

# Whether a Clergyman of the Church of England Be Now Bound to Have Morning and Evening Prayers Daily in His Parish Church.

by J.H. Newman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of daily prayer in the Church of England, and the role of the clergy in leading daily prayer.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 55:17, Psalm 88:13, Luke 18:1, Acts 2:42, 1 Thessalonians 5:16

**Topics:** "Public Worship", "Daily Prayer"

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## Description

Dean Comber emphasizes the importance of daily public prayers, highlighting the universal practice of setting aside time for divine worship in various cultures and religions. He challenges the excuses of clergy members who neglect daily prayers, pointing out that the neglect of public worship can lead to a decay of true piety and a rise in profaneness. Comber urges ministers to read the prayers frequently and fervently, ensuring that those who have the opportunity to attend are never deprived of the chance to serve God.

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## Transcript

COLLECTIONS IN ORDER TO THE RESOLUTION OF THIS QUESTION.

1. BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER--"They (the Fathers) so ordered the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over once every year; intending thereby, that the clergy, and especially such as were ministers in the congregation, should (by often reading and meditation in GOD'S word) be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth; and further, that the people (by daily hearing of the Holy Scripture read in the Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of GOD, and be the more inflamed with the love of His true religion."--Concerning the Service of the Church.

2. "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."--Ibid.

[Note, that these last directions used to be inclosed in inverted commas, probably for the purpose of calling peculiar attention. It might be asked, on what authority the commas have been omitted in recent editions of the Prayer Book?]

3. "The Psalter shall be read through once every month, as it is there appointed, both for Morning and Evening Prayer."-- Order how the Psalter is appointed to be read.

4. "The Old Testament is appointed for the first Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer, so as the most part thereof all be read over every year once. The New Testament is appointed for the second Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer, and shall be read over orderly every year thrice."--Order how the rest of Holy Scripture is appointed to be read.

5. TITLE.-- "The Order for Morning and Evening Prayer daily to be said and used throughout the year."

6. TE DEUM.--"Day by day we magnify thee....

"Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin."

7. RUBRIC.--"The Collects [for Peace and for Grace] shall never alter, but daily be said at Morning Prayer throughout all the year." See also the Collect for Grace.

See likewise the Rubric before the Second Collect at Evening Prayer, and the Collect for Aid against all Perils.

The Collect for the First Sunday in Advent is to be repeated every day, until Christmas Eve.

That for Ash-Wednesday is to be read every day in Lent, after the Collect appointed for the day.

The Morning and Evening Service to be used daily at Sea, shall be the same which is appointed in the Book of Common Prayer.

8. In the Prayer-book of 1552, instead of "not being let by sickness," &c. (see No. 2.) we have, "except they be letted by preaching, studying of divinity, or some other," &c.

9. Q. ELIZABETH'S INJUNCTIONS, 1559.-- "Item, That weekly upon Wednesdays and Fridays, not being holy-days, the curate at the accustomed hours of service shall resort to church, and cause warning to be given to the people by knolling of a bell, and say the Litany and Prayers."--Injunction 48th. Bishop Sparrow's Coll. p. 79.

10. CANON XIV. JAMES I.-- "The Common Prayer shall be said or sung distinctly and reverently upon such days as are appointed to be kept holy by the Book of Common Prayer, and their eves, and at convenient and usual times of those days, and in such place of every church as the bishop of the diocese, or ecclesiastical ordinary of the place shall think meet for the largeness or straitness of the same, so as the people may be most edified. All ministers likewise shall observe the orders, rites, and ceremonies, prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, as well in reading the Holy Scriptures, and saying of prayers, as in administration of the Sacraments, without either diminishing in regard of preaching, or in any other respect, or adding any thing in the matter or form thereof."

11. CANON XV.--"The Litany shall be said or sung when, and as it is set down in the Book of Common Prayer, by the parsons, vicars, ministers, or curates, in all cathedral, collegiate or parish churches and

chapels, in some convenient place, according to the discretion of the bishop of the diocese, or ecclesiastical ordinary of the place. And that we may speak more particularly, upon Wednesdays and Fridays weekly, though they be not holydays, the minister at the accustomed hours of service shall resort to the church and chapel, and warning being given to the people by tolling of a bell, shall say the Litany prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer: whereunto we wish every householder dwelling within half a mile of the church to come, or send one at the least of his household fit to join with the minister in prayers."

12. After the words "some urgent cause," (see No. 2.) the Scotch Prayer-book had, "Of which cause, if it be frequently pretended, they are to make the bishop of the diocese, or the archbishop of the province, the judge and allower."

13. TITLE OF THE LITANY. "Here followeth the Litany to be used after the third collect at Morning Prayer, called the Collect for Grace, upon Sundayes, Wednesdayes and Fridayes, and at other times when it shall be commanded by the ordinarie, and without omission of any part of the other daily service of the Church on those days."--Prayer-book of the Church of Scotland, 1637.

14. PRAYER IN EMBER WEEKS. "A Prayer to be said in the Ember weeks, for those which are then to be admitted into holy orders; and is to be read every day of the week, beginning on the Sunday before the day of ordination."--Prayer-book of the Church of Scotland.

15. ACT OF UNIFORMITY, 14 C. O. cap. iv. 2. "Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, &c., That all and singular ministers in any cathedral, collegiate or parish church or chapel, or other place of public worship within this realm of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, shall be bound to say and use the Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, celebration and administration of both the Sacraments, and all other the publick and common prayer, in such other and form as is mentioned in the said book, annexed and joined to this present act, and intituled, 'The Book of Common Prayer,' &c.: and that the Morning and Evening Prayers therein contained, shall upon every Lord's Day, and upon all other days and occasions, and at the times therein appointed, be openly and solemnly read by all and every minister or curate in every church, chapel or other place of public worship within this realm of England, and places aforesaid."

16. DR. NICHOLLS. "Morning, and Evening Prayer shall be used, and all other the Common Prayer, administration, &c. in the order and form, and on the days, and times appointed, nor will any dispensation excuse the performance of what is here required."--Dr. Nicholls on the Act of Uniformity.

17. "The Rubric here (see No. 2.) speaks of the whole Morning and Evening Prayer, which our Reformers would not have in any case, neglected by ministers of the Church; but that they should be as diligent, in using the English Liturgy, as the Papists were the Latin; and if they could not get a congregation at church, they should use the public forms with their own families at home.

