Introduction

Along with the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal, the two Books of Homilies, first issued in 1547 and 1563 respectively, form part of the basic formularies of the Church of England. They are therefore of considerable importance for understanding both its history and its doctrine. Like the other formularies, they also enjoy an extended authority in the Anglican Communion as a whole, although they are not specifically recognised by most other Anglican churches. But whereas the other formularies are well-known and easily obtainable, the Homilies remain obscure. Apart from the mention of them in Article 35 they remain virtually unknown and are seldom read nowadays. They were last edited in 1859, by John Griffiths, and although his edition is sometimes reprinted and was revised by Ian Robinson as recently as 2006, few people now read them and to all practical purposes they have gone out of use in the church.[1]

This is a pity, because among the many distinguishing features of the Church of England, it was the only branch of Christendom that incorporated sermons into its statements of faith. Preaching had been a fundamental part of Christian witness and worship since New Testament times, and there are many collections of them from every period of church history. Broadly speaking, sermons fall into one of two main categories. Either they are expository, which is to say that they expound a particular verse (or verses) of Holy Scripture, often in an extended sequence, or they are thematic, discussing special subjects and drawing on many parts of the Bible for support and illustration. On the whole, the Protestant Reformers preferred the expository pattern, and there are extensive collections of their sermons on almost every book of the Bible. Their approach is still very popular today, and there are some who would argue that all sermons ought to be primarily exegetical. The thematic approach, by contrast, has seldom been equally widespread, though it still finds a place on special occasions like the great festivals, at weddings and funerals, and when preachers tackle the Apostles' Creed and similar subjects.

1. J. Griffiths, ed., *The two books of homilies appointed to be read in churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859); reprinted without introduction or index (Bishopstone: Brynmill Press, 2006).

The Homilies of the Church of England are most definitely thematic in nature, which makes it difficult for preachers used to the expository pattern to know what to do with them. Some of them are primarily doctrinal, expounding the great themes of the Reformation for the benefit of those who did not understand what the changes in the church were all about. Others were disciplinary, designed to raise the moral and spiritual standards of church members. Several of them cover the main festivals of the Christian year, a few are dedicated to the individual and corporate devotional life and the last one, against rebellion, is openly political. Since they were written to address the main questions of the day, a number of them seem quaint and far removed from modern concerns, though it must be said that the purely doctrinal sermons are often as fresh and as relevant today as they were when they were first written. Perhaps most surprisingly of all, their language needs little updating, apart from the spelling and forms of certain words that have now gone out of use (for example, 'appliable' instead of the modern 'applicable'). Only rarely does this lead to misunderstanding, and then a footnote is usually enough to enlighten the reader as to the sense of what is being said.

The Articles of Religion remind us that the Homilies were intended to provide a more extensive commentary on certain aspects of Christian doctrine than was possible within the constraints of a single paragraph, though there is no direct correlation between the two kinds of theological witness. Nevertheless, it is clear that it was from the Homilies, either preached as they stood or adapted by preachers to the needs of their particular congregations, that ordinary churchgoers were expected to learn what the Reformation was all about, and for that reason they remain important as evidence for the faith that the Church of England confessed after it broke with Rome in the sixteenth century.

How far they were used for the purpose for which they were intended is impossible to determine. Clergymen had to have a preaching licence if they were to preach their own sermons, and as late as 1604, when the revised canons were issued, there was still a need to provide for those who did not possess one. Unlicensed preachers were expected to read the Homilies instead, and to do so in a systematic manner. The longer ones were broken down into several parts so that they could be read over a few Sundays instead of all at once, and to the extent that the canons were obeyed the contents of the Homilies must have become familiar to many people. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then we may note that during the reign of Mary I, Bishop Edmund Bonner of London felt obliged to produce a book of his own, setting out the distinctive teaching of those who were opposed to the Reformation, and two centuries later John Wesley did the same for his Methodist preachers. The sermon as a means of establishing and communicating a doctrinal position was therefore deeply ingrained in the Anglican psyche, even if the Homilies themselves were seldom quoted directly.

