

THE DIVINE OFFICE IN ANGLICAN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

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[*Note.* For most of the information given in these pages I am indebted to an article by the Rev. Thomas J. Williams, 'Anglican Versions of the Breviary', reprinted from 'Cowley' (no date). My thanks are also due to the Superiors of many Anglican communities of men and women who have supplied details of their Office Books.—P. F. A.]

THERE is so much of excellence and beauty in the services of the Breviary, that were it skilfully set before the Protestant by Roman controversialists as the book of devotion received in their communion, it would undoubtedly raise a prejudice in their favour, if he were ignorant of the circumstances of the case, and but ordinarily candid and unprejudiced.' Such are the opening words of No. 75 of *Tracts for the Times*, which was entitled *The Roman Breviary as embodying the substance of the devotional services of the Church Catholic*. It was published in 1838, and its author was John Henry Newman. After the title the following verse is printed. The words contain a deeper meaning today than when they were composed.

Teach her to know and love her hour of prayer,
 And evermore,
 As faith grows rare,
 Unlock her heart, and offer all its store,
 In holier love and humbler vows,
 As suits a lost returning spouse.

Newman's attitude towards the Roman Church was still antagonistic, for he explains that the purpose of this Tract is 'to wrest a weapon out of our adversaries' hands; who have in this, as in many other instances, appropriated to themselves a treasure which was ours as much as theirs; and then, on our attempting to recover it, accuse us of borrowing what we have lost through inadvertence'.

Tract 75 marked the beginning of a movement in the Church of England which has gone on steadily for more than a century; first, by the translation and adaptation of the Day Hours of the Roman or Sarum Breviaries, and culminating by the adoption of either

the *Breviarium Romanum* or *Breviarium Monasticum* by Anglican religious communities of men and women.

Strictly speaking, this movement did not begin in the first year of the reign of Queen Victoria, but two centuries earlier. For the Church of England, unlike the Reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, retained the principal elements of the Breviary in the Prayer Book Offices of Matins and Evensong. The traditional method of public choral worship was not abandoned completely after the Reformation. Moreover, the daily recitation of these two Offices, either privately or openly, was made obligatory to Clerks in Holy Orders, 'not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause'. Yet even this was not enough to satisfy the piety of the more devout Anglican clergy and laity.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several vernacular Diurnals were published. The first of these books was Bishop Cosin's *Collection of Private Devotions in the Practice of the Ancient Church, called the Hours of Prayer*. It was intended as a counterblast to the French or Italian devotional books Queen Henrietta Maria was pressing on her Anglican ladies-in-waiting. Among similar Diurnals which followed Bishop Cosin's little book were George Hicke's *Devotion in the Ancient Way of Offices*; Mrs Hopton's manual based on John Austin's *Catholic Book of Offices*; and Dorrington's *Reformed Devotions disposed into the form and method of the Roman Breviary*. At Little Gidding, Nicholas Ferrar and his household of men, women and children lived a life of prayer and good works that resembled that of the first Christians. They were not content with reciting prayer at the Canonical Hours during the day, in addition to Matins and Evensong: they rose during the night for watches of prayer. This unique experiment in communal living received the encouragement of Charles I, but it did not survive the Revolution. The call of the cloister was heard faintly but clearly again and again, yet there were no ways in which it could be answered in the Church of England. From time to time after the Restoration until the middle of the eighteenth century plans were made to establish 'Protestant Monasteries' or 'Colleges of Maids', as they were called, but nothing came of them.