"Now, it is certain, by the rules of the Roman Church, even before the Reformation, and the Council of Trent, that the clergy were obliged to recite the canonical hours, or the offices of the several hours of day and night, which are in the Breviary; either publicly in a church, or chapel, or privately by themselves. The canon law is positive as to this, with relation to priests. Decret. dis. 91. And it is the common opinion of the divines and canonists, that deacons and sub-deacons were obliged to the same. Wherefore, since our Reformers thought it convenient that the mumbling over the prayers in private should be laid aside by the clergy, they would not perfectly exonerate them from the constant repetition of the public devotions; and therefore they changed the private recital of the Morning and Evening service, which was before

performed by each clergyman alone by himself, into family prayer, when a congregation could not be gotten at Church."--Dr. Nicholls in locum.

18. "The two times of worshipping God in public among the Jews, were Morning and Evening, and that by GOD'S own appointment; the Morning and Evening Sacrifice drawing the people together for that purpose. Thou shalt offer upon the altar two lambs of the first year: the one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other in the evening. (Exod. xxix. 32.) Which precept was constantly observed, as long as the city and polity of the Jews stood. For Josephus says, [Dis tes hemeras, proi te kai peri ennaten oran, ierourgounton epi tou bomou.] Twice a day, in the morning and at the ninth hour, they offer sacrifice. Joseph. Ant. lib. xiv. c. 4. And that this was the hour of prayer, for devout people to go to the temple, to perform their devotions there, is plain from Acts iii. 1. Peter and John went up together into the temple, being the ninth hour, which is confirmed by the Talmud. R. Jose Ben Chaninah saith, The patriarchs appointed the prayers. R. Josua Ben Levi saith, They appointed them according to the daily sacrifices. Morning Prayer is still the fourth hour; the prayer of the Mincha, or the Evening, is till evening."--Beracoth, cited by Dr. Lightfoot, Talm. Ex. p. 649.

"Upon this account, the primitive Christians, who would not be behind-hand with the Jews in their devotion, did constantly observe these two solemn times of prayer, and did very early add a third. For, as some devout Jews had a third hour, which they devoted to prayer, viz. (our twelve o'clock) when they retired to some closet, or other private place, to say their prayers, as we see in the example of Peter, who went up on the house-top to pray about the sixth hour (Acts x. 9.): so the primitive Christians turned this hour, which was formerly voluntary, into a settled hour of public devotion. For so it was settled before St. Cyprian's time; for this Father gives a rationale of the institution of the three solemn hours of prayer. The Morning Prayer (he says) was instituted in remembrance of CHRIST'S resurrection; the Noon Prayer in remembrance of His crucifixion, and the Evening prayer in token of His death, (Vide CyE., de Or. Dom.) which is confirmed likewise by a passage in St. Clemens of Alexandria, [Ei tines kai horas taktas aponemousin euche, hos triten, fere, kai ekten, kai ennaten,] &c. "Though some are for stated hours of prayer, viz. 9, 12, and 3 o'clock; yet the [ho gnostikos], the most perfect Christian, will be always praying." (Clem. Alex. Strom. vii.) Soon after, the monks, who would be more devout than common Christians, were for more hours of stated prayer: and in St. Basil's time, they had mounted them up to seven. (Op. tom. ii. p. 49.) At last these were established by decree of Pope Pelagius II., and the Psalms appointed for each hour, which was the rise of what they call canonical hours in the Church of Rome. (Pol. Virg. de Rer. Inv. lib. ii. c. 2.) But our Church, in her reformation, has brought back the solemn times of prayer to the most ancient institution, and enjoineth only morning and evening prayer to be used."--Dr. Nicholls' note on "Proper Lessons for Sundays."

19. Day by day, &c. (see No. 6.) "Therefore in the words of the Psalmist let us say, Every day do we bless thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever, be pleased therefore to answer the petitions of this day's devotion, and to preserve us from sin, till the course of our public exercise returns to-morrow."--Dr. Nicholls, Paraphrase on the Te Deum.

20. CREED.--"St. Ambrose (Ad Virg. lil. iii.) advises the use of the Creed every morning. And St. Austin (De Symb. ad Cat. lib. i.) morning and night. King Canutus ordered it to be used in our daily devotions." Id. Notes on the Apostles' Creed. [But see No. 26 of this Collection.]

21. "The latter part of the Collect for Grace (see No. 7.) does exactly agree with that in the Greek Liturgies: [Doresai hemin to loipon tes parousias hemeras, eirenikon kai anamarteton, kai panta ton chronon tes

zoes hemon.] Euchol. Gr. Lucern. Orat. 2."--Id. Note on the Collect for Grace.

22. "And we beseech thee, out of thy tender mercy to all thy creatures, and especially to thy faithful servants, that thou wouldest be pleased to defend us from all the dangers which the night brings along with it; from fire and thieves; from diseases and sudden death; from all unchaste thoughts and frightful dreams; and that thou wouldest preserve us in health and safety to the next morning."--Id. Paraph. on the third Collect at Evening Prayer.

23. BISHOP OVERALL.--Of ministers daily saying the service. --This was so ordered in the Council of Venice, under Pope Leo I., and after that in the Council of Mentz, Can. 57. "Clericus, quem intra muros civitatis suã manere constiterit, et matutinis hymnis, sine probabili excusatione ãgitudinis, inventus fuerit defuisse, septem diebus a communione habeatur extraneus," &c.--Bishop Overall ap. Nicholls.

24. "All the priests and deacons shall be bound to say daily." -- "So that we are all bound, and all priests are in the Church of Rome, daily to repeat and say the public service of the Church. And it is a precept the most useful and necessary of any other that belongs to the ministers of GOD, and such as have cure of other men's souls, would men regard it, and practise it a little more than they do among us. We are all for preaching now; and for attending the service and prayers appointed by the Church for GOD'S worship, and the good of all men, we think that too mean an office for us, and therefore, as if it were not worth our labour, we commonly hire others under us to do it, more to satisfy the law, than to be answerable to our duties. Here is a command that binds us every day to say the Morning and Evening Prayer; how many are the men that are noted to do it? It is well they have a back-door for an excuse to come out at here: for good men! they are so belaboured with studying of divinity, and preaching the word, that they have no leisure to read these same common prayers; as if this were not a chief part of their office and charge committed unto them. Certainly, the people whose souls they have care of, reap as great benefit, and more too, by these prayers, which their pastors are daily to make unto GOD for them, either privately or publicly, as they can do by their preaching: for GOD is more respective to the prayers which they make for the people, than ever the people are to the sermons which they make to them."-- Id. ibid. p. 6.

25. BISHOP COSINS.--"Every curate is enjoined to say the Morning and Evening Prayer daily in the Church, unless he be otherwise reasonably letted. Which requires an explanation (against them that account themselves 'reasonably letted' by any common and ordinary affairs of their own) whether any thing but sickness, or necessary absence abroad, shall be sufficient to excuse them from this duty."--Bishop Cosins ap. Nicholls, 67.

