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In this fifth article of my series on An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) I examine the Penitential Preparation and the Ministry of the Sacrament in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008). I have included the Penitential Preparation with the Ministry of the Sacrament because it is historically connected with that Ministry.

The Penitential Preparation is derived from the Order of Communion of 1548, which was inserted in the Ministry of the Sacrament of the First Prayer Book of 1549 after "Christ our Pascall lambe is offred up for us...". In the Second Prayer Book of 1552 the Order of Communion was broken up. The First Exhortation, the Second Exhortation ("Ye that do truly repent..."), the General Confession, the Absolution, and the Comfortable Words were placed before the Prayer of Consecration; the Prayer of Humble Access was placed after the Sanctus; and the Words of Distribution after the Prayer of Consecration. In An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) the Penitential Preparation - the First Exhortation, the Second Exhortation ("Ye that do truly repent..."), the General Confession, the Absolution, and the Comfortable Words are placed before the Prayer of Consecration as in the 1552, 1559, 1604, and 1662 Prayers Books, the 1789, 1892, and 1928 American Prayer Books, and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book. The Penitential Preparation:

The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) omit the first two forms of the First Exhortation from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and substitute for the third form a revision of that form. The version of the third form of the First Exhortation in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) is not a word for word translation of the 1662 form into modern idiom. Instead of addressing the congregation as "Dearly beloved in the Lord..." the revised form addressed them as "Fellow baptized Christians...". The revision also does away with the Scriptural language and allusions of the original.

The Exhortation "Ye that do truly repent..." has been altered slightly. It begins "If you truly repent..." and the phrase "take this holy Sacrament to strengthen and comfort you" has been substituted for "...and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort." The words "meekly kneeling upon your knees" have been dropped. The omission of these words appears to recognize that those using An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) may, under certain circumstances, not be able to kneel for the General Confession. The rubrics, however, after permitting a pause for self-examination direct all to say the General Confession, kneeling.

An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) would have benefited from a General Directions for Public Worship section with a note pointing to the attention of users of the book that where a certain posture is particularly appropriate, it is indicated but these directions are suggestions only. Such a note would have helped to give the book the kind of flexibility needed for the wide variety of circumstances in which Anglican Mission congregations are worshiping.

The 1662 Order for the Lord's Supper:

Before we examine the Ministry of the Sacrament in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008), let briefly review the history of the development of the Order for the Lord's Supper in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer itself. I have modernized the spelling of texts from the 1549, 1552, and 1559 Prayer Books where I quote them.

The Order for the Lord's Supper in the 1662 Prayer Book is the one that conforms to the standards for faith and worship set forth in the Proposed Constitution of the Anglican Mission in America-the Holy Scriptures, the Thiny Nine Articles of 1562 and The Book of Common Prayer of 1662. It is also the one that conforms to the standards for faith and worship that the Anglican Mission has agreed to accept in ratifying the Theological Statement of the Common Cause Partnership:

1) We confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, containing all things necessary for salvation, and to be the final authority and unchangeable standard for Christian faith and life. 2) We confess the Baptism and the Supper of the Lord to be Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself to the Gospel, and thus to be ministered with unfailling use of His words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him. 4) We confess as proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture the historic faith of the undivided church as declared in the three Catholic Creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. 5) Concerning the seven Councils of the undivided Church, we affirm the teaching of the first four Councils, and the Christological clarifications of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils in so far as they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. 6) We receive The Book of Common Prayer as set forth by the Church of England in 1662, together with the Ordinal attached to the same, as a standard for Anglican doctrine and discipline, and, with the Books which preceded it, as the standard for the Anglican tradition of worship. 7) We agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. 6) We receive The Book of Common Prayer as set forth by the Church of

Indeed the Proposed AMA Constitution and the CCP Theological Statement establish the Order for the Lord's Supper in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as normative for Anglican Mission churches.
The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) have done away with the awkward wording of the Ordinary better than others. Repeated use will identify the weakest.  

The first proper preface is adapted from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the second from the 1928 American Prayer Book and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book, the third from the 1928 American book and the 1926 Canadian book, the fourth from the 1962 Canadian, the fifth from the 1662 Prayer Book, the sixth from the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book, the third from the 1928 American book and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book, and the seventh from the 1962 Canadian, the eighth from the 1926 American and 1962 Canadian, and the tenth, if my memory serves me, from the 1928 American. I did not find the last proper preface in the electronic editions of the 1928 American Prayer Book and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book that I consulted. I did find a similar preface in a number of other Anglican service books, including An Australian Prayer Book (1978). The quality of these proper prefaces varies. Some are better than others. Repeated use will identify the weakest.

The Order for the Lord’s Supper in the 1662 Prayer Book is substantially that of the Second Prayer Book of 1552 with some modifications. In the 1552 Prayer Book all references to the Offertory were omitted. The Penitential Preparation—the First Exhortation, the Second Exhortation (“Ye that do truly repent...”) the General Confession, the Absolution, and the Comfortable Words, were moved to a position before the Canon, or Prayer of Consecration; “the Canon was so rearranged as to exclude the remotest possibility of its being interpreted as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.” [1] The versicle and response “The Lord be with you” “And with thy spirit,” with its association with the doctrine of Transubstantiation, was dropped from the Sursum Corda. The Intercession was moved to a position where it had no connection with the Consecration, and the Prayer for the Dead was omitted. The Invocation of the Holy Spirit, or epiclesis, with its implication of a mutation of the elements, and its affirmation of a corporal presence in the consecrated bread and wine was replaced with a petition that those receiving the bread and wine, in accordance with Christ’s institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, might be partakers of Christ’s Body and Blood. The Prayer for Humble Access was moved from its 1549 position before the distribution of the consecrated elements to a position immediately after the Sanctus where it could not be referring to the consecrated bread and wine. The phrase “In these holy mysteries” in the Prayer of Humble Access was omitted. The Benedictus with its implication of a corporal presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the bread and wine was stricken out after the Sanctus. The 1552 Prayer Book also did away with the anamnesis of 1549. The Lord’s Prayer was placed after the Consecration. The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and the oblation of “ourselves, our souls, and bodies” were reworded and placed after the Consecration where they could not be associated in the minds of the people with the Medieval doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass (or any other doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice) and where they served as “a response to the grace made known in the sacrament but no part of the sacramental action itself.” [2]

