

Come, Holy Ghost

John Cosin and 17th Century Anglicanism



Notes from sabbatical study leave, Summer 2016

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Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
and lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
with the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far from foes, give peace at home:
where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but One,
that through the ages all along,
this may be our endless song:

Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.¹

Original Latin ascribed to Rabanus Maurus (died AD 856), traditionally sung at Pentecost, Confirmations, and Ordinations:

*Veni, creator Spiritus, / mentes tuorum visita, / imple superna gratia, / quae tu creasti, pectora.
Qui diceris Paraclitus, / donum Dei altissimi, / fons vivus, ignis, caritas, / et spiritalis unctio.
Tu septiformis munere, / dextrae Dei tu digitus / tu rite promissum Patris, / sermone ditans guttura.
Accende lumen sensibus, / infunde amorem cordibus, / infirma nostri corporis / virtute firmans perpeti.
Hostem repellas longius / pacemque dones protinus; / ductore sic te praevio / vitemus omne noxium.
Per te sciamus da Patrem / noscamus atque Filium, / te utriusque Spiritum / credamus omni tempore.
Amen.*

Numerous translations and versions exist, including Martin Luther's *Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist* (1524), John Dryden's *Creator Spirit! by whose aid* (1690), and at least 50 others in English.

Cosin's version, less literal than some, but of great literary and spiritual beauty, was written for and sung at the Coronation of King Charles I in 1625, published in Cosin's *Collection of Private Devotions* in 1627, then included in the Ordinal of the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1662, and in all Church of England liturgies for the ordination of priests and bishops since then.

¹ First published in Cosin, *Collection of Private Devotions*, p 111

Come, Holy Ghost

John Cosin and 17th Century Anglicanism²

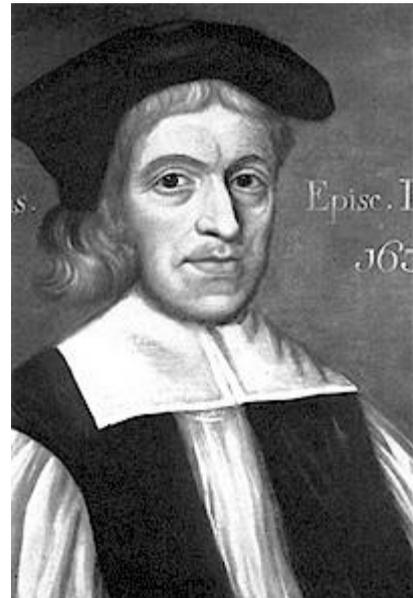
Personal Interest

I first came across Cosin (pronounced *cousin*) as a choirboy around 1960 when we learnt his great hymn, *Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire*. That hymn has stayed with me ever since, not least as it is part of the Church of England's liturgy of ordination, and I have been involved in ordination services in one way or another most of the last forty years.

Part of the genius of Cosin's version of an older Latin text is that it reads and scans as though it had always been part of the English liturgy of ordination. As we shall see later, Cosin was not really a new or creative thinker: he did not invent radical theology or turn old ideas upside down. He loved books and read very widely. In particular he knew and loved the older writings: the Bible, the ancient Church Fathers, the catholic³ liturgies, and Cranmer's texts of a hundred years before. He rejected most reinterpretations of them, whether from the Roman Catholic "right wing" or the Radical Protestant "left wing." Doctrinal orthodoxy and linguistic beauty were both important to him, and his great gift as a liturgist was that these two features characterised his thought and writing. The new collects he wrote for the 1662 Prayer Book, as well as much of the material in his 1627 *Collection of Private Devotions*, and other liturgies he produced, sound and feel like the best that Cranmer and the other masters of liturgy have given us.

In 1970 I went as an undergraduate to Peterhouse, Cambridge, where for four years I sat beneath Cosin's portrait in the Hall, and worshipped in the Chapel which meant so much to him. Although he was only Master for a relatively short time, being deprived from 1643 to 1660, his influence is still felt there. I didn't get the chance to study Cosin then, there being no 17th century options in church history, but I continued to be aware of him as a presence.

Forty years later I was called to be Bishop of Peterborough, and discovered that Cosin had been Dean there, though again interrupted by the Civil War and the Commonwealth. The memorial to his wife Frances, who died in childbirth, is still in the Cathedral, and suggests what a good influence she was on him (*see photo on p 17*). His marriage seems to have been in some



Cosin: from the panel in Peterhouse Hall

² The meaning of "Anglican" has changed over the centuries. I use it not in any technical academic sense, but simply to refer to the whole identity and culture of the Church of England at any given period of history.

³ "Catholic" has even more meanings than Anglican. In this paper I use "Catholic" (capitalized) to mean Roman Catholic, and "catholic" to refer to the culture of church life which looks to and honours the early church councils and fathers, and seeks to stay within their tradition.

respects like that of Martin Luther a century earlier: in both cases their wives apparently softened and rounded the edgy and perhaps grumpy men they married.

This third intrusion of Cosin into my life encouraged me to find out some more about him. Although there is no good modern, or even old, biography of him, there are some clues and pointers. He is one of those intriguing figures who has been claimed by both sides in several controversies, then often disowned later for holding a more subtle position than his erstwhile champions originally thought. From the 1620s to the 1660s he was admired and hated in equal measure. Never the leader of a movement or of any one side in the various political and theological arguments of those very heated years, his grasp of the issues, his clarity of thought and expression, and the beauty of his writing, ensured that people wanted him either on their side or as the main target of their invective.

As I started to dig into Cosin's thinking, I discovered three areas where I felt real resonance, sympathy, and agreement. He was saying things that weren't entirely popular in his day, and aren't today, but which I thought important and largely right. Not that I found myself in complete agreement on everything, but his confrontational tone sometimes hides a subtler and more irenic attitude.

First, Cosin's ecumenical sympathies, especially with the French Calvinists or Huguenots, are very impressive and deep. There is some controversy among historians about whether there was a change of mind during his French exile, a move from what we might now call traditional anglo-catholicism to a more broad-church view. It is clear that the anglo-catholics of the nineteenth century, who so lionised him, were embarrassed by his acceptance of non-episcopal Huguenot ordination and sacraments. But I think more and more that he was espousing the traditional catholic view all along, and that it was the Laudian party, with which Cosin is usually associated, which became more intolerant and narrow, losing its broader catholic sympathies in the second quarter of the 17th century. All this is very relevant to today's Anglicanism and its relations with other Churches, not least its understanding of Methodist ordination, and of presbyteral confirmation in our European sister Churches. The Church of England can remain authentically catholic, while being much more generous to and accepting of other traditions. In fact, authentic catholicism would move in this direction.

Second, Cosin's liturgical passion and skills made a huge difference in his century, and I believe have much to teach us nearly four hundred years on. I had studied Cranmer's 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books, the second considerably more Protestant than the first, and been aware that the Elizabethan Settlement of 1558-9 had established a Prayer Book which was something of a good compromise between the two. But I'm afraid that in liturgical terms the next hundred years were a blank to me, with the assumption that the 1662 Prayer Book which followed the Restoration of 1660 was simply a republication of the 1559 version. I didn't know about the healthy tradition of regular revisions, not least that of 1604, or that 1662 contained over 600 changes from 1559. Digging into Cosin I discovered that about 90% of these changes were suggested by him in the revision process, and that about 70% are entirely his work. If Cranmer is the primary author of the Book of Common Prayer, Cosin should be seen as the primary reviser of what is a significant revision of Cranmer's work. I love our Anglican Prayer Book tradition, but was quite ignorant about the 17th century debates which did much to shape it. But I have always felt uncomfortable with the rigidity of the 1662 Act of

Uniformity, and with the extreme reluctance to revise the 1662 book (even *Common Worship 2000* is still only an alternative, not a replacement). In Cosin I find someone who loved the old and understood it, but wasn't afraid to revise it for his generation. I also find someone who had great sympathy for those who wanted more flexible liturgy, as we will see with regard to Richard Baxter at the 1661 Savoy Conference as well as with the Huguenots in Paris in the 1640s and the 1650s. However, he very definitely believed in a set liturgy, and indeed preferred set prayers which had been carefully constructed for good doctrine and good English: his 1627 *Collection of Private Devotions* demonstrates and models that both implicitly and explicitly.

