

The Place of Dr Robert Lee in the Developments in the Public Worship of the Church of Scotland 1840-1940⁽¹⁾

Our generation has occupied itself with re-examining the character and work of many prominent Victorians. It is timely that we should now re-examine the work of Dr Robert Lee, who has often been regarded as the father of the liturgical revival within the Church of Scotland during the last hundred years ; for Lee in himself epitomizes the urges and misunderstandings which largely shaped the movement for some fifty years.

When Dr Lee's critics accused him of attempting to save the Established Church by piling up prayer books as buttresses to support her cracked and crumbling walls, they were pointing to factors in Lee's conduct which must be recognized now, if we are to assess his work. It was primarily as an ecclesiastical statesman, and not as some cloistered liturgical scholar who longed for the riches of sacramental and catholic worship, that Lee entered the field. He was possessed of considerable liturgical knowledge. While his contemporaries were agreed that his extemporary prayers were so fine that he had much less reason than any of his fellow ministers to seek the aid of a book of prayers, yet the discerning saw in Lee one who was fitted neither by gifts nor temperament to be the reformer who should set right the Church's devotions.⁽²⁾ Lee was a man of the world. He was known for his liberal theological views. He trembled for the future of a Church which had been dangerously weakened by the Disruption of 1843, and which was continuing to lose many intelligent and influential members to the growing Scottish Episcopal Church. He believed that the public worship of the Church of Scotland was the weakest point in her defences, therefore upon that he fixed his attention.

Lee, however, was not the first to advocate reform of worship within the Church of Scotland. Dr Cumming published his edition of Knox's Liturgy in 1840, and argued

⁽¹⁾ The substance of a paper read at a Conference of the Society at Paisley Abbey, on 30th September, 1957.

⁽²⁾ cf. A. K. H. Boyd, *St Andrews and Elsewhere*, p. 208.

the case for reading prayers. Dr Marshall Lang introduced standing to sing and sitting to pray before Lee himself made these changes. Also, in the colonies, where the defects of Presbyterian as compared with Anglican worship were felt most acutely, a young minister, G. W. Sprott, was doing some hard thinking, which was to find expression in his pamphlet, *The Worship, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Church of Scotland* (1863). This publication mapped out the task for the reform of public worship which ensued, and actually exercised more influence than Lee's ambitious volume, *The Reform of the Church of Scotland, Part I* (1864). Moreover, the Church's newly appointed Committee on Aids to Devotion published its prayer book for the use of exiled Scots in 1859, just after Lee brought out his *Prayers for Public Worship*.

Dr Lee found a fair measure of support for his views in sections of the press and of the General Assembly, but within the reforming movement itself he was not the acknowledged leader. His conduct during the Greyfriars' case alienated many who sympathized with his views and bred distrust where none need have existed. He and his prayer book were an embarrassment to the newly founded Church Service Society. Matthew Leishman of Govan urged his son, Thomas, to collaborate with G. W. Sprott in publishing, as a corrective to Lee's mistaken arguments, their edition of *Knox's Liturgy and the Westminster Directory* (1868), which proved to be the first fruits of modern, careful liturgical study in the Church of Scotland, and gave the new movement its true bearings.

Dr Lee's motives are best expressed in his own words : " It is the business of the Church to provide everywhere, even in the remotest parishes and among the humblest and most illiterate of the population, that public worship shall be distinguished by good taste, decency, propriety, and solemnity, as well as purity in doctrine and fervour of devotion ; that it shall be comprehensive, and as far as possible complete in its several parts, omitting nothing that is essential to the idea of public Christian worship on the one hand, while on the other it avoids redundancy and tediousness, doctrinal exaggeration, fanatical vehemence, and enthusiastic raptures, and everything else that is inconsistent with sober piety and godly wisdom ".⁽¹⁾

The main steps which Lee took to put his aims into practice within his own congregation of Greyfriars',

⁽¹⁾ R. Lee, *The Reform of the Church of Scotland, Part I*, pp. 47-8.

