to the which prayer in my estimation, no other is to be compared. For in that first the whole honour due vnto the deity is comprehended. Secondly whatsoever is necessary for vs, both for the time present or past or for time to come is there desired and prayed for.’

2. Hence ‘common prayer’ or ‘common prayers’ is used of the public prayers of the Church as contrasted with individual private prayers, and this in a general sense and in specific senses.

As a preface to the illustration of these uses, the interesting passage from S. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 18 in 2 Cor. 3*, may be quoted at length: ‘Ἡ γοῦν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν εὐχὴ τὸν Πέτρον ἀπὸ τῶν δεσμῶν ἔλυσε [Acts xii 5], τοῦ Παύλου τὸ στόμα ἠνέφξεν [Eph. vi 19]. Ἡ τούτων ψήφος οὐχ ὡς ἔτυχε καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς πνευματικὰς ἀρχὰς ἐρχομένους κατακοσμεῖ· διὰ τοι τοῦτο καὶ ὁ μέλλων χειροτονεῖν καὶ τὰς ἐκείλων εὐχὰς καλεῖ τότε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐπιψηφίζονται καὶ ἐπιβοῶσιν ἅπερ ἴσασι· οἱ μεμνημένοι· οὐ γὰρ δὴ θέμις ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμνητῶν ἐκκαλύπτειν ἅπαντα.<sup>1</sup> Ἔστι δὲ ὅπου οὐδὲ διέστηκεν ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ ἀρχομένου· οἶον ὅταν ἀπολαύειν δέῃ τῶν φρικτῶν μυστηρίων· ὁμοίως γὰρ πάντες ἀξιούμεθα τῶν αὐτῶν· οὐ καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς τὰ μὲν ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐσθίει, τὰ δὲ ὁ ἀρχόμενος, καὶ θέμις οὐκ ἦν τῷ λαῷ μετέχειν ὧν μετεῖχεν ὁ ἱερεὺς· ἀλλ’ οὐ νῦν, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι ἐν σῶμα πρόκειται καὶ ποτήριον ἔν. Καὶ ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς δὲ πολὺ τὸν λαὸν ἴδοι τις ἂν συνεισφέροντα· καὶ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐνεργουμένων, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ κοιναὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ ἱερέως καὶ παρ’ αὐτῶν γίνονται αἱ εὐχαὶ καὶ πάντες μίαν λέγουσιν εὐχὴν, εὐχὴν τὴν ἐλέου γέμουσαν.<sup>2</sup> Πάλιν ἐπειδὴν εἴρωμεν τῶν ἱερῶν περιβόλων τοὺς οὐ δυναμένους τῆς ἱερᾶς μετασχεῖν τραπέζης ἐτέραν δεῖ γενέσθαι εὐχὴν καὶ πάντες ὁμοίως ἐπ’ ἐδάφους κείμεθα καὶ πάντες ὁμοίως ἀνιστάμεθα.<sup>3</sup> Ὅταν εἰρήνης πάλιν μεταλαμβάνειν καὶ μεταδιδόναι δέῃ πάντες ὁμοίως ἀσπασόμεθα.<sup>4</sup> Ἐπ’ αὐτῶν πάλιν τῶν φρικτωδεσμάτων μυστηρίων ἐπεύχεται ὁ ἱερεὺς τῷ λαῷ, ἐπεύχεται καὶ ὁ λαὸς

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the bidding ‘Ἡ θεία χάρις ἢ πάντοτε τὰ ἀσθενῆ θεραπεύουσα καὶ τὰ ἐλλείποντα ἀναπληροῦσα κτλ. with the triple Κύριε ἐλέησον in response in the Byzantine ordinations (Goar *Euchologion*, ed. 1647, pp. 250, 292, 302, &c.), and in all the other oriental rites (Denzinger *Rit. or.* ii 5, 80, 117, 228, 288, &c.). Chrys. is alluding to some such form, and this form itself may be as old as the fourth century: see S. Didymus *de Trinitate* ii 1 ἢ θεία χάρις ἢ τὰ λείποντα ἀναπληροῦσα καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ ἰωμένη.

<sup>2</sup> The prayers for the expelled orders: see *Litt. E. & W.* pp. 3-9, 471 sq.

<sup>3</sup> The prayers of the faithful: *ib.* 9-12, 472 sq.

<sup>4</sup> The kiss of peace: *ib.* 13, 473.

τῷ ἱερεῖ· τὸ γὰρ Μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματός σου οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦτο.<sup>1</sup> Τὰ τῆς εὐχαριστίας πάλιν κοινά· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος εὐχαριστεῖ μόνος ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἅπας· πρότερον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαβὼν φωνὴν εἶτα συντιθεμένων ὅτι ἀξίως καὶ δικαίως τοῦτο γίνεται, τότε ἄρχεται τῆς εὐχαριστίας.<sup>2</sup> Καὶ τί θαναμάξεις εἰ που μετὰ τοῦ ἱερέως ὁ λαὸς φθέγγεται ὅπου γε καὶ μετ' αὐτῶν τῶν χερουβὶμ καὶ τῶν ἄνω δυνάμεων κοινῇ τοὺς ἱεροὺς ἐκείνους ὕμνους ἀναπέμπει;<sup>3</sup> Ταῦτα δέ μοι πάντα εἴρηται ἵνα ἕκαστος τῶν ἀρχομένων νήφῃ, ἵνα μάθωμεν ὅτι σῶμά ἐσμεν ἅπαντες ἐν τοσαύτην ἔχοντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους διαφορὰν ὅσην μέλη πρὸς μέλη καὶ μὴ τὸ πᾶν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἱερέας ῥίπτωμεν ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὥσπερ κοινὸ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀπάσης οὕτω φροντίζωμεν.

Chrysostom is urging that the whole liturgical activity of the Church is the activity of the body as a whole, and not of the ministers alone, and is therefore 'common'; and that this community of action is marked in three ways:

(a) some acts are simply common to ministers and people alike; e.g. the prayers for the expelled orders, the kiss of peace, the communion;

(b) some acts are bidden by the minister and done by way of response by the people; as in the intercessions for ordinands before their ordination;

(c) other acts are done by the priest alone, but the context indicates that they are yet 'common', and the minister is only expressing the common intention; e.g. the central eucharistic action prefaced as it is by the *Sursum corda*, &c. He might have added that the responsive *Amen* gives this common character to all the prayers of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

These three varieties of form correspond, the third to the general

<sup>1</sup> The salutation before the *Sursum corda*: *ib.* 14, 473.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 14, 473.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 18, 474.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Hooker *E. P.* v 39; and the three methods of rendering αἱ κοινὰ ψαλμῳδαί in the night office of the church of Caesarea as described by S. Basil *Ep.* ccvii 3 νῦν μὲν διὰ χεῖρ διανεμηθέντες ἀντιψάλλουσιν ἀλλήλους (the 'antiphonal' method, side answering to side verse by verse) . . . ἔπειτα πάλιν ἐπιτρέψαντες ἐνὶ κατάρχειν τοῦ μέλους οἱ λοιποὶ ὑπηχοῦσιν (the 'responsive' method, the officiant singing the first half of the verse, the congregation responding with the second: cp. S. Ath. *de Fuga* 24; *Consil.* *ap.* ii 57 § 5) . . . ἡμέρας ἤδη ὑπολαμπούσας πάντες κοινῇ ὡς ἐξ ἐνὸς στόματος καὶ μιᾶς καρδίας τὸν τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως ψαλμὸν ἀναφέρουσι τῷ Θεῷ (simultaneous recitation). These methods of 'common psalmody' do not, of course, correspond term by term with the three methods of 'common prayer' above, except in so far as one method of 'responsive' psalmody is analogous to the 'bidding' method of prayer: see below, p. 504 note 2.

sense of 'Common Prayer' as applied to the prayers of the Church, and the first and second to the specific senses already mentioned.

(1) 'Common Prayer' can stand for the service<sup>1</sup> of the Church generally. In sense, it expresses only the commonplace, on the one hand, that the prayer of the Church is the act of the Church and of all its members, and not of the ministers merely, and this even in the Canon itself (see e.g. Florus of Lyons *Expositio missae* 80 'in illa sacrosancta oblatione communis servitus exhibetur Deo tam a sacerdotibus quam a cuncta familia domus Dei': cp. 73 sq., 91, 109); and on the other hand, that the individual in reciting the Divine Service by himself need not curtail it or otherwise adapt it to his individual needs, since he is reciting it in the name of the Church (S. Peter Damian *Dominus vobiscum* passim, ap. Hittorp. pp. 370 sqq.).<sup>2</sup>

S. Thomas Aq. *Summa* II<sup>2</sup> lxxxiii 12: 'Communis quidem oratio est quae per ministros ecclesiae in persona totius fidelis populi Dei offertur; et ideo oportet quod talis oratio innotescat toti populo pro quo profertur; quod non posset fieri nisi esset vocalis; et ideo rationabiliter institutum est ut ministri ecclesiae huiusmodi orationes etiam alta voce pronuncient, ut ad notitiam omnium possint peruenire.' Here, verbally at least, S. Thomas excludes the Canon from *communis oratio*.

