

## A Rationale of The Daily Service.

THE Daily Service in any fully developed system of Public Worship possesses a character of its own. It is not a prayer meeting. It is not a meeting for instruction. Like these, it does indeed contribute to personal edification. The worshippers who participate cannot fail to recognise in it a means of grace ; and, whether it includes formal courses of instruction or not, that orderly reading of the Holy Scriptures which is one of its constituent elements does always provide a place for the ministry of the Word. Personal edification, however, is not the primary intention of the Daily Service. Its primary intention is the maintenance by the Church of continuous corporate worship. Ancillary to the services of the Lord's Day, it knits the whole week together in public devotions as a liturgical unit. The Lord's Day rules it ; and only when celebration of the Holy Eucharist, that central act of common Christian worship, is made the principal service of each Lord's Day can it realise completely its distinctive character. But in any case the observance of Daily Service must always look to the worship offered upon the Lord's Day as that which explains its meaning and purpose. It repeats what George Herbert sang regarding Sunday :—

“ The week were dark, but for thy light :  
Thy torch doth show the way.”

The offices of Daily Prayer are distinguished from the regular Services of the Lord's Day by one general qualification. They are of necessity representative offices. In ordinary circumstances they cannot be offered by the great congregation. They must depend for their observance upon the few who have sufficient leisure to attend them. Nevertheless, just because representative, they are truly acts of the whole Church. The act of the hand is the act of the body. In this consideration an answer may be found to the contention of those who argue that the maintenance of services attended by ‘ two or three ’ only is not worth while. In the region of spiritual values effectiveness cannot be estimated by numbers. Aaron and Hur were only

two persons ; but they held up the hands of Moses, and, by doing so, enabled all Israel to prevail.

The offices of Daily Prayer differ also from the central act of common Christian worship in this respect, that they originated not in Dominical institution but in pious custom. The Disciples, so long as they remained in Jerusalem, continued probably to take part in the services of the Temple ; but the Daily Offices of the Church seem to have developed independently. Their origin has been traced to the Vigil of Easter, the current belief then being that our Lord would return early on Easter morning. Subsequently the Easter Vigil was extended to every Saturday evening, and thereafter to every evening of the week. To this nucleus the various 'Hours of Prayer' were added, one after another or in groups, until the system of devotion corresponded with the resolution of the Psalmist, "Seven times a day will I praise Thee." In the lapse of centuries these 'Hours of Prayer' came to be observed only by the Clergy and Monastic Orders, and at the period of the Reformation had been generally 'accumulated' and had fallen into intricacies and confusion. The Reformers reduced them to Morning and Evening Prayer, and aimed at their becoming congregational. The Church of England, omitting Tierce, Sexts, and Nones, condensed Mattins, Lauds, and Prime into Mattins, and Vespers and Compline into Evensong. The Church of Scotland, following Geneva, broke altogether with the traditional forms of the Breviary, and had recourse to the forms set forth in 'The Book of Common Order,' the use of which was enjoined by the law of the Church from 1564 to 1645. We have Dr Sprott's authority for the assertion that in Scotland "Daily Service on week-days was very general from the time of the Reformation. In towns the Readers read the Common Prayers, with portions of Scripture, every morning and evening through the year. . . . There was daily service even in country villages." For present use in the Church of Scotland, no more suitable order exists than that published by the Church Service Society in 1893 under the title, 'DAILY OFFICES FOR MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.' The general arrangement followed by these offices is: I. Sentences ; II. Prayer: (1) Invocation, (2) Confession, (3) Pardon and Peace, (4) Dedication, (5) Supplications, (6) The Lord's Prayer ; III. The Psalm or Psalms ; IV. The Old Testament Lesson ; V. A Psalm,

Hymn, or other Canticle; VI. The New Testament Lesson; VII. The Apostles' Creed; VIII. Prayer: (1) The Thanksgiving, (2) Collect or Collects; IX. A Psalm or Hymn; X. Intercessions; XI. A Hymn; XII. The Benediction. For the due performance of this Service half an hour suffices.