Edinburgh, were: kneeling to pray; standing to sing; prayers read by the minister; the opening of the service with a solemn call to prayer, instead of with the customary psalm. In 1857 he published and proceeded to use his own service book, of which new editions came out in 1858 and 1863. Lee seems to have entertained some hope that this book might be adopted officially by the Church. It was used, especially its marriage service, in other parishes, but its Order for the Lord's Supper was never used in Greyfriars'. This "reformed worship" in Greyfriars' meant that the morning service was largely devotional. Usually there was no sermon; a short exposition was given. Two lessons were read. In the afternoon a sermon was preached at greater length. The congregation made responses. Prose psalms were chanted. A harmonium appeared in 1863, a pipe organ in 1864. A marriage was solemnized in church in 1865. Mr Ramsay, an elder, testified to the Presbytery that, although many congregational meetings had been held, no objections had been heard. "They", he commented, "were not a fashionable church, but a middle class congregation. Every seat was taken".⁽¹⁾

Lee, however, admitted that he might not have attempted his "innovations" in a different congregation. Here he was gathering a new congregation of those with a taste for "genteel and seemly worship". Echoing the views of such worshippers, *The Times* asked whether the age had not become "too refined, too fastidious, too critical, and too reasonable, for extemporaneous, that is, declamatory prayer".⁽²⁾

The interesting thing is that while the Church courts more or less tacitly passed by Lee's other innovations—painted glass, instrumental music, changes of posture (thereby admitting them into public worship),—they condemned his use of a privately published prayer book. The fact that Lee continued to use such a book, either in manuscript or in book form, despite prohibition, would likely have led to strong prohibitive action by the General Assembly, had not his sudden death left the Greyfriars' case undecided. As it happened, Lee's persistence in practice left the way open for others to prepare and use books of prayers in church, although the opposite might well have been the result of his rash conduct.

⁽¹⁾ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28. 12. 1865.

⁽²⁾ *Times*, 3. 1. 1866.

Lee's own book cannot be said to have been an important factor in the revival of worship, but it prepared the way for two books which were to contribute largely to the transformation of public worship—*Euchologion* and Dr Cameron Lees' *St Giles' Service Book*. Lee shaped the course of events, not by the quality of his book nor by the model it provided, but by his example in preparing privately a book for use in public worship. He acted as he did because he felt that no official sanction could be expected in the near future for an official liturgy or a partial liturgy. Thus he initiated the long period of experimental liturgical writing which was carried on chiefly by the Church Service Society, which constantly had to refute the charge that it sought to foist a liturgy upon the Church.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the benefits conferred by this unofficial liturgical study and composition. The Church Service Society was able to do much that would then have been impossible, had it been an official committee of the Church with responsibilities to the General Assembly. In particular, the great improvement in the Sacramental and Occasional Services (where improvement was apparently most needed) was directly due to the imagination, order and dignity which this Society brought into public worship. All this was possible because Robert Lee took the plunge, and prepared and used his own service book. The result was in the main good. Any official service book which the Church could have adopted in the 1860's would have been immature and dated. The long period of experimentation at an unofficial level proved the greatest blessing which Lee conferred upon the reforming movement. Out of the process came at last *Prayers for Divine Service*, 1923, then *The Book of Common Order*, 1940. Both these volumes were singularly worthy of the Church's official recognition when at last it was received.

Yet one may well ask if Lee's action did not also set the pattern for a line of action which impeded the attainment of an official liturgy. During the second half of last century, in Scotland, it was often insisted that a National Church demands a liturgy, although few demanded a liturgy so rigid in its prescriptions as that of the Church of England. There can be no doubt that, had Lee begun a process of overturing the General Assembly for the preparation of at least a partial liturgy, and had, say, the Church Service Society busied itself with the preparation of one order of Divine Service, instead of four or five alternatives, the more

general use of read prayers would likely have been established. In using such a service ministers would have felt that they were using the Church's service, commonly heard throughout the land, instead of smuggling a prayer book into church, using it as much as they cared or dared, and all the time being under the suspicion that, because the book left them free to use this order or that, they were only borrowing prayers which they lacked the power to compose. An order of service, with possibly a fixed general confession and general thanksgiving, and which left ample scope for free prayer, might in time have achieved the dignity and objectivity of corporate worship, the balance of read and free prayer, which Lee and *Euchologion* failed to establish throughout the Church.

