

allowed themselves to be persuaded that their exclusion is consonant with ancient and immutable custom, as binding as any law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not.

We have but to look at the advertisements in some of the clerical newspapers to note the difference between the modern ecclesiastic and the old historic High Churchman. "Assistant Priest" takes the place of "Assistant Curate." The advertiser signs himself "Catholic." We know what that means. For "Catholic" we might read "mediæval." "The Holy Sacrifice will be offered" for this or that purpose. We can hardly imagine Bishop Andrewes or, indeed, any of the great Caroline divines, or even their later successors, using language of the kind.

The Church, then, in its legislative capacity consists of clergy and faithful laity. Neither can do without the other. To use a Scriptural analogy—these two, in a spiritual sense, are one; and what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.



Why are Daily Services a Failure ?

BY THE REV. S. C. LOWRY, M.A.,

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THE justice of the question may possibly be disputed. "Daily Services a failure!" exclaims a reader of this paper. "They are nothing of the kind. To the clergy in this parish they are of the utmost value, as securing a time for daily meditation and worship amid the distracting duties of parochial life, while several of our lay people also show their appreciation by constant attendance. And if even only one or two come to form a congregation, who can estimate the benefit for these one or two souls? Or, indeed, if none of the laity come at all, do not they value the fact that their parish priest is known to be daily interceding for them before the Throne of Grace?"

We are familiar with arguments such as these, where either an exceptional case is taken to be typical of the generality, or where some apparently extravagant expenditure of labour or money is defended on the score that we cannot measure the value of a single soul. Single souls, indeed, it must be admitted, are each of incalculable value, but when they are multiplied the united value must necessarily be subject to a proportionate increase. The "*little flock*" may be most worthy of the shepherd's care; but he is no true shepherd if he concentrates his attention on the two or three in the fold, and leaves the ninety-seven or ninety-eight to wander in the wilderness.

It is chiefly from a *numerical* point of view that we must confess the failure of Daily Services as at present maintained. In cathedrals or some few favoured town churches, where there is the attraction of a good choir, there may be what is considered a satisfactory attendance of the laity. It is not, however, generally so. In most places the sparseness of worshippers is obvious and lamentable. In some cases the Order of *Common Prayer* is often read in a church without a congregation, a process which hardly agrees with the structure of the service, and which must be very depressing to the officiant.

While we admit the benefit, and the great benefit, to the limited number who attend in certain places, it must still be confessed that, taking a wide survey of the congregations at Daily Services, the outlook is disappointing, and the efforts to secure attendances must be regarded as a failure pure and simple. This is all the more remarkable because of the stress which in recent years has been laid upon the maintenance of Daily Services as an essential and indisputable part of a clergyman's duty. Again and again it has formed a part of Episcopal Charges. Bishop after Bishop has reminded his clergy of their solemn duty, unless reasonably hindered, to read Morning and Evening Prayer daily in church. This Episcopal stress on Daily Services has probably been the result of ritualistic vagaries rather than of any demand on the part of the laity, or even, in some cases, of an appreciation of their intrinsic necessity

on the part of the Ordinary. A Bishop has called to account some troublesome incumbent who has created a ferment in his parish through additions to the services of a Roman type not contemplated in the Prayer-Book. The incumbent has retaliated by pointing to the omissions in other churches of the diocese. Why should the Vicar of St. Cyprian's be reprimanded for his excesses, while the Vicar of Emmanuel, who never has any weekday service except on Thursday evenings, is ignored? Of course, the Bishop might reply that the one by his wilfulness alienates a large number of loyal Churchpeople, while the other, by his omission of Daily Services, provided he is active in other ways, directly affects an infinitesimally small proportion of his parishioners. By the letter of the Prayer-Book, however, if not by its spirit also, they are equally culpable, and in order to check the excesses of the one the Bishop feels he must also brand with his displeasure the defects of the other.

The efforts of the Bishops, however, to inculcate Daily Services have not been entirely successful. The Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline (1906) gives a table with reliable statistics on this matter. It shows that in only two dioceses (Durham and Rochester before its subdivision) does the number of churches which have Daily Service exceed the number which have not. Indeed, of 12,000 churches, it appears that only 4,000 have Daily Service (see Report, chap. iv.). From this it is obvious that a very large number of clergymen—and these not all Evangelicals, unless Evangelicals form a majority in the Church—feel that such services are not an essential part of their duty, and that there is no great demand for them on the part of their parishioners.

