

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP: CONTROVERSY IN THE CHURCH SERVICE SOCIETY IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The revival of interest in the public worship of the Church of Scotland in the late nineteenth century was not concerned simply with the externals of worship. In the Church Service Society, which was formed as a result of the renewed interest in liturgical matters, there was controversy over such questions as the place of doctrine in worship, and the order of service which should be used in the worship of the Church.

The Church Service Society was formed in 1865 with a non-doctrinal object:

‘the study of the liturgies – ancient and modern – of the Christian Church, with a view to the preparation and publication of forms of Prayer for Public Worship, and services for the Administration of the Sacraments, the Celebration of Marriage, the Burial of the Dead, etc.’¹

The principal way in which the Society carried out its aim was by the publication of its service book, *Euchologion*, the first edition of which appeared in 1867. At the outset it was thought that the Society should avoid doctrinal controversy. The great object of the Society, said Principal John Tulloch of St. Andrews, the President of the Society, 1877–85, was the ‘practical improvement’ of the worship of the Church. The kind of ‘ritualism’ which they sought was not based on sacerdotalism but was that which promoted ‘order, decorum, seemliness, and beauty of devotional expression’. Tulloch hoped that the work of the Society would lead to practical results and not to ‘mere theoretical ideas’.² The Committee of the Society decided in 1877 that a proposed ‘History of the law and practice of worship in the National Church’ was not within the proper limits of the Society’s operations.³ Marshall Lang, who later became the Principal of Aberdeen University, said in 1879 that the Society was not concerned with any ‘particular party or shade of feeling, but embraced all who desired the worship of God to be spiritual, reverent, and becoming’.⁴

It proved impossible, however, to keep the liturgical work of the Society free from theological considerations. In England, too, the work of the Cambridge Camden Society had been affected by doctrinal controversy. The Society was founded in 1839 and it was declared in its journal, the *Ecclesiologist*, that it was interested only in

the 'symbolical and material expression' of the Church's belief.⁵ It became evident, however, that the members of the Committee of the Society were influenced by the ideas of the Oxford Movement. For them Church architecture had to be inspired by Catholic feeling and Churches had to be built in the gothic style.⁶ The policy of the Society became subject to attack on the grounds of trying to introduce Roman practices under the guise of an interest in antiquity.⁷ Some members of the Society tried unsuccessfully to have it dissolved.⁸ It was equally difficult to separate doctrine and practice in the work of the Church Service Society. It came to be recognized that there were different points of view represented within the membership of the Society. It was proposed at the annual meeting in 1886 that the Editorial Committee of the Society should be enlarged to include men of various shades of opinion.⁹ From the start, it was said,¹⁰ two parties had struggled together in the 'womb' of the Society, the broad church party and the high church party. The difference between the two groups lay in their attitude to the place of doctrine in the worship of the Church.

The attitude of the broad churchmen can be seen in the remarks of Principal Tulloch at the annual meeting of the Church Service Society in 1882. He said that doctrine was undesirable in the realm of devotion. There was a great difference between the 'sphere of dogma' and the 'sphere of devotion'. 'The more prayers were devotional – the more true they were – the less they had of dogma.'¹¹ At the annual meeting of 1887 reference was made to those members who did not approve of an undue introduction of dogma into worship. They did not agree, for example, with the prominent place given to the Apostles' Creed in the services in *Euchologion*.¹² To represent this position the Rev. Dr Allan Menzies, who later became Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews, was added to the Editorial Committee.¹³

The broad church position was most fully put forward in a statement submitted to the Committee of the Society in 1888 by one hundred and forty-six members which has been called 'The Broad Church Manifesto'.¹⁴ These members thought that the services in *Euchologion* were 'too doctrinal in tone and expression'. Worship has 'moral and spiritual' ends which must suffer 'if doctrinal statements and allusions are introduced unnecessarily or in too great detail'.¹⁵ They considered that the prayers of confession in *Euchologion* were 'statements of doctrine rather than of experience'. The prayers of intercession were too Church centred. The function of worship was, rather, 'to infuse a Christian spirit into all the occupations and relations of our complicated society', and 'to save the world by making it increasingly Christian'.¹⁶ The world should not be treated purely as evil, 'but as the scene in which the Kingdom of God is

growing up by the co-operation of all true and Christian men'. Forms of worship should be devised 'which would enable men of various pursuits and ways of thinking to regard themselves as enlisted in the work of Christ in the world'.¹⁷ They also held that 'the intellectual virtues of love of truth, openness of mind, and courage in upholding conscientious convictions, merit direct encouragement in the worship of the Church'.¹⁸ As a result of the 'Manifesto' a group of broad churchmen was given responsibility for preparing the morning and evening services for the fifth Sunday of the month in the sixth edition of *Euchologion* which was brought out in 1890.¹⁹

