

THE THEOLOGY OF LITURGY*

First let me thank the President and Council of the Church Service Society for inviting me to give a Centenary lecture to this learned Society. I consider this to be a great honour, and may I add that I am very proud to follow in the footsteps of the distinguished Irish Presbyterian scholar, the Rev. Samuel Prenter, M.A., LL.D., D.D., Ormond Quay, Dublin, who addressed the annual meeting of the Society in 1890, and who in 1904 was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

I have chosen as a title 'The Theology of Liturgy'. This was occasioned by the fact that while many notable books have been published in recent years on the subject of worship and liturgy a considerable number of them do not appear to me to provide an adequate theological basis as they are too cult-centred. My aim, therefore, is not to set out a blueprint, but rather to seek the sources providing the guidelines for a Theology of Liturgy. Indeed a theology of liturgy is a vital necessity if worship is to be real and genuinely Christian.

In the apostolic age, Christianity is above all else the religion of the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Lord. In the earliest days this was the centre of the conflict. The Sanhedrin forbade the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus. To this St. Peter replied, 'There is no salvation in anyone else at all, for there is no other name under heaven granted to men, by which we may receive salvation' (Acts 4:12).

When the procurator Festus informed King Agrippa as to the case against St. Paul, he said it concerned 'someone called Jesus, a dead man whom Paul alleged to be alive' (Acts 25:19).

Tacitus, although far from being fully informed, says of those 'who are commonly called Christians' that they 'derived their name from Christus', who 'was executed at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius' (*Annales*, 15:44).

Suetonius, writing about the Edict of Claudius, says, 'The Jews were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus' (*Vita Claudii*, 25:4).

Pliny, the younger, who considers Christianity to be 'a depraved and extravagant superstition' says 'the sum of their guilt or error amounted only to this, that on an appointed day they . . . meet before daybreak, and recite a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a

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god, and to bind themselves by an oath (sacramentum) . . . to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery and breach of faith. . . . After the conclusion of this ceremony it was their custom to depart and meet again to take food . . . ' (*Epistles*, 96).

This evidence from early adversaries of Christianity that Christ is the central object of faith is also to be found in the first Christian preaching. This is the theme of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, at the gate of the Temple, and before the Sanhedrin – 'God has made him Lord and Christ', 'God raised him from the dead' (Acts 2-4). It, also, is the theme of St. Paul in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13).

Christ, as well as being the central object of faith, is also the Saviour, in whom every man must trust and hope. Salvation and forgiveness are in Christ alone (Acts 2:38; 4:12; 5:31; 13:38). A truth which we find expressed in the *Shorter Catechism*, 'The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ . . .' (21), and the *Catechism of Vatican II*, 'All men have need of Christ who is the . . . saviour and giver of life' (67).

To be redeemed means that one no longer belongs to himself, he is the Lord's, as St. Paul puts it. 'No one of us lives, and equally no one of us dies, for himself alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Whether therefore we live or die, we belong to the Lord. This is why Christ died and came to life again, to establish his lordship over dead and living' (Rom. 14:7-9; cf. I Cor. 6:19-20).

Christianity, consequently, is not simply a new condition of life, it is a new life. In baptism, Christians are buried with Christ in death and raised again with him to life (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12; 3:4). In rising again they do not do so as separate individuals, isolated from one another, they rise as members of the people of God, the body of Christ, the Church (I Cor. 12:13, 27; Rom. 12:5; Col. 1:18; 3:15; Eph. 4:4), with Christ as Lord and Head. In him they have life and are bound to one another.

The primacy of Christ, and his life-giving power, extends not only to the Church, but to the whole world of which he is ruler and head. The writer of Colossians puts it thus, 'In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities, and powers: the whole universe has been created through him and for him. And he exists before everything, and all things are held together in him. He is, moreover, the head of the body, the church. He is its origin, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme. For in him the complete being of God, by God's own choice, came to dwell. Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the

cross – to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone' (Col. 1:16-20).

