

**Leabhar na hUrnáí Coitinne,
Eaglais na hÉireann
(Baile Átha Cliath, 1965)**

It is surprising to a Scots visitor to encounter this edition of the Anglican prayer book in Irish in such a setting as the government stationery office in Dublin, and even stranger to discover that it was published by that organization for the Church of Ireland. We may rightly conclude that only in Ireland could this happen. It does serve, however, to indicate the greater place and respect now accorded to Gaelic in that island. Its publication is also of significance at a time when the Roman Church is offering its liturgy to the people in their own tongues.

With such omissions as the canons concerning worship, the kalender and tables of lessons and psalms, this new translation covers the normal contents of the *Book of Common Prayer*. It gives the orders for Morning and Evening Prayer ; the Litany ; Prayers and Thanksgivings ; the Psalter ; Holy Communion ; Collects, Epistles and Gospels ; a Penitential Service ; Harvest Thanksgiving ; Public and Private Baptisms of Children ; Catechism ; Confirmation ; Solemnization of Matrimony ; Churching of Women after Childbirth ; Visitation and Communion of the Sick ; Burial of the Dead ; Burial of Infants ; and two alternative orders for Evening Prayer, the second being the normal form for Compline. The language has all the terse dignity of the original English, the same commendable avoidance of verbosity. The printing is clear and well-set, though one must deprecate the somewhat archaic use of so-called Irish script.

The outsider should avoid the temptation to view the Church of Ireland merely as the fading symbol of a past English aristocratic ascendancy, and this edition of the Prayer Book as a new-found interest in things native. On the contrary, it produced earlier Irish editions in 1608, 1825, 1856 and 1931 ; as well as others in English and Irish in 1712, 1819, 1832 and 1861. It was also a minority communion, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, which gave to our Highlanders the only comparable Scottish service book ; for between 1794 and 1895 no less than six Gaelic editions of

the *Book of Common Prayer* appeared. The Church of Scotland contribution in the way of Gaelic service books appears to consist of Carswell's 1567 translation of *Knox's Liturgy*, editions in 1725, 1804 and 1891 of the *Westminster Confession* and *Directory* and the optional Gaelic supplement of the *Book of Common Order*, 1940. The last, though linguistically competent, is liturgically inadequate. The Irish example of 1965 should prompt the National Kirk to do at least as well by its Gaelic-speaking people, when the next edition of the *Book of Common Order* becomes necessary.

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