Third, Cosin clearly stood for a reformed catholicism, though in his context he preferred the word protestant to reformed. He wasn't afraid to be known as both, and indeed fought hard to establish the Church of England's credentials as fully catholic and fully protestant. In his day, and ever since, too many Anglicans have veered towards one of these positions and shunned the other. Cosin exemplifies the honourable espousal of both traditions with full integrity. He isn't afraid to reject and denounce the excesses on both sides: in particular papal infallibility and transubstantiation on the one, and the rejection of liturgy and of ecclesial hierarchy and authority on the other; but he loves Christ's Church as generously catholic and graciously protestant, and has much to teach us here. Both Paul Robinson, the Catholic priest with whom he engaged in Paris, and Richard Baxter, the leading theologian among the Puritans at the Savoy Conference, saw him as a fellow-traveller as well as a worthy opponent. Sadly, he was unable to persuade the Puritan Anglican Peter Smart and his friends to see the value of robes and symbolism in the 1620s, 30s and 40s, or Archbishop Sheldon and the Cavalier Parliament to be more gracious to the Puritans in the 1660s. The 17th century might have been much more peaceful, and the Church much more secure, if he had.

I have just had ten weeks, curtailed from my hoped-for thirteen, to spend about three days a week reading Cosin's work and becoming better acquainted with his context. I have followed my own instincts and preferences, discovering a number of new (to me) authors and controversies. I am very conscious that what I am putting down in writing is personal, provisional, and partial. I have indulged myself by including as a preface Cosin's great hymn (like all his best work, derivative of others), and as appendices his wonderful collects (in the best style of the giants on whose shoulders he stood), and his Last Testament, as included in the sermon at his funeral: these say it all.

I have learnt much, and enjoyed myself, and, when I can, hope to be back for more.

The Legacy of the 16th Century

I have already mentioned the Elizabethan Settlement. The 1559 Act of Uniformity and the subsequent Royal Injunctions had imposed clearer rules in terms of externals, such as the wearing of a surplice for ministers rather than the protestant black gown or catholic vestments, but had also allowed some latitude in practice (wafers could be used instead of ordinary bread), and greater latitude in beliefs (for example about the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine). While, as MacCulloch points out, this was not enough to satisfy Roman Catholics, it seemed to hold together the various strands of protestantism from the most conservative Lutherans to the most radical Puritans. The Queen's insistence on not making windows into men's souls enabled a high degree of mutual toleration by 16th century standards, although the Victorian anglo-catholic idea that 1558-9 created a *via media* between Catholicism and protestantism is nonsense. The *via media* was there, but only between the different strands of protestantism.

The late Elizabethan Church was, through and through, moderately Calvinistic. It wasn't a coalition of all Christian beliefs and practices. It specifically excluded Catholic allegiance to the Pope and belief in transubstantiation, and protestant rejection of liturgy and bishops. Calvin's teaching on salvation and sacraments represented a middle way between the consubstantiation of Luther and the receptionism of Zwingli. Christ was received in the Eucharist, but spiritually and only by the faithful. A liturgy which made this clear, but didn't force people to say precisely where on the spectrum they stood, held the Church together. Nicholas Tyacke has this right: "That Calvinism was the *de facto* religion of the Church of England under Queen Elizabeth and King James may surprise those brought up to regard Calvinists and Puritans as one and the same. Such an identification witnesses to the posthumous success of the Arminians in blackening the reputation of their Calvinist opponents."⁴

The Elizabethan Puritans held the doctrines of salvation and sacraments in common with the mainstream, official, majority beliefs of the Church of England. They differed from the majority in two respects. First, they wanted doctrine more tightly defined than the Elizabethan Settlement had done, and to exclude the moderate catholic views which by deliberate ambiguity were enabled to remain. In practice this would have meant getting rid of surplices, wafers, kneeling at Communion, the use of the sign of the cross, and so on: all of which they saw as welcoming or at least tolerating "papistical heresies." Second, they had a view of the Church which wanted a more thoroughgoing Reformation: getting rid of old set forms of worship rather than revising them, abolishing bishops and hierarchical structures in favour of decision-making by local clergy or even by the congregation.

The strength with which the Puritans held these distinctive views varied enormously. Some were content or even happy to remain in the Church of England despite its being broader than they would have preferred. As the century progressed, some argued for a more tightly defined Anglicanism: we shall see this shortly in the case of John Reynolds. Some eventually left for presbyterianism or independency. Some of those who left later drifted back. This pattern was repeated by their successors following the 1662 Act of Uniformity, and has persisted on a smaller scale right through the history of the Church of England. In our generation, we have seen the same pattern, though

⁴ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p 45

more often in reaction to the toleration of liberal or “progressive” views than in opposition to catholicism.

Richard Hooker began to publish his great eight-volume *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in 1594, the last three parts coming out after his death in 1600. This is too often seen as defining a pretty broad Church of England, with room for (as we would say) liberal as well as anglo-catholic beliefs and practices. Hooker is often revered as the defining theologian of Anglicanism, representing the wisdom and settled views of fifty years on from the heat of the Reformation. By and large this is true, but it doesn't take much reading of Hooker to discover that he was teaching the same moderate Calvinism that the Elizabethan Settlement had defined. He was not presenting a *via media* between Rome and protestantism. He was thoroughly reformed, rejecting both Romanism and the separatist strand of Puritanism. Some of the Puritans attacked and rejected his work, accusing him of Romanising tendencies (as they would accuse Cosin a generation later). In fact, Hooker stood for and defined an Anglicanism which was catholic but not Roman, and protestant but not separatist (as did Cosin in the next century).

This Elizabethan middle way maintained the English ecclesial peace. Most scholars and educated Christians accepted the principles of gradual reformation and salvation by grace through faith, and rejected medieval Roman additions to the gospel and extreme Puritan zeal for radical change. But the peace of 1558-9 was already under threat by the end of the century, and only held for about 60 years. Even before Elizabeth died, and the next generation tried to define doctrine more tightly again, ecclesial war began to break out – leading in many ways to the English Civil War as well as to the near-destruction of Anglicanism.

In 1595 Archbishops Whitgift of Canterbury and Hutton of York jointly published the Lambeth Articles, a series of nine doctrinal statements defending Calvinism against William Barrett, a Cambridge college chaplain who with other theologians was beginning to challenge the prevailing orthodoxy. These Articles went further than previous Anglican teaching by insisting on “double-predestination”: that some people were predestined to damnation as well as others to eternal life. The Thirty-nine Articles of a generation before had spoken of predestination as a comfortable or reassuring truth for believers, assuring them that they were safe in God's hands, but had deliberately not gone into ideas of double predestination or reprobation. This new tighter definition mirrored what was going on in continental Europe, as Calvinism (long after Calvin's death in 1564) was taking more extreme forms.

By focussing on salvation and sacraments, and avoiding more detailed controversies, the Elizabethan Church held together. Once doctrine began to be defined more tightly, for whatever reasons, things began to fall apart. As Tyacke puts it, “The grace of predestination and the grace of the sacraments were to become rivals for the religious allegiance of English men and women by the early seventeenth century.”⁵

⁵ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p 245

Arminianism, Dort, and the Durham House Group

King James had been ruling Scotland since 1566, and was known as a wise leader with a very good understanding of what was going on. Aware of the growing Puritan unease as he took the English throne in 1603, he convened the Hampton Court Conference so that he and the English Bishops could hear the main Puritan leaders and discuss their concerns. By and large this conference succeeded in maintaining peace for a time: people felt that they had been heard, and a new project was launched which saw theologians of all strands working together to produce what became in 1611 the Authorized (“King James”) Version of the Bible. The discordant note of Hampton Court came when the influential Puritan John Reynolds (sometimes *Rainolds*) asked that the Lambeth Articles of 1595 be given official confessional status alongside the Thirty-nine Articles. This was refused, but it represented the beginning of the end for ecclesial peace.⁶

In 1603, Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian, became Professor of Theology at Leiden. Although he died just six years later at the age of 49, his writings in those few years changed the face of Protestantism by providing a theologically focussed alternative to Calvinism. Although he had studied under Beza, the disciple of Calvin, Arminius began to move on a number of key points. First he re-interpreted Romans 7 as the account of an unregenerate man, saying that the converted man was no longer in bondage to sin. Gradually this expanded into a wholesale rejection of the Belgic Confession of 1561, which had become the key focus of unity for the Reformed Churches across Europe. Arminianism as a theological movement, with much greater stress on human freedom to choose, and far less on God’s sovereignty in salvation, began to grow, and protestantism faced a major theological divide.

