

Thomas Cranmer

By James M. Stanton

Introduction

Luther was a bright scholar, and a bold figure. We come now to consider a man who is no less a scholar, and his contribution to the Reformation was also considerable, but who certainly was not as brash or the controversialist that Luther was.

Thomas Cranmer is on any account a giant of the Reformation. But he did not write as copiously as Luther, and he was at no point center stage in the conflicts that unfolded in the turbulent Reformation like either Luther or Calvin.

Two Fortuitous Events

Interestingly, if not for two fortuitous events, we might never have heard of his name.

First event

Thomas was born in 1489 to parents of modest means. His father died in 1501. In 1503 he went to a newly founded college in Cambridge named Jesus College, built on the site of a Benedictine convent in 1496. He took his bachelor's degree in 1511, and his masters degree in 1515. He was elected a fellow of Jesus College and very likely would have proceeded to ordination. To be a fellow was to be recognized as a scholar and presupposed both an academic and clerical career. Just when things looked the brightest, Thomas married a woman named Joan. We don't know much at all about this marriage. In fact, we do not even know her last name.¹ The marriage meant that Thomas had to withdraw from being a fellow of the College.

Tragically, however, the marriage ended when Joan died in childbirth. The child, too, died shortly thereafter. And that could have been the end of the story to all intents and purposes. But it was not.

Such was the esteem in which his colleagues held him, that Thomas was restored as a fellow shortly after Joan's death. This was not the usual practice. But clearly, Thomas was a respected and valued member of the College. With this sad event now in his past, Thomas resumed his work and was ordained in 1520, and took his doctoral degree in theology in 1526.

This then is the first fortuitous event in Thomas Cranmer's life: the death of his young wife and his restoration to a fellowship that would permit him to study and grow toward theological and ecclesiastical service.

¹ Some of the detractors of the future archbishop suggested that it was an emergency marriage and that Joan was a barmaid.

Now it is important to remember that precisely at the time Thomas was ordained and advancing in his academic programme, Luther was already publishing and preaching and causing a general stir on the Continent. In fact, we know that Cranmer read Luther and we know something of what he thought about this German from a habit that Cranmer developed: he was a voracious reader and collector of books, as we might expect a scholar to be. But he also took copious notes on what he read. Sometimes he would jot down his thoughts in the margins of the books themselves, and over and above this he would keep a notebook – several actually – in which he would comment more fully.

We can note here that Cranmer's early reactions to Luther were highly negative. What had a more lasting effect on Cranmer was that in evaluating not only Luther, but the works of other Reformers on the Continent, Thomas undertook a deep and profound reading of Scripture over a period of three years. This reading was prompted by the erudition and rhetorical skill of a great man, a Catholic Humanist, of the period, Desiderius Erasmus. Erasmus had prepared a new critical text of the New Testament, which both attracted and informed Cranmer. It was in this period that he became thoroughly and personally conversant with the Bible, and this would have a lasting effect on his subsequent work.

Although we may safely say that in his early years, in the 1520s in any case, Cranmer was thoroughly orthodox and not by any means to be seen as a reformer, gradually this began to change. Cranmer had an able mind, and a desire to understand what changes were sweeping the Church.

Second event

The second fortuitous event is found in the fact that several of Cranmer's colleagues at Cambridge would come to serve the King in prominent ways. It was the Cambridge connection that brought Cranmer to the attention of Cardinal Wolsey, who was a very powerful man both in the Church and in the Kingdom in the mid-1520s. Wolsey was Henry's right-hand man, the real power behind the throne. Wolsey liked the Cambridge men and picked a few of them, Cranmer included, to serve a diplomatic mission in Spain in 1525. Cranmer made no discernible contribution to this effort. But on his return, he met with King Henry for a short time, and Henry seems to have liked him. As Henry was growing more and more concerned about his marriage to Catharine of Aragon in this period, and pressuring Wolsey to get his annulment approved by the Pope, he chose Thomas to assist with the communications and sent him to Rome in 1530.

It was in that very year that Henry grew impatient with Wolsey, stripped him of much of his power, and eventually had him brought up on charges that would have led to his utter humiliation if not execution. Wolsey was arrested. On his way to court, however, Wolsey died.

