

VI

The Renaissance of Worship

WE pass now to the period from about 1750 onwards. Charity of judgement and tolerance had increased among all classes, agriculture was beginning to be scientifically studied and practised, bringing with it not only wealth to the landowners but a vast betterment in the conditions of life to the farmer and farm-servant; and the improved roads and means of travel bound the country together into a growing unity. Education reached a higher standard and became more generally available, the towns grew and prospered industrially, culture and grace of living became more general among the lairds and upper classes, music was practised and enjoyed, and a school of landscape and portrait painters arose with Alexander Nasmyth as a pioneer. Acceleration in all this began to show itself about the middle of the century: manners became more gentle, taste began to be more widely cultivated, and among the clergy reading and education walked in broader paths.

'Never did the Church', writes Grey Graham,¹ 'hold so high a place as in 1750-70 in attainments, position, and esteem. In the General Assemblies met the men most conspicuous for worth and ability, both lay and clerical; and in the debates, ministers of distinguished talents, and elders who were the most accomplished and brilliant Scotsmen, took their parts. In the absence of

¹ *op. cit.*, pp. 359-61.

a Scots Parliament, the Assembly was looked upon and used as a nursery for orators and politicians, and there was to be found almost as good speaking as in the House of Commons.' In contrast, the ministers at the beginning of the century, with their wailing rasping voices inherited from the 'antediluvians' (i.e., the pre-Restoration men), were, speaking generally, though 'thoroughly respectable, even eminently respected, pious and faithful', also 'narrow, uncouth, and superstitious . . . and whether they were sprung from poorer classes, farmers, or "merchants" or lairds, there was less difference in manners between ranks in the country then'.

Never did the clergy in Scotland sink in social esteem and position like the common clergy in England in the beginning of the eighteenth century. . . . The Ministers described in the memorable *Tour of the Hebrides*—living far remote from towns and libraries, in inaccessible regions of the Highlands, appear as men of good sense and breeding, vigour and learning, so as even to extort growling regard from the anti-presbyterian lexicographer. But nowhere is higher praise given from a competent source than in 1772 by Pennant,¹ the traveller who knew them so well: "They are much changed from the enthusiastic, furious, illiterate teachers of old times and have taken up the mild method of persuasion instead of the cruel discipline of corporal punishment. They are the most decent and consistent in their conduct of any class of

¹ *Tour in Scotland*, i, p. 173. We find two interesting contemporary opinions of Pennant in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*: 'Books of travels having been mentioned', writes Boswell, 'Johnson praised Pennant very highly, "He's a *Whig*. Sir; a *sad dog* (smiling . . .). But he's the best traveller I ever read; he observes more things than anyone else does."' Boswell did not agree: 'I could not help thinking that this was too high praise of a writer who had traversed a wide extent of country in such haste, that he could put together only curt frittered fragments of his own, and afterwards procured supplemental intelligence from parochial ministers, and others not the best qualified or most impartial narrators, whose ungenerous prejudice against the house of Stuart glares in misrepresentation; and who it should seem from a desire of ingratiating himself with the Scotch, has flattered . . . so inordinately and with so little discrimination, that the judicious and candid among them must be disgusted.'

men of their order. Science flourishes almost universally among them, and their discourse is not less improving than the table they entertain strangers at is decent and hospitable', and 'they preserve with a narrow income a dignity too often lost among their brethren south of the Tweed'.

These were the Moderates—is it not time we had a good word to say for them?—to whom Scotland in truth owes so much; nor is this to detract from the great contribution made by evangelicals and seceders during the same period; with more patience and generosity of mind each might have understood the other's worth. Not only did the seceding ministers and the evangelicals within the Church contribute by their zeal and ardour, always an essential leaven in the full catholic faith, but also by their direct influence towards a richer worship; evangelicals of the Relief Church were the first to introduce hymns, and some brought back into use the Lord's Prayer and the doxology, appreciating also the value of historic prayers, 'the divinely approved petitions of saints'.¹ As M'Crie has said, 'No man of fairness will fail to allow that the record of the Seceders all through the period of decadence was a noble one, a record of splendid service to the cause of Christ and the historic Church of Scotland'.² This is a just tribute, biased only in its gratuitous reference to decadence.

Lord Cockburn, whose *Memorials* are not always strictly accurate, also makes a typical Whiggish generalization about this period, and supports the Whig myth of decadence, so long accepted by historians. 'The old historical glory had faded; and under the insignificance of repose, it was chiefly a lower description of men who were tempted to enlist in the ecclesiastical service. The humbleness of their living and the cheapness of their education

¹ United Associate Synod's *Testimony*, 1827.

² *op. cit.*, p. 308.

vulgarized them still more. Indeed, learning and refinement ceased to be expected; and with too few exceptions, vegetating in the manse, and the formal performance of parochial duties, came to be the ultimate object of clerical ambition. The descent of the Scotch clergy throughout the last half of the eighteenth century was steady and marked', he writes. But when he goes on to particularize by specific illustration we find that he is speaking not of the last half of the eighteenth century but of the early nineteenth century, and of that period he does speak somewhat more accurately. 'Take the case of Edinburgh', he says, 'to which the best clergymen may be supposed to have been allured [another doubtful generalization]':

About the year 1790 we had Blair, Henry the historian, Hardy the eloquent Professor of Church History, Principal Robertson, Dr. Erskine, and Sir Harry Moncrieff; all literary and agreeable gentlemen, the delight of all society. But twenty years showed the change that was proceeding. Sir Harry alone remained, and not one other person had arisen to fill up the vacancies. I do not recollect a single work of any importance, which any one of our established clergy contributed during this time to learning, or to science, or even to theology; and in Edinburgh at least, but I believe everywhere, they had fallen almost entirely out of good lay society.