The 1859 edition of John Griffiths has stood the test of time very well, not least because our knowledge of the circumstances in which the Homilies were composed (and by whom) has not improved greatly. Mr Griffiths believed that further research would shed more light on their origins, but that has not turned out to be the case. For the most part, his conclusions are as valid now as they were 150 years ago. Further copies of the editions that he cited have turned up, as well as a few of which he was unaware, but nothing has appeared that would significantly enlarge or modify his conclusions. For this reason, the present edition can justly be regarded as a revision and updating of the 1859 one, to which it conforms in all essentials.[1] The advent of modern technology has made it unnecessary to reproduce every detail of Griffith's work, and some things, like the extensive quotes from original sources that he gave, are no longer necessary because the interested reader can easily find them online. On the other hand, the 1859 edition referenced its sources in a way that is now outdated and often difficult to use, and that deficiency has been remedied in the present volume.

One important addition which can now be made, but which would have been impossible in 1859, is the inclusion of Bishop Bonner's Homilies of 1555. These were composed in direct imitation of the first book of Homilies issued by Thomas Cranmer in 1547, and two of the thirteen sermons it contains are actually recycled from that earlier volume. This has always been known, of course, but the reader can now see for himself what changes were made and can get a sense of how the Marian counter-Reformation saw its task. The reader must be reminded however, that Bishop Bonner's Homilies have never been officially sanctioned by the Church of England, and that whatever influence they had disappeared with the collapse of the Marian reaction in 1559. They can be reprinted here because all the Homilies are now more of historical than of doctrinal interest to most people, though their function within the Church of England officially remains what it has always been.

The First Book of Homilies

The first Book of Homilies owes its origin to the reform programme initiated by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and his colleagues after the Church of England broke with Rome in 1534. There had already been an embryonic confession of the Reformed faith, known as the Ten Articles (1536) which outlined some of the basic doctrines of the Reformation, and

1. For a comprehensive assessment of the current state of scholarship, including its continuing dependence on Griffiths, see Ashley Null, 'Official Tudor Homilies' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, edited by P. McCullough, H. Adlington and E. Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 348-365.

that had been supplemented a year later by the so-called 'Bishops' Book', a manual of instruction in Reformed principles that was meant as a stop-gap until something better could be produced. In 1538 there appeared the Great Bible, the first authorised English-language text, which was set up in every parish church and made available for the parishioners to read. Two sets of royal injunctions (1536 and 1538) authorised a number of changes that were favourable to the Reformed point of view and it seemed as if the church was on course to effect a thoroughgoing reform of its doctrine and discipline.

Soon after that, however, a reaction set in. This was typified by the Act of Six Articles (1539) which re-established some pre-Reformation practices in worship, reinforced the celibacy of the clergy and made transubstantiation the official church doctrine once again. It seems that Henry VIII was trying to achieve a balance between the old and the new, and that he felt that change had gone too far. It was in this period of reaction that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer felt that the principles of Reform needed to be communicated to a wider audience, and the pulpit was the only effective means of doing so. Cranmer managed to persuade his fellow bishops of the need to produce homilies for general circulation, and on 16 February 1543 he deposited a book of them with the convocation of Canterbury, that had been composed by a number of different people, including himself. But before anything could be done about this, Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester and a leading conservative opponent of Cranmer's reform programme, managed to produce the King's Book, which the convocation approved (over Cranmer's objections) on 30 April 1543. This was an extensive revision of the Bishops' Book and it retreated from many of the positions taken in the earlier volume, though it did not deny the Reformation altogether.

In this reactionary climate, the Homilies were set aside and no more was heard of them until after the king's death on 28 January 1547. Cranmer then resurrected them and over Gardiner's objections, published them on 31 July 1547. In the royal injunctions that were issued soon afterwards, the clergy were instructed to frame their sermons in accordance with the doctrine taught in the Book of Homilies and a year later they were told to read them just as they stood, without adapting them in any way. To make that easier, the Homilies were divided into subsections, each of which would be preached at the main Sunday service in weekly succession.

