

# John Henry Hobart (1775-1830)

## *“Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order”*

*The Very Rev. Peter D. Robinson*

If you had attended Morning Service at Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York two hundred years ago, there is a strong chance that the pulpit would have been occupied by a short, muscular man of thirty-one whose poor eyesight was attested to by his strong spectacles. As his sermon proceeded you would have noticed that he preached with more freedom and emotion than was usual for an Episcopalian. This freer style of preaching was the product of his poor eyesight as he had to memorize his sermons, but effect was electrifying after the read discourses of his colleagues. On leaving the church you ask who this young preacher is, and you are told that he is none other than John Henry Hobart, the rising star of American High Churchmanship.

Hobart was born in Philadelphia on 14th September 1775. After attending the newly founded Episcopal Academy and the University of the State of Pennsylvania, he read for his degree at Princeton graduating in 1793. After a brief period working in his brother's office, he returned to Princeton as a tutor, and then followed his vocation, reading for Holy Orders under the direction of Bishop White.<sup>1</sup> The training Hobart received undoubtedly reflected the rationalist outlook of White, whose Anglicanism was of the “Tillotsonian” type.<sup>2</sup> Later, Hobart studied the writings of the Caroline Divines, particularly Jeremy Taylor, and embraced their Protestant High Church views.

After ordination to the diaconate in 1798, Hobart's early ministry was marked by restlessness. Five moves in two years took him to Trinity Church, New York, a large parish with three congregations, shortly after his marriage to Elizabeth Chandler, daughter of the late Dr Thomas Chandler. Chandler had been one of the champions of High Churchmanship in the previous generation. Hobart remained at Trinity for the rest of his life. Bishop Provoost, who was Rector of Trinity, ordained Hobart priest shortly before the Bishop's retirement in 1801. Later on, Provoost came to fear the influence and High Churchmanship of his former assistant and even tried to block Hobart's election as Bishop.

Throughout his ministry Hobart's motto was “Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order”, which he explained as the belief “*that we are saved from guilt*

*and the dominion of sin by the merits and grace of a crucified Savior”* coupled with the belief that the merits of Christ could only be reliably communicated through a “*devout and humble participation in the ordinances of the Church, administered by a priesthood who derive their authority by regular transmission from Christ.*” He also encouraged Episcopalians to deepen their spiritual life. To this end he edited two devotional works “A Companion to the Altar” and “The Christian's Manual.” Other projects from his time as Assistant Minister at Trinity were “The Protestant Episcopal Theological Society” and the “New York Bible and Prayer Book Society.” With Hobart at the helm both were organs of High Church influence.

When Bishop Benjamin Moore suffered a stroke in 1811, the diocese of New York had a major problem. Provoost, the diocesan, was retired; Moore, the assistant, was incapacitated, and the growing diocese needed a bishop. Hobart, though only 35, was seen as the natural successor. His vigorous leadership, cheerful nature, and High Church principles won him many friends, and his frankness in admitting to his errors meant that his occasional mistakes made him few enemies. When the Diocesan Convention met on 29th May 1811, Hobart was quickly elected in spite of some opposition from Provoost loyalists. The election may have been a walk-over, but securing the consecration of the new bishop was unexpectedly difficult. There were few bishops active in 1811 and when the General Convention met at New Haven only two bishops attended. In order to assemble the requisite three, Bishop Provoost suggested that the consecration be moved to New York. Even then, the drama was not over, as Provoost fell ill, and the consecration only went ahead when he finally arrived in the vestry of Trinity Church.

Although Hobart was officially only the Assistant Bishop, he ran the diocese from the day of his election. In 1811, the Diocese had twenty-five clergy, forty parishes, and 2345 communicants. Hobart set himself the task of visiting his entire diocese. Traveling by packet boat and by stage, he crossed and re-crossed New York preaching, confirming, encouraging. This was a marked contrast to his two predecessors who had limited their role to ordaining and licensing clergy, presiding over



*The Very Rev. Peter D. Robinson, F.S.S.M., has been Rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church, Prescott, AZ, and Rural Dean of Arizona in the Anglican Church in America's Diocese of the West since 2003. He was born in Lincolnshire, England, and holds a Bachelor's degree in history and theology from the University of Leeds. He was ordained in 1994, and served several missions in the UK before he married his wife, Denise in 1999, and moved to the U.S.A. He was interim Rector of a parish in California before moving to Arizona in 2002. He has been a member of P.B.S. since 1987, and is also a member of Forward in Faith North America, and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Martin (F.S.S.M.), an Anglo-Catholic society for parish priests who uphold the use the traditional Anglican liturgy (BCP/English Missal).*