Had all this been compensated by higher professional eminence, it might have been said, that what this world had lost the Church had gained. But at this period, this could not be said with even a pretence of truth. It was the reverse. Until Chalmers arose the theology and eloquence seemed to be worn out. . . . A new Presbyterian revolution, however, was approaching, which brought out new men, and new dangers, and new popularity, with a necessary elevation of those who shone in it. But about this time the old thing was dead.¹

That was the picture as Lord Cockburn saw it, but it

¹ *Memorials of His Time*, ed. W. Forbes Gray, pp. 140-1.

is by no means a whole picture; Grey Graham's is less partial, and helps us better to understand what was happening at the beginning of the renaissance of worship, for it must properly be dated from the last part of the eighteenth century. Save that the reader's service had disappeared—certainly not an advantage, for it meant a decline in the reading of Holy Scripture in the churches—the changes in structure were slight. But a new sobriety, orderliness, and seemly dignity began to be seen in the services of the Church, and the prayers possessed a new directness of speech—fewer colloquialisms appeared in them, there was less histrionic 'wrestling', weeping, and smiling; it was beginning to be seen that speech and language addressed to the Most High God differed from that addressed merely to man; and if prayers were usually still long according to our standards, they began to gain in dignity and brevity as compared with what was general earlier in the century.¹

Here, for example, is a consecration prayer used at an ordination at Kirkgunzeon in the Presbytery of Dumfries on 4 August 1747. It is taken from a MS. collection of sermons which I have in my possession,² but the writer is not known. It serves, however, to illustrate a style of prayer used by a country minister at this time; and it is also of passing interest to note that he had carefully prepared and written his prayer for this occasion:

FATHER of mercies, God of all grace and consolation, with gratefull minds we adore thy goodness that shines with a conspicuous lustre and dazzling glory in the face of Jesus our divine Saviour, whom thou hast been pleased to send into the world for the redemption of guilty mankind, and for restoring them to a primitive, holy, and happy state. We thank and praise thee with our whole hearts for all the

¹ See my *The B.C.P. and the Worship of the Non-Anglican Churches*.

² The gift of Dr. Francis Eeles.

advantages we enjoy by the Gospel, for the clear discovery of thy will and of our duty, for the gracious promises of thy apostles, and the encouraging prospect of a glorious reward to animate our obedience. We bless thee for the wise instruction of religious ordinances and for the gifts and graces of thy holy Spirit which thou bestowest upon men to qualify them for dispensing these ordinances unto thy people that they may be trained up for the noble and exalted enjoyment of a future state.

Do thou, O most Mercifull Father, pour down a double portion of thy holy Spirit upon this thy servant whom we now in thy name and by thine authority set apart and consecrate to the holy ministry in this congregation. Give him grace to fulfill the work of his ministry in all things, to feed the Church of God committed to his charge with so much care and fidelity as that both he and his flock may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus when he comes to call us to an account for our stewardship. Adorn his mind with all those virtues that will make him shine as a light in the world: And may he be the happy mean, in thy providence, of bringing this people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. All which we humbly implore for the sake of Jesus. Amen.¹

The increase of pews, replacing the former stools and benches, helped to create a greater attitude of reverence and good manners;² formerly it had been common for

¹ See Church Service Society *Annual*, 1951, pp. 29-31, for the service in full.

² See p. 100 supra. Till well past the middle of the eighteenth century manners in church were very free, and this can be seen at a glance in Allan's painting referred to earlier, for Allan was not 'Hogarthian' but a genuine recorder of the life of his period. The records too give information to support this, and the Glasgow record of a century earlier throws light on behaviour in church in the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries: 25 March 1665, 'The same day the beddelship of the Laigh Kirk in Trongate is conferred upon and given to James Smith, merchand; and he is not onlie to be careful anent the ringing of belles, but also he is to walk throw the kirk in time of divyne service, with ane whyt staff in his hand, as wont to be of old, for the crubbing of bairns and others, that maks disturbance in the kirk and for impeding all abuses therein.' See also Henderson, *Sermons*, p. 8.

people to move about and talk during service. The interesting spectacle of the penitents disappeared. People now everywhere reverently stood during prayer. This was not yet a liturgical awakening, but there was an increased reverence and propriety in worship. Further, the quickened sense of worship in England and numerous suggested reforms of the Book of Common Prayer were not without their effect upon Scottish ministers who read the works of their authors. This is clearly apparent in such publications as *The Scotch Minister's Assistant*, first published at Inverness in 1802, and running into several editions during the next twenty years,¹ and such works as *Holy Communion*,² containing strong arguments for a return to the primitive and early Reformed practice of weekly communion, which came from the pen of Scots ministers abroad and were published and widely read in this country.

Between 1760 and 1830 Scotland experienced a period of considerable intellectual development, and produced in the realms of art, letters, and science many figures of international repute. This was accompanied by vastly improved agricultural methods and the expanding Industrial Revolution, both of which contributed to improved living standards and a greatly increased population. The last factor brought with it the need for new churches as well as the replacement by more adequate structures of diminutive and decayed rural churches of medieval origin.³ While the loss of some of the more interesting of those pre-Reformation buildings is to be regretted, the new churches were in the main architecturally superior to those they superseded. One of the most gracious

¹ Title later changed to *Forms of Prayer for use in Church of Scotland*.

² J. M. Mason, *Letters on Frequent Communion*, 1803. See Spratt in *Euchologion* edition, 1905, for a further list of these early Scottish books on worship.

