

THE ORDERING OF EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP

(A Brief Review of the Work of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion with special reference to the period 1963-77 and of the Work of the Church Hymnary Revision Committee 1963-1973.)

In Memoriam

F. N. D. K.

On 26th May 1976, minutes after receiving the thanks of the General Assembly, Nevill Davidson Kelly died outside the Assembly Hall. For thirty-six years he had been Secretary of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion. He was also Secretary of the Church Hymnary Revision Committee and of the Church Hymnary Trust. He was a member of our Society and formerly a member of the Council; he held office for many years in the Scottish Ecclesiological Society and in the Scottish Church Society. In this short article some of the more recent work of the Committee on Public Worship in these three and a half decades is noted, and a brief reference is made to C.H.3, because it is thought that it will be of interest. In the dedication of the article, however, there is implicit a grateful and affectionate recollection that with all of this work and with much more Nevill Davidson Kelly was intimately and tirelessly and painstakingly identified and the realization, made only more vivid with the passing of time, that his contribution thereby to the liturgical and musical wellbeing of the Church in Scotland was monumental.

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You may well wonder what was so special about 1963. The answer is that in that year there appeared an 'Order for the Administration of Holy Baptism' prepared in collaboration with members who had served on the Special Commission on Baptism and taking into account the recommendations made by the Commission. In the prefatory note to that little publication, as in the report to the General Assembly of that year, mention is made for the first time of a new edition of the *Book of Common Order*. That marks the beginning of a period of theological scrutiny of services and of liturgical rethinking such as the Committee can rarely if ever have known. And if these theological and liturgical challenges were not enough there was also thrust upon the Committee about this time the challenge of language: archaisms were to be rooted out, tautologies

expunged, indeed all the language of worship began to be examined with quite ferocious candour. The inquisition still goes on and is likely to be with us for many years yet. A *Book of Common Order* will appear, however, this year, 1977. In the same year 1963 the Church Hymnary Revision Committee began its ten-year task. In the following year the Committee accepted the invitation to be represented on the Joint Liturgical Group.

Reading the reports of the Committee to earlier General Assemblies one realizes that well into the fifties the Committee were still happily consolidating the liturgical gains made by the *Book of Common Order 1940*. A second extensively revised edition of *Prayers for the Christian Year* was published in 1951. In 1954 the Committee revised and reissued *An Outline and Brief Explanation of Public Worship*. A revised edition of *Prayers for Use at Sea* appeared in 1956 and in 1957 it was reported with satisfaction that the *Book of Common Order* continued to sell well at home and abroad and to be a quarry for liturgists in many other Churches. Regional Conferences in Music and Worship for Ministers and Organists and others interested commended the works of the Committee to a wider public.

With the publication of the *Report of the Special Commission on Baptism* the theological scrutiny began and the time of change. Now of course to try to distinguish between theological scrutiny and liturgical rethinking is an arbitrary exercise but it will serve our present purpose to use these terms in order to differentiate between work done by the Committee where the main emphasis was theological and work where the main emphasis was liturgical. Under the first heading comes the work on the Baptismal Service. The labours were long and arduous and fraught with controversy. Draft forms and orders of service were prepared, revised and presented successively to the General Assemblies of 1963, 1965, 1967 and 1968. They were discussed in General Assembly and by Presbyteries. It has to be frankly admitted that the service which was published in the booklet *Holy Baptism and Confirmation and Admission to the Lord's Supper* does not appear to have found favour in Scotland. It may be that the reasons for this are quite superficial. It may be that a slim production with limp grey cover that soon becomes dog-eared does not easily replace a beloved order bound up with other respected material in black morocco. It may also be that the reason is more substantial and that the service suffers from the fact that the theological emphasis was too strong. Profoundly and legitimately impressed by the massive scholarship of the *Report of the Special Commission on Baptism* and no doubt excited by the beautiful logic of the christocentric understanding of baptism the Committee can now be seen at ten years' distance from the event, to have erred. In his Gifford Lectures on the Scots Confession of 1560 Karl Barth

wrote about the propriety and necessity of the theological element in worship but entered these caveats. He called it a 'secondary form of the church service', secondary to the hearing of the Word of God, which he calls primary on the human side: he also writes 'It (theology) can neither take the place of, nor supplement the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . It can neither take the place of nor supplement the church's hearing of the Word of God as the real human act in the church service. It has a very modest significance.'¹ On the grounds that perhaps in that baptismal service the Church cannot hear the Word of God for the din of theological words the Committee has amended it yet again in preparation for its inclusion in a *Book of Common Order* this year. The preamble now includes the record of the baptism of our Lord from St. Mark's Gospel (1:9-11), the command of our Lord after his resurrection from St. Matthew's Gospel (28:18-20) and the words of Peter to the people on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-39). There follow two sentences of simple explication which run like this: 'The sacrament of Baptism is the appointed way of entrance into the Church. It assures us of the washing away of sin, the start of a new life in Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.' The service then proceeds to the vows as before.

