

## Peace and Safety

*"Nor can you have peace and safety if, knowing what is good, you leave it undone".<sup>(1)</sup>*

The *Book of Common Order*, we are told in the preface, was prepared on instruction of the General Assembly for the guidance of ministers in worship. It is necessary "to express the mind of the Church with regard to its offices of worship".

It is to be found on the shelves or desks of most ministers of our Church and is regarded by many, I should like to think most, ministers, as the form approved by the Church, for certainly it is issued "by authority of the General Assembly". The present edition is clearly a compromise to embrace the varying traditions of the Churches at the Union of 1929, and taken all in all it is a very good compromise. It tells us what we *may* do and not what we *must* do. It tells us, for example, that a hymn shall be announced here, a certain type of prayer shall be said, the people shall join in the Lord's Prayer, the Offering shall be received, and the minister shall dismiss the people with the Benediction; but that the great, universal Belief of the Church may (or may not) be said. It contains in the Order for Confirmation (sic) the question: "Do you receive 'the Doctrine of the Christian Faith'?", and hastily adds an alternative for those who (presumably) do not believe the Doctrine of the Christian Faith in these terms. It presents, except for the Alternative Service, a form of service still largely based on Anglican Matins—essentially a daily service—and brought into our Church towards the end of last century against the advice of many of its more knowledgeable brethren. It is at times too long and too verbose. It contains responses which are almost useless since, being essentially a ministers' book, few have the book with which to respond, and not least does this apply to the services for children. On the whole, however, these are small points, and it is a book of which we in the Church ought to be proud.

Though not all, in spite of the blessing of the General Assembly and its authority for publication, agree with the

<sup>(1)</sup> From the General Assembly's Pastoral Letter to the People of Scotland, 30th May, 1836.

book, it is sufficiently compromising to cover most shades of opinion within our Reformed and now united Church ; and only those who prefer the Puritan Anglicanism of the seventeenth Century to the rich Catholic heritage of our Scottish Reformers disagree with most of the book.

Yet, though so many agree with it and so many join the Church Service Society, there are still far too many who fail to put into practice what they believe. With them so often much is spoken—little done. How many members of this Society still allow English Puritan services to continue within their own parishes against their own better judgement and firm belief ? How many wish, for example, to include the Creed in Sunday worship, as did our Reforming fathers, and are anxious to fulfil the desire of the Reformers for more frequent celebration of Holy Communion, and to return more generally to the true worship of the Reformed Church instead of a Puritan-Anglican order,—how many meet about it, talk about it, write about it, urge it, praise it, and do so very little to put it into practice in their own parishes ?

Ninety years ago the compilers of *Euchologion* first sounded the rallying call ; but many of their recommendations are still seldom adopted ; and still far too many ignore, or fear to follow, the wise counsel of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion which has for over a hundred years now so faithfully and wisely served our Church. During that period the lead has been taken in a number of places<sup>(1)</sup> and by a few pioneers, and many of these are still with us to-day. This simple and digressive Tract is hardly for them. But it is, in all humility, for that still far too large number of supporters who claim to stand for all that members of the Church Service Society sincerely believe, and yet still hesitate to take resolute action, because they are afraid to risk offending their people whom they have omitted, or failed, to enlighten,—or else “ split their congregation ”.

If the conviction is there, all that is required is surely a little more courteous courage. Certainly the Assembly's sanction is there, and the tradition of the Reformers is there. The conscience that makes cowards of us all depends

<sup>(1)</sup> One immediately thinks of the lead given and continued by St. Giles' Cathedral ; Glasgow Cathedral ; St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen ; St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh ; The Barony of Glasgow ; Greyfriars', Edinburgh ; Govan ; and Paisley Abbey, to mention only some old town charges. Nor must we forget Iona, for the Iona Community has never really had the recognition it deserves in its great effort to revive and make real the true worship of the Church, under its gifted and courageous Leader.



largely on what sort of a conscience in this regard we have. Like so many others I have the greatest possible respect for those who conscientiously do not hold our views : and I should like to think that they equally respect those who differ from them. But I find it hard to respect those who, contrary to historic truth, " brand " us as Anglicans or Romanists ; and almost as hard to respect those who, holding our views, are afraid or unwilling to do anything about it.