26. It does not appear, (see No. 20.) from the Latin version at least, that Canute ordered the Creed to be used in the daily devotions.--See Sir H. Spelman's Councils, &c. vol. i. p. 549.

27. SAXON CHURCH.--Excerptio 2da Egberti Archiep. Ebor. circ. An. Christi 750.

"Item, Ut omnes sacerdotes, horis competentibus diei et noctis, suarum sonent ecclesiarum signa: et sacra tunc Deo celebrent officia; et populos erudiant, quomodo aut quibus Deus adorandus est horis."--Spelm. Conc. 1. p. 259.

Ex ejusdem Egberti Pœnitentialis Lib. 2do.

5. "Si quis clericus aut monachus corporis sanitate consistens, si vigiliis et cotidianis officiis defuerit, perdat communionem."

6. "Si quis clericus, absque corpusculi sui inĀŃsqualitate, vigiliis deest, stipendio privatus, excommunicetur."

7. "Si quis clericus, dato signo, non statim ad ecclesiam properaverit, correptionibus subjacebit."Ā--Spelman, Conc. vol. i. p. 276.

28. "Docemus etiam, ut quis statis temporibus campanas pulset, et ut omnis tunc sacerdos cantum suum horarium in ecclesia psallat, Deum in timore invocet solícite, et pro omni populo preces fundat."Ā--Canon. dat. sub Edg. Reg. Spelm. i. p. 453.

29. "De mane et vespere orando.

"Dicendum illis ut singulis diebus, qui amplius non potest, salten duabus vicibus oret; mane scilicet et vespere, dicens symbolum sive Orationem Dominicam; Qui plasmasti me miserere mei; vel etiam, Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori. Et Domino gratias agens pro quotidianĀŃ vitĀŃ comeatibus, et quia se ad imaginem suam creare dignatus sit, et a peccatoribus segregare; llis actis, et solo Deo Creatore suo adorato sanctos invocet, ut pro se intercedere ad majestatem divinam dignentur; hĀŃc facient quibus basilicĀŃ locus prope est in basilica. Qui vero in itinere, aut pro qualibet occasione in sylvis aut in agris est, ubicunque enim hora matutina vel vespertina invenerit, sic faciat, sciens Deum ubique presentem esse, dicente Psalmista, "In omni loco dominationis ejus, et si ascendero in caelum, tu ibi es," &c.Ā--Speln. Conc. 23ta Capit. inert. Edit. vol. i. p. 599.

30. DR. BISSE.Ā-- "Though the publick worship be appointed to be daily offered up in our parish churches, and in some few is offered up according to appointment; yet in these great temples (Cathedrals) the morning and evening sacrifice is never intermitted: it is offered day by day continually, even as the Lamb under the law. These are the great mother churches in every diocese, from which the parochial churches being originally derived, and upon which being dependent, are to be looked upon as parts of them, and belonging to them, as living members of the same body; and therefore the acts and offerings which are offered up in these greater, are accepted for all the lesser parish churches within their dependence, where the daily offering is not upon just cause observed, as indeed it generally cannot; even as the daily sacrifice of the temple was imputed to the several synagogues, where only the law and the prophets were expounded, and that every Sabbath-day. These cathedral temples, these mother-churches, the sure resting-places for the ark of the covenant, before which the daily offering never ceaseth to be offered morning and evening,Ā--these are our strength and salvation, and are of far greater use and security to our people and to our land, than all the watchfulness of our senators, or policy of our ambassadors, or valour of our mighty men."Ā--Dr. Bisse, Rationale on Cathedral Worship, pp. 53, 54.

31. T. S.Ā-- ".....the corruptions and cruelties of the Church of Rome, made those that justly opposed her in many things, to forsake others, without any other reason but the hatred of being like to her who had been so cruel towards them. And among these, I reckon this to be the chief, that they not only left off the daily offices of GOD'S publick worship, but also that ancient order for the performance thereof on the LORD'S day, which was most accommodate," &c.Ā--Preface to a book intituled "Advice to the Readers of the Common Prayer, &c., by T. S. [possibly, Dr. Thomas Smith, the friend of Bishop Ken.] 1683."

32. "Hereby (by the use of our Liturgy) we shall be greatly assisted in holy meditations (while our minds will be stored with abundance of excellent matter for the same), and in educating our children religiously, in keeping our families in unity and order, and performing the worship belonging to the same, and many other great benefits that we shall experience in a devout attendance on the daily service of GOD in publick

appointed by this Church; by which means they will also be more confirmed in their love hereunto, and become examples to others, who will be more effectually drawn to their duty, by observing the practice of this way of piety, than by disputations about it."--Ibid. sub fin.

33. "I was lately told of an order in some Lutheran churches, whose service consists chiefly in singing the Psalms of David to the praise and glory of GOD, and songs of love and honour to our blessed SAVIOUR, composed by excellent persons among themselves: they have twice a day assemblies for this service; and that all may know what is to be sung, there is a table hung up at the entrance of the church, where it is written down what Psalms and Songs are appointed for the day; and the people (coming early to church) go first to this place, and take notice what they are to sing, and look it out ready before the service begins."--Advice to Readers, &c. p. 30.

31. "Whereas we have an order most profitable and comfortable to pious minds, (viz. to have publick prayers daily, that those who are not hindered by necessary provisions for themselves and family, or other works of justice and mercy, may constantly enjoy the heavenly delights of GOD'S house, in Christian communion and fellowship of the Spirit (which certainly are above any can be found elsewhere) and for a freedom whereunto a plentiful estate is more desirable than upon any other account whatsoever); yet notwithstanding this, many of the richest and most leisurely persons never take care that this order be observed in their own parish churches; and when it is, will scarce ever come there, but make that which should give them the greatest advantage and obligation to come, to be a hindrance thereunto: I mean that men make use of their riches to run themselves into such vast trades and troublesome projects, whereby they are so incumbered with cares and labours, that they are less at leisure for GOD'S service than the poor and indigent; or else (if they incline more to pleasure than profit) they take no care to order their carnal divertisements, that they may be no hindrance to the service of GOD; but make them more joyful and zealous therein (though this they ought to do), but suffer these to ingross all their time and exhaust all the vigor and strength of their minds, that either they never come to church at all (at least on weekdays), or if they do, they are more ready to sleep than pray, and are far from taking such delight in these spiritual exercises as they find in carnal recreations: nay, many I have observed that will stand altogether idle and unemployed (a thing that seems tedious to nature itself), and yet will not divert themselves with going to church; and in this I have observed the female sex most guilty, who being not so subject to be incumbered with business as men, and often wanting opportunity of company, sports, and pastimes, have nothing else to do; and yet living near the churches where prayers are daily read, seldom or never come there."--Advice to the Readers, &c. pp. 130, 133.

