

## The Anglo-Catholic Campaign against Revision of the Book of Common Prayer: The Hickleton Conference of 1911

By Rene Kollar

### I. Introduction

The history of the Book of Common Prayer vividly demonstrates the importance of words, gestures, and rubrics. Liturgy conveys or expresses the doctrines or teachings of a church. Beginning with the First Prayer Book of Edward VI in 1549, numerous individuals or groups of earnest people have sought to modify or change aspects of the Prayer Book to fit their theological positions. This urge or desire to revise the Book of Common Prayer persisted into the twentieth century. The Church Assembly, created by the 1919 Enabling Act, took up the challenge and presented a revised Prayer Book to Parliament for approval. Between 1927 and 1928 Parliament debated and eventually rejected this proposal. Internal divisions within Anglicanism contributed to the failure to secure a successful passage. “Unfortunately, there were two groups in the Church that were extremely opposed to the measure, the extreme Evangelicals and the extreme Anglo-Catholics—the former because it went too far in a catholicizing direction, the latter because it did not go far enough.”<sup>1</sup> Both sides had successfully lobbied members of Parliament to see the measure defeated. The Anglo-Catholic party, however, had already developed a strategy before the parliamentary debates of 1927-28 began. During August 1911, Lord Halifax invited influential Anglo-Catholics to his Yorkshire estate at Hickleton to discuss the threat of a revision and the appropriate means to combat any changes in the Prayer Book.

### II. Background to Prayer Book Revision

This pre-war meeting at Hickleton took place when the cry for revision seemed overwhelming. The demand for changes grew out of alleged ecclesiastical lawlessness and comprehensiveness associated with Victorian ritualism.<sup>2</sup> In spite of ecclesiastical admonitions, these Anglo-Catholic clergy sought to “adopt the liturgical practices of the pre-Reformation church in England and in not a few cases the extra-liturgical devotions of the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church in Europe.”<sup>3</sup> By 1875, the main points of contention between the ritualists and their opponents, who believed they were disloyal to

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<sup>1</sup> A. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution, 1789 to the Present Day* (Penguin Books 1987) 165.

<sup>2</sup> For the best description of Victorian ritualism and the attempts to bring some uniformity by legal means, especially the Public Worship Regulation Act, see James Bentley, *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain: An Attempt to Legislate for Belief* (Oxford 1978). This book also contains a useful bibliography which includes the biographies of the notable ritualists. For a brief overview of the opposition to Victorian ritualism, see R. Kollar, “The Opposition to Ritualism in Victorian England,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 51 (1985) 63-74.

<sup>3</sup> H. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Newman to Martineau* (Princeton University Press 1962) 115.

the Anglican Church, had developed: vestments, the eastward position, altar lights, unleavened bread at the eucharist, the mixture of water and wine in the chalice at holy communion, and incense.<sup>4</sup> But the debate over the alleged impropriety of some liturgical actions did not confine itself to the toasty atmosphere of the common room or learned theological tracts.

The opponents of ritualism sought to use the power of statute law against ritualists, especially the provisions of the Church Discipline Act of 1840 (3 & 4 Vict, c. 86) which “empowered the Bishop in the case of an alleged non-criminal offense to issue a Commission of Inquiry, or to transmit the case by Letters of Request to the Provincial Court of Appeal.”<sup>5</sup> But the Protestant party continued to demand tighter control on the interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric. “Therefore, if they were to be satisfied, they wanted to alter the law by a new act of Parliament.”<sup>6</sup> In 1874 the Public Worship Regulation Act (37 & 38 Vict., c. 85) attempted to expand the prosecution of ritualism and to apply the force of statute law to clerics who disobeyed the rulings of church courts and bishops. But the act proved to be weak. The imprisonment of four Anglican priests for contumacy brought shame to the act, and the provision which gave the local bishop the prerogative to veto the proceedings greatly diminished the force of the Public Worship Regulation Act. The failure of the Church Association to prosecute successfully Edward King, the saintly High Church Bishop of Lincoln, between 1888 and 1892 slowed down the campaign for Prayer Book revision, but the crusade did not weaken.<sup>7</sup>

