

as the prayer of the Church, that it is useless to dragoon them to sing plainchant or use a Missal before they understand what all this is about. Of course it can be done—in the past it has indeed been attempted too often; the strange ideas which are so often fathered on the liturgical movement are merely one result of forcing people into liturgical straight-jackets.

In conclusion we may paraphrase an extract from Dom Lambert Beauduin's little book *La Pieté de l'Eglise*<sup>(2)</sup>: thousands of Englishmen come together every Sunday with the sole purpose of being present at a liturgical assembly . . . to carry out an act that is in the words of Pius X the primary and indispensable source of the Christian spirit. That is a material reality of which we are witnesses every Sunday and Holiday of Obligation. It remains for us to make of this reality a living act. Here is no need to get people together, to provide a place for them to meet. The programme and the speakers, too, are for Christians incomparable: the drama of Calvary and the ministry of Jesus Christ. All is ready: it remains but to intensify, galvanize into action the members of his body. Can the necessity and practicality of such an undertaking be denied?

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(2) One of the earliest and still one of the best expositions of the ideals of the liturgical movement. There is an English translation published in the U.S.A. (Liturgical Press, Collegetown, Minn.) under the title: *Liturgy, The Life of the Church*.

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## THE STUDY OF LITURGY

By

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There has been a marked change in liturgical writing in the last few years. It can hardly be called a change for the better, for that would imply disrespect for the great liturgical work of the beginning of the century. A great deal of the work immediately connected with the liturgical movement has not indeed merited deep respect in so far as it has indulged in a facile and over-naturalistic philosophising which ill becomes the humble worshipper. But the great historians of the liturgy, men like Neale, Brightman, Bishop or Fortescue, performed the scholarly task of research without which our modern writers would have nothing to say.

The previous work still continues in such important studies as Mr. Dugmore's researches into the Jewish ancestry of the Divine Office<sup>(1)</sup>. In this book the author has done for the Divine Office what Oesterley, in his study of Jewish origins, did for the Eucharistic worship. He has moreover opened a new way of approach in the more neglected study of the non-eucharistic parts of Christian worship. He shows not only that the Pro-Anaphora

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(1) *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office*, by C. W. Dugmore, B.D. (Oxford University Press; 10/6).

or Mass of the Catechumens was often celebrated in the early church apart from the Eucharist and so formed a service like that of the synagogue of prayers, lessons and psalms distinct from the central liturgical act, but also that the three daily prayers of Jewish worship begot three or at least two Christian assemblies a day of like nature. This means that the Divine Office is not simply an expansion of the first part of the Mass, which all agree is itself of Jewish origin, but that the day was sanctified by more than one assembly for prayer even before the Mass was celebrated daily, and that this early form of Divine Office was directly inherited from the synagogue. This work on the early shape and ancestry of our official prayer is in the best tradition of liturgical study.

Another book which deserves mention here is that of James Norman who has produced a most satisfactory textbook to summarise in a small space the whole development of Christian worship from these first stages up to the modern forms<sup>(2)</sup>. The book is remarkable not only for the fact of its having been written in Australia by an Anglican who might have claimed indulgence on that account for inaccuracies but also in that no such indulgence is required. The book is not only an accurate and very full summary of the history of the liturgical rites, but also includes some original work of the author's—such, for example, as his interpretation of the celebrated letter of Innocent I to the Bishop of Gubbio in 415. The book is indeed one of the handiest of handbooks and is to be recommended to all who seek a resumé of the great historians' work.

But the new spirit of liturgical study emerges into the daylight in the work of the Anglican Benedictine, Dom Gregory Dix. He has written much on the subject but with his *Detection of Aumbries* published in 1942, he inaugurated this new phase which has come to a great climax in his latest work *The Shape of the Liturgy*<sup>(3)</sup>. It is difficult to avoid the superlative cliché in praising this book for it is truly monumental, it is a *tour de force*, it would be a landmark in liturgical publication even in peace time—seven hundred and fifty beautifully produced pages packed with erudition, the elaboration of a single paper read to the Cowley Fathers in 1941. The change is not that Gregory Dix can write all this with an unfailing freshness of style which makes a profoundly learned work easy and indeed delightful reading throughout. Edmund Bishop did that before him. But the style is indicative in this case of a synthesis only suggested hitherto. Dom Gregory Dix sets out to show that in spite of enormous and continuous variations the shape of the liturgy follows a course which in effect has never been altered by the

(2) *A Handbook to the Christian Liturgy*, by James Norman. (S.P.C.K.; 10/6).