Lyndwood *Provinciale* ii 3 § 1: 'et nota quod oratio communis, quae fit per ministros ecclesiae in personam totius populi, ut innotescat ei pro quo fit, merito ex institutione debet esse vocalis.'

*The Pilgrimage of Perfection*, 1526, iii 8: 'How there ben two maner of prayers, a pryuate prayer and a commune prayer, and what difference is bytwene them. . . . Saynt Thomas sayth [secunda secunde q̄. lxxxiii. art. xiii. Item iiii. sente. d. xv. q. iiii. art. ii.] that there ben two maner of prayers. One in commune and of duty as in y<sup>e</sup> seruyce of God in y<sup>e</sup> chirche, sayd or songe, and such other prayers, as the statutes or ordynaunces of religyons commaundeth. . . . The first maner of these prayers ben offred to god, not onely for our selfe, but principally for the hole chirche

<sup>1</sup> I use 'service' throughout as meaning the ritual acts in which primarily the Church offers adoration and thanksgiving and prayer to God, as distinguished from those in which primarily it ministers grace to its members.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. S. Isidore of Seville *Etym.* vi 19 § 60 'quarundam horarum communium' as contrasted with the 'unceasing' individual private prayer to which Isidore regards I Thess. v 17 as referring.

of Chryst, and all the people of the same, where so euer they be in the worlde.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin *Institutes* iii 20 § 29: 'ne contemptui essent communes ecclesiae preces, eas splendidis elogiis olim Deus ornauit: praesertim ubi templum vocavit domum orationis.'

Milasch Τὸ ἐκκλησιαστικὸν δίκαιον § 136: τοῖς δὲ ἀπὸ σκοποῦ ἀπουσιάζουσιν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ κατὰ τὰς κοινὰς προσευχάς, ἐπειδὴ χωρίζουσιν ἑαυτοὺς κτλ.; where the whole service of the Church is included in 'the common prayers'.<sup>2</sup>

Hence 'common prayer' may be used of any part of the service of the Church, or of any prayer or class of prayers belonging to it.

Evagrius *Hist. eccles.* i 21: κοινὰς δὲ τὰς πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν λιτὰς διημερεύουσί τε καὶ διανυκτερεύουσιν—of the offices of cenobitic communities.

*Vita S. Athanasii Neapolitani* (Muratori *Rer. ital. script.* ii 2 c. 1054) 'in qua (sc. in Naples) laici simul cum clericis assidue graece latineque communi prece psallunt Deo debitumque persolvunt iugiter officium': where the reference seems to be to the choir office, but may be general. The *Life* was written by a contemporary of Athanasius († 887).

*Micrologus* 7 (ap. Hittorp. p. 334: repeated by Ralph of Tongres *de Canonum observatione* 23, *ib.* p. 669)—of the first Collect in the Mass: 'Omnes autem adstantes, iuxta antiquam sanctorum patrum traditionem, in signum confirmationis *Amen* subiungere debent, ut communem orationem quam sacerdos pro omnibus libauit confirment.'

Manuzzi *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Florence 1859, s.v. comune (i 762): 'Le comuni orazioni, e quelle cose che in confessione, in capitolo, o vero altrove, per varie cagioni, gli sono comandate, abbia in primo luogo'—quoted from an old translation of a letter ascribed to S. Bernard. Here the 'common prayers' seem clearly to be the choir-offices, as obligatory upon a member of a religious order or a chapter.

S. Thomas Aq. *Summa* III lxxxiii 4: 'in celebratione aliorum sacramentorum non fit communis oratio pro salute fidelium defunctorum [the second *Memento* in the Canon] . . deinde agitur de perceptione sacramenti et primo praeparatur populus

<sup>1</sup> I owe this reference to the *New English Dictionary*, s.v. Common Prayer.

<sup>2</sup> I quote from the translation, Athens 1906: the work was written in Servian.

ad percipiendum, primo quidem per orationem communem totius populi quae est oratio dominica [the Lord's Prayer after the Canon] . . . in his tamen quaedam dicit publice, scilicet quae pertinent et ad sacerdotem et ad populum sicut sunt orationes communes, quaedam vero pertinent ad solum sacerdotem sicut oblatio et consecratio, et ideo quae circa haec sunt dicenda occulte a sacerdote dicuntur: in utrisque tamen excitat attentionem populi dicendo *Dominus vobiscum* et expectat assensum dicentium *Amen*.'

*Flerscheimer Chronik* p. 53 (ed. O. Waltz, Leipzig 1874): 'Da Frantz von Sickhingen, in dem das man mess gehalten uund das gemein gebet fur sie gethan, durch herr Niclausen bericht (dem dann uber dem altar gesagt sie sey schon verschieden), das sie todt' &c.<sup>1</sup> In this passage (written after 1542 and referring to the death of Franz von Sickingen's wife), unless 'mess uund das gemein gebet' is to be taken as one expression to mean the proper mass *pro iter agentibus* or *pro infirmo*, either of which would fit the circumstances, 'the common prayer' would seem to denote the *Officium mortuorum*.

Hermann von Wied *Simplex ac pia deliberatio*, Cologne 1545, f. xcii b: 'Ob id enim populum Minister compellat hac uoce. Dominus uobiscum. Et, Oremus, & populus respondet, Et cum Spiritu tuo, significans eo, communem sibi cum Ministro precem fieri . . . Et quia debet communis hæc oratio esse totius Ecclesiæ, Collecta dicitur, eo quòd ceu collecta ex præsentium omnium uotis, Deo per Ministrum offeratur, uel quòd sit oratio collectæ in unum & pariter Dominum precantis Ecclesiæ' (not so fully expressed in the original German, *Einfaltigs Bedenken*, 1543, f. cv: cp. Durandus *Rationale* iv 15 § 13). Cp. *Landesordnung des Herzogthums Preussen*, 1525 (Richter *Evangelische Kirchenordnungen* i p. 25), *Preussische Kirchenordnung*, 1544 (*ib.* ii p. 67).

'Generalis' may also be used in the same application: S. Bernardino of Siena *Dom. i in Quadrages. Sermo x* (*Opera* ii p. 60): 'tertio vero in diebus festis orationi generali [insistendum est], id est attente seu devote et cum omni reverentia divinum officium audiendum est.'

A modification of this use of the phrase is found in *Micrologus* 18: 'nam beatus Innocentius papa, scribens sancto Augustino et Aurelio episcopis, asserit quod nos plus communibus et publicis

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Grimm *Deutsches Wörterbuch* u. s.



quam singularibus et privatis orationibus proficere poterimus'—where it is applied to the essential prayers of the rite as distinguished from the private prayers of the ministers during its course, prayers which vary from church to church, in the several uses of the rite. The writer is criticizing the multiplication of private prayers for the celebrant before communion, and adapts to his purpose the letter of S. Innocent I quoted above (p. 498).

(2) Specifically, 'common prayers' are those of the public prayers in which the faithful co-operate explicitly by word or action (*ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι*, Rom. xv 6), as opposed to the prayers of the priest with which they co-operate only in intention and by a final assent (*ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου . . . ἐρεῖ τὸ Ἄμην ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστίᾳ*, I Cor. xiv 16). This explicit co-operation has been expressed for the most part, not by the simultaneous recitation of prolonged prayers,<sup>1</sup> but by means of two closely related forms of prayer, the Litany and the 'Bidding of Bedes'. In a litany either the minister begins each petition and the people finish it with a standing response, or the minister bids the subject and the people make the petition whether by a vocal response or by silent prayer for which an interval is left.<sup>2</sup> The bidding of bedes is a modification of the bidding form of the litany, the biddings being recited continuously and the whole closed with

<sup>1</sup> Simultaneous recitation of prayers at length is perhaps confined to the Lord's Prayer in the eastern (*Litt. E. & W.* i passim: S. Greg. Magn. *Epp.* ix 12) and Gallican rites (S. Greg. Turon. *de mir. S. Martini* ii 30). In the Book of Common Prayer, in 1549 no prayer is directed to be said 'with' or 'after' the minister, and the people take vocal part in prayers only by way of response; in 1552, in the choir-office the confession is to be said 'after' the minister, and the essential Paternoster by 'minister, clerks and people'; in the liturgy, the Paternoster after communion is to be said after the priest clause by clause (cp. Hooker *E.P.* v 36 § 1): in 1661 the Paternoster, 'wherever it occurs in divine service,' is to be said 'with' the minister, but its division into clauses indicates that 'with' means the same as 'after', and, while the rubric as to the confession before communion is incoherent and unintelligible, the division of the confession itself into clauses again suggests that it is to be said 'after' the minister. In short there are no certain directions for simultaneous recitation by ministers and people.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient method of responsive psalmody is analogous to this, the deacon or the reader reciting the text of the psalm, and the people, who of course had no books, responding with a standing refrain, which survives in the 'antiphon' to the psalm. I imagine that the fifteenth canon of Laodicea, which forbids 'others than the canonical singers' to sing, did not forbid the people to sing their own part, the refrain, which they knew, but only to create disturbance by attempting to sing the text of the psalm which they did not necessarily know.

prayers in which the people take part vocally. 'Common prayer' therefore, specifically, denotes the Litany and the Bidding Prayer.

a. The Litany as common prayer.

