

THE CHURCH SERVICE SOCIETY and the SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY

The Church Service Society

The society was founded in 1865 as a result of the renewed interest in worship in the Church of Scotland. Its object was formulated as:

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

The second of these aims - the compilation of liturgical material - was carried out by the publication of the society's service book, Euchologion, which had a wide circulation and ran eventually to nine editions. This function of the Society, however, has been largely taken over by the General Assembly's own Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion and with the publication of the Book of Common Order. The Society still publishes liturgical material which has been prepared by individuals or unofficial groups. The first of the aims - the study of liturgies - is carried out through "The Record" and by the conferences and lectures organised by the Society.

In the early days of the Society the liturgical object was rigidly adhered to and theological issues were not raised. For example, the Society refrained from advocating a more frequent celebration of communion in the Church of Scotland. It was felt that there were a variety of different viewpoints in the Society on this question and that each member should be left to make up his own mind. The Society also did not approve a suggestion that it should publish a book dealing with the history of the law and practice of worship in the Kirk. It was felt that such a book was not within the Society's proper sphere of operations. Now, however, through its journal the Society publishes material relating to the theology, history, and practice of worship, although not from any one point of view. The Society is concerned with worship in its widest sense.

The Scottish Church Society

The Scottish Church Society was formed later than the Church Service Society, in 1892, with the aim

"to defend and advance Catholic doctrine as set forth in the Ancient Creeds and embodied in the Standards of the Church of Scotland; and generally to assert Scriptural principles in all matters relating to Church Order and Policy, Christian Work, and Spiritual Life, throughout Scotland."

In many respects the Society can be said to have emerged from the Church Service Society. Some members of the Church Society felt the need, along with the revival of worship, of seeing that changes in the church were grounded in what they considered to be "catholic" doctrine. This doctrine was contained in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and was affirmed in the reformed Confessions of Faith of the Church of Scotland. They wished to affirm the "fundamental

doctrines" of the Christian faith, those truths which lie at the basis of all church life and activity. * The motto of the Society is from Jeremiah:

"Ask for the Old Paths and walk therein."

The "old paths" are those of scripture and of the early church, the catholic element in the church's tradition.

The founders of the Scottish Church Society saw it as being different from other societies in the church, such as the Church Service Society, which studied the worship of the church, the Church Law Society, which dealt with the constitution of the church, or the Ecclesiological Society, which was concerned with church architecture. The Society, it was said, has a wider scope and deeper principle than these societies since its primary concern is not with ritual, law or fabric, but with doctrine. The founders of the Society continued to be members and office-bearers of the Church Service Society and wished the work of the two societies to be viewed as complementary and not in any way opposed to each other. The Scottish Church Society was working along different lines, but its aims were not mutually exclusive to those of the Church Service Society. Its membership, too, is not so broad based. Whereas the Church Service Society is open to those who are interested in the study of worship in all its aspects, members of the Scottish Church Society are those who share its doctrinal position and wish to be identified with that stance in the church.

In addition, the founders of the Scottish Church Society were not only concerned with the doctrinal basis of worship but with other areas of the life of the church. When the society was founded there were changes taking place in theology itself and it was proposed that an alteration be made in the subscription of ministers to the Confession of Faith. There was the question of the relation between the church and the state and the proposed reunion of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. The question remained as to the direction these developments would take. Members of the Scottish Church Society wished any changes to be made in the light of the doctrines which are at the root of the church's life. There are changes taking place in the worship, government, and ministry of the Kirk today, and the role of the society lies in relating these concerns to "catholic" doctrine.

The two societies today

Points for discussion as to why the differences between the two societies are not so obvious today :-

1. The Church Service Society now publishes material relating to the theology of worship, and those members of the Scottish Church Society who are also members of the Church Service Society are able to discuss the doctrinal basis of worship in this way.

2. The Church Service Society does not contain such a wide variety of points of view among its membership as it once did,
3. The distinctive aims and objects of the Scottish Church Society are not so well known because its membership is smaller and it has not issued so much in the way of publications.
4. The Scottish Church Society has been more concerned with worship than with other matters and its wider concerns have not been so obvious.

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- * An exposition of the Society's doctrinal position can be found in H.J. Wotherspoon and J.M. Kirkpatrick, Manual of Church Doctrine.

PREPARING MORNING SERVICES FOR A RURAL PARISH

For the past four and a half years I have ministered in a rural parish. The two places of worship are $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles apart, and the services are at 10.45a.m. and 12 noon. The first service is a little more restricted in time than the second - usually 50 minutes as compared with 60. The children like everyone else are brought to church by car; Sunday Schools are therefore held at the same time as the services, with the children leaving after the second hymn. Apart from the place of the dedication of the offering, the order of service is the same in each church. I always aim at giving the service "shape", following with some variation the order given in the Book of Common Order (1979) pages 42 - 43. My order is as follows :

Intimations

APPROACH TO GOD

Call to worship

Praise

Call to Prayer

Prayers of Adoration/Thanksgiving, Confession, Absolution, Supplication,
ending with Lord's Prayer

THE WORD OF GOD

First Scripture Reading (sometimes omitted at first service)

Children's Address

Praise - Children's Hymn

Second Scripture Reading

Praise

Prayer for Illumination

Sermon