³ These were followed by the neo-Gothic churches which continued to be erected into Edwardian times. While there were some of real merit, on the whole the results in Scotland do not give cause for pride.

features of this Georgian period is the developed Renaissance architecture of the many country houses and urban buildings which were produced by architects and craftsmen of skill for clients of taste. As far as means permitted, the new churches were built in this elegant style, and there is little doubt that many of them are not unworthy contributions to our architectural history.¹

At last, the real merit is now being recognized of many of these heritors' churches of this period, so often sneered at in the past as poor in materials and of a 'bastard classical design'; and many of the defects formerly criticized are seen to be owing to the neglect or 'renovations' of succeeding generations rather than to the conception and construction of the builders. The beautiful windows paned with clear glass, have been denuded of their graceful astragals and filled with frosted glass, or a repulsive greenish pebbled glass so widely favoured seventy-five years or so ago; the exteriors have been allowed to get dirty or dull, or have even been washed with a yellowish brown, in the niggardly interest of economy; and the interiors have been stencilled and genteelly coloured and patterned. A coat of whitewash on the exteriors, clean pastel paint on the interiors, and the restoration of the windows would transform many of these churches into places of light and beauty, for in nearly all of them the proportions are fair and pleasant, if they were but allowed to be apparent. Also, they were admirably suited to the mode of worship of the day, with the pulpit central to the long side of the rectangle or at the cross of the T, and the communion table running the full length of the main axis; and if now they require some remodelling to meet the changes in our manner of worship and of ministering holy communion, this should

¹ Lishman, *op. cit.*, v, pp. 415-16, in common with many other writers, greatly overstates the merit of the medieval churches and underrates the new. Cf. Geo. Hay, *op. cit.*

never be done without the most careful study and the advice of an architect skilled in work of that period, and with a competent knowledge of the modern requirements of our rite.

Extremely detrimental to the serene simplicity of these churches have been the many commercial installations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of pipe-organs with their aggressive and intrusive pipes blatantly occupying a central place in the sanctuary instead of being modestly housed in the west gallery or at the west end where they properly and traditionally belong. 'Renovations', too, were carried out in this period—they called them 'restorations'—upon many of our ancient churches; so often they were destructive, and apart from preserving the fabric, deplorable. Nor have we yet learned to be cautious, scholarly, and painstaking in the renovation of our churches; for many nowadays are still being done in the best Edwardian Anglican manner, with narrow passages, high mean steps,¹ ill-proportioned holy tables and cluttered sanctuaries and chancels. Sentimental love of the House of God as the place where His honour dwelleth is not enough; it must also be informed love, born and expressed of knowledge.

When we turn to examine psalmody, we find just after the turn of the half century a new movement led by Channon who came to Aberdeenshire in 1753;² and in due course it spread over the country bringing dignity and beauty in simplicity to the Church's praise. As we have seen, the preposterous practice of 'lining' had become universal in Scotland during and after the Cromwellian

¹ Scots architects to a large extent, for example, still have an extraordinary propensity for 6-in. risers in steps, and seem unable to distinguish between domestic and ecclesiastical architecture in this matter, and so in their renovations and even in new churches contribute resolutely to the disfigurement of our sanctuaries. See my *Concerning Worship* for specific guidance.

² Millar Patrick, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

period, and psalmody was dismal beyond description. Twelve common-metre tunes formed the canon of music in Scottish praise for nearly a century from 1666, when the first collection of tunes for the new psalter was published in Aberdeen;¹ and it is doubtful if all twelve were ever or long operative; in fact, the number of tunes used in most parishes seems not to have been more than two or three. No organs were permitted; the precentor led the praise. And most precentors were more remarkable for their idiosyncrasies than for their knowledge and skill. We cannot linger here over the old stories which abound in memoirs of the time, but many have been collected by Dr. Millar Patrick in his account of Scottish metrical psalmody.

New horrors, however, were yet to be invented by precentor and people alike. Not content with the simple tune, which in any event most could not sing, they fell to embellishing it with grace notes of their own devising, often invented on the spot, each singer owing allegiance to his own fancies alone. Thus, together with lining and gracing, the cacophony created is mercifully unimaginable to modern ears despite the strain to which they are still sometimes put. The tune was unrecognizable, though many precentors protected themselves from this charge by displaying the name of the tune, boldly if rudely printed on cardboard set in front of their desk. 'What tune are they at?' asked a late arrival at a church in Berwickshire of his neighbour. 'I no ken', was the answer; 'I'm at the Auld Hundert.' And the remarks of an Italian music master once passing the open door of the Tron Church, Edinburgh, when song was in progress, expressed the utmost bewilderment.

But the musical revolution after 1753 led by the English foot-soldier, Thomas Channon, under the patronage

¹ *ibid.*, p. 111.

of Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk gradually changed all that. The great movement began in Aberdeenshire, and not in city but in country parishes. It consisted in the dropping of 'lining',¹ and the training of choirs, together with these simple reforms: choosing tunes, old and new, with discrimination; teaching them 'truly and plain', without quavering or any kind of affectation; observing 'the proper time'; and introducing the use of harmony.

It is not, of course, to be thought that this movement succeeded all at once; there was great opposition for a long period, and even secessions occurred over it. But it did grow and increase, and a new standard was established, which spread rapidly throughout the country, so that its effect was widespread within ten years. Choir lofts now began to be built in churches at the west end to accommodate the choir, some holding as many as 120 persons. In other churches, the elders were thrust out of their traditional place in benches round the pulpit, and the singers installed there.

This musical renaissance was accompanied by the publication of large numbers of tune books with which psalmody was enriched, or debauched, according to the varying quality of what was supplied. But a renaissance had begun, which as the years passed yielded rich fruit, and sent musicians examining into the treasuries of the past, out of which a corpus of notable psalm and hymn

¹ The General Assembly in 1746 recommended 'the ancient practice of singing without reading the line', but it was slow of adoption—e.g., 1757, St. Machar's, Aberdeen; 1766 in one church in Edinburgh—and it lingered on in many places for a century longer, and in remote Highland parishes till within living memory, if indeed it has yet wholly disappeared. It is, however, merely just and true to say that in spite of the disadvantages of lining, psalmody in Highland churches often attained a singular beauty, and the pathos and triumph of worship, born of the Celtic genius for music, a genius that could not be fettered and which was able to transform the very obstacles of lining and gracing into vehicles of loveliness and devotion creating an effect not unlike the early responsorial psalmody.

tunes has been built up, comprising some of the most dignified music of Christendom.

The first extraneous additions to the metrical psalter were the Scriptural paraphrases which appeared in 1745; but they were not finally accepted in use till forty years later, and were never officially adopted by the Church of Scotland.¹ At first they met with violent opposition, and some secessions occurred when they were introduced. Now they are regarded as precious and singular to our tradition, as indeed they are; but their introduction was the occasion of many and sometimes acrimonious differences. The chanting of prose psalms was first suggested by Dr. James Beattie,² but nearly a century passed before this became a feature of Scottish worship in some of the city and burgh parish churches.