In all rites there is, or has been, in the Mass, after the sermon which follows the Gospel, a litany of intercession, the 'prayers of the faithful', forming the opening feature of the mass of the faithful. In the Roman liturgy this litany has fallen into disuse except on Good Friday, when the *Orationes sollemnes* are still said, while on all other days they are represented only by the isolated *Oremus* before the offertory. In some rites also this litany has been preceded by a series of litanies for catechumens, penitents, &c., recited, one for each order, before the expulsions. 'Common prayers' is, perhaps most frequently before the sixteenth century, applied to these litanies after the sermon<sup>1</sup>; but it is also used of Litanies generally.

S. Justin Martyr *Apol.* i 67: *ἔπειτα* (after the sermon) *ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν*: *ib.* 65 (referring to the same feature of the liturgy) *κοινὰς εὐχὰς ποιησόμενοι ὑπὲρ τε ἑαυτῶν καὶ τοῦ φωτισθέντος καὶ ἄλλων πανταχοῦ πάντων*. This no doubt implies an at least inchoate form of litany.<sup>2</sup>

Origen *in Matt.* xxvi 36 (iii p. 901) 'In ecclesiis Christi consuetudo tenuit ut qui manifesti sunt in magnis delictis eiciantur ab oratione communi': i.e. expelled after the mass of the catechumens and so excluded in the first place from the prayers of the faithful which follow.

S. Chrys. *hom.* 18 *in 2 Cor.* 3: *καὶ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐνεργουμένων, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ κοιναὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ ἱερέως καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν γίνονται αἱ εὐχαὶ καὶ πάντες μίαν λέγομεν εὐχήν*: *de incompr. Dei nat.* iv 4 *ἵνα τοῦ δήμου τῆς πόλεως ἀπάσης ἔνδον παρούσης κοιναὶ περὶ αὐτῶν* (sc. τῶν ἐνεργουμένων) *ἱκετηρῖαι γένωνται πάντων ὁμοθυμαδὸν τὸν κοινὸν δεσπότην ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐξαιτουμένων*. The reference in these passages is to the litanies for the expelled orders. Cp. *in Eph.* iii 5 *ὄραν ἀκούσης Διεθῶμεν πάντες κοινῇ*—the opening of a litany. Cp. also *de prophet. obscur.* ii 5; *hom.* 2 *in 2 Cor.* 5.

S. Aug. *Ep.* lv 34: 'Aut antistes clara voce deprecatur aut

<sup>1</sup> The 'common' character of the prayers of the faithful is marked by the *ἔπωμεν πάντες* with which the Byzantine form opens (*Litt. E. & W.* p. 373) and the *Dicamus omnes* of the Gallican (*Stowe Missal* f. 16<sup>b</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> See the remarks of Th. Harnack *Der christliche Gottesdienst* pp. 247 sqq.

communis oratio voce diaconi indicitur': where the deacon's 'bidding' of 'common prayer' is contrasted with the bishop's prayer.

Eusebius Gallus *hom. in Litaniiis* (*Bibl. patr. Lugdun.* vi p. 645) 'inter haec autem ille se ab oratione communi reddat alienum qui se his periculis non sentit obnoxium': where the reference is to the Gallican Rogations.

*Byzantine Liturgy*, the prayer of the third antiphon of the Enarxis, i.e. our 'Prayer of Saint Chrysostom' (*Litt. E. & W.* i pp. 311, 367): 'Ὁ τὰς κοινὰς ταύτας καὶ συμφώνους ἡμῖν χαρισάμενος προσευχάς: where the reference is apparently to the litanies and hymns which accompany the prayers.

*Missale Gothicum* Orationes paschales (Neale and Forbes *Gallican masses* p. 93) 'Communicatis precibus ac fletibus pro fratribus ac sororibus nostris Domini misericordiam deprecemur'. These prayers are a series of biddings 'for all sorts and conditions of men', each followed by a collect. The corresponding prayers in the Mozarabic liturgy have a space for silent prayer, marked by *Flectamus genua* and *Levate*, between each bidding and its collect (*Migne P. L.* lxxxv 448 sqq.).

*Missale Francorum* (*Muratorii Lit. vet. rom.* ii 666 sqq.): in the ordinations, after the *Dignus est* which finally expresses the popular election, the bishop says, for deacons 'Commune votum communis prosequatur oratio, ut', &c.; for presbyters 'Sit nobis, fratres, communis oratio, ut', &c.; for bishops 'Deum . . . deprecemur uti hunc famulum suum . . . ad eorum (sc. plebis) nunc precem universam eundem summo sacerdotio . . . locupletet . . . ut igitur . . . idoneus fiat . . . adtentissimis concordissimisque omnium precibus adiuvemur; omnium pro ipso oratio incumbat . . . impetret ei affectus totius ecclesiae', &c.; after which follows in each case the *benedictio* of the order. The Gallican ordinations are now only preserved as combined with the Roman forms, and so placed that the Litany has already occurred in the preceding Roman formula. But it may be supposed that the Litany also occurred in the Gallican rite between the *praefatio* or bidding and the *benedictio*, and is what is meant by the *communis oratio*, and by its synonyms in the *praefatio* of bishops. Otherwise the *communis oratio* must be a silent prayer on the part of the faithful for which an interval was left.

S. Bernard *de gradibus Humilitatis* 22 § 56: ‘etsi enim a comunibus orationibus ipsi se excludunt, sed ab affectibus omnino non possunt. viderint tamen in quanto periculo sint pro quibus ecclesia palam orare non audeat, quae fidenter etiam pro Iudacis, pro haereticis, pro gentilibus orat. cum enim in Parasceve nominatim oretur pro quibuslibet malis, nulla tamen mentio fit de excommunicatis.’ Here the reference is to the *orationes sollemnes* of Good Friday.

S. Symeon of Thessalonica *adv. omnes Haereses* 339 (Migne *P. G.* clv 613) λιτανεία δέ ἐστὶ παράκλησις πρὸς Θεὸν καὶ ἰκεσία κοινὴ καὶ δι’ ὀργὴν ἐπιφερομένην καὶ χάριν εὐχαριστίας ὑπὲρ ἀγαθῶν δωρηθέντων . . . καὶ τῆς κοινῆς εὐχῆς τοῦ Κύριε ἐλέησον ἀδομένον κτλ.

G. Chastellain *Chronique* vi I § 65 (ed. Lattenhove, Brussels 1864, iv p. 207) ‘Donc ceux de Londres, mesme le roy Edouart, en firent processions générales, sermons et dévotes solemnités, là où communes prières furent enjointes à tout l’universel peuple pour ce prince’.<sup>1</sup> The ceremonies referred to are those celebrated in 1461 on the receipt of the news of the illness of Francesco Sforza. The ‘common prayers’ are probably those of the ‘general processions’, viz. the Litany and its collects; but they may be those of the Bidding of the Bedes, and belong to the next heading. Chastellain’s words suggest—especially when they are compared with the description which follows of what happened in France on the same occasion—that he is referring directly to the mandate by which the ‘solemnities’ were enjoined; but I cannot find the mandate in Wilkins, nor can I find, among the many mandates for such observances collected in Wilkins, any instance earlier than the sixteenth century which refers to the prayers ordered—i. e. the Litany—as ‘common prayer’. The nearest approach to it I have found is the letter of Winchelsey in 1295 ‘ad excitandum populum ad orationes et eleemosynas . . . pro quibusdam nobilibus et discretis ad partes Vasconiae et Franciae transmissis’, which has ‘ut pro statu et tranquillitate regni Angliae processiones et orationes, eleemosynae, jejunia et caetera pietatis suffragia per ecclesias fierent in communi’ (Wilkins *Concilia* ii 216).

*Sächsische Kirchenordnung*, 1539 (ap. Richter, i p. 313) ‘Wiewol das volck bey allen Emptern in der Kirchen zum Gebet

<sup>1</sup> I owe this reference to the *New English Dictionary*, s.v. Common Prayer.

sol vermanet vnd angehalten werden, Doch sol man auch zu sonderlichen bestimpten zeiten, das gemeine Gebet der Litanía halten, als auff die vier Quatember eine wochenlang, In den Stedten alle Mitwochen oder Freitage in der wochen, nach der predigt'. So *Brandenburgische Kirchenordn.* 1540 (*ib.* 329).

Hermann von Wied *Einfaltigs Bedenken*, 1543 (*ib.* ii p. 42) 'Vnd dweil das Kyrieleyson ein allgemein gebet, vnnnd das Gloria in excelsis, einn gemein lobgesang ist, sollen die Pastoren sehen, das das volck diese gesang gelehret werde auch in Teutsch zu singen'.