35. "That the Church hath well appointed these daily offices of divine worship, it being agreeable to reason and the divine prescription to the Jews, and the customs of the wisest and most civilized of the Gentiles;--this, and much more that might be said of like nature, being so evident, I must believe those kind of men, that think; our daily attendance at prayers is being righteous over-much, are not moved hereunto by any thing of reason or sober consideration; but are wholly influenced by pride or covetousness, or other carnal affections which hinder the exercise of their rational faculties, &c. The second sort to whom I shall apply myself, and for whose sake I chiefly undertook this work, is such as have a love for these holy offices, and daily frequent them; to whom my earnest request is, that they will persist in the good way they have begun, attend to the best manner of performance, and male all the rest of their lives answer to the devotion herein. For the first of these, I doubt not but such who do understand the grounds and reasons upon which this way of our publick service was first ordered, and have taken up this practice, not upon some carnal and secular accounts (as may sometimes happen), but in a sense of

their duty to GOD and man: I say, these will, I hope, easily and effectually comply with my desire, and save me the labour of arguments. The inward peace and satisfaction they will find in governing themselves in this matter by reason and not by fancy, and in following the universal custom and usage of Christians for many ages, and of most even in this, and not that of heretiques and schismatiques; in obeying the orders of our own Church, made with the greatest advice and by the most unbiassed persons of any in the world; and not herding with Quakers, Fifth-monarchy-men, Anabaptists, and other turbulent sects that oppose the same and seek its ruin; in finding all that was good and profitable, all that was decent and solemn, all that was truly primitive or any way praiseworthy in the service of the Church of Rome, still retained in ours, &c. I say, the satisfaction they will find in considering the excellency of our Form of divine service will prevent all inclination to turn into other ways."—Advice to the Readers, &c. p. 138. 141.

36. "I do heartily congratulate the happy success of such ministers, who in conscience of their assent and consent to the orders of this Church, have taken upon them the constant daily reading of the Common Prayer in their parish churches.....that do not make the backwardness of their people to come to prayers a pretence for their own neglect (when they never tried how forward they would be if they had opportunity and good instruction).....they have found access beyond their expectation, the numbers of those that have attended the prayers being much greater than what others do ordinarily suggest to be likely," &c.

"At St. — Aldermanbury, at 11 Morn. and 5 Even. Being given by a pious person for one year, with promise of settling it for ever, if it be attended by any considerable number in that time. 'Tis a thousand pities future generations should be hindered of such a benefit by the indevotion of this."—Advice to the Readers, &c. pp. 115. 168.

37. BP. JEREMY TAYLOR.—"Between this (morning) and noon usually are said the publick prayers appointed by authority, to which all the clergy are obliged, and other devout persons that have leisure to accompany them."—Bp. Jeremy Taylor, Holy Living, p. 39.

38. BP. FELL.—".....If I require a constant diligence in offering the daily sacrifice of prayer for the people at least at those returns which the Church enjoins, the usual answer is, they are ready to do their duty, but the people will not be prevailed with to join with them.....And so when the minister has thoroughly accused his flock, he thinks he has absolved himself, his church becomes a sinecure; and because others forbear to do their duty, there remains none for him to do. But, my brethren .....if our people be negligent, we are the more obliged to industry; if they are indevout, we ought to be more zealous; if they are licentious, we ought to be more exemplary. Nor let any man say, the people will not be prevailed upon: how know we what will be hereafter? They who resisted one attempt may yield unto another; or if they yield not to a single instance, they may to many and more pressing," &c.—From Bishop Fell's Charge to his Clergy, 1685.

39. ROBERT NELSON.—"Q. Is the obligation [of attending publick worship] sufficiently discharged by going to church on Sundays and holy days?

A. "It is to be wisht, that all Christians were constant in attending the publick worship on Sundays and holy days; because 'tis likely 'twould dispose them to repeat such exercises of devotion with greater frequency. But considering that among the Jews there was a morning and evening sacrifice daily offered to GOD at the Temple; and that the precepts of the Gospel oblige us to 'pray always,' and to 'pray without ceasing;' and that the ancient prophets expressly declare that there should be as frequent devotion in the

days of CHRIST, as there had been in former times; that 'prayer shall be made unto Him continually, and daily shall He be praised.' Considering these things, I say, as prayer, the Christian sacrifice should be offered morning and evening in public assemblies; so they that have such opportunities, and are not lawfully hindered should endeavour so to regulate their time, as to be able constantly to attend such a great advantage to the Christian life. And as those who have leisure cannot better employ it, so they must have but little concern for the honour and glory of GOD, that neglect such opportunities of declaring and publishing His praise."--Nelson's Fasts, p. 440, 3d edit. 1705.

40. BISHOP BURNET.--"Though there is still much ignorance among their [the Roman] mass priests; yet their parish priests are generally another sort of men: they are well instructed in their religion; lead regular lives, and perform their parochial duties with a most wonderful diligence. They do not only say mass, and the other publick functions daily, but they are almost perpetually employing themselves in the several parts of their cures: instructing the youth, hearing confessions, and visiting the sick: and besides all this, they are under the constant obligation of the breviary."--Bishop Burnet, Pref. to his Disc. on Past. Care.

41. HOMILY.--"To the house or temple of GOD, at all times by common order appointed, are all people that be godly indeed, bound with all diligence to resort, unless by sickness or other most urgent causes they be letted therefro.....If we would compare our negligence in resorting to the house of the LORD there to serve Him, with the diligence of the Jews in coming daily very early, sometime by great journeys to their temple, and when the multitude could not be received within the Temple, the fervent zeal that they had, declared in standing long without and praying: we may justly in this comparison condemn our slothfulness and negligence, yea plain contempt, in coming to the LORD'S house standing so near unto us, so seldom and scarcely at any time."--First Part of the Homily "Of the right Use of the Church."

42. DR. CAVE.--"The Christian Churches began to rise apace, according as they met with more quiet and favourable times; especially under Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius, Aurelian, and some other emperors: of which times Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. 1. 8. c. 1. p. 29.) tells us, that the bishops met with the highest respect and kindness both from people and governors. And adds: But who shall be able to reckon up the innumerable multitudes that daily flocked to the faith of CHRIST, the number of congregations in every city?" &c.--Dr. Cave's Primit. Christianity, part i. 6.

