

**THE STUDENTS PRAYER-BOOK:
THE TEXT OF MORNING AND
EVENING PRAYER AND LITANY
WITH NOTES**

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The students prayer-book: the text of morning and evening prayer and litany with notes by W. H. Flecker

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W. H. FLECKER

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WITH NOTES**

J. P. Sheraton
THE STUDENT'S
PRAYER-BOOK

THE TEXT OF MORNING AND
EVENING PRAYER AND LITANY

WITH NOTES

BY

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** * Junior Students may omit pages 24-53, except the section, "The order how the rest of Holy Scripture is to be read." Throughout the book, passages marked by a vertical line need not be studied by Junior Students, nor by Senior Students on a first reading.*

The text of the Prayer-Book has been adhered to throughout the book, but numbers have been prefixed to the verses of the Te Deum, the Benedicite, the Athanasian Creed, and the Litany.

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INTRODUCTION

I.

ON reading carefully the long and somewhat complicated title of the book which we familiarly call the "Prayer-Book," we see that it is divided into four parts, viz. Common Prayer, the Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies, the Psalter, and the Ordination Services.

It is with the first and third of these that we deal in this book.

Our Lord Himself ordered the two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion, to be administered, and the very earliest Christian records show that the Lord's Supper was the central part of the service which Christians held on every "Lord's Day."

Sunday Services.—We should expect then to find that the history of the Administration of the Sacraments would take us farther back into the primitive life of the Church of Christ than the history of "Common Prayer." And, indeed, we have an interesting account of a Sunday service with its administration of Holy Communion given us by Justin Martyr in the second century, and from his time onwards the descriptions of the Communion Service become frequent and full, and the service itself more and more elaborate.

Yet when we search for the origin of the services which we know as "Morning and Evening Prayer," we have to go

back nearly as far as to Justin Martyr's time; and if in respect of antiquity they are venerable, so in regard to the position assigned to them in the English Church services they are of unique interest and of special importance.

Daily Services.—Two customs of the early Church may each have contributed something to the introduction of *Daily Services*. There was first the practice, continued from Jewish times,¹ of observing the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day as hours of prayer. And there was secondly the custom² of assembling for prayer on the night before the Sunday service.

"Hour" Services: Fourth Century.—But it seems that with the rapid growth of Monasticism in the fourth century there arose the custom of members of a religious community meeting in their church twice, thrice and at last seven times a day in order to go through their prayers, to recite the Psalms, and to listen to the reading of the Bible. The custom spread from monastic churches to ordinary parish churches. The laity, we may assume, did not as a rule attend on the ordinary week-days. The *Hours* were observed on Sundays with greater elaboration.

Seventh Century.—When we reach the seventh century we have in Western Europe not only full accounts of the services used in the "Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies," but also at Rome, at least, a complete scheme of seven or eight Daily Services, arranging for a weekly recital of the Psalms and a regular annual reading of a great part of the Bible. This Roman "Divine Office" is the direct ancestor of our "Morning and Evening Prayer."

Forms of Services vary in different places.—It must not be supposed that the services, whether of the Hours

¹ See Daniel vi. 10 and Psalm lv. 18.

² This is supposed to have originated in the all-night service which was held before Easter Day.

or of the Sacraments, were at this time the same throughout the West of Europe. Spain, France, Ireland and even parts of Italy used Liturgies¹ differing among themselves and differing considerably from the Roman use.

The Roman type gradually prevails. The Sarum use.—In England, especially in the North, which was converted to Christianity by Celtic missionaries, the Liturgy and some church customs at first differed from those of Rome; but the Roman prevailed here as elsewhere throughout Western Europe during the seventh and eighth centuries, and the various books used in the church services in England thenceforward are *in the main* similar to those used in Rome itself. But even then the services were not in every part of England performed in the same way: there was "great diversity . . . some following Salisbury use, some Hereford use, and some the use of Bangor, some of York, some of Lincoln." Of these far the most popular was the Salisbury or Sarum use, a liturgy drawn up for use in the cathedral church of Sarum, and carefully described by a thirteenth-century bishop named Richard Poore.

II.

Mediæval "Hours."—When we speak of the Sarum *Missal* we mean the book containing all the service of the Mass as used in the Salisbury and a great many other dioceses. Similarly the Sarum *Breviary* is the book containing the services known as the *Hours*, or as the *Divine Office*. Seven hours² a day were hours of prayer

¹ The term *Liturgy* was used for the services of the Church by early Christian writers: we have seen that the earliest services they described were essentially Communion Services; but there is no reasonable objection to the extension of that term to other parts of Christian worship which was very speedily made after the introduction of Daily Service. The attempt now being made to confine the word to the Communion Service seems unnecessary.

² Sometimes eight are reckoned.