“It was precisely the chaos in Anglicanism, from the left to the right wings, which made a revision of the Prayer Book essential.”<sup>8</sup> Without some authoritative action in this direction, the Church of England would remain at war with itself. Consequently, in 1904 the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline was appointed to examine charges of liturgical lawlessness and also to suggest remedies. The charge of the Commission was clear: to investigate the alleged disregard for the laws governing worship in the Anglican Church; to consider the current means to enforce uniformity; and finally to make recommendations to correct any liturgical irregularities. The members soon recognized the chief difficulty in their task, namely, the long history and development of the Book of Common Prayer. “The result is that the ceremonies and ornaments that the law prescribes or tolerates,” the Commission’s *Report* eventually noted, “must be ascertained by reference to that which was required at certain dates, varying according to whether ceremonies or ornaments are in question, and are so remote from contemporary English life that the most recent is separated from the present time by more than 240 years.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See “Six Points” in F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press 1983) 1281.

<sup>5</sup> D. Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church* (Montreal: McGill University Press 1986) 119. See also R. Phillimore, *The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England*, London 1873.

<sup>6</sup> O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church 2* (London: A. C. Black 1971) 320.

<sup>7</sup> See M. Wellings, “Anglo-Catholicism, the ‘Crisis in the Church’ and the Caviler Case of 1899,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1991) 239-58.

<sup>8</sup> H. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: The Ecumenical Century, 1900-1965* (Princeton University Press 1965) 290.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline* (London: Wyman and Sons 1906) 7. In 1904, the English bishops recognized that some action was needed to check the growing incidents of ritual lawlessness. The *Report* also contains an excellent survey and history of ritualism during the nineteenth century.

In 1906 the *Report* appeared in four volumes. It stated that certain liturgical practices, some inconsistent with the teaching of the Anglican Church, enjoyed popularity throughout England.

The law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and the ornaments of churches is, in our belief, nowhere exactly observed; and certain minor breaches of it are very generally prevalent. The law is also broken by many irregular practices which have attained lesser, and widely different, degrees of prevalence. Some are omissions, others err in the direction of excess.<sup>10</sup>

The *Report* concluded with the following observations: the law concerning the public worship in England was too narrow; the means or machinery for enforcing liturgical discipline had broken down; and when reformed, the law must be enforced. Ten recommendations accompanied the *Report*, and one especially frightened the Anglo-Catholics and threatened to jeopardize their freedom of worship: Letters of Business should be issued to the Convocations directing them “to frame, with a view to their enactment by Parliament, such modifications in the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fittings of churches This directive sought “to secure the greater elasticity of the Church of England which a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand.”<sup>11</sup> Letters of Business were duly issued, “and the way was once more open for a revision of the Book of Common Prayer after a lapse of nearly 250 years.”<sup>12</sup>

It now appeared that a revision of the Book of Common Prayer would definitely happen in a few years, and the direction this might take frightened many Anglo-Catholics who feared that a Protestant interpretation would result. No one experienced this anxiety and apprehension more than Sir Charles Lindley Wood, second Viscount Halifax (1839-1934), President of the English Church Union since 1868, and titular leader of Anglo-Catholicism.<sup>13</sup> He opposed the original proposal for the formation of a Select Committee on Ecclesiastical Discipline and described it as “a gross piece of impertinence.”<sup>14</sup> Halifax believed the Royal Commission, at which he gave testimony, was less offensive, but unfortunately it still recommended revision of the Prayer Book. He regarded this with grave suspicion. “I think those who wish for it,” Halifax wrote in 1907, “are demented.” According to his biographer, “Halifax . . . had an uncomfortable fear from the first that the purpose of revision was not so much to provide the Church of England with a better Prayer Book as to tighten the machinery of discipline against the Anglo-Catholics.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 52. The *Report* listed some “Non-significant breaches of the Law” such as: special services (for example, harvest services), sermons by the bishop at confirmation, collections at morning or evening prayer, failure to read the daily office, and baptism during the week. Other practices were clearly Roman, such as vestments, ceremonial mixing of the chalice, wafers, incense, Roman Catholic liturgies for Holy Week, elevation, reservation of the blessed sacrament, prayers for souls in purgatory, and some forms of Mariology. For a complete list of both types of liturgical irregularities, see *Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline*, 12-15, 18-48.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>12</sup> G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (London: MacMillan 1969) 212.