Then in the second decade of the nineteenth century, Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, asked why there were no Sisters of Charity or Béguines in the Anglican Church. With the publica-

tion of the first of the *Tracts for the Times* in 1833, the dry bones of Anglicanism began to stir, and with them came the blossoming of the Gothic Revival in literature, art and architecture. The leaders of the Tractarian party began to feel that although the Breviary had become 'the property of the Romanists, by retaining it in its ancient Latin form', yet they had 'defrauded the Church of that benefit which, in the vernacular tongue, it might have afforded the people at large'. Hence the reason for Newman writing *Tract* 75. He set some of his disciples to begin a translation of the Breviary which was never completed, although a few sections were published. In the so-called 'monastery' at Littlemore he initiated the daily recitation of the Breviary among Anglicans. It ceased with his reception into the Roman Church in 1845, but a few months earlier the first Anglican Sisterhood of the Holy Cross, Park Village West, Regent's Park, London, had started the recitation of a carefully expurgated translation of the Sarum Breviary, prepared under the auspices of Dr Pusey. For fear of arousing the opposition of the then Bishop of London, all legendary matter from the Second Nocturn Lessons at Matins, all invocations of our Lady and the Saints, and all prayers for the departed were omitted.

Three years later the Sisterhood of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, was founded. Here the spiritual life was nourished on a translation of the Sarum Day Hours which had been made by the Rev. Albany Christie. It was also in 1848 that the Society of the Most Holy Trinity at Devonport was established. The Sisters used at first manuscript translations of the Salisbury Breviary. In 1851 Sister Amelia Warren started a complete translation of this Breviary, but it was not published until 1889, with the title *The Breviary of the Renowned Church of Salisbury, Translated into English According to the Use of the Society of the Holy Trinity, Devonport*. This interesting vernacular Office Book is still used by this Community at Ascot Priory, but has never been adopted by any other Anglican Sisterhood. The Rev. John Mason Neale, founder of the Society of St Margaret, East Grinstead, translated portions of various Breviaries for this Sisterhood which dates from 1854. They did not appear in book form until after his death in 1866. The first of the three volumes of *The Night Office of the Church* was published in 1870, and was followed by *Breviary Offices from Lauds to Compline* in 1877. These books are based on the Sarum

Breviary, but contain many features taken from the Roman, French, and other liturgical books. They were adopted by many other Anglican communities and have been re-issued and revised several times.

So what Newman regarded as the 'appropriation of a treasure which is ours as much as theirs', and the 'wresting of a weapon out of our adversaries' hands', went on apace, for as early as 1854 Canon Liddon, while Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon Theological College, had brought out a vernacular Diurnal—*The Hours of Prayer*—for the use of the students. It seems to have been due to Liddon's influence that Sir Francis Lygon, afterwards Lord Beauchamp, set to work on compiling *The Day Hours of the Church of England*. This very much watered-down translation of the Sarum Breviary was published in 1858, and soon became the most widely used of all Anglican Office Books. It was adopted by most Sisterhoods, except those which used the East Grinstead books after their appearance. There were not a few Anglican bishops as well as the more devout High Church clergymen and laity who found the *Day Hours* helpful to their private devotions. So popular did it become that a smaller edition, containing only the Little Hours, was issued, and in some cases, bound up with the *Book of Common Prayer*. Between 1858 and 1898 five editions of *The Day Hours of the Church of England* were published, and more than 27,000 copies sold—a proof of the increasing attraction of the Breviary to Anglicans. This Diurnal has been revised and enriched more than once. The latest edition (1950), entitled *The Day Hours of the Church*, would surprise and perhaps shock the original editor and translator. Its Kalendar has been made to 'correspond to the Western Use', and contains the Roman Offices for the feasts of the Sacred Heart, Christ the King, SS. Thomas More and John Fisher, together with many other saints which are not found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The communities of St John the Baptist, Clewer, and St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, deserve to be congratulated on this admirable vernacular Diurnal. There may be many liturgically-minded Catholics who regret that they have nothing of the same kind to fall back on if they are ignorant of Latin.