Further, this experimentation in liturgical composition at an unofficial level soon disclosed its inherent dangers. A body like the Church Service Society was free to compose services which did not need to be submitted to the Church for approval, which did not even need to be such as could be put into immediate use, unadapted, in the average parish church. Consequently, prayers appeared which were divorced from the realities of the prevailing worship. Some of them were too ambitious, too ponderously formal, too fanciful in their conception of what could be of widespread usefulness. There was a certain lack of realism in the experimentation which stemmed from Lee's service, even if one admits that such orders of service should point the way to a higher devotional level, rather than merely reflect the prevailing use and wont. Another result was the decline in the quality of extemporary prayer. Increasingly the phrases from *Euchologion* were heard on the lips of the younger ministers, where formerly were heard phrases from Matthew Henry's *Method of Prayer*, and from the "unwritten liturgy" of stock phrases; yet Spratt, H. J. Wotherspoon, and others all testified that free prayer had greatly declined in power and polish. Lee acted in the name of freedom and progress. In this he also set the pattern for subsequent reforming activity.

It was a day of theological transition, a time when men were impatient of confessional and liturgical restraints. Lee was followed by leaders of the Broad Church School, like Tulloch and Story, who exercised a directive force in the reform of worship. As Limited Atonement and the Double Decree fell into disfavour, as stress was placed on the Universal Fatherhood of God, and great interest was

shown in our Lord's earthly life, distrust of the human and non-didactic aspects of public worship diminished. The introduction of hymn singing speeded up the change. A new concern with order and seemliness appeared. It was not ashamed to borrow from Anglicanism and from Non-conformity, and from the Gothic revival for the "enrichment" of public worship according to the prevailing taste. Unlike the Oxford Movement, this innovating movement was not rooted in a set of agreed doctrines. It founded itself upon tolerance and progress. It did not always know clearly where it was going. Thus, by 1894, when a census was taken, the most extraordinary divergence in use and wont in worship was manifest, whereas, in 1864, a similar census showed exactly the opposite. Lee was in a real sense the spiritual father of this rather meandering search after seemliness and order. The indeterminate theology behind the movement was so important a factor that it nearly split the Church Service Society and led to the foundation, in 1892, of the Scottish Church Society, part of whose aim was to protest against mere trimming and embellishment. When the flood of innovation had run its course, the discerning saw the folly of it. They regretted some of the changes, and they sought a reason in the Church's *doctrine* for the form of public worship. "We have left", said one who lived through this time of change, "the old—that was inevitable—and we have not yet assimilated the new—a good deal of it, one humbly hopes, is too indigestible to be ever assimilated".⁽¹⁾

From the start, of course, there had been men associated with the movement who knew very definitely where they were going. Sprott and Leishman aimed at restoring the worship of the early Scottish Reformed Church. They looked to the Primitive Church and to the Reformed Churches of the Continent for guidance. John Macleod saw a vision of the Catholic and Evangelical Church. He consistently taught that all changes in public worship which did not restore the weekly Eucharist, were secondary and even trifling. James Cooper's interest in liturgical reform was inspired by a passionate desire for the re-union of Christendom. But such men acted as a corrective, rather than typified the innovating or reforming movement begun by Dr Lee.

Thus Professor William Milligan rightly asked of the movement in 1892: "Will tasteful arrangements, music and flowers, pictures, embroidery and carved wood, every-

⁽¹⁾ H. J. Wotherspoon, *The Present State of Church Music in Scotland*, p. 37.

thing in what is surely ironically characterized as 'an attractive service' long continue to avail? Things like these may be good when they are the well-regulated expression of realities, when they are the blossoming of a tree rooted in Divine soil and drinking the rain of heaven that cometh oft upon it; but to imagine for an instant that they can occupy the place of the most solemn revelations of what the Church believes to be the gospel of God, is to show ignorance of human wants equalled only by its insensibility to all experience".⁽¹⁾

The changes, nevertheless, brought light and new life to the Established Church. The didactic element occupied less place in public worship. Prayers were less frequently a mere variation in the display of ministerial rhetoric. Sermons were briefer and more practical. More variety and less rigidity was observed in the subjects of prayers. The observance of the Christian Year came in slowly. Holy Communion was celebrated more frequently, although as the practice of parishioners attending communion services in neighbouring parishes died out, it is doubtful if the average member communicated more frequently. Baptisms and marriages began to be celebrated in church. With the restoration of St Giles' and the building of Govan Parish Church, the new movement for building and restoring churches was well on its way.

