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CHAPTER I

Christian Worship and its History

1. Introduction

What is worship? A shortened form of *worthship*, the word means rendering to Almighty God His worth or due. Worship for the Christian is the way of approach to the Divine Majesty. "Going to church" is a phrase which our British reserve has invented to disguise the truth that in worship we go to the throne of grace as creatures to the Creator, as subjects to the King of kings, as children to the Father. Is there any other way by which a living person can draw near to the living God? I know of none. To withdraw from worship is to drift away from God and to serve our own self-made idols. Godlessness is the natural result when an individual or a nation abandons the privilege of worship. When the worth of God is neglected the worth of man declines, until to "fear not God" becomes to "regard not man". Worship is at once the disinfectant and preservative of moral standards.

2. Christian Worship Sacramental

One reason for the ease with which people abandon or neglect the worship of God lies in the fact that there is and must be a very human element in all

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worship. In itself worship is a spiritual act, yet it can only express itself in human language, human forms, human postures; that is simply because we ourselves are human as well as spiritual beings. Worship, therefore, never can be wholly spiritual; it must manifest itself in outward forms. All worship is sacramental; it has its "outward and visible" form as well as its "inward and spiritual" reality. Outward forms of worship can never fully express the worthship of Almighty God. That is a strong reason not for neglecting the forms but for ensuring that they should be as worthy of their purpose as it is possible to make them. The Scottish Prayer Book, as revised in 1929, is an example of the care which the Church has always taken to refashion and improve its forms of worship from time to time. Neglect of forms renders worship not spiritual but "formless", lacking the "decency and order" which St Paul declares necessary for Christians in their approach to God.

3. St Paul's Principles of Worship

Questions concerned with Christian worship are not settled offhand by quoting the Apostle's declaration, "I will pray with the spirit". He said much more than that. Read I Cor. xiv, 15, 26, 40 and you will see that he laid down four other principles which should govern public worship. Christian worship should be intelligible, edifying, decent or beautiful, and orderly. The first two, intelligibility and edification, have to do

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with the truth expressed in the outward form; the other two, beauty and order, with the form itself. The crown of all these is the spirituality which is produced by the impact of God's spirit on man's. "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Yet, "Let all things be done decently and in order", and, "Let all things be done unto edifying".

4. The Story of Christian Worship

The long and romantic history of Christian worship cannot be told here. There is room only for a few facts which should be known before we begin to consider the various services in the Scottish Prayer Book.

In early times worship developed freely in different parts of the Church, yet there was always a core which remained the same throughout the Christian world. Down to the beginning of the fourth century the only form of public worship was that for the Eucharist; before that time no other public service was possible, partly because for three hundred years Christians were seldom free from persecution and partly because a large number of them were slaves. The form of service for Holy Communion fell into two parts. The first consisted of Scripture readings, sermon, prayer and praise; this corresponds to our ante-Communion service. The second part began with an offering of the elements of bread and wine and then passed to a thanksgiving to

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God, which as early as the third century included the Sursum Corda ("Lift up your hearts") and the Sanctus ("Holy, holy, holy"). The thanksgiving then took up the theme of the Redemption and Sacrifice of Christ and contained a petition, direct or indirect, for the blessing of the elements, after which those present received the consecrated gifts. If you look at the Scottish Liturgy you cannot fail to see this primitive outline embodied there.

5. English and Scottish Forms

It is a long step to pass from the fourth century to the sixteenth, and one might think that in the course of twelve hundred years changes would be so great that all continuity with the past would be lost. This, however, is not so. Both in England and in Scotland the Catholic type of service for the Eucharist remained substantially the same, as will be shewn later. The first form of service to appear in the English tongue was the Litany in 1544, which was translated from the Latin Litany used in England for centuries before the Reformation. This was followed in 1548 by the publication of a short form of preparation for Holy Communion consisting of "Ye that do truly", the Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words and the Prayer of Humble Access, which was inserted into the Latin Mass. The first complete English Prayer Book appeared in 1549. The intention of the compilers of that book (with Archbishop Cranmer at their head)

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was not to abolish the old Latin forms but to adapt these to the needs both of clergy and laity. Before the Reformation the Latin service book took little account of the laity. Even for the clergy it was no easy task to find their way about in the elaborate directions prescribed in these books. The first Prayer Book of 1549 was a masterpiece of liturgical composition; it retained all that was best in the old Latin books and at the same time provided the clergy and laity alike not only with a high standard of worship but also with much more simple forms. In the reign of Edward VI a revised edition of the Prayer Book was published in 1552, most of the changes being for the worse rather than for the better. In the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I slight improvements were made.