This is not mere speculation. It governs the whole of the Christian life. The Church is the body of Christ: all its activities are produced within it by the action of Christ, the Head. He is its life (I. Cor 11-14:12; Eph. 4:11-16).

The sacraments are set forth only in this light. Baptism is burial and resurrection with Christ. The eucharist is participation of his body and blood. It is a partaking of his death and resurrection (Cullmann and Leenhardt, *Essays on the Lord's Supper*).

Not only does this Headship apply to the sacraments. It does so to ordinances, for example, ordination, 'While they were . . . offering worship to the Lord, the Holy Spirit, said, Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me, to do the work to which I have called them' (Acts 13:1-4). So, also, in marriage there is a union representative of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:25, 32). Or, if we take the rite of burial, the Apocalypse says, 'Happy are the dead who die in the faith of Christ' (14:13).

The same thought underlies all moral exhortations. St. Paul says, 'for to me life is Christ' (Phil. 1:21). Because our bodies are members of Christ we must flee fornication (I Cor. 6:15), husbands must love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25), Christ being rich for our sakes became poor, therefore we must be generous (II Cor. 8:9), Christ took the form of a servant, so we must be humble (Phil. 2:6-7), servants must be obedient to their masters as to Christ (Eph. 6:5), as Christ loves the master, so must the master love his slave (Philemon).

Petrine teaching is the same as the Pauline, 'Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example; it is for you to follow in his steps' (I Pet. 2:21; cf. 3:18; 4:1, 13-14). So is the Johannine. Christians are the servants of Christ, and the martyrs are witnesses to him.

This constant reference to Christ in order to inculcate upon Christians fidelity to duty fills the whole of life in apostolic teaching.

How is this related to worship? Writing about the central place of worship in early Christian life and thought Dr. A. B. Macdonald says:

From all that we are told of the early Church and its Worship, it would appear that the immediate motive leading a number of Christians in any place to form themselves into a Christian fellowship was the desire to worship God together in their special Christian way. Their organisation as a visible body of believers was, first and foremost, an organisation for Worship. Organisation for other purposes might grow out of their Worship, or might lean on it, but was in no case primary. It was when regular assemblies

for Worship were instituted in any place that the actual existence of a church in that place was attained, and its continuance secured (*Christian Worship in the Primitive Church*, p. 195).

With this statement there is general agreement, but the phrase 'in their special Christian way' raises a second issue. The emphasis upon the centrality of Christ did not cause the Father to be forgotten; quite the contrary. God was in Christ. Canon Leonard Hodgson has said, 'Christianity began as a trinitarian religion with a unitarian theology' (van Dusen, *Spirit, Son, and Father*, p. 150), and, indeed, as Dr. T. H. Bindley points out, all the early heresies were trinitarian (*Oecumenical Documents of the Faith*, 1st edit., intro). The task of the early Church was to bring its theology into line with its experience. The problem was that of monotheism and the divinity of Christ. The latter must be secured otherwise Christianity would cease to be. Its experience of Christ polarized the Church's reflection upon the meaning of God, resulting in the doctrine of the Trinity. So too in worship. We can think truly about worship 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' only if we primarily think 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'. St. Paul writing to the Romans says, 'Let me begin by thanking my God, through Jesus Christ . . .' (1:8). The Christian Church prays to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'. The character of Christian worship is fundamentally determined by the nature of God given in Christian revelation. Both worship and theological reflection upon its nature must be carried on in a trinitarian framework. But Christology is the pivot in the doctrine of the Trinity. As it is in the Event of Christ that God reveals and communicates his very being to man, Christian worship is Christological. It is also pneumatological but it is Christology which safeguards against this becoming subjective.

From this early period a third factor has to be considered. Preaching and Baptism-Eucharist may be described as 'the earliest Gospel'. Through them was shown forth and proclaimed the person and work of Christ for years before the first epistle or gospel was written. Here it might be well to call to remembrance the answer of Irenaeus to the question, 'How should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings?' He answers:

Would it not be necessary to follow the course of the tradition they handed down . . . ? To which course many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ do assent, having salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit, without paper and ink, and carefully preserving the ancient tradition (*Adversus Haereses*, III. 4:1-2).

