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From Bread and Wine to Body and Blood . . . and Back Again: The Significance of Changes Made to the Eucharist under Henry VIII and Edward VI

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In England, as in the rest of Europe, the liturgy stood at the center of late medieval religion, and celebration of the Eucharist during the Mass was the high point of the liturgy.¹ Eamon Duffy states that in this ritual “the redemption of the world, wrought on Good Friday once for all, was renewed and made fruitful for all who believed. Christ himself . . . became present on the altar of the parish church, body, soul, and divinity, and his blood flowed once again, to nourish and renew Church and world.”² Medieval church doctrine held that Christ’s body and blood became physically present in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine, and as such they represented a conduit of God’s grace to those who partook of them.³ The movement for religious reform that began in the early sixteenth century challenged many aspects of established church doctrine and worship, including the theological basis of the Eucharist.

This article focuses on the changes made to the ritual celebration of the Eucharist during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, viewing it as a lens through which to understand the shifting theology of the English church and the methodology evangelicals used to effect religious reform. This study seeks to understand the connection English reformers made between changing the wording and actions of worship and instilling evangelical (proto-Protestant) beliefs among the laity. This article argues that English evangelicals began by remodeling actions, specifically the Eucharist and public worship in general, because they believed that encouraging

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1. Several different terms have been used for this liturgical event, including Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper, Sacrament of the Altar, and Mass. I have endeavored to use the term Eucharist throughout this essay for the sake of continuity. Terminology in quotations is unchanged from the original.
 2. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 91.
 3. Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 35.

participation in a reformed liturgy would bring about a change in parishioners' beliefs more effectively than issuing comprehensive doctrinal statements requiring mandatory subscription. Before addressing the period under investigation in this article, let us briefly review the origins and development of the Eucharist in Christian tradition.

I. The Eucharist in Christian Tradition

Biblical Precedent and Origins in the Early Church

The celebration of the Eucharist is one of the oldest practices in the Christian faith. The Biblical record and Christian tradition agree that it was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper, when, having gathered together for a traditional Passover meal, "Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"⁴ Jesus' words are framed in terms of the covenant system God instituted in the Hebrew Scriptures, wherein he promised to protect and sustain his chosen people. The synoptic Gospels' account of the Last Supper speak of Jesus bringing a new covenant to his disciples and all those who would believe in him as savior. The early church took the injunction in Luke 22:19 to "do this in remembrance of me," as a sign of the ritual's centrality within the faith community. The apostle Paul echoed these words when he described the Last Supper in his first letter to the Corinthian church.⁵ The Eucharistic celebration in the early church consisted of a communal meal shared by the members of a Christian community, where there would also be a reenactment the Last Supper. Over time, the celebration of the Eucharist was separated from the shared meal, and loosely structured first-century practices grew into the official liturgy of the church. From the early centuries of Christianity, many took the words in John 6:51–58 to mean Christ's body and blood were literally present in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine.

4. Matthew 26:26–28, New International Version (all biblical quotations are from this version unless noted). Similar accounts are given in Mark 14:22–24 and Luke 22:19–20. There is a side-by-side comparison of the institution narratives in Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainright, and Edward Yarnold, *The Study of Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 158–159.

5. 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. Dated CE 53–54, this is the earliest account of the celebration of the Eucharist; see Jones, et al., *The Study of Liturgy*, 151.

The Development of Medieval Eucharistic Theology

The ritual celebration of the Eucharist took shape following a period of intense theological debate and doctrinal revision during the first several centuries of the Christian church. The medieval ritual, as outlined in the Roman liturgy, involved elaborate processions and prayers, which led to the ultimate focal point of the priest's consecration, offering, and consumption of the Eucharistic elements on behalf of the congregation. By the late medieval period, the ritual had been largely separated from the laity as a priestly rite filled with mystery and theatrical presentation.⁶ Lay participation in the ritual was limited to adoration of the Eucharistic elements from afar, private prayer intended to synchronize with the priest's actions, and (for the literate) reading from vernacular devotional manuals intended to guide them through the service.⁷ In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council had affirmed the long-held belief that, during the mass, the bread and wine were miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ through the miracle of transubstantiation.⁸ In his *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas integrated Aristotelian philosophy with Christian theology to explain the Eucharistic miracle. Aquinas held that while the outward appearance (accidents) of the bread and wine did not change during the ritual, the internal being (substance) of the elements became the body and blood of Christ. Therefore, the sacraments "really contained and communicated grace," and were thus "indispensible for salvation."⁹ The ritual asserted God's enduring presence in the midst of his earthly church and the notion that one received grace through partaking of, or observing, the Eucharist guided much of the ritual actions in the medieval liturgy.¹⁰

6. Laypeople were required to partake of the Eucharist once a year, at Easter, and even then they only partook of the consecrated bread. Andrew Brown, *Church and Society in England, 1000–1500. Social History in Perspective*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 47.

7. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 95, 117–126.

8. The first canon stated that Christ's "body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (*transsubstantiation*) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood." "The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215," Canon 1, in H. J. Schroeder, ed., *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1937), 236–96.

9. Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 35.

10. The mere act of watching the ritual was believed to have sacramental significance. Thomas Lentjes, "As far as the eye can see . . .": Rituals of Gazing in the Late Middle Ages," in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theology in the Middle Ages*, Anne-Marie Bouché and Jeffrey Hamburger, eds. (Dept of Art History, Princeton University, 2005), 360–373.

The Late Medieval Sarum Liturgy in England

The form of worship in England varied by region, but over time the liturgical uses of major cathedral churches took precedence over local practices. Procter and Frere note that, while the medieval English service books were all of distinct Roman influence by the thirteenth century, they “differed in detail to a considerable extent; and, indeed, there was no idea of strict liturgical uniformity, either in England or abroad, in mediæval times.” Liturgical uniformity was a later phenomenon; however, the cathedral use of Salisbury (Sarum) was the most well-known and widespread liturgy in late-medieval England.¹¹ By the early sixteenth century Sarum had been adopted in many cathedral and college churches; “it was constantly called ‘the Use of the English Church’, and finally, in 1542 . . . the Convocation of Canterbury adopted the Sarum Use . . . throughout the Southern Province.”¹²

The Sarum high Mass followed the older Roman form, in that it was structured around practices handed down through church tradition. The Sarum liturgy was conducted entirely in Latin until the latter part of Henry VIII’s reign and was largely sung rather than spoken.¹³ It began with the priest and his assistants leading a procession around the church grounds and through the church interior, during which the side altars and the congregation were sprinkled with holy water. The mass involved the singing of prayers and readings from the Gospels and Epistles as set forth in the Missal. All of this was anticipatory of the main event in the consecration, elevation, and reception of the elements by the priest.