Tyacke has written brilliantly about the rise of Arminianism in England and its significance. His views have attracted controversy, but they convince me. Three quotations sum up what he is saying:

- “Arminianism can plausibly be understood as part of a more widespread philosophical scepticism ... a reaction to dogmatic certainties.”⁷ (Elizabethan Calvinism had left room for manoeuvre by not spelling out every detail of doctrine, but it never allowed for the rejection of traditional salvation teaching in the way that Arminianism did. This new development changed Protestantism for ever.)
- “Arminians stressed the hierarchical nature of both church and state in which the office not the holder was what counted. This ... probably predisposed hereditary rulers to look benevolently on anti-Calvinists.”⁸ (King Charles I, who succeeded to the throne in 1625 and who seems to have been thoroughly convinced by Arminianism, developed an exaggerated view of the Divine Right of Kings and a great liking for William Laud: both of which led to so much trouble, and both of which are explained by this insight from Tyacke).
- “Arminians not only rejected Calvinist orthodoxy. ... With their re-interpretation of the Prayer Book and imposition of new ceremonies, Arminians became the *bête noire* of

⁶ Reynolds remained an Anglican, though Queen Elizabeth had rebuked him for wanting to be too precise in his religion, and blocked his appointment as Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. He came back into favour under King James, and was one of the main movers for, and translators of, the new Bible.

⁷ *Anti-Calvinists*, p 245

⁸ *Anti-Calvinists*, p 246

Puritans.”⁹ (Their teachings, their antagonism to even moderate Puritanism, their influence on Charles I, and the rise to power of Laud, led eventually to the tragedies of the English Civil War of 1642-51 and the Great Ejection of 1662.)

By 1609, Arminian teachings were being heard in England, although James I and Archbishops Bancroft (died 1610) and Abbot continued to hold the Calvinist line. Other leading bishops were divided: the great Lancelot Andrewes (Chichester 1605, Ely 1609, Winchester 1619-26), who had been expected by many to follow Bancroft to Canterbury and who oversaw the translation of the new Bible, took the Calvinist line; but John Overall (Coventry and Lichfield 1614, Norwich 1618-19, and very significant in John Cosin’s story) was at least sympathetic to Arminianism, and William Laud (St David’s 1621, Bath and Wells 1626, London 1628, Canterbury 1633-45) began to speak against Calvinism and for Arminianism in 1615.

The Synod of Dort (Dordrecht) was called by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1618-19 to deal with the issues raised by Arminianism. Voting representatives from reformed churches across Europe, including the Church of England, were invited. England’s four representatives, led by George Carleton, Bishop of Llandaff, took an active part and signed the final documents which held a strong Calvinist line and condemned Arminianism in no uncertain terms. In 1620 the Secretary to the Synod came to England with presentation copies of the *Acta (Resolutions)* of Dort for the King, Prince Charles, and Archbishop Abbot. He was warmly received, granted an Oxford doctorate, and applauded by the King for upholding the orthodox faith. Carleton was elevated to Chichester.

But once again a tighter definition of orthodoxy was to lead to trouble. From 1622 onwards the delegates to Dort found themselves increasingly having to defend the *Acta* against attacks from theologians and bishops. And it was only after the Synod of Dort that churchmen who were opposed to Puritanism, either the mild sort or the secessionist variety, began to be called Arminians. On the continent this was very much a theological label, but in England it began to be used, unhelpfully and confusingly, to denote loyal Anglican churchmanship: just as Calvinist began to mean anyone whose Anglican loyalties were suspect, whatever their theology of salvation and sacraments.

Richard Neile has the dubious distinction in church history of having held more English bishoprics than anyone else: Rochester 1608, Lichfield and Coventry 1610, Lincoln 1614, Durham 1617, Winchester 1628, York 1631-40.¹⁰ As Bishop of Durham, Neile, who became a convinced Arminian, hosted a group of theologians and younger church leaders at regular meetings from 1617 to 1630 in Durham House on the Strand in London. Some even lived there when they were in London. The Durham House Group sought a return to the reverence and decorum in worship which they felt had

⁹ *Anti-Calvinists*, p 246

¹⁰ In those days some bishoprics were much more wealthy and better paid than others, and bishops were appointed directly by the monarch, so it was normal for someone who stayed in favour to move “upwards” quite quickly. Also bishops tended to spend much more time in London than their diocese, as they were expected to be in the House of Lords whenever it was sitting, and to be available to the Royal Court whenever required. They were provided with a substantial London residence as well as one (or more) in the diocese. Leading the diocese was a much smaller part of the job than it is today, so a move of diocese was less of an upheaval for them or their flock than would be the case now – and with no need for consultation a successor could be appointed immediately.

been lost at the Reformation. They opposed the Reformation stress on preaching, preferring strict adherence to the liturgy and sacraments. They weren't trying to re-introduce medieval Catholic teaching, and certainly wanted to keep the Prayer Book, though they looked for its continued revision to allow for more of the ritual and solemnity they favoured. They included Neile himself, with Lancelot Andrewes and John Overall as mentors, others at various stages of seniority in the Church: John Buckeridge, Thomas Jackson, Laud, Augustine Lindsell, James Montague, and Francis White – and one seen as a most promising young theologian, John Cosin.

John Cosin was the son of Giles Cosin, a wealthy Norwich citizen, and his wife, Elizabeth Remington. He won a scholarship to Cambridge at 16 (a normal age to start university in those days), studying and then becoming a Fellow at Gonville and Caius College. In 1616, at the age of 22, with six years of Cambridge theology behind him, Cosin was appointed Librarian and Secretary to Bishop Overall. His love of books was able to flourish, and he was nurtured in the newly emerging Arminian ritualistic ways of the Durham House group. At some point while working for Overall he was ordained, and on Overall's death in 1619, Cosin was appointed Domestic Chaplain to Bishop Neile of Durham.

It is too easy to pigeonhole historical figures, as it is for our own contemporaries. The Durham House Group were a mixed bunch. They all shared the love of "high church" ritual, and they all believed that getting rid of robes or bishops would be seriously wrong, but in many important ways the more senior Andrewes, Neile, and Overall, held differing views; and the rising Laud and the about-to-rise Cosin were quite far apart theologically. They all tend now to be labelled Arminian, or even (anachronistically) Laudian. Laud, Cosin, and the other younger ones, are lumped together as the Caroline Divines. But they differed on key issues, sometimes subtly, sometimes markedly. We will see more of this with regard to the Divine Right of Kings, the attitude to the ministry and sacraments of the continental reformed churches, and the question of holding moderate Puritans within the Church of England. We have already seen that Andrewes maintained a Calvinist theology, while Laud thoroughly rejected it. Interestingly, if eccentrically, C W Dugmore describes Cosin and Andrewes as Central Churchmen, largely on the grounds of their Eucharistic theology. Whatever labels are used, it is clear that within the Durham House Group we see much of the spectrum of Anglican views across the 17th century.

The Origins of the Civil War

This brief section is a bit of a digression from my theme, and many far more knowledgeable historians have read and written much more about it than I am ever likely to know, but I note with interest that some scholars put much more weight on the religious causes of the Civil War while others see it in largely political terms. Some see Charles I's attempt to impose Anglican episcopacy and ecclesiology on Scotland (at the instigation of Laud) as a major factor, while others minimise the importance of that.

While there are many nuances to be considered, Charles I's exaggerated view of the Divine Right, which he seems to have first learned in childhood from Archbishop Bancroft (who foolishly committed Anglicanism to an Episcopacy tightly linked to the theory of the Divine Right of Kings), his Arminian hatred of Puritanism, and his determination to force greater uniformity on the Church than at any time since before the Reformation (aided and abetted by Laud), need to be given due weight. The King was trying to suppress a movement which had been tolerated for most of the previous hundred years since the time of Cranmer (except for the dreadful and bloody tyranny of Mary 1553-1558), and which given a certain amount of freedom of expression had done little harm and some real good. Putting genies back into bottles is never easy, and rarely wise. It may well be the case that the English people as a whole wanted to retain the monarchy, and were happy to restore it in 1660, but they did not want their hard-won freedoms granted under the strong-but-wise Elizabeth and James to be taken away by the young-and-foolish Charles. The irony of Charles's execution exactly one hundred years after Cranmer's first Prayer Book seems worthy of note.

Cosin's *Collection of Private Devotions*

Cosin quickly became a rising star as a liturgist and theologian, within the Durham House Group, and then on the national scene. He was helped by the patronage of Bishop Neile and others, and received several rich livings, a prebendal stall at Durham Cathedral, and the appointment as Archdeacon of the East Riding, all before his 30th birthday. But it is clear that he was up to the posts he was given. His pastoral care of his parishes, and his preaching, were valued. Even when he appointed curates to cover his absences he continued to visit and to be involved. Much of the money from the livings he put in to beautifying the church buildings, including stunning carved wooden screens and furniture at Brancepeth. As Archdeacon he was active in visitations and in encouraging clergy in their pastoral ministry. He was increasingly known as a ceremonialist, attempting to re-introduce elements of ritual and beautiful furnishings for worship, as one who argued for people to attend and receive Holy Communion more regularly, and as something of a scourge to “the ceremony-haters of our day.”