Here, not at my request, I hasten to add, but at the invitation of the Editor of the *Annual*, I have put down with comments what has been attempted in a city parish within recent years, and chiefly with reference to the *Form and Order of Divine Service*<sup>(1)</sup>, based on the first Book of Common Order of 1562 (" Knox's Liturgy ") and the *Book of Common Order* of 1940 authorized, remember, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for the use and guidance of ministers of our Church. The " soil " for the revival of worship in Canongate was as rough as any in Scotland, and the good, loyal people there are not surely so different from those in other parishes in Scotland ; yet they have not only accepted, but loyally and enthusiastically co-operated in all that has been done.

And what has been done, and is in one form or another done in many other churches throughout Scotland, I have now the opportunity to sketch with discursive and possibly not always entirely relevant comments ; and if at times you may violently disagree or be offended, I pray you to wait until the end.

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### The Entry of the Bible.

The Service is introduced by the solemn *Entry of the Bible*<sup>(2)</sup> carried by one of the Choir Boys, the lighting of the lamps at the Holy Table<sup>(3)</sup> by another boy, and then the

<sup>(1)</sup> *The Order of Divine Service, etc.* as used in the Canongate Kirk (the Kirk of Holyroodhouse) : first edition 1947, present edition 1955—Price 2/6, Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh.

<sup>(2)</sup> In the Courts of Law people stand for the entry of the representatives of the Law, and in the Churches where there is no processional surely people ought to pay at least the same respect to the representative of the Gospel. I have yet to meet a Scot who sees any harm in, or has any objection to, standing at the entrance of the haggis at a Burns' Supper !

<sup>(3)</sup> " Religious denominations " seem now to be given to things as well as people : Candles, so long used in our churches, as the former Treasurers' accounts will show, have now largely become " Roman Catholic ", and electric light bulbs " Protestant ". All honour to Dr. H. C. Whitley who recently had a procession of candles—real and not Roman ones—at Candlemas in St. Giles' Cathedral.

Head Boy enters and, standing in front of the Holy Table, says *Let us Worship God*, and announces the first hymn.

### The Processional Hymn.

While the hymn is being sung the choir of fifty boys and young men enters in procession, followed by the ministers. The choir is robed in scarlet cassocks (as befits a Royal foundation), nearly all of which have been made, from a pattern, by members of the congregation. Each chorister wears a white ruff round his neck and, for those who have "earned" them, the silver badge of the Canongate is worn on a pale blue ribbon. There is nothing "high church" about a choir of boys and young men.<sup>(1)</sup> In former days all choirs were of "singing boys" and men; and, though you may not all agree with St. Paul, I think that St. Paul would have approved! A boys' choir, all unpaid incidentally, means that you can always depend on your choir being there, morning and evening and at practice, and it means that the boys are thirled to the Church right up to the age of National Service and beyond, for they always return to church even on week-end leave; and the good habit of church-going is difficult to break even in these days of voluntary parades. In addition to attending church each boy receives instruction in Sunday School or Bible Class until at 16 he comes to the Confirmation Class. This class begins usually in September in preparation for the Easter Communion, and has a follow-up class on the following year with the new class,—really a two-year course during which they are "confirmed and admitted" according to the form of the *Book of Common Order*, after their first year.<sup>(2)</sup>

The choir boys are not just "Sunday singers" but a real part of the "family" (some, to be quite frank, are not very good singers at all; but our criticism is not how well they sing, but whether they are willing to use such

(1) I have heard it said that to have boys is "high"; on the same strange argument one has to presume that women and girls are "low"!