Indeed, his comments concerning those who ignore the Church and Tradition are also relevant.

Their manner of acting is just as if one, when a beautiful image of a king has been constructed by some skilful artist out of precious jewels . . . should rearrange the gems, and so fit them together as to make them into the form of a dog or of a fox, and even that but poorly executed; and thus exhibiting the jewels should deceive the ignorant who had no conception of what a king's form was like, and persuade them that that miserable likeness of the fox was, in fact, the beautiful image of the king. (*Adversus Haereses*, I. 8:1).

It is essential to grasp that through worship Christ influenced the inmost mind of the Church and left his indelible stamp upon it during this formative period.

The evidence of the apostolic and early Church reveals that in any theology of liturgy Tradition, Ecclesiology and Christology have a role.

Before looking at the relation of theology to liturgy, one point should perhaps be clarified. Professor W. P. Paterson in his Baird Lectures said, 'The value of a religion depends on the truth and sufficiency of its idea of God' (*Rule of Faith*, p. 203). While the worship of other religions includes adoration, thanksgiving, intercession, and other elements common to Christianity it is not worship in general we are considering. It is Christian worship. So if we do not get our Christology right our thinking about Christian worship is not likely to be right. The reason for emphasizing this is the very real problem created in the field of education in a multi-religious school where one may have both teachers and pupils from Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and other faiths. While personally fully supporting the use of an Agreed Syllabus which provides education not only about Christianity but about other major religious faiths, I feel that the School Assembly for worship raises distinct issues. A paper submitted by the Religious and Cultural Panel of Birmingham Community Relations Committee to the City of Birmingham Conference in 1971 concluded with the following questions:

In a multi-religious school, might worship be led by teachers or groups of the senior boys and girls themselves, drawn at different times from the different faiths represented in the school?

It is possible to compose suitable acts of worship based upon the considerable common element among the different religious traditions? (*Learning for Living*, September, 1971 pp. 26-8).

I hope that I am Christian enough to see the good in other faiths and that I would have no hesitation in using in Christian worship a prayer from another faith. Take, for example, the prayer of Mohammed:

O Lord, grant us to love thee; grant that we may love those that love thee; grant that we may do the deeds that win thy love.

Make the love of thee to be dearer to us than ourselves or our families (S. F. Fox, *A Chain of Prayer across the Ages*, p. 27).

Or the prayer for penitence from the *Authorized Daily Prayer Book* of the orthodox Jewish community:

O God of forgiveness, who art gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness, I confess unto thee with a broken and contrite heart that I have sinned, and have done that which is evil in thy sight. Behold, I repent me of my evil way, and return unto thee with perfect repentance. Help me, O God of my salvation, that I may not again turn unto folly, but walk before thee in truth and uprightness (316a).

Yet perhaps it is because I have used these prayers I feel that there is a fundamental distinction between education and worship, (although worship is a vital element in education), in that a Moham-medan would address these words to Allah and a Jew to Yahweh, whereas I addressed them to God in Christ.

In fairness to those who advocate the adoption of such worship in schools, it must be pointed out that they do not claim that it is Christian worship. They describe it as 'inter-faith worship'. On the other hand, the assertion that this worship is an affirmation of the themes on which it is based requires careful scrutiny. While acknowledging the positive fact that meditation upon some of these themes is necessary and that the themes themselves may be in no way contrary to the Christian way of life, there is a real danger of reducing religion to a mixture of humanistic principles.