Similarly 'generalis oratio' may be used, as in Rabanus Maurus *de Institutione clericorum* i 33 'post introitum autem sacerdotis ad altare litaniae<sup>1</sup> aguntur a clero ut generalis oratio specialem praeueniat sacerdotis'.

*b.* The Bidding of the Bedes as common prayer.

The litany of the faithful at the opening of the mass of the faithful, which had vanished from the Roman rite on all days except Good Friday, was replaced on this side of the Alps, at least from the end of the ninth century, by the less formal 'Bidding of the Bedes'. At first, as will be seen below, this retained an old form of the Litany, each bidding being followed by an interval for silent prayer, after which a collect was said by the priest. Later, the biddings were combined, generally into two paragraphs, for the living and for the dead respectively, and the prayers followed each paragraph. In Germany the Bidding followed the sermon; in France and in parish churches in England, at least in later usage, it preceded the sermon. In cathedral churches in England it was recited during the procession, under the rood. The Bidding, perhaps from the first, was in the vernacular, and so far Hamon L'Estrange's statement may stand—'of all the service then used this only could be called common prayer as being the only form wherein the whole congregation did join in concert' (*Alliance of the Divine Offices* vi, A. C. L. p. 136); but only so far, since the prayers themselves were recited in Latin.

I have not found any unambiguous instance of the 'Bidding Prayer' being called simply 'common prayer' or 'common prayers' earlier than the sixteenth century; but in the first

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the *Kyrie eleison*, which is the survival of a litany and continued to be called *Litaniae*: cp. Walafrid Strabo *de rebus ecclesiast.* 23 'Laetaniae autem quae sequuntur, id est *Kyrie eleison* et *Christe eleison*'; *Micrologus* 1.

explicit reference to it, as below, it is directed to be said 'in commune', and in the sixteenth century the title is used so frequently and so instinctively, especially in Germany, that it seems to be traditional.

Regino of Prum *de eccles. discipl.* i 190 (Migne *P.L.* cxxxii 224) 'Oportet ut diebus festis vel dominicis, post sermonem intra missarum sollemnia habitum ad plebem, sacerdos admoneat ut iuxta apostolicam institutionem orationem omnes in commune pro diuersis necessitatibus fundant ad Dominum pro regibus et rectoribus ecclesiarum, pro pace, pro peste, pro infirmis qui in ipsa parochia lecto decumbunt, pro nuper defunctis, in quibus singillatim precibus plebs orationem dominicam sub silentio dicat, sacerdos vero orationes ad hoc pertinentes per singulas admonitiones sollemniter expleat. Post haec sacra celebretur oblatio'.<sup>1</sup> This is repeated by S. Ivo of Chartres *Decret.* ii 120.

Luther *Deutsche Messe*, 1526 (Richter, i p. 39) 'Es sihet, als habens die alten bis her, auff der Cantzel gethan, daher noch blieben ist, das man auff der Cantzel gemeyn gebet thut, odder das vater vnser fur spricht'.

Hereafter in the Lutheran *Kirchenordnungen* this intercession after the sermon, called 'das gemein' or 'allgemein Gebet' or 'das gemein Gebet für alle Stände', becomes a constant feature, sometimes in the form of a bidding prayer (e.g. Pomerania 1542, Richter, ii p. 3: cp. Daniel *Cod. lit.* iii p. 39), sometimes the Litany (Prussia 1544, *ib.* p. 67), sometimes only a prayer of the minister (Albertine Saxony 1580, Sehling *Evang. Kirchenordn.* i p. 370). It is unnecessary to quote further examples at length; but see Richter i p. 319 (Hamburg), ii p. 116 (Halle), 42, 50 (Cologne),<sup>2</sup> 138 (Württemberg), Sehling i pp. 440 (Saxony), 567 (Gottleuba), 684 (Torgau), 595 (Leipzig).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is these prayers that are referred to in *Capitulary* i 4 of Charlemagne, A. D. 810, with which Baluze connects Regino's rule (Baluze *Regin. Prum. de eccles. discipl.* cxc p. 95; cciv p. 104).

<sup>2</sup> In the English translation of Hermann's *Consultation* 1547 and 1548 'gemein gebet' is rendered 'common prayer'.

<sup>3</sup> On the traditional German *Pronaus* (French *prône*) of the Mass—i.e. the sermon, the public confession, the bidding prayer, and the notices for the week—see Thalhofer *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik*, Freiburg-i.-B. 1883-90, ii pp. 123 sqq., where it is remarked: 'Dieses allgemeine Gebet ist so recht ein Stück kräftiger Volksliturgie und wird daher füglich vom ganzen Volke gemeinsam gebetet, vom Prediger nur angestimmt; betet er es allein und laut vor, so thut er es jedenfalls

## II

In England during the sixteenth century, not only after, but also before the influence of the occurrence of the phrase in the title of the new service-book made it popular in its present vague use, 'common prayer' or 'common prayers' is frequently found. It is used in the specific senses already noticed; and it gains a new importance in the general sense as applied by way of a standing title to 'Divine Service'; but in many instances its exact denotation is quite ambiguous. All that is possible is to collect the instances of unambiguous use, and under them to arrange tentatively cases that are ambiguous.

## I. The Litany.

*Henry VIII to Cranmer*, Aug. 20, 1543 (Cranmer *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. Parker Soc. p. 493): 'Forasmuch as there hath been now a late and still continueth much rain, and other unseasonable weather, whereby is like to ensue great hurt and damage to the corn and fruits now ripe upon the ground . . . we . . . have thought good to cause the [people] to be exhorted by you and other the prelates of this our realm . . . to call unto God for mercy, and with devout and humble prayers and supplications every person, both by himself apart, and also by common prayer, to beseech Him to send unto us seasonable and temperate weather . . . for the which purpose we require you, and nevertheless command you, to send unto all your brethren the bishops within your province, to cause such general rogations and processions to be made incontinently within their dioceses, as in like case heretofore hath been accustomed in this behalf accordingly.' Here 'common prayer' for a particular emergency is to find expression in the 'accustomed' form of a rogation or litany.

*Exhortation to prayer and Litany*, Berthelet, 27 May 1544 (the first edition of the English Litany) 'it is thought convenient in this common prayer of procession to have it set forth and used in the vulgar tongue'.

*Litany*, 1544, fin.: 'Almightie God whiche haste given vs grace at thys tyme with one accorde to make our commune supplicacyons vnto thee.'

zunächst im Namen des Volks.' The directions for the *Pronaus* are to be found in the diocesan *Ritualia* or *Agendae*: in that of Salzburg, 1675, the prayer is called *oratio generalis* (ii p. 547).

*A letter from the lords of the council for prayers on sundays and holy days*, May 6, 1548 (Wilkins *Concilia* iv p. 26) 'this is to will and require you to give advertisement and commandment to all the curates in your diocese, that every Sunday and holy day in their common prayer they make devout and hearty intercession to Almighty God for victory and peace'—and a form of prayer is enclosed 'the which we would that you and they should follow and read it instead of one of the collects of the King's majesty's procession', i. e. the Litany. The form of prayer here referred to is quite probably that printed in Jenkins *Cranmer's Remains* ii p. 186, headed '*The Common Prayer*'. But it is likely that 'common prayer' includes also the Bidding of the Bedes, the more so that Cranmer provided a further clause for the Bidding on the same occasion: see Jenkins *ib.* p. 187.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the following should be included under this head.

*Articles to be followed and observed according to the king's majesty's injunctions and proceedings* 1549 (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 64) 'That the common prayer upon Wednesdays and Fridays be diligently kept, according to the king's ordinances, exhorting such as may conveniently come to be there': similarly in Ridley's *Injunctions* 1550 (*ib.* p. 83). These apparently refer to and enforce the first rubric after the Mass in the book of 1549, '*Upon wednesdays and fridays the English Litany shall be said or sung in all places, after such form as is appointed by the king's majesty's injunctions: or as is or shall be otherwise appointed by his highness*'—with the 'antecommunion' following. The reference of the rubric is commonly, I think, supposed to be to the Injunctions of 1547, and in that case it only covers the 'form', since those Injunctions have nothing about Wednesdays and Fridays, but only require that the Litany shall be said before the high Mass, kneeling and without perambulation. But it is plain from the other passages cited above that there must have been another injunction which has disappeared, and all three passages become clear if it directed the Litany to be used on Wednesdays and Fridays. The similar 48th Injunction of

<sup>1</sup> The relation of the Bidding Prayer to the Litany had become very close. As we have seen, in cathedral churches the bidding was made in the procession; but since 1545 the Litany had been the only procession in use.



Elizabeth, 1559, is explicit (*ib.* p. 196): 'That weekly upon Wednesdays and Fridays, not being holy days, the curate at the accustomed hours of service shall resort to church, and cause warning to be given to the people by knolling of a bell, and say the litany and prayers.' It is to be remembered that the Litany was not yet, what (in imitation of the Scotch Book of 1637) it was practically made to be in 1661, an appendage to Matins; and consequently its use was provided for independently of the rule as to the recitation of the choir-offices and without the exceptions allowed by that rule.