The problem of Henry's divorce is terribly complicated and went on for years.² We can't go into all that here. But Thomas had given a lot of thought to the problem. While in Rome, he suggested to Stephen Gradiner and to Edward Foxe an idea that might help get through the impasse with the Pope: submit the matter of Henry's request for an annulment to the

² I suggest a very readable biography by Diarmaid MacCullough: *Thomas Cranmer: A Life*. 1998: Yale University Press.

Universities of Europe. The Theological faculties could judge whether in fact Henry had grounds for the annulment, as they were often called upon to do. This was an exciting idea for the King's advisors, and word got back to Henry. In the meantime, Wolsey was gone, the Pope had issued a decree forbidding Henry from remarrying. Thomas was ordered home, where he took a major part in assembling the case that would ostensibly be submitted to the Universities.

Cranmer returned to Europe in 1531 for discussions about the King's "Great Matter." He met and developed relations with two great Reformers, Simon Grynaeus and Martin Bucer. He discovered that the Lutherans were, for the most part, arrayed against Henry – Luther himself took Catherine's side in the dispute.

Cranmer returned to Europe again in 1532, this time as Henry's ambassador to Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. Thomas had very few meetings with Charles, but did in fact learn a great deal more about the reformation. In Nuremberg, he was able to see firsthand how certain reforms to the liturgy were taking shape, and he was impressed by these. And he got to know Andreas Osiander, a Lutheran pastor and theologian who actually supported Henry's cause. This relationship was very significant. Ironically, while on this trip, Thomas met, fell in love with and married Osiander's niece, Margarete – and Osiander in fact officiated at the marriage.³

In August of that year, William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died. Warham had, reluctantly and without effect, pressed the Pope for a positive verdict in Henry's case. But now that Warham was gone, Henry saw an opportunity and named Cranmer to succeed as Archbishop. This required approval of the Pope, of course, and the Pope, perhaps hoping to win the obedience of Henry, gave his consent. Thomas was notified of this appointment in November of 1532 and was officially made Archbishop the Sunday before Palm Sunday in March of 1533.

Just to finish out this part of the story: Henry had come to the conclusion that the Pope could not restrain his re-marriage. He and Anne Boleyn were married secretly in November of 1532 (before Thomas came back to England), and then a little less secretly in another ceremony in January of 1533. Parliament passed an Act making appeals to any power outside England, like the Pope, illegal. In the light of this new Act, the new Archbishop summoned the King to a trial on his marriage to Catherine in May. Two weeks later, Archbishop Cranmer issued the judgment in favor of Henry, and on June 1 – the Day of Pentecost – Anne was crowned Queen.

Once the Pope heard of this, he placed Henry and his advisors – including Cranmer, the new Archbishop – under "provisional excommunication." But this only made Henry more resolved to break with Rome. In the next year, Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy which made the king "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England." The Church of England was now autonomous, and the Archbishop of Canterbury was the most important clergyman in the realm.

So two, very unconnected but important fortuitous events brought Thomas into a place of great prominence. First, the traumatic death of his young wife and child opened the way for this bright young theologian to return to his academic and ecclesiastical pursuits. And second, it was

³ It is very unlikely that Osiander would have approved the marriage, let alone officiated, unless Thomas had subscribed to Reformation principles.

precisely his Cambridge connections that brought an obscure and very fortunate scholar to a place of prominence in the nation and the Church of the English people. It was his native ability, however, that made him such an important figure to all subsequent generations of Anglican Christians.

CRANMER'S THEOLOGY

As I noted earlier, Cranmer was a very orthodox – which is to say, a very Catholic – Christian in his early formation. There is no sign that, at this stage, he was inclined to be a reformer. To the contrary, he was moving in the 1520s to embrace a renewal of Catholic faith and practice in the tradition of Erasmus.

But in time, as he began to study the reformed theology on the Continent and the Bible, he grew to see the need for some reforms within the Church of England.

Henry himself was also a learned theologian in his own right. Henry had once written a critique of Luther's theology and a defense of the Catholic faith which earned him the title "defender of the faith" from the Pope.