43. "As that day [the Jewish Sabbath] was kept as a commemoration of GOD'S Sabbath, or resting from the work of creation, so was this set apart for religious uses, as the solemn memorial of CHRIST'S resting from the work of our redemption in this world, completed upon the day of His resurrection. Which brings into my mind that custom of theirs, so universally common in those days, that whereas at other times they kneeled at prayers, on the LORD'S day they always prayed standing, as is expressly affirmed both by Justin Martyr (Ap. 2. p. 95.) and Tertullian (De Coron. c. 3. p. 102.): the reason of which we find in the author of the Questions and Answers in Justin Martyr (Resp. ad Quest. 115. p. 468). It is (says he), that by this means we may be put in mind both of our fall by sin, and our resurrection or restitution by the grace of CHRIST: that for six days we pray upon our knees, is in token of our fall by sin; but that on the LORD'S day we do not bow the knee, does symbolically represent our resurrection."--Cave's Primitive Christianity; part i. c. 7. p. 163.

44. "Their family duties were usually performed in this order: at their first rising in the morning they were wont to meet together, and to betake themselves to prayer (as is plainly implied in Chrysostom's Exhortation) to praise GOD for the protection and refreshment of the night, and to beg His grace and blessing for the following day: this was done by the master of the house, unless some minister of religion

were present. 'Tis probable that at this time they recited the Creed or some confession of their faith, by which they professed themselves Christians, and as it were armed themselves against the assaults of dangers and temptations; however I question not but that now they read some parts of Scripture, which they were most ready to do at all times, and therefore certainly would not omit it now. That they had their set hours for prayer, the third, sixth, and ninth hour, is plain both from Cyprian, Clem. Alex. and others: this they borrowed from the Jews....When night approached, before their going to rest, the family was again called to prayer, after which they went to bed: about midnight they were generally wont to rise to pray and to sing hymns to GOD."--Cave's Primitive Christianity, part i. c. 9. pp. 262. 266.

45. "Eusebius (Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. c. 23. p. 63, ex Hegesippo) reports of St. James the Just, that he was wont every day to go alone into the church, and there kneeling upon the pavement so long to pour out his prayers to GOD, till his knees became as hard as camel's."--Cave's Primitive Christianity, ubi sup.

46. "At first (while the spirit of Christianity was yet warm and vigorous, and the hearts of men passionately inflamed with the love of CHRIST) it is more than probable they communicated every day, or as oft as they came together for publick worship, insomuch that the canons apostolical (Can. 9 ) and the synod of Antioch (Can. 2.) threaten every one of the faithful with excommunication, who come to church to hear the Holy Scriptures, but stay not to participate of the LORD'S Supper.....This custom of receiving the Sacrament every day continued some considerable time in the Church, though in some places longer than in others, especially in the Western Churches. From Cyprian, we are fully assured it was so in his time: 'We receive the Eucharist every day (says he), as the food that nourishes us to salvation.'--The like St. Ambrose seems to intimate of Milan, whereof he was bishop; nay, and after him St. Hierome tells us it was the custom of the Church of Rome; and St. Augustine seems pretty clearly to intimate that it was not unusual in his time'. In the Churches of the East this custom wore off sooner, though more or less according as the primitive zeal did abate and decay; St. Basils telling us, that in his time they communicated four times a week, on the LORD'S day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, yea and upon other days too, if the memory or festival of any martyr fell upon them."--Cave's Primitive Christianity, part i. c. 2. p. 339.

47. GEORGE HERBERT.--"His obedience and conformity to the Church and the discipline thereof, was singularly remarkable. Though he abounded in private devotions, yet went he every morning and evening with his family to the church, and by his example, exhortations, and encouragements, drew the greater part of his parishioners to accompany him daily in the publick celebration of divine service."--Preface to "The Temple."

"Mr. Herbert's own practice was to appear constantly with his wife and three nieces (the daughters of a deceased sister) and his whole family twice every day at the church prayers, in the chappel which does almost joyn to his parsonage-house. And for the time of his appearing, it was strictly at the canonical hours of 10 and 4, and then and there he lifted up pure and charitable hands to GOD in the midst of the congregation. And he would joy to have spent that time in that place, where the honour of his Master JESUS dwelleth; and there, by that inward devotion which he testified constantly by an humble behaviour and visible adoration, he, like Josua, brought not only 'his own houshold thus to serve the LORD,' but brought most of his parishioners, and many gentlemen in the neighbourhood, constantly to make a part of his congregation twice a day; and some of the meaner sort of his parish did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert, that they would let their plow rest when Mr. Herbert's saint's-bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to GOD with him, and would then return back to their plow. And his most holy life was such, that it beat such reverence to GOD, and to him, that they thought themselves the

happier, when they carried Mr. Herbert's blessing back with them to their labour. Thus powerful was his reason, and his example, to persuade others to a practical piety and devotion. And his constant public prayers did never make him to neglect his own private devotions, nor those prayers that he thought himself bound to perform with his family. Thus he continued, till a consumption so weakened him, as to confine him to his house, or to the chappel, which does almost joyn to it; in which he continued to read prayers constantly twice every day, though he were very weak: in one of which times of his reading, his wife observed him to read in pain, and told him so, and that it wasted his spirits and weakened him; and he confessed it did, but said, 'his life could not be better spent than in the service of his Master JESUS, who had done and suffered so much for him. But (said he) I will not be wilful; for though my spirit be willing yet I find my flesh is weak; and therefore Mr. Bostock shall be appointed to read prayers for me to-morrow, and I will now be only a hearer of them, till this mortal shall put on immortality.' And Mr. Bostock did the next day undertake and continue this happy employment, till Mr. Herbert's death."--Isaac Walton's Life of Herbert, pp. 807. 313.

48. NICOLAS FARRER.--"Mr. Farrer having seen the manners and vanities of the world, and found them to be, as Mr. Herbert says, 'a nothing between two dishes,' did so contemn it, that he resolved to spend the remainder of his life in mortifications, and in devotion, and in charity, and to be always prepared for death.....He being accompanied with most of his family, did himself use to read the common prayers (for he was a deacon) every day, at the appointed hours of ten and four, in the parish church which was very near his house, and which he had both repaired and adorned: and he did also constantly read the Mattins every morning at the hour of six, either in the church, or in an oratory, which was within his own house: and many of the family did there continue with him after the prayers were ended, and there they spent some hours in singing hymns or anthems, sometimes in the church, and often to an organ in the oratory: and there they sometimes betook themselves to meditate, or to pray privately, or to read a part of the New Testament to themselves, or to continue their praying or reading the Psalms: and in case the Psalms were not always read in the day, then Mr. Farrer, and others of the congregation, did at night, at the ring of a watch-bell, repair to the church or oratory, and there betake themselves to prayers, and lauding GOD, and reading the Psalms that had not been read in the day; and when these, or any part of the congregation grew weary or faint, the watch-bell was rung, sometimes before, and sometimes after midnight, and then another part of the family rose, and maintained the watch, sometimes by praying, or singing lauds to GOD, or reading the Psalms; and when after some hours they also grew weary or faint, then they rung the watch-bell, and were also relieved by some of the former, or by a new part of the society, which continued their devotions until morning. And it is to be noted that in this continued serving of GOD, the Psalter, or whole book of Psalms, was in every four-and-twenty hours sung or read over, from the first to the last verse; and this was done as constantly as the sun runs his circle every day about the world, and then begins again the same instant that it ended. Thus did Mr. Farrer and his happy family serve GOD day and night: thus did they always behave themselves, as in His presence. And they did always eat and drink by the strictest rules of temperance,-- eat and drink so, as to be ready to rise at midnight, or at the call of a watch-bell, and perform their devotions to GOD..... and this course of piety and liberality to his poor neighbours, Mr. Farrer maintained till his death, which was in the year 1639."--Walton's Life of G. Herbert, p. 316. ed. 1675.

