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The Place Where Prayer was wont to be made :

BEING THE
PRAYER BOOK'S PLEA FOR DAILY PRAYER
IN THE CHURCH.

AN ADDRESS
TO PLAIN CHURCH PEOPLE.



BY
THE REV. R. TOMLINS, M.A.

“Prayer shall be made ever unto Him; and daily shall He
be praised.”

Ps. lxxii. 15.

“Continuing daily with one accord in the Temple.”

Acts ii. 46.

LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET.

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* * * The Publisher begs to state that the following little Tract appeared, in the first instance, in the pages of the WEST OF ENGLAND CONSERVATIVE. Having been requested by several persons, who had read it, to apply to the Author for his permission to reprint it, he is now enabled to publish it, in its present form, with the Author's revisions.



Daily Prayer.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE greatest good in this world which I can desire for you is, that you may profitably read the *Holy Scriptures*, and pray to Almighty God. Accordingly, I will endeavour to make it clear to you that it is not, the fault of the Church, but of ourselves, if we do not fulfil the Scripture by "searching the Scriptures *daily*." I know that some, and I trust that many of you have followed the directions of the Church, by *daily* reading the Word of God according to the Calendar in the Prayer Book.

You who have done so know by experience the happiness of keeping to that rule. You who have not done so, and have therefore had no experience in the subject, can have nothing

to say to any one on its advantages or disadvantages. Of you, we know, it must be said, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

When I say, then, that for many years past, up to this day, it has been my own practice to keep to this direction of the Church, I feel that I have, at least on this ground, a right to speak; I feel that I have, to some extent, a right to demand that what I say be listened to before anything which may be said by those who may set up for teachers where they have never learned, and to condemn what they have never tried. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?"

I appeal, therefore, to those who can answer by experience; "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say." Is it not a great and blessed privilege to read the Holy Scriptures on a settled, orderly, progressive plan? And is there any plan to be compared with that of our Church? All the Old Testament, with but slight exception, is read over *once* during the year; all the New Testament, *three* times; all the Psalms *twelve* times; besides much of these being repeated at various other times in our services.

In such harmonious succession are the Old and New Testaments, side by side, daily brought before us. The Old calling to the New; and the New answering to the Old. Prophecy followed by its fulfilment. Type answered by its anti-type. Shadow answering to substance. The Divine history of the past, the present, and the future gradually unfolded. Such is the

scheme of Lessons provided by the Church. What is lacking? What is superfluous? Very sure am I that there are not wanting those who fully go with me in saying, that this is a great and blessed privilege.

Now let me beg you to ask yourselves seriously whether it would not be well to make more of this privilege. We may, it is true, daily read our Bibles at home, and adhere, in our reading, to the order prescribed in the Church's Calendar; but, all the time, there is one point missing;—we did not, as one united family, meet together daily in the House of our Father. We cannot say daily, “the rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.” Scripture addresses us as fellow-members of a Divine Head, rather than as individuals. It is therefore when we are met together in Church, as fellow-members of our Lord, that we shall most fully reach its meaning, and realize its blessings. Thus from this close union between reading of Scripture and public worship, not only will man listen to God in His most Holy Word with more benefit, but also address God in prayer with greater reverence.

If such be not the case, whose is the fault? It is not the fault of the Church, but of ourselves, that we do not thus daily meet together. A very little consideration will show this:—only open to the very title-page of our Prayer Book, and what do we see there?

The Book of Common Prayer.

We profess to use a book of COMMON prayer, or of prayers *in common*, one with another, and

yet too many seem contented never to meet in common to use it, except on Sundays.

Let us turn a leaf or two farther, and see what the Prefaces tell us:—

“And all Priests and Deacons are to say DAILY the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by sickness; or some other urgent cause.

“And the Curate that ministereth in every Parish Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish Church, or Chapel, where he ministereth; and shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God’s Word, and to pray with him.” *

What can any honest, straightforward person say to this? Is it, or is it not the express rule that the Clergy of the Church of Christ in this land shall *daily read God’s Word to the people, and daily pray with them?*

It is already proved; nevertheless I proceed:—We come to the next page, and find:—

“The Order how the Psalter is appointed to be read.

“The Psalter shall be read through once every month, &c. &c.”

Then, again:—

“The Order how the rest of Holy Scripture is appointed to be read.

“The Old Testament is appointed for the first Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer; so as the *most part thereof* will be read every year *once*, as in the

* This direction, occurring, as it does, in the Preface, is likely to be overlooked by ordinary readers. It is most important, as plainly showing that a large Church, in a populous parish, is not contemplated as necessary for the carrying out of the Church’s injunctions. The Curate is required to read the service “openly,” so long as he can find persons to join with him; and, even in default of this, he does not stand excused, but is to say it “privately.”

Calendar is appointed. The New Testament is appointed for the second Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer, and shall be *read over orderly* every year *thrice*. . . . And, to know what Lessons shall be read **EVERY day**, look for the day of the month in the Calendar, &c. &c.

We come next to the Tables of Lessons; and we find a regular course of *daily* reading variously adapted to the 365 days of the year, and appointed to be publicly read to the people. Lessons are appointed for the *week-days*, just the same as for *Sundays*.

Thus much the mere Prefaces to the Prayer Book tell us; let us now proceed to the Book itself. And what is the title to the Morning Service?

The Order for Morning Prayer, Daily throughout the Year.