Most significant of all, people cared about the ordering of worship and the suitable furnishing of churches. Men proved their opponents wrong when they accused them of being occupied merely with the trimmings and trappings while they neglected the orthodox Faith. It came to be realized that an adequate expression of the Christian Faith for the time demanded concern for such things. But, broadly speaking, changes were dictated by popular taste and by belief in toleration and progress, rather than by intense conviction regarding sacramental grace or ministerial order.

Results, however, were not altogether happy in the external details of the ordering of public worship. As standing at prayers went out, kneeling did not come in; sitting prevailed. This was a retrograde step, in view of the practice of the Primitive and the early Reformed Church. The unfortunate practice of allowing the people to remain in their pews to receive Holy Communion spread unchecked.

⁽¹⁾ W. Milligan, *The Scottish Church Society: Some Account of Its Aims*, p. 17.

While choirs did much to enlist the service of youth for the Church, and, with organs, to improve praise, both, especially in the larger churches, often dominated the sanctuary. A decline in congregational praise was noted in many quarters. "Somehow our people have been put off. Silence has become a habit",⁽¹⁾ admitted a contemporary observer. Cleaner and better appointed churches became more general. Chancels, prayer desks, stained glass, Holy Tables, fonts and robed choirs appeared, where formerly all art had been banished save that of the silversmith. Yet in the rush to build churches with chancels, the essential proximity of Word and Sacrament, so effectively symbolized by the central pulpit with its long table set in the midst of the worshippers tended to be lost to view. Generally, the remote Holy Table set in the inmost recess of the chancel, which is symbolic of the catholic, sacrificial type of worship rather than the reformed, prophetic type, centring round the proclamation of the Word, meant no radical change in the type of worship offered. The Table was not revered as the Holy Place whereon were set the Body and Blood of Christ, truly present in the Elements, but quite distinct from them. Calvin's fear of a localized Presence still dominated the Church's eucharistic teaching. The Holy Table chiefly provided a platform for the display of skill in floral decoration on the part of the ladies of the congregation. It could provide a helpful point of focus for the worshippers' gaze, with its suggestions of Heavenly Food, Sacrifice and Self-dedication. Nevertheless, it must often have proved less satisfying in this regard than the old canopied pulpit with its open Bible, especially where its precincts were crowded with elders' chairs, more reminiscent of the dining-room than the sanctuary.

In two other interesting respects, by his complex regarding Anglicanism, and by his attitude to the public worship of the Church of Scotland as it was conducted between 1560 and 1638, Dr Lee set the pattern for the movement which followed the Greyfriars' case. By birth an Englishman, Lee, although he did not hesitate to criticize the Church of England and the *Book of Common Prayer*, feared the political strength of that Church, and was deeply conscious that public worship in Scotland compared unfavourably with that in England. "We cannot", said Lee, "disguise from ourselves the painful fact that the

(1) H. J. Wotherspoon, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

Kirk even at this moment maintains its position as the Church of the law, by the sufferance of the English Church ; which with the eager co-operation of the Dissenters could at once disestablish it ".⁽¹⁾

Resentment was added to a sense of insecurity by the claim which was being made by some Anglicans that the Church of Scotland was a schismatic and heretical body. The memory of the harsh treatment meted out to Edward Irving and John Macleod Campbell, the restless discontent of liberally-minded theologians under confessional restraints which were found too narrow, the distrust of some with the intolerance of Dissent in Scotland, the weariness of others with ecclesiastical controversy within Presbyterianism, all created an uneasiness lest Anglicanism should prove too inviting a refuge for increasing numbers from the Church of Scotland.⁽²⁾

What troubled Lee most about Anglicanism was, of course, the fact that many were leaving the Established Church for the Scottish Episcopal Church, not on account of conviction about Apostolic Succession or Eucharistic Sacrifice, but most often just because they were attracted by the Episcopalian form of worship. Hundreds did desert to Episcopacy chiefly for this reason in the middle years of last century.

A sense of inferiority by comparison with the larger, liturgically better endowed Church of England continued throughout the whole movement for the reform of public worship. In its early stages it acted as a strong incentive to innovation. This feeling was aggravated by a sense of injustice which many felt because, as they reasoned, Brownist influence from England had robbed the Scottish Church of her true liturgical inheritance. It affected the outlook of all who busied themselves with the revival of public worship in Scotland. The claims made by the successive Lambeth Conferences, the fear lest the Anglican Church should become the official Church of the British Empire, the adherence to Episcopacy of many potential lay leaders in the rural parishes of Scotland, and their openly expressed distaste for the lack of order and seemliness still to be found in the worship of parish churches even at the end of last century, all fomented this complex about Anglicanism.