During the Offertory and the Canon of the Mass the celebrant prepared, consecrated, elevated, and partook of the Eucharistic elements. All of the action from this point forward would have taken place at the high altar behind the rood. During the Offertory the priest faced away from the congregation toward the altar, and was directed to speak the sacred Latin prayers in a soft, almost inaudible voice, lest the mystery of the ceremony be lost through familiarity with its phrasing. Baxter describes the Offertory as “the offering of the oblations of bread and wine at the altar.”¹⁴ It marked the

11. Francis Procter and Walter Howard Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1949), 12–14.

12. Procter and Frere, 14–22; see also, F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1970), xvii.

13. For a full description of the Sarum Mass, see Philip Baxter, *Sarum Use: The Ancient Customs of Salisbury* (Reading, U.K.: Spire Books, 2008), 74–82. Baxter’s description relates to the liturgy as practiced at Salisbury Cathedral, but it was widely adapted for use elsewhere.

14. Baxter, 80.

beginning of the liturgical actions meant to reenact the sacrifice of Christ at the high altar through the miraculously transformed elements.

The priest began the Canon of the Mass by standing over the elements, asking God to “accept and bless . . . these gi+fts, these pre+sents, this ho+ly immaculate Sacrifice.” Then he was instructed to “*regard the Host with great reverence*” and deliver the central prayer of consecration: “We beseech Thee, O Almighty God, that thou wouldst . . . bl+ess, ap+prove, rat+ify, and make reasonable and acceptable, that [the Eucharistic elements] may become to us the Bo+dy . . . and the Blo+od . . . of Thy most dearly Beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁵ The elements were now the body and blood of Jesus Christ, miraculously transformed from their former substance of bread and wine. Just before the priest elevated the host, an assistant rang the sanctus bell, which was attached to the church exterior, usually at the apex of the eastern gable of the nave and rung with a line running from the ground to the rooftop. The bell signaled the imminent elevation of the host to those observing. After the prayer of consecration, the celebrant recited Jesus’ words as recorded in the gospels. During this recital he was instructed to “*elevate [the Host] above his forehead that It may be seen by the people.*” In turn, he uncovered the chalice containing the wine and “*elevate[d] the chalice to his chest, or above his head, saying: ‘As oft as ye shall do this, ye shall do it in remembrance of Me.’*”¹⁶

After elevating the chalice, the celebrant said the *anamnesis*, which was meant as the congregation’s response to Christ’s words from the institution narrative, “Do this in remembrance of me,” that he had spoken while elevating the host. In reciting the *anamnesis*, the priest performed the ritual sacrifice of Christ under the Eucharistic elements with the words “we . . . offer . . . a pu+re, a ho+ly, a spot+less Sacrifice . . . the holy Br+ead of eternal life . . . and the Cup ☩ of everlasting salvation.”¹⁷ The Eucharistic theology of Aquinas and the Fourth Lateran Council affirmed that “it was now Christ himself whom the priest, with and on behalf of the church, offered to the Father.”¹⁸ This was the high point

15. A. H. Pearson, trans., *The Sarum Missal Done into English*, 2nd ed. (1841, repr.; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 310; referred to hereafter as *Sarum Missal*. The missal contains rubrics (represented here in *italics* or with crosses), instructing the celebrant in the appropriate manual actions to go along with the words.

16. *Sarum Missal*, 311.

17. *Sarum Missal*, 311–12. The liturgical term *anamnesis* refers to the words said in response to the institution narrative. In the medieval mass, it was typically the wording meant to effect the sacrifice of the consecrated Eucharistic elements.

18. Colin Buchanan, *What Did Cranmer Think He Was Doing?* Grove Liturgical Study No. 7 (Bramcote, U.K.: Grove Books, 1976), 17. The Old Testament prophet Malachi

of the Sarum rite, acting as the purifying and reconciliatory sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharistic elements.¹⁹

The celebrant then broke the host into three pieces and placed one of the pieces in the chalice with the wine to symbolize that the elements, though separated by their unique accidents, were united through their miraculously changed substance. He then partook of them for the benefit of the congregation and spoke for its members when he recited the Communion prayer: "What we have partaken of with our mouth, O Lord, may we receive with a pure heart, and by a temporal gift may our everlasting healing be effected. . . . Let this communion, O Lord, cleanse us from sin, and make us partakers of a heavenly healing."²⁰ This prayer emphasized that the sacrament enacted a literal transferal of God's grace to the priest celebrating the rite and to the congregation observing.

The high level of spiritual preparation required in order to partake was prohibitive, and most laypeople were wary of the severe consequences of doing so unworthily to risk regular participation.²¹ The passing of the "kiss of peace," better known as the *pax*, developed as a lay substitute for reception of the Eucharistic elements. Just before partaking the priest kissed the *corporas* (a gilded plate) on which the Host rested, and the lip of the chalice containing the consecrated wine, then he kissed the paxbread. *Paxes* were made of various materials: Some were gilded in silver and gold, inlaid with precious stones, and with carved figures, while others were simple painted or carved wooden panels.²² An assistant

spoke to an unrepentant Israel, warning of impending judgment for their sins; Malachi 1:11 refers to the actions of Israel's coming messiah, who is the only one worthy to make a pure sacrifice before God.

19. The consecration of the Eucharistic elements was a source of consternation to later evangelical reformers like Thomas Cranmer, who criticized the medieval ritual for encouraging superstition: If parishioners "worshipped in spirit only Christ, sitting in heaven with his Father, what needed they to remove out of their seats to toot and gaze, as the apostles did after Christ, when he was gone up into heaven? . . . Doubtless, many of the simple people worshipped that thing which they saw with their eyes." Thomas Cranmer, *An Answer to a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner*, in John Edmund Cox, ed., *Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer Relative to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. The Works of Thomas Cranmer, vol. 1. The Parker Society (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1841), 229; referred to hereafter as *Writings and Disputations*.
20. *Sarum Missal*, 317, 319.
21. Duffy discusses why lay participation was so rare in *Stripping of the Altars*, 93–94.
22. In 1534 the churchwardens of Boxford in Suffolk paid 6d. for a pax. Presumably, 6d. would have bought a pax of wood, which was also either carved and/or painted. Peter Northeast, ed., *Boxford Churchwardens' Accounts, 1530–1561*, Suffolk Records Society, vol. 23 (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 1982), 14.

then brought the *pax* to the congregation waiting in the nave where each person kissed it in turn, according to his or her social rank. The *pax* was meant as an act of peace making, wherein the congregation put aside petty squabbles to affirm their unity in Christ. This purpose was sometimes lost on parishioners more concerned with maintaining social hierarchy. John Craig recounts that, “in 1522 a parishioner of Theydon-Gernon in Essex smashed the pax over the head of the offending clerk who had dared offer it to another man first.”²³

The service ended with a recital of the first fourteen verses of the Gospel of John and the phrase “*ite, missa est*” (depart, the Mass is ended).²⁴ The celebrant had performed the miracle of transformation of the Eucharistic elements and the divine drama of Christ’s sacrifice had been reenacted before their very eyes. Parishioners believed that the priest’s reception of the elements on their behalf had added to their own experience of God’s saving grace, as well as had benefited the deceased members of the congregation on whose behalf the Mass had also been said.