*Saint Paul's Anglican Church, Prescott, AZ, was founded as a traditional BCP parish in 1981. It moved to its present location at Lincoln Avenue in 1984. The parish has outgrown that site and is in the midst of a project to create a larger sanctuary on Eastwood Drive, Prescott with a hoped-for completion in 2007 for the 400th anniversary of American Anglicanism. Sunday services (1928 BCP) are held at 9.00am and 10.30am. For details see [www.prescottanglican.ozonez.org](http://www.prescottanglican.ozonez.org) or phone 928-778-6018.*

the Diocesan Convention, and confirming in the Manhattan churches. Hobart also used his journeys as an opportunity to publicize the Episcopal Church. He read the Prayer Book services and preached in Courthouses and borrowed churches to anyone who cared to come and hear him. From these efforts a number of churches were founded in upstate New York. The down side of his administration was his need to control. He founded a *Diocesan* Missionary Society and a *Diocesan* Sunday School Society which he could dominate. He also opposed the founding of the General Seminary, as he had his own plans for a Diocesan Seminary.

The long journeys, the burden of being Rector of Trinity, Hobart's deeply personal style of administration, and additional duties, such as temporary oversight of the New Jersey Diocese (1811-1815), and of the Connecticut Diocese (1813-1819), put a huge strain on his health. He seems to have suffered periodic breakdowns, culminating in a major illness in 1823, which led to a long absence in Europe to recover his health. Some of his old vigor returned, but his stamina was clearly impaired. He met his end, appropriately enough, conducting a visitation in Auburn, New York. After preaching at St. Peter's Church, he complained of a slight cold and took to his bed. As his condition worsened, his son, a physician, was summoned from New York, but Bishop Hobart died shortly after receiving Holy Communion, two days before his fifty-fifth birthday. So well known had Hobart become that his coffin's progress back to New York was one long funeral procession. He left a greatly strengthened diocese with 128 clergy; 68 parishes, an unknown number of missions, and 6708 communicants.

Hobart's career pointed to the future of American Anglicanism, not its past. His staunch High Churchmanship coupled with a warmly emotional, almost evangelical, style pointed the way forward to Tractarianism and Anglo-Catholicism.<sup>3</sup> He molded nineteenth century Episcopal apologetic by urging the unique claims of Anglican Reformed

Catholicism upon New Yorkers. Hobart's active style of Episcopal Ministry created the modern understanding of the Bishop's role within his diocese, and Hobart's pioneering work in Upstate New York provided a model for later Missionary Bishops such as Jackson Kemper.<sup>4</sup> John Henry Hobart was indeed one of the great figures in the development of American Anglicanism.

## Notes

1. There were no Episcopal seminaries in the 1790s. One read for orders under the direction of an experienced priest.
2. Thomas Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury 1691-94, is often regarded as being the model for eighteenth century Anglicanism. He was a moderate in all matters, and is unjustly blamed for the lukewarm character of Georgian Anglicanism.
3. Modern Anglo-Catholics would be uncomfortable with Hobart's rejection of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and his opposition to Auricular Confession. Hobart was also very anti-Roman. This may have caused him to mishandle the Rome-ward leanings of Mrs Elizabeth Seaton, a member of his congregation.
4. Jackson Kemper (1789-1870) was another bishop who was deeply influenced by Bishop White while serving as his assistant at Christ Church with St. Peter, Philadelphia, in the 1820s.

## Bibliography

- James Thayer Addison. 1951. *The Episcopal Church in the United States 1789-1931*. New York.
- Diana Hochstedt Butler. 1995. *Standing Against the Whirlwind*. New York.
- Thomas Elliott Lindsley. 1984. *This Planted Vine*. New York.
- Robert Pritchard. 1991. *A History of the Episcopal Church*. Harrisburg.
- Roger Steer. 1999. *Guarding the Holy Fire*. New York.

---

*St. Andrew's Continued from page 7*

me away from my roots in the Presbyterian Church of America. Having just graduated from high school, my parents took me and my three siblings on a six week tour of the British Isles. While visiting the Cathedral at York, I stopped in the bookshop and bought my first Prayer Book: a tiny 1662 BCP and Hymns Ancient & Modern combination, published by Collins' Clear-Type Press. I had no idea what a Prayer Book was! I stayed up late into the night thumbing through the delicate pages of that miniature volume, smitten by the language of

the Scriptures raised in prayer to Almighty God.