The new King Charles I wanted some appropriate religious input for his wife's maids-of-honour and ladies-in-waiting. Henrietta Maria was a Roman Catholic, open about it and proud of it, and this raised much public concern. Charles looked for some way of ensuring that her court and staff did not go in that direction too, but also did not become irreligious. He sought advice, and commissioned Cosin to write a manual of prayers for their use. Quickly Cosin produced his *Collection of Private Devotions* (1627), a pattern of daily and seasonal readings and prayers, which immediately and rightly became a best-seller. Such primers had existed within Roman Catholicism, although for clergy, monks and nuns rather than for lay people, and in Latin rather than in any vernacular, and a Latin one had even been authorized in 1560 for the private use of Church of England clergy. Cosin had obviously read and studied several of these, and based his book on what had gone before. But this was in English, for lay people, and very clearly not Roman Catholic. In addition to a regular daily pattern of prayer based on monastic offices, the *Devotions* included expositions of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, and material to help people prepare themselves for Holy Communion. Cosin mined a variety of sources, including (though perhaps wisely not acknowledging) Ignatius Loyola. The *Devotions* was a hugely important work, both derivative and seminal, and still repays study and devotional use.

However, this was the 17th century, and we are talking church history, so it is to be expected that this early masterpiece from a 31 year-old did not receive universal acclaim. In fact it aroused great enmity among the more Puritan-minded theologians, and Cosin quickly became the public hate-figure in their circles, far more than Laud, whose anti-Puritan views were stronger, but whose communication skills were weaker, than the younger man's. Cosin's clarity, his ability to popularise, his willingness to be controversial, and his immense communication skills, made him an easy target for those who wanted one.

One of his themes was that people should be taught to pray, and that the use of written set prayers was a very good way to do this. Some of the Puritans believed that all or most prayers should be spontaneous or *ex tempore*. Cosin thought that this might be acceptable for theologically educated people, but not for the average worshipper. He gives four reasons for publishing the *Devotions*, and

the first puts this very clearly: "That men before they set themselves to pray, might know what to say, and avoid, as near as might be, all extemporal effusions or irksome and indigested prayers."¹¹ This sort of language was never going to endear Cosin to the Puritans, however good the prayers in his book were – and many of them were very good indeed.

Cosin's views were not theologically Arminian as were Neile's or Laud's (we can see that in his *Last Testament*, which I have included towards the end of this paper); he did not reject all non-Anglican ministry as did Laud and Jeremy Taylor; and later Puritans such as Richard Baxter saw him as the most supportive of the Anglican leaders towards their cause: but still he became the focus of immense theological and personal opprobrium.

The complaints against the *Devotions* began with pamphlets by Henry Burton and William Prynne, claiming that it was riddled with popery. In truth, Cosin was fiercely anti-popery, but strongly pro-ritual, and his attackers either ignorantly or maliciously ignored this distinction. They condemned its prayers for the dead (less blatant than some, and removed by Cosin from later editions), the proliferation of saints' days, and the emphasis on priestly absolution. Cosin defended these charges, but then Peter Smart, a fellow-prebendary of Durham, launched an even more vitriolic attack. That, and its consequences, changed everything.

¹¹ *Collection of Private Devotions*, p 11

Controversy, Cambridge, Catastrophe

Peter Smart had been a prebendary of Durham since 1609, and was unhappy with a number of changes introduced to the liturgy and the ritual since then. Cosin became the focus for this, even though most of the changes had taken place well before he appeared on the scene. Smart's initial attack took the form of a sermon in the Cathedral in July of 1628. He declared that Cosin "hath turned these his Popish theories and speculations [in the *Devotions* book] into practice." He described Cosin as "our young Apollo, [who] repaireth the Quire and sets it out gayly with strange Babylonish ornaments", and accused him of introducing ornamental angels and candles on Candlemas Day, of having the Creed sung by the choir, and of insisting on the wearing of copes "one of them having the picture of the Trinitie embroidered upon it." In fact, changes like this were coming into cathedrals generally, and although Cosin approved of them (not least of choral polyphony replacing some congregational singing), and later introduced such things into Peterhouse Chapel when he became Master there, he was not the culprit in Durham, and was able to defend himself with ease. But mud sticks, and Smart's personal attack on Cosin made them both notorious.

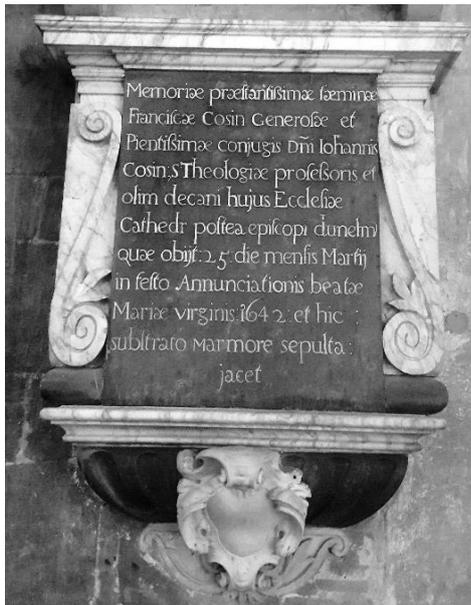
Smart was suspended by the Cathedral Chapter, then deprived by the High Commission Court, with Cosin giving evidence against him. However, opponents of "Arminianism" (or rather ritualism) in Parliament used his accusations and others to accuse Cosin of high treason, of tampering with the Prayer Book, and as "an author and abettor of Popish and Arminian innovations." Cosin was saved by the dissolution of parliament, as Charles I began his autocratic eleven-year personal rule.

Cosin's ministry continued and flourished, but not without controversy. He was known to be in favour with the King, organised services and a reception for Charles when he visited Durham in 1633, and was appointed a royal chaplain-extraordinary that year. But Smart continued to attack, and both the Dean and the new Bishop failed to give Cosin the support he wanted. He had the support of Neile, now Archbishop of York, but also felt it necessary from time to time to appeal to Laud, now at Canterbury, and to the King, against his own Bishop. At the same time, his gifts of administration were being used: he represented Archbishop Neile in undertaking a visitation of Chester in 1633, and as treasurer of Durham Cathedral he completely reformed the finances in 1633-34.

In 1635 he was appointed Master of Peterhouse in Cambridge. Quickly he embellished the Chapel and its services in a ritualistic direction, spending much of his own money to do so. But we see his independence of mind in that in 1636 he opposed Laud's attempts to conduct a visitation of the University, while at the same time writing to Laud to tell him which aspects of the colleges' religious lives needed to be reformed. He became vice-chancellor of Cambridge in 1639, naturally using the opportunity to move Great St Mary's, the University Church, in a more ritualistic direction, but also to plan new University buildings including a library, for which he raised the huge sum of £8,000. Those plans were not to come to fruition because of Cosin's own troubles of the early 1640s, which made his earlier difficulties pale into insignificance.

The King's war with Scotland meant that Cosin lost the income from his Durham livings. The Mastership on its own did not pay enough to meet his commitments, so in 1640 the King also appointed him Dean of Peterborough. As with his other appointments, and even with his busy

Cambridge enterprises, he took this seriously, giving clear leadership and pastoral attention to the Cathedral, drawing up an inventory of chapter lands and leases, proposing a better system for collecting the rents – and in 1642 burying his wife there after she died giving birth to their fifth child.



The memorial to Frances Cosin in Peterborough Cathedral

To the memory of a most excellent woman, Frances Cosin, generous and very godly; wife of Master John Cosin, Professor of Sacred Theology [STP: equivalent to today's Doctor of Divinity], formerly Dean of this Cathedral Church, later Bishop of Durham; who died on 25 March 1642, on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and lies buried here in a marble tomb.

In 1641 the newly convened Long Parliament (anti-king, anti-ritual, anti-Cosin) began to consider again all of Peter Smart's old accusations. The Commons condemned him, but he was just saved in the Lords by pleading the King's pardon granted to him in 1629. This was a very tough time, though Cosin kept his head (in more ways than one). When he bowed before a Commons committee, one of the members noted sarcastically, "Here is no altar, Dr Cosin." On top form, Cosin replied, "Why then, I hope there shall be no Sacrifice."