<sup>13</sup> See J. G. Lockhart, *Charles Lindley Viscount Halifax 1885-1914*, London 1936. This is the standard two-volume biography of Lord Halifax.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 232.

In August 1911, therefore, Lord Halifax invited the country's leading Anglo-Catholics to his Yorkshire estate at Hickleton to discuss the real dangers of revision and to plan for a defense against this dreaded ecclesiastical policy. The introduction to the minutes of this conference, written by H. W. Hill, the Secretary of the English Church Union, reveal Halifax's alarm: "Lord Halifax, in view of certain difficulties that would arise out of current proposals to revise the Book of Common Prayer, thought that a Conference of clergy and laity would be helpful in the coming distress."<sup>16</sup> At his annual address to the English Church Union during the summer of 1911, Lord Halifax outlined the real dangers which threatened to harm the Anglo-Catholic party, and he emphasized the mischief which would result if Parliament interfered in matters of religion. "And here let me say that we have to insist. . . that the Acts of Uniformity are dead and buried. . . No one wants to see ecclesiastical matters before Parliament," he told the delegates; "[the] Church has nothing to expect nor indeed to wish for from Parliament except to be left alone."<sup>17</sup> Resistance to changes in the Prayer Book received general support from other High Churchmen. The Revd Darwell Stone, the Librarian of Pusey House, argued in the pages of *The Church Times* that if the Prayer Book must be re-interpreted and modernized, this serious task must be entrusted to expert theologians and liturgists, and not the politicians.<sup>18</sup>

### III. The Hickleton Conference

In July 1911, Lord Halifax sent out invitations to attend the Hickleton Conference. "In view of the proposals for a Revision of the Book of Common Prayer, proposals which seem likely to be brought forward in a definite shape in the autumn, or early next year," the letter began, "it has been thought that a meeting of some of those specially interested in the question should be held about the middle of August to discuss the question. . . ." Lord Halifax called this meeting "not merely for the sake of seeing how such a revision as has been hitherto suggested can be successfully opposed, but also with the object of considering what, if revision is forced upon them, Catholics should insist upon on their side. He suggested several items for the agenda, for example, the burial office, "the present dislocation of the Canon, the steps that might be taken at once on the responsibility of individual clergy to remedy that dislocation," and the restoration of Holy Week services. At this meeting, Halifax believed, the participants could freely discuss ideas and "suggest what steps can best be taken to meet the dangers which might seriously threaten the progress of the Catholic Revival."<sup>19</sup>

Lord Halifax, therefore, planned the conference not only to protect Anglo-Catholic practices, but also to discuss ways to re-introduce customs curtailed by the sixteenth-century reformers, such as Holy Week liturgies, which had become commonplace in many Anglo-Catholic parishes during the last century. "The Church of England, at the Reformation, removed much of what had been distinctive of Holy Week,"

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<sup>16</sup> "A Conference of Clergy and Laity at Hickleton August 1911," A. Riley Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth Palace, London.

<sup>17</sup> *The Church Times* (London), 16 June 1911.

<sup>18</sup> *The Church Times*, 9 June 1911.

<sup>19</sup> Lord Halifax, "Invitation to the Hickleton Conference," July 1911, printed in "A Conference of Clergy and Laity."

and many regarded this as nothing “other than an impoverishment.” Because of the influence of the Oxford Movement, Holy Week had become popular again with Anglo-Catholics. The rites and liturgies associated with Holy Week devotions were revived in two ways: the use of the Roman Catholic ritual, or adaptation of “ancient practices to celebrate it in a fitting manner. . . . In many churches, which one would call Anglo-Catholic, the first of these expedients recommended itself, and the entire Roman Holy Week ceremonies, from the blessing of the palms to that of the Paschal Candle, were copied forthwith.”<sup>20</sup> The second way of implementing Holy Week services was advocated by Percy Dearmer in his book, *The Parson’s Handbook* (London 1899), which suggested a number of additions to the Prayer Book based on the Sarum Use.<sup>21</sup>