The restoration of organs and organ accompaniment aroused for some time heated opposition, often resulting in scenes of mob-rule, when the newly-installed organs were removed and publicly burnt or destroyed after service. But the protests failed, and organs quickly became universal. The pioneers were Dr. J. Marshall Lang³ in the newly-opened church at Anderston, Glasgow, in 1860, and a few months later Dr. Robert Lee of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh.

Some years earlier than this, when Marshall Lang was minister at East Church, Aberdeen, and still a youth in his twenties, he had preached an eloquent sermon on the

¹ The standard work on the paraphrases, a very complicated subject, is D. J. Maclagan's *The Scottish Paraphrases*; see also Millar Patrick, *op. cit.*, and M'Crie, *op. cit.*, pp. 282 sqq.

² In *A Letter to the Revd. Hugh Blair D.D., on the Improvement of Psalmody*, printed in 1778 but not published until 1829.

³ Two of Dr. Marshall Lang's sons became in later years, one the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the other Moderator of the General Assembly. On his introduction of the organ, see his letter in J. Kerr's *Renascence of Worship* (Lee Lecture, 1905), pp. 88-90. Previously, there had been an abortive attempt to introduce an organ in St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow, in 1807; it is now preserved in the People's Palace.

value of kneeling for prayer and standing for singing, and, not a little to his surprise, after sermon the congregation, deeply impressed, spontaneously adopted these attitudes; but his neighbour, the minister of the West Church, carried the matter of this heinous innovation to the presbytery, which solemnly ordered the congregation of the East Church to revert to its former custom. Being young, and not desirous of setting his youthful judgement against that of a court of the Church, Marshall Lang acquiesced.¹

The first organs were either harmoniums or American organs,² but pipe-organs followed swiftly and became a formidable feature in Scottish churches.

After the Oxford Movement some country parsons in England going up to the great churches which consisted of nave, quire, and chancel discovered the singers in the quires, and coming back to their parish churches brought their singers into the chancels to imitate as nearly as possible what seemed to be the approved thing; and, Scottish ministers, going south and admiring, followed this unfortunate example in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, and, oddly, are doing so still in some places. As a result, many of our sanctuaries are now crowded with stalls, chairs, organs, and singers many of whom mistake the office of chorister for that of concert singer, and with an invincible determination worthy of a better cause suppose that they must face the people when they sing, and will go to any lengths to do so. Thus so many of our sanctuaries, instead of being spacious places of dignity where the holy table stands in austere simplicity, are

¹ We soon find the movement spreading rapidly; e.g. 'Mr. Usher moved that steps now be taken to alter the usual forms of worship in the church in so far that the congregation should be invited to kneel at prayer and stand at singing. . . . The Session unanimously agreed' (Kirk-Session Minutes, Canongate, 5 December 1864).

² Dr. Marshall Lang's was a pipe-organ, Dr. Lee's a harmonium to begin with. In the Canongate a harmonium was introduced in June 1874.

cluttered, crowded, and restless; and, as if this were not bad enough worse still has been devised, for the irreverent and banal indignity is not unknown of organ consoles being made to serve as communion tables.

However, distressing as were the designs of most of the new organs and deplorable as were usually the places selected in the churches for their erection, they did bring a new enrichment and orderliness to Scottish praise. Soon after this, hymns were introduced into the Church of Scotland;¹ and to these were added anthems and prose psalms. But to comment in detail upon the renaissance in congregational and choral music, begun 200 years ago, and receiving new and splendid impetus in the last seventy-five years, would require a volume in itself. The movement has been fostered by the Church through its Aids to Devotion Committee, and within the former United Free Church through its Psalmody Committee; and it is still active, the music of the Church reaching an increasingly richer and more diverse expression under a skilled and devoted group of musicians and organists to whom a sufficiently high tribute can hardly be paid.

Turning now to other aspects of worship,² we have

¹ The *Scottish Hymnal* for use in the Church of Scotland was published in 1870, other editions following rapidly. The Relief Church's Hymnal had been published in 1794, that of the Secession Church in 1852, and that of the Free Church followed in 1882. Hymns from other collections began to be introduced in Scottish parish churches at least as early as the 1860s, as for example, 'It was agreed to bring the subject of the use of hymns sanctioned by the General Assembly for the public worship of Canongate Church prominently before the congregation in order to induce them to purchase copies with the view of their general introduction into the church service' (Kirk-Session Minutes, 5 October 1863); and in the next year we read, 'It was unam. agreed to raise a sum by subscription for the support of an efficient band, the members of which would be required to officiate regularly at both diets of worship under Mr Gardiner the precentor', who 'was held responsible for having an efficient choir for the church' (Minutes, 8 February 1864). 'Band' and 'choir' are synonymous.

² We are not to forget the witness of the novelists from this period onwards, interestingly collected and displayed by Dr. A. L. Drummond in his *Churches in English Fiction*, pp. 202-32.

observed that there was a quietly discernible improvement in the general conduct of worship from 1750 onwards: prayers became shorter (though still long by our standards), more chastely phrased, and less histrionically offered. There was, however, a long established tendency to use an unwritten liturgy, and to mistake it for extemporary prayer. Dean Ramsay, a regular attender at Banchory Church from 1815-22, remarked upon the minister's prayer there being 'rigidly and precisely the same as much as any liturgy could be'.¹ A letter of Archbishop Benson's dated 1848 says: 'Last Sunday we went to Kirk [at Crathie]. . . . Within there is no Communion Table, no font, nothing Christian and holy looking. . . . The service . . . was as like as possible to what I remember of the Independent system—no [prose] Psalm, no first and second lessons, no Glory to the Father, no Lord's Prayer even. From the minister's manner it was clear that every Sunday there was exactly the same kind of prayer a little varied in expression, and Mr. W. assured me that it is so—that in fact the objections against a liturgy as formal are nil, and to the specious name of heart-prayer is sacrificed all the beauty of worship.'² And A. K. H. Boyd writes a little gruffly in Fraser's Magazine in 1857: 'If you hear a decent, commonplace, rather stupid Scotch minister pray, every sentence would fall quite familiarly on your ear if you were a Scotsman. It is the regular old thing, only the component parts a little shuffled.'