Confirmation also was subjected to theological scrutiny in this period but in this case the theological interest does not obtrude and though some may question the value of making people take a multiplicity of very specific vows they are unlikely to fulfil, the service has on the whole given satisfaction and in the accompanying order for adult baptism and confirmation an adequate rationalization of a somewhat confused situation is achieved. It requires only the addition to this service of a celebration of Holy Communion to recover the original and most satisfying unity of all the elements of christian initiation. A service for adult baptism alone and one for confirmation alone complete the provision here.

In 1967 another important theological task was undertaken. As part of a wider remit aimed at liturgical development in Scotland the General Assembly asked the Committee 'to make clear the purpose and principles of public worship' and 'to provide a source of teaching material about the meaning and practice of public worship'. For this doctrinal task the Committee had the help of members from the Panel on Doctrine and from the Divinity Faculties. In 1970 the Committee submitted their report to the General Assembly and it was sent to Presbyteries for discussion and comment. Here again, a christocentric approach to the subject, developing recent theological trends and following gratefully in the steps of von Allmen² brought not only consistency with the work on baptism but a logic which emboldened the Committee to make unequivocally in 1971

this theological liturgical judgement: 'The Committee, remembering that *Knox's Liturgy* and the earlier editions of *Euchologion* began with the Sacramental Services and then added Forms of Prayer for Sunday Services, believes that the Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion should eventually stand first in the Revised Book of Common Order as the normative Christ-ordained Divine Service of Word and Sacrament, which in the days of the early Church and for many succeeding centuries was celebrated every Lord's Day in the Universal Church.' Recalling that the separation of the Lord's Day from the celebration of the Lord's Supper was never the intention of the Reformers the Committee went on to indicate that the Eucharistic Order would also 'provide a scheme for ordering the Morning Service when Holy Communion is not celebrated – a Service based on the Liturgy of the Word with the Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession following the sermon as in the earlier tradition of the Reformed Church rather than a Service based on Matins with the sermon coming practically at the end of the devotional exercises, as has become normal in the Church of Scotland during the last eighty years or so.' In further fulfilment of the remit to provide teaching material the Committee issued two booklets prepared for them by members: one entitled *Weekly Communion in the Church of Scotland*: and the other, intended for group study, entitled *Learning Together about Christian Worship*.

One more service was scrutinized theologically in the period under study and that was the Marriage Service. In 1973, having reached an impasse in the preparation of a new preamble for the Marriage Service, the Committee appealed for help through the General Assembly, to the Panel on Doctrine. The difficulty in the Committee lay with the Pauline typology of Ephesians 5. There were those who firmly believed that the couple represent a symbol and illustration of the unity between Christ and His Church and there were those who believed as firmly that these ideas were meaningless today, irrelevant and unnecessary. The Panel's reply made some helpful points of a sociological nature: theologically it was somewhat barren – 'The Bible is not a "marriage manual". It does not contain specific answers to the problems arising in the man-woman association. . . . There is no systematic doctrine of marriage in the Bible. References to marriage are frequent but they have an incidental character.' The Committee gave up the theological struggle and played instead (but reverently and quite responsibly) the liturgical game, finding a form of words that would be capable of conveying a greater or lesser degree of theological intensity according to the view of the expositor.

It is of course true that a worship committee can never abdicate its responsibility for theological scrutiny of its work – *lex orandi, lex*

credendi – but it can surely be claimed that since 1963 this particular committee has done its duty with more than usual diligence!