(3) *The Shape of the Liturgy*, by Dom Gregory Dix. (The Dacre Press; 45/-).

deliberate choice of man. He claims that whatever the reformers may have desired, their liturgy still preserves the blood of its forbears in its veins. He says, for example, "The Reformers thought largely in terms of the Western tradition within which they had been trained. In consequence their rites all reveal under technical analysis not 'primitive' characteristics at all, nor anything akin to the special Eastern tradition, but a marked dependence on the basic Western liturgical tradition at a particular stage in its development". (p. 10). Here we would make a distinction for it is quite clear that the prayers and the general liturgical attitude, since they are practically natural to man, have remained the same—i.e. the material shape, the outward contours, the *figura*. But has the formal shape remained, the shape that springs from the divine power that authorises it and renders it at once effective and acceptable? If we take 'shape' to be the equivalent of the Latin *forma* we shall have to disagree with Dom Dix. It is not simply a question of the common instincts of man in his relation to God as revealed by the study of comparative religion and its liturgy. The question of whether a particular liturgy remains authentic depends on its fidelity to the authority of its originator, who determines its form. While we should say in consequence that the 'forma' of the Anglican liturgy must depend upon such apparent minutiae as the intention and methods of Archbishop Parker's ordainers, we can follow with unalloyed benefit his tracing of the development of the 'figura'. This involves a good deal of domestic discussion of Anglican problems, a particularly interesting discussion being that of Cranmer's skilful changing of the rite so as to express the Zwinglian doctrine. The author admits that some of these conclusions will cause distress to his Anglican readers as they caused him distress in their discovery. It is this honesty and frankness which brings such charm to his style and untold value to his conclusions.

In spite of what may appear to be a weak link in Dom Dix's chain of argument and the consequent error of his main thesis, he does in fact show the relevance of the history of the Christian liturgies to our own modern way of worship. He often interprets the phases of liturgical development by the modern philosophical methods, as when he treats the fourth century change over to open public worship in terms of the two inherent and opposite tendencies in any worship,—puritanism on the one hand and "ceremoniousness" on the other. (Chapter XI). But this method has the double advantage of preventing this philosophising from becoming remote and abstract, and of enlivening the past history and showing its relevance to modern problems and practice.

It is inevitable that there should be many disputable points and even an occasional inaccuracy in such a work; we would, for

instance, recommend a study of Mr. Dugmore's book to check Dom Dix's assertion that the Divine Office was of private origin adopted by the Church from the monks when she became free to worship publicly and so wished to fill out her liturgy (pp. 326 sq.). He maintains the same view about the "domestic" position of the early presbyters already set forth by Dr. Jalland and criticised by Professor Dvornik in *BLACKFRIARS* (January, 1945). He also revolutionises the early history of the different rites, adopting a 'left wing attitude' to the whole question. But such points where one may disagree or which may later be superseded are in fact not essential to the main value of the book which lies in this new element of synthesis and the abandonment of the earlier and drier tradition of liturgical learning in favour of a living synthesis. Dom Gregory himself speaks of the "psychological study which requires insight and human sympathy as well as wide knowledge", and says that until we take this up seriously "we shall not understand the history of the liturgy, and we shall not put such dry knowledge of it as we may gain to any valuable use". He shows in particular the eirenic value of this type of liturgical study, as it will help to overcome the psychological sunderings between the different Churches, expressed and continued by an uncomprehending practice of their liturgy (p. 742). We would recommend all Catholic liturgists to possess the book and adopt the method.

Previous liturgical scholarship would have made it impossible to mention such a monumental work as this in the same breath as two small practical volumes for following the Roman Mass. In view of the direct approach, however, we may recommend as brief summary of the history of the Mass, leading immediately to actual assistance at Mass Fr. McEvoy's *The Sacrifice We Offer*<sup>(4)</sup>. This is very well produced with practical photographs of each stage of the Mass and a selection of liturgical prayers to bring the explanation to the point of actual worship. The other is Fr. Stedman's *My Sunday Missal*<sup>(5)</sup>, the last word in American practicality and brevity, already widely distributed among U.S. troops and now made available for English Catholics by the enterprise of Sheed and Ward. It is a great leap from the Jewish daily prayers of the first century to the American Missal of the twentieth, but these modern studies will help us to see the connection.

(4) *The Sacrifice We Offer. An Explanation of the Mass*, by Hubert McEvoy, S.J. (Oliver and Boyd; 3/6).

(5) *My Sunday Missal, Using New Translation from New Testament; And a Simplified Method of Following Mass; With an Explanation before Each Mass of its Theme. Latin-English Edition*. Rev. Joseph F. Stedman. (Sheed and Ward; Cloth 5/-; Boards 3/-).