Nevertheless, there was an improvement upon former days. Sermons also were more carefully prepared and

¹ *Presbyterian Liturgics*, Edinburgh, 1858.

² *Life*, i, p. 47. We are not to suppose that the archbishop was without bias, but he is not the only one to have remarked upon the 'unwritten liturgy', and many will still remember it; there is no doubt that for the most part ministers' prayers though extemporary varied little from Sunday to Sunday and the old familiar expressions and catenas from the psalms and Holy Scripture recurred with obvious frequency. Archbishop Benson's description is not applicable to Crathie now.

delivered; the introduction of the read sermon stirred much controversy but there can be little doubt that it greatly improved preaching, and reduced rant and cant; and in the hands of such masters as Edward Irving and Thomas Chalmers, and later, Alexander Whyte and John Caird and many others, who would venture to declare it to be ineffective? Nevertheless, the particular changes in general order were slight until after the disruption in 1843: the changes consisted rather in an improvement of the parts. This was no doubt chiefly because controversy in the Church of Scotland centred upon other matters, culminating in the disruption.

In 1824, an innovation was made, however, in the manner of communicating in St. John's Church, Glasgow, by which the elders distributed the sacred elements to the people in their pews, the backs of which were covered with white linen houseling cloths, instead of the people coming forward to the tables as formerly. This innovation was in fact borrowed from old English Puritan practice, transmitted through the Congregationalists and Anglicans of the day. It was the commonly accepted method of administration in the Congregationalist Churches, but was known also and used within the Church of England at this time for, as J. C. Bowmer has remarked, 'in the nineteenth century at St. Mary's Oxford the pews were covered with "houseling cloths" and the communicants had the elements brought to them. Dr. Pusey, of all people, used to administer in this way at Christ Church, Oxford, as late as 1856, and it was also the custom at Trinity College, Cambridge, fifteen years later.'¹ There had been debates on the subject at the Westminster Assembly in 1644, the Scots refusing to accept the method. Likewise, in 1825 it was debated in

¹ *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, p. 9; and F. Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches*, pp. 122-3.

the General Assembly, and condemned: to sit 'at or around a Communion Table or Tables' was declared to be 'the law and immemorial practice of the Church of Scotland'. But general opinion especially among the laity favoured the practice, and it gradually spread—quickly in the large congregations. The service was reduced in length by many hours; for, instead of successive tables, one normally served, with perhaps a second in the afternoon; thus the practice is now all but universal in large and small congregations alike. The process of change occupied more than one hundred years.

The *Statistical Account* of Campsie gives an example of what the service was generally throughout the country about the end of the eighteenth century:

The Sacrament is given once in the year [parishes still combined, though not on the previous scale—now usually only two or three parishes uniting]: three discourses on the fast day, two on Sunday, two on Monday; the action sermon in the church, and the evening sermon, besides preaching in the tent. People have complained that the tent preaching was prejudicial. I am inclined to believe the contrary from experience: first, on account of its bringing a considerable collection for the poor; and secondly it accustoms a number of people to meet together in a decent, cheerful, and respectable manner.¹

Such a passage [writes Leishman] gives no conception of the length of the Sunday service. Not less than two hours passed before the minister left the pulpit to head the procession of elders bearing the Communion elements and vessels to the Table. Each successive company of communicants not only received the sacrament, but listened to an address on the ordinance, both before and after, so that nearly half an

¹ Tent preaching was not always accompanied by such respectability, and had in fact given rise in some places to grave scandal (see, e.g., Grey Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-13, and p. 152 *supra*). The reasons the minister of Campsie gives in favour of the practice are themselves mirrors of the age.

hour passed between their taking their places and rising again. The last of these services was followed by an address from the minister of the parish to the whole body of communicants, and that by a sermon of thanksgiving by another preacher. In large congregations, requiring twelve or fifteen table services, a circuit of the clock was sometimes nearly completed before the worship was. Of this series of services, the last stage was the 'perlicuing' (*perlego*) before the benediction was spoken on Monday. The minister of the parish summed up, as well as his aptitude and memory allowed, all the discourses which the people had heard, the preachers listening with varied feelings as their productions were mangled or mended.¹

Here also we may include John Wesley's description of a communion service he attended with misgivings at St. Guthbert's parish church, Edinburgh, on 16 June 1764; for it gives a clear if unflattering picture by an outside observer of the form generally followed in the century before Chalmers's innovation of carrying communion to the people in their pews.

Sat. 16. We had a ready passage at Kinghorn, and in the evening I preached at Calton Hill to a very large congregation, but a still larger assembled at seven on Sunday morning in the High School yard. Being afterwards informed that the Lord's Supper was to be administered in the West Kirk I knew not what to do; but at length I judged it best to embrace the opportunity, though I did not admire the manner of administration. After the usual morning service, the minister enumerated several sorts of sinners, whom he forbade to approach. Two long tables were set on the sides of one aisle, covered with table-cloths. On each side of them a bench was placed for the people. Each table held four or five and thirty. Three ministers sat at the top, behind a cross table, one of whom made a long exhortation, closed with the words of our Lord; and then, breaking the bread, gave it to him who sat on each side of him. A piece of bread was then given to him who sat on each side of him. He broke off a little

¹ *op. cit.*, v, p. 410.

piece, and gave the bread to the next; and so it went on, the deacons [elders?] giving more when wanted. A cup was then given to the first person on each bench, and so by one to another. The minister continued his exhortation all the time they were receiving; then four verses of the twenty-second Psalm [vv. 25-28?, with the words, 'The meek shall eat, and shall be filled'], while new persons sat down at the table. A second minister then prayed, consecrated, and exhorted. I was informed the service usually lasted till five in the evening. How much more simple, as well as more solemn, is the service of the Church of England!¹

The general form of ministration was the same everywhere, but there were local differences, many of them dating back to the Reformation, e.g., along the Solway unleavened bread [not wafers] was specially made; in Aberdeenshire, the mixed chalice was traditional. There were also later differences, e.g., as between Lifters and Anti-lifters.