We turn now to some of the more important, mainly liturgical, tasks undertaken in the same period, and first to the work of revision of the service for the celebration of Holy Communion which bore fruit in the publication, *The Divine Service*.³ By the time this work had got under way it was already clear that a new Book of Common Order was needed; it was also becoming clear that in that new book the service for the celebration of Holy Communion must be first, normative and definitive of the character of morning worship in the Church of Scotland when the sacrament is not celebrated. Even from defenders of traditional worship-language the unnecessary archaism of some of the language of the *Book of Common Order* was already under fire, but the situation called for more than mere tinkering with words: the legitimate demand for services in the language of today could not be denied and clearly this great liturgical adventure must be dared. The situation also called, however, for a careful reappraisal of the essential elements of eucharistic worship, and for realism. If Holy Communion was to be presented as the norm and if the inference was to be that we should move towards more 'normal' Christian worship, i.e. towards more frequency of celebration of the Lord's Supper as an integral part of the morning service then we would have to have a shorter form. As a result of all this three orders were produced in *The Divine Service*. In the first of the three much beloved material from the *Book of Common Order* has been retained, but the more tiresome archaism and extravagance of language have gone and the service reveals a new and firmer grasp of the classic characteristics and shape of the liturgy. There are *Kyries*; the *Gloria in excelsis* is printed in full, to be said or sung after the Collect for the Day; there is reference to the congregation's standing for the reading of the Gospel; spare, dignified, devout models are offered for conclusions to readings; a distinction is drawn between 'great intercessions' for church and world outwith the eucharistic prayer and more intimate and intense intercessions within the eucharistic prayer, thanksgiving for the faithful departed is associated with the latter; alternative positions are suggested for the Creed; the words of institution are included in the eucharistic prayer, so that the warrant can, if desired, be omitted.

Considerable study prepared the way for these revisions, much of it stimulated by contributions to this Review and especially by the review articles of the late Dr. Lamb. I should like to mention three articles which I personally found of particular value. The first is an article on the origin of the eucharistic prayer by Louis Ligier;⁴ the second on the *Didache* is by W. Rordorf;⁵ the third on celebration and anamnesis is again by Ligier.⁶ The points which these articles

make persuasively is that the eucharistic prayer is derived from Jewish blessings – the kind of blessing indeed which Our Lord would have spoken at the meal He celebrated with His disciples in the Upper Room. These blessings are a blend of eucharist or celebration and anamnesis or remembrance of God's mighty acts, expressed with brave confessional directness. In other words they are saying 'we bless Thee for what Thou art, we remember what Thou hast done for us, we put our whole trust and confidence in Thee: blessed be God'. Rordorf believes that in *Didache*, chapter 10, where we find prayers said after a Christian community meal and before Holy Communion we have a primitive *praefatio* or eucharistic prayer and he has shown that this prayer is step by step a christianising of the Jewish blessings that would have been said at that point on a comparable occasion. Ligier likewise demonstrates how eucharistic prayers, even the most complex, have developed from this original simple blend of celebration and anamnesis: the one sometimes differentiated from the other, sometimes not, sometimes separated by the Sanctus, sometimes not; the one sometimes more amply expressed than the other but the other motif never lacking.

In the second and third order in *The Divine Service* an endeavour was made to give expression to these findings and to profit from a renewed examination of ancient models. The Second Order in particular with a certain lyricism of expression endeavours to bring a new note of celebration into the eucharistic prayer. It has to be stressed, however, that if here and there facets of ancient eucharist are repeated in these services this is done not because it satisfies antiquarian predilections but because the ancient models are again marvellously serviceable today. It is because we live in the space age and have pushed out so amazingly the horizons of our knowledge of the universe that we find ourselves looking back gratefully to early models of uninhibited adoration of God the Creator. And noting the scale of the scheme of creation we have also a new gauge for the scale of the scheme of salvation. Therefore, as in several early models, the mighty acts of God in creation and redemption are celebrated together in these two orders: the *Sanctus* is a climax of the recital and the post-*Sanctus* is a bridge to the record of the institution and the consecration.

One or two other refreshing features of the second order are worth noting. A salutation and the Collect for Purity are suggested before congregational singing. The Collect for Purity is after all a Cranmer Vestry Prayer and leads into congregational praise rather well. The 'great intercessions' are in the form of biddings with congregational responses. The beauty of biddings is that since they are not addressed to God but addressed to the people with God only overhearing as it were they make it possible for those who use traditional prayer

language to earth their prayers quite firmly and unmistakably to today's world, using if necessary if not today's at least yesterday's headlines. The Second Order indicates by means of square brackets parts of the service which may be omitted. With omissions the Second Order is a little more than half the length of the First, which makes it perhaps a useful model for churches where there is going to be more regular celebration of Holy Communion in the future. When it appears in a *Book of Common Order* the Second Order will provide for the reading of the warrant as an alternative to anamnesis of the institution in the eucharistic prayer, as in the First Order. Emendations have also been made to the Third Order but these are slight: the Third Order appears to have been found very acceptable.