(2) The question as to the right age for Admission to first Communion for boys and girls is one about which there are many differences of opinion. We have found that "school leaving age" is as suitable as any and more suitable than most. In the *First Book of Discipline* it says that "none are to be admitted to this mystery who cannot formally say the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Belief (the Creed) nor declare the sum of the law". The Reformers in the early days of the Reformation were admitted at a very early age, e.g., James Melville at 12 (Sprott and Leishman). Dr. Pusey used to say "under twelve or over twenty; let me have them with the grace of innocence or the grace of penitence". Peter Green, who probably knows more about how to deal with boys than any man living, says he is strongly in favour of "an early age for boys, or else leave them very late". But that was before National Service, and I feel that under fifteen is too young and that our boys should enter National Service as full communicant members of the Church.



voices as God has given them to His praise and glory in worship), and throughout the rest of the week a Club is run for them where they play table tennis, basketball, cricket, football, billiards, chess and all the rest of it, including T.V. ; and they go camping on our permanent site by the sea after the services at Christmas and Easter and, except usually for week-ends, throughout the summer.<sup>(1)</sup> On Sunday night after church games can be and often are played.<sup>(2)</sup>

The processional hymn, which is always concerned with the praise or glory of God or with a special Sunday like Christmas, Easter or Pentecost, or a special season of the Christian Year<sup>(3)</sup> like Advent or Lent, is but an introduction to, and not the beginning of, the service. It is a "sung voluntary" to compose or set the minds of the worshippers for the service that is to follow and centre their minds on worship, a seemly and dignified entry and better than the too often whispered conversation among the pews while the organist plays a background of voluntary music. These, as *The Directory* puts it, "private whisperings, conferences, salutations, or doing reverence to any person present or coming in", may be justified by some as "recognizing liberty of opinion . . . as does not enter into the substance of the faith", but we feel that the processional hymn in which all join is at once more fitting and more reverent !

By the time the hymn is over the choir is in its place and, all still standing, the Minister from behind the Holy Table "after solemnly calling on them to the worshipping of the great name of God" begins with prayer.

### Adoration, Confession, Absolution, and Supplication.

We ask God to help us to love Him more and serve Him better, and lay our needs before Him. During the prayers, which are read or carefully prepared<sup>(4)</sup>, the people are either

(1) See *Our Club*—A Short Sketch of the Boys' Club in the Canongate, which can be had from the Church of Scotland Bookroom, price 5/-.

(2) For too long in Scotland "holiness" has become in some quarters almost identified with "idleness" as well as ugliness. Man's first duty on Sunday, the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, the Day of Resurrection and rejoicing, is to worship God ; I can find no commandment that says anything against playing on Sunday. As Dorothy L. Sayers has put it : "Feeling that the Commandment 'Thou shalt not work' was rather half-hearted, they have added a new Commandment—'Thou shalt not play'".

(3) See footnote on page 18.

(4) Why so often are prayers rambling discourses, "unprepared verbosity" as I once heard Professor H. R. Mackintosh call them, and sermons so carefully prepared, as though "any old thing" would do when speaking to God, but only the best in careful English when addressing the people ?

kneeling or sitting, depending largely on the width of the pew—or the worshipper ! (Kneeling for prayer and standing for singing was re-introduced into the Canongate in 1864<sup>(1)</sup> ; but, alas, Victorian joiners twenty years later made kneeling an impossible physical feat ; and only at the recent renovation of 1950 has it been made possible for those who wish to do so to kneel in a limited number of pews). Apart from the prayer of Confession<sup>(2)</sup> the minister stands. At the end of the prayers those who have agreed with the minister's petitions say *Amen*.

### Praise, and the Reading of the Word of God.

We prepare ourselves, by the singing of a *Paraphrase or Hymn*, for the public Reading of the Holy Scriptures, first from the *Old Testament* and from an *Epistle*, or *Acts*, or *The Book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine*. This is followed, still keeping within the framework of Holy Scripture, by a *Psalms*, after the singing of which the congregation remains standing for *The Holy Gospel*.

For the passages read from Holy Scripture we take as our guide the excellent Lectionary from the 1952 edition of the *Book of Common Order*. We do not always read from the Authorized Version. As a masterpiece of English it is unsurpassed ; but sometimes a clearer and more accurate meaning is given, especially in the Epistles and sometimes in the Holy Gospel, in such dignified and readable versions as the Standard Revised or Knox. The reading of three lessons, rather than the customary two, means that the Bible can be more thoroughly and widely covered in these non-Bible reading days,<sup>(3)</sup> Seldom, if ever, is a Lesson read from the Psalms as a psalm is sung at each service.