The high churchmen in the Society took the opposite view from the broad churchmen as to the place of doctrine in worship. The Rev. Dr George Campbell of Eastwood, one of the founders of the Society, thought that the aim of the Society should be the

'preserving and presenting in a form of sound words the great doctrines and verities of our faith, in place of the shallow and unmeaning, and often misleading, expressions so long used in prayer and in the administration of the sacraments'.²⁰

In contrast to the address given by Principal Tulloch in the previous year, Professor William Milligan of Aberdeen took the opposite view of the relation of doctrine to worship in his speech at the annual meeting of the Society in 1883. If Tulloch's view can be characterized as 'the less dogma, the more devotion', Milligan's view was 'the more dogma, the more devotion'. Milligan wished particularly to emphasize the doctrine of the Church. One of the first and most important principles for regulating their future course as a Society, said Milligan,

'must be that they form to themselves as clear and definite an idea as possible of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as an organized and living institution in this world, and then as an institution which must in its very nature, because it was living, have its own proper modes of expression'.²¹

Unlike the 'Broad Church Manifesto' which was later to minimize the difference between the Church and the world, Milligan spoke of the Church as a 'distinct Society'. Christianity was not a 'general principle infused into the common everyday life of man'. The Church had a common life 'higher than the world's'.²² The 'higher life' of the Church, as Milligan made clear in his published works, is centred on the continuing ministry of Christ in heaven, to whom the Church is united by the Holy Spirit.²³

Milligan wished to relate the life and worship of the Church to the continuing life and worship of Christ in heaven. It was the doctrine of the heavenly priesthood of Christ which Milligan wished to

emphasize.²⁴ He considered that the priestly office of Christ had been forgotten in the Church of Scotland in spite of the Reformation emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. In rightly rejecting the priesthood of the clergy, the priestly calling of the Church had been neglected. Milligan did not wish to encourage 'sacerdotalism'. The Church's priesthood was not something which it exercised independently, in its own right, but only in union with the present life of Christ. The Church is to share in the one priesthood of Christ. It is in his office as priest that Christ mediates between God and man. Christ has made a perfect offering of himself to the Father on behalf of men by his life of obedience offered once and for all on the cross, and having risen and ascended he continues to live as man at the right hand of God and is the source and centre of the Church's life and ministry. The worship of the Church is thus a participation in the worship of Christ. The life of Christ on earth was one of worship and praise to God, and in heaven he continues to lead his people in worship.²⁵

It followed from Milligan's view that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper should have the central place in the worship of the Church since it is there that the one offering of Christ is most fully set forth.²⁶ In the Lord's Supper there is recalled not just the death of Christ but his continuing heavenly life.²⁷ The eucharist, said Milligan, is the meeting place of heaven and earth where the King meets his guests in closer than common fellowship and with richer than common blessing.²⁸ The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper should therefore be celebrated weekly as the main service of the Lord's Day. Shortly before his death in 1893 William Milligan told his close friend, the Rev. Dr James Cooper of Aberdeen, that the most pressing need of the Church of Scotland was the revival of the weekly eucharist.²⁹ Other high churchmen in the Church Service Society agreed with Milligan in holding that the Lord's Supper is the characteristic service of the Lord's Day, and that even when it is not celebrated the service should be based on the order for its celebration. The service should have the traditional structure of two parts, the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the Liturgy of the Faithful, with the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, the Lord's Prayer, and the offering, coming after the sermon and leading into the celebration of communion.³⁰ The liturgical scholars, Dr G. W. Sprott and Dr Thomas Leishman, noted that the ordinary service in Knox's *Book of Common Order* was based on the celebration of communion as the normative act of worship for the Lord's Day.³¹ From their concern with the place of doctrine in worship, the high churchmen in the Society were thus led to emphasize the centrality of the Lord's Supper. Yet it was the doctrinal truths on which worship was based which remained of primary importance. The first need of the Church in reforming

worship, said the Rev. Dr John Macleod of Govan, was 'to get the ideas that lie at the root of worship restored'.³²