Even within the Christian Church we must beware of reducing Christianity to the thematic or propositional although worship is always 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'. It arises particularly for those entrusted with possibly the most difficult of all liturgical tasks the compilation of Lectionaries. Indeed, when analysed to its greatest extent could such an outlook not have been responsible for the days when, in Scottish worship, the sermon was the great feature of the Service, and it was too often 'a screed of dull doctrine or of cold morality'? (R. H. Story, *The Reformed Ritual in Scotland*, p. 36). In other words, the proposition or value has become more central than the living person of the Saviour.

Without condemning inter-faith worship, it must be clearly recognized that it is not Christian worship; and while its positive elements should not be denied in a pluralist society the danger of reducing Christian worship to a mixture of Christian truth and secular humanism or something else must be faced.

Professor J. G. Riddell, Glasgow, in his introduction to his commentary on *A Short Statement of Faith (What We Believe)* shows that what we believe determines how we act. This is relevant to a

consideration of the relation of theology to liturgy. As a man believes, so he prays. Many illustrations of this occur in history. The theological objection of the Reformers to the medieval Mass 'as a propitiatory sacrifice' may be taken as an illustration. Worship as propitiation embodies a concept of God in which his grace is obtained by man's works rather than as a free gift through faith. The effect of this on worship can be seen in the liturgical works of Luther, Calvin, Knox and Cranmer, so let it suffice to quote some words I wrote concerning the first German Mass of the Strasbourg reformer, Diebold Schwarz:

Schwarz made five changes which, because they are constructive, should not pass unrecognized. Firstly, the doctrinal basis underlying the rite was changed towards the Reformed position. Secondly, the rite was to be said audibly and in the vernacular . . . Thirdly, he restored the communion of the people in both kinds. Fourthly, the *Confiteor*, formerly said by the priest, was slightly modified and enlarged and was to be said aloud as a general confession of the people. . . . And, fifthly, his treatment of the Canon of the Mass was constructive. While he simplified its form without altering its essential character, the Canon was retained and continued to be entitled as such (*Worship of the Reformed Church*, p. 14).

Here we see how doctrine or dogma determines worship. The character of worship springs from the nature and character of the God who is believed in. Our concept of God and the way we manifest and expound his relation to man determine our worship. The God of thought and the God of devotion cannot be separated. But just as theology influences liturgy, so liturgy influences theology, because it brings theological statements before the bar of experience. Hazelton puts this rather well when he says:

A God who can be worshipped is as necessary to theology as a believable God is necessary to worship (*The God We Worship*, p. 158).

Indeed, it is possible that one gets a truer understanding of the belief and faith of the Church of Scotland in its *Book of Common Order* than from a study of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Here, let me give a personal illustration. Some twenty-five years ago I would have maintained that I could have answered any question put to me concerning the worship of the Eastern Church as the result of my study of the fathers and theologians of the Greek and Russian Churches. Then one day I went to the celebration of the *Liturgy of St. Chrysostom*. The result was that I realized that I knew nothing. Here was opened up to me a whole new world – rich in devotion.

The theology of the Orthodox Church ceased to be formal and became living. What I am trying to say is that there must be an inter-relationship between theology and liturgy if we are to attain to a theology of liturgy. A failure to recognize this opens the door to two dangers.

The first is the menace of the liturgical expert who tries to force worship into his own preconceived structures. While insisting 'on the ordered life of the Primitive Church' this is the main criticism by Professor W. D. Davies of the thesis of an early rigid form by Dom Gregory Dix in his *Shape of the Liturgy* (*Christian Origins and Judaism*, p. 221). It is also the basis of Louis Bouyer's criticism of Dom Gueranger's concept of the proper celebration of the Mass. He writes:

It could not have become the real worship of any actual congregation of the period. It could only become the worship of that artificial monastic congregation which Gueranger had brought into existence simply to carry it out (*Liturgical Piety*, p. 12).

The second danger is that of the pastor who blandly says 'I am no theologian', forgetting that if this is true he is taking his stipend on false pretences. He ignores the fact that every time he selects lections, writes a sermon, prepares prayers, or chooses a psalm or hymn he is acting theologically.