As the Civil War started in 1642, Cosin (in common with other Oxbridge College Masters) attempted to send money and plate from Peterhouse to support the King. This was intercepted by a group of Cambridgeshire volunteers under Oliver Cromwell, and Cosin was in even more trouble. In 1643 Parliament imposed subscription to the Solemn League and Covenant on all citizens over 18. Before long Cosin was deprived of the his Mastership, but by then he had already fled to France.

Exile, Roman Catholicism, and the Huguenots

Queen Henrietta Maria was also safely in France as Charles fought the Civil War against Parliament, and the King appointed Cosin to serve as Chaplain to the protestant members of her court in Paris. For 17 years he held the protestant royalists together (without pay after Charles's execution in 1649): maintaining Anglican worship, seeing a number of converts from Roman Catholicism, and losing a few (including to his horror his own son) in the opposite direction.

He engaged in private and public debate with Roman Catholics, especially in the person of Father Paul Robinson, Prior of the English Benedictines in Paris. He maintained his impressive levels of reading and writing, and became increasingly friendly with the Huguenots who met and worshipped at Charenton, just outside the city. There is debate among scholars as to how much Cosin changed his views in Paris, Dugmore even arguing that here he moved from High to Central Churchmanship, whereas Osmond argues that he moved away from his previous beliefs, abandoning the catholic understanding of bishops as essential for ordination. More of all that a bit later, though (to give the game away slightly) I am not convinced that he did change his theology at all, or that he ever abandoned true catholic teaching. But it is clear that in Paris he found the Huguenots more congenial than the Romans.

Some of Cosin's writings from this period are very much to the point.

- “[The Roman Catholics] are here so exceeding uncharitable, and somewhat worse, that I know not how any man ... can enter into communion with them in those doctrines and practices which they hold necessary to salvation. ... It is far less safe to join with these men, that alter the *credenda*, the vitals of religion, than with those that meddle only with the *agenda*, and rules of religion. ... They of Geneva are to blame in many things, and defective in some Yet I do not see that they have set up any new articles of faith under pain of damnation to all the world that will not receive them for such articles; and you know whose case that is.”¹²
- “Though we may safely say ... that [Huguenot] ministers are not so duly and rightly ordained, as they should be, by those Prelates and Bishops of the Church, who, since the Apostles' time, have only had the ordinary power and authority to make and constitute a Priest, yet, that by reason of this defect there is a *total nullity* in their ordination, or that they be therefore no Priests or Ministers of the Church at all, because they are ordained by those only who are no more but Priests or Ministers among them, for my part, I would be loath to affirm and determine against them.”¹³
- “It is [Christ's] spiritual presence that we must hold to now, and that is as real a presence as any his body or his flesh ever was, or ever can be.”¹⁴
- “The fiction of transubstantiation and the repeated sacrifice of Christ to be offered daily by each priest for the living and the dead are rejected by our Church.”¹⁵

¹² Letter to Dr Richard Watson, 1646 (*Correspondence*)

¹³ Letter to Mr Cordell, 1650 (*Works*, Vol 4, p 400)

¹⁴ Ascension Day Sermon, 1651 (*Works*, Vol 1)

¹⁵ Ascension Day Sermon, 1651

- “The Eucharist may by allusion and analogy be called a sacrifice, and the table an altar, though neither can be strictly and properly so called.”¹⁶
- “Luther was a man of great learning, and God bestowed on him singular gifts and remarkable talents, by which he was enabled to bring again into a clearer light ... the truth of the Gospel; but he was not infallible.”¹⁷
- “Calvin, too, deservedly stands high in reputation, but none of us take him for our master; and we are not prepared to submit to him, as every Papist must to the Pontiff.”¹⁸

And his table of comparison (abbreviated) seems to say it all.

“The Roman Catholics:

1. Say and believe that we are all damned, and accursed persons.
2. Call us heretics.
3. Excommunicate us.
4. Burned us.
5. Allow us no burial other than the burial of a dog.”

“The Reformed Churches:

1. Say and believe ... that we profess and believe what is necessary to salvation.
2. Acknowledge us true Catholics.
3. Most willingly receive us.
4. Harboured us.
5. Allow us to bury our dead in their churchyards.”

In conclusion, Cosin says of the Huguenots, “In all which regards we ought no less to acknowledge them, and to make no schism between our Churches and theirs, however we approve not some defects which may be seen among them.”¹⁹

Cosin had clearly read the writings of Georg Calixtus (1586-1656), the Lutheran Abbot of Königsutter. He regularly quotes him in his notes on the Prayer Book (more of this to follow). One of Calixtus’s great passions was the uniting of the protestant Churches of Europe. The Charenton Huguenots had been among the first to rise to his challenge, declaring in 1631 that Lutherans could receive communion in their churches, and be accepted as sponsors for children, without renouncing their Lutheranism. But Cardinal Richlieu, the iron hand of Rome in France, wanted to divide and rule the protestants, and got his mouthpiece, Veronus, to declare: “This new heresy [mutual acceptance by protestants] is the worst of all; teaching indifference to all religions, allowing men to be Calvinists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Anglicans, or otherwise, if they did but believe in the same God and in the same Christ. This new heresy is but one remove from atheism.”²⁰

Cosin’s attitude to all this was crystal clear. At Charenton, the Huguenots had offered the Anglicans the same welcome as the Lutherans. He encouraged his flock to intercommunion with the Huguenots, and gratefully took advantage of the permission to hold burial services there according to the Anglican rite. There is no evidence that he personally ever received communion from them, but he was in no doubt as to the validity of their (albeit irregular) orders and their sacraments. Episcopacy to him was important, beneficial, and a plank of catholicity, but not absolutely essential.

¹⁶ *Works*, Vol 5, p 347

¹⁷ *The Religion, Discipline and Rites of the Church of England*, 1652

¹⁸ *Religion, Discipline and Rites*

¹⁹ *The State of Us Who Adhere to the Church of England (Works, Vol 4, pp 337-338)*

²⁰ Dowding, *The Life and Correspondence of George Calixtus*

Osmond, whose 1913 biography of Cosin is still the only one in existence, felt that Cosin let the side down at this point, stating that his attitude to the Huguenots “distressed some of his friends and would be endorsed today by very few Churchmen who are in sympathy with his general Churchmanship.”²¹ Clearly Osmond is trying to claim Cosin as a full-blown late-Victorian anglo-Catholic, but he never was that.

Cosin was a 17th century “catholic protestant” (his own phrase), who had never accepted the new teaching on episcopacy brought in initially by Laud and James Montague (Bishop of Bath and Wells 1608, Winchester 1616-18). In his DD thesis, Laud had argued that only a bishop can confer orders, that episcopacy is superior by divine right to priesthood, and that there can be no Church without diocesan bishops. He seems to have picked up these innovations from Cardinal Bellarmine, the theological leader of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. But Laud simply asserted all this, without attempting to prove it. According to Cosin, Jeremy Taylor in 1642 was the first explicitly and systematically to deny presbyterian orders.²²

Cosin continued to hold the line of the pre-Counter-Reformation catholic Church, shared by Cranmer, and by Lancelot Andrewes, Richard Hooker, and John Overall, that non-episcopal ordination, if it took place in a Church or a context where no bishops were available, could be valid. When questioned about his positive attitude to the Huguenots, he asked: “Whether, in such a case, if you were a Bishop, you would ordain the Presbyter [one previously ordained by presbyters alone] again, or no; which was never done in the Church of England? whether the Church of England hath ever determined the French and German ordinations by Presbyters and superintendents to be null and vain? and hath not rather admitted them and employed them at several times in public administration of the Sacraments and other divine offices among us? yea, whether there was not such a law made (13th Eliz.) to allow such an ordination?”²³ His reference to a law is to one made in the 13th year of Elizabeth’s reign that said those being admitted to a benefice must subscribe to the Articles of Religion: there is no specific mention of episcopal ordination one way or the other, but Cosin’s understanding that this was the only condition seems to have been shared by many others.

Cosin doesn’t just assert this case: he argues it from the earliest days of the Church. In detail he spells out six reasons why we cannot reject non-episcopal ordination as always invalid. Among these, he writes that in the early Church: “Restricting ordination to bishops was by Apostolical Practice, not absolute precept.” He also uses a powerful inclusive (and properly catholic) argument, that “Some learned scholars have always allowed Presbyters the intrinsic power of ordination.” He insists that this “Is not a communion-breaking matter.” And he allows of the Huguenots that they don’t deny bishops, but rather hold that presbyters are bishops.²⁴

Anthony Milton in his great book, *Catholic and Reformed*, writes: “The outright denial of presbyterian orders probably remained a minority position even among Laudian divines ... its roots

²¹ Osmond, *Life*

²² Taylor, who had also studied at Gonville and Caius College but was nearly 20 years Cosin’s junior, went on to be King Charles I’s Chaplain and alongside him on the scaffold in 1649. Like Cosin he suffered under the Commonwealth, but was elevated after the Restoration, becoming Bishop of Down and Connor 1660-67.