While medieval Eucharistic doctrine and practice were entrenched in the hearts and minds of most English people at the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were some who had begun to think differently about the church and its central rite. Ozment explains that continental reformers had “set out to overcome . . . a perceived oppressive superstition—teachings and practices that burdened the consciences and pocketbooks of the faithful.”²⁵ This message soon spread to England and over the course of two decades, 1533–1553, English evangelicals sought to remake their church. The most far-reaching initiative involved the revision of public worship, which replaced the Sarum liturgy with the Book of Common Prayer. We now turn to the English Church under Henry VIII, focusing on the early movements and false starts toward religious change during his reign.

Compare that with the 2 s. 3d. that the wardens of nearby Mildenhall paid to goldsmith Robert Stone for a pax in 1542. At more than four times the cost, and employing a skilled metalworker, this item must have been gilded with gold or silver. Judith Middleton-Stewart, *Records of the Churchwardens of Mildenhall: Collections (1446–1454) and Accounts (1503–1553)*, Suffolk Records Society, vol. 54 (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 91.

23. John Craig, “Reformers, Conflict, and Revisionism: The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Hadleigh,” *The Historical Journal*, 42 (1999): 3.
24. *Sarum Missal*, 321. Duffy notes that “[i]ndulgences were attached to hearing this Gospel read, perhaps in order to encourage the laity to remain to the end of Mass,” which was a constant problem, both before and after the reformation. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 124.
25. Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 210.

II. False Starts toward Religious Change: Henrician Catholicism

Two pillars upheld late medieval religious culture: traditional devotional practice (liturgy, church calendar, prayer, sacraments), and papal authority in ecclesiastical and temporal matters.²⁶ Henry VIII, aided by his Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, rebelled against this system, destroying papal authority and making serious alterations to traditional devotional practice.²⁷ Despite his strong Catholic faith, Henry was an ambitious monarch, and it was his desires for a male heir and recognition in Europe that drove him to separate from Rome and the authority of the pope, declaring himself “the only Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England” in the 1534 Act of Supremacy.²⁸ Henry was thus responsible for the spiritual care of his people, including what they ought to believe and how they ought to worship. While many of the king’s evangelical advisors sought parity with their continental brethren, Henry VIII’s reformation was not really an evangelical campaign. The king’s opinions were too unsystematic and the enforcement of reforms too inconsistent to be a concerted effort at evangelical change. Henrician Catholicism was a hybrid religion that adopted some aspects of evangelical teaching while retaining some Catholic doctrine and practice, all while threatening punishment for those who could not walk its theological tightrope.

Henry VIII’s reign saw a series of false starts toward religious change. The Ten Articles of June 1536 were the first evangelical legislation passed after the 1534 Act of Supremacy. They recognized only three sacraments: baptism, the Eucharist, and penance.²⁹ Article four contained language vague enough to support Cranmer’s present belief in Lutheran consubstantiation, while also satisfying Henry’s continuing belief in transubstantiation.³⁰ Cranmer later moved away from consubstantiation to a Swiss-reformed spiritual presence position, but Henry

26. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation In England, 1547–1603*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave, 2001), 4.

27. Despite wavering on doctrine, Henry was not averse to destroying religious and social institutions such as monasticism and pilgrimages to shrines to suppress superstition. See Article Four of the “First Henrician Injunctions,” in Gerald L. Bray, ed., *Documents of the English Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 176. For the dissolution, see Joyce Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*, Historical Problems: Studies and Documents (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971); G. W. Bernard, *The King’s Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 243–275, 433–474.

28. Bray, 114.

29. For text of the Ten Articles, see Bray, 162–174.

30. Bray, 170.

never wavered in his belief in the miraculous nature of the Eucharist, as evidenced by the 1539 Act of Six Articles.

Faced with the possibility of being isolated between the Catholic powers of France and Spain, and the Protestant Princes of Lutheran Germany, and taken aback by radicalism that had arisen as a result of Cromwell's evangelical policies, Henry had Parliament issue the Act of Six Articles in June 1539. He was also motivated by shifts in political factions at court and his own love interests.³¹ His marriage to Catherine Howard in 1540 signaled the ascendancy of the conservative party at court, led by her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk. In attempt to abolish "the diversities of minds and opinions especially of matters of Christian religion," the Six Articles reaffirmed transubstantiation, reinstated reception in one kind, and upheld the traditional practice of private masses for the dead.³² The act also established a harsh penal code for violators. Although MacCulloch asserts that they were not so drastic as they seemed, the Six Articles arrested further religious change for the time being.³³

The final swing of Henry VIII's religious conscience is seen in the choice of his last wife, Katherine Parr, who was an active supporter of the evangelical cause.³⁴ In 1546, Henry made peace with France, which

31. Queen Jane Seymour died giving birth to Prince Edward in 1537 and Henry genuinely mourned her death, not remarrying until his short-lived union with Anne of Cleves in 1540. Henry's growing dissatisfaction with Cromwell's approach to reform, plus the intervention of the Duke of Norfolk, probably inspired passage of the Six Articles, and led him to have Cromwell executed for treason in July 1540. All of this signaled a religious and political sea change for several years (1539–1543), during which time many evangelicals were executed for denying transubstantiation. Even Cranmer was threatened by conservative attacks, though he survived. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 237–296. For Cromwell's fall, see John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1988), 186–189.

32. Bray, 223–24. Earlier drafts of the Six Articles had included the word transubstantiation, but the final version omitted it. Ryrie points out that the wording of the Act "was virtually a dictionary definition of transubstantiation." By leaving the word out, the government had attempted to remove a non-scriptural vestige of papal power from the English church and arrive at the same doctrinal formulation on its own. "As a result, the complex tradition underpinning established Eucharistic doctrine was being left behind. If traditional forms of doctrinal authority were being questioned, then every scrap of doctrinal territory had to be fought for." Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36.

33. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 253.

34. For Parr's role in developing an English Protestant literary culture, see "Representing the faith of a nation: transnational spirituality in the works of Katherine Parr," in

allowed him more latitude with regard to reform. It was around this time that Cranmer reached his final spiritual presence position on the Eucharist. In a statement made during his later examination for heresy in September 1555, Cranmer credited Nicholas Ridley, his chaplain in 1546, with changing his mind on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.³⁵

In the end, Henry VIII was too much of a traditionalist to be steered entirely to the evangelical (Protestant) cause. Nevertheless, breaking ties with Rome over the matter of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon had precipitated the creation of an independent identity for the English Church. Despite this, there was much left to do in the eyes of evangelicals. The latter years of Henry VIII's reign were focused on enacting policies not opposed to the key doctrines of faith but regulating items and practices deemed extra biblical and superstitious. In January 1546, a year before Henry's death, English evangelical John Hooper wrote to his mentor, the Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger, in Zurich: "As far as true religion is concerned, idolatry is no where in greater vigour. Our king has destroyed the pope, but not popery."³⁶ Hooper lamented that the mass was unchanged and that the people retained many "popish superstitions." It was only at the end of his life that Henry VIII, influenced by Parr and Cranmer, tipped the scales by selecting an evangelical protectorate council for his underage son, the future Edward VI.³⁷ This ensured that reform would continue, although it could not guarantee smooth progress.

