

Q U O T E N D I M U S.....
.....Q U O R U I M U S ?

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Every now and then, perhaps with increasing frequency in recent decades, we are told that "institutionalized" Christianity is increasingly handicapped by its obsession with large and increasingly costly buildings set apart from all common unto sacred use: our knuckles are didactically rapped in reproof, and we are reminded that since God is everywhere He is not to be shut up in sabbatical boxes. He may be worshipped everywhere - in the marketplace, up in the hills or down in the dales as the "blue domers" used to insist. They were generally sublimely deaf to the rather earthy rejoinder - "Yes, He certainly can be - but how often is He ?"

Vague thoughts of this kind occasionally swirl about in my poorly disciplined mind as, Sunday after Sunday, I find myself privileged to sit in a glorious Gothic fane gazing at the great east window designed by Dr Douglas Strachan, listening to great music skilfully realized upon a fine organ combining the unsurpassed talents of Willis and Harrison, and inevitably letting my eyes presently turn to a superb pulpit fashioned from alabaster and Iona marble - a pulpit fittingly recalling some of the outstanding clerics who proclaimed the Word on this long-hallowed spot in previous centuries. Not the least of these, indeed, and surely the most accessible to our hearts today was the last of the moderators of the General Assembly to be called from this charge to the supreme office within our Church - The Revd Dr Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd, minister of the First Charge of the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity in St Andrews from 1865 until his death in 1899.

Few members of The Church Service Society, presumably, will fail to recall that AKHB in addition to his courageous and tireless work in the revival of worship in the Church of Scotland throughout the second half of last century, not least in his convenership of the committee which presented our Church with its first hymnal, was a wide-ranging and prolific essayist whose popularity extended far beyond the borders of Scotland, exceeding indeed his justifiably high reputation as a preacher. It seems quite safe to say that no comparable churchman has arisen north or south of the Border in this

present century; possibly the nearest might have been Dean Inge, but AKHB never ran much risk of being characterized as "gloomy".

Here, then, in this inspiring sanctuary I sit and meditate on two themes - the first being the curious reflection that Dr Boyd never saw the magnificent proportions of the present nave and choir, never rejoiced in the glory of that great east window and never heard the heart quickening roll of that splendid organ, and the second being that he had himself long ago seen that promised land from afar, and had steadfastly led his people towards it. Although, almost as a matter of course, he had been the guest preacher at the dedication of the organ in Glasgow Cathedral on Easter Day, April 13th, 1879, no organ was erected in the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity, St Andrews while he was minister there: the best that he could effect was a harmonium (at first only on hire from 1882, then succeeded by the outright purchase of a new harmonium in 1886 at a cost of £45; a larger, two-manual harmonium, still to be seen in the Hunter Aisle, was not acquired until 1900, the year after Dr Boyd's death); it falls to be noted that modifications of long-established liturgical practice in Holy Trinity Parish Church were always some years later than similar alterations in the worship at St Mary's Church - the chapel-of-ease located some distance to the west of the parish church as the city began its expansion in that direction. In St Mary's Church, indeed, Dr Boyd was able, step by step, to introduce and regularize such things as instrumental music (harmoniums), the chanting of prose psalms, the use of the Canticles and even the decoration of the church with greenery at Christmas. The more distant landward chapel-of-ease at Boarhills, later to become a parish *quoad sacra*, also managed to move rather more quickly than the "Town Church" in these matters.