There were twelve homilies in all, the first six being more 'doctrinal' and the last six more 'pastoral' in content, though this distinction is not absolute. The doctrinal homilies have a pastoral application and the pastoral ones are rooted in Scriptural doctrine, giving them a greater unity than such an analytical distinction might suggest. As it happens, we know who wrote all six of the doctrinal homilies, but only one of the pastoral ones – the others remain anonymous. Taking them in order, the doctrinal homilies are:

1. Scripture	Thomas Cranmer (probably)
2. Sin and the Fall	John Harpsfield
3. Salvation (justification by faith)	Thomas Cranmer
4. Faith	Thomas Cranmer
5. Faith and good works	Thomas Cranmer
6. Love	Edmund Bonner

Of the three authors, two belonged to the more conservative wing of the church and their homilies would later be recycled in Bishop Bonner's collection. Thomas Cranmer was the probable author of the homily on Scripture and definitely wrote the trilogy on salvation and good works which belong together and may be regarded as a single exposition, divided into separate homilies only because of their great length.

The pastoral homilies are:

7. Against swearing and perjury	
8. Falling away from God	
9. Fear of death	
10. Civil order and obedience	
11. Against adultery	Thomas Becon
12. Against contention and brawling	

These themes are something of a mixed bag. The homilies against swearing, adultery and brawling can be grouped together as warnings against anti-social behaviour. Those on the fear of death and on falling away from God are more geared to the spiritual life of the individual, while the one on civil obedience is clearly the most political. We have no way of knowing why these particular topics were chosen, but they were obviously felt to be of particular importance at the time. We know that Thomas Becon wrote the homily against adultery because he included it in his collected works, but the others remain stubbornly anonymous.

Becon was Cranmer's chaplain, but he fell out of favour at court in 1543 and retired from the scene until after Henry VIII's death. We do not know for certain whether he had been rehabilitated by 31 July in that year, but whether he was or not, there would have been little time for him to have composed the homily then. It is much more likely that he wrote it in 1542, and if that is the case with his, it is probably also true of the others as well. This hunch is strengthened by the fact that the very last paragraph of the final homily announced that a number of others would be forthcoming in due course, a promise that was not to be fulfilled until 1562. Had they been in production in 1547 they would surely have appeared much earlier than that. Given what we know, and in the demanding circumstances of the Edwardian era, it seems much more likely that Cranmer just picked up what he already had to hand and rushed it into print, after which he was drawn away to other things.

On the whole, the first Book of Homilies avoids polemics against Rome, though there is a short section denouncing the pretensions of the papacy in the third part of the homily on obedience. This restraint may reflect official policy in the last years of Henry VIII's reign, but they also correspond to the general tenor of the early stages of the Reformation in England. It was more important to emphasise the positive aspects of the change than to fulminate against objectors, and that makes them more useful today.

Bishop Bonner's Homilies

In 1555 Bishop Edmund Bonner of London issued a book of homilies which was modelled on Cranmer's book and intended to replace it. Bonner was evidently impressed by the success that the book had had and wanted to achieve a similar result in his attempt to restore Catholic worship and piety.

How successful he was may be questioned, but his homilies retain a certain interest for the student of Anglican church history. For example, it is only because twelve of the thirteen sermons in Bonner's book are signed that we know who wrote the second and sixth homilies in the first book. By comparing the two texts, we can also see what Bonner and his associates felt was needed to restore what they thought of as 'Catholicism'.

We can also tell from the shape of Bonner's book what they rejected as 'Protestantism'. It may even help us to appreciate why the second book of Homilies, which was produced after the restoration of the Protestant church in 1559, took the shape that it did.