These figures are not encouraging. That people should, if possible, be gathered together daily in church for common worship is avowedly a good thing, and by all to be desired. But the fact remains that, contrary to the instructions of the Prayer-Book, Daily Services are not held in the majority of churches, and that, when they are held, the attendance is often so small that they must be reckoned a failure.

What is the cause ?

1. *Is it the indifference of the age ?* On all sides we hear of the growing materialism of our times and the havoc it makes in habits of devotion. And yet this will not account for the fewness of daily worshippers. There are still large congregations in many churches on Sundays, and the number of frequent communicants has been steadily on the increase in late years. The scientific objections to the efficacy of prayer are also less pronounced than they were twenty years ago. Some other reason beside indifference must be sought for this lack of appreciation.

2. *Is it that the services are held at inconvenient hours ?* Something, perhaps, might be said on that score. In many working-class parishes weekday services are held at hours wherein it is simply impossible for working people to attend. In cathedrals and most town churches Morning Prayer is usually at 10 a.m. ; but it is very questionable whether 10 a.m. is not too early for those who have matutinal household duties. At any rate, there is no prescribed time for either Morning or Evening Prayer, and the incumbent will do best to consult the interests of the greater number rather than to maintain some traditional and inconvenient hour.

3. *Is it that in the present day other channels for devotion and instruction are open which make Daily Services in church superfluous ?* Here we are on surer ground. When few could read and Bibles were scarce, it was well that the Church should everywhere make provision for daily public worship. It is very different now. Most houses which claim to be religious homes have family prayers. The idea that the head of a household is the priest of his family is far commoner than it used to be. Bibles, Prayer-Books, manuals of devotion, books of religious instruction, are to be found everywhere, and thus many feel that they can supply at home what in older days could only be obtained in the parish church. With regard to the clergy, the sphere of their duties has of late been wonderfully enlarged, and the frequent meetings and guilds and classes

present opportunities for united worship which some consider more necessary, more stimulating, and more profitable than sparsely attended services in the parish church. Apparently, in the opinion of a majority, the rubric, which bids the daily tolling of the bell and the daily reading of the prayers, unless the curate be reasonably hindered, is obsolete. Whether they are thus justified in setting aside a plain direction is questionable ; but some sympathy may well be felt for a clergyman in a scattered rural parish who knows that if he has a Daily Service the parishioners cannot attend, or for another in a town parish who feels that his time is really more usefully occupied in diligent visiting, in the promotion of religious and social agencies which directly attract the people, rather than in multiplying services which are only attended by a very few elect ladies. It is, indeed, a matter for consideration whether a rule which is long out of date should not be rescinded, and it is regrettable that the Convocation of Canterbury should have left the rubric practically untouched in their recent discussion of proposed alterations. Many of the most spiritual and devoted of the clergy do not think it necessary to observe it, and they feel that it is better to gather together in church a fairly large number once or twice on weekdays than a handful every day. Unfortunately, however, there are some clergy who do neither the one nor the other, and whose omission of Daily Service is not compensated by untiring spiritual activities in other directions.

4. Is it not possible, however, that there may be another cause, viz. : *That Daily Services, as at present conducted, fail to meet the spiritual needs of large numbers in the present day?* Such a suggestion may seem profane ; but the inquiry ought not to be hastily dismissed. At present, the structure of our Daily Services differs not from the Sunday service, and Matins and Evensong are on precisely similar lines. Is it irreverent to think that a stereotyped monotony is not altogether suitable for an age whose characteristics are movement and variety? In

spite of our traditional conservatism, is there not an unexpressed craving for less sameness and more diversity?

