

BOOK REVIEWS

The Book of Common Order (1979). The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1979. Pp. xvi. + 182. £3.50.

This volume is a revision of the *Book of Common Order* (1940); and once the two books are compared, it becomes obvious that the new book is in some ways slighter than its predecessor: sections II and IV, the orders for Public Worship and the Prayers for the Christian Year, have all but disappeared. A good deal of this omission will be made good, we are promised, with a companion volume which will “contain sixteen sets of prayers for morning worship” with other material relevant to the Christian Year.

The material here provided has been set out as it is because of a conviction that the true pattern of public worship is eucharistic and that a full diet of Word and Lord’s Supper should be the norm, that in fact a morning service where Holy Communion is not celebrated is in fact properly understood as ante-Communion. Three orders for Holy Communion are provided together with an outline of a service without Holy Communion, representing this understanding of worship, and some notes on a shorter order for Communion for use where it is appropriate. If this very important change in the stated understanding of worship reflects the practice of the Kirk, it would be very interesting to know. Of course, a Book of Common Order need not and perhaps should not be too much a reflection of normal practice, since it should more importantly represent a norm to which worshippers and those who lead them should aim; but the norm should not be too far removed from the practice of the Kirk and the mood of those who have liturgical responsibility in the parishes. For one who is outwith the Kirk it is impossible to be confident on this issue, except to realise its importance. If this book leads to more frequent celebration of Holy Communion, it will have more than justified its publication.

In addition to the material provided in the section The Divine Service, there are sections dealing with Christian Initiation, Celebration of Marriage, Funerals, Ordination and Admission of Elders, a lectionary, two sets of collects and the Proper Prefaces for the Christian Year.

The provision of two sets of collects highlights the fact that the committee responsible for producing this book was unable to make up its mind about the “thee-you” forms of prayer. Instead of coming down on one side of the fence, they have allowed for a variety of practice. The first of the two sets of collects is in the

traditional form, while the second is in the “you” form, and this derives largely from the Joint Liturgical Group in its *The Divine Office* (1968). It was evidently decided that, while the “language of today must be pressed into the service of the Church”, traditional prayer language still has a contribution to make to the worship of the Church, “because it is an art-form of rare quality and part of our culture”. Not all will agree with this compromise decision; but it is probably wise. We do not yet know what the effect of modern language will have on the worship of the Church; and it is already clear that in some cases its use has disastrously “demythologized” our worship so that little or no sense of awe remains. So we probably (almost certainly) need a spell in which we can try to evaluate the continuing use of traditional language and what may be the eventual profit from the use of contemporary forms of speech.

When attention is directed to the actual orders for Holy Communion, two of which are in traditional and one in contemporary language, two changes from the 1940 book are at once noticeable. The 1940 book in the first order provided that the Nicene Creed should be said (it was a permissive use, and not obligatory) after the scripture readings, before the intercessions, which was to be followed by the sermon. The alternative order was similar. In 1979 a different arrangement is recommended in the first two orders, that the Nicene Creed *shall* be said or sung *after* the elements have been brought to the Table, whereas in the third order it is suggested that the creed should follow the sermon. In the first two orders it is indicated that the creed *may* be said after the sermon; but the fact that it is printed out in full at the point in the order after the placing of the elements on the Table suggests emphatically that this is what the committee prefers. One wonders why this should be recommended at all. Surely, the reading of scripture, the preaching of the Word and the confession of the Faith all belong together; and it is difficult to see what theological or practical gains are derived from thus sundering them.

The Warrant is given alternative placings, either before or during the great prayer of thanksgiving: it is surely right to make this provision. One is less certain about what is said of the prayers of intercession. To include them in the great prayer has something to be said for it; yet, if the words of institution and these intercessions are both included in this prayer is it not all too likely that the prayer will be found to be too long? If it is true that modern congregations find concentration in prayer difficult, there is much to be said for making all the prayers as brief as possible and for breaking them up as much as may be into distinct units. There seems little to be said for providing for intercession after the

offerings and before the invitation to the Table *and* in the Eucharistic Prayer. The third order is much better in this respect. A welcome addition is the provision of alternative post-communion prayers in both language styles.