In many ways, Cranmer mirrored Henry. Henry, like Cranmer, also had an interest in some reforms. In general, we can say that both men were "conservative" when it came to the core of Christian belief and practice, but were inclined to move toward a more robust and accessible expression of faith. By his death in 1547, Henry's Church still used Latin for the Mass, the orders of ministry remained the same, clerical celibacy was still enforced, and the sacraments were still the same – including notably, penance. Even masses for the dead and the veneration of images of saints were practiced. All these had been questioned by the European reformers.

But in 1536, Henry authorized the publication of the Bible in English and ordered that the reading of lessons should be in English on Sundays and Holy Days. We may think this rather trivial, but in fact it was a major step forward. Cranmer had encouraged this move precisely because of the importance he had come to attach to the Scriptures in his own life. Dr. Ashley Null describes this commitment to making the Scriptures available in the English language Cranmer's first and most important step in reforming the English Church.

Henry also permitted some revisions of the liturgy at the instigation of Cranmer. Cranmer published the Litany in English. This was significant because, in the Middle ages, processions were significant liturgical events for the general populace and the Litany, a long series of intercessions and penitential acts, were central to the processions. Cranmer had wanted to move even further, but Henry opposed many of his suggested reforms – probably because he was preoccupied with many other matters of state.

Cranmer for his own part thought of two major initiatives that never really came to fruition: He saw the need to reform the Canon Law of the Church, which was overly complicated and which had been much abused. He actually worked on this project, but the King would not permit its implementation. Thomas also developed a plan for the enlistment of bright, educated clergy with an emphasis on preaching and teaching. But this, too, never came to fruition.

Two projects, however, give us insight into Thomas Cranmer's theology in a way nothing else does. Cranmer, unlike Luther, never wrote heavy theological tomes. His work was more occasional. In 1536, he wrote a preface to the Great Bible that was ordered to be placed in all the Churches. In 1539, he wrote a commentary on the Six Articles which had been adopted by Convocation – the book, often called the Bishops' Book, also is known as *the Institution of the Christian Man*. Still later, he conceived and promoted the idea of a Book of Homilies, sermons which could be read and used by the Clergy for the instruction of the people and to bring some kind of unity to the Churches. All of this work was primarily pastoral and practical: they are serious works, but approachable, readable, and meant to make an impact on the Church rather than being either systematic or speculative.

Of course, the great project of his life was the preparation and publication of the *Book of Common Prayer*. In the latter case, it is a matter of some controversy just which parts Cranmer himself actually wrote, and it is certain that he drew on a number of sources – both ancient and reformed. But one thing has never been in doubt: Cranmer's facility in the use of the English language, and his deep spirituality is imprinted on this book as a whole and in all its parts.

OUR THREE QUESTIONS

What is the goal of life in Christ?

For Cranmer, this is simple: it is salvation. Salvation for Cranmer consists in a double movement – eternal life with God and transformation of life on earth.

Salvation is a gift of God. Cranmer speaks everywhere of God's mercy. He says that in order to "obtain justification" it is important to know "first, how naughty and sinful we are." But rather than dwell on this, what he has in mind is a sober self-awareness. Life is dangerous and burdensome. Every man knows this. And he should, if he is honest, also know just how weak he is in the face of either dangers or burdens.

But over against this stands God's mercy. And the great relief and joy of the Christian is that in trusting this, "God's mercy is ready to forgive."

"The commandments of God," he writes, "lay our faults before our eyes." But, "the great promises of God by the mediation of Christ showeth us – and that to our great relief and comfort – we have forgiveness of our sins, are reconciled to God, and accepted and reputed just and righteous in his sight."