Another vernacular Diurnal was *The Day Office of the Church, According to the Kalendar of the Church of England*, the first edition of which appeared about 1870. Unlike previous Anglican Office

Books, this one was based on the *Horae Diurnae* of the Roman Breviary. It was adopted by several communities in England and in North America, and was much used by clergymen. In 1910 Fr Trenholme, s.s.J.E., compiled another version of the Sarum Day Hours, entitled *Hours of Prayer from Lauds to Compline*, enriching it with additional matter taken from other medieval Breviaries. This book has since been used by the 'Cowley Fathers', and has been adopted by a number of communities at home and overseas.

The Priest's Book of Private Devotions, first published in 1872, contained simplified versions of the Little Hours of the Sarum Breviary. These were reissued subsequently in a little book called *Prime and the Hours*, which has been widely used in all parts of the Anglican Communion, not only by Religious Communities but by individual clergymen and layfolk. The last edition bears a commendation by Fr Frere of the Community of the Resurrection (afterwards Bishop of Truro). In 1950 this Community published a two-volume Breviary for the use of its members, containing the Prayer Book Offices of Matins and Evensong, together with the lesser Hours taken from *Prime and the Hours*, and its Kalendar enriched with many saints not found in that of the Book of Common Prayer. These are taken from the South African Prayer Book, with the addition of a few monastic saints. The book itself has received the sanction of the Visitor of the Community. The Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham, also uses *Prime and the Hours*, for, like the Community of the Resurrection, its members who are in Holy Orders feel bound to the recitation of the Prayer Book Offices; the Day Hours being merely a community and not a canonical obligation. The Society of St Francis, Cerne Abbas, is another male community which has adopted this book.

Besides the Society of the Holy Trinity, Devonport, there were a few other Anglican Sisterhoods in the last century which drew up Office Books for themselves, e.g. The Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Oxford. This Sisterhood brought out a three-volume edition of the Day and Night Hours of the Roman Breviary in 1872. Most of the translating was done by Philip Pusey, son of Dr Pusey. Another book was *The Day Hours and Other Offices as Used by the Sisters of All Saints*, translated from the Roman Breviary by Sister Maria Francesca, sister of Christian and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It was revised and republished in 1921 under the title of *A Book of Day Hours for the Use of Religious*

Societies, with many of the reforms of Pius X adopted. In 1925 the Order of St Paul, Alton Abbey, Hampshire, had printed for its own use an interesting Diurnal entitled *The Choir Office*. The whole of the Psalter is incorporated, and a regular sequence of Scripture Lessons is provided for Compline.

It was not until 1916 that the first Anglican translation of any portion of the *Breviarium Monasticum* appeared, with a version of the Benedictine Night Office. The work was undertaken by Canon Wilfrid Douglas, chaplain of the Community of St Mary, Peekskill, New York. Two years later this same Episcopalian Sisterhood printed for its own use a vernacular version of the Benedictine Day Hours. After subsequent revision, it was published by the Oxford University Press in 1932, under the title of *The Monastic Diurnal*. This book has now been adopted by numerous Anglican communities of men and women in many parts of the world, and has superseded some of the older Diurnals.

At least one Anglican Sisterhood (the Community of St Mary at the Cross, Edgware, Middlesex) started the recitation of the Day Hours in Latin as early as 1870, but it was not until the foundation of the Benedictine community of men in 1896, which moved to Caldey Island in 1906, that the complete *Breviarium Monasticum* was adopted by any Anglican religious. By 1908 the Anglican Benedictine nuns at West Malling, Kent, had started to use the *Breviarium Monasticum* in emulation of the monks on Caldey. There is little doubt that it is largely due to this use of an unexpurgated form of Catholic liturgical prayer in Latin, including the *Missale Romanum*, that these two communities discovered their true *lex credendi* by means of a *lex orandi*. Since 1913, when this happened, several other Anglican communities have adopted either the Monastic or Roman Breviaries in Latin. Apart from the purely practical reason of being able to buy complete Office Books which are those used today by the majority of secular and regular clergy in Western Christendom, it is difficult to understand why a small group of Anglicans should feel it helpful to their devotion to pray in a dead language, especially as it is a reversal of the policy of the Roman Church in the early ages, which substituted Latin for Greek. But in at least one instance the reason given is that there are no plainchant books for use with the Monastic Diurnal in English.