Christian Initiation is much discussed, and we may expect that it will be some years before we reach a common mind; but it is very uncertain whether this book has “got it right”. The very order in which the services are presented gives a wrong impression; but it becomes clear that the administration of Holy Baptism refers only to infants. Next follows confirmation and admission to the Lord’s Supper. Then Baptism, confirmation and admission in one rite, followed by an order for Adult Baptism. This gives the impression that Adult Baptism is a kind of after-thought. Apart from asking whether “Believer’s” would not be a more accurate word here than “adult”, one wonders whether it would not have been wiser and theologically better to have made it perfectly clear that there is but one baptism, whether administered to believers or infants, and to have exemplified this by providing an order, which can be done without undue complication, with alternative portions to be used as appropriate. The service in which baptism, confirmation and admission to the Lord’s Supper are brought together is good, and this makes it the more disappointing that the foregoing comment has to be made at all. Of course, discussion and experiment within the Church of Scotland may have made the order in which these services are presented necessary within that ecclesiastical context; but to one who knows the situation, if at all, only by reading and hearsay, this section of the book is much less satisfactory than the excellent orders provided for Holy Communion.

The occasional services have good suggestions for scripture readings. The Lectionary is that provided by the Joint Liturgical Group (1967) with minor modifications.

In general, the language used, whether traditional or contemporary, is fitting, though the eucharistic prayer in the third Order contains the graceless expression “Your Son Jesus Christ is to be thanked and praised . . .”, which sounds like a reminder for a vote of thanks! But what sort of theology does this stylistic lapse suggest?

It would be equally graceless to end this review on so sour a note, since the overall impression of the book is that it will provide a fine norm for the public worship of the Kirk, continuing, as it does and should, the Reformed tradition of providing models for worship rather than definitive forms, since, as is said in the introduction, “the search for language and for forms that are appropriate at once to worshippers and to Christ . . . must go on

tirelessly and without intermission". We look forward to the promised companion volume.

JOHN HUXTABLE, Newton Abbot.

Liturgical Studies. E. C. Ratcliff. Ed. A. H. Couratin and D. H. Tripp. S.P.C.K., London, 1976. Pp. vi + 250. £8.50.

Not only was E. C. Ratcliff a liturgiologist of repute but he was the principal author of the ground plan of the Eucharistic Prayer as it appears in the report of the Church of England Liturgical Commission, *Alternative Services, Second Series*, 1965. Consequently we look to *Liturgical Studies* with particular interest.

In an editorial note the Revd. A. H. Couratin explains why this volume contains almost exclusively published papers. Apart from one or two items unpublished material, particularly correspondence, has been excluded. Pp. 1-10 gives a list of published writings, but does not indicate which of them appear in the present volume. Pp. 11-15 gives a brief account of E.C.R. "as liturgist". At the end are, first, an index of persons 244-46 and, second, an index of liturgical subjects 247-50.

We now come to the main body of the book. Its contents are in four sections: Eucharistic Liturgy, Baptism, Ordination and the Book of Common Prayer. Among these the first paper "The Sanctus and the Early Anaphora" 18-40, was perhaps the most influential. The whole collection, however, presents a series of stimulating and instructive investigations and reading between the lines we can detect suggestions which were to be fruitful later. In particular we may note the penetrating analysis of Hippolytus' Eucharistic Prayer.

Sometimes we may remain unpersuaded. In his discerning study of "The Institution Narrative of the Roman 'Canon Missae'" E.C.R. makes an interesting comparison of the text of its Institution Narrative with the Old Latin witnesses. On the basis of this and other grounds he argues that the text in the *Canon Missae* is older than that in the *De Sacramentis* for example. As has been pointed out, however, the text in the *De Sacramentis* is more archaic in prose rhythm than that in the *Canon Missae* (G. G. Willis, *Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, 111-117).

The limitations that the editors placed upon their selection have caused one important aspect of E.C.R.'s work to be neglected. As principal author of the Eucharistic ground plan in the English liturgical revision he exercised a most important influence. This has been ignored in the present book. As is hinted on page v the evidence for this would be difficult to handle, but it will be much

more difficult later on. Not merely do we have a considerable correspondence, but many of those who worked with him are still alive and from their recollections as well as from written sources we would expect that a fair picture of his thought and influence might be drawn.