God's mercy, then is the great theme of Cranmer's work. It is hard to grasp just what a driving force God's mercy was for Cranmer. He was a very private man, and while his formal writing – either in his papers or in his liturgical productions – was vivid and even poetic, he does not speak of his inner thoughts or experiences. So was his "conversion" to reformation principles more a matter of the mind or the heart? Was he, in this sense, more like Erasmus or More, Catholic reformers, or like Luther or even Wesley, evangelical? In many ways, this is a false

dichotomy. What comes clearly through the Scriptures – if one actually reads or hears them – is the immense love and mercy of God. Luther had found that in the verse from Romans as we saw earlier. God’s very strength is disclosed in His mercy toward sinners and the weak. As we are grasped by this truth, however, a new and deeper reality – a very personal reality – impresses itself upon us: we acquire a “true and lively faith” and not just a cold or rational affirmation of a proposition. It is this mercy that moves us towards God. As we think about this, and see it, and trust it, we are drawn to God with love and joy and peace. This is what impels us to worship God, and to do so in holiness. Mercy saves us not only by forgiving us, but by drawing us to love God. The mercy of God is a sheer gift, and the only thing that can save us for eternal life.

But in the same measure, mercy also causes us to love and care for others. When we finally open our eyes and see this mercy freely given to us, all as he says “the benefits of God,” we not only have a heart that overflows with love for God, but a deep desire to “perform all such works . . . as [are] acceptable to God.” This is the transformation of life. This transformation saves us not only from sin, but also saves communities – saves our humanity: we are saved for life with God, but it is in this life as well as in the next.

What is the basis of life in Christ?

What we have said so far is not really different from Luther, or for that matter Benedict or Matthew. This is the stuff of Christian theology. This is not where Cranmer shines.

But the unique thing about Cranmer comes under our next heading: what is the basis of life in Christ?

Cranmer’s view of the human make-up is this: “what the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies. (Null)” It is this basic concept that sets Cranmer apart from other theological traditions and that ultimately shapes Cranmer’s language and therefore, our worship. In some approaches, what must change in the human being is the head – the mind. Or the will. For Cranmer, it is the heart.

One scholar has said that for Cranmer, what God does is give us a “heart transplant.”⁴ The problem with human nature is that our hearts – our deepest love and passion – centers on the self. We are born as slaves to self-preservation, self-promotion, and self-gratification. That is why, for example, we always gravitate to those people or things or ideas that make us “feel good about ourselves.” And why we are such easy targets for those who understand this.

Now what the heart loves the will chooses. That means that the will is captive to the heart, and it explains why you can’t simply will yourself to be better or whole. And the mind is captive to the will – the mind will seek to justify or rationalize what our hearts cause our wills to choose.

Now if this is all true, as Cranmer believes it is, then it is clear that the only thing that can save us and transform us is if God gives us a new heart. And this is precisely what Cranmer finds in the Scriptures: for example, Jeremiah 31.33, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the

⁴ Dr. Ashley Null

house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law *within* them, and I will write it *on their hearts*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

So the way this works is that God, by the Holy Spirit, begins to transform our hearts from within when we hear the Scriptures and trust God’s word. In connection with what we said before, we know our neediness, our weakness in the light of God’s commandments – the Law. Then we see God’s mercy in the light of Jesus – that is, the Gospel. Both the Law and the Gospel are found in Scripture. As we hear Scripture, the Holy Spirit awakens in us a new awareness, a new love, which draws us towards God in worship and holiness, and towards each other in charity and communion.

We can see here a distinction with Luther. For Luther, essentially faith is a matter of the will. We simply trust God. Therefore, preaching and exhortation is the way in which God approaches us. And faith is our response.

But for Cranmer, it is the movement of the heart toward God, not the will, that provides the opening by which the Holy Spirit carries out His work. The Word of God is important – in fact, indispensable; preaching and teaching are important; faith is essential, and right behavior is important; all of this is important and plays its part in our salvation. But the basis for life in Christ is the transformation of the heart of the human being. And this has consequences for how life in the Church is ordered – particularly its prayer. It is the work of the Church, the people of God, to bring us into encounter with the mercy of God and open the way to our transformation in the heart – our heart transplant! And that, of course, is the work of liturgy – literally, the “work of the people.”

The Character of Life in Christ

There are two things to be said about the character of life in Christ as we have received it in our Anglican tradition: It has to do with the shape of life over all, and the center of life in particular.