"Old unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago" - such we might think today, could sum up the long campaign waged by the first warriors of The Church Service Society and supplemented almost a generation later by the Scottish Church Society - and then, it is just possible, we might experience a little surge of thankfulness that we personally were not called upon to bear the heat and burden of those days. By the time we were enrolled in the ranks, the long grim battles were over, and the territory was secure, hardly needing even a token garrison in this enlightened age. Ah, well - near the end of the Lee Lecture for 1905 given by The Revd John Kerr of Dirleton, and subsequently published under the title of "The Renaissance of Worship: the Origin, Aims and Achievements of The Church Service Society," the reader's eye will inevitably fall on the words:

"In a certain sense the battle has been fought and won. 'Back to the true usages of the reformed churches !' is now the cry. 'Away with the vulgarities of rabid independency ! Surely, in looking

back over these forty years, I may, in the name of our beloved Society, close my lecture with this prayer:

'Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for the offices thereof.' [Nehemiah 13,14)"

I think that possibly my attention was first drawn to the fact that the cyclic theory of history was not to be too readily discarded, and that time might indeed run back and fetch, not the Age of Gold, but, less felicitously, the age of dross which we might have hoped to have been long discarded, when, some thirty years ago, I entered a handsome parish church in one of the traditionally "upper crust" areas of Edinburgh. It was on a week-day, for in those halcyon days it was still considered quite safe to leave church doors unlocked on week-days without even having a strong man armed located on the premises to guard them. After admiring the principal features of the interior, I noted with interest that almost all the regular worshippers were provided with not only Bibles and combined Church Hymnaries and Metrical Psalters, but also separate Prose Psalters. Thin accumulations of dust upon these, however, plus the negative information from the praise-boards, led me to the conclusion that prose psalms had ceased to feature in the regular pattern of worship there for some considerable time, stimulating inevitably the still unanswered questions "When ?" and, of course, "Why ?"

Ministers themselves regularly active in charges have, of course, relatively few opportunities of "sitting under" the ministrations of their brethren, except at meetings of presbytery or synod or (more rarely, of course) General Assembly. The worship patterns of the General Assembly seemed to depart little if at all from those long familiar to me in the pages of "Prayers for Divine Service" in its 1929 format, the "Book of Common Order"(1940), and the "Ordinal and Service Book"(1954). One might indeed occasionally sigh for the more expansive splendour of the older "Euchologion", but clearly it was now a case of *tempora mutantur, et nos in illis*. On the whole, it seemed, synods, now attended only by the elect of the select (I sometimes wondered why not even the slightest attempt ever was made to discipline those who systematically broke their ordination vows anent "taking their due part in the administration" of the regularly constituted courts of the Church) could be trusted to maintain long-established standards in corporate worship. Presbyteries - well, now, although some of them at least maintained the pretty custom of presenting their incoming moderators with copies of the current "Ordinal and Service Book", doubtless to ensure that personal eccentricity did not instantly get the bit between its teeth, gradual doubts might just possibly begin to rear their heads there. The amount of "free prayer" generally accorded to, or at least claimed

by, moderators of presbytery in constituting meetings afforded frequent opportunities of discovering where the political interests and sympathies of the said moderators lay - I discovered long ago, rather to my surprise, that while agricultural workers (non-commissioned ranks only), miners and factory-workers require regularly to be prayed for, stockbrokers, bankers, hairdressers and even bus-drivers do not, which seems rather divisive, if not positively sexist or racist. And then, of course, even in presbytery, where it might seemingly have been assumed that all of those present had progressed rather beyond the range of a primary Sunday School, we may all too often find ourselves subjected to the patronizing usage of the second person plural in addressing the Deity (for my part, let me confess that this usage no sooner strikes upon my ear than I feel that everything ought rightly to have been prefaced with "Now we are going to have a little talk with God. Hands together; all heads bowed; all eyes closed"), carried over, one may safely assume, from what has become the regular practice in the speaker's own Sunday services. In such circumstances it is more than likely that some preliminary warning will have been given by the fact that the Scripture lessons will have been read from one or other of the flat, dull, mildly irritating and decidedly unmemorable "modern English" versions. With reasonable luck, however, it is probable that things will not be quite as ruthlessly "with it" in the praise selected; many presbyteries still seem to feel that tradition in some areas at least ought not to be lightly esteemed (it would never do, for instance, to import organ accompaniments into the rich, still predominantly male-voice chorusing in Assembly, synod or presbytery), and there is even a persistent notion that somehow a metrical psalm is "safer" than a "human hymn" in such places.