At the distribution of the Communion the rubrics refer to the consecrated elements as “the bread” and “the cup.” The rubrics direct the minister to first receive the Communion in both kinds himself, and then to deliver the bread and wine to the communicants, if any were present so that they might help the chief minister, and “after to the people in their hands kneeling.” When he delivers the bread, he is directed to say these words: “Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.” [3] The minister who delivers the cup is directed to say these words: Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.” [4] The Agnus Dei was omitted from the Consecration because it implied a corporal presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the bread and wine. It also had strong associations with the doctrine of Transubstantiation and the adoration of the consecrated Host.

The rubrics at the end of the service state that if any of the bread and wine remained, “the Curate shall have it to his own use.”

At the time of its printing the Declaration on Kneeling, the so-called “Black Rubric,” was added to the 1552 Prayer Book. It offers an explanation for the continuance of the Medieval custom of kneeling to receive Communion in the 1552 Prayer Book, a practice also associated with the adoration of the consecrated Host, the highpoint of the Medieval Mass for the laity, and the offering of fealty to one’s liege lord in Medieval feudal society. It goes on to state:

“Let yet the same kneeling might be thought or taken otherwise, we do declare that it is not meant thereby, that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental bread or wine bodily received, or unto any real and essential presence there being of Christ’s natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the Sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful christians. And as concerning the natural body and blood of our savior Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is against the truth of Christ’s natural body, to be in more places than one, at one time.”

The Order for the Lord’s Supper of the Prayer Book of 1559, the Prayer Book of the Elizabethan Settlement, “the” Prayer Book of the Church of England for almost 100 years, and the first Prayer Book used in North America, is that of the Second Prayer Book of 1552 but with two specific important changes. The 1559 Prayer Book amalgamated the Words of Distribution of the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. It dropped the Declaration on Kneeling.

The Order for the Lord’s Supper in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer is a modest revision of that in the 1559 Prayer Book. The word “Offertory” is used in the rubrics. After the ingathering and presentation of the “the Alms for the Poor and the other devotions of the people” the priest is directed to “place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine, as he shall think sufficient, at that juncture in the service. The 1662 Prayer Book places an “‘Amen’ at the conclusion of the Prayer of Consecration, restores the Manual Acts and the Fraction of the Host, and adds an “Amen” at the conclusion of the Prayer of Consecration, and the Prayer for the Dead was omitted. The Invocation of the Holy Spirit, or epiclesis, with its implication of a corporal presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the bread and wine was stricken out. The 1662 Prayer Book also adds a form for the consecration of additional bread and wine. The phrase “in these holy mysteries” in the Prayer of Humble Access was omitted. The Benedictus with its implication of a corporal presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the bread and wine was stricken out after the Sanctus. This addition comes from the 1662 Canadian Prayer Book. As previously noted, this versicle and response were omitted from the 1552 Prayer Book due to its association with the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

The opening words of the Prayer of Consecration have been changed from those used in Services in Contemporary English from The Book of Common Prayer of 1662, the predecessor of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008), issued in 2006 for restricted trial use in Anglican Mission churches for limited period of time. While the original wording worked well enough, the new wording will work even better. It flows smoothly off the tongue and focuses attention immediately upon God.

The first proper preface is adapted from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer the second from the 1928 American Prayer Book and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book, the third from the 1928 American book and the 1926 Canadian book, the fourth from the 1962 Canadian, the fifth from the 1662 Prayer Book, the sixth from the 1962 book, the seventh from the 1962 Canadian, the eighth from the 1962 Canadian, the ninth from the 1928 American and 1962 Canadian, and the tenth, if my memory serves me, from the 1928 American. I did not find the last proper preface in the electronic editions of the 1928 American Prayer Book and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book that I consulted. I did find a similar preface in a number of other Anglican service books, including An Australian Prayer Book (1978). The quality of these proper prefaces varies. Some are better than others. Repeated use will identify the weakest.

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As well as adding the versicle and response "The Lord be with you." "And with your spirit," the compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) add a rubric that permit the recitation or singing of the Benedictus after the Sanctus or before the Communion. This addition also come from the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book. Since the Sursum Corda, Prefaces, Sancus, and accompanying rubrics printed in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) serve as the common Sursum Corda, Prefaces, Sancus, and rubrics for the three orders that follow, the two additions, except in the case of the so-called "The Canadian Order, 1962," change the theology of these orders from that of the Prayer Books from which they were adapted.

The Three Orders: In the introductory notes to The Order for the Holy Communion in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008), the compilers of the book point to the attention of those using the book, that for the second half of the Service, the Ministry of the Sacrament, worship planners may choose from three orders—the English, the American and the Canadian. They go on to claim that these orders "have the same textual material but use it in different ways, and thereby illustrate the major ways the Eucharist has been organized and celebrated in the classic tradition of Common Prayer in the Anglican Way from the 1662 to the present." They fail to mention that the three orders actually are comprised of different textual material and embody different theological interpretations. They also neglect to say that the three orders are not word for word translations of the texts in the three Prayer Books from which they were taken. Additions and alterations have been made to these texts. None of these changes were necessitated by the translation of the traditional language of the three Prayer Books into modern idiom. The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) have also made other changes so that each order is in fact not that of the Prayer Book which it is supposed to represent; and the theology of the so-called English, American and Canadian Orders in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) is not the theology of the English, American, and Canadian Prayer Books.