No longer do they feel, as did John Henry Newman, that the

Antiphons of our Lady and certain other liturgical details of the Breviary 'show clearly the utter contrariety between the Roman system, as actually existing, and our own; which, however similar in certain respects, are in others so at variance, as to make any attempt to reconcile them together in their present state perfectly nugatory' (*Tract 75*). Newman lacked the gift of prophecy when he wrote: 'Till Rome moves towards us, it is quite impossible that we should move towards Rome', for some of these latter-day communities have effected a complete 'act of re-appropriation' by taking over one or other Breviary in its modern Latin form.

The monks of Nashdom Abbey (together with their American Priory at Three Rivers, Michigan); the nuns of Malling Abbey, Kent; those of the Society of the Salutation, Burford Priory, Oxfordshire; and the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Haywards Heath, Sussex, are among those which now use the *Breviarium Monasticum*. When Mass, Vespers, or other Offices are sung, the *Antiphonale Monasticum* and *Graduale Romanum* are used for the plainchant.

The Society of the Precious Blood, Burnham Abbey, near Maidenhead—an enclosed and contemplative Sisterhood—recites the Office from the *Breviarium Romanum*, and follows the *Ordo* of the Archdiocese of Westminster in which their convent is situated.

But this urge to use the Latin language for prayer is not widespread in Anglican communities. The three strictly enclosed and purely contemplative communities of the Sisters of the Love of God recite the full Office in English. The two Sisterhoods which follow the Cistercian Rule have vernacular Office Books. One of these—the Society of the Sacred Cross, Tymawr, Monmouthshire—is bringing out a translation of the Benedictine Office of Matins. The Society of the Divine Compassion and the Brotherhood of the Holy Cross—both Franciscan in ideals and manner of life—use English Diurnals in addition to the Book of Common Prayer. It is stated that the American Episcopalian Poor Brothers of St Francis, and the Poor Clares of Reparation and Adoration, 'follow the Breviary used by the Order of St Francis'. The small community of Canons at Walsingham, which observes the Rule of St Augustine, rather surprisingly stick to the Book of Common Prayer, but with interpolations from the Breviary. In the early days of Anglican communities, each was at liberty to adopt any

form of Office it fancied, but in recent years, since the establishment of an Advisory Council for Religious Communities with the blessing of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Visitors have limited powers to regulate what Breviaries or Diurnals are adopted.

Plainchant books for use with vernacular Offices are now available, most of them edited by the late Dr Palmer, and published by the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage. They include an English plainchant Psalter, the Offices of Vespers and Compline, and a complete musical edition of the Sarum Day Hours, entitled *The Diurnal Noted*.

Three and a half centuries ago it seemed that the leaders of the Reformation movement in England had managed to suppress the traditional worship of the Catholic Church. But the Divine Office, either in its complete or in an abbreviated form, like a tiny seed buried in the ground, has come up again and grown into a mighty tree. This startling development of liturgical worship in religious communities in communion with Canterbury throughout the world, which really began with the publication of Newman's *Tract 75*, is a phenomenon which all who work and pray for the cause of Unity among Christians should study. For it is a consoling thought that, in these times when it is far more important to stress what Christians share than what are their points of difference, there is a vast body of men and women outside the Fold of Peter whose spiritual life is based on the *Opus Dei cui nihil praeponatur* of St Benedict. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to hope that in the long run some of them will be united with us in belief as well as in prayer, even if 'the mills of God grind slowly'.



THE CHARACTER OF A MISSIONARY

OSWIN MAGRATH, O.P.

A CORRECT view about the purpose of the Missions must determine the qualities needed in a missionary. The first requisite is adaptability: he has to form new Christians, and has to adjust himself to a new and foreign outlook and way of life. While the development of communications and health services has rendered the possession of exceptionally strong bodily