The Reformed Church is permanently open to this affliction, and this is so because of a false theology. Thomas Cartwright wrote in 1574 concerning responses:

God hath ordained the minister that as in public meetings he only is the mouth of the Lord from Him to the people, even so he ought to be only the mouth of the people from them unto the Lord, and that all the people should attend to that which is said by the minister and in the end both declare their consent to that which is said and their hope that it should be so and come to pass which is prayed, by the word Amen' (*Reply*, cf. Whitgift, *Works*, ii p. 490).

While Cartwright may only have been echoing an opinion held earlier the fact is that the Reformers were opposed to the sacerdotal Roman priesthood yet the Puritans because of a false ecclesiology established an equally sacerdotal public worship.

While referring to the dangers arising from the preconceived ideas of the liturgical expert and the non-theological pastor, it must be clear that it is impossible to reach an adequate theology of liturgy unless both the theologian and the pastor are involved in the study and reform of liturgy. Each has a vital contribution to make. That this is so may be seen by a simple experiment. First read what

Calvin has to say about the baptism of infants in the *Institutes*. Then take his *La Forme des Prières* and study the rite for baptism placing it in its liturgical context. Dr. H. G. Hageman brought this out well a few years ago when he said:

The . . . Catechism tells about the atoning death of Christ; the Lord's Supper shows it forth; a sermon proclaims the presence of Christ with his people; the Holy Communion actualizes it. A Confession of Faith declares that God always takes the initiative in Man's salvation; the Sacrament of Infant Baptism demonstrates it (*Theology Today*, 1949, p. 500).

A theological basis is necessary, otherwise the Church is at the mercy of liturgical gipsies. Baptism may be seen in the local congregation as a 'social occasion' instead of witnessing to the divine initiative in Man's salvation.

In the liturgical movement, perhaps it is true to say that attention has been concentrated too exclusively upon Baptism and the Eucharist, to the neglect of other Ordinances. Let us consider the position with regard to Burial. *Sacrosanctum concilium* says:

The rite for the burial of the dead should evidence more clearly the paschal character of Christian death (81).

So it is interesting to note the change in the *Worship-book Services* in American Presbyterianism where the Funeral Service and the Committal Service are entitled 'Witness to the Resurrection' (pp. 71-88).

Or, if we take the Marriage Service in the *Book of Common Order* of the Church of Scotland, its structure is praise, declaration of intention, prayer, vows, declaration of marriage followed by Scripture reading and prayer (pp. 154-160). Yet Scottish theologians would maintain that Christian Marriage is an Ordinance of the Word. If the theological statement is correct then surely the Scripture readings should precede the vows and declaration of marriage as it is on the basis of their teaching that the marriage covenant is entered into. The Order should be parallel to that for Ordination. For once the Westminster *Directory for the Public Worship of God* (pp. 156-158) appears to be more biblical than Knox's *Book of Common Order* (pp. 128-133).

Let us now try to see if in what we have said there are any guidelines for a theology of liturgy. We have seen that the minister or pastor in the local congregation has a vital part to play, but it has to be remembered that he suffers from tremendous pressures. He may have a half-empty church, or have to face the contradiction between everything he stands for and proclaims in the name of Christ and the immoralities of society. This raises serious temptations. Temptations to make man's experience more sovereign than

the nature and character of Christ and so to structure worship psychologically, or to follow sociological principles - to introduce the 'pop group' (although there is nothing wrong with this *per se*) to attract numbers - to ally worship with a political or social ideology - to reduce worship (especially by the use of certain types of hymnody or of jargon) to an emotional outlet - to produce a sort of escapism - to surrender to the existential situation. The temptations are numerous. This is not to deny that psychology and sociology have much to teach us about communication. They are the servants of theology. But to surrender, putting it at its lowest level, is to forget the words of Dean W. R. Inge that when a Church marries the spirit of the age, she will be left a widow in the next generation.