Critics of the liturgical movement from its inception characterized it as " aping Episcopacy ". Even the mere

⁽¹⁾ R. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁽²⁾ cf. R. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

fact of reading prayers was fixedly and inseparably associated in some minds with prelacy. Episcopal leanings were constantly attributed to the Church Service Society in the early days. The charge was not unfounded. In 1886 we hear that Dr Donald Macleod "wanted the services" in *Euchologion* "more Anglican". The seventh edition of that book was quite bare-faced in its copying of the *Book of Common Prayer*; the order of public worship was altered from the traditional Scottish Order, putting the Intercessions and Thanksgiving before the sermon, and adding the Lord's Prayer to the first prayer. Sprott, who went so far as to say that "deference to Anglicanism is a crime", along with Leishman and others protested at this departure from the order of the Eucharist; but the damage was done, and only recently has an effort been made to restore the order of the Liturgy of the Word. In the hearts of those who borrowed unblushingly from the Anglicans there seems to have been at times a secret despair. Thus Dr A. K. H. Boyd could confess that "he would not say that by their changes they would re-attract many persons who had joined the Episcopal Church, because, if a person had left them from attachment to the liturgy of the Church of England, and was accustomed to that liturgy, he would not be brought back by any other liturgy, however well drawn up".⁽¹⁾

Dr Muir had described Lee's prayer book as a form of worship "totally alien from the mind and temper of the people of Scotland";⁽²⁾ and when the reforming movement was well established and *Euchologion* had run through several editions, Dr Archibald Scott was found saying that "'scissors and paste prayers' would never adequately express the devotional aspirations of the Church of Scotland."⁽³⁾ The mass of the people did not want a printed service book with congregational responses, as Lee imagined. They wanted better services, by having better trained ministers.

The other respect in which Lee was representative of the movement which followed was that he viewed the period 1560-1638 as a sort of "Golden Age" of Reformed Church worship in Scotland. He has never lacked followers in this line of thought. It is an attitude which has been a dominant factor in the reform of public worship in the Church of Scotland ever since.

(1) quoted in J. Kerr, *The Renascence of Worship*, p. 130.

(2) *Scotsman*, 27. 4. 1859.

(3) *Scotsman*, 27. 5. 1902.

Although Lee was not uncritical of Knox's Liturgy, he based his right to read prayers on the assumption that it was used as a liturgy, rather than as a directory, until 1645. This started a long discussion as to whether Knox's Liturgy was actually used as a liturgy in any sense of the word. The opponents of read prayers argued that it was no more than a directory, or at the most a discretionary liturgy; those who favoured read prayers held that ministers had been allowed much less liberty in their use of Knox's book than had often been supposed. Lee argued too, that the *Westminster Directory* did not forbid set forms of prayers and that it now had no legal authority in the Church.

While Lee lamented the loss of much that had been characteristic of Scottish worship between 1560 and 1638, he was not consistent in his desire to restore the worship of that day. His own prayer book is in temper and spirit far nearer to the *Book of Common Prayer* than Knox's Liturgy. He invoked the support of the *Westminster Directory*, but only when it suited his purpose. He made no effort to restore its prescriptions as to fasting and public censure. Likewise he tended to invoke the authority of the Primitive Church when this suited his purpose. To its insistence on the weekly Eucharist, Lee seems to have turned a deaf ear. The Greyfriars' case, however, aroused more popular interest than had any case since the Disruption. Lee popularized the belief that the Church of Scotland had once had set forms of public prayer, that Calvin and Knox did not object to such forms, and that it was largely due to alien influences that so much freedom had come to be allowed to individual ministers in the conduct of worship, and that extemporary prayers were common usage in his day.

For the most part, however, neither side in this controversy was unprejudiced in its arguments. Those who read into the first years of the Scottish Reformed Church a "Golden Age" of Presbyterian worship did so, not because they wished to return to all that that worship comprised and implied—with its polemics and dogmatics mixed up with devotion, its long prayers lacking the spirit and the felicitous phrases of catholic piety; but because they were hankering after another type of worship more dignified and liturgical than that which had been long established by use and wont in the Church. They were all too conscious of the Anglican way of doing things, where so much of catholic piety and liturgical beauty had been conserved.