49. DR. BEST.--"The highest orders of men and women in our Church, instead of being exempted from the exercise of daily public prayer by their exalted station, are more loudly called upon than others to be constant in their observance of this duty.....It would not be difficult to point out to you the example of a personage [King George III.] who has a greater weight of duties, a greater burthen of cares, a greater

variety of earthly concerns upon his mind, than any other individual amongst us, who nevertheless suffers neither business nor any other avocation to prevent his first addresses to the MAJESTY of Heaven, for pardon and peace, grace and direction, for the welfare of his people, and for his own and others' present and future happiness. After this, let no excuses be made for the neglect of our daily service."--Dedication of "Best's Essay," to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

50. "As the want of a congregation is the only justifiable, so is it the only true reason why we do not meet with a daily celebration of it in our parochial churches; in some of which it would be extremely difficult, if not impracticable, especially in country villages, to comply with her order for it; and therefore to them we conclude it was not intended to be given."--Dr. Best's Essay on the Daily Service of the Church, 12.

51. "In St. Matt. xviii. 20, CHRIST hath especially declared, that 'where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of them.' Comfortable words, indeed, to the daily frequenters of the daily service,--words that carry with them a strong motive to their perseverance in this pious practice,--words that supply the ministers of the Gospel (whose duty it is to attend continually on this very thing) with a powerful reason against being quite disheartened from all further celebration of the daily service, by the non-attendance of so many of their people upon it,--words that are, both to pastor and flock, a great argument for the continuance of the daily service, though so small is the number of frequenters in it."--Dr. Best's Essay, 32.

[But the whole of this Essay deserves to be carefully read. It was re-published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in the year 1794.]

52. BP. JEREMY TAYLOR.--"Every minister is obliged publicly or privately to read the Common Prayers every day in the week, at morning and evening; and in great towns and populous places conveniently inhabited, it must be read in churches, that the daily sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving may never cease."--Advice to the Clergy of Down and Connor, Æ. lxxvii.

53. WILLIAM III.--"That the bishops do use their utmost endeavour to oblige the clergy to have public prayers in the Church, not only on holy-days and litany-days, but as often as may be, and to celebrate the holy sacrament frequently."--Injunctions to the Archbishops, Æ. 11.

54. DR. HAMMOND.--"In the discharge of his ministerial function, he satisfied not himself in diligent and constant preaching only, (a performance wherein some of late have fancied all religion to consist), but much more conceived himself obliged to the offering up the solemn daily sacrifice of prayer for his people, administering the Sacraments, &c. The offices of prayer he had in his church [Penshurst] not only upon the Sundays and festivals, and their eves, as also Wednesdays and Fridays, according to the appointment of the Rubric; (which strict duty and ministration, when it is examined on the bottom, will prove the greatest objection against the Liturgy; as that which, besides its own trouble and austerity, leaves no leisure for factious and licentious meetings at fairs and markets), but every day in the week, and twice on Saturdays and holiday-eves; for his assistance wherein he kept a curate, and allowed him a comfortable salary. And at those devotions he took order that his family should give diligent exemplary attendance."--Bp. Fell's Life of Dr. Hammond, p. 162, et seq.

55. "When we reckon up and audit the expences of the Doctor's (Hammond) time, we cannot pass his constant tribute of it paid by him to Heaven in the offices of prayer, which took up so liberal proportions of each day unto itself, for the ten last years of his life, and probably the preceding. Besides occasional and supernumerary addresses, his certain perpetual returns exceeded David's seven times a day. As soon

as he was ready, (which was usually early) he prayed in his chamber with his servant, in a peculiar form composed for that purpose; after this he retired to his own more secret devotions in his closet. Betwixt ten and eleven in the morning he had a solemn intercession in reference to the national calamities; to this, after a little distance, succeeded the morning office of the Church, which he particularly desired to perform in his own person, and would by no means accept the ease of having it read by any other. In the afternoon he had another hour of private prayer, which on Sundays he enlarged.... About five o'clock, the solemn private prayer for the nation, and the evening service of the Church returned. At bed-time his private prayers closed the day; and after all even the night was not without its office, the 31st Psalm being his desired midnight entertainment."--Fell's Life of Hammond, p. 230. See also, p. 263.

56. MR. WHEATLY.--"People of all ages and nations have been guided by the very dictates of nature not only to appoint some certain seasons to celebrate their more solemn parts of religion, but also to set apart daily some portion of time for the performance of divine worship. To his peculiar people, the Jews, GOD Himself appointed their set times of public devotion; commanding them "to offer up two lambs daily, one in the morning and the other at even," which we find from other places of Scripture (Acts ii. 15. iii. 1.) were at their third and ninth hours, which answer to our nine and three; that so those burnt-offerings, being types of the great Sacrifice which CHRIST the Lamb of GOD was to offer up for the sins of the world, might be sacrificed at the same hours wherein His death as begun and finished....

And though the Levitical Law expired together with our Saviour, yet the public worship of GOD must still have some certain times set apart for the performance of it; and accordingly all Christian Churches have been used to have their public devotions performed daily every morning or evening. The Apostles and primitive Christians continued to observe the same hours of prayer with the Jews, as might easily be shown from the records of the ancient Church. But the Church of England cannot be so happy as to appoint any set hours when either morning or evening prayer shall be said; because, now people are grown so cold and indifferent in their devotions, they would be too apt to excuse their absenting from the public worship, from the inconveniency of the time; and therefore she hath only taken care to enjoin that public prayers be read every 'morning and evening daily throughout the year;' that so all her members may have opportunity of joining in public worship twice at least every day.