There is the very title itself, staring us all in the face, as often as we attend service, and declaring to us that we are attending what ought to be a **DAILY Service throughout the year!**

Again, when we come to the XCV. Psalm, *Venite exultemus*, we find it expressly stated in the Rubric prefixed to it, that

“ On the nineteenth day of *every* month it is not to be read here, but in the *ordinary* course of the Psalms.

“ Then shall follow the Psalms, *in order as they are appointed*, &c.

“ Then shall be read distinctly with an audible voice the First Lesson, taken out of the Old Testament, *as is appointed in the Calendar*. . . . And, after that,

shall be said or sung, in English, the Hymn called *Te Deum laudamus*, DAILY throughout the year."

Again, what is the rule given in the Prayer Book for the reading of the two Collects after the Collect of the Day?

"The two last Collects shall never alter, but DAILY be said at Morning Prayer throughout all the year."

The Order for the Evening Service is equally plain. The title of that, too, is:—

The Order for Evening Prayer, Daily throughout the Year.

And so on, as you will perceive, in the same manner as the Morning Service.

Let us turn, now, to the Prayer appointed to be used in the Ember Weeks; see how the Rubric runs:—

"In the Ember Weeks, to be said EVERY day, for those that are to be admitted into Holy Orders."

And now go on to the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels.

Observe the note at the very beginning of them:—

"Note, that the Collect appointed for EVERY Sunday, or for ANY Holy Day, that hath a Vigil or Eve, shall be said at the Evening Service next before."

Look at the Rubric which is added after the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent:—

"This Collect is to be repeated EVERY day with the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas Eve."

And, again, the Collect for St. Stephen's Day :

"Then shall follow the Collect of the Nativity, which shall be said *continually unto New Year's Eve.*"

Or, again, the Collect, &c. for the Circumcision :— www.libtool.com.cn

"The same Collect, Epistle, and Gospel shall serve for EVERY day after *unto the Epiphany.*"

Or for Ash-Wednesday :—

"This Collect is to be read EVERY day *in Lent, &c.*"

Then, again, observe the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels appointed for *each day in Holy Week*; and for Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week; for Ascension Day; for Whit-Monday and Whit-Tuesday; and for all the Festivals.

And now, let us glance at the Communion Service; and see what is said respecting the proper Prefaces.

First, . . . "Upon Christmas-Day, and SEVEN days after."

Secondly, . . . "Upon Easter-Day, and SEVEN days after."

Thirdly, . . . "Upon Ascension-Day, and SEVEN days after."

Fourthly, . . . "Upon Whit-Sunday, and six days after."

Then, again, at the beginning of the Forms of Prayer to be used at sea, we are told :—

"The Morning and Evening Service to be used DAILY at sea shall be *the same* which is appointed in the Book of Common Prayer."

And here I would remark that the compilers of the Prayer Book contemplated no favourable and exceptional state of things in the making of the rule. They by no means considered the regular business of life as necessarily a hindrance to the fulfilment of the Church's intentions.

They have provided precisely the same Form of Daily Worship to be used by the little congregation which can be spared from a few, and that few incessantly engaged in a constant round of laborious service on board ship. The sailor on the billows, and the Curate in his study, are alike called upon to use "THE ORDER FOR MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER, DAILY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR."

I have picked out, here and there, passages from the Book of Common Prayer, which are more than sufficient to prove beyond dispute that the Church of Christ in this country intends her members *daily* to hear the Word of God, *daily* to meet together for prayer and praise.

There was a time when the intentions of the Church were not, as now, too frequently neglected. I will remind you of what was the case in London alone, at the beginning of the year 1700:—There was in London alone, at that time, no less than seventy Churches where there was a service daily; forty-three in which there was service *twice* daily; six in which it was *three* times daily; and five in which it was *four* times daily (see the PIETAS LONDINIENSIS.)

And why are not our Churches open now, as they used to be? Let us not answer by the Clergy blaming the Laity, and the Laity blaming the Clergy; but let us have candid, open, generous truth and charity enough to own, "We are one and all to blame." We have been living in an age which thinks more of this world than the next, and of self than God. It has been the *fashion* not to go to God's House, to hear God's Word, and to pray

to God. And even the very best of us have unconsciously yielded. Yet let us "thank God, and take courage." Brethren; surely it requires but little learning to discover whether our Church does or does not intend us daily to hear the Holy Bible read, and daily unite in prayer, like people should do who hope to get to Heaven, and love one another in God for ever and ever. No: the learning it requires is the knowledge that we are on our trial for another world, where united worship never ceases. Surely such a thought is enough to calm all rising dissension, and make all of us, however, unhappily, disagreeing in other points, at least to be "glad, when we say unto you, Let us go into the House of the Lord." Oh! that God may teach you to the full, what I have myself learned but little of, but feel that I cannot do without learning more, that daily to follow out the calm and sober order of the Church is the greatest happiness on this side the grave. What if the man of business would begin his daily work by seeking the House of his God? What if the chafed and vexed heart would daily "pour out its complaints before Him, and show Him of its trouble?" What if the poor man who, from one year's end to another, can never open his Bible, because he cannot read, had the opportunity of hearing the Holy Scriptures read *daily* in God's House? Happy people, if you would but know your own happiness. "Happy are the people that are in such a case: yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God."

I am,

Your's faithfully,

Lent, 1852.

R. T.

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