The claim that the three orders in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) "illustrate the major ways the text of the Eucharist has been organized and celebrated in the classic tradition of Common Prayer in the Anglican Way from the 1662 to the present..." glosses over significant theological differences between the three Prayer Books from which these orders have been adapted. The three orders where they are faithful to the Prayer Books that they are supposed to represent do illustrate how three different theological strands in Anglicanism have ordered the Lord's Supper. Of the three Prayer Books, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book, to a lesser extent, give expression to the Biblical-Reformation theology of classical Anglicanism.

The 1928 American Prayer Book and its Scottish Non-Juror antecedents stand in a different tradition. The Non-Jurors sought to reform Anglican worship after the pattern of Medieval worship, and reintroduced the practice of adoration of the bread and wine after the Words of Institution, its invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine, and its petition that the bread and wine “may become the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son.” The 1928 American Prayer of Consecration is derived from the 1764 Scottish Non-Juror Prayer of Consecration with its omission of the word “there” from the clause “who by his own oblation of himself once offered” to make a full perfect and sufficient sacrifice, its offering of the bread and wine after the Words of Institution, its invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine, and its petition that the bread and wine “may become the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son.” The 1928 American Prayer of Consecration is derived from the 1764 Scottish Non-Juror Prayer of Consecration.

The English Order, 1662: In the order that the compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) label “The English Order, 1662,” they drop the seventeenth century rubrics, or follow them in general terms, ostensibly “to take account of both greater congregational participation, and more flexibility in the use of spiritual songs and hymns.” In their omission of a number of these rubrics they also drop key elements of the Biblical-Reformation theology of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. They omit the rubric that directs that the Minister deliver the Communion to the people into their hands, an ancient practice that was restored in the 1552 Book of Common Prayer, which with Communion in both kinds, another ancient practice restored in the 1549 Prayer Book, was among the important reforms of the sixteenth century. The Medieval Catholic Church’s suppression of these practices had contributed to the decidedly unscriptural evolution of the Eucharist from a Holy Communion into a sacrifice at which the elevation of the consecrated bread and wine for their adoration was the highpoint for the laity instead of the communion of the people. By the time of the English Reformation the laity was receiving Communion only in one kind, the bread, which was placed upon the tongue by the priest, and then outside the Mass once a year at Easter after private confession and absolution. With the revival of these ancient practices Archbishop Thomas Cranmer sought to restore the Eucharist as a Holy Communion and the frequent communion of the people. In the rubrics before the distribution of the Communion the 1662 Communion Service state “When he delivereth the bread, he shall say...” but the so-called “The English Order, 1662” expunges this important avowal and substitutes for it, “The following words of administration are used.”

The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) omit the rubric that permits a celebration of the Lord’s Supper, except when there is sufficient number of people to communicate with the priest. They drop the rubric that requires that “the bread be such as is usual to be eaten” so as “take away all occasion of dissension and superstition, which any person might have or be concerned in the eating of it.” They omit the rubric that prohibits any leftover consecrated bread and wine from being carried out of the church and require its consumption immediately after the blessing. They also drop the Declaration on Kneeling—the affirmation at the close of the 1662 Communion Service that in kneeling to receive Communion “no adoration is intended or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ’s natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were idolatry, to be abhorred by all faithful Christians; and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ’s natural Body to be at one time in more places than one.”

The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) add a rubric that permits the singing of the Agnes Dei during the distribution of the Communion. They also add rubrics that permit the reservation of Communion for the sick and the consumption of any leftover consecrated bread and wine either after the distribution of the Communion or at the end of the service.
Due to these omissions, additions, and alterations the theology of "The English Order, 1662" in An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) is not that of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and should be a source of great concern for Anglicans faithful to the teaching of the Bible and the doctrine of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the 1662 Prayer Book. The theology of "The English Order, 1662" and the theology of the other two orders, as we shall see, should give them cause to think twice about using An Anglican Prayer Book (2008).

The American Order, 1928: The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) were not content to tinker with the theology of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. This can be seen in a comparison of the Oblation in the Prayer of Consecration in the 1928 American Prayer Book and the Oblation in the Prayer of Consecration in so-called "The American Order, 1928."

The Oblation in Prayer of Consecration in the 1928 American Prayer Book reads as follows:

"O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, we, thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before thy Divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same."

Now this Oblation is itself a departure from the theology given expression in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. The words of Institution in the 1662 Prayer Book, "the memorial which thy son hath willed us to make, having in remembrance his blessed passion, mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension" is "so worded as to avoid any reference to any offering or sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ or of the bread and wine of the people's oblation." As previously noted the words of Institution in the 1549 Prayer Book, the words of the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration are essentially the words of the Roman Canon. The 1928 American Prayer of Consecration substitutes this clause for "an immaculate sacrifice, a holy sacrifice, an immaculate sacrifice, or host, the holy bread of eternal life, and, the cup of perpetual salvation" of the Roman Canon.

The 1928 American Prayer of Consecration, on the other hand, contains an offering of the bread and wine with which those present will be making and celebrating in God's presence the memorial that Christ has commanded them to make. The language of the obligation in the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration parallels that of the obligation in the Roman Canon. With the exception of one clause, "the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make," the words of the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration are essentially the words of the Roman Canon. Since the 1928 American Order for the Holy Communion, like the Medieval Sarum Mass, has an offering of the bread and wine before they are laid on the Table after the Offertory, this second offering represents something more than the offering of the bread and wine for holy use, for this offering has already taken place. If the epiclesis is regarded as the moment of consecration, it is one step short of the offering of the consecrated elements, a usage connected to the Medieval doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.


"And so, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly loved Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, we, your humble servants, do celebrate and make before your Divine Majesty, which we now offer to you, the memorial your Son has commanded us to make; and, as we do so, remember his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and we offer to you most sincere thanks for the benefits without number, procured for us by the same."