But to make the duty as practicable and easy both to the minister and people as possible, she hath left the determination of the particular hours to the ministers that officiate, who, considering every one his own and his people's circumstances, may appoint such hours for morning and evening prayer, as they shall judge to be most proper and convenient. ¶ 2. But if it be in places where congregations can be had, and "the curate of the parish be at home, and not otherwise reasonably hindered," she expects or enjoins that "he say the same in the parish church," &c.

But if for want of a congregation, or some other account, he cannot conveniently read them in the Church, he is then bound to say them in the family where he lives; for by the same Rubric, "all priests and deacons are to say daily the morning and evening prayer, either privately or openly," &c.... The occasion of our Rubric was probably a rule in the Roman Church, by which, even before the Reformation and the Council of Trent, the clergy were obliged to recite the canonical hours, (i. e. the offices in the breviary for the several hours of day and night), either publicly in a church or chapel, or privately by themselves.

But our Reformers, not approving the priests performing by themselves what ought to be the united devotions of many; and yet not being wholly to discharge the clergy from a constant repetition of their prayers, thought fit to discontinue these solitary devotions; but at the same time ordered, that if a

congregation at church could not be had, the public service, both for morning and evening, should be recited in the family where the minister resided. Though according to the first book of King Edward, "this is not meant that any man shall be bound to the saying of it, but such as from time to time, in cathedral and collegiate churches, parish churches and chapels to the same annexed, shall serve the congregation."--Wheatly on the Common Prayer, pp. 83, 84. Sixth Ed.

57. "That the primitive Christians, besides their solemn service on Sundays, had public prayers every morning and evening, daily, has already been hinted, but a learned gentleman (Bingham, Ant. B. 13. c. 9. s. 1. vol. 5. p. 281.) is of the opinion that this must be restrained to times of peace; and that during the time of public persecution, they were forced to confine their religious meetings to the LORD'S day only. And it is certain that Pliny and Justin Martyr, who both describe the manner of the Christian worship, do neither of them make mention of any assembly for public worship on any other day; so that their silence is a negative argument that in their time was no such assembly, unless perhaps some distinction may be made between the general assembly of both city and country on the LORD'S day, and the particular assemblies of the city Christians (who had better opportunities to meet) on other days; which distinction we often meet with in the following ages, when Christianity was come to its maturity and perfection. However, it was not long after Justin Martyr's time, before we are sure that the Church observed the custom of meeting solemnly on Wednesdays and Fridays, to celebrate the Communion, and to perform the same service as on the LORD'S day itself, unless perhaps the sermon was wanting. The same also might be showed from as early authorities in relation to the festivals of their martyrs, and the whole fifty days between Easter and Whitsuntide. [Tert. de Id. et de Cor.] Nor need we look down many years lower, before we meet with express testimony of their meeting every day for the public worship of God. For S. Cyprian tells us, that in his time it was customary to receive the holy Eucharist every day; a plain demonstration that they had every day public assemblies, since we know the Eucharist was never consecrated but in such open and public assemblies of the Church. ¶ 2. That these daily devotions consisted of an evening as well as a morning service, even from S. Cyprian's time, the learned author I just now referred to (Bingham, ubi sup.) endeavours to prove. However, in a century or two afterwards, the case is plain, for the author of the 'Constitutions' not only speaks of it, but gives us the order of both the services.--l. 8. c. 37." Id. pp. 113, 114.

58. DEAN COMBER.--We may call this (public prayer) the life and soul of religion, the anima mundi, that universal soul which quickens, unites, and moves the whole Christian world. Nor is the case of a private man more desperate, when he breathes no more in secret prayer, than the condition of a church is, where public devotions cease. St. Hierome, out of Hippolytus, puts the cessation of Liturgy as a principal sign of the coming of Antichrist. (Hieron. Com. in Dan.) And nothing more clearly shows a profane generation, the very title of wicked men in Scripture being that "they call not upon God."

It is well if any of us can excuse ourselves; but the general neglect of daily prayers by ministers, (who are both desirous and bound to perform them,) doth too sadly testify they are tired out with the people's constant absence, and altogether witnesseth an universal decay of true piety. Perhaps the dishonour that is cast upon GOD and religion, will not move these disregards and neglecters, since they live so that a stranger could not imagine they had any God at all. But I hope they have yet so much charity for their own persons, that it may startle them to consider what mischiefs are hereby brought upon their own selves as well as others.

Wherefore, let them ask the cause of all that atheism and profaneness, luxury and oppression, lying and deceiving, malice and bitterness, that is broke in upon us, to the torment and disquiet of the whole world.

Let them ask why they plague others with their sins, and others requite them again? and it will appear that all this is come upon us because we forget GOD and heaven, death and judgment, which daily prayers would mind us of.... But if these evils be too thin and spiritual, let it be inquired whence our national and personal calamities proceed, epidemical diseases, wars, and pestilences?

Whence comes the multiplication of heresies, the prevalency and pride of the enemies of the true religion? The Jews will tell you, "Jacob's voice in the synagogue keeps off Esau's hands from the people." We have disrespected and slighted GOD and his worship, and He may justly put us out of his protection: "If he meet us not in his house, he may go away displeased," and then we lie open to all evil when our defence is departed from us; and they that provoke him so to doe, are enemies to themselves, and to the Church and state where they live, indeed the worst of neighbours 2.

But notwithstanding all this, while sober and devout men lament this epidemical iniquity, and groan under the sad effects thereof, passionately wishing a speedy remedy, the offenders grow bold by their numbers, and hardened by this evil custome, till they now despise a reproof, and deny this negligence to be a sin, because they have no mind to amend it. But these are of two kinds: 1. Those that make their business their apology, and suppose it is unreasonable to expect them every day at common prayer, and judge it sufficient to say they cannot come. 2.

Those who despise the Prayers of the Church, &c.... 1. We shall demonstrate the reasonableness of the daily attendance on public prayers, and that principally from the universal reason of all the world, and the concurrent practice and consent of all mankind, which agrees in this, that wheresoever they own a God true or false, they daily perform some worship to him. The very heathens, beside their private requests and vows, made particular addresses to their temples in all their great concerns, and yet abstained not from the daily sacrifices, nor from the frequent festivals of their numerous deities; in Egypt (as Porphyry relates) they praised their gods with hymns three or four times every day.

The Turks are called to their houses of prayer five times every day, and six times upon the Fridays; and he that notoriously absents himself is punished with disgrace, and hath a fine set upon him. And if our Saviour think it reasonable we should doe something more [perismon], how dare we call it unreasonable, when we are not enjoined to doe so much as they? But to go on, who knows not that the Jews had set hours of prayers, when all devout people (even Christ's Apostles) went to the temple or synagogues to offer up public supplications?