The standing at the proclamation of the Holy Gospel we introduced about four years ago. It is a part of the early worship of the Church, a "significant and evangelical ceremonial", as Dr. W. D. Maxwell calls it in his excellent

(1) See my *A Short History of the Church in the Canongate, 1128 to the Present Day* (1955).

(2) Incidentally are we afraid of a return of some sort of voluntary Confessional within our Church so that people can feel they can go to the minister and receive the consolation of the Church's absolution instead of going to the psychiatrist ?

(3) Are we really the Church which, "as part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church . . . acknowledges the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the supreme rule of faith and life" ? If so, who so often do we find an ignoring of, perhaps a disbelief in angels, and in certain New Testament miracles, and in the Virgin Birth ; and almost ignore the blessed Virgin Mary, in a way that no self-respecting man would do his own mother ?



Baird Lectures, *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland*. Edgar tells us in his *Old Church Life in Scotland* that "when people had seats for sitting on during the sermon it was customary for them to stand during the reading of the Gospel". If our grandfathers failed to commend this practice certainly the Fathers did. "When the Holy Gospel is being read, we do not attend in a careless posture but standing up with much gravity we so receive the message, yea the greatest potentate on earth stands up also with awful reverence, takes not the liberty to cover his head with his imperial diadem, but in all submissive manner behaves himself in the presence of God who speaks in those sacred Gospels". So wrote one of "The Godly Fatheris", as one of my predecessors in Canongate, John Craig, called them—St. Chrysostom.

### The Confession of the Faith of the Church.

And now, as a response to the proclamation of the Holy Gospel, the congregation of the faithful publicly and boldly confess the Belief of the Universal Church,<sup>(1)</sup> still standing and saying as with one voice *The Apostles' Creed*.

The saying of the Creed in the Church of Scotland is too often like Mark Twain's definition of a "classic" as "a book much praised but seldom read". How sad the early Reformers would be to think that the Belief has departed, at least for a time, from so many of our churches. As John Craig wrote in his *Catechism* of 1581, the "principal heads of Christ's promise are contained in our Belief, called the Creid of the Apostles". This is not the place to justify the use of the Creed (as if it needed to be justified), for the works of Maxwell, Spratt, Cooper, or Knox himself are known or can be easily obtained and read; though it might not be entirely out of place to remind ourselves of John Calvin's words in his *Catechism*: "Briefly what is the effect of this knowledge of God in Christ? It is contained in the Confession of the Faith used of all Christians which is commonly called the Creede of the Apostles: both because it is a brief gathering of the Apostles of that Faith, which hath bene alwise continued in Christs Church, and also because it was taken out of the pure doctrine of the Apostles".

(1) Why do we lay so much emphasis on *our* Church being the Church of Scotland? "The Universal Kirk"—what a grand and glorious name that is, and how proud we should be that it is to that rather than to any Nationalistic sect that we are privileged to belong. Perhaps it is best designated "The Catholic Church Reformed in Scotland".

To introduce the Creed into a service where it has not been said within living memory, or before, may not be always easy ; but that it is something " new " or " Anglican " or " Popish " can soon be disposed of, and its inclusion in the *Hymnary* of our Church makes it easy to announce it as Hymn 724, " which will be said and not sung ". But always it would be advisable and courteous to announce that this would soon be done and in the meantime a series of sermons would be preached on the Creed during which the Minister would be open to hear any objections, if objectors came to *him* with them, until such time as it was proposed to start. This we did in the Canongate when for the first time for some generations<sup>(1)</sup> the Creed was re-introduced ten years ago. Only one complained and objected ; he is still with us. If we believe the Creed, no " fear of the consequences " ought to keep us back from doing what is right ; but if the minister or the congregation do not believe the Creed then it would be wrong indeed to introduce it.