More, of course, might be done to make our present services helpful without any change of structure. A less perfunctory recital of the prayers, and a clearer and more intelligent reading of the lessons, would often contribute to greater earnestness. A small choir, where possible, would lend brightness to the service. A short exposition might press home the truths of the Lessons. But far more is needed. Is it right that the Monday services and the Tuesday services and the Wednesday services should be exactly similar, the only variations being the Psalms and Lectons, and the only addition the Litany? As a matter of experience, people will come to special services who will not frequent daily Matins and Evensong. "When we had said Evening Prayer," writes Father Dolling,¹ "to empty benches for a year, we thought the thing was hopeless. People would come to a prayer-meeting in the mission room, but they would not come to church, which was the very place where we wanted to get them. But directly we began a prayer-meeting in church, many people came, and God granted us such visible proofs—His answer seen by all the people—that many times during the year . . . people would come with some special need, quite sure that, in some way or another, God would answer them." These prayer-meetings were on Mondays. On Thursdays Dolling had what he calls "Vespers of the Blessed Sacrament"; on Fridays the "Stations of the Cross," of which he says that, "Friday after Friday they were like a great sob going up from the heart of this sinful place, to tell Jesus how sorry we were that we had been His murderers." These week-day services continued for several years at St. Agatha's, Portsmouth, and were valued by the people. Is it not possible that in many other places a similar variety of procedure might be beneficial? The exact services which Dolling adopted will certainly not commend themselves to all, and to some may appear of foreign growth. They caused some disturbance in

¹ "Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum," p. 208.

Portsmouth at the time, and much perplexity to his Bishop. It is not likely that any reader of these pages will be inclined to adopt all of them. But the fact remains that they reached many whom daily Matins and Evensong did not reach, and it would be quite possible to have something of the kind, without any suspicion of Romeward tendencies, which would help to emphasize the various days of the week. Thus, every Friday might be marked by a commemoration of some of the main incidents of the Passion, with appropriate prayers. On Thursdays there might well be an office in preparation for Holy Communion. Mondays might be known as days of intercession for the parish and the various parochial agencies of the week. Saturdays might be devoted to prayer for clergy and congregations in view of the approach of Sunday, or to a commemoration of the faithful departed. To many, we are aware, these suggestions will not be palatable. As we write them, we seem to hear the muttered phrases, "our incomparable Liturgy," "the Prayer-Book in the melting-pot," and such like. But the failure of the present system suggests that there would be no great harm in trying a change. Is it impossible that, under the "Letters of Business" now issued, a small book of supplementary services should be authorized for use in church on week-days? These services need not be altogether written new for the purpose. There are many existing sources, ancient and modern, from which they might be compiled. Among others, "A Book of Common Order" (Edinburgh, 1902) has lately come into our hands, composed, we believe, by a Scotch divine, containing fourteen separate services, many of them admirable in tone and diction. It is only unreasonable attachment to the habitual and accustomed which leads people to think that the making of prayers is a lost art. The Spirit of the Lord is still the inspirer of His Church.

Of course, the practical difficulty is that, if any relaxation of the Act of Uniformity is tolerated, disloyal persons will introduce services doctrinally opposed to the Prayer-Book standard. The danger is real, and at present the Act of Uniformity does not

seem to do much in the way of checking them; but surely a Bishop's powers might be so enlarged as to hinder such a perversion. It cannot be right that the legitimate development of the devotional life of the Church should be held in check, because sometimes it assumes abnormal and unhealthy forms. At present, in two-thirds of our parish churches there are no daily prayers. Probably in many of them the practical difficulties are insurmountable; but in others it is otherwise. If so widespread an omission of a definite rule is tolerated by the authorities, might they not well encourage experiments in the direction indicated above? The church should on week-days, as well as Sundays, be the home of the devotions of the common people. At present, it is not.



Jesus at the Door.

BY THE REV. JOHN REID, M.A., INVERNESS.

OF all the pictures which flashed before the mind of the prisoner-seer of Patmos, the most wonderful is that which shews Jesus standing as a suppliant at a door, and that the door of a church (Rev. iii. 20). It was only the other day that I discovered for myself the reason why this is the most wonderful picture in the Apocalypse. Others may have found it out before, but it was only then that I saw that the words in verse 14 (of the third chapter) should be read as an inscription over the door—"The Church of the Laodiceans." I had not thought of that before; the door had been any door to me. And while it was wonderful that Jesus should stand there and knock, His action has all the effect of a surprise, when it is seen that He is standing and knocking at the door of the Church of the Laodiceans, of which He had said, "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." How shall we indicate the significance of that?

Let us see what was the matter with this Church. It was