Cranmer’s first *Book of Common Prayer* was essentially a manual for the Christian life. It was intended to bring the whole Church to a common sense of order in worship and, in turn, the ordering of daily life. It put into a single volume the services of the Church. In the Middle Ages the Church’s worship was set forth in numerous books and required several volumes often for the conduct of even a single, simple service. Most of these were available only to the clergy. Manuals of devotion were also published to aid the laity who could read (and afford) them, since the services themselves were in a foreign tongue. Cranmer’s Prayer Book simplified all this. And, it did more than that – it brought the clergy and laity together. In fact, in many rural places, where there was a desperate shortage of ordained persons, the new Prayer Book opened the possibility of lay leadership in the services!

Furthermore, the Prayer Book was not just intended for public worship services. As someone once observed, the Prayer Book was not just for Church and not just for Sundays. It provided a model for daily prayer for individuals and families by taking the structure of the Benedictine “offices” and reducing them from seven to two: Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. It also included the “collects” or prayers for the seasons, which in turn not only taught people how to pray, but had the effect of sanctifying daily life through prayer.

Cranmer took as his purpose in putting the Prayer Book together the ancient practice, as he regarded it, of reading the whole Bible or the “greatest parte thereof” in the year. He wrote, “by daily hearing of holy scripture . . . [the people] should continuallye profite more and more in the knowledge of God, and bee the more inflamed with the love of his true religion.”⁵ And the key to this possibility was the arranging of bible passages and the psalms in a more continuous, complete scheme, so that the people could hear the story more fully and coherently.

And finally, the Prayer Book also contained a Catechism – a fairly simple and practical framework for instruction of the young and the not so young in the basics of Christian belief and practice. Not surprisingly, the Catechism itself in built on Scripture.

So the Prayer Book actually served a larger purpose than merely providing a “service book.” It provided the foundation for hearing God’s Word, which as we have seen led one to grasp God’s mercy. It gave one a means for responding to God with love and devotion. And it finally gave shape to common life which is, according to Cranmer’s theology, the way God transforms our lives.

The Book of Common Prayer was a stunning achievement, and one for which we may justly be grateful. The first publication of the Book was highly criticized by those on the conservative wing of the Church as being too novel and too radical, and by the more protestant reformers in England as not radical enough. Few appreciated at the time just how important this book and its language would prove. Literary critics have long admired the work, and attributed to it a very constructive role in unifying the English language and culture. In fact, Cranmer’s Prayer Book stands alongside the later works of Shakespeare and the still later King James Bible in bringing about a transformation in English. A recent critic has claimed in fact that Cranmer “invented” the complex sentence in English, and that this led people to a deeper, subtler, richer experience of God.⁶

Be that as it may, it is when we explore the Book as Cranmer gave it to us, and listen to it and pray along with it that we see the genius of Cranmer’s theology come alive.

We cannot tour the whole book here. But let me point out, against the backdrop of what I have said, some of the more familiar passages and prayers of the Book.

Consider the “Collect for Purity” with which we are accustomed to begin the Eucharist:

ALMIGHTIE God, unto whom all hartes bee open, and all desyres knowen, and from whom no secretes are hid: clense the thoughtes of our hartes, by the inspiracion of thy holy spirite: that we may perfectly love thee, and worthely magnifie thy holy name: through Christ our Lorde. Amen.

Here we see Cranmer’s theology in a nutshell. What the heart loves . . . But we come with the recognition not only that our hearts need to be transformed – to be “cleansed” as Cranmer puts

⁵ Preface to 1549 BCP

⁶ Ian Robinson: *The Establishment of Modern English Prose in the Reformation and the Enlightenment*. 1998.

it. The truth is that the most important part of who we are is already known to God – that our hearts are indeed open to Him whether we wish it or not, and that our secrets and our desires are known as well. If our hearts are to be set in the right relations with God, this can only happen if we let God do His work in them: thus we pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And if we trust in this invocation, by the surrender of our hearts to the Spirit, then we become able to worship God in truth: we become able to perfectly love God who so perfectly loves us, and worthily praise God though in ourselves we are unworthy.