²³ Letter to Gunning, *Works*, Vol 4, pp 448-449

²⁴ Letter to Cordell, *Works*, Vol 4, p 401

lay in a far broader change in Jacobean and Caroline understandings of episcopacy.” Milton goes on to say that this new view, rejecting non-episcopal orders as invalid, was espoused by Charles I, who saw presbyterianism as “more erroneous than the Church of Rome.”²⁵ Cosin never accepted that new narrow catholicism: he remained authentically catholic.

²⁵ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p 493

Breda, Savoy, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the Act of Uniformity

After the death of Oliver Cromwell his son Richard was named Lord Protector, but was quickly seen to be a weak and ineffective leader. He stepped aside, and before long the largely Presbyterian Parliament was talking about welcoming Charles (son of the executed King Charles I) back from the continent and restoring the monarchy. This became possible with the Declaration of Breda. This was actually a series of letters, dated April 1660, in which Charles promised a general amnesty for those who had led the country and marginalised Anglicanism since 1649, with the exception only of those directly responsible for the execution of his father. Charles wrote that “No man should be disquieted or called into question for differences of Opinion in Matters of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom.”²⁶ The plan was for a real measure of religious freedom, remarkable for its time, and fitting exactly with what Cosin had been teaching. In practice this would mean bishops restored, but with reduced powers, and both Puritans and Roman Catholics tolerated.

This was accepted by the presbyterian-majority parliament, but later on Bishop Sheldon of London, soon to move to Canterbury, managed to move the goalposts so that the concessions and the freedom were just a temporary measure until a new synod and Prayer Book should be in place. Cosin and Sheldon were to disagree over all this frequently and bitterly.

Cosin loved the *Book of Common Prayer*, but clearly believed that it could always be improved, and that it should be revised for each generation. The version in use during the earlier part of his ministry was that of 1604, but he knew of Cranmer’s versions of 1549 and 1552, Elizabeth’s of 1559, and of course the many earlier sources and texts which Cranmer had mined. He was a wonderful liturgical scholar. There are many hand-written notes in the margins of Prayer Books which Cosin owned. These are usually grouped by scholars as the First Series and the Second Series, dated 1619 onwards and 1638 onwards, though some of the Second Series must be dated as late as 1644, and some to 1656. This careful liturgical annotation, flowing from his very wide reading, continued for most of his ministry, uniquely equipping him for the work of revising the *Book of Common Prayer*.

In the First Series, he quotes at length from *On the Sacraments*, by Maldonatus, a Spanish Jesuit theologian, from sermons by Andrewes, and from Hooker, among others. In the Second Series Calixtus’ *On the Sacrifice of Christ* looms large. Cuming argues that by the Second Series Cosin has moved his position, softening towards the Reformers. It is true that in those later notes he praises both Luther and Calvin, and criticises Rome very fiercely, but I can only find a change of emphasis and not of doctrine from his earlier positions. He certainly becomes more controversial, dwelling on differences from Rome rather than areas of agreement, but his reformed sacramental theology is clear even in the First Series.

The Savoy Conference was called by the King in 1661, with the aim of getting Anglicans and Puritans to agree the text of a new revision of the Prayer Book, and building them into one united national church. Officially Archbishop Frewen of York led the Anglican delegation, but in practice he delegated this role to Sheldon of London. Cosin was by far the major contributor of scholarship, ideas, revisions, arguments, (and concessions) on the Anglican side, submitting 90% of the 600

²⁶ Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*

changes eventually made from the 1604 book, 70% of them being entirely his own work. He persuaded the bishops to make a total of 17 concessions in the hope of keeping the Puritans on board. Richard Baxter, in effect leader of the Puritan side, wrote that Cosin was “extremely well versed in Canons, Councils and Fathers,” describing him as “of a rustic wit and carriage, so that he would endure more freedom of our discourse with him, and was more affable and familiar than the rest.”²⁷ However, Sheldon and the others managed to block other key concessions which would have enabled the Puritans to accept the new book.

Sheldon is seen as a hero by many, indeed “the architect of Anglican survival” by historians like Sutch. He was clearly a very good administrator, even though not really an intellectual, and certainly no preacher. But his skills in managing the business of the Church had enabled him to rise under Laud and Charles I. During the Commonwealth he was indefatigable in supporting Anglicanism and raising funds to keep the remaining clergy going. His eventual appointment to Canterbury, like Laud’s 30 years earlier, reflected his usefulness to King and Church. But his theological views, also like Laud’s, eventually led to the Church dividing. He was firmly against allowing presbyterians any role in public life, and in this he got his way.

To be fair, the failure to reach final agreement at the Savoy Conference was not only Sheldon’s fault. Richard Baxter was a difficult character, speaking and writing at great length and in great detail, and not always helping his own cause. Baxter did, however, achieve the inclusion of the “manual acts” in the Eucharistic Prayer (nowadays sadly sidelined in *Common Worship* and ignored by many evangelicals who don’t seem to know their own heritage). But Savoy failed, and the Puritans felt unable to accept the new book.

Following the failure of Savoy, the Cavalier Parliament, elected after Charles’s return on the basis of the Declaration of Breda, overturned all the aspects of toleration which the King and his friends had promised to introduce, and between 1661 and 1665 passed the four statutes known as the Clarendon Code (though Lord Chancellor Clarendon himself, like Cosin, thought them much too harsh). These measures severely limited the rights of both Roman Catholics and non-conformists, effectively excluding them from national and local politics, and of course from Church appointments. This represented a complete overturning of the principles of Breda, and of the convention that had until then allowed Huguenot ministers to be admitted to Anglican benefices without episcopal ordination.

So the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1662 was published, including the changes and (insufficient) concessions that had been agreed at the Savoy Conference, and reinforced by a new Act of Uniformity which insisted on absolute conformity to the text and rubrics of the Book. F D Maurice in the 19th century made the interesting point that the Puritans wanted uniformity of opinions with freedom of modes of worship, whereas the Act of Uniformity insisted on uniformity in worship with some freedom of beliefs.²⁸ This of course reflects the Elizabethan Settlement of a century earlier.

²⁷ Osmond, *Life*

²⁸ Maurice, *Kingdom of Christ*, Vol 2, p 296

Thus came about the Great Ejection, with probably 2,500 clergy forced out of the Church of England. To add to the cruelty of this, the date on which it was brought into effect was St Bartholomew's Day, exactly 90 years after the dreadful massacre of the Huguenots in France.

Cosin's Other Distinctive Views

Alongside his views on Huguenots, non-episcopal orders, and the toleration of Puritans within the Church of England, Cosin was something of an embarrassment to the more hardline members and successors of the Durham House Group in other respects. He was able to look into Scripture and the Fathers, and break free of the shibboleths and legalism of his time. He was also courageous enough to challenge the Church's laxity in other areas.

On Sunday observance, the Church in his day was remarkably lax, and Cosin argued for a greater honouring of the Lord's Day.

He wanted to raise the minimum age of confirmation to 14, but failed to get that into the Prayer Book.

He also believed in the possibility of a second marriage for the innocent party after divorce, speaking on several occasions in the protracted House of Lords debate on Lord Ross's situation. Cosin took the very unusual stance, one of only two or three bishops out of the 18 present in the debate, that Jesus' teaching recorded in Matthew's gospel about the legitimacy of divorce after adultery also implied permission to remarry. "The exception confirms the rule, and infers a concession, that in the case of fornication, the putting away one wife and marrying another is allowed." He went on saying that "The plain drift of our Saviour to teach ... that the marriage of a second wife after the dismissal of a former, upon any other cause except for fornication, is no less than adultery; thereby inferring, that, upon a just dismissal for fornication, a second marriage cannot be branded with adultery."²⁹

²⁹ Cosin's contributions to House of Lords Debate, in *Works*, Vol 4, pp 489-503

Reflections

If anyone other than me is reading this, congratulations on getting so far (unless you cheated and skipped to this section). Please don't take this study as an attempt at an academic paper. I wrote it simply as an aide-memoire for myself, in the hope that a very enjoyable summer of study wouldn't be entirely forgotten by the winter. I came to this with a great interest in church history and historical theology, and reasonably well-read (for a non-academic) in the early church fathers and in the 16th and 19th centuries, but conscious of yawning gaps in my reading, not least Cosin's century. So I have just jumped in, starting with Cosin's own works and what little others have written about him, and moved out a bit from there. I could easily have been sidetracked into the religious aspects of the Civil War, or into how the Huguenot refugees were received into this country, but I've pretty much stayed on track with Cosin. Time permitting, I would like to have read more of Andrewes and Taylor, and of Laud and Sheldon; I'm pretty sure that I would have enjoyed the first two and been infuriated by the two archbishops.

