

The Scottish Book of Common Prayer, 1637.

“THE Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other parts of Divine Service for the use of the Church of Scotland” owes its origin to Charles I., who wished to see one form of worship used throughout his dominions. Uniformity of worship was one of the desires of the earlier Covenanters, so that in this at least the monarch and his opponents were at one.

When Charles came to Scotland for his coronation in 1633, he was accompanied by Archbishop Laud, and it is on record that the Anglican Book of Common Prayer was then publicly read in all the churches where the royal party worshipped. No scruple was made regarding its use in churches frequented by the Scots in England, and these things may explain why both the King and the Archbishop thought that there would be little difficulty in getting their wishes carried into effect here.

The first idea was simply to have the English book, as it stood, substituted for the Book of Common Order then in general use. The Scots Bishops were against this, thinking that, if new forms were to be introduced, these should be different from the English ones, lest it should be thought that the church of the smaller nation was being subordinated to that of the larger. The majority, both of Bishops and Ministers, would probably have preferred that any alterations of the Book of Common Prayer should be in a Puritan direction. Such a book had been drawn up some twenty years earlier by William Cowper, Bishop of Galloway, assisted by some of the “most learned and grave ministers” of the Church of Scotland. But it may be safely said that Laud would not have tolerated the introduction of such a book, and in his desire for alterations of quite another sort he was ably assisted by two of the Scottish Bishops, Wedderburn of Dunblane and Maxwell of Ross. They took, with the King and Laud, the chief part in the compilation of the work. While it may not be strictly correct to speak of the book as “Laud’s Liturgy,” we may say, with Bishop Dowden, that the popular name “indicates not unfairly its doctrinal colouring.” Laud’s own words may be quoted:—“I like the book exceeding well and hope I shall be able to maintain anything that is in it.” There is much to be said for the view that Laud wished to see the book established in Scotland, in order that when the time came it might be used as a model for the revision of the English Book of Common Prayer.

The Scots Service Book follows the order of the contemporary Anglican one, which, it may be said, differed in some respects from the one at present in use. In Scotland, though only five holy days, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsunday, were observed with the consent of the General Assembly, no less than twenty-nine were recognised, with Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, in the new book. This was two more than in England, the additional ones being the Conversion of St Paul and Easter Even. Though all these twenty-nine were “red letter” days in the Scots book, a letter from Laud to Wedderburn makes it clear that there was to be no attempt to introduce their observance unless in exceptional circumstances. The Bishops had evidently thought, and rightly as it turned out, that these should not be inserted. Laud, however, states that though the Scots Bishops were asked to consider the observance of Holy Days “yet it was never intended but that the office appointed

for every one of them should be kept in the Liturgy, and the consideration was only to be of the observation of them."

After the Service Book had been laid aside it was stated in the "large declaration" that the King had taken special care in order that the alterations which were made should be such "as we had reason to think would best comply with the minds and dispositions of our subjects of that kingdom" (Scotland). The chief of these alterations was the substitution of the words of the Authorised Version of Holy Scripture for those which appeared in the English Prayer Book. This version, though the work of English Divines, had been made at the suggestion of the Scottish King James, and there must have been many ministers and others who remembered that it had first been spoken of in the General Assembly of their own Church at Burntisland in 1601. The Lord's Prayer, it may be noted, is not given in its Scriptural form, but in that of Anglican usage, viz., "Trespases . . . trespass against us." "Debts . . . debtors" had been the form used in Scotland even before the Reformation, as may be seen in Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism, and this is the form used in the Book of Common Order.

Strangely enough, in the second of the "comfortable words" in the Communion Service the older form, "So God loved the world," was allowed to remain. Probably stranger still, Professor Cooper takes no notice of this in his notes in the reprint which he edited for the Church Service Society.

The change which was likely to be most noticeable was the substitution of the word "Presbyter" for "Priest" wherever it occurs in the rubrics. It has been suggested that this change was not altogether what it seemed to be, and that Laud wished to get rid of the Puritan word "minister." Against this view may be quoted the words of the Absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer, where "the Presbyters of His Church, the Ministers of His Gospel" is substituted for the simple "Ministers" of the Anglican book.

A third alteration which may have been meant to conciliate the Scots is the alternative of the 23rd Psalm for the "Benedicite."

"The Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion" is the most distinctive feature of the book. Laud's enemies maintained that it was the sacrificial aspect of the rite which was emphasised, and whatever may be said of their other accusations, they were undoubtedly correct in this. The rubrics enjoin that the "Holy Table" (the contemporary English book had "Table" only) was to stand at "the uppermost part of the chancel or church." In England it was (and still is) permissible to have the Table "in the Body of the Church"; but that was not to be allowed in Scotland, although, as is well-known, it was customary then for communicants to receive at a table which was so placed that they could sit around it.