Services associated with Holy Week did not attract as much attention from anti-ritualist protesters as practices such as the reservation of the blessed sacrament, modifications of the Canon, or administration of the sacraments, but they did not escape the attention of those opposed to alleged Roman adaptations. Giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, gave an example of angry demonstrators disrupting the veneration of the cross on Good Friday at a London church in 1898.<sup>22</sup> Abbot Aelred Carlyle, a participant at the Hickleton Conference, adopted the Roman Catholic ritual in its entirety for his Anglican Benedictine monastery on Caldey Island in South Wales. The Holy Week liturgies at the monastery drew praise from some visitors,<sup>23</sup> but others argued that this and other rites and customs were illegal. The Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline eventually viewed some ceremonies associated with Holy Week in a negative light. The *Report* condemned as unlawful practices: the blessing of palms, tenebrae, washing of the altars, the paschal candle, and stations of the cross. The mass of the presanctified was classified as an illegal practice of a graver or more serious nature.<sup>24</sup> At the Hickleton Conference, therefore, Lord Halifax wished to devise tactics which would resist any revision of the Prayer Book harmful to Anglo-Catholic principles, and he also wanted the participants to discuss possible ways of implementing or adopting other agreeable liturgical customs or rites for their worship.

Lord Halifax fixed 12 August as the opening date for the conference, and he drew up a schedule for the conference, each day beginning with mass at 7:30 A.M. Halifax realized some could not attend because of the short notice and previous holiday plans,<sup>25</sup> but a good representation of the leadership of the Anglo-Catholic party did travel to Yorkshire: Mr Athelstan Riley, Abbot Aelred Carlyle of Caldey Island, the Revd J. S. L. Burn, the Revd W. B. Trevelyan, Mr W. J. Birkbeck, the Revd W. J. Scott, Sir Hubert Miller, the Revd J. C. Howell, the Revd H. F. B. Mackay, the Revd F. L. Boyd, the Revd Hon. S. Hanbury Tracy, the Revd W. Crouch, Sir Frederick Holiday, Mr H. W. Hill, and the Revd J. Dalton. A sense of excitement preceded the gathering. Abbot Carlyle eagerly anticipated the conference and told the Revd E. H. Day that “if these men are going to

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<sup>20</sup> J. G. Davies, *Holy Week: A Short History* (Richmond VA: John Knox Press 1963) 61.

<sup>21</sup> Dearmer recommended the blessing of palms and procession, tenebrae service, stripping and washing of the altars after the Maundy Thursday service, additions to Good Friday such as the three hours and the reproaches, and baptism and the paschal candle for the Holy Saturday service.

<sup>22</sup> G. K. A. Bell, *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford University Press 1952) 467.

<sup>23</sup> P. Anson, *The Benedictines of Caldey* (Gloucester: Prinknash Abbey 1944) 124.

<sup>24</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline*, 18-44.

<sup>25</sup> For a complete list of those invited, see “A Conference of Clergy and Laity.”

fight, I will fight with them.”<sup>26</sup> Carlyle also assured Lord Halifax that “I shall gladly and heartily throw myself into any course of action that may be decided upon as a help to the solution of present difficulties and the clearing up of the catholic party in the Church of England.”<sup>27</sup> Ronald Knox, who was staying on Caldey Island with the Anglican Benedictines, remembered that “the atmosphere, without being restless, was somehow vaguely electric.”<sup>28</sup>

Lord Halifax opened the Hickleton Conference with a talk and addressed what he termed “grave causes for anxiety at the present moment.”<sup>29</sup> He began on a positive note by pointing out that “the Faith where it is held is held more intelligently than in the case formerly, and there is a corresponding improvement in ritual and practice.” Anglo-Catholics had won the nineteenth-century battles over ritualism. However, he continued, self-defeating complacency had replaced the old fervor: “there is a lack of earnestness, a lack of care for the propagation of the truth, an acquiescence in scandals and a weakening of hope for the future, which are serious symptoms, and such as cannot be disregarded.” Halifax chided his small audience and told them that “a loss of that enthusiasm which is the essential condition of all success, and upon which the strength of any cause depends” currently paralyzed their efforts. Lord Halifax proclaimed, “If there is any truth in what is here alleged, the Catholic Revival must go forward.”

He singled out the revision of the Prayer Book as a particular cause of anxiety for Anglo-Catholics. The proposals “for revision are noxious in themselves,” he stated, “and still more noxious for the reasons that have inspired them. . . . To be allowed things that we want, on condition of similar allowance being granted to things we object to, is a position which could never be accepted.” Moreover, Halifax argued that compromises such as re-naming ancient liturgical practices so as not to offend Protestant ears must be roundly rejected. “We have to strangle it, and all such similar proposals at once.”