In offering the memorial itself to God instead of the bread and wine with which those present will celebrate and make the memorial, the priest in "The American Order, 1928" is also offering the consecrated bread and wine to God. The memorial consist of taking bread and wine, giving thanks, breaking the bread and giving the bread and wine to God. The bread and wine of the memorial is the bread and wine that has been set apart for holy use. This offering of the consecrated bread and wine in the memorial is open to a variety of interpretations, including the interpretation that what is being offered is a propitiatory sacrifice as in the Medieval doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Even the second offering of the bread and wine in the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration is open to this interpretation. In the tradition of the Western Church Christ the word of God is regarded as consecrating through the repetition of his words in the Institutional Narrative. The obligation of the bread and wine in the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration follows the Words of Institution. In the course of the Words of Institution the priest breaks the bread. From this perspective the bread and wine that the priest is offering is consecrated, set apart for holy use.

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer appears to have recognized that the offering of the bread and wine after the recitation of the words of the Institutional Narrative admits an interpretation as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world that Christ was made upon the cross; by his one oblation once offered. They omit the anamnesis altogether and reword and move the petition for the acceptance of "this our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" and the offering of "our self, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee" to a position after the Communion, where they are combined with the petition that God accept the "bounden duty and service" of those present and made an alternative to a slightly revised version of the 1549 Prayer of Thanksgiving. This Prayer of Thanksgiving also serves as a second Prayer of Oblation.

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Archbishop Thomas Cranmer appears to have recognized that the offering of the bread and wine after the recitation of the words of the Institutional Narrative admits an interpretation as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead as he omitted that offering from the 1549 Canon. Archbishop Cranmer not only omitted the offering of the bread and wine after the Words of Institution in the 1549 Canon, but he also omitted another usage from the Medieval Sarum Mass-the offering of the bread and wine after the Offertory, in which the priest offers the bread and wine to God in readiness for its use in the sacrifice of the Mass before laying the unconsecrated elements upon the Table. The offering of the bread and wine after the Offertory and after the Words of Institution in the Canon have strong associations with the Medieval doctrines of Transubstantiation and of the sacrifice of the Mass. Cranmer and the English Reformers rejected the doctrine of Transubstantiation as contrary to the teaching of Christ, to reason, to the evidence of the senses, and to "the faith and doctrine of the old authors of Christ's church." [5] They were also uncompromising in its repudiation of the sacrifice of the Mass, a doctrine "indissolubly connected with the theory of transubstantiation", out of the conviction that "It is dishonoring to Christ and incompatible with the New Testament doctrine of salvation". [6] Classical Anglicanism also puts aside these doctrines as not to be accepted, practiced, or believed. Article 28 declares that Transubstantiation "cannot be proved by Holy Scripture, and is not consonant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrows the nature of a sacrament, and has given rise to many superstitions." Article 31 further declares, "the sacrifices of masses, in which it is commonly said that the priest offers Christ for the living and the dead, to obtain the remission of their punishment or guilt, are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." [7] In compiling the First Prayer Book...
of 1549 Cranmer sought to remove all suggestions of an oblation or sacrifice from the Communion Service. The letter to the Roman emperor has no Eucharistic reference. The preparation of the bread and wine takes place without any ceremony. (8) The 1928 American Order for the Holy Communion restores both usages from the Medieval Sarum Mass. This represents a significant departure from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the 1549, 1552, 1559, and 1604 Prayer Books that preceded it.

A modified doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice has gained some currency among Anglicans and Episcopalians. This doctrine, while it rejects the Roman view which associates a sacrifice or oblation in the Eucharist with Christ's death, seeks to connect such a sacrifice or oblation to the heavenly priesthood of our Lord. This notion of Eucharistic sacrifice is defined in a number of ways:

"Some have spoken of the suffering of Christ as a temporal revelation and reflection of something that ever continues in the presence of God. Some have spoken of the risen life that Christ now lives, and the intercession that he now makes, as having the character of sacrificial self-offering. Some...have spoken of Christ always standing before God's throne, presenting, offering, or pleading his earthly sacrifice. Then the church's sacrifice is explained in terms of pleading Christ's death for the remission of our own and others' sins as we offer all that we are and have to God. This pleading is said to be a 're-presenting' (not a symbolizing, but a fresh offering or a 'making present again') of Christ's sacrifice to the Father in union with Christ himself as he re-presents it; and the church's corporate self-offering in Christ, within which our re-presenting of Calvary finds its place, is seen as the main purpose of, and the central action in the eucharistic liturgy." [9]

In this view of Eucharistic sacrifice "the sacrifice of Christ is more than his once-for-all death on Calvary, and in some sense continues into the present; and the church's union with Christ is such that Christians are incorporated, not merely into his death and resurrection, but into his present sacrifice as well." [10] What happens in the Eucharist is not a repetition of Christ's sacrifice, nor an addition to it, but it is more than a commemoration of that sacrifice. It is a participation in it. [11]

As W. H. Griffith Thomas points to our attention in The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles, those who teach this view of the Eucharistic sacrifice wrongly associate the Holy Communion with Christ in heaven, for everything in the Bible and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer associates the Lord's Supper with the death of Christ and not with his life in heaven. [12]

He lists five considerations that we should weigh in the study of this view. First, no trace of any such idea can be found in Ante-Nicene history. Second, nothing in the New Testament provides a Scriptural basis for the belief that Christ is presenting before God the sacrifice once offered on the Cross. Neither the New Testament nor the 1662 Prayer Book teach such a doctrine. Third, no sacrifice is associated with our Lord in heaven either in the New Testament or the 1662 Prayer Book. Fourth, in a sacrament the movement is from God to man. In a sacrifice it is from man to God. This is a major difference between a sacrament and a sacrifice. Fifth, the idea of our Lord offering or pleading in heaven is not found anywhere in Scripture. [13]

As Griffith Thomas further points to our attention in his discussion of the Lord's Supper in The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles, when Christ says, "do this in remembrance of me," touto poieō, "do this," does not mean "offer this." He writes:

"The force of the present tense in the Greek is 'Do this again and again,' i.e., 'perform this action.'" [14]

Anamnēsis, "remembrance," he stresses, in the Greek "means an act of the mind recalling and never an objective memorial." He goes on to write:

"The two Greek words for 'remembrance' and 'memorial' are never identical, but always carefully distinguished." [15]

He further points to our attention that the indirect object of the verb kataggellō, "proclaim," in 1 Corinthians 11:26 is "always man, never God. It cannot possibly mean 'exhibit before God.'" [16]

In his discussion of the idea of Eucharistic sacrifice in The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles he reiterates that touto poieō, "do this," in the Institutional Narratives cannot be rendered as "offer this," anamnēsis, "remembrance" as a "memorial before God," and kataggellō, "proclaim" with God, and not man, as the object. [17]

He goes on to point to our attention that the 1662 Book of Common Prayer follows the New Testament and has three sacrifices only-the sacrifices of ourselves (Romans 12:1); our gifts (Hebrews 13:16); and our praises (Hebrews 13:15). The 1662 Prayer Book does not even have an oblation of the unconsecrated elements. [18]

He concludes:

"In the Lord's Supper Christ is neither offered to God, nor for man, but He is offered to man in all the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, to be received by faith. It would be well if we could avoid ambiguous terms. Even such a phrase as 'commemorative sacrifice' is ambiguous, for strictly, it is not this, but the commemoration of a sacrifice. If, however, the words 'Eucharistic Sacrifice' means some sacrifice which is offered only in and at the Lord's Supper, it is clear that no such idea is found either in the Bible or in the Prayer Book." [19]

"Of a piece with" this view of Eucharistic sacrifice, to use the words of J.I. Packer, is what Packer describes as the "fancy" that the "remembrance," or anamnēsis, of Christ in the Eucharist is directed to God, "as if Jesus' words 'do this in remembrance of me' had meant 'do this to remind my Father of me'." [20]

Packer draws to our attention that, while directly the Thirty Nine Articles say nothing about this view of the Eucharistic sacrifice, indirectly they say a lot. He goes on to identify a number of principles laid down in Articles 25-26 and 28-31, which this doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice appears to contravene. [21]

The first of these principles is that the gospel sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are "signs of the gospel, with their meaning fixed by the gospel." "The 'sacraments of the gospel,'" Packer reminds us, "are 'effectual signs of grace' by which God works to 'quicken...strengthen and confirm our faith in him' (Article 25)." "But to know what the gospel and grace and faith are," he stresses, "we have to look back to Articles 9-18, which the sacramental Articles presuppose." [22]

The second of these principles is that the gospel sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are "acts of God terminating on men." "Signs...by which the (God) doth work in...in us (Article 25)." Packer makes the same point as W. H. Griffith Thomas, that in a sacrament the movement is from God to us. God is the chief agent and his work is the chief action. [23]

The third of these principles is that the gospel sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion "proclaim God's work for and in man." Packer writes:

"Baptism is 'a sign of regeneration, or new birth' (Article 27) through union with Christ in his death and resurrection; the Lord's Supper 'is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death', in which those united to...
Christ by faith partake of his body and blood (Article 28). Thus both sacraments exhibit Christ's atoning achievements and benefits which flow from it to us here and now.” [24]

The fourth of these principles is that the gospel sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion "are means by which God works faith." The Thirty Nine Articles tell us the gospel sacraments are means of grace and "convey the blessings that signify...to those who receive them 'worthily'—'rightly, worthily, and with faith' (Article 25, 28)." Packer goes on to note:

"Right reception is believing reception. 'The mean(s) whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten is faith' (Article 28)." [25]

He further notes:

"And the sacraments, in their character as visible words and acted promises, are God's instrument to 'not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him' (Article 25). They function as means of grace precisely because God makes them means to faith. The essential sacramental action is his coming to us sinners to call forth our faith through the sign and through that faith to impart to us the benefits of Jesus' death." [26]

"Believing and receiving," Packer tells us, "are the essence of sacramental worship." "Those who have received sacraments should indeed give themselves to God, but such self-giving is a response to the grace made known in the sacrament and not strictly part of the sacrament itself. That is the view clearly expressed in the 1662 Communion office." [27]

The modified doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice that has been circulating among Anglicans and Episcopalians conflicts with all four of these principles. It is not determined by the gospel as the gospel is presented in the New Testament. This view of Eucharistic sacrifice, Packer draws to our attention, "insists that Christ's sacrifice continues in heaven, whereas Scripture equates his sacrifice with his death and proclaims his work of offering as finished. Also this doctrine labours to assimilate our self-offering to his, whereas Scripture does the opposite, stressing the uniqueness of Christ's vicarious sacrificial death and keeping it distinct from the sacrifice of praise and service that is our response to it. These emphases were not learned from the biblical gospel." [28]

This view of Eucharistic sacrifice "turns the Lord's Supper into an act of man terminating on God." Packer further draws to our attention:

"The essential action ceases to be God's sacramental offering of Christ to men, and becomes our sacrificial offering of ourselves with Christ to God. But this is to embrace an unbiblical fantasy about the re-presenting of Calvary and to treat our response to the sacrament as if it were the sacrament itself." [29]

This view of Eucharistic sacrifice "makes the Lord's Supper a symbolizing not of Christ's sacrifice so much as of ours." Packer notes:

"The service turns into a showing forth primarily of the church's devotion, and of the Lord's death only incidentally. But this impoverishes sacramental worship, not enriches it." [30]

This view of Eucharistic sacrifice "minimizes the function of the Lord's Supper as a means of grace." "On this view, the church comes to the eucharist to give rather than to get," Packer further notes, "not primarily to receive, but to offer itself in thanksgiving for what it has received already. This cuts across the view of the Articles, that the Lord's Supper is first and foremost a means for God to strengthen faith and to communicate to believing hearts the fruits of Calvary." [31]

Packer concludes that, now five centuries ago, the Thirty-Nine Articles anticipated this doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice and "ruled it out as misshapen." He writes:

"To any currently attracted by it they suggest a question: is it not a poor thing compared with that which it seeks to supplant? Ultimately, of course, that question must be answered by Scripture, but surely it is the right question for us to face in this matter, and surely the Articles do us a service by pointing it up for us." [32]

The preceding discussion of the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice both in its Medieval and more recent forms and its incompatibility with the proposed and agreed standards for faith and worship of the Anglican Mission-the Bible, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer-is relevant not only to "The American Order, 1928" but also to the so-called "The Canadian Order, 1962," as we shall see below. But before we proceed to that order, let us first complete our examination of the American order. "The American Order, 1928" places the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Humble Access before the distribution of the Communion, as in the Order for the Lord's Supper in the 1928 American Prayer Book, and permits the people to join in the prayer of the Prayer of Humble Access. The positioning of the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Humble Access before the distribution and the singing or recitation of the Benedictus before the distribution and the signing of the Agnes Dei during the distribution can and have been interpreted to teach the doctrine of Transubstantiation. In Episcopal churches where this doctrine has been maintained and taught, the permission to sing a hymn before the distribution in the 1928 American Order for the Lord's Supper has been used to sing the Agnus Dei before the distribution in imitation of the Medieval Sarum Mass.

The rubrics for the distribution of the Communion in "The American Order, 1928" are identical to those for the distribution of the Communion in the so-called "The English Order, 1662." The significance of these changes is discussed in the section titled "The English Order, 1662" above. The discussion of the general rubrics at the end of the Communion Service in that section is also applicable, including the discussion concerning the Declaration on Kneeling which was omitted from the 1928 American Prayer Book and its predecessors.

The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) omit the 1928 American Communion Service's provision for the consecration of additional bread and wine from "The American Order, 1928."

The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) omit the disciplinary rubrics that are printed before the 1662 Communion Service and after the 1928 American and 1962 Canadian Communion Services. These rubrics permit the priest to bar from the Holy Communion anyone that he knows is living in grievous sin or those between whom he perceives malice and hatred to exist. One of the criticisms of Anglicanism in North America in recent years has been the lack of church discipline. The omission of these rubrics is surprising.

Packer concludes that, now five centuries ago, the Thirty-Nine Articles anticipated this doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice and "ruled it out as misshapen." He writes:

"To any currently attracted by it they suggest a question: is it not a poor thing compared with that which it seeks to supplant? Ultimately, of course, that question must be answered by Scripture, but surely it is the right question for us to face in this matter, and surely the Articles do us a service by pointing it up for us." [32]
the Holy Communion were filled with God's grace and heavenly benediction. A comparison of this petition
with similar petitions in the Sarum Canon, the 1549 Canon, and the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration
may suggest an explanation for this particular choice of wording. The petition in the Sarum Canon follows the
consecration and offering of the bread and wine: "We most humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, command
these holy Sacraments to be carried by the hand of Thy Holy Angel to Thy Altar on high, in the sight of Thy Divine
Majesty, that as many as shall partake at this Altar of the most Sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son may be
with all heavenly grace and blessing." The petition in the 1549 Canon follows the consecration of the bread
and wine and the offering of "ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto
Thee." It asks God to grant that "...whosoever shall be partakers of this holy Communion, may worthily
receive the most precious body and blood of thy son Jesus Christ: and be fulfilled with thy grace and
benediction, and made one body with thy son Jesus Christ, that he may dwell in them, and they in him." The
petition in the 1928 American Prayer of Consecration adopts the language of the 1549 Canon, and follows an
offering of the bread and wine, an epiclesis, a petition for God's acceptance of the congregation's sacrifice of
praise and thanksgiving, and an offering of "ourselves, our souls and bodies" as "a reasonable, holy and lively
sacrifice" to God. Both the 1549 Canon and the 1928 American Prayer Book appear to take the view that
God's grace and heavenly benediction are imparted by the bread and wine of the sacrament and those who
worthily receive the sacrament will be filled with God's grace and heavenly benediction.

On the other hand, the petition in the 1962 Canadian Prayer of Consecration follows the consecration of the
bread and wine and the petition, "And we entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our
sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, most humbly beseeching thee to grant, that by the merits and death of
thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our
sins, and all other benefits of his passion...." The 1962 Canadian Prayer of Consecration contains no spoken
offering of the bread and wine and no spoken offering of "ourselves, our souls and bodies" In praying that by
the power of the Holy Spirit those who are partakers of the Holy Communion will be filled with God's grace
and heavenly benediction, the 1962 Canadian Prayer of Consecration appears to take the view that the Holy
Spirit imparts God's grace and heavenly benediction to the communicants apart from the bread and wine but
this imparting accompanies the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup. This same petition is also
used in the 1958 West Indian Prayer of Consecration, suggesting that it can be given a different interpretation
since that prayer is decidedly Anglo-Catholic in its view of the Eucharist.

The alteration of the clause, "by the power of the Holy Spirit," to "by the presence and power of the Holy
Spirit," depending upon how one interprets the clause, appears to rule out the automatic operation of the
sacrament. It does not appear to suggest that everyone who receives Communion will receive some benefit
from it only believers. According to the teaching of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is present in people and not in
inanimate objects, and then the Holy Spirit is only present in those who believe in Jesus Christ. Nowhere in
the Bible do we find anything that approximates the belief of the ancient Egyptians that their gods and
goddesses inhabited their idols or the belief of African animists that spirits inhabit their fetishes and the
associated belief that gods, goddesses, and spirits can inhabit animals or foodstuffs. In such a view the bread
and wine of the Communion could confer a blessing upon even those who have no faith. This change appears
to move the doctrine of "The Canadian Order, 1962," at least in this particular instant, closer to that of the
Thirty-Nine Articles and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

In regards to the idea of a sacrifice or oblation in the Eucharist the 1962 Canadian Prayer of Consecration and
the Prayer of Consecration in "The Canadian Order, 1962" both express the desire that God "accept this our
sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." They also juxtapose the words, "we thy humble servants, with all thy
holy Church... do make before thee, in this sacrament of the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of
eternally salvation, do the memorial which he hath commanded..." or the contemporary English equivalent
immediately before this petition so that "this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" refers to the memorial
that Christ has commanded.