This single prayer also moves easily into one of the most profound theological doctrines of our faith: the Trinity. We address God, the Father, the Almighty straight out. We ask for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And we offer our prayer and surrender ourselves through Jesus Christ our Lord. The intimacy of the language brings us into the mystery of God in a most natural and personal way, instead of breaking the mystery into pieces that we must try to understand.

All of this is most pertinent as we begin our worship of God in the context of the Eucharist. It is interesting to note that Cranmer did not compose this prayer. It was already there, in Latin, in the liturgy that was used in Salisbury – the Sarum Rite. But in that liturgy, this prayer was said by the Priest alone as a preparation for celebrating the Eucharist, not by the People. Here again, we see how Cranmer was thinking: clergy and laity together were coming into the presence of the merciful God, and must be prepared together in common prayer both to hear God’s Word and respond rightly to it.

Finally, I suggest that this prayer provides an insight into Cranmer’s own formation. A survey of other Reformation liturgies – those which indeed were more radical than what Cranmer produced – begin with long citations of Scripture, or with other sorts of declarations. Cranmer here decided to use a part of the tradition, in that sense being “conservative”; but he did so with a typically reformed sense of the need for vivifying and enlivening the expression of faith. He had, in other words, a foot in both the tradition and in the reform movement, and because of this stance had a secure and robust footing for leading the English Church into what would become its most distinctive contribution to the Christian world.

Once attuned to Cranmer’s theology, we find him giving voice to it everywhere. Here are some examples:

“LORD, we beseech thee, give ear to our prayers, and by thy gracious visitation lighten the darkness of our heart, by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ALMIGHTY God, who hast poured upon us the new light of thine incarnate Word; Grant that the same light enkindled in our hearts may shine forth in our lives.”

“ALMIGHTY God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through time same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

“O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before

thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*”

“ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

Of course, all these mention the heart in some way. Even when Cranmer composes a prayer without the language of the “heart,” he still evidences this intimate, dynamic and transforming character – as in this well-known example:

“BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*”

Cranmer did not, of course, always compose these prayers out of whole cloth. Moreover, he was not using his project of liturgical reform to introduce his own peculiar theology. In many cases, Cranmer translated prayers. And even when composing new prayers, he would draw from themes and expressions found in earlier liturgies. What I think is important in all this however, is that Cranmer’s theology, far from being original, was itself formed by a deep life of prayer and an experience of life transformation that informed his work as a theologian and bishop. His genius lay not in finding a new way to be Christian, but in giving voice to the most ancient and venerable forms of Christian life and worship in a new tongue. And his gift was to inspire and form Christians for generations to come, not in confessions and theologies, but precisely as he had been formed: in prayer and worship.

Cranmer embodied the theology that shaped his praying and the praying that shaped him. C. Fitzsimmons Allison wrote, “his genius consisted of that rare and mysterious virtue, humility.” He lived immersed in Scripture. So much so, that when he wrote, the phrases of the Bible and their great sense flowed as it were effortlessly through his pen. In his “General Confession” prayer in Morning and Evening Prayer, the prayer known by heart by so many formed in the Prayer Book tradition, “Almighty and Most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. . .”, Cranmer draws on language and imagery from (in order) Isaiah, Psalms, 1 Peter, Proverbs, Jeremiah, II Chronicles, Matthew, Psalms, Luke, Psalms, Nehemiah, Psalms, Romans, 1 John, Titus and the Gospel of John!⁷

The work of his whole life has not always been appreciated or evaluated appropriately. He died a martyr’s death, caught as it were between his own doctrine of loyalty to the Crown and his faithfulness to Scripture. It was a difficult end. And yet, as Allison also wrote, “Cranmer’s blend of self-effacement and persistence in the service of faith accounts for the care and discipline which produced the single greatest combination of liturgical forms in the Church’s history.” That gift by God’s mercy is ours to ponder, to give thanks for, to benefit from and to celebrate!

⁷ Massey Shepherd.

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Online Resources:

The Life of Thomas Cranmer: <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/cranmerbio.htm>

The Institution of the Christian Man:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=vgLtMHCyl7IC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

The Homilies: <http://www.anglicanlibrary.org/homilies/index.htm>

The 1549 Book of Common Prayer:

http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1549/BCP_1549.htm