Another issue on which high churchmen differed from others in the Church Service Society was the order of service in the Society's service book. The controversy followed from their view of the place of holy communion in worship, and it arose, as did the doctrinal disagreement, over the revision for the sixth edition of *Euchologion*. The order of service which had been used in the first five editions of *Euchologion* was based on the pattern for the celebration of the Lord's Supper with the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession and the Lord's Prayer coming after the sermon. At a meeting of the Editorial Committee in 1888 it was decided that the revision should proceed on the principle of having the Lord's Prayer at the end of the first prayer in the service and the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession before the sermon.³³ Dr Sprott and other members of the Committee dissented from this decision, their reason being, as Sprott later remarked,

'besides the departure from Primitive and Reformed usage . . . that the order of the Communion which is the normal service of the Church should be followed as closely as possible at other times'.³⁴

When the revised order was drawn up, Sprott moved unsuccessfully that the order used in previous editions of *Euchologion* should be restored.³⁵ He also failed to have the prayers of thanksgiving placed after the sermon. At the annual meeting of the Society in 1890 Sprott and Leishman recorded their dissent from the alteration made in the position of the intercessory prayers.³⁶ Other high churchmen, such as James Cooper and the Rev. Dr E. L. Thompson of Hamilton, who were members of the Committee, did not object publicly to the change. Cooper, however, expressed the view to Sprott privately that the 'apostolic' order, which puts the intercessions and thanksgivings last in the service, is the best order.³⁷ W. D. Maxwell has pointed out that the change in the order of service corresponded to the order of Anglican Matins, where the sermon comes at the end of the service.³⁸ The high churchmen in the Church Service Society were thus not among those who wished the services of the Church to be influenced by such Anglican forms. Cooper remarked that he had been in disagreement in the Editorial Committee with the Rev. Dr Donald MacLeod of Glasgow because MacLeod had wanted to make the services 'more Anglican'.³⁹ The Rev. Dr Thomas Dykes of Ayr also had objected to the change in the order of service for that reason. He thought that some were apt to introduce too much of the English Prayer Book into the services of the Church of Scotland.⁴⁰

After the disagreements over the place of doctrine in worship and the centrality of communion for the worship of the Church, the high

churchmen in the Church Service Society came to the conclusion that there was a need for another society in the Church of Scotland. John Macleod recalled that at the first meeting of the Church Service Society which he had attended he had wished the Society to advocate a greater frequency of communion in the Church of Scotland, but that Professor R. H. Story of Glasgow had rightly replied that the Society should keep to its restricted aim of creating the best forms for the administration of communion and leave to individual ministers to decide as to its frequency.⁴¹ Macleod thought that the Society should keep rigidly to its object and not raise even such a closely related question as that of the place of holy communion in the worship of the Church. There may be room, he said, for another society 'for promoting in various ways the Catholic revival in the land'. He wrote to Sprott to say that he had thought of forming a society of 'Missioners of the Holy Eucharist'.⁴² It would appear that the 'Broad Church Manifesto' had shaken Macleod's confidence in the future usefulness of the Society.⁴³ There was the need of a revival of the principles which underlie worship. These principles, however, are inseparable from the doctrines which are related to Church life and order. There was the need of a revival of the fundamental doctrines of the faith which underlie all Church activity, and not just of those which are related to worship. Macleod felt that such a task went beyond the scope of the Church Service Society which was concerned solely with liturgical matters. James Cooper, too, had come to the conclusion that the Church Service Society was unlikely to do much more good work because its Committee was paralysed by a 'spirit of compromise'.⁴⁴ Thomas Leishman's interest in the Society waned after the 'anti-doctrinal protest' of 1888. For him 'the liturgical revival was secondary always to the doctrinal' and he had been reluctant to join the Editorial Committee of the Society for that reason.⁴⁵

The high churchmen in the Society thus came to realize that there was a need for another society which would assert the place of doctrine in the worship and life of the Church. The founding of the Scottish Church Society in 1892 'to defend and advance Catholic doctrine' was the result of the action of these high churchmen. They continued to be members and office bearers of the Church Service Society and wished the work of the two societies to be viewed as complementary and not in any way opposed to each other. The Rev. Dr H. M. Hamilton was applauded when he said at the annual meeting of the newly formed Scottish Church Society in 1893 that there should be no feeling of opposition between the two societies. The members of the Scottish Church Society, he said, felt the necessity, along with making services more attractive, 'of reviving the great doctrinal truths with which the revival of worship was so

intimately connected, and upon which it had its true foundation'.⁴⁶ Thomas Leishman was anxious to avoid anything which might cast a 'torch of discord' between the two societies.⁴⁷ Members of the Church Service Society, too, thought that there need be no antagonism between the societies.⁴⁸ It was pointed out, however, that the Scottish Church Society was working on different lines, since the Church Service Society had always included within its membership many of those who would call themselves broad churchmen.⁴⁹