Kimberly Anne Coles, *Religion, Reform, and Women's Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45–74. For a broader biographical study of Parr, which includes useful discussion of her influence on Henry VIII, his court, and the future Queen Elizabeth, see Susan E. James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999).

35. See "Examination before Brokes," in John Edmund Cox, ed., *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*. The Works of Thomas Cranmer, vol. 2, Parker Society (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1846), 218; referred to hereafter as *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*.
36. John Hooper to Heinrich Bullinger, from Strasburgh, 27 January 1546, in Hastings Robinson, trans. and ed., *Original Letters Relative to the Reformation written during the reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary: chiefly from the archives of Zurich*, vol. 1, Parker Society (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1846), 36; referred to hereafter as *Original Letters*.
37. The exclusion of the conservative Bishop of Winchester Stephen Gardiner solidified the evangelical shape of the council. See MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 77–78, 359.

III. Changes to the Eucharistic Rite under Edward VI, 1547–1553

Initial Efforts, 1547–1548

If reform under Henry VIII had often been uncertain and glacial, reform under his son, Edward VI, was deliberate and deployed with lightening speed. The evangelical council formed to rule during his son's minority, led by Edward VI's uncle, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, had him crowned king on January 28, 1547, at the age of ten. Later in 1547, Parliament repealed the Six Articles, almost all of Henry VIII's treason legislation, and restrictions on printing of theological texts. Although Edward was king, he was still dependent on his advisors, most notably his two successive lord protectors, Somerset, and later John Dudley, the Earl of Warwick, who became the Duke of Northumberland. Having survived Henry VIII's Janus-like religious personality, Thomas Cranmer continued as Archbishop and spearheaded the reform movement. His plan was not meant to change the face of English religion overnight; rather, it was a program of stepped reform, involving a multifaceted revision of the English liturgy that would gradually influence people's beliefs.³⁸

In his study of Edward VI's role in the English Reformation, MacCulloch notes that Cranmer and his allies faced severe difficulties.³⁹ The first year of his reign was dangerous for evangelicals, as they tried to sidestep still-influential conservative bishops such as Edmund Bonner (London) and Stephen Gardiner (Winchester).⁴⁰ Cranmer recognized the danger that conservatives still posed to his plans. He thus attempted to reign in the more radical members of his evangelical party with "A Proclamation concerning the irreverent Talkers of the Sacrament," released on December 27, 1547. The statute forbade public debate on the nature of the Eucharist while reaffirming the scriptural warrant for the sacrament. However, it was purposely vague in its definition of what the ritual meant, espousing the traditional view that "the body and blood of Jesus Christ is there," without actually explaining what that meant.

38. "The regime of Edward VI . . . knew from the start in 1547 exactly what Reformation it wanted. . . . There was an essential continuity of purpose in a graduated series of religious changes over seven years. These changes were designed to destroy one Church and build another, in a religious revolution of ruthless thoroughness." MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 365.

39. "Outside the court and the Council chamber, their chief support came from people who did not matter in politics: Cambridge dons, a minority of clergy and a swathe of people below the social level of the gentry, all concentrated in south-east England." Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 59.

40. MacCulloch, *Boy King*, 61.

The important point was that no one was to question the nature of the sacrament, nor to

contentiously and openly argue, dispute, reason, preach or teach, affirming any more terms of the said blessed sacrament, than be expressly taught in the holy scripture, and mentioned in the afore-said act . . . until such time as the king's majesty, by the advice of his highness' council and the clergy of this realm, shall define, declare, and set forth an open doctrine thereof.⁴¹

This was meant to keep radical evangelicals in check so that Cranmer and his advisors would have time to formulate a liturgical plan that suited their goal of gradual reform.

During the first year of Edward VI's reign, Cranmer was actively involved in recruiting influential continental reformers to England. Throughout 1548, he wrote to Jan Laski, Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli, and Philip Melancthon, among others. Cranmer entreated them to come to England and assist with "setting forth in our churches the true doctrine of God," and "laying aside all carnal considerations, to transmit to posterity a true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of the sacred writings [Scripture]."⁴² Bucer emigrated in 1548, followed by Peter Martyr, who brought with him a copy of an epistle purportedly written by John Chrysostom, an early church father. Entitled *Ad Caesarium Monachum*, the letter "contained a passage on the Eucharist which provided a perfect patristic basis for a non-realist Eucharistic theology, including as it did the statement that 'the nature of the bread doth still remain' after consecration."⁴³ The arrival of continental supporters must have aided Cranmer in applying his new Eucharistic position to the liturgical revisions he was working on at this time.

The first official revisions to the public worship of the English church came in the 1548 *Order of the Communion*. The *Order* offered minimal outward changes to the Sarum service, except for administration of the sacrament in both kinds and a large part now to be conducted in English.⁴⁴ It made no changes to the other traditional forms of the mass as they had existed under Henry VIII. Buchanan believes that "it is clear that the

41. "A Proclamation concerning the irreverent Talkers of the Sacrament," in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 506.

42. Thomas Cranmer to John A Lasco, from London, 4 July 1548, in *Original Letters*, 17.

43. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 380–382.

44. For full text of the 1548 Order of the Communion, see Joseph Ketley, ed., *Two Liturgies in the Reign of King Edward VI*, Parker Society (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1841), 1–8; referred to hereafter as *Two Liturgies*.

consecration (and presumably therefore the elevation and adoration) at the heart of the mass was undisturbed." Furthermore, the *Order* exhibited Cranmer's newly emerging "devotional approach to the Lord's table, designed to provoke self-examination, reliance upon Christ for forgiveness, thankful remembrance of his death for us, and thus fruitful reception."⁴⁵ The *Order* stressed a renewed focus on lay participation in the rite; parishioners were encouraged to repent of their sins, trust in God's mercy, and partake of the elements regularly. The Eucharistic rite outlined in the *Sarum Missal* had presented one supreme moment of liturgical and spiritual climax in the consecration of the Eucharistic elements. The 1548 *Order* established a second, albeit subordinate, moment in personal reception. The *Order* was thus the first step in Cranmer's plan to gradually elevate the importance of personal reception and eventually remove consecration.