Bonner's book contains thirteen homilies, but none of them is subdivided into parts and the whole collection is considerably shorter than Cranmer's book. The first six homilies are clearly based on the earlier ones and two of them are actually reproduced from the first book, with slight modifications. These, of course, are the homilies by Bonner himself (number six in the first book and five in his own) and John Harpsfield (the second in both books). Five of the first six homilies are by John Harpsfield, the exception being Bonner's recycled homily on love. Of the other seven, the first two are by Henry Pendleton or Pendilton, who was Bonner's chaplain and a prebendary of St Paul's from 1554 until his death in 1557, and the rest are by Harpsfield, with the possible exception of the last one, which has no signature. It has been suggested that Bonner must have been its author, but the fact that it is so closely connected with the previous two suggests that Harpsfield wrote it and that his signature was omitted by mistake. In any case, Harpsfield was certainly the main contributor to the volume as a whole and was the guiding spirit behind it.

The first six homilies can be broken down as follows:

1. The creation and fall of man
2. The misery of man's fallen state and his condemnation to death
3. The redemption of man
4. How Christ's work of redemption is applicable to man
5. Christian love and charity — Edmund Bonner
6. How dangerous a break of charity is

These homilies are clearly grouped in twos (which may reflect the division into parts found in the first book) under the general headings of Sin, Redemption and Love. It should be noted that there is no homily on Scripture and that there is no equivalent to Cranmer's trilogy on justification by faith and the use of good works. These were considered to be Protestant themes and were simply left out. The sixth homily bears some relation to the eighth one in the first book, but its focus is different. The original homily concentrated on loss of faith, whereas Harpsfield speaks more about loss of love. This difference seems rather unimportant to most people today, but it reflects a dispute in the Reformation era between Protestants who believed that we are justified by faith alone (without love) and Catholics who insisted that our faith must be formed by love for it to have any meaning. This homily must therefore be seen as a negative response to the earlier one, not as a continuation or adaptation of it.

The remaining homilies can be grouped as follows:

7. The nature of the church — Henry Pendleton
8. The authority of the church — Henry Pendleton
9. Papal supremacy
10. Papal supremacy

11. The real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the altar
12. Transubstantiation
13. Answers to objections made against this sacrament — Edmund Bonner?

Once again there is a clear pairing of sermons on the Church, the Papacy and the Mass respectively. (The thirteenth homily is obviously a kind of appendix to the preceding pair.) None of these subjects had been tackled in the first book, though some of them had been mentioned in passing. What is remarkable about Bonner's homilies is that they pay almost no attention to the pastoral questions that occupied the last half of the first book of

Homilies. Bonner was clearly not in favour of adultery or brawling, but he probably felt that such issues were of secondary importance in the battle he was fighting for the restoration of Catholicism. As a result, his homilies are more exclusively theological than those of the first book are.

Of particular interest are the two on papal supremacy, both by John Harpsfield. All three men involved in composing this book of homilies had accepted the Henrician reformation and conformed to the Protestant church during his reign. Bonner was the first to break with it, but even he was content to do without the papacy. This was therefore a clear change of direction for all three men, brought about by the reconciliation with Rome in 1554 and the subsequent influence of Reginald Pole, the papal legate and Cranmer's eventual successor as archbishop of Canterbury.

The Second Book of Homilies

Bonner's book disappeared after the restoration of Protestantism in 1559 but it may have had some influence on the composition of the second Book of Homilies, with its emphasis on the church and public worship, themes which the first book either ignored or touched on only in passing. At most however, Bonner's book may have reminded the compilers of the second book of the importance of tackling these topics, but as they were becoming increasingly prominent anyway, even that is uncertain.

The first thing to be said about the second Book of Homilies is that it is much longer than the first book. As initially approved in 1563, there were twenty sermons, subdivided into parts as those in the first book were. Another sermon was added in 1571 and in later editions two of the earlier homilies were broken up, making an extra one on the Passion of Christ (Good Friday) and another on Rogationtide. There combined length is roughly three times that of the first book and they were regarded as a separate collection, not being printed or bound together with the first book until 1623. Article 35 of the Thirty-Nine Articles lists them all separately, sometimes giving them names slightly different from the ones that appear in the book itself and reversing the order of the second and third from the end.