For a rationale of this order we need not turn to the ancient Hours of Prayer. In both this order and these Hours of Prayer, Psalms and Canticles, Lessons from Scripture, and Prayers compose, doubtless, the substance of the Service. But the structure of the former bears comparatively small resemblance to that of the latter, and has instead a closer structural affinity with the Morning and Evening Offices of the 'Catholic Apostolic Church.' To this order at least may be applied not a little of the rationale drawn from Old Testament types, which is expounded in the 'Readings upon the Liturgy' of that Communion. That rationale bases itself upon the principles enunciated in the Epistle to the Hebrews (viii., ix., x.), that the ordinances of the Tabernacle in the wilderness were 'figures of the true'; that Christian worship enters into that 'true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man'; and that the parts of Christian worship must, therefore, correspond spiritually and substantially with the shadow of heavenly things which they fulfil, "as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

In the Daily Service of the Tabernacle there were two chief parts—the offering of the Morning and Evening Lamb upon the brazen altar in the outer court (Exodus xxix. 38-43, Numbers xxviii. 1-8); and the offering of incense, the symbol of prayer, upon the golden altar in the Holy Place (Exodus xxx. 1-8). These, with their accompanying ceremonies, find antitypal realisation in the two great ends which the Daily Service of the Church has in view—namely, *A.*—the presentation of a spiritual sacrifice in God's Presencé (Nos. I. to VII. of the above order), and *B.*—the maintenance of intercession before the Throne (Nos. VIII. to XII. of the above order).

*A.*—The *sentences* with which Service begins are intended simply as an invitation and encouragement to worship. They call listless souls to attention, and reassure timid souls.

The first prayer in the Service corresponds to the sacrifice offered upon the brazen altar. The general signification of that rite was that sinful men cannot approach the holiness of God without confession of sin, without atonement, without entire dedication, without purification as by fire. Hence the first prayer is essentially a prayer of access. *The Invocation* is, as it were, entrance through the gate into the outer court of the Tabernacle. It is the solemn placing of worshippers in the presence of God, and the imploring of Divine aid in the service to be performed. All Christian worship is worship in spirit and in truth. Prayer—"God's breath in man returning to his birth"—cannot be offered except in God and through the grace which God bestows. We must pray in order to pray. The *Confession of Sin* is like the presentation of the lamb, and that laying of hands upon its head which symbolised the transference of guilt. Except by the avenue of penitence, return to God is impossible. The resolution, "I will arise and go to my Father," must be followed by the acknowledgment, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." Before worshippers can stand to minister as a Royal Priesthood before the Divine Majesty, they must return with broken and contrite hearts to their Baptismal status in the Family of God; and, because the whole service is representative in character, the guilt confessed must be not only personal but also corporate guilt. This confession of guilt is made, implicitly if not expressly, in reliance upon His mediation who is "the propitiation for our sins"—"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The vision of the Lamb slain pleading the prevailing virtue of His sacrifice before the Throne (Revelation v. 6) is the aspect of Christ's office which dominates this first part of the Service. In the *Prayer for Pardon and Peace*, accordingly, worshippers are placed under the shelter of that pleading. They return thus into the peace of reconciliation, and are thus prepared for the worship which they come to offer. *Self-dedication* is properly the first act thereafter (Romans xii. 1). Just as the whole sacrifice was laid upon the altar, so must the sacrifice of will be presented without reservation; and just as the sacred fire consumed the gross elements of the material sacrifice and enabled it to ascend, so is it only by yielding to the purifying efficacy

and uplifting flame of the Holy Spirit that this offering of an obedient will can be made complete. *Supplications*, if introduced here, may be regarded as an expansion of the act of self-dedication. But their introduction at this point tends rather to confuse the sequence. *The Lord's Prayer* also, although its connection with the prayer of access can be explained liturgically, is better reserved for association with the intercessions.

