

# JLS

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JOINT LITURGICAL STUDIES

## **Bishop Thomas Rattray and his Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem**

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*Alcuin Club and The Group for Renewal of Worship*

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The cover picture is from the National Library of Scotland  
Portrait of Bishop Thomas RATTRAY (1688-1743)

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# 1

## Introduction

The liturgical text in this booklet was originally prepared for a celebration of the Holy Eucharist according to Bishop Thomas Rattray's *ORDER for celebrating the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist* from his *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem*, on St. John Baptist's Day, 24th June, in St Regulus's Church, Cromarty, Ross-Shire as part of the Cromarty Conference, 'Liturgy and Jacobitism' 23rd – 25th June, 2014.

Rattray's *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem* of 1744 is his posthumously published grammatical and comparative analysis of the 'proper *Anaphora* or Eucharistical service' (Rattray, 1744, p. v) of the Greek Liturgy of St James as it was published by J. A. Fabricius in his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg: 1704). Thomas Rattray (1684–1743) chose the Liturgy of St James for his extensive analysis because it 'is unquestionably one the most ancient and valuable now anywhere extant in the Christian Church. That it is the same that was used in the Church of Jerusalem about the time of the first Council of Nice will appear to any who candidly compare it to St Cyril's 5th Mystagogical Catechesis...' (Rattray, p. iii). There have been two twentieth century comments on Rattray's *Ancient Liturgy*. The first is W. J. Grisbrooke's *Anglican Liturgies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Grisbrooke's assessment is that '...it is ...as a liturgist of the first order that he deserves the grateful remembrance of posterity. The scholarship of his work ... is such that even the passage of two hundred years has not completely outmoded it' (Grisbrooke, 1958, p. 136). The second, Professor Stuart Hall's 1998 paper, 'Patristics and Reform', commends Rattray's scholarship, but challenges his method and conclusions (Hall, 1999, pp. 240–60).

Historically, Rattray was, as a bishop and a scholar, faced with the

practical circumstances of public worship obtaining in Scotland. Liturgical worship came to an abrupt end in Scotland when the old Latin rite was abolished by *The Scots Confession* of 1560. The attempt to restore liturgical worship in Scotland with the Prayer Book of 1637 was catastrophic, precipitating the National Covenant of 1638 and the abolition of Episcopacy in Scotland. From the Restoration of Episcopacy in the Scottish Church in 1660 until the advent of the Scottish Liturgy of 1764, Scottish Episcopalians possessed no liturgical texts of their own for public worship. From the Revolution of 1688, into the eighteenth century, Episcopalian public worship varied little from Presbyterian worship of the time. The identifying features of Episcopalian worship were concluding the metrical psalm with a doxology, reciting the Lord's Prayer (which the Established Church did not), and reciting the Apostles' Creed at baptisms.

A MS by Rattray, partly transcribed by Bishop John Dowden, describes the state of Episcopalian worship from the Revolution to about 1710. He wrote, '[At that time]...we had no such thing as an office or liturgy among us. The method in our ordinary assemblies on the Lord's day was almost the same as with that of the Presbyterians: beginning with singing a stanza or two of the Metre Psalms, after which followed an extemporary Prayer... After the sermon 'followed another extemporary Prayer at the conclusion of which they said the Lord's Prayer...the congregation was dismissed with the blessing...' How the Eucharist was celebrated, to his obvious dismay, was that it was virtually identical to a Presbyterian observance in that day. It 'was not celebrated, in most places ...above once a year if that often...As for the consecration, which was performed by an extemporary Prayer, which how defective it must frequently have been may easily be judged considering many of them had no notion of its being the Sacrifice of the Christian Church, only they repeated the History of the Institution' (Dowden, 1922, pp. 35–41).

Episcopalian public worship began to ameliorate rapidly after 1710 when copies of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer became widely available in Scotland, and was used by many Episcopalians (Dowden,

p. 37). The Episcopalian ecclesiastical historian George Grub (1812–1892) comments, ‘The passing of the Toleration Act [1712], and the unwonted degree of favour shewn by the government to the adherents of Episcopacy in the latter years of Queen Anne, encouraged the clergy to continue their efforts for the introduction of liturgical services. ... [The Prayer Book’s] use continued to increase, both in the parochial churches where the old incumbents remained, and in the Toleraled and [in the] Nonjuring meeting houses’ (Grub, 1861, vol iii, p. 368). The underlying motive, however, which Grub considers to be more political than otherwise, ‘was the advantage which the adherents thus had of appealing more effectually to the sympathy and support of the powerful hierarchy in England’. Grub continues, ‘The principal which led to... a different Eucharistic use [the Scottish Liturgy of 1764] was of a higher kind and was connected with important questions of doctrine’ (Grub, vol. iii, p. 360).

There were also some who looked back to Scottish precedents. In 1712 the Earl of Winton reprinted the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 (Dowden, p. 17). Dowden quotes Rattray’s preference for the 1637 Liturgy, ‘Some people among us could have wished that instead of the English Prayer Book, that which was formerly composed for the use of our own church in King Charles’ time had been now introduced’ (Dowden, p. 43). That the Liturgy of 1637 had already set precedents for the use of the Prayer of Oblation and the Prayer of Invocation, Rattray observes in the same passage, ‘And even some who did not use [the 1637 Liturgy], did yet interject a Prayer of Invocation for the descent of the Holy Ghost to bless and sanctify the Elements, and make them the Sacramental Body and Blood of Christ, and read the first prayer in the Post-Communion immediately after the Words of Institution for a Prayer of Oblation’ (Dowden p. 43). *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem* was Rattray’s attempt to provide Scottish Episcopalians with a solemn liturgical text for Eucharistic worship within their own tradition in both doctrine and text, which had the provenance of antiquity.