Cranmer's subtle changes in the *Order of the Communion* were enough to agitate conservative bishops. Procter and Frere note that, "some of the Bishops were backward in directing the use of the new form," some even said that "the real intention of the Government was to lay a tax . . . upon every marriage, christening, and burial."⁴⁶ In February 1548, Edward VI's government suspended all unlicensed preaching in an attempt to silence conservative criticism of the *Order*.⁴⁷ Further changes are visible in the visitation articles published prior to Cranmer's diocesan visit to Canterbury. They stipulated that images, shrines, candles, artwork, and anything else promoting superstition and idolatry should be removed from churches.⁴⁸ The Royal Proclamation preceding the 1548 *Order* made the crown's intentions clear:

[We will] every man . . . with such obedience and conformity, to receive this our ordinance, and most Godly direction, that we may be encouraged from time to time, further to travail for the reformation and setting forth of such Godly orders as may be most to God's glory, the edifying of our subjects, and for the advancement of true religion. Which thing we (by the help of God) most earnestly intend to bring into effect.⁴⁹

45. Buchanan, 12.

46. Procter and Frere, 39.

47. Ibid., 39–40. For the preaching ban, see "A Proclamation against those that do innovate, &c., and against them which preach without licence," in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 508.

48. "Articles to be inquired of in the visitations to be had within the diocese of Canterbury," in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 154–159.

49. "The Proclamation," in *Two Liturgies*, 1–2.

So, Edward's religious program took aim at the public worship of the church. This scheme gained further momentum when Parliament approved the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549.

The 1549 Book of Common Prayer

In March 1549, the Spanish reformer and religious refugee, Francis Dryander wrote to his Swiss mentor Heinrich Bullinger from his new post as a Professor of Greek at Cambridge. Dryander had heard about but not yet seen the new Book of Common Prayer, nonetheless he wrote excitedly to Bullinger:

It is generally reported that the mass is abolished, and liberty of marriage allowed to the clergy: which two I consider to be the principal heads of the entire reformation, the object of which, as I think, is not to form an entire body of Christian doctrine, and to deliver a fixed and positive opinion without any ambiguity upon each article, but is entirely directed to the right institution of public worship in churches.⁵⁰

Dryander's hopeful statement goes to the heart of the Edwardian liturgical reform movement, the main object of which was to revise the Eucharistic rite to reflect evangelical theology.

The draft Prayer Book was put before Parliament in December 1548, with its position on the Eucharist the focus of debate.⁵¹ Although the language in the 1549 Eucharistic rite could be interpreted to imply real presence, it became clear that Cranmer's position had moved beyond real presence to a spiritual presence extant only at reception of the elements by the faithful. To defend his new position, Cranmer deployed St. Augustine of Hippo's theory of *manducatio impiorum*. In his commentary on the Gospel of John, Augustine had said "the one who does not abide in Christ and in whom Christ does not abide, doubtless neither eats his flesh nor drinks his blood."⁵² Augustine thus held that only the faithful received the spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist—in his new rite Cranmer extended this idea to combat the notion of real presence.⁵³

50. Francis Dryander to Heinrich Bullinger, from Cambridge, 25 March 1549, in *Original Letters*, 349–350.

51. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 395–398.

52. St. Augustine of Hippo, *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus* 26.18. Quoted here from Edward J. Kilmarton's citation of Augustine in, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 27.

53. *Manducatio impiorum* was a difficult subject for conservatives to tackle from their real presence view. For, if the consecration of the elements effected their transformation

Although optimistic in his aforementioned letter to Bullinger, it is clear that Dryander knew (or at least hoped) the 1549 Prayer Book was only an intermediate step.⁵⁴ The appendix to the 1549 Prayer Book, entitled "Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained," showed that Cranmer intended further revisions. In it, he explained that the ceremonies removed were "so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us," and they "did burden men's consciences without any cause."⁵⁵ The goal of these changes, as outlined in the Preface to the 1549 Prayer Book, was that "the people . . . should continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true religion."⁵⁶ The changes made to the public worship of the church in the 1549 Prayer Book were meant first to edify parishioners in the Gospel and reformed theology, second to maintain good order, and third to remove superstitious practices from worship.⁵⁷

The Eucharist in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer

The 1549 Prayer Book was an intermediate step in Cranmer's plan to gradually amend the worship of the Church of England; as such, it is understandable that the Eucharistic rite still reflects aspects of the ceremony as presented in the *Sarum Missal* and the 1548 *Order of the Communion*. However, the Eucharistic rite that emerged in 1549 was far removed from medieval Catholic transubstantiation, even if it still resembled it in places. The streamlined ante-communion still followed the Sarum pattern although there was now space provided for the new homilies. The priest remained in his traditional vestments and position, and several of the familiar hymns and prayers were still included. From this point on things changed, with the priest reading the long exhortation from the 1548 *Order*.

into the real presence of Christ, how would this presence, and the saving grace they believed it possessed, not be communicated to the unworthy who no doubt partook of it alongside regenerate Christians? This question shed light on the great divide between the Catholic and Lutheran positions (both of which advocated some form of real presence) and the Swiss-Reformed view on this topic, thus "anyone who believed that only the faithful consume the body of Christ had clearly left behind any notion of real or corporeal presence. . . . Cranmer made it quite clear . . . that by now he had moved into the 'Reformed' camp." MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 405.

54. Dryander believed that "some puerilities have been still suffered to remain, lest the people should be offended by too great an innovation. These however, trifling as they are, may be shortly amended," Dryander to Bullinger, in *Original Letters*, 350.

55. "Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained," in *Two Liturgies*, 155–157.

56. "Preface" to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, in *Two Liturgies*, 17–19.

57. "Of Ceremonies," in *Two Liturgies*, 157.

Provision was also made for the priest to exhort parishioners to participation if they seemed “negligent” in doing so. Buchanan states that “there had been no hint of such ‘negligence’ in the 1548 Order, but it recurs constantly thereafter.” A lukewarm public reception for the *Order* after Easter 1548 had likely “dictated the retreat from a hope of regular communion,” with Cranmer resorting to “series of shifts and defences to try to keep *some* coming to communion, and to provide for ante-communion on its own when they . . . refused.”⁵⁸

One area where Cranmer’s changes in meaning were useful to expedite the service and remove the Catholic practice of private masses was in the Offertory preceding the Eucharistic celebration. Whereas the Sarum Offertory led to the sacrifice of the consecrated Eucharistic elements, the newly re-envisioned Offertory of 1549 was a mere collection of money.⁵⁹ It had been separated from the Canon of the Mass and was part of the ante-communion in 1549.⁶⁰ By redefining the Offertory, Cranmer created a method for getting parishioners out of their seats and approaching the altar; if it was clear that there were none disposed to participate after the Offering (as was often the case), the service would end and the priest would not be forced to conduct what would appear to be a private mass.