He identified the second cause of Anglo-Catholic anxiety as “Pan-Undenominationalism,” and he placed the blame for this evil on the shoulders of John Percival, the Bishop of Hereford, and Canon Herbert Hensley Henson.<sup>30</sup> Passivity offered little protection; action and counter-attack afforded the best defense. Halifax then revealed a strategy: “might not definite, concerted action on our part to remedy the dislocation of the Canon and other anomalies in our Communion Office. . . . be the very best step to prevent revision, or, if revision is going to be forced through, to secure such a revision as we should desire? . . . The change in our pre-Reformation services was carried out by a revolution,” he continued; and the Anglo-Catholics “have to complete the counter-revolution by winning back for the Church of England its rights, and in that

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in E. H. Day to Hill, 16 August 1911, Halifax Papers, The Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.

<sup>27</sup> Carlyle to Halifax, 24 July 1911, Halifax Papers, The Borthwick Institute of Historical Research.

<sup>28</sup> R. Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid* (London: Longmans, Green Co. 1981) 100.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in “A Conference of Clergy and Laity.”

<sup>30</sup> Many disliked Bishop John Percival because of his belief in Welsh disestablishment. Henson, then Canon of Westminster, alienated many because of his liberal theological views. He also disturbed others because he viewed the Church of England “less as an integral part of a Divinely constituted society,” but rather “as an institution which ought to embody the best ideals of our national character—its toleration, its breadth of view, its political sense, its distrust of extremes.” Churchmen were also offended by his wish to see Nonconformists included within the fabric of the national church and by his indifference to apostolic succession and the “historic doctrine of the episcopacy”: F L. Cross, *Darwell Stone. Churchman and Counsellor* (Westminster: Dacre Press 1943) 132.

conflict must remember that abnormal conditions, to some extent and within limits at least, justify abnormal action, and that ‘necessitas non habet legem.’”

Halifax described his plan by using the language and examples of a church militant. “If what we attempt be reasonable and defensible,” he told his friends, “a battle, should a battle arise in regard to such matters, would be to everyone’s advantage.” Halifax continued to use rhetoric similar to a medieval king facing a larger army: “it would enkindle enthusiasm, inspire our friends, disturb our enemies, and shift the conflict from what we have won to what we want to win.” He ended his address on a somber note. He believed that “the arrangement of our present liturgy is largely responsible for the general failure to grasp the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.” Consequently, “to teach people, and to bring home to them, what the Mass is, and anything which works in that direction is, on the face of it, good.”

Lord Halifax’s address met with general approval, and the discussion centered on the subjects which he described at the beginning of his talk, namely, the revision of the Prayer Book and the lack of enthusiasm and the complacency of the Anglo-Catholics. The participants, for the most part, avoided specific issues, and no resolution was submitted for a vote. In the afternoon, the Hickleton delegates considered a lengthy statement about Prayer Book revision submitted by the Revd Leighton Pullan, Fellow of St John’s College, Oxford, lecturer in theology at the university, and author of a study on the history of the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>31</sup> Halifax had invited Pullan to Yorkshire, but he could not attend. Pullan told Halifax that he was sick, but he did have some advice about Prayer Book revision. In the first place, any public statement must be couched in simple and plain language. Pullan promised to send Halifax some suggestions about Prayer Book revision. “I want to make very moderate demands and to state them firmly,” he wrote, and “I feel very strongly about the dislocation of the Canon to which you have often alluded.”<sup>32</sup> On the same day, he also sent Halifax a statement, “Prayer Book Revision,” with another letter in which he declared he was “anxious to do and say nothing which could reasonably repel any really sound and sober-minded Catholic.”<sup>33</sup>

On the afternoon of 12 August, Halifax read to the delegates the Revd Leighton Pullan’s statement, which would eventually form the basis for the official declaration of the Hickleton Conference. In the opening lines, Pullan suggested that “we might pledge ourselves to resist, and might refuse to employ, any revised form of the Book of Common Prayer. . . .” which might offend Anglo-Catholic practices, such as relaxation in the Ornaments Rubric and the recitation of the Athanasian creed by clergy, the failure to acknowledge catholic practices dealing with the administration of the sacraments, the reservation of the blessed sacrament and prayers for the dead. He emphasized the need to “restore a better and more primitive ‘Order of the Administration of the Lord’s Supper.’”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Pullan opposed both the Presbyterian organization and Calvinistic doctrine which had threatened to color the Book of Common Prayer in the past. He praised the actions of Elizabeth, who “wished to restore the use of the Book of Common Prayer of 1549, and of the ecclesiastical ornaments of the second year of Edward’s reign, a year when almost the whole of the medieval ceremonial was still retained”: Leighton Pullan, *The History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London 1901) xi-xii.