The number of parishes combining for communion services began to be reduced from 1750 onwards, for agriculture and work suffered too greatly. The fast days disappeared more slowly, and it is not till 1887 that we find them abandoned in Edinburgh. In the kirk-session minutes of the Canongate,² it is recorded, for example, that the presbytery and town council had conferred on the question of public holidays, it having been found for some time past that the fast days no longer served their religious purpose but were kept merely as holidays. The kirk-sessions of all the city churches were consulted, and it was generally agreed that the old fast days should be abandoned, and other times suitable for holidays be in due course fixed by the town council.

Earlier, the Oxford Movement, and the liturgical movement which followed it, had made themselves felt in

¹ N. Carnock (ed.), *Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, V, pp. 77-78.

² 7 October 1886; 4 November 1886, &c.

Scotland, and many within the Church began to examine anew the origins and doctrines of Christian worship, the Church, and the holy ministry. Thus we find in 1849 a committee appointed by the General Assembly to prepare forms of service for those, at home or abroad, who were without a minister; and the second book of prayers issued by the Church¹ since the Book of Common Order appeared in 1858 entitled *Prayers for Social and Family Worship*. This may seem but a slight advance, yet it denoted a remarkable change of attitude and climate; in this book the prose psalter was used, the Lord's Prayer, and Scripture lessons. Two years before this, the General Assembly had specifically enjoined the clergy to read lessons from both Testaments at the Sunday Services, and generally to conform more closely to the Directory. Nor was this injunction unnecessary; as late as 1857 such expressions as this were commonly heard: 'The reading of the Bible in church is a mere waste of time—we can read our Bibles at home.' 'The mutilated form of the Protesters', as Dr. Sprott says, 'had come to be regarded as embodying that purity of worship which the Reformers restored, and for which the Covenanters fought and died.' The next year, in 1859, an Aids to Devotion Committee was appointed by the General Assembly under the con-venership of Professor Crawford, and it continues an influential and active committee of the General Assembly still.

The *Liturgy and Divine Offices* of the Catholic Apostolic Church also influenced considerably the development of the worship in the Church of Scotland, and particularly in the ordering of the Lord's Supper.² This influence

¹ The booklet for family worship mentioned by the minister at Tynninghame was the first; see p. 108 supra.

² See Dr. H. C. Whitley's thesis on Edward Irving, in the Edinburgh University library. Irving, a founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church, was at one time an assistant to Dr. Thomas Chalmers, though his attitude to ecclesiastical reform differed greatly from Chalmers's.

came chiefly through Dr. John Maclead of Govan, and it is interesting to compare his *Communion Office* (published anonymously and undated) with the Catholic Apostolic liturgy.

Things were moving more or less quietly forward, when they were first disturbed, as we have seen, by the young minister of East St. Nicholas Aberdeen, Mr. Marshall Lang; then later the storm broke on Dr. Robert Lee at Old Greyfriars Edinburgh, who had dared not only to install a harmonium but to institute new liturgical services boldly printed in a book, the people standing to sing and kneeling to pray. His service-book, *Prayers for Public Worship*, was a work of his own genius, and exhibited no basic knowledge of liturgics (indeed, he was impatient of reference to the historic liturgies), but its intention was good, and the style of the prayers terse, concrete, direct, and Scriptural.

All this excited much controversy, which forced into closer association men concerned to improve worship, and out of it the Church Service Society originated on 31 January 1865. With many of the most eminent and scholarly clergy and teachers as its leaders, it grew quickly and steadily until more than a third of the clergy were members.¹ The Society was accorded a liturgical leadership by the Church, and the leadership was scholarly, conservative, and wise. A small group of scholars wrote books and pamphlets expounding the origins and history of Scottish worship—Sprott, Wotherspoon, Leishman, Cooper, Story, and others—while the smaller Scottish Church Society studied doctrine and made a massive contribution to our understanding of Church, ministry, and sacraments. The Church Service Society also issued services for special occasions and Christian festivals.

Most noteworthy was *Euchologion or a Book of Common*

¹ See J. Kerr, *op. cit.*, for a detailed account.

*Order*¹ published in 1867, the chief compilers of which were G. W. Sprott of North Berwick, R. H. Story of Roseneath (later, Principal of Glasgow University), and Principal Tulloch of Edinburgh University. *Euchologion* met a long-felt need, and ran into a large number of successive editions for fifty years and more. It made a distinctive and brilliant contribution to the renaissance of Scottish worship, drawing in its prayers from many sources, ancient and modern, and adding its own creative work.

The early editions of *Euchologion* set forth an order of service for ordinary Sunday use very similar to that commonly prevalent but with some elaboration, and the whole and the parts of the service more clearly ordered. What was then general use we know from a report made to the General Assembly in 1864 by Dr. Hill, who at the previous Assembly had been appointed convener of a special committee to consider worship. He reported that 'almost universally the order is as follows: Praise, Prayer, Reading of Scripture, Praise, Prayers, Lecture or Sermon,² Prayer, Praise, Benediction; that the use of the Lord's Prayer was general, but that some used it only occasionally and some not at all; that in Old Greyfriars the prayers were printed, and that a harmonium had been in use for nearly a twelvemonth'. He concluded the report by saying that while 'the Church may claim the

¹ The first edition was supplied with a good preface, excellent notes, and mention of sources; and the 7th edition, 1905, contains an introduction and notes (not wholly accurate, but still of great value) by Dr. Sprott; see also Barkley, *op. cit.*, vi, pp. 1 sqq. On the successive editions, see M'Millan's article, in Church Service Society's *Annual*, 1936-7, pp. 24-33. The Form for the Celebration of Holy Communion was used by the General Assembly from 1890 to 1923, an indication of the approbation with which the book was received by the Church. A book of *Daily Offices* was published by the Society in 1893.