Later in the service, during the consecration of the Eucharistic elements, Cranmer kept the two rubric crosses where the priest entreates God, “with thy holy Spirit and Word vouchsafe to bl+ess and sanc+tify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ.”⁶¹ The elements are no longer referred to as “this oblation” as in Sarum, but as “these thy gifts and creatures.”⁶² Cuming believes that this difference in language asserts Cranmer’s view that the elements “are not now offered, nor is God asked to accept them; they are for celebrating and making

58. Buchanan, 13; emphasis in original.

59. Those “as are disposed” were instructed to “offer to the poor men’s box every one according to his ability and charitable mind,” and if those making monetary offerings intended “to be partakers of the holy Communion,” they were directed by a further rubric “to tarry still in the quire.” If no one “tarried in the quire” after the Offertory to partake of the Eucharistic elements, then the service ended at this point. *Two Liturgies*, 84–85.

60. The 1547 injunctions had ordered installation of a strong box near the altar for the collection of alms; but it was not until the 1549 Prayer Book that instruction was provided for how to use the box. *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 503.

61. *Two Liturgies*, 88.

62. See the discussion above for the wording of the Sarum consecration. *Sarum Missal*, 310.

the memorial which Jesus Christ 'willed us to make.'⁶³ Cranmer's idea of consecration had moved away from the Lutheran view of there being a real presence of Christ under the elements after consecration and was now far removed from the Catholic idea of consecration effecting transubstantiation. The view he espoused in his 1551 *Answer* to Bishop Gardiner was the same as that presented by the rite in 1549: "Consecration is the separation of any thing from a profane and worldly use into a spiritual and godly use."⁶⁴ The 1549 Prayer Book emphasizes, although not with the same force as the 1552 version, "a 'consecration' which looks wholly to reception" and not to any miraculous moment of transformation in the consecration of the elements.⁶⁵

It is useful here to contrast the 1549 *anamnesis* immediately following the institution narrative with the Sarum version. The Sarum liturgy's *anamnesis* responds to Jesus' command in Scripture to "Do this in remembrance of me," by offering of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice. Sarum calls the elements "a pu+re, a ho+ly, a spot+less Sacrifice."⁶⁶ In contrast, Cranmer's 1549 *anamnesis* responded to Christ's words by saying: "We . . . celebrate and make here . . . the memorial which thy Son hath willed us to make."⁶⁷ This vague language could support a range of interpretations, essentially implying "whatever form of remembrance Jesus intended by his words, that is the form we intend in our celebration."⁶⁸ So, it is clear that this inventive rearranging of the *anamnesis* was yet another step in Cranmer's plan to gradually reform the liturgy. The 1549 Eucharistic rite did not reenact Christ's sacrifice; instead, it was a recollection and thanksgiving for his prior once-for-all sacrifice. Although there are still two moments in 1549, as in the 1548 *Order*, the focus had been shifted from consecration to reception of the elements. The consecration in 1549 symbolized the congregation's act of faith in God to work in and through the elements in a spiritual manner, reinforcing the recipient's relationship with God.

Although the phrasing was similar, the 1549 rite had little in common theologically with Sarum. Buchanan asserts that "Sarum is echoed in every line of this section of the [1549] canon, and an echo is exactly

63. Geoffrey Cuming, *The Godly Order: Texts and Studies relating to the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Alcuin Club, SPCK, 1983), 93.

64. "An Answer to a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner," in *Writings and Disputations*, 177.

65. Buchanan, 17.

66. *Sarum Missal*, 311–312.

67. *Two Liturgies*, 89.

68. Buchanan, 17–18.

what it is—it *sounds* like the original, but does not have the same substance behind it.”⁶⁹ By constructing the 1549 rite in this manner, Cranmer sought to ease parishioners into reformed worship patterns and hoped that by participating in them they would come to accept the altered theological meaning behind the new liturgical actions. Successful or not, the trouble Stephen Gardiner caused with his critique of the 1549 Prayer Book left Cranmer with work to do developing his reception-focused rite in the 1552 Prayer Book.

Challenges to Edwardian Reform, 1549–1552

The criticism Bishop Gardiner and other conservatives laid against the 1549 Prayer Book was one of three distinct challenges to the program of religious reform faced by Edward VI’s government between the introduction of the first and second Prayer Books. The other two challenges were popular uprisings against religious innovations, and challenges from radical evangelicals who wanted more wide-ranging reform at a faster pace than Cranmer would allow. Somerset’s government pressured Gardiner to issue a public statement approving of the 1549 Prayer Book and he did so in his 1551 *Explication and assertion of the Catholic faith*. He took advantage of its imprecise language to support his own real presence view on the Eucharist.⁷⁰ Gardiner’s hijacking of the 1549 Prayer Book no doubt motivated Cranmer and his associates to revise it in less-ambiguous language.

The Western rebellion of 1549 is an extreme example of the popular discontent provoked by changes to religious rituals. Three of the rebels’ grievances related to the Eucharist: they demanded a return to the old mass and restriction of communion to the celebrant, reservation and adoration of the elements, and reversion to partaking in one kind. Two further articles demanded the reinstatement of familiar ceremonies, rituals, and images used “by our mother the holy [Catholic] Church,” and rejected the 1549 Prayer Book and its Eucharistic rite, too.⁷¹ Cranmer penned a vitriolic refutation of the rebels’ demands, accusing them of

69. Buchanan, 18.

70. Gardiner said “that the book he would not have made after that form, but, as it was, he could with his conscience keep it, and cause others in his diocese to keep it.” Stephen Gardiner, *Explication and assertion of the Catholic faith*, as quoted in MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 486–487.

71. Many of the Western rebels were Cornish and thus did not understand English, so they wished to return services to Latin. To them, it was better to keep the familiar rhythm and sound of the service in one unknown language, rather than trade it for a new unfamiliar tongue, see Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 5th ed., Seminar Studies in History (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2004), 151–152.

ignorance in wanting to return to the old ways. The government then crushed the rebellion by force. The destruction of the rebels “acted, no doubt, as a clear object lesson to the rest of England.”⁷² Buoyed by ending the insurgency, Edward VI and Cranmer continued with their program, now aided by Dudley, newly created Duke of Northumberland, who had usurped Somerset’s position as Edward’s protector at the end of the summer of 1549.