<sup>32</sup> Pullan to Halifax, 10 August 1911, printed in “A Conference of Clergy and Laity.”

<sup>33</sup> Pullan to Halifax, 10 August 1911, printed in “A Conference of Clergy and Laity.” This was a cover letter accompanying his list of suggestions, “Prayer Book Revision,” also printed in “A Conference of Clergy and Laity.”

<sup>34</sup> Pullan, “Prayer Book Revision.”

Like Halifax, Pullan advocated action. Strong opposition to a revision of the Prayer Book which did not acknowledge Anglo-Catholic theology or the catholicity of the church would be justified. A discussion followed, and the participants made some amendments to Pullan's statement. Lord Halifax finally ended the morning session by inviting participation on topics such as "the general methods of saying Mass," Ash Wednesday and Easter Week services. Again, no resolutions were introduced following an exchange of views.

The next business session was convened on Monday morning, 14 August. Lord Halifax read Pullan's amended statement, and made copies available for the membership. A discussion then followed about the publication of this statement of policy. The conference agreed that this declaration concerning Prayer Book revision should be made public during the first week of November, 1911. Mr H. W. Hill would determine the best method of publication. The conference also decided that signatures would not accompany the public statement, and the participants agreed that Lord Halifax should write a covering memorandum to introduce the Hickleton statement on Prayer Book revision to the public, the wording to be discussed the following day. The morning session ended with a consideration of possible changes in the Holy Week and Good Friday services, "the general restoration of the Paschal Candle and the anticipation of the Easter communion on Holy Saturday in places where in the face of difficulties largely insurmountable, such communions could be better made than on Easter Day itself." Several London churches which might pioneer these changes were identified.

The afternoon meeting continued to discuss ways to modify and improve Holy Week services consistent with Anglo-Catholic theology; and the participants "agreed that Lord Halifax should arrange for a small Committee to make a Report, setting out what could well be done at once, and the ideal to be subsequently realized, such Report to be circulated at the discretion of Lord Halifax." Following the aggressive spirit which Halifax suggested at the first meeting, they approved a plan to seek the help of experts to secure the revival of Candlemas Day, the use of candles at funerals, funeral observances such as palls and hearses, the celebration of All Souls' Day, and "the question of the blessing of Oils for unction."

The last day of the conference at Hickleton was 15 August, the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The day began with high mass, and the celebrant used the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. The participants conducted little new business during the day. Lord Halifax read his memorandum which would accompany the public statement and the resolutions of the conference, one minor amendment to the conference statement was suggested and carried, and Halifax announced plans to set up a committee to study the question of Holy Week liturgies. The membership finally agreed not to discuss the deliberations of the conference until the official statement was released during the first week in November.

#### **IV. Resolutions of the Hickleton Conference**

The Hickleton Conference had buoyed up those participants who had anguished about a revision of the Book of Common Prayer; these conversations had re-kindled an enthusiasm and provided tactics to meet the suspected assault upon their Anglo-Catholicism. The Anglican Benedictine Abbot of Caldey Island, Aelred Carlyle, had



arrived at the meeting despondent and even contemplating a conversion to Roman Catholicism. He returned to his monastery more confident. "I came away from Hickleton filled with gratitude for the opportunities of the meeting," Carlyle wrote Lord Halifax. "It was a great inspiration to me.. . for I think that a great deal of my doubt arose in the first impression from a feeling of isolation."<sup>35</sup> Ronald Knox related that when Carlyle returned to Caldey Island, the Abbot enthusiastically announced that "the crisis over prayer-book reform could be met, and we might all stay in the Church of England with a good conscience."<sup>36</sup> Carlyle's reaction to Hickleton also revealed the militancy and excitement Halifax wanted to encourage. "Dom Aelred's notes, which he read to us on his return, sounded like the confidential deliberations of generals planning a campaign," his biographer recorded, "a new crusade against the Protestant and Broad Church parties in the Church."<sup>37</sup>