6. The Scottish Prayer Books of 1637, 1912 and 1929

It is at this point that Scotland enters into the story. In 1610 Episcopacy was restored to the Scottish Church, and in the reign of Charles I preparations for the restoration of liturgical worship began. These resulted in the publication in 1637 of *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments for the Use of the Church of Scotland*. The most remarkable feature of that book was its Liturgy or form for the celebration of Holy Communion. In drawing up this service the compilers followed not so much the fourth edition of the English Prayer Book as the much

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superior edition of 1549, especially in the Prayer of Consecration and the Prayer for the Church. Unfortunately this fine service book appeared to numbers of Scottish people to be imposed upon the Church by royal authority. The public use of it by the Dean of Edinburgh in St Giles' Cathedral on 23 July 1637 was the signal for a riot followed by rebellion, and the Scottish Prayer Book was silenced for nearly a hundred years. The Scottish Bishops in the reign of Charles II made no attempt to introduce the Scottish Prayer Book but were content to put up with an unwritten form which differed little from Presbyterian worship. It was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that the use of this book was revived, and even then, only at the Holy Communion. The Scottish Communion Office made its way gradually by its manifest superiority to the English; but for all services other than the Eucharist the English Prayer Book of 1662 was universally used. This state of things continued till the beginning of the present century when a desire for more liberty in the use of the English book was increasingly expressed. Modern requirements for a time were satisfied by the publication in 1912 of *The Book of Common Prayer* (*Scotland*). This slight revision paved the way for a prolonged examination of all the services of the Church, which resulted in the publication of *The Scottish Book of Common Prayer* in 1929. The preparation for this work officially began in 1918 but preliminary work on the Lectionary and Psalter was going on for some years before that date. In point

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of fact the Scottish Prayer Book may be said to have taken some twenty years to complete. In their work the Scottish revisers kept in close touch with the authorities of the Church of England, who were engaged in a similar task, and the Scottish Prayer Book owes much to the English Prayer Book of 1928, especially in the revision of the occasional offices of Baptism, Marriage, the Burial of the Dead, etc. Let this chapter end with the judgment of a distinguished scholar on the merits of the Scottish Prayer Book: "The Book as a whole is clearly the best of the Anglican Prayer Books; it draws freely on the rich material provided by the long English debates and is also strongly national, especially as regards the Eucharistic Liturgy and the Calendar" (*Liturgy and Worship*, S.P.C.K. p. 792).

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CHAPTER II

Regulation of Worship; Kalendar; Lessons; Psalter

THIS part of the Prayer Book, which is paged with roman numerals, begins with two extracts from the handbook which governs the procedure of the Scottish Church and is known as the Code of Canons (1929).

1. SERVICE BOOKS AND RULES FOR WORSHIP

Canon XXIII states that two Prayer Books are authorized, the Scottish Prayer Book and the English Prayer Book of 1662. You might think that this arrangement would lead to confusion; but the Scottish Church publishes only one book, the Scottish. A few congregations are tied to the English Book by their local deeds of constitution, but these will find in the Scottish Prayer Book the whole substance of the English Book to which they have been accustomed; there is no need to buy the English Book. Canon XXIV, which lays down regulations affecting Divine Service, is interesting. It enjoins that Holy Communion shall be celebrated at least every Lord's Day and on the Great Festivals, when in the opinion of the

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Bishop it is "reasonably practicable" to do so. The Lessons may be read either according to the Version of 1611 or according to the Revised Version of 1881, 1884, 1894, but for any change of version the sanction of the Bishop must be obtained. No hymn or collection of hymns to which the Bishop has objected in writing shall be used in any church. Sudden changes in the "customary...conduct of Services" are deprecated; the Rector or Priest-in-charge of a Congregation must "satisfy himself reasonably" that any change made "is not unacceptable" to his people. Bowing at the Name of Jesus is enjoined, especially in the Creeds, and is described as the "customary reverence".

2. The Kalendar

Here are set down month by month such Festivals as Christmas and Epiphany (6 January), and the two classes of Saints' Days known as "red letter" and "black letter". Red Letter Days (so called because, in times when printing was cheap, these were printed in red) are those Holy Days and Saints' Days which have a special Collect, Proper Preface, etc.; among them are the Festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Twelve Apostles. Black Letter Days commemorate later heroes of the Church, such as Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Cyril.

Look at the names in any one month of the Kalendar and you will feel a noble pride at the varied contributions made to the progress of the Church by the Saints

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from apostolic times down to the year 1380: the martyr spirit, Christian courage, learning, missionary enterprise, personal devotion, and religious community life. You will find in the Kalendar no mention of Lent, Good Friday, Easter, etc.; moveable days and seasons appear in the Tables of Lessons. Before we consider these a few words must first be said about the Christian Year.

3. The Christian Year

This venerable institution of the Catholic Church for many centuries has brought before its members in stately cycle the great truths of the Christian faith and the facts on which these are founded. The primary purpose of the Christian Year is to commemorate the events of our Lord's life, His Birth on Christmas Day; His Infancy, Boyhood, and Manhood at Epiphany; His Fast on Ash Wednesday; His Redeeming Passion and Sacrifice in Holy Week and Good Friday; His Resurrection and Ascension at Easter and Ascensiontide; and His Gift of the Spirit on Whitsunday; Trinity closes this first half of the Christian Year with the Christian doctrine of God, which our Lord revealed as the Tri-Unity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in one God; the second half of the year is occupied with the work and teaching of our Lord in the days of his flesh. The Christian Year is thus a grand unity. The deepest moods of the human heart are awakened in its course; joy rising up to praise and thanksgiving on the Great

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