

**Review: Cyril Garbett, *The Claims of the Church of England*, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, London, UK, 1947 (1955 edn.)**

Pages: 160

**A Church Fallen Away**

Definitely a unique work as stated: part history; part social commentary; and part description of Church of England [CoE] structure and operations.

The author, an Archbishop no less, tries to project some authority and orthodoxy on the one hand, that the CoE gifted the world with the Authorized Version, and it stands against the Papacy, etc, yet on the other hand is shamefully corrupt in accepting ‘science’ (read Darwinism), elevating so-called ‘tradition’, and consorting with the great harlot Rome!

The end result is a sad fall from grace (even in 1947). Even sadder is the blindness of the Archbishop Garbett as to why only 9% of those born into the CoE actually attend Communion as teens [because it has rejected God’s preserved words!], also, his false prophecy that the already-liberal CoE which had already ordained female deacons contra scripture, would never ordain female priests (it did in 1994)!

On ‘evangelism’, the CoE’s strategy of home visitation to those *already meant to be church members* seems an entirely pointless exercise.

Written seventy years ago, the state of the CoE was already in great decay, but in 2025 it is beyond recognition, if not hope. Garbett’s fellow Anglicans: “some of the clergy and laity ... predicting that within the next fifty years the Church will be a negligible force in the life of the people.” [p130]

In the 21<sup>st</sup>C, the CoE’s only ‘claim’ is to apostasy!

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**Preface (pp. 5-6)**

## **Introduction (pp. 7-10)**

### **I) Catholic and Reformed (pp. 11-25)**

The Church came to England with the missionaries from Rome and Scotland. Augustine founded the Sees of Canterbury, Rochester and London.

“The Church of England [CoE] proclaims to all that it is Catholic.”

“Today the Church of England is a Bible Church, accepting the Bible as the test of faith necessary for salvation, using it as the basis of its worship and teaching ... In the Authorized Version we have the perfect fruition of all previous attempts to render the Bible into the English tongue.. It was perhaps the most valuable gift that the Church has ever conferred on the English people.” [p20]

The CoE and the Eastern Churches stand for Catholicism without the Papacy.

### **II) The Faith of the Church (pp. 26-37)**

“Tradition was not a rival or an alternative authority to the Scriptures, but it made clearer their meaning.”

“The CoE for its doctrine appeals to the Scriptures, to tradition and to reason.” [p30]

“Nor is it possible to accept the Bible as an infallible guide, it was not intended to teach man history, science, or philosophy.” [p32]

Pelagianism teaches salvation by effort and merit.

“Only a century ago the verbal and literal inspiration of the Bible was held by the majority of Anglicans ... but they would now say with the members of the Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England ‘that the tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge at our disposal.’ ” [p36]

### **III) The Worship of the Church (pp. 38-54)**

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup>C there arose a movement in favour of richer ceremony, partly due to the spirit of Romanticism and the Oxford Movement.

The Reformers held Communion at least three times each year.

#### **IV) The Bishop and 'The Bishops' (pp. 55-79)**

As long as the church is established the Crown must have a decisive voice in the choice of its bishops.

With the tendency towards a Totalitarian State there will be the expectation that the Established Church should reflect ... opinions of the Party in power.

In the CoE, children are confirmed at fourteen, the 'age of decision'. Visitation enquiries show an equal number lapse whether the Confirmation is at twelve or fourteen.

“Out of every 100 children, 67 are baptised, 34 attend Sunday School, 26 are confirmed, and 9 attend Communion.”

The Roman Empire was divided into twelve districts or diocese.

The Bishop must abandon all thoughts of prosecution and rely on spiritual powers to enforce Church discipline.

Synods must: have only one effective vote [the diocesan bishop]; frank discussion; and an atmosphere of devotion.

Bishops have always been unpopular in England, criticised for pomp, avarice, and repeated absence. In the age of Wycliffe, “we have the opinion of their contemporaries that worldliness was their characteristic and avarice their vice.” [p72]

If a Bishop's income is large, so are his expenses; the greatest being for a large house in which he is expected to live.

Most CoE bishops are over sixty.

#### **V) The Parochial Clergy (pp. 80-104)**

“We are forced to conclude ... most of the ordinary parish clergy were inefficient, ill-educated, undistinguished men.”

Post-Reformation pulpits were controlled by the Government and homilies read instead of sermons preached.

“Preaching has fallen on evil days ... The modern congregation prefers a ‘sermonette’ ... not more than ten minutes.” [pp91-2]

Pastoral visitation is the CoE’s normal mode of evangelism [?].

The CoE allows clergy to marry or not.

Celibate clergy are more mobile and less of a financial burden, but married can relate more to the common man.

## **VI) The Laity (pp. 105-116)**

These are grouped as: convinced Churchmen; occasional Communion attendees; those who never attend services but call themselves CoE members.

## **VII) The Church and People (pp. 117-133)**

The Archbishop and many priors were murdered in the 1381 Peasant Rising.

“Some of the clergy and laity ... predicting that within the next fifty years the Church will be a negligible force in the life of the people.” [p130]

## **VIII) Yesterday and Today (pp. 134-146)**

Falling birth rates, a stigma of Church-going, and Materialism and Atheism are reasons highlighted for losses.

“With the rejection of Christian dogma has gone the rejection of Christian morality.”

The CoE would still be the national church of disestablishment occurred.

## **IX) Tomorrow (pp. 147-160)**

The Order of Deaconesses was restored by Convocation of Canterbury in 1923. There was a fear this may lead to the Ordination of women to the priesthood. There is no possibility that the Church of England would approve of such a grave departure from the traditions of the Catholic Church. [p155]