Work on the Communion Service was of course at the same time work on the Morning Service where Communion is not celebrated. The one was to be definitive of the nature of the other. The Committee decided, however, that the three Communion models were not enough, and that it was ungrateful not to observe the rich experience of the Spirit the Church of Scotland has had despite its share in the Reformed Churches' sin of performing what Barth called an unwarranted amputation on the liturgy. With a high and 'sacramental' view of the Word of God and a grateful recognition of the freedom of the Spirit tempered by a clear appreciation of the lordship of Christ a Church receives its own share of devotional riches. But the freedom of the Spirit implies change, and the times we live in clamour for change. How was all this to be related imaginatively to the recovered eucharistic emphasis? The solution arrived at was to print in a *Book of Common Order*, and in close association with the orders for Holy Communion, only an outline of a Morning Service without communion and then to produce a second volume, probably paperback, disposable after a few years, containing 16 sets of prayers as used by members of the Committee in their own churches and other devotional material for the Christian Year. These prayers will be both in traditional prayer language and in modern speech. In parallel columns the outline shows different ways of ordering the third and essentially eucharistic part of the service. There are alternative positions for the Offering. Each position has its rationale, but the Committee on the whole took the view that it is better not to read too much theology into this offertory; those who do so appear to run the risk of being swept away by winds of offertory theology which are very bracing from a human point of view but which are liable to impel us past Calvary with our eyes closed. The position of intercessions is the other variable factor and this reflects the liturgical debate that still goes on about the respective merits of intercessions within or outwith the eucharist. Again the Committee forebore to judge. Clearly there are liturgical traditions going back beyond the

early Church to the synagogue for intercessions at the close of the *synaxis* and there are practical considerations too in favour of this arrangement. There are, however, theological reasons of some weight and pastoral reasons of some intensity for associating intercession with the buoyancy and spaciousness of Christ-centred, eucharistic-style prayers.

There remains one major liturgical task to mention and that is the production of the Church Hymnary: Third Edition. The book is now obviously well known, having sold more than a million copies, and needs no fresh review here. It is of course a hymnary but I classify it without hesitation as a liturgical book. One of the first decisions taken by the Revision Committee in 1963 was that the hymns would be arranged not according to themes but according to the progression of worship and that the liturgical pattern followed would be eucharistic. Hymns are not religio-musical interludes to relieve the tedium of much speaking but rather, in the broadest sense, the people's part in our liturgy.

Finally the challenge of language has thrust itself upon us increasingly in the years under review. The Committee makes a bipartisan response to the challenge. We are clear in our minds that the language of today must be pressed into the service of the Church not just because it is modern but because it has a contribution to make to the worship and mission of the Church. Equally, however, we are clear that traditional prayer language must be used and developed in the service of the Church, not just because it is traditional, hallowed by usage centuries-long, but because it has a contribution to make to the worship and mission of our Church, because it is an art-form of rare quality and part of our culture. All models prepared by the Committee are prepared therefore in those two forms.

As this review has indicated the years 1963-77, including the decade of work on the hymnary, have been years of constant theological and liturgical activity and the language policy has almost doubled the volume of work on published services. They have, however, been satisfying years, years of rethinking and reformation, new christological, new ecumenical awareness, new marvel at the sweep and spaciousness of that divine-human interaction men call worship.

And thus for ever with a wider span
Humanity o'erarches time and death.

NOTES

1. *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, pp. 215-16.
2. Especially *Worship; its Theology and Practice*, by J.-J. von Allmen (Lutterworth Press, 1965).

3. *The Divine Service: Three Orders for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper*, O.U.P. 1973.
4. 'The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. IX, No. 4.
5. *Les Prières eucharistiques de la Didache* and
6. *Célébration divine et anamnèse dans la première partie de l'anaphore ou canon de la messe orientale*. (Both in *Eucharisties d'Orient et d'Occident* reviewed in this Journal in May 1972.)

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