St. Andrew's Parish is proud of its inheritance in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. But a book has no breath of its own. It is my conviction and that of the staff and parishioners of this great Parish, that each generation must be brought again to drink deeply from the life giving waters of Holy Scripture and the Prayer Book which faithfully leads us in the worship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

# The Hymnal, 1940

## *The Daily Services for Morning & Evening*

The jewel in the crown of Anglican Spirituality is the Order for Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer, but the golden band of the crown itself consists of the Daily Prayer Offices, known as Matins (Morning Prayer) and Evensong (Evening Prayer). Indeed, the Service Schedule of any parish going by the name “Anglican” is not complete without the public reading of these Offices, for they provide a disciplined means of reading and profiting from the Psalter and Holy Scripture. The prayer book system embraces both the mind and the heart, as we worship the Most Holy Trinity in Time: Morning and Evening, Month by Month, Year by Year.

What I am describing is the ideal of the Anglican Way, but this ideal is not very well reflected in the present reality of our situation. In many parishes across America today, a particular aspect of the prayer book is frequently over-emphasized at the expense of the others, and thus an incomplete picture of the Anglican Way is experienced.

In some places Holy Communion is treated as an occasional office, while a single, weekly Service of Morning Prayer is the principle act of public worship. In many more other places, Holy Communion is the only public offering of worship in the Church, while Daily Matins & Evensong are never read or sung. Adding insult to injury, the Order for Holy Communion is then also drawn, quartered and served up in such a way as to render it unrecognizable to any Churchman from the year 1549 to the year 1949, be they High, Low, Broad or Evangelical!

The fathers of our Church must have anticipated this sort of development when they provided a statement *Concerning the Service of the Church* (1928 American BCP, p. vii), saying, “The Order for Holy Communion, the Order for Morning Prayer, the Order for Evening Prayer, and the Litany, **as set forth in this Book**, are the regular Services appointed for Public Worship in this Church, and shall be used accordingly.”

There can be only one common sense, practical application of this directive, and that is to offer Daily Morning and Evening Prayer *daily*, to celebrate the Holy Communion *weekly* on the Lord’s Day (and on such Feast Days of the Saints provided in the Calendar of the Prayer Book) and to read The Litany *regularly* at the discretion of the priest. Happy is that parish, where the fullness of the Anglican system is thus appreciated, utilized and profited from in the way, in which it was intended, without yielding to local idiosyncrasies of one kind or another!

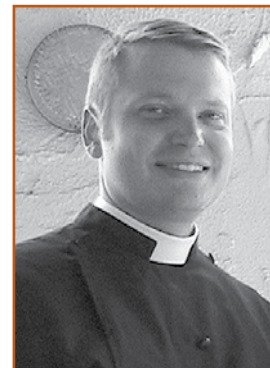
### Music for Daily Worship

On those occasions where it may be suitable to sing the Daily Services, we need look no further than *The Hymnal, 1940* for everything we need. The SERVICE MUSIC of *The Hymnal* represents centuries of musical development, carefully edited and adapted to the American situation by scholars during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. That time period remains important to the American Church, for it was a Golden Age of Church Music and Liturgical Style not paralleled since. There were well over 100 vested Choirs of Men & Boys across the country (today less than 25), and the quality of the sung Services was at a comparatively high level. Interest in the singing of the Daily Services led to the publication of musical resources such as *The Choral Service* (1927), *The American Psalter* (1930), and *The Plainsong Psalter* (1932).

*The Choral Service* provided a means for sung Matins & Evensong, Holy Communion and The Litany, using material from John Merbecke’s *Book of Common Praier Noted*, and Choral settings by Thomas Tallis. The works of Merbecke and Tallis are not useable by an average person in their original form, however, and previous editions were seriously flawed. Thus they were re-edited, presented in contemporary notation, and supplemented by other resources, such as directions on how to chant the Collect of the Day, etc... *The American* and the *Plainsong Psalters* provided Anglican Chant and Plainsong settings of the entire Psalter as well as of the Canticles.

The Service Music of *The Hymnal, 1940* is essentially formed from these three volumes, and even the title “The Choral Service” is retained for *The Preces, The Lord’s Prayer, The Suffrages after the Creed*, and the *Amen* after the sung Collects in the hymnal. Thus we find the resources for singing of Matins and Evensong, virtually from start to finish, in either Anglican Chant or in Plainsong. A trained choir can lead the congregation in Anglican Chant, but Plainsong settings are better suited for clergy and congregation in the absence of a choir. A capable organist may lead the congregation in Plainsong thanks to organ harmonizations provided by C. Winfred Douglas. That is the only reason for the harmonizations, however. Where there is a singer available who can lead Plainsong, then it should be sung *a cappella*.