And possibly the following is to be added.

*Articles against Gardiner* (Foxe *Acts and Monuments*, 1563, p. 757) 'and touchinge the procession and common prayer in english'—referring to the requirements made of Gardiner as to the subject-matter of his sermon before the king in June 1548. The phrase may well be only the equivalent of the 'common prayer of procession' of 1544 and mean the English Litany.<sup>1</sup> But it is possible that 'common prayer' means the Bidding of the Bedes, as in the Injunctions, and that the reference is to a proposal, otherwise, so far as I know, unrecorded, that the bedes themselves and not only, as had always been the case, the Bidding, should be said in English.

## 2. The Bidding Prayer.

*Injunctions of 1547*, fin. (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 21) '*The form of bidding the common prayers.* Ye shall pray for the whole congregation of Christ's church', &c. In 1559, when 'common prayer' was currently used in a wider sense, this title

<sup>1</sup> The original editions of Foxe, 1563 and 1570, read as above: the reprint of Townsend and Pratt, 1870, has 'the procession, and Common Prayer in English'; Dr Gasquet and Mr Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* pp. 111 sq. (1st ed.), paraphrase 'processions, and the establishment of Common Prayer in English', and comment 'He was consequently not merely commanded to express his approval of what had actually been done, but also of what Somerset and Cranmer proposed to do'. In any case this is something of an exaggeration; for matins and evensong and the Mass itself had already been used in English (*ib.* p. 102); and here, if so it be, only the principle of common prayer in English is referred to, not the particular form which it might take in the future. But anyhow there is a difficulty which this interpretation does not remove; for the Litany had been in English since May 1544, and had been enforced as the ordinary Sunday and festal procession since the middle of 1545 (*Letters and papers foreign and domestic: Henry VIII* xx pt. i p. 550: Wriothesley *Chronicle*, ed. Camden Soc. i p. 161), and presumably Gardiner had already accepted it.

was altered, in the Injunctions of Elizabeth, to ‘*The form of bidding the prayers to be used generally in this uniform sort*’ (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 202).

Here, I think, should be added *Institution of a Christian man* 1537 (the ‘Bishops’ Book’) and *Necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christian man* 1543 (the ‘King’s Book’) on the fourth commandment (Lloyd *Formularies of faith put forth during the reign of Henry VIII* pp. 143 sqq., 307 sqq.: the words in brackets are only in the King’s Book): ‘We be bound by this precept at certain times to cease from bodily labour, and to give our minds entirely and wholly unto God, to hear [the divine service approved, used, and observed in the church, and also] the word of God, to acknowledge our own sinfulness unto God, and his great mercy and goodness unto us, to give thanks unto him for his benefits, to make public and common prayer for all things needful’; and below ‘Against this commandment generally do offend all they’ who do not cease from pleasing themselves, who spend holy days in idleness instead of spiritual exercises, who hear the divine Word heedlessly, who distract themselves ‘in Mass time’, ‘and likewise do all those, which in such time as the common prayers be made, or the word of God is taught, not only themselves do give none attendance thereunto, but also by [reading], walking, talking, and other evil demeanour, let other that could well use themselves.’ Now obviously the statement of the positive devotional duties of the holy days—a first sketch of the exhortation ‘Dearly beloved brethren’ of 1552—is not so much a description of particular services of the Church, as a statement of the needs which those services and private devotions are meant to satisfy, and therefore the insertion of the allusion to ‘divine service’ in the King’s book, however desirable practically, is rather illogical. But if it be asked where the ‘public and common prayer for all things needful’ finds its expression, it is easy to point to the Bidding Prayer and the Litany. But the Litany would only be heard by the people on a few days in the year; while the Bedes were heard nearly every Sunday, and being bidden in the vernacular were conspicuous and familiar, and they covered ‘all things requisite and necessary both for the body and the soul’ at least as adequately as anything else in the Breviary or in the Book of Common

Prayer apart from the Litany.<sup>1</sup> It is noticeable also that the 'common prayers' and the 'word of God' are the only parts of 'divine service' to which the detailed attention of 'the ignorant people', as distinguished from occupation with their own devotions, is asked for; and this is natural if the common prayers are the bidding of the bedes and consequently the only element in the service which was in the vernacular, except the sermon, and after 1542 two lessons of Scripture. And this conclusion is confirmed by Tyndale's description in 1532 of the public prayers for 'the common necessities' (*Exposition of Matthew v. vi. vii*, ed. Parker Soc. p. 79): 'we must have a place to come together, to pray in general, to thank and to cry to God for the common necessities, as well as to preach the word of God in: where the priest ought to pray in the mother tongue, that the name of God may be hallowed, and his word faithfully taught and truly understood, and faith and godly living increased; and for the king and rulers, that God will give them his Spirit, to love the commonwealth; and for peace, that God will defend us from all enemies; for wedering and fruits, that God will keep away pestilence and all plagues': where it is evident that the Bidding Prayer, the only public devotion at that moment which 'ought to' be said 'in the mother tongue', is being summarized.

*Articles to be enquired of in the visitations to be had within the diocese of Canterbury, 1547* (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 42) 'Whether in their common prayers they use not the collects made for the king, and make not special mention of his majesty's name in the same'. These prayers might be either the Litany or the Bedes. But since in the next enquiry the Litany is called 'the English procession', they are more likely to be the Bedes.

*The Council to Bonner, May 23, 1555* (Wilkins, iv p. 128) 'to

<sup>1</sup> See the forms of Bidding Prayer in Honorius of Autun *Speculum ecclesiae* (Migne *P. L.* clxxii 819 sqq.); Burnet *Reformation* ii app. p. 104 (1509); the collection in *Forms of Bidding Prayer*, Oxford 1840; the French 'prône' in *Manuale Noviomense*, 1546, fin. (Noyon), *Rituel du diocèse de Sens*, 1694, pp. 405-426. The Sarum form is meagre as compared with some others. It is to be remembered that the *preces* of the Divine Service were not said on Sundays and festivals. In Hermann *Einfalt. Bedenk.* (Richter, ii p. 42) the 'gemein Gebet' after the sermon is called 'das geppet für alle stende vñnd notturfft der kirchen' (English translation 1547 'a prayer for all states of men and necessities of the congregation').

cause common prayers to be used for this purpose’ (viz. for peace between the Emperor and France) ‘in all churches within your diocese . . . and in the same their common prayers to pray also to Almighty God’ for the conclave engaged in the election of a pope.

3. The Divine Service.

Prayer Book of 1549, title: ‘*The book of common prayer and administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church: after the use of the Church of England.*’

*ib.* Preface: ‘the common prayers of the Church, commonly called divine service.’

*Act of Uniformity, 1549*: ‘Where of long time there hath been had in this Realm of England, and in Wales, divers forms of Common Prayer, commonly called the service of the Church: that is to say the Use of Sarum,’ &c.

Here ‘common prayer’ or ‘common prayers’ is distinguished from ‘the administration of the sacraments and other rites’, and is equated with ‘divine service’ or the ‘service of the Church’. Now in England ‘divine service’, *servitium divinum*, generally meant the choir offices, the contents of the Breviary, as contrasted with the Mass and the contents of the Missal.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the Preface of 1549, now called (since 1661) ‘Concerning the Service of the Church’, treats only of the choir office, as it did in its first form in Cranmer’s experimental reformation of the Breviary, and in the original from which Cranmer for the most part derived it, the *Breviarium Romanum* of Quignon, while Cranmer’s ‘common prayers of the church commonly called divine service’ translates Quignon’s ‘horarias preces quas canonicas etiam appellamus’.<sup>2</sup> It might seem then that in the book of 1549 ‘common prayer’ means simply and exactly what ‘divine service’ meant, and that it covers only matins and evensong, along with the Litany, which

<sup>1</sup> For the popular use of ‘divine service’ in this sense see Chaucer *Canterbury Tales* Prologue, Prioress; Cavendish *The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey* passim. In the *Sarum Consuetudinary* and *Customary* (Frere *Use of Sarum* i) *servitium* is generally used of the choir offices, *officium* of the mass; but sometimes *servitium* is used of the mass, while *officium* is used frequently (pp. 159, 180, &c.) and *officium servitii* sometimes (pp. 174, 182) of the choir offices. In the *Rationale* ‘divine service’, and in the 25th Injunction of 1547 ‘service’, denote the choir office simply.