Let us look at this ground plan. As it stands in the report of 1965 we have first the Preface followed by the *Sanctus*, but, in addition to provision for supplementary insertions for the great festivals, the Preface has three further items recalling our creation, redemption and sanctification. After the *Sanctus* we have the Institution Narrative, an *anamnesis*, an oblation and a final doxology. With the further intrusion of an ambivalent acclamation after the Institution Narrative this pattern has become standard. We can see its influence on subsequent English forms down to *Holy Communion Series 3 Revised* of 1978, in the New Zealand revision, in *Australia '73* and *An Australian Prayer Book* (1978), in some of the forms in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1977) of the Episcopal Church and in the Canadian draft of 1975.

Despite its widespread acceptance this ground plan has an air of incoherence and unfinished business. It is hard to see why the *Sanctus* has wandered along to its new place, where it succeeds in separating things that ought to be kept together. That *anamnesis* is understood in the conventional way only serves to make us more doubtful of this interpretation. If we are going to have a coherent and well organised eucharistic prayer on the ancient lines we must start again.

I have aired my doubts at this point not just to give vent to dissent, but to emphasize the importance of having E.C.R.'s thoughts and discussions at this vital point well documented. If we look for precedents, we may recall in connexion with the Deposited Book of 1927 and 1928, F. L. Cross, *Darwell Stone*, and also Frere's own work setting out his views which were so influential in that book. We may suspect that E.C.R.'s proposals were just as significant, but, even if the relevant materials are not easy to assemble, the trouble is well worth taking and should enable even those of us who are unconvinced to consider his contribution with more understanding.

Though we may feel that there was much more to E.C.R. than this volume reveals, the papers here assembled display something of his learning, his acuteness and his resource. We can only thank the editors for their unobtrusive work which at any rate enables us to form and retain a picture of E.C.R.'s scholarly work.

G. D. KILPATRICK, Oxford.

Preaching through the Christian Year: A selection of Exegetical Passages from the *Church Dogmatics* (made by J. McTavish and H. Wells). Karl Barth. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1978. Pp. viii + 279. £3.80.

It is not everyone who will tackle the upwards of six million words contained in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, and the two ministers who have made this selection are concerned to rescue for a wider readership some of the exegetical treasures hidden within the thirteen volumes. They demonstrate, by their selection, the extent to which Barth was concerned with the life of the church and its preaching ministry. It is with the preaching of the Word that this selection is concerned.

Many readers of Barth have concentrated on the larger type and neglected the small print interspersed in the text. The selectors have drawn upon the oft-neglected passages which, after all, provide the basis and justification for what Barth argues in the larger type.

Whilst the Barthian vogue is now past, the selectors are right in believing that there is much in Barth's interpretation of theology, and, particularly, in his Biblical exegesis, which merits a wide readership. To give shape to the selection, passages devoted to GOD and CREATION form the introduction to the Christian Year—with sections suitable for background study and meditation from Advent through to Pentecost provided.

Karl Barth assumed that his readers could cope with the classical languages, but the presence of quotations in Latin and Greek should not mean that the non-classicist will not profit. Barth's masterly use of illustrative material comes across. One of my favourite bits (in reading through the selection) is his enthusiastic presentation of Mozart, where creation's praise for its creator and the "completeness" of the seemingly "incomplete" (illustrated by the composer's brief life) are the central themes. I am glad that the sections on the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son are included. The one on David and Bathsheba could spark off not one sermon—but a whole series! The student will be assisted in finding here not only Barth's lucid approach to "myth", but also his approach to miracle, the resurrection and many basic doctrines now under debate. Whilst time has marched on, to neglect the opinions of the greatest theologian of this century would be inexcusable. No one wants to attribute infallibility or finality to his writings, but his opinions are to be respected and his living faith and devotion emulated.

RAYMOND HAMMER, London.