In reaction to the formation of a high church society, and in reaction to some of the policies which high churchmen pursued in the General Assembly, an association of broad churchmen, called the National Church Union, was formed in 1896. The immediate reason for the formation of the National Church Union was the judgement of the Assembly of 1896 in the Kilmun Case. A libel was found proven against the Rev. Alexander Robinson, minister of Kilmun, for certain views expressed in his book *The Saviour in the Newer Light*.⁵⁰ It was found that he had denied the authenticity and truthfulness of the four Gospels, the divine inspiration and integrity of the Gospel writers, the divinity of Christ, the miracles of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ.⁵¹ Members of the Scottish Church Society were prominent in the debate and the successful motion in the case was proposed by John Macleod. One correspondent, writing to the editor of *The Glasgow Herald*, thought that the verdict showed the triumph of the 'sacerdotal and priestly element' in the Church.⁵² Other correspondents thought that it was wrong to think of the Assembly's decision as the work of the 'High Church' party alone.⁵³ Others thought that, since members of the Scottish Church Society had been given toleration for their views, they should in turn extend toleration to others with whom they did not agree.⁵⁴ At the annual meeting of the Scottish Church Society in the following year, G. W. Spratt referred to the formation of the new society. The founders of the National Church Union, he said, state that

'the action of the High Church party has caused not a few Ministers to feel that the liberty of teaching hitherto enjoyed in the Church of Scotland is seriously imperilled, and has suggested the need of a union being formed to defend that liberty'.⁵⁵

Spratt commented that if the Scottish Church Society was responsible for the formation of the Union, it was not less true that the prevalence and publication of opinions which were thought to be subversive of the foundations of Christianity had much to do with the formation of the Scottish Church Society. He thought that the new society had done honour to the 'so-called High Church party' in recognizing them as their chief antagonists, but he thought that they would find no less strenuous opponents among those 'moderate'

broad churchmen who held fast to the essentials of the Christian faith.⁵⁶

The Church Service Society, however, continued to hold both high church and broad church groups within its membership. Professor Story, speaking at the annual meeting of the Society in 1897, thought that there had been a tendency in the Church of Scotland recently to create more societies in the Church than were necessary. Two societies had been formed, he said, which stood 'at wide extremes of thought and of Church feeling', and which might encourage extremes of opinion. The Church Service Society should continue to unite people with concern for the subject of ritual.⁵⁷ According to Professor Menzies, the leader of the 'Manifesto' group of broad churchmen, the secret of the success of the Society had been that it did not consist of men of only one colour of thought.⁵⁸ It had proved impossible, however, to separate the study of liturgy from consideration of its doctrinal basis.

NOTES

1. The Constitution of the Church Service Society, V, in John Kerr, *The Renascence of Worship*, the origin, aims and achievements of the Church Service Society, The Lee Lecture, 1909 (Edinburgh, 1909), p. 72.
2. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1872, p. 17; Kerr, op. cit., pp. 126-7. I am grateful to the Secretary of the Church Service Society, the Rev. W. J. Ross, for his help in consulting the Annual Reports and Minutes of the Society.
3. Minutes of the Church Service Society, 31 May 1877.
4. Kerr, op. cit., p. 131.
5. J. F. White, *The Cambridge Movement*, The Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival (Cambridge, 1962), p. 35.
6. Ibid., p. 86; cp. p. 92.
7. Ibid., pp. 139ff.
8. Ibid., pp. 149ff.
9. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1886, p. 29.
10. J. F. Leishman, *Linton Leaves*, including a biography of Dr Thomas Leishman and some sidelights on Catholic Reunion, edited by his daughter, preface and biographical sketch of the author by the Rev. R. S. Kirkpatrick, D.D. (Edinburgh, 1937), p. 135.
11. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1882, p. 22; Kerr, op. cit., p. 134.
12. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1887, p. 28.
13. Ibid., p. 29.
14. Kerr, op. cit., pp. 95-7.
15. Ibid., p. 96.
16. Ibid., p. 96.
17. Ibid., pp. 96-7.
18. Ibid., p. 97.
19. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1890, p. 29; *Euchologion*, A Book of Common Order, issued by the Church Service Society, Sixth Edition (Edinburgh, 1890), pp. 148-72.

20. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1875, p. 21; Kerr, op. cit., p. 128.
21. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1883, p. 23; Kerr, op. cit., pp. 135-6.
22. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1883, p. 23; Kerr, op. cit., pp. 135-6.
23. William Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord*, Third Edition (London, 1884), pp. 286-7; cp. *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord*, The Baird Lectures, 1891 (London, 1892), p. 307.
24. Milligan, *Ascension of our Lord*, pp. 32-4.
25. Ibid., pp. 301-2; Psalm 22: 23; Hebrews 2:12.
26. Milligan, *Resurrection of our Lord*, p. 288.
27. Milligan, *Ascension of our Lord*, p. 266.
28. Ibid., p. 310.
29. H. J. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper: A Memoir* (London, 1926), p. 15.
30. G. W. Sprott, *The Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1882), pp. 15, 42; H. J. Wotherspoon and J. M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine* (London, 1919), pp. 88-91.
31. Sprott, *Worship and Offices*, p. 15; Thomas Leishman, 'The Ritual of the Church', in R. H. Story, ed., *The Church of Scotland, Past and Present* (London, 1890), Vol. V, p. 335.
32. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1890, p. 32; Kerr, op. cit., p. 142.
33. Minutes of the Church Service Society, 11 October 1888. The change in the order of service was made in the sixth edition of *Euchologion* and not in the seventh edition, which was brought out in 1896, as G. W. Sprott stated by mistake in the introduction to his edition of *Euchologion* (G. W. Sprott, ed., *Euchologion, A Book of Common Order* (Edinburgh, 1905), p. xxi n. 2).
34. Sprott, ed., *Euchologion*, p. xxi n. 2.
35. Minutes of the Church Service Society, 27 May 1889.
36. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1890, p. 28.
37. James Cooper to G. W. Sprott, 9 December 1887 (Church Service Society Papers). I am grateful to the Rev. Dr I. A. Moir, editor of *Liturgical Review*, for his help in consulting the papers of the Church Service Society.
38. W. D. Maxwell, *The Book of Common Prayer and the Worship of the Non-Anglican Churches*, Friends of Dr Williams's Library, Third Lecture (London, 1950), pp. 24-5; *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland*, The Baird Lectures, 1953 (London, 1955), pp. 180-1.
39. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper*, p. 150; the Diaries of James Cooper, Aberdeen University Library, MS. 2283/8, p. 63, 7 July 1886.
40. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1890, p. 29; Kerr, op. cit., p. 144.
41. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1891, p. 28.
42. John Macleod to G. W. Sprott, letter no. 93, undated (Church Service Society Papers).
43. R. S. Kirkpatrick, *The Ministry of Dr. John Macleod in the Parish of Govan*, The Seventh Macleod Memorial Lecture, 1913, and subsequently expanded (Edinburgh, 1915), pp. 146-7.
44. James Cooper, *The Revival of Church Principles in the Church of Scotland*, A paper read at a meeting of the North Test Valley Clerical Society (Oxford, 1895), p. 17.
45. J. F. Leishman, *Linton Leaves*, pp. 135-6.
46. Scottish Church Society, *Annual Report*, 1892-3, p. 17. I am grateful to the Rev. K. G. Hughes, Secretary of the Scottish Church Society, for his help in consulting the records of the Society.
47. J. F. Leishman, *Linton Leaves*, p. 138.
48. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1894, pp. 30, 31.
49. Ibid., p. 31.
50. (Edinburgh, 1895).

51. *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1896), 29 May 1896, pp. 72-3; *The Glasgow Herald*, 30 May 1896.
52. *The Glasgow Herald*, 5 June 1896.
53. *Ibid.*, 9 and 22 June 1896.
54. *Ibid.*, 11 and 12 June 1896.
55. Scottish Church Society, *Annual Report*, 1896-7, p. 30. The National Church Union does not appear to have published any pamphlets or books.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
57. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1897, pp. 27-8.
58. Church Service Society, *Annual Report*, 1908, p. 31.

DOUGLAS M. MURRAY, Callander