

A Note on ‘Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks’ in Anglican Liturgies

Marion J. Hatchett

Frank Henderson’s Page on Liturgy and Medieval Women
www.jfrankhenderson.com

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Marion J. Hatchett is author of *The Making of the First American Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Seabury Press 1982), *Commentary on the American Prayer Book* (New York: Seabury Press 1981), and numerous other publications. He was kind enough to contribute the following in response to the article, *Moslems and the History of Anglican Liturgy*.

In your paper on “Moslems and the History of Anglican Liturgy” on page 4 you quote the prayer about the Jews and Turks as an “alternative collect.” Actually the use of all three collects was required as opposed to the usual use of one collect of the day. Other collects of the day are headed THE COLLECT, whereas these are headed THE COLLECTS.

The section “Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, and take from them . . .” is still there in the 1662 BCP. It was even retained in the proposal which failed to make its way through parliament in 1928, *The Book of Common Prayer with the Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928*.

It was retained in the 1912 Scottish book as well.

The 1922 Canadian book substituted “Have mercy upon the Jews, thine ancient people, and upon all who reject and deny thy Son; take from them all ignorance . . .” The American 1928 revision substituted “Have mercy upon all who know thee not as thou art revealed in the Gospel of thy Son. Take from them all ignorance . . .” The Scottish 1929 revision substituted “Have mercy upon thine ancient people the Jews, and upon all who have not known thee, or who deny the faith of Christ crucified; take from them all ignorance . . . “

A substantially revised version of this prayer was included in the 1979 American revision of the BCP as the fourth of “The Solemn Collects” of the “Proper Liturgy” for Good Friday (page 280):

Merciful God, creator of all the peoples of the earth and lover of souls: Have compassion on all who do not know you as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ; let your Gospel be preached with grace and power to those who have not heard it; turn the hearts of those who resist it; and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This form was reproduced in the 1985 *The Book of Alternative Services* of the Anglican Church of Canada (page 312), and in a very much abbreviated form in the 1986 Lent, *Holy Week, Easter Services and Prayers* Committed by the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England (page 214):

Merciful God, creator of all the people of the earth, have compassion on all who do not know you, and by the preaching of your Gospel with grace and power, gather them into the one fold of the one Shepherd, Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century many proposals were made for revision of the BCP, including whole books meant to replace it. A few ideas were picked up from some of the more conservative of these books and incorporated in the 1789 first American BCP, and from that source some of these phrases or ideas made their way into later BCP revisions. One of these books, as far as I can find, contributed nothing to any later revision, but it is an interesting book from the standpoint of Moslems and the history of Anglican liturgy. It was printed for David Williams for use at the Margaret Street Chapel, Cavendish Square, London, *A Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality*. In the preface the author asks why public forms of worship should “divide men into parties,” for “all acknowledge the most important truths.” “Do not Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Mahometans [sic], own his power, his wisdom, and his goodness?” There is one essential difference between this book and every other proposal for the revision of the BCP from that period: the Name of Jesus is not mentioned once in the entire book.