But, curiously enough, it is in this very sphere that I have recently been led to note the widespread, brisk and, to me, rather inexplicable retreat from what I had long supposed to be a well-fortified stronghold. Over many years, I had observed in the printed documents of the General Assemblies I had attended that the principles of The Church Service Society, Dr Millar Patrick, Dr Wauchope Stewart, Dr Wilson Baird, Dr William Maxwell, and other liturgical and musical authorities whose teachings we had revered in our student days, were accorded their due respect; the appropriate doxologies were printed at the end of each Psalm-portion to be sung - and sung they heartily were. But today, not only in a considerable number of congregations, but in the very presbytery itself, I frequently hear the officiating clergyman announce a portion of the Metrical Psalter, generally giving us the number under which it is printed in CH3, and then carefully adding "Omitting verse 6" (or "7" or "5" - as the case might be, but in all cases meaning the verse at which CH3 has printed the appropriate Gloria):

here, it seems to me, we are entitled to demand rational explanation. Why, on what authority, delete what the Church's own official committee has printed, not for senseless decoration, but for normal use ?

If the Church of Scotland has by now decided (at which Assembly, one wonders) that prose psalms are no longer to be permitted within the walls of its sanctuaries up and down the land, so that we cannot point to the regular use of the Gloria there, those of us who have access to television sets or even radios, can find out that the Church of England still firmly adheres to its long-established practice of adding the Gloria to each psalm chanted. In these days of supposedly ever-warming oecumenicity, exactly why, and on what high authority, should the Church of Scotland be tugging in an opposite direction ? It is surely unnecessary to recapitulate the historical arguments given for the use of the Gloria with the Psalms in Christian worship. Suffice it here simply to quote from Dr Stuart Loudon's helpful article on "Psalmody in the Church", incorporated in the current handbook to the Church Hymnary:

"In the metrical psalmody of the CH3 the doxology or conclusion (Gloria Patri) appropriate to the particular metre of the psalm portion is included, except where there is already a doxological conclusion in the text of the psalm (Hymns 101, 167, 566). The doxologies for the metrical psalms had dropped out of use under English Independent and Scottish Covenanting influences in the mid-seventeenth century. Although the seven conclusions were printed together as an appendix in the Scottish Psalter, 1929, their use has only been slowly recovered until the present arrangement in this 1973 book of praise. Calderwood's famous appeal in the General Assembly of 1649, when it was proposed to drop the doxology at the close of a psalm portion, may be recalled: 'Moderator, I entreat that the doxology be not laid aside, for I hope to sing it in Heaven.' "

Calderwood was certainly not the only loyal member of our Church to resent the iconoclastic tendencies of self-satisfied Puritanism south or north of the Border; the same withering wind for long deprived us of the liberty to join in the hallowed words of the Creeds and even those of the Lord's Prayer itself. And although much educational work was done and the "waste places of many generations" rectified in our land after 1865, it now seems necessary to take stock once more, to "number and see who is gone from us" almost a century and a quarter later.

The doxology or Gloria Patri was not quite literally the conclusion to our acts of praise : that place was in fact accorded to the Amen. Here again I feel compelled to speak out, both in sorrow and in anger: this time the musical editors of CH3 cannot be exonerated, for in none of our previous

hymnals had any attempt been made to outlaw the centuries-old Amen. In the "Introductory Notes to the Music" in CH3, however, we are confronted with the decidedly bald statement that "AMEN has been excluded where it is not appropriate, and should be sung only where it is printed."