### The General Thanksgiving.

After the saying of the Apostles' Creed we now usually say together *The General Thanksgiving*.

This, I am aware, may not be the liturgical place for a Thanksgiving, but we introduced it here a year or so ago, since it came as a natural response of Thanks for the Gospel and for the Belief which we share with the Universal Church. It certainly seems to conclude most fittingly this part of our worship, and to the objection that it is Anglican it can at least be fairly answered that it was composed by a Presbyterian and is contained in the *Book of Common Order*.

### Proclamation of Banns and Intimations.

This may seem to many a rude break in the service. A congregation, however, is essentially a family, and it is right and proper that we should know how the rest of the family are occupied, what they are doing, how they can be helped, how they can help us, whether that family be within the parish itself or within the larger Church.

<sup>(1)</sup> Andrew Bonar, Minister of the Canongate, wrote in 1858 : " It is recommended that the ancient custom of repeating the Creed audibly by the communicants, be restored ". *Presbyterian Liturgies*.



### The Preaching of the Word of God.

And now the people prepare by the singing of a *Hymn* while the Minister enters the pulpit<sup>(1)</sup> for the *Sermon*, "the preaching of the Word being the Power of God unto salvation". This is probably the only time during the service when it is better to see as well as hear the Minister, though sometimes and in some parts of the Church, owing to bad acoustics (as in Canongate) often the preacher is more seen than heard. Here for the first time in the service other than the call to prayer, the announcing of the praise, and the Banns and intimations (both of these last two could equally well be given from the pulpit) the Minister is talking to the people "in the Name of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit". The language of preaching should be easier and freer than that of prayer, conversational without being cheap, friendly and simple without the discourtesy of "talking down", or the bad manners of "talking above" (even if we are able to) the heads of our people. No preaching can be good preaching unless the "common people hear us gladly". Humility and sincerity are the key words. The servant of Christ, the *Directory* tells us, whatever his method be is to perform his whole ministry "painstakingly; plainly, that the meanest may understand", faithfully 'looking at the honour of Christ'; wisely; gravely (that he be not 'despised in his ministry'); with loving affection", and "as taught of God, and persuaded in his own heart, that all that he teacheth is the rule of Christ". After the sermon there is an *Ascription of Praise to God*.

### The Reception of the Offering.

*The Offering* of the people is now made as a solemn act of worship, and the collection is received by the Minister standing now in front of the Holy Table so to receive it, the congregation rising to their feet as the elders come forward, as a sign of their association with the gifts laid before the Lord for His Church.

(1) The Minister of the Canongate in 1858 wrote—"If the Minister is to be understood to lead the prayer of the congregation why should the prayers be said and the Bible read from the pulpit . . . . . The Preacher stands in the most advantageous place for arguing and remonstrating with his audience. The leader of public prayer acts as one of the congregation; does not require to make use of rhetorical exertion, and is supposed to join in unison with them". *Presbyterian Liturgies*, p. 16. See also footnote on page 20.

### The Great Prayer : Thanksgiving, Intercession, Remembrance, The Lord's Prayer.

There follows what is commonly called *The Great Prayer* : of Thanksgiving, Dedication, Intercession for the Church Universal and for the Parish ; for the people and the peace of the world ; for the Sovereign and the Royal Family ; for our country and our lawful governors, for all in special need and distress and for all we love wherever they may be ; and the Remembrance of and Thanksgiving for the Faithful Departed.<sup>(1)</sup> This concludes with the whole congregation joining in the saying of the Lord's Prayer, using the "trespasses" version, as being more familiar to visitors, and that used, incidentally, by John Craig, the first Reformed Minister in Canongate, in 1562.

### The Blessing and the Recessional Hymn.

All now stand while the minister coming from behind the Holy Table and standing now in front of it "dismisses the congregation with a solemn *Blessing*".

The Divine Service for another Sunday morning is over, but as we entered with a "sung voluntary" so do we leave in a dignified procession of choir and ministers and elders while a *Recessional Hymn or Psalm*, this time based, as far as possible, on the preaching of the Word or message for the day is sung, and in the vestibule the choir is dismissed with a short prayer.