<sup>2</sup> Gasquet and Bishop *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* pp. 356 sqq.

was also contained in the Breviary and was already, as we have seen, regarded as typically common prayer. But on the other hand, 'divine service' was sometimes used more loosely in the sixteenth century; e.g. in Cromwell's *Injunctions* of 1538 (Gee and Hardy *Documents* p. 280), in *Necessary doctrine* as quoted above, and in the book of 1549 itself, in the seventh rubric after the Mass, it is used in a sense which must include the Mass.<sup>1</sup> In the reign of Mary, in the 10th of the Articles directed by the Queen to Bonner (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 113), in Bonner's *Visitation Articles* 7, 12, 18 (*ib.* pp. 126, 128 sq.) and in Pole's *Visitation Articles: touching the lay people* 4, 5 (*ib.* p. 173), 'divine service' includes the Mass and is in fact equivalent to 'mass, matins and eveningsong' (*ib.* p. 175). As we have already seen, the 'common prayers' of Wednesdays and Fridays included the 'antecommunion'. And again, further down in the Act of Uniformity, the contents of the book are described (Gee and Hardy p. 360) as 'the Matins, Evensong, celebration of the Lord's Supper, commonly called the Mass, and administration of each of the sacraments and all their common and open prayer', and (*ib.* p. 361) the use of 'any other rite, ceremony, order, form, or manner of Mass . . . or Matins, Evensong, administration of the sacraments, or other open prayer than is mentioned or set forth in the said book' is forbidden under penalties. Here the Mass is, quite properly, distinguished from the administration of the Sacraments, a distinction which was especially emphasized at the moment, since for some months, while the Mass remained in Latin, 'the order of the Communion' had been in English; a distinction too which has left its mark on the title of the Mass in the book of 1549, 'The Supper of the Lord and the holy Communion, commonly called the Mass': so that the Mass, apart from the Communion, is not included in the administration of the sacraments and must belong to 'common prayer'. Consequently 'common prayer' and its equivalent 'divine service' do not exclude, and in fact seem to be

<sup>1</sup> In the book of 1549 'divine service' occurs only in the two places mentioned above: 'service' in the rubric after the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity is of 1552, and covers both choir office and mass: the other instances of 'divine service' in the present book are of 1661 and obviously cover both, if not in fact everything done in church.

intended to cover, the Mass, with its bidding prayer, otherwise provided for outside the book, as well as the choir offices and the Litany.

This use is further illustrated by the following.

*Rationale* (1545-1547<sup>1</sup>: *Strype Eccl. Mem.* i app. cix) 'Ceremonies used in the Mass . . . And first, it is to be understood, that the Priest is a common Minister in the name and sted of the whole congregation, and, as the mouth of the same, not only rendreth thanks unto God for Christs death and passion, but also maketh the common prayer, and commendeth the people and their necessities in the same unto Almighty God.' But perhaps 'the common prayer' is here the bidding of the bedes.

*Some questions with answers made to them by the bishops of Worcester, Chichester and Hereford* (i.e. Heath, Day and Skyp) 1547 (*Cranmer Miscellaneous Writings*, Parker Soc. p. 153) 'Whether in the primitive church there were any priests that lived by saying of mass, matins and evensong and praying for souls only . . . *Answer.* There were priests in the primitive church which preached not, but exercised themselves in prayer for the quick and the dead, and other spiritual ministrations in the church, and accustomedly used common prayers both morning and evening'; where the 'common prayers both morning and evening' of the answer corresponds to the 'matins and evensong' or 'mass, matins and evensong' of the question.

Tunstall in *Answers to queries concerning abuses in the Mass* 1547 (*Burnet Reformation* ii app. pp. 146, 138) 'the Mass, being the common prayer of the whole Church'; 'the Mass by Christ's institution consisteth in those things which be set forth in the Evangelists . . . with . . . common prayer for the mystical body of Christ.'

<sup>1</sup> The date of the so-called *Rationale* seems to me to be fixed for one of these three years by the section on *General and particular processions*; for this provides 'that in al processions the maner of praying appointed by the King's injunctions'—i.e. the English Litany—'be observed', and cannot therefore be earlier than 1545 (see p. 512 n. 1 above); and it implies perambulation, which was forbidden by the Injunctions of 1547. And it is obviously intermediate between the *Necessary doctrine* of 1543 and the Book of Common Prayer of 1549; for while its exposition of the minor ceremonies is derived from the section on the Fourth Commandment in the former (which repeats it from the *Institution* of 1537), its account of the *rationale* of ceremonies in general is identical in substance with the note *Of Ceremonies* in the latter.

Under this head perhaps the following ought to be included.

*Injunctions* 20, 1547 (*Cardwell Doc. Ann.* i p. 13) 'That no person shall from henceforth alter or change the order and manner of any fasting day that is commanded, or of common prayer or divine service, otherwise than is specified in these injunctions'—which repeats one of Cromwell's injunctions of 1538 (*Gee and Hardy Documents* p. 280), only substituting 'common' for 'any' and 'these' for 'the said'. In strict language 'common prayer' and 'divine service', covered as they are by a single 'of', ought to be equivalents; and in that case they would be used synonymously in what appears to be their meaning in 1549. But perhaps precision of language in that period, or in any period, can scarcely be so closely pressed, and the meaning of 'common prayer' ought perhaps to be determined by 'common prayers' as used further down in the *Injunctions*. And in that case, 'divine service' would keep the general sense it has in the original injunction of 1538, and the changes referred to would be those of Injunction 22 above (Epistle and Gospel in English in high Mass; and an English lesson in Matins and Evensong, with abridgement of the offices to make room for them); while 'common prayer' would be the Bidding of the Bedes, for which a modified formula is provided at the end of the *Injunctions*.

*Articles to be enquired of in the visitations to be had within the diocese of Canterbury*, 1547, 62 (*Cardwell Doc. Ann.* i p. 49) 'Whether in the time of the litany, or any other common prayer in the time of the sermon or homily, and when the priest readeth the scripture to the parishioners, any person have departed out of the church', &c.: derived from the twenty-fourth Injunction of 1547 with the substitution 'or any other common prayer in the time' for 'of the mass': *ib.* 72 (*ibid.* p. 50) 'whether any have used to commune, jangle and talk in the church in the time of the common prayer, reading of the homily, preaching, reading or declaring of the scripture': similarly no. 80, and Ridley's Injunction (*ib.* p. 84). In the first of these passages it is certainly implied that litany and bidding prayer before a sermon otherwise isolated are 'common prayer'; but in all three cases 'common prayer' would seem to be used in the larger sense.

## III

Hitherto the denotation of 'common prayer' has been principally illustrated, and the phrase has been taken to connote prayer made by or in the name of all the faithful, who take their part in it either vocally or by intention. But in some few of the examples of its use already quoted it seems at least to include something more than this, while in some examples it may be doubtful what is the precise connotation intended. But the use of the phrase can be further illustrated by examples in which the general connotation already mentioned is modified, and by others in which it is definitely changed; and these may throw light on the doubtful cases.

1. By a slight shifting of meaning, 'common prayer' may be that which all the faithful may or do frequent or are expected to frequent, apart from all immediate consideration of the part they take in it.

This, I imagine, is the meaning of 'das gemeine Ampt' ('commune officium', 'commune service') or 'das ordentliche gemeine Ampt' used by Hermann von Wied of the high Mass of festivals (Richter, ii p. 50; *Pia deliberatio* f. cxvi; *Consultation* f. ccli).

And 'common' seems to have a similar connotation in the title of Knox's *Book of Common Order*, 1564.

Calvin uses *ecclésiastique* in this sense, in the title of his service-book, *La forme des prières ecclésiastiques*.

In English it is generally represented by 'public' and sometimes by 'open'; and in fact 'common prayer' in the title of the Prayer Book seems to have been sometimes understood in this sense immediately after the publication of the book of 1549.<sup>1</sup>

*The council's letter to Bonner for reformation of certain masses at St Paul's*, 24 June 1549 (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 66) 'as it is appointed in the book of the public service'.

*The king's order for bringing in popish rituals*, 14 Feb. 15 $\frac{49}{50}$  (*ib.* p. 74) 'the publicke service, th' administration of the sacramentes, and other rightes and ceremonies'.

So the title of Haddon's Latin translation of the Prayer Book, 1560, is *Liber Precum publicarum seu ministerij Ecclesiasticae*

<sup>1</sup> The Homily *Of Common Prayer and Sacraments* (1563) and Hooker *E. P.* v 24 sq. use 'public' and 'common' as synonymous in the sense of 'collective'. In Acts v 18 *publica* (δημοσία) from Wyclif onwards has been rendered 'common'.