A fine bit of coat-trailing, which I personally found impossible to ignore! "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*", as St Augustine phrased it? I think not - but let me do our CH3 musicians the justice to say that they certainly did not dream up this revolutionary quirk all by themselves. On the contrary, it seems that they must have noticed a bandwagon lumbering past and hastened with one accord to scramble up upon it. I concede this because while still resident in Newfoundland and worshipping quite often in churches other than Presbyterian, I had noticed that Amens had apparently gone out of fashion, except, indeed, after the Gloria following prose psalms. Anglicans generally seemed to submit themselves to this state of affairs with much the same kind of acquiescence tinged with smouldering resentment as they accorded to the modernized forms of the liturgy, particularly the Eucharist, that were now fluttering down upon their devoted heads. Certainly for many regular worshippers in most denominations the new fad was about as disturbing as it would have been to wake up some morning and find that no cats were to be seen anywhere except those of the curtailed Manx variety. Some of us soon began to ask "Why?" Exclude Amens where "not appropriate", indeed! Just where, it ought to be riposted, are they "not appropriate"? Coming rapidly to earth, it will surely be agreed that the vast majority of hymns are in fact couched in terms of prayer - invocation, adoration, thanksgiving, petition or confession - and with regard to prayer in public worship we may well bear in mind the caustic comment by Dr A K H Boyd on verse 15 of Deuteronomy, chapter 27 ("And all the people shall answer and say, Amen") that apparently many Scottish congregations must be using a very different translation, one which read, "Let nobody but the minister ever think of saying Amen." Now, it would seem, not even the minister is to be allowed this luxury, at least as far as hymns are concerned.

If we actually turn the pages of the music edition of CH3, beginning at the beginning, we might think at first that things are possibly not going to be quite as bad as we feared, for Hymns 1 to 8 are all allowed Amens - but that seems to be because they all happen to be portions of metrical psalms (and, please note, you would not be entitled to indulge in their "Amens" unless you dutifully sang their printed Glorias first): Hymn 9, however, although its whole sentiment seems to insist on a triumphant final "Amen" (see especially the fourth stanza), comes under the ruthless guillotine. Hymn 10 is more fortunate, presumably because it ends with what might reasonably be termed a doxology or variant form of the Gloria.

After that, however, the going gets rough until we fight through to another batch of psalm portions (19-29), and St Francis gets preferential treatment at Hymn 30, probably on the same basis as that used for Hymn 10. However, I do not propose to analyse the whole of the rest of the hymnary with similar minuteness: the point is that the compilers on the whole appear to regard Amens as an intrusion, while I per contra condemn their exclusion.

Now at the very end of all this (I can imagine many a weary reader pricking up hopeful ears for an imminent Amen), I should like to leave the thinking public with a stimulating question, to which I have as yet been unable to devise an answer. I wrote a few paragraphs back that the surgical excision of Amens from hymns should not be blamed solely upon the musical experts involved in the compilation of CH3; I said that I could trace this melancholy malpractice somewhat further back. But - and here indeed is the great unsolved problem - WHO in fact was the mighty authority who first issued the implacable ukase that Amens must be cast into outer darkness? The swift and almost universal obedience accorded to his fiat suggests that somewhere out there - presumably on earth rather than in outer space, but can one be sure? - beyond Edinburgh, beyond Canterbury, beyond even Rome, there has recently emerged a kind of new HE WHO MUST BE OBEYED (I do hope not a SHE), potent enough to stop us in our tracks anywhere. Could it be a super-Ayatollah?

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A N O R D E R F O R T H E
D E C O N S E C R A T I O N O F C H U R C H
P R O P E R T Y

The Revd W Gerald Jones, MA BD MTh.

(Kirkmichael with Straiton)

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INTRODUCTION

Though a tragic commentary on our society, the fate of redundant churches is sealed increasingly by their conversion to a purpose far removed from their original intention, or by the merciless hammer of the demolition contractor. It is unlikely that during the interregnum between death sentence and execution there has been any significant act of worship which expresses the sentiments of "deconsecration" of hallowed property.

Furthermore, the ancient concept of the churchyard is also eroding, as more and more consecrated ground is acquired for motorway construction, private development or parking