² As the reading of the Scriptures began to find a place during the nineteenth century in the Sunday worship either the lecture or the sermon was dropped. Formerly both had existed side by side.

power to interfere with ministers and congregations adopting a closer observance of the Directory than custom demands or sanctions', legislative measures were both 'unnecessary and inexpedient'.

The order recommended by *Euchologion* was first confined to the prayers, but a Table of Lessons from the Old and New Testaments was provided 'for each Lord's Day' to cover a period of two years, for both morning and evening services.¹ This lectionary attempted to include the chief passages of the Old Testament, most of the Epistles, and the whole of the Gospels, but the lessons were perforce too long. Its influence, however, was very marked, and a new emphasis began to be laid upon the reading of the Holy Scripture in the worship of the Scottish Church. The prayers were three in number: the first prayer consisting of 'Introductory Collect, Confession of Sin, Prayer for Pardon and Peace, Supplications, and Concluding Collect'; the second, 'Thanksgiving, and Prayer for Illumination before Sermon'; the third, 'Collect after Sermon, General Intercession, and Concluding Prayer'. It was recommended that 'the Lord's Prayer may conclude either the First or Second Prayer'. To use the Lord's Prayer in either of these positions was contrary to Scottish use both before and after the Reformation, and we see here the influence of Anglican morning and evening prayer making itself felt, for the positions recommended for the Lord's Prayer are derived directly from the Prayer Book. The influence of the Prayer Book was to become more dominant still as time passed.

Euchologion contained also orders for the ministration of Holy Baptism, for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, and for many other offices. The Order for the Celebration

¹ Evening services began to be introduced about the middle of the nineteenth century in place of the afternoon service. The change first took place in city parishes, but made its way slowly and was not general till the twentieth century.

of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion alone concerns us here. It was preceded by a brief historical explanation, indicating what was common to the experience of the Church beginning with New Testament times; then the order, with prayers, was set down, having one distinct peculiarity an innovation of the times, in that the principal intercessions followed communion. It was influenced in much by the rite of the Catholic Apostolic Church, but is by no means derived from that rite, and it follows the Directory closely.

The service took its usual course till after the sermon; at which point there was introduced an exhortation of moderate length, compiled chiefly from the Book of Common Order, with some paragraphs from the Book of Common Prayer, and with the ancient *τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις*, translated 'Holy things which are for holy persons'. The offertory followed, taking the form usually of the singing of Paraphrase 35 ('Twas on that night), during which the alms might be collected, and the minister and elders bring in the elements in solemn procession to the communion table; and the communicants take their places. The minister then salutes the people with the grace, reads the words of institution (1 Corinthians 11.23-26), and this is followed by a brief address upon the meaning of holy communion, concluding in Calvin's manner with the *Sursum Corda*.

The Apostles' Creed follows in the form of a prayer, and a prayer of access, which begins with a confession of sins and prayer for pardon and concludes with the prayer of the veil.

Now the prayer of consecration begins, 'It is very meet, . . .', with thanksgiving for creation modelled upon Eastern liturgies and relating the fall and redemption of man, for providence, for redemption, the sending of the Holy Spirit, for the sacraments and ordinances of the

Church, the communion of saints, and hope of everlasting life, concluding with the *Sanctus*, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, &c.', and the *Benedictus qui venit*, 'Blessed is He that cometh', with Hosannas. Thereafter follows the epiclesis or invocation, and the Lord's Prayer. Then comes the fraction and delivery, somewhat confused and intermingled, and the communion; after communion metrical Psalm 103 is sung.

A brief exhortation to thankfulness is then given by the minister, and the post-communion prayer of thanksgiving and self-oblation, closely modelled on the Prayer Book, follows, and after it the great intercession, and thanksgiving for the Church Triumphant. Then the *Nunc dimittis* is sung in the metrical version, and the minister pronounces the benediction.

This order is not wholly satisfactory, particularly in the consecration prayer, which is influenced too much by the fashion of the times, but it served as a model valuable in itself, and helped to foster the study of the historical liturgies and Reformed worship. It was not greatly changed in succeeding editions, except that the introductory historical exposition (never of course part of the service) was unfortunately dropped. In the fifth edition (1884), the Nicene Creed was given preference to the Apostles' Creed in the communion service.

But in 1890, in the sixth edition, against the advice of its best liturgical scholars, a group within the Church Service Society managed to bring about a revision by which the order of morning worship was made to conform more closely with Anglican matins, and indeed with the prevalent Victorian manner of saying matins. This was more pronounced in the seventh edition (1896) of which Dr. Sprott says, 'It was resolved to change the order of public worship as follows: the Lord's Prayer to be said both by minister and congregation at the close

of the first prayer [a custom then popular in the Anglican Church, when often the Lord's Prayer was omitted after the little litany at Morning Prayer], and the intercessions and thanksgiving to precede the sermon [also derived from common practice at Anglican Morning Prayer]. From this resolution there were dissents, the chief reason, besides the departure from Primitive and Reformed usage, being that the order of the communion which is the normal service of the Church should be followed as closely as possible at other times. The old order, however, was printed as an alternative (p. 176).¹

This brought certain enrichments: the use in a few places of responsive prayers, and a wider use of the prose psalms to Anglican chants. But it was an unfortunate and amateur departure from the traditional Scottish structure of worship, and in principle and content the loss was greater far than the gain, for matins began to usurp the eucharist as the traditional norm of Scottish worship, and that diversive influence has not yet wholly passed.

