



# **Signs of God's Promise: Thomas Cranmer's Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer**

*Gordon P. Jeanes*

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The development of Thomas Cranmer's theology of the Eucharist has often been studied and debated. This book places that development in the context of his sacramental theology and overall policy towards the reform of the liturgy. The first part of the book describes the traditional practice and perceptions of the Eucharist and Baptism (a somewhat different picture from that presented e.g. by Duffy's Stripping of the Altars). It then follows the evidence for liturgical reform and the development in Cranmer's thought through the reign of Henry VIII and the beginning of Edward VI's reign leading up to the two Prayer Books.

**Detailed examination of the 1549 Prayer Book confirms scholarly consensus that its theological standpoint is identical to that of 1552, the fullest and clearest liturgical expression of Cranmer's standpoint; however there are sections in it which (along with the Order of Communion of 1548) suggest the influence of a less radical sacramental and eucharistic theology. It is suggested that the 1549 Prayer Book was originally drafted as a liturgy to accompany the King's Book of 1543 but was hurriedly changed as Cranmer's thought developed through 1548.**

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