The opening parts of the Communion Service in Laud's Liturgy follow the same order as the contemporary English book, though there are some differences in the first Collect for the King. The sentences for the Offertory differ for the better from those in the Anglican book, and are arranged according to the order in which they occur in the Bible. Following the taking and presentation of the Offerings comes the prayer for "Christ's Church militant here on earth," which is somewhat fuller than its English counterpart, especially in the thanksgivings for the faithful departed. Then come the three exhortations, and thereafter the Invitation, Confession, Absolution, and Comfortable Words. In the first

Prayer Book of King Edward VI. all four come later in the service, between the Consecration and Reception, a much more fitting place for them. There is evidence that Wedderburn, and probably some of the other Scots Bishops as well, wished to have them there also, but Charles and Laud thought otherwise. The *Sursum Corda*, Preface and Doxology, led up to the Prayer of Consecration, which differs very considerably from that in use in England. "There is now," says Professor Cooper, "for the first time since 1549 a distinct consecration of the Elements." His reference is to the *Epiclesis*, "Hear us, O merciful Father, and of thy Almighty goodness vouchsafe so to bless and sanctify with thy Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son." The Prayer of Oblation, which in part is found in the Anglican service after reception, here comes immediately after the Consecration. It is followed by the Lord's Prayer, introduced with the words "As our Saviour Christ hath commanded and taught us we are bold to say." The Prayer of Humble Access (given this title for the first time) comes immediately before the reception, an alteration made at the request of the Scots Bishops. The second clause in the words at the delivery of the consecrated Bread and Wine does not appear, and a return to primitive usage is indicated by the rubric "Here the party receiving shall say, *Amen.*"

The concluding part of the service consists of the Collect of Thanksgiving (the second in the present Anglican Book), the *Gloria in Excelsis* and the Blessing.

There is no need to record, at any length, the reception the book received when the Dean of Edinburgh tried to read it in St Giles'. Every Scot has heard of Jenny Geddes and of the movement which started on that seventh Sunday after Trinity, 23rd July, 1637. Evidently the Dean had managed to get as far as the Collect for the Day before he was interrupted, which may indicate that no objection was taken to the first part of the service. There were other churches, however, where the book continued to be used in whole or in part. As late as July 1638 we find Baillie complaining of the action of his cousin, who was minister of the Scots Kirk in Campvere, in using the obnoxious book in the ordinary services there.

There was no attempt to re-issue the book when Episcopacy was restored in 1661. After the Revolution, when the church again became Presbyterian, some of the extruded Episcopal ministers began to use it in whole or in part. In 1712 a new edition was printed in Edinburgh at the charge of the Earl of Winton, and this is known to have been in use in some quarters. The (Scottish) Communion Office of the Episcopal Church in Scotland is based on the 1637 book, and from it that of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America (U. S. A.) is derived.

The Service Book is a well printed and handsome volume. The text is in black letters, the rubrics in Roman and italics. There is a great diversity of capital letters, some of which are very well designed. One in particular shows a ship being blown by Boreas, while Neptune astride a dolphin acts as a guide to the pilot. The ship, it may be noted, flies the St Andrew's Flag of Scotland. This, as well as other examples, appears quite often with a different letter in the centre.

The Book of Psalms, although always bound up with the Service Book, was printed separately by the same printer. It is dated 1636 and has a separate title page. Indeed, there are five different impressions, each with a different title page. What appears to be the earliest of these

has the words "pointed as they (the Psalms) shall be said or sung." No copy, however, seems to have had anything of the nature of pointing, and the word "pointed" is left out of the later impressions. At the foot of the last page in the first issue is the catchword, "Certaine," having reference to "Certain Godly Prayers" which it was intended should be bound up with the book, as was the custom in England. There is a note, still extant in King Charles' handwriting, to the effect that such prayers "be all left out and not printed in the Liturgie." Despite the king's prohibition at least two copies survive in which two pages containing "Certaine Godlie Prayers" are to be found, one of them being in the British Museum, the other in the Bodleian Library. Recently a copy came into the possession of the writer containing eight pages of these prayers as in some contemporary English Prayer Books. This copy appears to be unique.

In addition to the Psalms in prose, there was also bound up with many of the copies the metrical Psalter containing "The Psalms of King David Translated by King James." It was intended that this should replace the version of the Psalms in metre which had been used in Scotland from the Reformation. It was printed in London by Thomas Harper in 1636, and sent to Scotland to be bound up with the Service Book. As in that work the Psalms are printed in beautiful black letters and a number of tunes are supplied, most of them in what would now be called Double Common Metre, though the Old Hundred and the old 124th are both here. The longer Psalms are divided into portions containing about twenty double lines (of fourteen syllables) each. This version was in the hands of the Scots ministers who revised that of Rous, as may be seen from the opening verse of the 25th Psalm (Short Metre)

"To Thee I lift my soul, O Lord I trust in Thee,
My God let me not be ashamed nor foes triumph o'er me.
Let none of them have shame, who do on Thee depend :
But who without a cause transgress, let shame on them attend."

or the corresponding verse of the 24th (Common Metre) :

"The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains :
The world that is inhabited, and all that there remains.
For the foundation of the same, he on the seas did lay ;
And also hath establish't it, upon the floods to stay."

While his son, Charles, claimed for his father the authorship of this Psalter, it is known that by far the greater part of the versification was done by Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, afterwards Earl of Stirling. This Psalter shared the fate of the Service Book, and lives only in the lines from it which have been incorporated in the one we still use.

Copies of the Service Book are occasionally met with in the book market, and the late Dr Christie, of St Andrew's Parish Church, Edinburgh, gave it as his opinion that there must be at least a hundred copies still in existence. In 1904 a reprint was published by the Church Service Society. This, as has been said, was edited with introduction and notes by the late Professor James Cooper.

WILLIAM McMILLAN.