And these hours are observed among them exactly to this very day. One instance of their strictness in this particular we learn from the Talmud; here it appears that because of the distance of the temple, and the impossibility of attendance on the daily sacrifice, those who could not come hired certain devout men who were called "viri stationis," the men of appearance, to present themselves daily there and put up petitions for them. And the Pharisees not only observed the usual hours of prayer, but doubled them, and zealously kept them all.

Now JESUS tells us, our righteousness must exceed theirs, if ever we hope to enter into His kingdom. Which precept of His, some of us could almost afford to call an intolerable burthen, for we call a smaller matter by a worse name. To pass, then, to the Christian Church. We have an express command, to pray "without ceasing," that is, without omitting the set times which every day return, and ought to be observed. In obedience hereunto, the Church in the Apostles' time, met at daily prayers; and so did the primitive Christians for many ages after, who had their Liturgy, Eucharist, and Hymns, even in the night, when

persecution prevented them in the day.

And surely their zeal and fervour is a huge reproach to our sloth, who yet call ourselves of the same religion, and are so far from venturing lives and estates to enjoy opportunities of devotions, that we will not leave our shop nor our company, nay, our very idleness half an hour, for a freer and more easie worship than they could enjoy. Surely we are as unlike them in practice as we are like in name and profession. Twice a day as not enough for them, wherefore they appointed (in the days of martyrdom) three set times in every day for prayer, nine, twelve, and three in the afternoon, and punctually observed them.

Afterwards, in more quiet times, it was wonderfull to behold the orderly performance of morning and evening prayer in huge assemblies of men and women, who failed not to their constant attendance. These are the men and times whose principles we are reformed by; but I wish that corrupted Church, who forced us to a separation, do not prove more conformable to the outward part of their practice in a due observance of public prayer, than we who have more knowledge, better prayers, fewer excuses, and yet less devotion.

Wherefore let us no more complain of our own Church for expecting us at daily prayers. Let us rather challenge all nations and people for fools, and declare it unreasonable that we should have any GOD at all, or let Him have any of our time, though He give us all we have. Let us tell the world, we are self-sufficient for the conduct and defence of ourselves and our affairs, and then we shall discover ourselves what we are. We must not feign ourselves too busy; for we do lay aside our business daily, for causes less weighty, and advantages more inconsiderable.

If vanity or lust, Sathan or his emissaries call, we can find leisure; and why not when GOD calls? unless we think all that time lost which is spent upon His service, or as if we needed not His blessing. In short, if unavoidable business did hinder us and nothing else, many men might come always, and all sometimes, and every day an hundred for one that now comes. Wherefore it is sloth and covetousness, or atheism and irreligion, keeps us away. And if so, what signifie those pretences of praying at home (which ought to be done too)?

Verily, no more than those of the idle school-boy who seeks a corner, not to learn, but play in without disturbance. And truly it is to be doubted that constant neglecters of publick prayers use seldom and slight devotions in private, for they make the same objections against them. Finally, therefore, do but remember the reasonableness of this is to be tried at a higher tribunal, and come as often as GOD can in reason expect to meet you there, and I shall ask no more. .... But it is urged that these prayers, though good in themselves, will grow flat and nauseous by daily use, and consequently become an impediment to devotion.

Ans. We come not to the house of GOD for recreation, but for a supply of our wants; and therefore this might be a better reason of an empty theatre than a thin congregation. We come to GOD in publick, to petition for the relief of our own general necessities, and those of the whole Church, viz., for pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and succours of divine grace, and a deliverance from sin and Sathan, death and hell; as also for food and raiment, health and strength, protection and success in all our concerns; and more generally for the peace of the kingdom, the prosperity of the Church, the propagation of the Gospel, and the success of its ministers.

Now these things are always needful, and always the same, to be prayed for every day alike. Wherefore, (unless we be so vain as to fansie God is delighted with variety and change as well as we), what need is

there to alter the phrase every day, or what efficacy can a new model give to our old requests. Particular wants and single cases must be supplied by the closet devotions, for the publick, whether by form or extempore, can never reach all those, which are so numerous and variable.

Wherefore one form may fit all that ought to be asked in the Church; and why then should we desire a needless and infinite variety and alteration? If we do, it is out of curiosity, not necessity. The poor man is most healthfull whose labour procures him both appetite and digestion, who seldom changeth his dish, yet finds a relish in it, and a new strength from it every day; and so it is with the sober and industrious Christian, who busying himself in serving GOD, gets daily a new sense of his wants, and consequently a fresh stomach to these holy forms, which are never flat or dull to him that brings new affections to them every day.

It is the epicure and luxurious, the crammed lazy wanton, or the diseased man, that need quelques choses, or sauces, to make his daily bread desirable. And if his be our temper, it is a sign of a diseased soul, and an effect of our surfeiting on holy things. In this we resemble those murmurers who despised the bread of heaven, because they had it daily, and loathed manna itself, calling it in scorn dry meat. This was sufficient to sustain their bodies, and satisfie their hunger, but they required "meat for their soul," that is, to feed their fancies and their lusts; even as we do, for whom the Church hath provided prayers sufficient to express our needs, but not to satiate our wanton fancies, nor gratifie the lust of our curiosity; and we complain they are insipid; so perhaps they are to such, for the manna had no taste to the wicked; but it suited itself to the appetite and taste of every good man, as the Jews tell us in their traditions.

Sure I am it is true here; for if we be curious and proud, or carnal and profane, there is no gust in the Common Prayers; but a truly pious man can every day here exercise repentance and faith, love and desire, and so use them as to obtain fresh hopes of mercy, peace of conscience, increase of grace, and expectations of glory; and whoever finds not this, the fault is not in the prayers, but in the indisposition of his own heart."—Dr. Comber's "Discourse on the daily frequenting of the Common Prayer."

59. "I conclude this preface with a twofold request: First, to my brethren of the clergy, that they will read these prayers so frequently, that such as have leisure may never want opportunity thus to serve GOD; and so fervently, that those who do attend them, may be brought into an high esteem of them. It was a great end to GOD'S instituting the priest's office, and a principal motive to our pious ancestors in their liberal provisions for it: That there might be an order of men on purpose, to pray daily for all mankind, especially for such as could not daily attend Divine Service: So that if we neglect this daily sacrifice, we neither answer the designs of GOD nor of our benefactors. And as we are not excused by, so we ought not to be discouraged at the people's slowness in coming to daily prayers, for their presence is indeed a comfort to us, and an advantage to themselves; but their absence doth not hinder the success, nor should it obstruct the performance of our prayers. The promise of JESUS is made to tw

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