While Cranmer was refuting his conservative opponents and dealing with popular uprisings, he also faced challenges from within his own evangelical party. MacCulloch notes that the breadth and speed of reform “was a common concern among émigrés,” including many of the continental reformers Cranmer had recruited.⁷³ John Hooper was one of those disgruntled evangelical reformers. An Englishman, Hooper had spent several years living abroad in Switzerland and, as noted earlier, he often corresponded with his friend Heinrich Bullinger, leader of the reformation in Zurich. Hooper had criticized the 1549 Prayer Book for not going far enough in reforming the public worship of the church. When he was appointed to the bishopric of Gloucester in 1550, he intended to make a point by refusing to wear the traditional garments of the office at his investiture. Cranmer and Nicholas Ridley, the new Bishop of London, responded by blocking Hooper’s installation until he agreed to follow the prescribed dress.⁷⁴

Cranmer probably agreed with much of what Hooper wanted, but he was unwilling to follow the path he demanded. He sought to maintain decency and order in reforming the public worship of the church, principles not always present in the clashes that characterized the continental reformation. Cranmer had to take into consideration larger concerns, such as how best to gain and maintain support for his program.⁷⁵ With that in mind, we turn to the 1552 Prayer Book, the culmination of Cranmer’s plan to reform the worship of the English Church.⁷⁶

The Eucharist in the 1552 Book of Common Prayer

In April 1552, Parliament passed the new Act of Uniformity authorizing the revised Book of Common Prayer. Revision of the 1549 version had

72. Procter and Frere, 58.

73. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 469; also see MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, 14.

74. Hooper relays much of the argument over vestments and oath taking at his investiture to Bullinger in a letter dated June 29, 1550. *Original Letters*, 86–87.

75. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 483.

76. There is evidence to suggest that Cranmer was preparing yet another version of the Prayer Book to follow 1552. See Buchanan, 21, n. 1.

begun almost as soon as it was published, with the biggest issue being the “possible real-presence implications of the words of administration at communion and nationwide variety in administering communion.” In early 1551, Bucer had been asked to draw up recommendations for revised Eucharistic language; his critique was entitled the *Censura*.⁷⁷

The Royal Proclamation preceding the 1548 *Order of the Communion*, as well as the essay, “Of Ceremonies,” appended to the 1549 Prayer Book, made it clear that “the 1552 rite was no accident, no afterthought, and no overreaction,” for both of these earlier statements had made provision for future revision to the liturgy.⁷⁸ The practical reality of non-communication alluded to in the 1548 Order of the Communion and addressed in the first Prayer Book, was still an issue in 1552. Many parishioners still harbored fear of divine punishment for partaking unworthily. Furthermore, the new requirements for partaking every week asked a lot of parishioners who were used to partaking once a year, at Easter.⁷⁹ In response, the 1552 Prayer Book placed more emphasis on the non-Eucharistic services of Matins and Evensong. A new rubric was added at the end of the Eucharistic service stipulating thrice-yearly participation for all parishioners, rather than once per year as in 1549.⁸⁰ The change in participation requirements and altering the form of the rite itself shows that revisions to the public worship of the English church during Edward VI’s reign were intended to influence personal beliefs through promoting the practice of evangelical worship forms.

The 1552 Eucharistic rite turned the focus away from the elements and toward the participants. This change signaled a move away from the medieval liturgical tradition. Procter and Frere note that “the alterations in 1552 were designed to facilitate and foster the view that the prayer of consecration had reference . . . to the persons [rather] than to the elements, and that the presence of Christ was not in the Sacrament but only in the heart of the believer.”⁸¹ The sacrament had thus become a *sign* of the real-

77. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 504–505; Peter Martyr also contributed an essay (since lost) on revising the Prayer Book. Gordon P. Jeanes provides a detailed summary and analysis of Bucer’s *Censura* and Cranmer’s use of it in *Signs of God’s Promise: Thomas Cranmer’s Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 226–229.

78. Buchanan, 21.

79. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 94–95.

80. *Two Liturgies*, 283.

81. Procter and Frere, 82–83. The distinction, made clear in 1552, that Christ is not present in the Sacrament but in the heart of the believer at reception of the elements is key to Cranmer’s Eucharistic theology of spiritual presence.

ity that Christ already indwelt believers through the mystery of the Holy Spirit. The 1552 Eucharistic rite communicated this shift in theological emphasis through altering and reordering the 1549 communion service. The clearest example of this is Cranmer's new use of the *anamnesis* in connection with the institution narrative. Administration of the Eucharistic elements in communion now immediately followed the institution narrative.⁸² In 1549 the *anamnesis* followed the institution narrative and began by vaguely stating that the communicants "celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty . . . the memorial which they Son hath willed us to make."⁸³ These words had been clear enough to Cranmer, but his opponents had used them to justify a conservative real presence position.⁸⁴

The wording of the 1552 *anamnesis* was much more explicit: gone were the intervening prayers of thanksgiving for receiving the elements, the Lord's Prayer, the prayer of repentance, and the comfortable words from Scripture that had previously preceded administration. The *anamnesis* had been converted into the very words of administration. The 1552 rite simply stated "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in they heart by faith, with thanksgiving," and "drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful."⁸⁵ This change was not meant to combine the moments of consecration and reception into one. Buchanan holds that "it is far more internally consistent to read 1552 as having no consecration at all. The *only* possible action with the bread and wine is reception."⁸⁶

Cranmer emphasized that there was no consecration in the 1552 rite through a rubric added at the end of the communion: "To take away superstition, which any person hath, or might have in the bread and wine, it shall suffice that the bread be such, as is usual to be eaten at the table with other meats. . . . And if any of the bread and wine remain, the curate shall have it to his own use."⁸⁷ Here, Cranmer explicitly affirmed that the left-over elements had not been set aside from profane to godly use, but were mere bread and wine, to be used after the service as any other food and drink. The only moment at which they represented the body and blood was at reception, and only then through the faith of the recipient and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit.

82. *Two Liturgies*, 279.

83. *Two Liturgies*, 89.

84. See the discussion above concerning Gardiner's challenge to Cranmer in his *Explication*, based on MacCulloch's text in *Cranmer*, 486–487.

85. *Two Liturgies*, 279.

86. Buchanan, 22; emphasis in original.

87. *Two Liturgies*, 282–283.

The 1552 Prayer Book changed the practical arrangement of the church as well: As early as 1550 altars had begun to be replaced by trestle-tables, which were appointed to “stand in the body of the Church, or in the chancel, where Morning prayer and Evening prayer” were said.⁸⁸ The location of the table only depended upon the size of the congregation gathered for worship.⁸⁹ With these changes, Cranmer finished his reconstruction of the Eucharistic rite, having made it clear in the liturgy and the physical layout of the worship space that things had changed in the English Church. The Eucharistic ritual had been redesigned as an act of personal and corporate thanksgiving and devotion—it was focused on participants’ reception of the elements as spiritually nourishing, no longer acknowledging a physical change in the elements, nor a transference of God’s grace. Cranmer intended to ease the transition from the medieval Sarum rite to the reformed liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer while also maintaining good order, thus avoiding the violent upheavals that had accompanied many continental reform movements.⁹⁰

IV. Turning Action into Belief: Evaluating the Edwardian Approach to Reform

Edward VI died in July 1553, at age fifteen. During his brief reign he had overseen radical alterations to the doctrine and worship of the English Church. His ministers had orchestrated the wholesale destruction of the old church and the construction of an entirely new edifice. The Edwardian Church was defined by the Book of Common Prayer, which outlined an evangelical approach to public worship. This article has argued that Edwardian religious changes focused on the public worship of the church because Cranmer and his associates presumed that “right actions” would gradually lead parishioners to “right beliefs.” If, based on the evidence presented above,

88. Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, was the first to do this in May 1550; the full text of the order is in “The Council’s Letter to Bishop Ridley to take down Altars, and place Communion Tables in their stead.” *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 524. A rubric prefaced to the 1552 “Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion,” reiterates this placement of the table. See *Two Liturgies*, 265.