The versicles "O Lord, open Thou our lips," &c., immediately succeed the prayer of access. The first act of worship, after return to God has restored the joy of salvation, is the sacrifice of praise. The *Gloria Patri* is itself a comprehensive and complete act of Christian praise. Nevertheless the contents of this compendium require to be unfolded; and it is to this end that the Psalms find their place here. From the very earliest times the recitation of the Psalter has been a principal feature in the daily offices of the Church. While following Temple and Synagogue precedent in this particular, the Church did not follow it blindly. She perceived, indeed, the universality of the Psalms, their applicability to human experience everywhere and at all times, their provision for the inter-communion of the ages in the showing forth God's praise. But that which warranted the Church to claim the Psalter as her own book of praises was the spirit of prophecy inhabiting it. She used the Psalms as Christ and His Apostles used them. In all of them she heard speaking by anticipation the voice of Christ, or the voice of the Church, or the voice of both. And it is to emphasise this fulness of their latent meaning when employed in Christian praise, that the *Gloria Patri* is repeated at the conclusion of each Psalm in Daily Service. While proper Psalms are, of course, assigned to Festivals and special seasons, it is important that the whole Psalter should be recited consecutively in suitable portions day by day, for only so will the varied wealth of its inexhaustible treasury become available; and the practice of responsive reading renders this possible even when the number of worshippers present falls to a minimum.

It may be debated whether the reading of *Lessons* in Daily Service is primarily an act of instruction or an act of worship. The reading of *Lessons* does, of course, always serve purposes of instruction. But in Daily Service even instruction has worship immediately in view. The

Lessons are read to the glory of God ; and worshippers, receiving obediently the instruction of His Word, make thus an oblation of their souls, of the rational constituent within their being, of that very constituent which is prone to exalt itself intellectually above the things of the Spirit. As in the case of the Psalter, so in that of the Lessons, while they adapt themselves to the observance of Festivals and special seasons, at other times a consecutive lectionary should be systematically followed.

*The Canticle*, although placed in this order between the Lessons, connecting the Old Testament with the New, is much more than an interlude. It is the oblation of our spirits, as the Dedication is of our bodily life, and as attention to the Lessons is of our reasonable souls. One or other of the evangelical canticles is made the vehicle of this oblation, because these spiritual songs, as being the songs of the Incarnation—the ‘morning songs’ which received our Saviour into the world—are representative of all purely Christian praise. The *Benedictus* has special suitability at Morning Service, the *Magnificat* or the *Nunc Dimittis* at Evening Service. The *Gloria in Excelsis* is reserved for Eucharistic use.

*The Creed* responds to the Lessons. It gives articulate expression to that obedience of faith which is the offering of our reasonable souls. As an act of profession it is also an act of praise. Man cannot praise God more fitly than by the acknowledgment of what He is in His Being and of what He has done, what He does and what He has promised to do in the work of human redemption.

With the recitation of the Creed the first part of the Service—that which answers to the offerings made in the outer court of the Tabernacle—concludes. The worshipper, having completed the sacrifice of contrition and the whole offering of body, soul, and spirit to God, is now prepared to go up into the Holy Place for the office to be fulfilled at the golden altar of intercession—that office which constitutes the *raison d'être* of the Daily Service.

*B.*—The chief purpose for which the Levitical Priesthood entered the Holy Place was to burn incense. This is clear not only from Scriptural references to the ceremony (Exodus xxx. 1-8 ; 2 Chronicles ii. 4, xiii. 11, xxix. 11 ; St Luke i. 8-11), but also from the central position of the golden altar immediately in front of the curtain shrouding the Holy of Holies, where stood the Ark with its Mercy-seat typical of the Throne of God in Heaven. Incense

was the symbol of prayer (Psalm cxli. 2; Malachi i. 11), and especially of intercession (Revelation viii. 3-5). When the priest, leaving the brazen altar without, approached the golden altar within the Holy Place to burn incense, this signified the ministry of intercession; and it foreshadowed that ministry of intercession to maintain which is the very purpose of Morning and Evening Prayer in the Church.

For the fulfilment of this ministry, guidance is given in I Timothy ii. 1-7. There St Paul distinguishes four kinds of intercessory offering, which have been compared to the four ingredients of incense (Exodus xxx. 34-38)—supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Of the first three of these a mutually exclusive definition is not easy; but all four are of the nature of intercession. All—even the thanksgivings—are to be made ‘for all men.’