Of course, in fairness it has to be realized that many of the pressures come from outside the Church. If one may take an illustration from the present Northern Ireland situation without commenting on it. During the past month a gang, calling themselves Protestants - as you saw on BBC TV news - broke into St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church and behaved in a sacrilegious manner. This has been condemned - and rightly so - by the leaders of the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. In 1969 - three years ago - the Luther Church, belonging to the Church of Ireland, was broken into, the furnishings smashed, the Communion Vessels thrown on the floor, and 'Up the IRA' painted across the altar. Not only did the news media not show any pictures of this, but to this day there has been no public condemnation of it by a leader of the Roman Catholic Church. In such circumstances, the existential pressures can be almost overwhelming. Worship may be considered irrelevant. It becomes powerless to transform life. The Church is reduced to impotence. At the same time, this illustration shows the importance of the pastor in liturgical reform because it reveals the validity of his concern to relate liturgy and life.

Worship must not be used to achieve humanly chosen ends. It is founded upon the divine initiative. To formulate a theology of liturgy a knowledge of the world is necessary.

Indeed, the New Testament shows that this is a biblical principle. The NT tells us that the Church is 'the Church of the living God', 'the new creation', 'the people of God', 'the Body of Christ', and so on. But it does not stop there. This is what the Church should be, but a realistic view is taken. 'Her virtues are praised, her faults are not glossed over.' She is praised for her 'love and faithfulness, good service and fortitude' and for her 'standing fast', but she is condemned for 'losing her early love', for her 'divisions', and for being 'neither hot nor cold' (Rev. 2-3). But this is not all. The NT always gives full recognition to the situation in which the Church is placed - 'I know how hard pressed you are', 'I know where you live; it is the

place where Satan has his throne', 'I know . . . Antipas, my faithful witness, was murdered in your city' (Rev. 2-3).

From this it is clear that while the existential situation of the Church must be considered and the insights it provides recognized, these must never become normative, as Bonhoeffer shows:

The first demand . . . made of those who belong to God's Church is . . . that they shall be witnesses to Jesus Christ before the world. . . . This testimony before the world can be given in a right way only if it springs from a hallowed life in the congregation of God. But a genuine hallowed life in the congregation . . . at the same time impels a man to testify before the world.

Then he warns

If this testimony ceases to be given, it is a sign of the inner corruption of the congregation (*Ethics*, pp. 202-3).

Having considered the place of the pastor in providing guidelines for a theology of liturgy, let us now consider the contribution of the theologian in the more technical meaning of that term. In our survey of the early Church we saw the prominent position of the Tradition, Ecclesiology and Christology. Today the activity of the theologian still appears to be in these fields, so let us first look at the Tradition.

First, of course, it is necessary to state what is meant by the Tradition. The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal, 1963, used Tradition (with a capital 'T') to mean the Gospel, traditions (with a small 't') for confessional traditions, such as, Lutheran, Anglican or Reformed, and tradition (with a small 't') as 'the traditional process' (*Report*, p. 50). While on scripture and tradition there is considerable difference from Vatican II, yet it appears true to say that both Montreal and Vatican II hold the Scriptures to be 'the written word of God' (*Report*, p. 53; *Dei Verbum*, 9), the Gospel, the Tradition.

Let us look first at traditions (with a small 't'). In the history of the Church there have been many liturgical traditions – Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople in the East, Roman, Gallican, Mozarabic and Celtic in the West, and Lutheran, Anglican and Reformed in the post-Reformation period, to name a few. This fact must not be ignored. Two of the most difficult situations I found myself in pastorally were caused by 'loss of memory'. The men concerned did not know who they were, where they had come from, or where they were going to. They did not know whether they were married or not, and did not recognize either their parents or their children. As memory is necessary for the continuity of personality, so tradition sustains the corporate personality of a community. The various liturgical

traditions cannot simply be scrapped and a start made *de novo*. While admitting that rigid adherence to a tradition can be crippling, traditions do give a stable character or value in that they have come into being in the encounter of the Christian Faith with man's life in history. They, also, warn against a rigid uniformity, and any attempt to produce a pseudo-unity by eclectic methods. Surely, the Church of Scotland followed the correct way when it allowed *Prayers for Divine Service* (1929) of 'the auld Kirk' and the *Book of Common Order* (1928) of the United Free Church to exist side by side for a decade before issuing the *Book of Common Order* (1940) in that opportunity was thus provided for a growing into one. Here, the position appears to have been stated by the General Council of the World Presbyterian Alliance in 1948:

In liturgy, as in doctrine, the Reformed Church recognises as normative – as absolutely binding – only what is revealed by the Word of God. . . . The Reformed Church cannot recognise tradition as a second normative authority alongside the Bible, but . . . respects tradition as a consultative authority (*Proceedings*, pp. 212-213).

There is a place for a variety of liturgical forms provided the various traditional elements are placed under the judgement of the Tradition (with a capital 'T'). In other words, as the Westminster *Confession of Faith* says:

There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God . . . which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence (1:6).

The situation is completely different with regard to the Tradition, Word of God, Gospel, which is not to be identified with the Bible, for as Luther reminds us,

A Bible lying on the dusty shelf of a library is not the Word of God.

What is meant rather is Christ, the Word, illumined by the Holy Spirit to the mind of the Church universal, the creative and life-giving power of the Christ-Event. While traditions are not normative, Tradition, in this sense of the term, is. Recognizing that the Church has failed to see the normative motive of the Tradition, Gospel, in the past in some liturgical and devotional areas of its life, let us take a modern illustration. Professor Joachim Jeremias has shown that the word 'many' in Greek is in opposition to 'all' and means 'many, but not all', whereas Hebrew and Aramaic have no word for 'all' in the plural so 'many' can have an inclusive connotation, 'the whole,

comprising many individuals' (*Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, pp. 123-5). Did Jesus die 'for many' and not 'for all'? The literal translation is 'for many', but the theological truth is that Christ died and rose, again 'for all' as the Fourth Gospel says 'for the life of the world' (John 6:51). Yet, only one liturgical rite has altered the words of distribution to

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, which is shed for all unto remission of sins: drink ye all of it.

Ecclesiology also provides essential concepts to a theology of liturgy. We remember the dominant place of worship in the early Church. The same is true of the Reformers, for example, the *Scots Confession* (1560):

The notes of the true Kirk . . . we believe, confess, and avow to be: first, the true preaching of the Word of God, in which God has revealed Himself to us . . .; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus . . .; and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's Word prescribes. . . . (18).

In other words, the Church is defined liturgically. Other Reformed Confessions could be quoted in support, and what is true of them is also true of the Lutheran (*Augsburg Confession* 7) and the Anglican (*Thirty-nine Articles* 19) Churches. Vatican II does the same when it says:

The liturgy is . . . the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2).

Today when there is a demand for a new definition of the Church, for example, in terms of mission or of action, and so on, the liturgical theologian has a valuable corrective balance to make by maintaining that worship in a fundamental sense is the mode of the Church's being, that, as Bishop Kenneth E. Kirk put it, 'disinterested service is the only service that is serviceable; and disinterestedness comes by the life of worship alone' (*Vision of God*, p. 451). Here we have an indication of the essential unity of worship and mission.

Ecclesiology also establishes the objectivity of the divine. Jesus Christ forms the people into a Church for himself, so worship is, as it were, man's being brought face to face with the divine reality. But the fact that the being of the worshipper becomes one with the being of his fellow-worshippers through being united with Christ makes worship corporate. This is the essence of *koinonia*, for as St. Paul says 'We being many are made one'. For this to have real meaning requires 'oneness' and a 'norm'.