The words "the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation" used in the phrase "in this
sacrament of the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation" in the 1962 Canadian Prayer of
Consecration and the Prayer of Consecration of "The Canadian Order, 1962" are adapted from words used
in the offering of the consecrated bread and wine in the Medieval Sarum Canon: "O Lord, we Thy servants, as
also Thy holy people, being mindful of the Blessed Passion of this Christ Thy Son, our Lord and God; and of
His Resurrection from the dead, and of His glorious Ascension into heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent
Majesty of Thy gifts bestowed upon us a pure Host, an Holy Host, a Host immaculate, the Holy Bread of
Eternal life, and the Chalice of Everlasting salvation."

The same words are used in the anamnesis-oblation of the 1954 South African Prayer of Consecration:
"Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son, our Saviour
Jesus Christ, we thy humble servants, having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his
mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, do render unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable
benefits procured unto us by the same; and, looking for his coming again with power and great glory, we
offer here unto thy divine majesty this holy Bread of eternal life and this Cup of everlasting salvation..." While
the anamnesis-oblation precede the epiclesis, it is itself preceded by the petition "Hear us, O merciful Father,
we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according
to thy Son Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood" and the Words of Institution. From the standpoint of the
Western Church and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer the bread and wine offered in the anamnesis-
oblation of the 1954 South African Prayer of Consecration are consecrated.

The words "Holy Bread of eternal life and "Cup of everlasting salvation" are also used in the anamnesis-
oblation of the 1959 West Indian Prayer of Consecration in which there can be no doubt as to whether the
bread and wine that are offered are consecrated as the anamnesis-oblation follows the epiclesis and the
institutional Narrative: "Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, we thy humble servants, having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, do render unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable
benefits procured unto us by the same; and, looking for his coming again with power and great glory, we
offer here unto thy divine majesty this holy Bread of eternal life and this Cup of everlasting salvation..." While
the anamnesis-oblation precede the epiclesis, it is itself preceded by the petition "Hear us, O merciful Father,
we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according
to thy Son Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood" and the Words of Institution. From the standpoint of the
Western Church and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer the bread and wine offered in the anamnesis-
oblation of the 1954 South African Prayer of Consecration are consecrated.

"The sacrament of the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation" of the anamnesis in the
1962 Canadian prayer of Consecration and the Prayer of Consecration of "The Canadian Order, 1962" also
refers to the consecrated bread and wine since both prayers adopt the consecratory form of the 1662 Book
of Common Prayer and the anamnesis follows the consecration. The memorial that the two prayers desire
God to accept as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is the offering of the consecrated bread and wine.
While these prayers do not have a straightforward spoken offering of the consecrated bread and wine, they
do have an offering of the consecrated elements. When they speak of "this sacrament of the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation," they are really speaking of this offering of Christ's Body and Blood. The phrase "this sacrament of the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation" is simply a euphemistic way of saying the Body and Blood of Christ.

"The Canadian Order, 1962" places the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Humble Access before the distribution of the Communion, as in the Order for the Lord's Supper in the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book, and permits the people to join the priest in the Prayer of Humble Access. The positioning of the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Humble Access before the distribution and the singing or recitation of the Benedictus before the distribution and the singing of the Agnes Dei during the distribution, as I have previously noted, can and have been interpreted to teach the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The permission in the 1962 Canadian Communion Office to sing hymns and anthems, including the Agnes Dei, in the Communion time has been used to replicate the devotions before the distribution in the Medieval Sarum Mass.

As in the case of the "The American Order, 1928", the rubrics for the distribution of the Communion in the so-called "The Canadian Order, 1962" are identical to those for the distribution of the Communion in the "The English Order, 1662." The significance of these changes is discussed in the section titled "The English Order, 1662" above. The discussion of the general rubrics at the end of the Communion Service in that section is also applicable, including the discussion concerning the Declaration on Kneeling which was omitted from the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book.

None of the three orders, the English, the American, or the Canadian, makes provision for any posture in which the communicants might receive Communion other than kneeling. Anglicans have kneel to receive Communion from the Second Prayer Book of Common Prayer of 1552 on. (The First Prayer Book of 1549 is silent on the matter.) Kneeling to receive the Bread and the Cup embodies the sacramental theology given expression in the 1552, 1559, and 1662 Prayer Books in which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is conceived in terms of God's action toward us. God is the giver and we are the receivers. Consequently, kneeling can be regarded as the preferred posture for receiving Communion.

At the same time the New Testament does not prescribe a posture in which the communicants should receive Communion. In the Old Testament those who observe the first Passover are instructed to stand with their staff in their hand. The disciples are described as rering at the Last Supper. Kneeling, standing, and sitting to receive Communion are all agreeable to Scripture.

Standing to receive Communion is a much older custom than kneeling. It was the practice of the early Church. The custom of kneeling to receive Communion originated in the Middle Ages.

Under some circumstances communicants may not be able to kneel to receive Communion. For a number of years my grandmother was prevented from receiving Communion because she had arthritis and was not able to kneel. Only after the 1979 Book of Common Prayer was adopted with its provision permitting standing as well as kneeling to receive Communion was she able to share the Lord's Supper again. An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) would greatly benefit from a provision that, when circumstances require it, permits communicants to stand to receive the Communion at the Lord's Table or to remain in their seats and receive Communion where they are seated.


Both the Prayer of Consecration in the "The Canadian Order, 1962" and the Post-Communion Collect in that order have a petition asking God to fill the partakers of the Holy Communion with his grace and heavenly benediction. The Order for the Lord's Supper in the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book has only one such petition in the Prayer of Consecration. Apparently the compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) did not consider one petition to be adequate enough and added a second petition. Perhaps they believe that Canadian Anglicans need twice as much of God's grace and heavenly benediction than do other Anglicans and Episcopalians in North America. Or they cut and pasted a part of the text from the first Post-Communion Collect in "The English Order, 1662" and neglected to delete the words "Fill us all who share in this Holy Communion with your grace and heavenly benediction" from it. This suggests carelessness, a lack of familiarity with the 1962 Canadian Liturgy, or hastiness in publishing An Anglican Prayer Book (2008).

