

PRAYER: Collect for the future.....

"O Christ our Lord, who came that men might walk in light and have life more abundantly, lead us forward at this time in Your own ways of giving and of spreading light, that our personal life may grow in true riches, our Church of five centuries fan the flame of faith for the coming generations, and Your light shine more brightly in Leith and the wider community of our world. We ask it for Your own love's sake".

BAPTISMAL HYMN 550 "Lift high the cross" (vv 1-4)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

BAPTISMAL HYMN 550 "Lift high the cross" (and vv 5-7)

DISMISSAL AND BENEDICTION

John M Kellet, MA
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REVIEWS

"THE OFFICE OF COMPLINE - AN ALTERNATIVE ORDER. MUSIC EDITION"

Mowbray. £1.75

The night office, Completorium, concluded the seven Day Hours developed in the fifth century monastic order of St. Benedict. The early history of the daily offices, which is one of gradual complexity and balancing attempts at simplification need not concern us in this review. Three stages mark the survival of Compline in the Anglican tradition.

Cranmer, married in Nuremberg to a niece of Andreas Osiander, had close contacts with the Lutherans and an awareness of their liturgical projects. As the Lutherans had done already, Cranmer rationalised the offices to form morning and evening prayer thus providing daily services in English available to the people and taking account of the lifestyle of the secular parish priest. Compline was hidden within Evensong for three hundred years.

In the nineteenth century, the Tractarians, and particularly Newman himself, showed great interest in the canonical hours and with the establishment of Anglican religious orders, English translations of the Latin offices made their appearance. Compline itself appeared in the 1928 Prayer Book which failed to gain the approval of Parliament.

The third stage, of course, is the liturgical renewal of recent decades resulting, for the Church of England, in "The Alternative Service Book". "The Office of Compline - An Alternative Order" published in 1980 and now in a music edition, follows the style of ASB and takes account of modern developments in the Roman and American Episcopal churches. David Silk who has produced it is a member of the Liturgical Commission but the reviewer has no indication that there is any authorisation by General Synod for this order.

The structure of Compline as we have known it in this century is unaltered except that the night hymn "TE LUCIS ANTE TERMINUM" is brought from after the psalms to the beginning of the service.

The psalms are from "The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship" (Collins 1976). Scripture passages are drawn from RSV, NEB, JB, AND GNB versions. The liturgical texts are ICET (with C of E amendment to the Lord's Prayer). The Musical settings, developed from the old plainsong chants, are by a Franciscan.

A great attraction of Compline is the dominant theme of the security and peace of God's presence. Another is the provision of a means whereby we may commit our lives into God's care.

Readily used as an act of private devotion, Compline also offers a very helpful late evening office for families, housegroups or conferences. In this edition it has been brought into line with current liturgical expression.

Colin R Williamson
Aberdalgie.

Edited by John W Doberstein, The Minister's Prayer Book An Order of Prayers and Readings, Collins, 490 pp, £7.95.

The aim of this long-standing classic, first published in 1959 and newly revised, is to provide a devotional manual for pastors, relating prayer and meditation to the work of the ministry. Lutheran in origins, it draws upon the riches of many Christian traditions, and it is believed by its compiler that "no [other] book in English...has attempted to meet the need of the evangelical pastor for an aid to a disciplined life of prayer." This book has been treasured widely across the ecumenical spectrum, and is free of the late mediaeval excrescences which, to those in the Reformed tradition, tend to mar most of the weightier manuals of devotion.

The compiler's introduction is full of rich wisdom. The minister must be the recipient as well as the giver of pastoral care. Ecclesiastical superiors or co-workers can help, as can the members of one's own congregation, but it must also be found in solitariness as he or she experiences fellowship with God through prayer and the Word, and with the writings of saintly masters of devotion. The distinctive nature of evangelical devotion is helpfully explained with some typically rumbustious words of Luther on this subject thrown in for good measure.

There is a set of devotions for each day of the week, including the use of a hymn in meditation, confession, a creed or creedal statement, Scripture lessons (uncluding special ones related to the various facets of ministry), readings from the anthology (more of which later) and prayers. Some of the prayers are in the singular, but others in the plural to remind the pastor that his prayers, even in private, are sometimes offered on behalf of all his people. The language is traditional (<'thee', 'thou' etc.), but free of the kind of high-sounding cliches which, upon translation into modern English, turn out to be vacuous. It is startling and perhaps a little disappointing to note the use of 'Christian' for 'Catholic' in the Creeds. The lessons in this edition have been revised "to bring these into line with current understandings reflected in the Lutheran Book of Worship and the two-year daily lectionary."

The greater proportion of the book consists of an anthology of longer and shorter readings for meditation, culled from a wide range of authors past and present. These are grouped thematically over the week, and are a treasure house of challenging wisdom. At the conclusion of each day's selection there is a quotation from Max Lackmann entitled "Mirror for Ministers" in which a number of deeply searching questions are posed. These should cut even the most conscientious of pastors to the quick, though the morbidly introspective phase of Luther's own spiritual path has important lessons to teach us about the need not to become too overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy and failure.

It is amazing how much material has been compressed into a pocket-sized volume, but the price to be paid for this is the extreme thinness of the paper. The material for each day is too full to be employed on a single occasion, so those who adopt this book for regular use will need to devise their own system for cycling regularly through its contents. Self-adhesive stickers should be used if notes require to be added for this purpose. The paper is almost as thin as the partition between heaven and earth could become for those who make diligent use of what is printed thereupon!

This is a book warmly to be recommended. Its regular use can only enrich the spiritual life of the minister and deepen his or her ministry. William Barclay, reviewing the original issue, said it all: "A man will be a better man and a better minister if he lives with this book."

William G Neill