I've been surprised to discover, though on reflection it might seem obvious, how much the controversies in which Cosin was embroiled focussed on the sacraments, and particularly the Eucharist. Of course politics is there too, and personalities loom large; different understandings of what "Church" is, and of where authority lies, are important; but it is Eucharistic theology, and the outworking of that in worship, that seems to be at the heart of all this. It is possible that this is simply my perception, and that I've been struck by the things I am interested in, or that I'm just carrying over my own thoughts about the 16th century into the 17th. But I think not. How Christ comes to us in the Supper, how we receive him in that meal: this is the experience which should unite Christians, but so often seems to divide us. Increasingly I see Cosin as potentially a great healer and bridge on this issue (as I do Calvin and Cranmer a hundred years earlier), but sadly they are all still seen as figures of division rather than of unity. If I've got Cosin right, he could still help bring us together.

Getting Cosin right seems to be tricky. I think his only biographer, Osmond (1913), simply doesn't get him, wanting to fit Cosin into his own mould of theology and churchmanship, with a fierce dislike of Puritanism, an absolute rejection of non-episcopal ordination, and an insistence on pre-reformation Eucharistic vestments; and finding him at fault when he doesn't quite fit. I think that a more recent sketch-writer on Cosin, Carter (1946), although trying to be less partisan (though strangely he doesn't give any indication of having read Osmond), also falls into the trap of trying to pigeon-hole his subject. Carter describes Cosin's understanding of the Eucharist as close to Lutheran consubstantiation teaching, which I think betrays ignorance of both views. Consubstantiation holds that Christ's body and blood are in some way physically present in and alongside the bread and wine, "co-mingled" as it is sometimes put. Bread and wine remain present (unlike the medieval Roman transubstantiation teaching), but are joined by the body and blood. Cosin insisted that not to be the case. He opposes consubstantiation as much as he does transubstantiation.

Cosin's understanding of the Eucharist is easily misunderstood, but I think straightforward. I have given relevant quotes on pp 18-19 above. What he is presenting here is the classical reformed position, taught by both Calvin and Cranmer. Christ is present, really present; that presence is

spiritual, not physical, but no less real for that. In his *First Series of Notes on the Prayer Book* he may seem to be closer to Luther, or even to Rome, but I think this a misunderstanding. “The body and blood of Christ is really and substantially present, and so exhibited and given to all that receive it; and all this not after a physical and sensual, but after a heavenly and invisible and incomprehensible manner.” If you just take the first part of that, and read *substantially* in a technical philosophical sense, as in transubstantiation or consubstantiation, you could conclude that he is teaching a physical presence and reception. But when you include the second half of the sentence (always a good idea), you see that he is using *substantially* to mean something rather different. I take him to be meaning that Christ is *effectually* or *beneficially* present. That seems confirmed by these sentences, also from the First Series of Notes: “The sacrifice which the church makes is only commemorative and sacramental ... Christ only offered it really upon the cross by his own death” and “It is not only a eucharistical, but a propitiatory, sacrifice ... not that it makes any propitiation, as that of the cross did, but that it obtains and brings into act, that propitiation which was once made by Christ”³⁰. He is using very strong language of the Eucharist, in such a way that those later anglo-catholics who believe in transubstantiation or consubstantiation feel able to claim him as theirs, and that those later protestants who see the Supper as simply a memorial meal can be very uncomfortable with him, but I think both those groups misunderstand this teaching.

This talk of the sacraments as effective or beneficial, so much so that it is possible to speak of them as though they were the source of that benefit, while still insisting that the source is always Christ himself and his cross, is not careless or unhelpful talk. It is biblical (“This is my body”³¹ or “Eat my flesh”³² or “Water [washing] of rebirth”³³), it goes back to the early church fathers, and it is classically reformed. It fits in with Cranmer’s Baptism language: “Seeing this child is now regenerate,”³⁴ and with Calvin on the Eucharist: “Unless a man means to call God a deceiver, he would never dare assert that an empty symbol is set forth by him. Therefore, if the Lord truly represents the participation in his body through the breaking of bread, there ought not to be the least doubt that he truly presents and shows his body. And the godly ought by all means to keep this rule: whenever they see symbols appointed by the Lord, to think and be persuaded that the truth of the thing signified is surely present there.”³⁵ “I freely accept whatever can be made to express the true and substantial partaking of the body and blood of the Lord, which is shown to believers under the sacred symbols of the Supper – and so to express it that they may be understood not to receive it solely by imagination or understanding of mind, but to enjoy the thing itself as nourishment of eternal life.”³⁶ “I shall not be ashamed to confess that it is a secret too lofty for either my mind to comprehend or my words to declare. And, to speak more plainly, I rather experience than understand it. Therefore, I here embrace without controversy the truth of God in which I may safely rest. He declares his flesh the food of my soul, his blood its drink. I offer my soul to him to be fed with such food. In his sacred Supper he bids me take, eat, and drink his body and blood under the

³⁰ All quotes in this paragraph are from the First Series of Notes on the Prayer Book, *Works*, Vol 5, pp 106-150

³¹ Matthew 26.26

³² John 6.54

³³ Titus 3.5

³⁴ Service for the Baptism of Infants, *Book of Common Prayer*

³⁵ *Institutes*, Book 4, Ch 10

³⁶ *Institutes*, Book 4, Ch 19

symbols of bread and wine. I do not doubt that he himself truly presents them, and that I receive them."³⁷

If only today's memorialist-minded protestants and transubstantiation/consubstantiation-minded catholics could hear this teaching, there might be real hope of coming together. There is much more to be said along these lines.

Cosin also wrote about the number of sacraments in a way which is properly Anglican, that is both catholic and protestant. He teaches, following and citing Augustine, that there are two sacraments "as generally necessary to salvation," but that there is no need to argue with Rome on the number, because we acknowledge many more "in a general sense." Cosin's whole sacramental theology could do with careful study today. It is biblical, catholic, protestant, and could be bridge-building for today's church.

I only wish that today's protestant Anglicans could realize that there is much to be learnt from the 17th century as well as the 16th, seeing someone like Cosin as building on the work of Cranmer; and that catholic Anglicans could see that their patrimony might more properly acknowledge Andrewes and Cosin rather than, or at least in addition to and balancing, Laud and Sheldon.

This leads on to the question of ordination, and the recognition of non-episcopal orders (and of non-episcopal Confirmation and Communion). I could go on, and expand what I've written on pp 19-21 with application to today's Church, but I think it's time to stop. For now.

³⁷ *Institutes*, Book 4, Ch 32

Collects written by Cosin and included in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer***The Third Sunday in Advent**

O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

St Stephen's Day

Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth, for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first Martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life: Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Easter Even

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that, through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The First Ember Collect

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son: Mercifully look upon the same, and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of thy Church. And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Cosin's Last Testament

OUR HELP IS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH.

In the Name and honour of the same Lord our God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the most high and undivided Trinity.

Forasmuch as it is appointed for all men once to die, and that every man's body shall be dissolved, but the time of my dissolution is uncertain; of which notwithstanding, as if it were nigh at hand, being mindful in my daily meditations, and shaken with the frequent infirmities of my body, I ever and anon think thereof:

I, John Cosin, an humble minister in the Church of God, and by the permission of the most High now Bishop of Durham, not putting my hope in this present life, but ever aspiring to that other (which is to come) eternal in the heavens, and which by the mercy of God ere long I hope to obtain, and humbly praying, for the salvation of my own soul, that through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, our only Redeemer and Mediator, all mine offences be forgiven me, being of a sound mind, out of a sincere heart, to make, ordain, and constitute this testament, containing my last will, in this form as followeth.