Two of the homilies are very long – the one on idolatry and the one on rebellion. The second of these was composed in the special circumstances that surrounded the excommunication of Queen Elizabeth I by the Pope in 1570, when he incited the English to rebel against her, so its length is perhaps understandable. The extreme length of the other one is harder to explain. Much of it is a learned treatise on the use of images in the pre-Reformation church, including a detailed account of the iconoclastic controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries, which makes interesting reading for some but is unlikely to have retained the attention of most congregations for long and

was perhaps never preached in its entirety. It was taken from an even longer work on the subject by the Swiss Reformer Heinrich Bullinger, but that (and other adaptations from earlier works) only serves to remind us that the second Book of Homilies often reads more like a set of theological essays than a collection of sermons.

As with the first book, the homilies are anonymous, and attempts to identify the different authors can only be speculative. It seems that Bishop John Jewel was the general editor of the collection and we know that the sermons on Good Friday and Easter were lifted from Richard Taverner's *Epistles and Gospelles with a Brief Postyl upon the Same*, which had appeared in 1540. Beyond that it is impossible to be sure, but John Griffiths suggested possible authors for some of them, and these are given with a (?) here. Following the numbering given in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the homilies may be grouped as follows:[1]

Church and worship in general:[2]

1. The right use of the church
2. Against idolatry[3]
3. Repairing churches and keeping them clean

Personal behaviour:

4. Good works, especially fasting	Edmund Grindal?[4]
5. Against gluttony and drunkenness[5]	James Pilkington?
6. Against excess of apparel[6]	James Pilkington?

1. The names given here are not the exact titles. See the introduction to the individual homilies for them.
2. Griffiths believed, on stylistic grounds, that these three homilies were all written by the same person, but we do not know who that was.
3. An adaptation of Heinrich Bullinger, *De origine erroris in divorum et simulacrorum cultu* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1539), originally presented by Matthew Parker and the other bishops to Queen Elizabeth I. There is an unsigned manuscript copy among the Parker manuscripts in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.
4. Griffiths conjectures that Grindal may have been the author of the original homily, but that Matthew Parker may have added the large extra element at the end of the first and the beginning of the second part.
5. Dependent on Peter Martyr Vermigli's discourse *De vino et ebrietate* in *In librum Iudicum commentarii doctissimi* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1571), 9. A few sentences are taken from Bishop Pilkington's E*xposition upon Haggai*, in *The works of James Pilkington*, ed. J. Scholefield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1842), 1.5-6.
6. Some phrases in this homily are taken from Bishop Pilkington's *Exposition upon Haggai*.

Prayer and public worship:[1]

7.	Prayer	John Jewel?
8.	The place and time of prayer	John Jewel?
9.	The use of the vernacular in common prayer	John Jewel?

Miscellaneous:

10.	An answer to people who are offended by certain passages of Scripture[2]	
11.	Alms and acts of mercy[3]	

The Christian year:

12.	Christmas	
13.	Good Friday	Richard Taverner
13A.	Good Friday	
14.	Easter	Richard Taverner
15.	Worthy reception of the sacrament[4]	John Jewel?
16.	Pentecost	John Jewel?
17.	Rogation week	Matthew Parker?
17A.	Rogation week	Matthew Parker?

Miscellaneous:

18.	Matrimony[5]	
19.	Repentance[6]	
20.	Against idleness	John Jewel?
21.	Against rebellion	

An interesting point, mentioned by Griffiths in the introduction to his edition, is that the first three of the Homilies and probably also the seventh to the ninth, quote Scripture from the Latin Vulgate, while the others go back to the original Hebrew and Greek. Griffiths supposed that this indicated different authors, and he ascribed the last three to John Jewel. Jewel may also have written (or at least edited) the first three, though