On the other hand, the opponents of read prayers were in the wrong in equating set forms with a type of worship which was essentially un-Presbyterian and un-Calvinistic. Recent research has confirmed that for ministers, as much as for readers, in their use of Knox's Liturgy, the structure of the service, the substance of each part of it, and even the words of some of the prayers, were intended to be invariable. In 1563 the Privy Council defined public worship as "the preaching of the Word of God, ministration of the Sacraments, and the *reading* of common prayers." Moreover, it has to be admitted that the book contains some set forms, e.g. the Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, and the Doxology, which later became abhorrent to Presbyterians; and that it was only when Episcopacy and Presbytery fell apart that the latter accepted Puritan criticisms of the *Book of Common Prayer* and of liturgical worship in general as its own.

Perhaps Lee and others after him sought to build too much upon the fact that Knox's Liturgy was once read in church, because they failed to admit that the real parting of the ways came in 1564, when the *Book of Common Order* was authorized for use, and the *Second Prayer Book of Edward VI* was set aside in Scotland. The way was then opened up for a type of Scottish Reformed worship which was radical, not conservative, in its reaction to the worship of the medieval Church, which by its tone and temper was to lead worship in the Church of Scotland further away from the pattern of medieval worship. In the English book a synthesis was secured between the sacrificial and prophetic types of worship; in the Scottish book the sacrificial aspect was practically excluded.

Also, because the *Book of Common Order* allowed very considerable liberty to ministers in the conduct of worship, the minister was supremely the mouthpiece of the people in their approach to God, in a service lacking congregational responses. Quite apart from political considerations and alien theological influences, by the very nature of Knox's Liturgy free prayer must have grown in importance. The reader came to be expected to *read* prayers, the minister came to be expected to show his prowess and piety in *free* prayer. Nor was Knox's Liturgy the fruit of ripe experience and settled devotion in a quiet and well ordered church life. Its purpose was to regulate public worship at a time of transition, when the Church was being rebuilt after a great upheaval. It was more intent on

guarding worship from error than on adding finesse to public devotion.

Lee and others seem to have refused to see this. They greatly under-estimated the lasting influence which the Church's experience between 1638 and 1690 had had upon her attitude to public worship. She had evolved through bitter experience her own mode of worship sanctified by long use and wont. The introduction of a liturgy was a far harder task than Lee recognized, or at least admitted. Even in 1940 it was easier to put through the General Assembly an excellent *Book of Common Order* which was not to be prescribed as obligatory and was not representative of the prevailing public worship of the time, than it would have been to persuade the Church to enforce a few regulations regarding the conduct of public worship. A mild attempt to do this in 1894 met with heated rejection.

It is indeed fanciful to suggest, as was often done during the revival of worship last century, that the Scots, who so decidedly resisted the imposition of a service book which was not to their taste in 1637, proceeded to give up Knox's book which we are told they prized and used regularly, without being convinced in their own minds that such a course was right.

The *Westminster Confession* suggests that no form of worship can ever be considered final.⁽¹⁾ The Scottish Church has never legislated as minutely for worship as for doctrine. Indeed from the framing of the rubrics of Knox's Liturgy to the time when the General Assembly declined to prohibit the use of the individual cup at Holy Communion, the Church has shown a marked unwillingness to enforce anything savouring of rigid uniformity. Lee, of course, felt that the National Church must have its own characteristic worship, which would distinguish her from the Dissenters. But he under-estimated the power of use and wont, and the popular resistance to anything savouring of enforced uniformity.

It happened, however, that in the course of time there arose one or two congregations where, amid all the lack of uniformity which the innovations had let loose on the Church, a more formal, liturgical service was established. In time these congregations exerted considerable influence upon the whole Church; but the popular criterion remained simplicity and sincerity, not the practice of the Scots Reformers, nor the usage of the Primitive Church. As a consequence of the changes in worship begun by Lee a type

(1) see Chapter XX.

of service appeared in some places which was neither Scottish nor Presbyterian. Worshippers found that whereas the preaching of the Word had formerly been regarded as almost a prophetic function, the common prayers of the congregation were now regarded as the most objective part of the service, and preaching could be allowed to descend to the level of practical counsel, expository notes, or devotional comments by the minister. Services could be much less definite in type than they had been in the pre-innovation days, when the Shorter Catechism, the Bible, and the scheme of doctrine outlined in the *Westminster Confession* were the familiar basis of the common worship. They contrasted unfavourably in this respect with the worship of the Free Church or with the Anglo-Catholic Sung Eucharist, where the fundamental theological presuppositions underlying the services are so manifest and so generally accepted by the group of worshippers present.