Mention must be made also of the St. Giles' Book of Common Order, written and compiled by Dr. Cameron Lees and in use in the cathedral from 1884 to 1926. Dr. Cameron Lees 'was one of those far-seeing men who in the latter half of last century turned the minds of many people in Scotland towards a worthier conception of common worship than was commonly in vogue among the clergy at that time. He saw that the old High Kirk of St. Giles, steeped as it was in centuries of Scottish devotion, deserved to have a liturgy at once dignified and real. This was necessary not only for the Sunday services, but also for the orderly conduct of daily service. So in 1884, a year after the cathedral was restored to its proper unity mainly by the generosity of William

¹ Sprott, in *Euchologion*, ed. 1905, p. xxi.

Chambers, there was published a *Book of Common Order for Sunday and Week-day Services* . . . to be used until such time as "another formulary be set forth by the proper authority".¹ Thus there came into being a service-book used every day in this historic church; and at communion the order in *Euchologion* was followed. The book was revised and shortened later by the reverent and skilful pen of Dr. Wallace Williamson. The liturgical revival has been still active under the ministry of Dr. Chas. H. Warr, and for many years now there has been a weekly celebration of holy communion there; and in an increasing number of Scottish churches holy communion is celebrated at least monthly.

Although the General Assembly's Committee on Aids to Devotion gave guidance in worship over many years, and issued services for special occasions with increasing frequency, it was not till 1923 that an official service-book was issued for voluntary use not merely with approval but 'by authority' of the General Assembly. It was entitled *Prayers for Divine Service*, based on *Euchologion*, the Book of Common Prayer, and other service-books, and drew material from the ancient liturgies. The prayers were brief and direct, and the whole of a high order, but marred by its dependence on matins for the Sunday morning worship. Nor was it improved by an enforced revision appearing a few years later. It did, however, set a fine standard of devotion and public prayer, and very rapidly established itself in wide use.

Meantime, liturgical societies had been formed in both the United Presbyterian and Free Churches, uniting with these Churches in 1900.² In 1928 the United Free Church

¹ C. T. Thornton, in *Church Service Society Annual*, 1953-4.

² See *Church Service Society Annual*, 1930-31, pp. 79 sqq., for an account by Dr. Millar Patrick of the Church Worship Association of the United Free Church; this Association united with the Church Service Society in 1930. The tributary societies of the Church Worship Association were:

published with the approval of the General Assembly, its service-book, entitled *The Book of Common Order* 1928.

In 1929, the Churches united, and a first action of the General Assembly was to appoint a Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, combining the Committees of the two Churches. A few years later, it was charged with the task of preparing a service-book to comprehend the full Scottish and Reformed tradition as a branch of the Catholic Church. The result was the *Book of Common Order* 1940, which was issued also by authority of the General Assembly. It is now the authoritative standard of the Church of Scotland, but its use is not compulsory. It is, however, in wide and steadily growing use, and, presented to every divinity student in his first year, it provides a basis of instruction in the universities.

Of outstanding excellence in this book are the orders for the ministration of the sacraments and other ordinances, and in particular the first Form and Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, which represents a long tradition brought to a high perfection, indigenously Scottish and Reformed, and essentially Catholic. In its dignity of action, centrality of content, and felicity of expression, it provides a vehicle of worship entitling it to a place among the great rites of Christendom, and is rapidly being recognized as such. Indeed, its influence in many other communions is notable, not only in the daughter churches, but even at Geneva itself where, translated into French, it is a rite used in Calvin's Church of St. Peter.

the Devotional Service Association (U.P. Church) formed in 1883, which published a service-book entitled *Presbyterian Forms of Service* (1891, 1892, 1899); and the Public Worship Association (Free Church), formed in 1891, which published *A New Directory for Public Worship* (1898), which contained prayers as well as directions. The Church Worship Association, formed in 1901, published a valuable *Anthology of Prayers* (1907, 1908) and a *Directory and Forms for Public Worship* (1909).

In addition to this book, the Assembly's Committee has also issued, the first edition in 1935 and a revised edition in 1952, *Prayers for the Christian Year*, which contains services for the principal festivals of the Church's year; the *Ordinal and Service Book for Use in the Church Courts* (undated) in 1931, with a revised edition in 1954; and *Forms of Prayer for Use at Sea*, 1936, is now under revision. It also issues many services for special occasions, and has published a long series of informative pamphlets of which large numbers are in frequent demand.¹

The Church Service Society still continues its work, having a membership of some 700 ministers and laymen, including branches in the daughter Churches of the Commonwealth. It publishes an *Annual* each year, containing papers and articles on the various aspects of Christian worship.

Thus the renaissance of worship leavens the life of the Church, and the movement happily is largely devoid of controversy and division, both in itself and in the Church. Holy communion is celebrated more frequently, as we have seen, throughout a large portion of the Church, and weekly communion is not unknown. The old Reformed basic order is in many places restored, together with such significant and evangelical ceremonial as standing for the reading of the holy Gospel; and the lectionary has been revised to include the central truths of Holy Scripture. For the last fifty years or more new churches have been built on the traditional rectangular or cruciform ground plan, with central communion table and side-pulpit, and some significant architecture has resulted, not least in new church-extension churches; and large numbers of older churches have been effectively renovated to accord

¹ The various service-books and hymnals of the Church of Scotland are published by the Oxford University Press; and other publications of the Aids to Devotion Committee are obtainable through the Church of Scotland Publications Department, 121 George Street, Edinburgh.

with basic principles of worship, and a growing sense of responsibility is evident. Freedom of worship, which has become a treasured tradition in the Scottish Church, still prevails, and the services therefore often differ considerably throughout the Church in their content and order. If much remains to be accomplished, none has been untouched by the liturgical movement, which from the beginning has been concerned to preserve, and, where necessary, to re-establish what is best and deepest in the tradition of the Scottish Church, remaining steadfast to the great evangelical principles of the Reformation, yet remembering that the Church of Scotland is, as she has always asserted herself to be, a part of the holy Catholic Church. The liturgical movement in the Church of Scotland has, on the whole, been directed by a loyalty to basic principles securely founded in the central tradition of the Church, steadied by a sense of history and propriety, and perpetually aware that it is God revealed in Jesus Christ as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whom all worship and obedience is due, and that 'man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever'.