

**CHURCH READING. CONTAINING THE  
MORNING, EVENING, AND COMMUNION  
SERVICES OF THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND, POINTED AND ACCENTED  
ACCORDING TO THE METHOD ADVISED  
BY THOMAS SHERIDAN, M.A.**

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by J. J. Halcombe

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**J. J. HALCOMBE**

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THE MORNING, EVENING, AND COMMUNION  
SERVICES OF THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND,

POINTED AND ACCENTED ACCORDING TO THE METHOD  
ADVISED BY THOMAS SHERIDAN, M.A.

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED

REMARKS, CHIEFLY COMPILED FROM THE SAME AUTHOR, ON  
THE ERRORS MOST USUALLY COMMITTED IN  
READING THESE SERVICES.

*Prayer*

BY THE REV. J. J. HALCOMBE, B.A.

OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
ASSISTANT CURATE OF HANOVER CHAPEL, REGENT STREET.

Λαλοῦσι μὲν οὕτοι, φράζουσι δὲ οὕ.—PLUT.

LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, 186, FLEET STREET.

1853.

*138. 2. 24.*

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE manner of reading the Services of the Church of England having lately excited much attention, I have put forward the following pages, with the earnest desire that they may tend, in an initial measure at least, to remedy some of the faults so justly complained of.

The work from which I have mainly quoted was published, in 1775, by Thomas Sheridan, Esq. M. A., and has, I believe, been out of print for more than half a century, being too voluminous ever to have had a large circulation.

The system of punctuation advised by Mr. Sheridan is founded on the analogy which should exist between *reading* and *speaking*, the ordinary system sufficing for grammatical purposes, but ignoring entirely many pauses inseparable from the natural use of speech, and giving but slight clue to the relative durations of those which it does mark. The object, therefore, of this

method of pointing is to get rid of an artificial style of reading, engendered by the habit of a close and servile observation of ordinary "stops;" and thus to open the way for further improvement.

The following somewhat hackneyed passage, from a paper of Sterne's on "Criticism," so exactly illustrates my meaning that I cannot forbear quoting it:—

"And how did *Garrick* speak the soliloquy  
"last night? Oh, against all rule, my lord, most  
"ungrammatically! betwixt the substantive and  
"the adjective, which should agree together in  
"number, case, and gender, he made a breach  
"thus,—stopping as if the point wanted settling;  
"—and betwixt the nominative case, which your  
"lordship knows should govern the verb, he sus-  
"pended his voice in the epilogue a dozen times;  
"three seconds and three-fifths, by a stop-watch,  
"my lord, each time.—Admirable grammarian!  
"—But in suspending his voice—was the sense  
"suspended likewise? Did no expression of at-  
"titude or countenance fill up the chasm?—  
"Was the eye silent? Did you narrowly look?  
"—I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord.—  
"Excellent observer!"



In those portions of the Service on which Mr. Sheridan has not dwelt, I have endeavoured to follow out his system of pointing to the best of my power.

The remarks in the Appendix are chiefly quotations, in a condensed form, from his work.\* His remarks on the Communion Service I have purposely omitted, lest they should be the means of diminishing, in any way, the especial solemnity with which this Service is so rightly associated in our minds. I cannot but feel that the adoption of this system of reading would do much towards remedying what the Bishop of Lincoln, in Convocation, aptly styled the "monotonous mumbling" of the Church-Services, and would, if properly carried out, go far towards imparting to them that life and reality of devotion the absence of which must always mar our best efforts towards union with any dissenting bodies. For the doctrines of the Church of England

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\* It might have been expected that I should have added the opinions of other writers on many doubtful passages. But, to illustrate the impossibility of doing this within the limits of the present work, I would mention the fact that there are no less than EIGHT different modes of reading one of the Commandments, each supported by separate and competent authority.

Professor Blunt claims only a "fair field and no favour;" let the same be given to her Services, and I cannot doubt that their superiority over the most eloquent extemporaneous effusions would soon be triumphantly vindicated.

I need hardly add that this system is equally applicable to every style of written composition, and available, therefore, as much for preaching as reading. That some new system in both is imperatively called for in these days few I think will doubt.

In speaking on this subject I am aware that there are many popular and strongly-rooted prejudices to be overcome; but popular prejudices are generally so little defined—and, therefore, so entirely unamenable to argument—that, as they happen, in this case, to have been most ably summed up and supported by one of the leading men of the day, I shall, I trust, under the circumstances, be acquitted of any disrespect to one so high in authority if I endeavour to meet his objections on the subject.

A portion of Archbishop Whateley's treatise on Rhetoric, entitled "Elocution," treats wholly of this subject, and I cannot but feel that his arguments, if unanswered, have sufficient influence

to prevent the Bishops and Clergy, as a body, ever setting themselves to carry out any reform in this matter.

It often, indeed, savours of weakness to endeavour to dispose of arguments by one sweeping affirmation; but here I must say that Archbishop Whateley's whole theory seems based on error: first, in that he argues entirely from the *abuse* of the system in question, or, at least, from its unrecognized, condemned, and, therefore, undeveloped use; and secondly, in that he practically denies the tritest axiom of everyday experience, that "habit is second nature."

It is manifestly impossible, in the limits of a Preface, to meet Archbishop Whateley's arguments step by step; but I think I state the case fairly when I say that they will all resolve themselves into the three following objections to any recognized study of elocution:—First, that speaking must be "natural;" secondly, that any study of elocution produces a style aptly termed "spouting," or, at least, an artificial or theatrical style; thirdly, that it must result in a manifest and offensive affectation.

Now if Archbishop Whateley by the term "natural" meant only that there must be at