In the order under consideration no attempt is made to preserve the Apostolic sequence strictly. In that order the *Thanksgivings* come first. This place has been assigned them probably to emphasise the fact that they are the continuation of the great Thanksgiving in the Eucharist. In the institution our Lord began by giving thanks. Thanksgiving is to be distinguished from Praise. While the latter contemplates the Being, the perfections, the marvellous works of God; the former contemplates the benefits received from His infinite bounty. Its character here is intercessional. It unites itself with the thanksgiving of Him who is the “one Mediator between God and men”—“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth.”

The Thanksgivings are followed by a *Collect* or *series of Collects*. These gather up comprehensively the pleadings to be presented later in detailed intercession. Ordinarily three Collects will be found suitable. The first will be that of the week. The rationale of its use is that it connects the Daily Service with the preceding Sunday. On Saturday evening, however, the Collect of the following Sunday is used, because ecclesiastically the day begins with its eve: “The evening and the morning were the first day.” The second Collect will refer to the particular day of the week. Themes for each day are dictated by the two great weeks of Scripture—the week of Creation and the week of Redemption. The former may be taken to rule the second morning Collect, the latter to rule the second evening Collect. The Appendix to the book of

'Daily Offices' provides a series of such Collects, although the system is not there carried out quite uniformly, nor without some confusion. The system is, of course, subject to modification on the occurrence of certain days of observance. The triad of Collects is completed by the regular daily Collects for morning and for evening.

The *Psalm* or *Hymn* following the Collects is introduced as a devotional rest. It serves also to secure the emphasis of isolation for the crowning prayers of intercession thereafter to be offered. Some Hymn having reference to our Lord's Intercession in Heaven—such as 'Thou Standest at the Altar'—will be found helpful in this place; for it is the vision of Christ pleading as High Priest before the Throne (Hebrews viii. 1, &c.) which dominates this part of the Service, just as the vision of the Lamb Slain dominates the earlier part.

The *Intercessions* proper may be either introduced or concluded with the Lord's Prayer, prefaced by the *Kyrie Eleison* or other formula of deprecation. The Lord's Prayer, being universally appropriate, may occupy with good reason almost any position in an order of service. But in services predominantly intercessory it finds its sovereign place here. It is intercessory both in form and substance; and each one of its petitions may be used with intercessory intention. Its presentation alone accomplishes a perfect and all-comprehensive act of intercession, and makes atonement for the shortcomings of other intercessions. Nevertheless particular intercessions must accompany it. The incense must be beaten very small (Exodus xxx. 36). The general order of intercessional topics is familiar, and needs no detailed explanation; but room must always be provided for such special petitions as circumstances dictate, and for private petitions offered in silence by individual hearts. Memorial also must always be made of the Faithful Departed, and prayer for the hastening of the Coming and Kingdom of our Lord. Nothing lies beyond the range of the intercessions of the Church which lies within the scope of our Lord's own intercessions. It is in union with Him, as members of that Spiritual Body of which He is the Head, that we participate in this mediatorial ministry. To Him we bring all our imperfect pleadings. He gathers them together, purifies and hallows them, and presents them before the Mercy-seat with the 'much incense' of His own intercession.

In the Holy Place the Levitical Priests not only offered incense, but they also trimmed the lamps in the morning and lit them in the evening. The antitype of this may be found in meditation upon that Word which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In the fully developed system of Morning and Evening Prayer, some text or passage of Holy Scripture may be proposed with brief exposition at Morning Service—the *trimming of the lamps*; and, that text or passage having been a subject of meditation throughout the day, the thoughts thus garnered may be ministered at Evening Service—the *lighting of the lamps*. In the book of 'Daily Offices,' however, the closing *Hymn* is that which corresponds to the trimming and the lighting of the lamps.

With the final *Grace* or *Benediction* worshippers, ere going forth, place themselves or are placed beneath the omnipotent shelter of THE THRICE HOLY NAME. *The Grace*, however, rather than *The Benediction* should be used at Daily Service.

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