A reaction against the Calvinistic stress on instruction was bound to come. As members of this Society we can only thank God that the movement initiated by Lee brought us all the light and joy of a worship based on an Incarnational theology, where hymns, colour, music, ceremony and the observance of the Christian Year have full place. Yet to dethrone the preaching of the Word, even slightly, from the centre of divine service, without proceeding to put the Eucharist at the centre of Sunday worship, was a grave step. Lee does not appear to have seen this. It was left to John Macleod and others of far-seeing vision to point out the dangers of what the reforming movement was bringing upon the Church. In practice a type of service was evolved, which, while it approximated to Anglican Mattins, was further removed from the norm of the Liturgy of the Word, a norm which was rooted in Primitive Christianity.

By 1940 a definite attempt was being made to put forward a theory of worship for the current type of Scottish service. Dr O. B. Milligan and others spoke of the whole act of worship as an offering made to God. It must be objective, not individualistic. The Sacraments were still put in subjection to the Word. The fact that the order of service which the Reformed Church had set up could be traced in origin to the Church's ancient Communion Office was emphasized by Dr W. D. Maxwell and others. Many seemed to find palliation in this fact for the fact that the Church was failing to fulfil the ideal of the Primitive and Reformed Churches, namely, that the weekly Eucharist

be the normal chief Sunday Service. Even yet many remain unperturbed by the fact, recently re-established by Cullmann, that there never existed in the Early Church a "Service of the Word" separate and independent from the celebration of the Eucharist. The majority of our congregations have in time seized upon most of the "improvements" and "enrichments" offered them by the reforming movement, but still continue to regard the conventional Morning Service as complete in itself. Only in one church prior to 1940 was the weekly Eucharist restored, and even there it was not the main Morning Service.⁽¹⁾ The problem of non-communicating attendance was a big factor. John Macleod and H. J. Wotherspoon both discussed it, but at an official level the Church has given no ruling.

The chief obstacle to making the Eucharist the chief act of worship every Sunday was the popular eucharistic theology, which, apart from the rejection of the doctrine of the Double Decree, remained as Calvinist as it had been in 1840. The Church did not make her own the teaching of the Scottish Church Society on the unity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice with Christ's Heavenly Sacrifice, which, had the Church accepted it, would have revolutionized and unified the Church's public worship and have made re-union easier now. Like Lee himself the reforming movement was not sacramentalist, in the strict sense of the word. Of course there were prominent leaders in the movement who were, but the majority stood fast by the old "preaching service", however much it might now be amplified and enriched by developments in its devotional aspects.

We must give Dr Lee all credit for having started a movement which won the right, for those who wished to exercise it, to prepare and use services on liturgical lines. He opened the door for the enrichment of services and churches in a manner which but a few years earlier would have been condemned out of hand as Popery or Episcopacy. This kept the people loyal to the Establishment at a difficult time in her history. It brought the Gospel to the people in a more human, practical manner. It helped to bridge the gulf between public worship and daily life. In a time of doubt, division, and confusion, it brought light and joy and strength to harassed souls. Religion in Scotland had for far too long been associated with emotional repression, with aesthetic hunger, with cold, intellectual dogma.

(1) Trinity Parish Church, Coatdyke.

Men still sought to glorify God above all when they met for worship, but they saw how unreasonable it was to imagine that this is best done by debasing human effort as much as possible. Symbolism does not belong to the Church's infancy, as Calvin imagined. God, it was now recognized, was known savingly through the Incarnation. Our Lord had spoken through some very humble and homely incidents. Therefore earthly beauty, human passions, and this-worldly ideals had a proper place in the sanctuary. At last they fully realized that "the Incarnation is as essential as the Trinity. It fundamentally affects the whole theory and method of our services." ⁽¹⁾

ALASTAIR K. ROBERTSON

⁽¹⁾ Prof. James Cooper, in *The Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society*, 1895, p. 15.