At Holy Communion which we celebrate on the great days of the Christian Year as well as at the close of, but still a part of, the service on the last Sunday of each month<sup>(2)</sup> ("commonly used once a month" says "Knox's Liturgy") some slight changes are made. Neither the Apostles' Creed nor the General Thanksgiving is said after the Gospel. The Grace is said at the close of the Lord's Prayer and those who are not receiving Communion can then leave quietly as the recessional hymn is sung and before the elements of

<sup>(1)</sup> What possible harm could be done in remembering the blessed departed in our prayers, as a part of the great family before the Great Father ?

<sup>(2)</sup> Andrew Bonar, again, in 1858 in *Presbyterian Liturgies* : "Closely connected with the subject of the previous remarks, is the question whether it may not be possible or desirable to introduce into our Sabbath observances, the more particular notice of those peculiar seasons,—momentous epochs in the development of the scheme of redemption, which are observed by a large section of the Christian world. The Advent of our Lord, the Nativity, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Giving of the Holy Spirit,—to the commemoration of these special epochs, a Sabbath might well be set apart ; while the services that would be appropriate for Good Friday and the Passion Sabbath find their counterpart in our days of communion. In reference to the latter, there are not a few who think it desirable that the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be more frequently observed".



bread and wine are brought into the church and reverently laid upon the Holy Table. Then after the Invitation the Nicene Creed is said by all. The Order followed is the Order for the Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion in the *Book of Common Order*. It is a great pity that the Nicene Creed is not more often said ; but at least if it is said at Holy Communion it becomes known and gradually memorized. It is surely the grandest or all the Creeds, nor does it offend those who find it difficult to believe, even by faith and with the weight of the Universal Church behind it, certain passages of the Apostles' Creed.

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I fail to see on what possible grounds our Form and Order can be criticized. Far from "splitting" the congregation it has all the more united it ; for they love its order and beauty as they are able to understand and follow its logical sequence. Loyal, devout, and loving as the people are in Canongate I cannot feel that they are different in other Kirks. The beautifying of the sanctuary at our renovation some years ago under the expert guidance of Mr Ian Gordon Lindsay and Mr George Hay, with its bright colours of blue and white ; its re-opening of the old apse ; and its light and simple dignity ; the robed choir boys ; the coloured coats of arms ; the beautiful flowers Sunday by Sunday (the responsibility of a different member of the church each week) ; the *Order Book* which each has, and of which four thousand have now been printed since its first appeared in 1947 ; enabling members not only to follow intelligently the service but to become a part of it ; even the "true blue presbyterian" cassock<sup>(1)</sup> and white stole presented to the Minister by the congregation and worn by him at frequent and appropriate times<sup>(2)</sup>—and many more "innovations" contrast favourably in all their eyes with the old dull

(<sup>1</sup>) Why should our clergy go about dressed in church as though all the time they were at a perpetual funeral—the only splash of colour being an often non-ecclesiastical University hood ? There is great dignity in the black gown ; but surely our cassocks need not always be the same black colour. The Royal Chaplains wear scarlet ; why should the cassocks not be made of blue, or purple, or green or any other colour ?

(<sup>2</sup>) The only Act I can find that may oppose all this is that of the General Assembly of 1575 ; but before an attempt is made to revive this let it be again read,—for it forbids among many other things silk hats (with which I heartily agree) and rings, and tells us that ministers' clothes are to be "grave" or "sad" ; and let married men be particularly careful, for their wives are to be "subject to the same order" !

building, heavy and dark with galleries and brown paint,<sup>(1)</sup> the fluctuating (not least in the evenings) size of an adult and largely female choir, with its inner squabbles and jealousies, and its gorgeous array of multi-coloured hats,—some more appropriate for Covent Garden and some for lying with the rest of the “kill” on the moors; the whole service conducted from the pulpit; the almost complete sacerdotalism<sup>(2)</sup> of the minister without a word, except for the hymns, from the people, not even the Lord’s Prayer (though occasionally that was sung); and, above all, and symbolizing so much, an aspidistra in a scarlet bowl placed in the middle of a Table<sup>(3)</sup> that could scarcely be called “holy”, for I doubt if anyone would have allowed it into his own front hall or back yard at home.