*administrationis Sacramentorum, aliorumque rituum & caerimoniarum in Ecclesia Anglicana*—a curious perversion of the title-page; and *Liber precum publicarum* has been the constant rendering down to the present, except in Durel's version of 1670, which has *communium*. Similarly the Greek versions of 1638 and 1665 have *δημοσίων εὐχῶν* and *τῆς δημοσίας εὐχῆς* respectively, the French of 1618 *prières publiques*, the German of 1718 *das allgemeine Gebetbuch*, the Italian of 1685 *pubbliche preghiere*, the Spanish of 1612 *rezado publico*, the current Danish *den almindelige Bønnebog*. On the other hand, 'common' seems to be represented by the *gyffredin* of the Welsh version of 1599, the *comhchoitchion* of the Irish of 1608 and *choitchionn* of the Gaelic of 1794; while the French of 1553 has *prières communes*, the Dutch versions of 1645 and 1704 *gemeinen Kerckendienst* and *gemeene gebeden* respectively, the Portuguese of 1695 *oraçãõ commum*, the Spanish of 1707 *oracion comun*, and the current Italian *preghiere comuni*.<sup>1</sup>

So S. Thomas in a passage parallel to that quoted above (p. 501) from the *Summa*, exchanges *communis* for *publica*: in *Sentt.* IV xv 4 qu. 2: 'duplex est oratio, scilicet privata quam quisque pro se facit: et publica quae facienda incumbit ministris ecclesiae, ut dictum est. et quia haec publica oratio non fit ab orante solum pro se sed pro aliis, ideo non debet solum esse mentalis sed vocalis etiam, ut per orationem voce expressam etiam alii ad devotionem excitentur et ad continuandam intentionem suam orantibus.' Cp. *Catechismus Conc. Trident.* IV viii 3.

'Open prayer' is illustrated by the following.

*Act of Uniformity*, 1549 (Gee and Hardy *Documents* p. 361) 'open prayer in and throughout this Act, is meant that prayer which is for other to come unto or hear either in common churches or private chapels or oratories, commonly called the service of the Church'.

*Ridley's Visitation articles*, 1550 (Cardwell *Doc. Ann.* i p. 80) 'any other rite, ceremony, order, form, or manner of communion, mattens or evensong, ministration of sacraments, or open prayers, than is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer'.

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Bingham in *The French church's apology for the church of England* iii 6 renders *les prières publiques* of the French protestant synods by 'common prayer' or 'the public common prayer'.

*Advertisements*, 1566 (*ib.* p. 288) 'in the ministrations of God's holy words, in open prayer and ministrations of sacraments'.

Cp. *A letter to preachers* 1548 (*ib.* p. 52) 'open and common preaching'.

2. Again, prayer may be 'common' not only in its source, as made by all, but also in its scope and intention, as made for all, 'pro omnibus ordinibus,' 'for all sorts and conditions of men,' according to their several needs.

S. Cyprian *de dominica oratione* 8: 'ante omnia pacis doctor adque unitatis magister singillatim noluit et priuatim precem fieri, ut quis cum precatur pro se tantum precetur. non dicimus *Pater meus qui es in caelis nec panem meum da mihi hodie* . . . publica est nobis et communis oratio, et quando oramus, non pro uno sed pro populo toto oramus, quia totus populus unum sumus.'

S. Chrys. *hom.* 19 in *Matt.* 4: παιδεύει δὲ κοινῆν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ποιῆσθαι τὴν εὐχὴν· οὐ γὰρ λέγει Ὁ Πατήρ μου ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἀλλ' Ὁ Πατήρ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινοῦ σώματος τὰς δεήσεις ἀναφέρων.<sup>1</sup>

*Antiphony of Bangor* ff. 20-22 (ed. Warren ii pp. 22 sq., 63) '*Oratio communis fratrum*'; f. 34 (*ib.* pp. 31, 80) '*Ad horas diei oratio communis . . . common oroit dun*' (i. e. 'common orate for us'); two series, a longer and a shorter, of verses and collects for the several estates, for use at the divine office. But 'common' here may mean 'said by', or 'in the name of, all'.

See also the end of the passage from the *Pilgrimage of perfection* quoted above, p. 501.

It is possible that, 'gemein Gebet' was understood in this sense in some of the Lutheran Orders. Where it is explained, in some cases it is clearly laid down that it means common prayer in the sense of prayer made by all (Halle, Richter ii p. 16: Württemberg, *ib.* p. 138); but in *Eine kurze form des gemeinen*

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *Constt. app.* iii 19 προσευχόμενος ὡς υἱὸς πατρὶ καὶ λέγων ὡς ἀπὸ κοινοῦ τοῦ τῶν πιστῶν συναθροίσματος οὕτως Πάτερ ἡμῶν: [S. Bernard] *Expositio in Or. Dom.* 1: 'antequam ad petitiones veniatur, captatio benevolentiae in ore orantis praemititur, *Pater noster*. inducitur unusquisque simul orans, non sibi sed communi salutis hominum, ut caritas et unitas ecclesiae designetur': Abelard *Expos. in Or. Dom.*: 'qui dicit *noster* excludit superbiam quia non sibi arroganter proprium aut specialem sed et aliis etiam communem denunciat': Latimer *Sermon 1 on the Lord's Prayer*: 'This word "our" teacheth us to consider that the Father of heaven is a common Father . . . so that when I pray, I pray not for myself alone, but for all the rest.' Cp. also S. Optatus *de Schism. Don.* iv 2.

*gebets* in the Albertine-Saxon Order of 1580 (Sehling, i p. 370) the bidding suggests the other sense: 'Ihr geliebten in Christo, dieweil wir aller glieder eines leibes sind, welches haupt Christus ist, so sol sich je ein glied des andern annemen, und füreinander bitten.' So also the Hanneberg Order (*ib.* ii p. 310).

This sense of 'common' is represented in the English Prayer Book by 'general'; viz. in the first rubric after the Mass (1552) '*the general prayer, for the whole state of Christes church militant here in earth*'; and in the title of the Litany (1661) '*the Litany or general supplication*'; but it is possible that 'common' is intended to bear this sense in the passages quoted above (p. 517) from the *Rationale* and the second from Tunstall.

In Calvin's order of service, as in the Lutheran, a prayer of intercession follows the sermon,<sup>1</sup> and among English people who have followed this order, this prayer has been commonly known as a 'General Prayer'. Thus:

*A Brieff discours off the troubles begonne at Franckford, 1575* p. vii: 'After the sermon, a generall praier for all estates and for oure countrie of Englande was also deuised, at thende off whiche praier, was ioined the lords praier.'

*A booke of the forme of common prayers . . . agreable to . . . the use of thi reformed churches, 1586* (the 'Middleburgh Prayer Book': Hall *Rel. Liturg.* i p. 4) 'The contents . . . diuers Forms of General Prayers for the whole Estate of the Church, after the Sermon'.

*The Reformation of the Liturgy, 1661* (the 'Savoy Liturgy': *ib.* iv p. 33) '*let the following General Prayer be used, when the Minister findeth it convenient, instead of the Litany and Collects*'; p. 36 '*The General Prayer*'; p. 142 '*A Larger Litany or General Prayer: to be used at discretion*'.

3. Prayer may be 'common' as made for a class, as distinguished from prayers made for any or all of the included individuals in particular.

*Council of Cologne, 1536, vi 37* (Mansi *Concilia* xxxii 1255) '*cum multum plerumque temporis paruo cum fructu teratur in recensendis singulatim defunctorum nominibus, ubi viritim pro quolibet exigitur una oratio dominica, idque interdum non citra suspicionem vel quaestus vel ambitionis fiat; nobis potius vide-*

<sup>1</sup> See *La forme des prières ecclésiastiques in Corpus reformatorum* xxxiv p. 173.

bitur ut populus ad communem pro defunctis orationem pie ac devote dicendam accendatur et hae genealogiae intermittantur'.

G. Cassander *Preces ecclesiasticae* (*Opera* 1616) p. 386: '*Orationes communes pro salute viuorum et mortuorum*': p. 393 '*Orationes communes*': where, if one is to judge by the contents of the prayers, *communes* means for the living and the dead, and for the people of God, in general.

This use of 'common' is analogous to that of 'general' in the 'General Confession' and 'General Thanksgiving' of the Book of Common Prayer; i.e. confession of sins in general and thanksgiving for benefits in general, as distinguished from the detailed enumeration of particular sins and benefits.

So S. Augustine *de cura gerenda pro mortuis* 4: '*quas (sc. supplicationes pro spiritibus mortuorum) faciendas pro omnibus in christiana et catholica societate defunctis etiam tacitis nominibus eorum sub generali commemoratione suscepit ecclesia; ut quibus ad ista desunt parentes aut filii aut quicumque cogniti vel amici ab una eis exhibeantur pia matre communi.*'

*Leofric Missal*, ed. Warren, p. 192: 'Item alia missa generalis'—i. e. for the dead in general.

Wyclif *Septem haereses* init.: 'Thai say furst, that speciale prayere aplied by hor prelati is better then generale. As, one Famulorum saide of a frere is better then a Pater noster, with other thinges even: ffor the Pater noster is moste generale, and the Famulorum moste special, of alle the prayers that God heris'—an example of Wyclif's polemic (founded partly on his predestinarianism, partly on his hostility to foundations—chantries and so on—for continual intercession) against 'special' prayers, in the sense of prayers 'applied' to individuals and of prayers directed to special objects. See also *Sermons* III xlv (ed. Wyclif Soc. iii pp. 380 sq.), IV iii (*ib.* iv pp. 27-33). His theory is that prayers should rather be 'general', for all men and for all good, and the special application of them left to God. *Famulorum* refers to the paragraphs of the Canon 'Memento Domine famulorum famularumque tuarum' in which individuals are prayed for by name, 'N. et N.'