1. On stylistic grounds, Griffiths assigns all three of these to the same author, probably John Jewel.
2. A few sentences at the beginning are translated from Erasmus' *Paraclesis*.
3. Partly taken from Cyprian's *De opere et eleemosynis.*
4. This may appear to be out of place, but parishioners were obliged to receive the sacrament at Easter, which is probably why it is put here.
5. This sermon was constructed from on by Veit Dietrich of Nuremberg and from one by John Chrysostom on the same topic.
6. Usually the order of this and the next homily is reversed in the printed editions. This sermon on repentance is dependent on one by Rudolf Gwalther on the same subject.

whether he was for that reason more 'Catholic' or conservative than the other authors is unlikely. The Vulgate was still widely known in academic circles and Jewel may not have seen any need to go beyond it. Similarly, many of the Homilies quote freely from the Apocrypha, which would have been almost unthinkable a few years later but which was still acceptable to the Reformers in 1563.

At the end of his introduction, John Griffiths thanked a number of people for their generosity in lending him their own rare copies of various editions of the Homilies. Modern progress has made such a thing almost impossible nowadays, since most of the copies in question are now safely stored in the rare books rooms of various national and university libraries. But although times have changed, there is one aspect of Mr Griffiths' thanks that remains as valid now as it was then. He hoped that those who had aided him in his work would be rewarded by knowing that their help had been directed 'towards the object which I have kept in view throughout the labour of preparing it, the furthering of the glory of God by setting in clearer light the agreement of the Church of England with the Gospel of our Blessed Lord and Saviour'. Amen.

Editions Used

The date of the edition is given according to the way it is referenced in the text (which follows Griffiths), and it is accompanied by its number in the Revised Short Title Catalogue.[1]

First Book of Homilies

Date	Printer	RSTC number
1547 G1	Richard Grafton	13638.5
1547 G2	Richard Grafton	13638.7
1547 G3	Richard Grafton	13639
1547 G4	Richard Grafton	13639.5
1547 G5	Richard Grafton	13640
1547 G6	Richard Grafton	13640.5
1547 W1	Edward Whitchurch	13641
1547 W2	Edward Whitchurch	13641.3

1. A *short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English books printed abroad 1475-1640,* first compiled by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave. Second edition, revised and enlarged, begun by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, completed by K. F. Pantzer, 3 vols. (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976-91), I, 594-5.

Date	Printer	RSTC number
1547 W3	Edward Whitchurch	13641.7
1548	Richard Grafton	13642
1549 G	Richard Grafton	13643
1549 W	Edward Whitchurch	13644
1549 O	John Oswen	13645
1551 G11	Richard Grafton	13646
1551 G2	Richard Grafton	13647
1559	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13648
1562	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13650
1562 A	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13650.3
1562 B	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13650.7
1563	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13651
1569	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13652
1574	Richard Jugge	13654
1576	Richard Jugge	13655

Second Book of Homilies

Date	Printer	RSTC number
1563 A 1	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13663
1563 A 22	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13663.3
1563 B	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13663.7
1563 C	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13664
1563 D	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13664.5
1563 E	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13665
1563 F	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13666
1563 G	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13666.4
1563 H	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13666.7
1567	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13667
1570	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13668
1571	Richard Jugge/John Cawood	13669
1574	Richard Jugge	13670

First and Second Books Printed Together (But Treated as Separate Volumes)

Date	Printer	RSTC number
1582	Christopher Barker	13656/13672
1587	John Charlewood	13657/13673
1595	Edward Allde	13658/13674

[A Welsh translation of both volumes was published in 1606. RSTC 13678]

First and Second Books Printed as a Single Volume

Date	Printer	RSTC number
1623	John Bill	13659/13675

All subsequent editions follow the 1623 one.

In this edition, textual emendations are indicated by a combination if *italics* for deletions and **bold type** for additions. The year and edition in which the change was made is indicated in square brackets after the alterations in question. Thus, for example, *conservation* **keeping up** [1559] indicates that in 1559 the word 'conservation', which had appeared in previous editions, was altered to 'keeping up'. Those who want the original text need only ignore the words in bold type but keep those in italics, whilst those who want the currently authorised text will do the opposite – include the words in bold type but ignore those in italics.