But critics, I believe, we have, outwith our parish, who are perhaps best answered by one of the foremost Scottish Historians of the present day, Dr. Gordon Donaldson, Lecturer in Scottish History in the University of Edinburgh, himself an Episcopalian, which makes his reply to a certain critic all the more pungent: “Sir, Since ‘D. B.’ finds it difficult to understand ‘under what sect of Christianity’ the Canongate Church is held, he might profitably consult the *Book of Common Order* of the Church of Scotland. This would convince him that everything in the Canongate service has the full authority of the General Assembly behind it. He might also turn to an earlier *Book of Common Order*—that used by John Knox. There he would find a service of similar structure”.

“If, on the other hand, he looks at the Order of Morning Prayer in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, he will

(1) Why should our churches be almost as funereal as the ministers? What particular sacredness is there in black or brown, two of the duller and most depressing colours?

(2) Why is it that we do not ask people to join in the service and make it a *people’s service* even to the extent of asking them to say *Amen* at the end of the prayers? As Dr. Maxwell once said: “It is morose sacerdotalism of the most acute sort to allow the minister alone to say *Amen*”. Of course, they could be told not to say *Amen* if they didn’t agree with the prayer; but for the minister to say *Amen* to his own prayers and the people to remain silent is a strange form of *corporate* worship. Wasn’t it one of the whole purposes of the Reformation to get the people to come into the service where before it had been left so much to the priest?

(3) Why should the church furniture not be treated with the same care and respect as, to put it at its lowest, the furniture of our homes, and for the purpose for which it is constructed? The usual purpose of the pulpit, as we have seen, is to preach from, to proclaim, and not—except in those cases when the building makes it impossible, very often owing to the structure or furnishing of the building—to pray from. The normal function of the lectern is to read from; the furniture of a church (if it is furnished) is surely there for a purpose. Who would think of having his breakfast on the piano or lying down to sleep on the dining room table?



find a service that in structure and content has not the remotest affinity to the Canongate service".

"If he cares for historic studies, let him investigate Scottish worship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He will, I suspect, discover that "the Presbyterian service we all love" was the creation of the late Victorian era. Or does he want to revert to such earlier practices as the exclusion of hymns, the standing posture for prayer, and the absence of Scriptural lessons—all of which were features of the Presbyterian worship at one time?"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It should be needless to add that what matters above all is the spirit and truth of the worship and the worshipper; but that does not mean that anything should be done in a careless and slovenly way—the Salvation Army has its ritual as well as the Church of Rome. Only the best in worship and in the House of Worship is worthy of God; what else does the word "worship" mean? Sincerity in worship, without which all else is empty, should mean ever giving of our best in words and actions, in music and art, in beauty and care, in order and discipline, in devotion and dedication. There must be something simple and clear and purposeful, if we are to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness".

In the Reformed Church the whole sea is ours, not just a small shallow pond in our garden: all the richness of our Catholic heritage, of the Universal Kirk, is ours if we would but "launch out into the deep" and not, for fear of drowning, or of pirates, or even mutineers on board, keep within our narrow shallows.

So do we pray in the prayer of John Calvin that now prefaces *The Order of Divine Service* as used within the Canongate Kirk:

"Almighty God, who by Thy great mercy has gathered us into Thy visible Church; grant that we may not turn aside from the purity of Thy worship, but may so honour Thee in words and deeds, that we may glorify Thee our God, and show ourselves the followers of Thy Son; even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen".

AND TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

RONALD SELBY WRIGHT.

<sup>(1)</sup> Letter to the *Scotsman*, dated 8th December, 1952. See also W. D. Maxwell: *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland*, p. 116. "So many people nowadays wax indignant about English influences in our worship, conveniently forgetting, if indeed they know, that most of what they defend as "Scottish" is no more or less than English Puritanism from which all their notions derive, and that what they condemn is not "Anglican" but part of our common inheritance from Christendom."