Erasmus *Modus orandi* (*Opera*, Basel 1540, v p. 941): 'denique tametsi probandum est, quod pro suo quisque principe orat, tamen conveniret, ut in publicis precibus non unius aut

illius, sed omnium principum Christianorum generalis fieret mentio.'

4. Prayers may be 'common' as used at any time, as distinguished from those proper to particular days or seasons.

*Missale ad usum Sarum* (ed. Dickinson c. 813\* sqq.) '*Memoriae communes*', i.e. the '*orationes diversae*' of the Pian Missal '*dicendae in Missa ad libitum sacerdotis cum iis quae in propriis Missis assignantur, quando non est Festum Duplex*'. Similarly the '*Commune sanctorum*' and within it the '*communiae*' of the several classes of saints, of the Missal and the Breviary, are the services in commemoration of any saint belonging to the class, who has no proper service commemorating him individually. And the ferial Preface in the Mass is *praefatio communis* or *generalis* as distinguished from the *propriae* of particular days and seasons (*Missale Romanum* 1474, ed. Lippe, Henry Bradshaw Soc., i p. 205, ii p. 109). In the Jacobite Syrian rite ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ, *oratio communis*, is used of the ferial office (Payne Smith *Thesaurus syriacus* s.v. ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ).<sup>1</sup>

In the English book, the Collects added after the Mass in 1549 'to be said after the Offertory when there is no Communion', were in 1552 converted into *memoriae communes* by the addition to the rubric of 'And the same may be said also as often as occasion shall serve, after the collects either of Morning and Evening prayer, Communion, or Litany, by the direction of the minister'; but no specific title is given them.

#### IV

'Common Prayer', then, is an old and venerable phrase, applied to litanies from the second century onwards and to the service of the Church as a whole and in its parts from at least the ninth century, and used to describe the contents of the existing service-books at the time when the reform of them was contemplated or in hand. Consequently it does not, as it sometimes seems to be supposed, mark any characteristic peculiar to the present English rite; it only expresses an acknowledged

<sup>1</sup> *Ordo communis* or *generalis*, the framework and fixed formulae of the liturgy, as distinguished from the variable lessons, hymns, and anaphoras, is perhaps due to Renaudot, and does not represent a Syriac phrase.

character of the service of the Church always and everywhere. At the same time, although I at least cannot recall any explicit evidence for the supposition, it is possible and probable that it was deliberately chosen from among several possible titles in order to emphasize this aspect of things and to keep it before men's minds. We have often been reminded in the last few years that the accepted obligation and practice of people in general in the middle ages was to assist not only at mass, but also at matins and evensong, on Sundays and festivals at least: the rule was 'matins, mass, and evensong'. This is assumed, for example, in the documents put out during the process of change in the sixteenth century. But of course the majority of people did not and could not follow either the mass or the offices in detail: they took their part by their general assent and their own devotions. Manuals like the *Lay Folks' Mass Book* and the *Primer* provided them with devotions by which they might follow the mass on a parallel line; and Tyndale's direction to the people in 1532 is 'Then while the priests sing psalms, let every man pray privately and give God thanks for such benefits as his heart knoweth he hath received of God, and commend to God his private necessities and the private necessities of his neighbours which he knoweth and is privy to'<sup>1</sup>; and the *Institution of every Christian man* and the *Necessary doctrine* give like directions at greater length.<sup>2</sup> The book of 1549 aimed at providing a service which should be 'common' in a fuller sense, common, not only in intention but in expression, not only *ὁμοθυμαδόν* but also *ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι*, and at realizing what none would dispute to be the ideal of the Church—'quando psallitur psallatur ab omnibus, cum oratur oretur ab omnibus, cum lectio legitur facta silentio aequè audiatur a cunctis legente lectore'.<sup>3</sup> And it is likely enough that the canonization given to the phrase 'common prayer' by its adoption as a formal title was intended to call and to retain attention to this ideal.

But Dr Gwatkin has lately asserted that 'this emphasis on *Common Prayer*, this ignoring of separate devotion in public worship' involved a 'significant' 'change in the ideal of worship',

<sup>1</sup> *Expos. of Mat. v. vi. vii.*, ed. Parker Soc. p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Formularies of faith in the reign of Henry VIII* pp. 144 sq., 307 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Nicetas of Remesiana *de Psalmodiæ bono* 13: Isidore of Seville *de Officiis* i 10.

and he adds, apparently in illustration of this, that 'at the Reformation it was argued on the Romish side that the public service ought not to be understood of the vulgar, because it disturbed their devotions',<sup>1</sup> as though the system of parallel private devotions represented the existing ideal. Such fragmentary history of 'common prayer' as can be gathered from the examples of its use collected above, seems to me, so far as it goes, rather to suggest that there was no change of ideal at all, but at most an attempt to disentangle an acknowledged principle from the encumbrances created by historical circumstances. Of course the Book of Common Prayer itself does not 'ignore' private devotions any more than the books which it displaced, unless we suppose that these were *intended* to be unintelligible. In fact the book of 1549 recognizes private devotions as the older books had not: '*Every man and woman to be bound to hear and be at the divine service in the parish church where they be resident, and there with devout prayer or godly silence and meditation, to occupy themselves.*'<sup>2</sup> And if by the argument on the Roman side is meant, as I suppose it is, the argument of Harding against Jewel, Harding neither says, nor, I think, means what Dr Gwatkin suggests. Of course, he is concerned to defend the use of the Latin Church, and he expends a great deal of special pleading to make out the best case he can for it: but he does not, I think, offer any such abstract defence of it, as desirable in itself, as might be inferred from Dr Gwatkin's note. He uses 'common prayer' quite freely of the service of the Church; he of course grants that what he is defending is not primitive and apostolic, but 'after that the faithful people was multiplied . . . and had been so well instructed in all points of religion, as by their own accord they conformed themselves to the ministers at the common prayers, in the Latin church the service was set out in Latin, and it was thought sufficient, part of the people in the choir to answer for the whole. And this hath been esteemed for a more expedite and convenient order, than if it were in the vulgar tongue of every nation'—no doubt for the reasons ordinarily alleged, such as they are. But some of the people can follow the service in detail, 'the Latin tongue in the Latin church is not altogether strange and un-

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin *The Knowledge of God* ii p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Seventh rubric after the Mass.

known ; for beside the priest, in most places, some of the rest have understanding of it, more or less' (so there can be no abstract desire that the laity as such should not understand the language of the Church)—and it is in itself desirable that all should understand ; 'it were good the people, having humble and reverent hearts' (i. e. as the context shews, not innovating in this matter against authority), 'understood the service, I deny not. . . Yet all standeth not in understanding . . . and when we shall all appear before Christ, in that dreadful day of judgement, we shall not be required to give an account of our understanding, but (faith presupposed) of our charity' : 'yea, even with my very heart I wish with Moses *Quis tribuat ut omnis populus prophetet . . .* but all the common people to understand the priest at the service, I think wise and godly men judge it not a thing so necessary, as for the which the ancient order of the church, with no little offence, public and universal authority not consulted, should be condemned, broken and quite abrogated by private advice of a few.' But as it is, the service is in fact common, the people take their place in it, 'they give assent to it, and ratify it in their hearts, and do conform themselves unto the priest, though not in special, yet in general ; that is to wit, though not in every particular sentence of praise and thanksgiving, or in every several petition, yet in the whole. For if they come to church with a right and good intent, as the simple do no less than the learned ; their desire is to render unto God glory, praise and honour, and to thank him for benefits received, and withal to obtain of him things behoveful for them in this life and in the life to come. And without doubt this godly affection of their minds is so acceptable to God, as no understanding of words may be compared with it. This requisite assent, and conforming of themselves to the priest, they declare by sundry outward tokens and gestures ; as by standing up at the gospel,' &c. : 'And as the vulgar service pulleth their minds from private devotion to hear and not to pray, to little benefit of knowledge, for the obscurity of it ; so the Latin giveth them no such motion ; they occupy themselves, while the priest prayeth for all and in the person of all, in their private prayers, all for all, and everyone for himself.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of John Jewel*, ed. Parker Soc., i pp. 317 sqq., 322 sq., 332



Now whatever any one may feel as to the presuppositions and the details of this argument, it is not an argument in defence of a service 'not understood of the people' in the abstract, nor yet an argument that the service ought not to be understood, because, if it were, it would disturb their private devotions. It is an argument, on the one hand, that there are considerations of greater importance which may, and at the moment do, interfere with what is abstractly desirable, however Harding's estimate of the intelligence of the people may suggest that he regards it as practically impossible; and on the other hand, that the people can, and by their devotions do, take their place in the service, which, though they cannot follow it in detail, they do understand in general; and that this is all they can really do in a vernacular service, which in fact is still in detail beyond their understanding, while by being half intelligible it is more distracting than a service the language of which is frankly unintelligible and can be ignored.

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