89. This flexibility of location also indicated “no special ‘sanctuary’ reserved for holy communion, but that there is to be the same space or area used for non-sacramental and sacramental services alike.” Buchanan, 29.

90. Cranmer’s concern with maintaining “good order” in the process of enacting real reform to the church is evident in his writings throughout this period. For examples, see the first ban on unlicensed preaching in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 512–513; the Prefaces to the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books, in *Two Liturgies*, 17–19, 193–96; and the rubrics at the end of the 1552 Prayer Book. See *Two Liturgies*, 282–283.

we accept this assertion, how then did the English reformers envision their plan working, and why was the reformation of worship and ritual prioritized over the dissemination of doctrinal formulae?

In her study of Bishop John Hooper and his approach to reform in the diocese of Gloucester, Caroline Litzenberger offers a helpful roadmap through which to navigate the liturgy-focused approach to reform in England. She recounts that “Hooper’s mentor, Heinrich Bullinger . . . believed that ritual practice shaped or at least greatly influenced belief,” and, just as the Swiss approach to reform involved “the elimination of anything that would distract worshippers from focusing on the Word of God, including decorations [and] especially images,” so too did the English.⁹¹ The negative act of destroying distracting and superstitious images was only one side of the evangelical approach to worship. Litzenberger draws on Edward Muir’s analysis, stating that “Protestant ritual . . . provided clarity of meaning through the declaration of seemingly unambiguous words [albeit] at the cost of visual impoverishment.”⁹²

The Prayer Book’s displacement of the Sarum liturgy, along with the campaign against images in churches, did not mean that evangelicals like Cranmer rejected liturgical ritual outright. Muir notes that, “despite their emphasis on the Bible and interpretation, Protestants still experienced the sacred through rituals.”⁹³ It is not surprising then that Cranmer and his associates went to such lengths in revising liturgical rituals, such as the Eucharist, so that they aligned with emerging Protestant theology. Just as Cranmer had done in the Prayer Books, in his diocese Hooper “revised ritual space and reformed rites so that, by entering into the discipline of participating regularly in particular rituals, people would come to understand and accept beliefs consistent with those rituals.”⁹⁴

The value of physical repetition and mental retention of ritual is evidenced by the often-negative reactions to the new forms of worship in the Prayer Books. The 1549 Western Rebellion is an extreme example of how upset people could become when familiar rituals were changed abruptly. A less-drastring example of the public reluctance to accept new forms of

91. Caroline Litzenberger, “Communal ritual, concealed belief: Layers of response to the regulation of ritual in Reformation England,” in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia, and the West*, James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow, eds., 98–118 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 100.

92. Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 198.

93. Muir, 186.

94. Litzenberger, “Communal ritual,” 100.

worship was the problem of non-participation in the new Eucharistic rite.⁹⁵ Evangelical reformers thought the only reason people were reluctant to accept the new worship forms was because they had been deceived by the superstitions of the old church. They thus emphasized conducting the new services in English, so that “the people (by daily hearing of holy scripture read in the Church) should continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true religion.”⁹⁶ In their opinion, the problem was that the medieval church had ignored the words of St. Paul, who “would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same.” Since services had previously been in Latin, most parishioners “heard with their ears only, and their hearts, spirit, and mind, [had] not been edified thereby.”⁹⁷

In reality, there were more factors behind the laity’s mixed reaction to the Edwardian changes. As Litzenberger notes, “when those in authority impose rituals on the people as did the sixteenth-century Protestant reformers, then those ceremonies do not necessarily reveal the actual beliefs of the subjected portion of society.” Drawing on Catherine Bell’s theory of ritual implementation, Litzenberger explains that “through ‘complicity, struggle [and] negotiation’ the powerless agree to accept a form of the official policy, a form that they then appropriate and modify.”⁹⁸ In the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 the authorities set forth requirements for liturgical conformity with specific theological meanings in mind; however, the laity accepted them with a much wider set of meanings than Cranmer and his associates had in mind. When coupled with examples of lay reticence to accept the new rituals, this helps explain the slow progress of Edward’s reforms despite their official sanction.

95. For more on strategic (non-)conformity to English church practices, see Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History, vol. 68 (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1993).

96. The wording is unchanged in the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. See *Two Liturgies*, 17, 193.

97. *Two Liturgies*, 18, 194. This principle is drawn from 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul instructs the church in the appropriate use of spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues. The main point of this chapter is that “all things be done for edification” (1 Cor. 14:26). The reformers thought that the medieval Latin liturgy had contravened Paul’s teaching by conducting services in a tongue that most people could not understand.

98. Litzenberger, “Communal ritual,” 100; see also Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 189–191.

Having detailed the changes to Eucharistic ritual under Edward VI, it is clear that evangelicals made a concerted effort to reframe the ritual practices of the church and imbue them with new meanings. Cranmer and his associates thought that if people regularly attended and participated in the revised public worship of the church, they would come to understand and accept the theological foundations for the new liturgical practices.

Due to the limited period the Edwardian liturgical reforms had to take root, and the evidence that many parishioners were slow to adopt them, it is fair to conclude that they were not a success in their own time.⁹⁹ That being said, Patrick Collinson provides some basis for asserting that the worship-based approach was successful in the long run when he said: "It would be foolish to deny to either the *Homilies* or the *Book of Common Prayer* the capacity to distil and drop into the mind, almost by an osmotic process, familiar forms of words which may have done more than anything else to form a Protestant consciousness."¹⁰⁰ Although the worship-based approach to religious change employed during Edward VI's reign was not successful in its initial implementation, it would seem that participating in the revised Eucharistic rite and hearing the Word of God read and preached over the course of decades and centuries may have justified Cranmer's approach after all.

99. Litzenberger offers a compelling argument for the development of a cautious attitude under Edward VI. Studying several thousand Gloucestershire wills made between 1540–1580, she found that many were reluctant to express an overtly Protestant faith in their last testaments until well into Elizabeth I's reign. See Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540–1580*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59–82.

100. Patrick Collinson, "The Church and the New Religion," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Christopher Haigh (1984; reprint, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1991), 179–80. Thanks to Caroline Litzenberger for drawing my attention to this quotation.

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