The manifesto of the Anglo-Catholic party, formulated in August at the Hickleton Conference concerning a revision of the Book of Common Prayer, appeared in *The Times* on 3 November 1911.<sup>38</sup> In his introduction, Lord Halifax reminded the readers that a "determined effort is now being made to force upon the Church of England a Revision of the Book of Common Prayer," and this would effect the peace of the church and cause anxiety among the faithful. Although the upheavals of the sixteenth century had altered and destroyed much which should have been retained, he noted that all parties within the Anglican Church had continued to enjoy certain liberties in interpreting the Prayer Book. Halifax maintained that any revision would disturb the Reformation Settlement "and must also modify those obligations of the clergy which arise from their subscription to the present book." Moreover, any revision of the Prayer Book would drive clergy and laity into "independent action in defence of the Catholic doctrines and practices which it is the duty of the Church of England to maintain." This situation, he pointed out, was the background of the meeting at Hickleton where the participants pledged themselves to resist certain modifications in the Book of Common Prayer.

The newspaper article stated that these influential Anglo-Catholics would oppose "and refuse to employ any revised form of the Book of Common Prayer which" relaxed the current Ornaments Rubric, altered "the substance of the Athanasian Creed" or relaxed the duty to recite it on certain days, or sanctioned giving communion to those who were not confirmed or had no desire to receive confirmation. Moreover, any revision must include a restoration of the "more primitive 'Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper,'" linking together the preface and sanctus, the present prayer of consecration, the present prayer of oblation, and the Lord's Prayer. The "placing of the Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, and the Comfortable Words in their proper place after the Communion of the Priest" must also be incorporated in any revision of the Book of Common Prayer.

The last four demands of the Hickleton statement concerned the administration of sacraments. The first three argued for the administration of baptism within the time limits

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<sup>35</sup> Carlyle to Halifax, 1 September 1911, Halifax Papers, The Borthwick Institute of Historical Research.

<sup>36</sup> R. Knox, "Dom Aelred Carlyle: A Memory," *Pax* (Spring 1956) 28.

<sup>37</sup> P. Anson, *Abbot Extraordinary A Memoir of Aelred Carlyle Monk and Missionary 1874-1954* (London: Faith Press 1958) 143. Abbot Aelred Carlyle and the majority of his Anglican Benedictine monks eventually converted to Roman Catholicism in 1913.

<sup>38</sup> The wording of the statement in the press differed a bit in wording from the one adopted at the Hickleton Conference, but the meaning and substance remained the same.

prescribed by the present Prayer Book, condemned the failure to provide for the “Scriptural and Catholic practice of anointing the sick,” and urged recognition of the reservation of the blessed sacrament for the purpose of ministering to the sick and dying. The final concern encouraged the sanction of prayers for those “who are fallen asleep in Christ.” This declaration of the Hickleton Conference ended with a show of solidarity and a threat of ecclesiastical opposition to any revision which ignored these Anglo-Catholic positions since any deviation “on the part of the revisers [would imply] a want of fidelity to the universally received doctrine or practice of the Catholic Church.”

## **Conclusion**

The Hickleton Conference, consequently, offered the leaders of Anglo-Catholicism an opportunity to discuss the anxieties and suspicions associated with the revision of the Prayer Book. This meeting also generated an enthusiasm and confidence among the participants, and they left Yorkshire with a commitment to fight against alterations or changes to the Book of Common Prayer which might compromise their beliefs and create a more Protestant interpretation. Following Lord Halifax’s lead, the conference not only took a defensive position, but also adopted an aggressive posture which demanded the inclusion of Anglo-Catholic theology in a revised Prayer Book. The statement of their position published in the following November contained the chief objectives of the Anglo-Catholic leaders and a vow to fight or ignore any changes injurious to their beliefs. This manifesto told the Anglican Church that Anglo-Catholics had regained the aggressiveness and vitality they had enjoyed in the last century during the ritual controversies. The Hickleton Conference, therefore, helped to solidify displeasure and dissatisfaction for the proposed revision of the Prayer Book and began the opposition which eventually helped to defeat the plans for revision in 1927-28.

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