The Dismissal: In the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the 1928 American Prayer Book, and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book the Blessing, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, " serves as the dismissal of the people. The rubrics in all three Prayer Books state that after the Gloria in Excelsis "the Priest (or the Bishop if he be present) shall let them depart with this Blessing." The text of the foregoing Blessing follows the rubric: A hymn or organ voluntary may follow during which the ministers go out. But this hymn or voluntary is not really a part of the service. In the time of Elizabeth I permission was given to sing a metrical psalm before and after the sermon and before and after the service, and it subsequently became customary to sing a hymn after the service. The rubrics of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) direct the minister to conclude the service with a contemporary English version of the foregoing Blessing in each of the orders, English, American, and Canadian.

Appended to the three orders, however, is a section labeled "For the ending of all three Orders." This section contains a rubric authorizing the singing of a recessional hymn and the use of a concluding prayer by the Minister. Printed below this rubric are two contemporary English versions of Collects that in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer are used to conclude the service when there is no Communion. This rubric formalizes what is regarded in the literature as a bad liturgical practice, that of saying a string of devotions and prayers after the conclusion of the service. The people have been dismissed with a Blessing. The Mass is ended!

As soon as the ministers have gone out, it is time for the people to depart after they have, of course, finished the hymn if a hymn is sung. If a voluntary is played, they may leave during the voluntary. Having offered God their praise and service, the time has come for them to go back into the world; to "show forth" God's praise, not only with their lips, but in their lives; and to serve God in the world. After the Blessing is the ideal place for a rousing mission hymn or stirring voluntary to help send the people forth into the world.

If a concluding prayer is desired, a better place for it is before the parting Blessing. The 1926 Irish Prayer Book makes provision for the use of a Prayer for Mission or other suitable collect before the Blessing or after the Collect of the Day. The compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) would have done better to incorporate this provision into An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) than to give legal form to an undesirable practice. It might be customary in some churches but it is a custom that has been allowed to grow up when it ought to have been discouraged.

Conclusion:

When measured by the proposed and agreed standards for faith and worship of the Anglican Mission the Ministry of the Sacrament of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) comes up short. As the foregoing discussion of
Eucharistic sacrifice shows, An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) gives expression to theology that is not Scriptural and which conflicts with principles found in the Thirty-Nine Articles. Some of the textual material and its arrangement in the three orders in the Ministry of the Sacrament is open to the interpretation that it teaches the doctrine of Transubstantiation, a doctrine that classical Anglicanism rejects. While An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) may be based to some extent upon the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the theology of the two other Prayer Books upon which it is based, and the theology of the compilers of An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) obscure and overshadow whatever Biblical-Reformation theology of the 1662 Prayer Book is incorporated into the book.

Peter Toon described An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) in an email to this writer as the work of “special group of men” at “a special time in history” intended to “create a bridge” for those who have been using the 1979 Book of Common Prayer to what he described as “genuine Anglican doctrine and experience,” and therefore in his opinion should not be subjected to what he characterized as “private judgment.” But the Anglican doctrine and experience to which An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) seeks to create a bridge is not that of classical Anglicanism of the English Reformation, the Elizabethan Settlement, and the reign of James I; it is the doctrine and experience of a later theological stream in Anglicanism, a theological stream that diverges in a number of significant ways from classical Anglicanism. In a sense An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) seeks to move those who are using the 1979 Prayer Book from what may be viewed as one divergent tradition to another. It fails to acknowledge that the theological stream that it would have users of the 1979 Prayer Book embrace helped to pave the way, for example, in its emphasis upon the authority of the Church rather than the authority of Scripture, for the emergence of the divergent tradition of which the 1979 Prayer Book is a part.

The Book of Common Prayer with the Bible occupies such a central place in the faith and worship of Anglican Christians that any revision of the Prayer Book, as in the case of any new translation of the Bible, must always be the subject of close public scrutiny.

The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 was a compromise between High Churchmen and those who held to a more Reformed theology. Those of more pronounced views on either side were, it must be admitted, not happy with it. However, the 1662 Prayer Book has served the Church of England well for more than 300 years. The 1662 Book is the most widely used service book in the Anglican Communion to this day. With the Holy Scriptures, the Creeds, and the Thirty-Nine Articles it is one of the standards for faith and worship of the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Australia, and a number of other Anglican provinces. It has nourished the faith of generations of biblically faithful Anglicans, well as ordered their worship.

An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) sets aside that compromise. While An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) is, in some ways, itself a compromise of sorts, too much, from a doctrinal standpoint, is given away for the little that is received in return. It is a compromise, if it can be really called that, which is made largely at the expense of the Biblical-Reformation theology of the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. This suggests that the latter were not adequately or effectively represented in the process of compiling the book. In setting aside that compromise, An Anglican Prayer Book (2008) puts itself at odds with the very standards for faith and worship that the Anglican Mission has proposed for its member churches and to which it has agreed.

Biblically faithful Christians desiring services in contemporary English, which adhere to the Biblical-Reformation theology of classical Anglicanism, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the 1662 Prayer Book are well advised to look elsewhere.

Endnotes:
[6] Ibid, p. 194
[10] Ibid, p. 81
[14] Ibid, p. 392
[16] Ibid, p. 392
[17] Ibid, p. 424
[18] Ibid, p. 425
[19] Ibid, p. 426
[21] Ibid, p. 82
[22] Ibid, p. 83
[23] Ibid, p. 83
[24] Ibid, p. 83
[26] Ibid, pp. 84
[27] Ibid, p. 84
[28] Ibid, p. 84
[29] Ibid, pp. 84-85
[31] Ibid, p. 85
[32] Ibid, p. 85
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