- Something Overheard**, an introduction to the New Testament. A. E. Harvey. The Bible Reading Fellowship, London, 1977. Pp. viii + 88. Paperback, £1.25.
- The Well is Deep**, Aspects of the Biblical Heritage. R. R. Williams. The Bible Reading Fellowship Book Club, London, 1978. Pp. 80. Paperback, £1.25.
- Singing to the Lord**, The Psalms as Hymns. Michael Ball. The Bible Reading Fellowship Book Club, London, 1979. Pp. 78. Paperback, £1.25.

In addition to providing notes for daily bible reading, the Bible Reading Fellowship publishes books to give further help for church members as they read the bible. Each of these paperbacks is short, written in a clear style, and will be a stimulus to bible study.

In *Something Overhead*, Anthony Harvey, a Lecturer in New Testament at Oxford, provides a stimulating introduction to the background of the books of the New Testament. It is written in the conviction "that it is possible to present the methods and achievements of modern New Testament scholarship to any interesting layman in such a way that he will feel able to join in the same study and to pursue the same quest." He introduces the New Testament as "unlike any other book which a modern reader is likely to come across". We cannot expect the writers to be addressing us directly. Reading the New Testament is rather like overhearing a conversation. In concise chapters he describes the nature of these "conversations" of the early Christians at prayer, as they preached and baptised converts, as they instructed new members in the faith, interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures, discussed the problems which arose from the conversion of the Gentiles, and withstood persecution by the state. He then deals with the ways in which the different books came to be written. His main purpose is to explain the setting of the New Testament and the assumptions of its authors rather than to describe or discuss its contents, but he has been successful in giving the reader a clear insight into the problems and results of modern scholarship. There are useful groups of passages for further study at the end of most chapters, and there is a comprehensive list of books for additional reading.

The Well is Deep is the first volume of the Bible Reading Fellowship Book Club, which has been launched in the belief that the bible is no dead book but that its message communicates with contemporary man and contemporary society. R. R. Williams, who was Bishop of Leicester from 1953 until 1978, supports that belief with a personal account of how the Bible is alive for him.

There are “depths” in the Bible to be sounded and drawn upon. The literary qualities of the Bible have ensured that it has made an impact upon its readers. It is written, too, within a solid framework of historical events, and readers will become familiar with periods of history of which they might otherwise have remained unaware. There are depths of devotion in the Psalms. Although we cannot reach this ideal of devotion ourselves, Jesus realised it in his own use of the psalms, and it is through him that we can use them today. In the chapter “Deep Memories of the Lord”, Bishop Williams gives an account of his own developing appreciation of the Gospels from an early “conservative evangelical” upbringing, through coming to grips with critical questions at Cambridge, and then to a high estimation of the Gospel of Luke, which shows Christ’s love for the sinful, the outcast, and the despised. He also summarises the main themes of Paul’s letters, and the insights of the other epistles into the meaning of Christ. Help is given, too, in understanding the biblical material relating to life eternal. Finally, he gives practical advice on reading the bible and discovering for ourselves the depths it contains. At the end of the book there are study projects on the theme of each chapter which could be used by groups and which would be particularly suitable for young people.

The second book published by the Book Club is Michael Ball’s *Singing to the Lord*. Dr Ball, who is the minister of Pontypridd United Church, describes the way in which the Psalms have come into Christian worship as hymns. Starting with the original use and setting of the Psalms, he goes on to show how they have been adapted for use in the worship of the Church. He describes how hymn writers such as Watts and Wesley “Christianised” the Psalms. He regrets that so few hymn writers have followed their example. In our worship today, contemporary language is used in the prayers and in the sermon and the most archaic contents of services are most often the hymns. There is a need for new Psalm-based hymns to be written. The Bible he says, should be viewed as the starting point, the nucleus upon which growth takes place, not the final boundary within which we must remain. There are several appendices, including a list of hymns found in most church hymnaries which are based on particular psalms. This list should prove helpful to those who are responsible for choosing items of praise for worship. There are also useful biographical notes on hymn-writers. This book will not only give a greater appreciation of the Psalms but will give more understanding to those who participate in the public worship of the Church.

With these two books the Bible Reading Fellowship Book Club

has made a very good start. They satisfy a need for such introductory books and can be confidently recommended to church members.

DOUGLAS M. MURRAY, Callander.