Following our “Choral Service” we find *The Invitatory Antiphons* and *Venite, exultemus Domino*, 603-612. Then, Canticles: *Te Deum laudamus*, 613-622; *Benedictus es, Domine*, 623-626; *Benedicite, omina opera Domini*, 627-633; *Benedictus*,

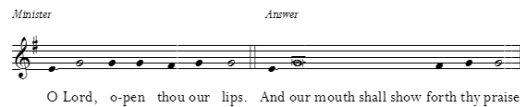


By Fr. Daniel McGrath,  
B.A., M.Mus., S.T.B.,  
D.Mus.

634-641; *Jubilate Deo*, 642-646; *Magnificat*, 647-658; *Cantate Domino*, 659; *Bonum est confiteri*, 661-666; *Nunc dimittis*, 667-673; *Deus misereatur*, 674-675; *Benedic, anima mea*, 676-679; and Occasional Canticles for Easter Day, Thanksgiving Day, Burial of the Dead, and Burial of a Child, 680-700. In the Hymnal Supplement there are additional Plainsong settings of *Benedictus es, Domine*, 742 and *Jubilate Deo*, 745, shortened forms of *Te Deum laudamus*, 795 and *Benedicite, omnia opera* 743-744; a Plainsong setting of *Magnificat*, 746 (less florid than its counterpart at 658); the additional Anglican Chants (single, double and triple) in the Supplement, 787-794, were composed by prominent American organists and composers, some of whom are still very much on the scene.

### Possible weakness?

If there is any weakness in the Service Music of *The Hymnal, 1940*, it is that Plainsong is rendered in the musical notation of metered music, which is to say, in quarter notes and eighth notes. This could lead to a stilted and artificial performance of Plainsong, when it must be sung fluently, in the rhythm of speech only. For this reason, any future edition of our Service Music requires a better Chant notation system. We are much indebted to Bruce Ford of Grace Church, Newark (b. 1947) for developing just such a system for use in *The Hymnal, 1982*. Consider for example the opening *Preces* from the hymnal, if they were set in Mr. Ford's Modern Chant, as pictured in this article.



At the end of the Third Collect for Evensong, we find a rubric which first appeared in the prayer book in 1662: *In places where it may be convenient, here followeth the Anthem*. Not much is known today about Anthems, because in the stampede of today's Churchmen to absorb anything foreign, innovative and superficial to the Anglican Way, they remain uninformed about the most typically Anglican piece of worship music! An *Anthem* is basically a sacred choral piece, along the lines of the motet. Anthems are classed in two types, primarily: a *Verse Anthem* (as in G.F. Handel's *Coronation Anthems*) consists of sung choral portions

interspersed by small groups of soloists and instrumental interludes; a *Full Anthem* is generally sung by a full Choir of Men & Boys in the contrapuntal, *a cappella* style of the Renaissance (as in the music of Thomas Tallis or William Byrd).

In the providence of Almighty God, the Anglican Church was blessed with a revival of the *Full Anthem* in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. We then were given such composers as Herbert Howells, Charles V. Stanford, R. Vaughan Williams, and so many more, that space would not permit me to mention the half of them. Because of the specialized nature of the Anthem as a piece for choral singing, there aren't any in the hymnal, apart from a very small index on p. 821, entitled "Hymns Suitable Also for Use as Anthems", but this is at least a starting repertoire for the small parish choir.

The implementation of the complete Public Services of the prayer book may not be considered feasible by some pessimists. Matins, Litany and Communion on a Sunday morning may appear to be too much. That is why I wish to relate my experience of a Service at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria B.C. a year or so ago. At this beautiful Canadian prayer book cathedral, Matins is sung up to the first Canticle, at which point the celebrant proceeds directly to the Order for Holy Communion.

Upon investigation, one finds that the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer also allows for Matins to lead seamlessly into Holy Communion in the same way. (Rubric on p. 10: *NOTE, That on any day when the Holy Communion is immediately to follow, the Minister at his discretion, after any one of the following Canticles of Morning Prayer has been said or sung, may pass at once to the Communion Service.*) What is being allowed here is the addition of the *Preces*, the *Venite*, The Psalter, an Old Testament Lesson and a Canticle, to Holy Communion. Now this would certainly lengthen the Communion Service by about 10 minutes, but consider the following: if we could first strip away all of the foreign material and doctrinal content that is presently being forced on to the prayer book rite, and replace it only with the beginning of sung Matins, the combined Service would actually be shorter and much more beautiful than what is now offered in most places! This tiny rubric, which has been hiding in the fine print of the prayer book for 78 years, may well be the way of the future!

Please remember the  
Prayer Book Society in your prayers, your  
charitable donations, and your will. Thank you.