First of all, I heartily thank our Lord God Almighty, that He hath vouchsafed me to be born in this life of faithful and virtuous parents; and that it hath pleased Him that I should be regenerate (and born anew into His Church) unto life eternal by the holy laver of Baptism, which He hath instituted; and that He hath instructed me from my youth in sound doctrine, and hath made me a partaker of His saints; that He hath imprinted in my mind a faith not feigned nor dead, but true and living, together with a firm confidence, that hereafter I shall be brought unto eternal life; which Faith doubtless consists in this: - that we adore and worship One God, and believe in Him, and in Him whom He hath sent, His most beloved Son, the Eternal Word, begotten before all ages, Jesus Christ our Lord: who for us and for our salvation took flesh of the most blessed Virgin Mary (the Holy Ghost overshadowing her) in this life, and was made man, afterward was born, suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, and, after He had descended into hell, rose again from His grave, and, leading captivity captive, ascended into heaven, where, sitting at the right hand of God, He reigneth for ever; but sent from thence the Holy Ghost (in Whom we ought equally to believe) proceeding from the Father and the Son, by Whom He most bountifully gave gifts unto men, and founded His Catholic Church in the communion of saints, in the divine Sacraments, in true Faith, sound doctrine, and Christian manners, together with the remission of sins, to be conferred on all the godly, and that in the same Church bring forth fruits meet for repentance; to whom also, when in the last day of the world He shall come from heaven to raise the dead and judge all, He will give eternal happiness; but to the rest, that are infidels, or that have lived according to the flesh, and would not repent or be converted, He will inflict eternal punishment. In this Faith, which is the summary and most absolute abridgement of all the Holy Scriptures, 'once delivered to the saints,' and which the Apostles and their successors have spread abroad and derived down even to us, I profess myself to live, and that I may persevere in it constantly without doubting, unto my last breath, is my daily prayer; in the

meantime seeking after unity by preserving the bond of peace and love with all Christians everywhere, who, among the great evils, distractions, and calamities of the Church (which truly I cannot but heartily bewail,) entirely receive this Faith, and call no one part of it in question. I hope also, through the goodness of God, and Christ, God and man, our Saviour, that all they, that have together with us sincerely believed these things that are revealed and delivered from God, and have lived a godly life, shall be saved in the great Day of the Lord: who although they are not able to give an account, or explain the manner of every of them, nor resolve the questions raised about them, and though perhaps, when they endeavour it, they cannot avoid some mistakes, and be altogether free from error.

But whatever heresies or schisms heretofore, by what names soever they be called, the ancient Catholic and Universal Church of Christ with a unanimous consent hath rejected and condemned, I do in like manner condemn and reject; together with all the modern fautors [*Latin fautores: adherents*] of the same heresies, sectaries and fanatics, who, being carried on with an evil spirit, do falsely give out they are inspired of God: - the heresies and schisms, I say, of all these, I also, as most addicted to the symbols, synods, and confessions of the Church of England, or rather the Catholic Church, do constantly renounce, condemn, and reject. Among whom I rank not only the separatists, the anabaptists, and their followers, (alas) too too many, but also the new independents and presbyterians of our country, a kind of men hurried away with the spirit of malice, disobedience, and sedition, who by a disloyal attempt (the like whereof was never heard since the world began) have of late committed so many great and execrable crimes, to the contempt and despite of religion and the Christian Faith: which, how great they were, without horror cannot be spoken or mentioned.

Moreover I do profess, with holy asservation [*solemn affirmation*] and from my very heart, that I am now, and have ever been from my youth, altogether free and averse from the corruptions and impertinent new-fangled or papistical (so commonly called) superstitions and doctrines, and new superadditions to the ancient and primitive religion and Faith of the most commended, so orthodox, and Catholic Church, long since introduced, contrary to the Holy Scripture and the rules and customs of the ancient Fathers.

But in what part of the world soever any Churches are extant, bearing the name of Christ, and professing the true Catholic Faith and religion, worshipping and calling upon God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with one heart and voice, if any be where I be now hindered actually to be joined with them, either by distance of countries, or variance amongst men, or by any other let whatsoever, yet always in my mind and affection I join and unite with them; which I desire to be chiefly understood of protestants, and the best reformed Churches: for where the foundations are safe, we may allow, and therefore most friendly, quietly, and peaceably suffer, in those Churches where we have not authority, a diversity, as of opinion, so of ceremonies, about things which do but adhere to the foundations, and are neither necessary or repugnant to the practice of the Universal Church. As for all them, who through evil counsel have any way inveighed against, or calumniated me, and even yet do not forbear their invectives, I freely pardon them, and earnestly pray to God, that He also would be pleased to forgive them, and inspire them with a better mind. In the meanwhile I take it to be my duty, and of all my brethren, especially the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of God, to do our utmost endeavours, according to the measure of grace which is given to every one of us, that at last an end may be put to the differences of religion, or at least that they

may be lessened, and that we may 'follow peace with all men, and holiness;' which, that it may be accomplished very speedily, God 'the Author of peace and concord' grant: whose infinite mercy I humbly beseech, that He would cleanse me, who was conceived in sin and iniquity, from every spot and corruption of human frailty; and that through His great clemency He would make me, who am unworthy, to become worthy, and that He would apply to me the passion and infinite merits of His most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to the expiating of all mine offences; that at the last hour of my life, which I daily look for, I may be carried by His holy Angels into Abraham's bosom, and, being placed in the fellowship of His saints and elect, may fully enjoy eternal felicity.

Now having declared what belongs to my religion, and the state and salvation of my soul, which I have now delivered here in Latin, the rest, that belongs to my burial, and the disposal of my temporal estate, I shall cause to be written in my native language, and so conclude.

Durham, Jan 18, 1672.

Works iv.521ff (Latin), 525ff Isaac Basire's translation from his sermon at Cosin's funeral.

Some Key Dates

Monarchs

- 1558-1603 Elizabeth I
- 1603-1625 James I (had been James VI of Scotland since 1566)
- 1625-1649 Charles I (executed)
- 1649-1660 (monarchy suspended)
- 1660-1685 Charles II (of Scotland 1649, 1660 declared King of England retrospectively from 1649)

Archbishops of Canterbury

- 1583-1604 John Whitgift
- 1604-1610 Richard Bancroft
- 1611-1633 George Abbot
- 1633-1645 William Laud (executed)
- 1645-1660 (episcopacy suspended)
- 1660-1663 William Juxon
- 1663-1677 Gilbert Sheldon
- 1678-1690 William Sancroft

John Cosin

- 1594 Born in Norwich
- 1610 Admitted to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge
- 1616 Librarian and Secretary to Bishop John Overall of Lichfield (Norwich from 1618, died 1619)
- 1619 Domestic Chaplain to Bishop Richard Neile of Durham (Winchester from 1628, York 1631-40)
- 1624 Rector of Elwick (held alongside subsequent benefices)
- 1624 Prebendary of Durham
- 1625 Rector of Brancepeth
- 1625 Archdeacon of the East Riding
- 1626 Marries Frances Blakiston
- 1627 *Collection of Private Devotions*
- 1628 Peter Smart's sermon denouncing Cosin
- 1628 Peter Smart prosecuted and deprived by the High Commission Court
- 1635 Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge
- 1640 Dean of Peterborough (retaining Mastership)
- 1641 Sequestered from his benefices by the Long Parliament
- 1642 Frances Cosin dies in childbirth
- 1643 Chaplain to the Anglican members of Henrietta Maria's Court in Paris
- 1644 Deprived as Master of Peterhouse
- 1650 Defends Huguenot orders (letter to Cordell)
- 1651 Son converts to Roman Catholicism
- 1656 *The History of Popish Transubstantiation*
- 1660 Restored to Mastership and his benefices
- 1660 Bishop of Durham
- 1672 Dies in London

Other events

- 1595 Lambeth Articles
- 1604 Hampton Court Conference
- 1615 Laud begins to oppose Calvinism
- 1619 Synod of Dort (Dordrecht)
- 1629 Personal rule of Charles I (“Eleven Years’ Tyranny” - parliament suspended)
- 1631 Huguenots at Charenton, Paris, decide an Open Table policy
- 1640 Short Parliament convenes and dissolves
- 1640 Long Parliament convenes
- 1641 Hyde (later Clarendon) attacks Laud’s leadership and policies
- 1642 Jeremy Taylor explicitly rejects Presbyterian orders (following Montague’s and Laud’s lead)
- 1643 Solemn League and Covenant
- 1660 Convention Parliament sits from April to December
- 1660 Declaration of Breda
- 1661 Savoy Conference
- 1661 Cavalier Parliament sits until 1679
- 1661 *Corporation Act
- 1661 Revision of Book of Common Prayer in Convocation and Parliament
- 1662 *Act of Uniformity
- 1664 *Conventicle Act
- 1665 *Five Mile Act

*These four Acts of Parliament, brought in by the Cavalier Parliament, became known as the Clarendon Code, even though Clarendon himself (and Cosin, and Charles II) thought them too harsh against the Puritans. They go against the letter and the spirit of Charles’s 1660 Breda Declaration, which had encouraged and enabled the Convention Parliament to proclaim Charles as Monarch.

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