While 'oneness' can find expression in silence (and we do not make enough use of this), for the most part it is expressed in words. One of

the most striking illustrations of the use of language occurs in John Buchan's *Three Hostages*. His friend Dick has advised Sandy to take up politics, and he reflects:

I might be bored in Parliament . . . but I should love the rough-and-tumble of an election. I only once took part in one, and I discovered surprising gifts as a demagogue, and made a speech in our little town which is still talked about. The chief row was about Irish Home Rule, and I thought I'd better have a whack at the Pope. Has it ever struck you, Dick, that ecclesiastical language has a most sinister sound? I knew some of the words, though not their meaning, but I knew that my audience would be just as ignorant. So I had a magnificent peroration. 'Will you, men of Kilclavers', I asked, 'endure to see a chasuble set up in your market place? Will you have your daughters sold into simony? Will you have celibacy practised in the public streets?' Gad, I had them all on their feet bellowing 'Never!' (p. 63).

In liturgical theology, the correct use of language is vital if the corporateness of worship is to be a true unity, and if intercession for the world and the service of mankind, in Christ's name, is to be genuine.

Ecclesiology also gives liturgical theology normative structures for worship. Especially the marks of the true Church, as understood by the Reformers, the Word and Sacraments. Using the term 'word' with a small 'w', we mean Scripture reading and preaching. In this sense, word and sacrament are but different modes of the Word. Karl Barth says:

Worship without the Eucharist is a theological impossibility and . . . we have not received from God the right to make this liturgical amputation, we have usurped it (von Allmen, *Worship: its Theology and Practice*, p. 156).

It is not necessary to discuss this in detail, as it is generally agreed that until recently Roman Catholicism has exalted the Eucharist above the sermon, whereas Protestantism has done the reverse, and that in spite of the eucharistic theology of Bucer, Luther, Calvin and Cranmer. Indeed, the major achievement of the liturgical movement has been to point to the necessity to bring our practice into harmony with our theology.

Ecclesiology provides a further guideline in the doctrine of the community of saints in all ages, the oneness of the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. While this is partly relevant in connection with tradition, it is more fundamental in relation to the communion of saints and concerns the use of great outbursts of praise in the *Gloria in excelsis*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, *Magnificat*, etc. A

theology of liturgy should provide for the use of such in public worship linking the Church on earth and in heaven and age to age.

Finally, let us ask what help is provided by Christology? Here, I do not refer to doctrinal disputes. Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, or whatever else, are relevant and a knowledge of the issues involved is necessary. What I am interested in is not the *anathemas* of Nicaea or Trent, but rather in the Christ whom men and women meet face to face in the liturgy. Let us take an illustration. The Eucharist in the early Church was an Easter celebration whereas an examination of today's rites in the various churches reveals that many of them, to use Brilioth's phrase, tend 'to give to the sacred rite the one-sided character of a commemoration of Good Friday' (*Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, p. 282). Who the people meet is the dying Christ.

The Christian Gospel proclaims that the Eternal has revealed himself in act, in time and space in Christ Jesus. Consequently the commemoration of God's mighty acts in history must always have a central place in Christian worship. At the same time, the Logos, the Word, the Christ has an ontological meaning as well as an incarnational and historical, together with a soteriological and eschatological. In a theology of liturgy all these meanings must find full and balanced expression for, as St. John says, it is 'from his fullness' we receive 'grace upon grace' (1:16). In other words, in worship man must come face to face with the being of God in his acts and the acts of God in his being. Worship is corrupted when man is confronted by 'a god of his own making' and when he treats this as the ultimate. The guideline of Christology in the theology of liturgy, therefore, is that the person and work of Christ, and this alone, is normative.

In conclusion, we may summarize by saying that the existential situation of the Church in the world, the Tradition and traditions, Ecclesiology and Christology all provide guidelines for the theology of liturgy, but only those of the Tradition and Christology are normative.

In the Reformed Church we hold ourselves to be *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*, so possibly we should say that our whole approach to a theology of liturgy should be *liturgica reformata semper reformanda*, remembering that in liturgy, as in doctrine, we have, as Professor T. L. Haitjema says, 'to think in the sphere of the Holy Spirit' (*Ministry and Sacraments*, edit. Headlam and Dunkerley, p. 166).

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