

AT BUTTERFIELD'S ISLAND MASTERPIECE

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The Church Service Society visited The College of The Holy Spirit at The Cathedral of The Isles on the Isle of Cumbrae last autumn for an overnight conference. I am privileged to be the Warden of The College of The Holy Spirit (a somewhat Trollopian title for 'manager' of the retreat house) and it was my pleasure to welcome the Society and look after them for two days. A number of connections emerged over the course of the conference, many of which I was expecting. My late father, the Rev A. Stewart Todd, D.D., (of whom an obituary appeared in the last edition of this periodical) was a past Honorary President of the Society and he was a great contributor to, and he and my late mother were assiduous attendees of, the Society's meetings. There were other connections too – Scotland being the village that it is.

The connections were not just social but historical. The College of The Holy Spirit and its Collegiate Church were built by architect William Butterfield at the behest of George Frederick Boyle, Earl of Glasgow, in 1851. It was Boyle's second big building and Butterfield's third church in Scotland. Boyle and Lord Forbes had commissioned Butterfield to build St Ninian's Cathedral in Perth in 1851 and Butterfield had earlier built a church for the Marchioness of Lothian in Jedburgh. These men were all part of the Oxford Movement in Scotland – a movement that had, in the 1840s, built a public school and seminary at Glenalmond just outside Perth which survives as a public school.

By the time The College of The Holy Spirit was built on the Isle of Cumbrae on land near the Earl of Glasgow's summer house known as the Garrison, the seminary function of Glenalmond had come to an end. The College was to be a seminary for Scottish Episcopal priests and a place of study for other students of theology. There were to be four priests who would maintain the daily office in the Collegiate Church and undertake tuition in the College and some pastoral work in the community. There was provision for a choir school with a separate building for their accommodation and study but this only lasted a few years before they were shipped off to Perth.



In many ways this was a forerunner of The Community and College of The Resurrection at Mirfield near Leeds founded by Charles Gore at the end of the nineteenth century – Gore who was famously the editor of *Lux Mundi* published in 1889 – a collection of essays by members of Oxford Group (a continuation of the Oxford Movement) which caused a stir at the time. The College there still operates as a seminary for Anglican priests and the community – much larger than Cumbrae was or could ever have been – assists in the work of the College but maintains worship in the church.

The Oxford Movement which started in England around 1833 with such men as John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey, Charles Marriott and Isaac Williams, was primarily concerned to save the Church of England from the State and worldliness. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Church had become unpopular. Too many churches had no resident clergy, communion was celebrated infrequently, the daily office was only said in the Cathedrals and many of the churches were furnished to a standard inferior to that of the average working man's home.

John Keble's book of poetry *The Christian Year*, published in 1827, and his sermon on national apostasy were undoubtedly inspirational. The aim of the movement was to 'go back to basics', to create a spiritual revival where personal devotion, prayer and worship were central to the church. They wanted their clergy to be men of study and pastors to their flocks rather than ambitious professional civil servants collecting benefices to improve their standing and their income. The movement sought to educate and train the clergy in the ways of religious study and pastoral care so that they could pass their knowledge and experience on to the people.

They took the *Book of Common Prayer* as their guide. Did this talk about the Church being a department of the State? Did it describe the Bishop's chief function as sitting in the House of Lords? Does the Book say communion should only be celebrated once per month? Should churches be closed during the week? Are Christian truths Protestant or Roman Catholic? Were they invented in the sixteenth century? The Book is, of course, a book of praise and prayer, of rite and devotion. It does not contain doctrine or theology and this was one of the aims of the Movement to bring men back to God with religion coming before theology.

It is not difficult to imagine similar circumstances in Scotland. The schism in 1843 was, after all, to do with patronage in the church which would advance well connected ministers in the Church of Scotland in a way not dissimilar to the advancement of English clerics. But the Oxford Movement in Scotland was in the Scottish Episcopal Church which had only recently (Laurencekirk 1804) become a recognised church and part of the Anglican Communion. In 1840 there were 89 clergy and 6 bishops in the Scottish Episcopal Church with no great opportunities for advancement. This was perhaps why the SEC concentrated on the educational and social side of the Movement's idealism. Glenalmond and Cumbrae are both examples of their desire to educate the clergy and St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth, and later St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee, are both examples of their desire to work in the poorer areas of the cities. Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes, Bishop of Brechin from 1847 to 1875, a pupil of Pusey who had started his ministry in the slums of Leeds, made an enormous contribution to the city of Dundee and founded five large churches as well as St Paul's Cathedral.

Interestingly the Scottish Episcopal Church built their cathedrals not only in the poorer parts of the cities in order to achieve their social aims but also built their cathedrals in cities where there had not been a medieval cathedral. Thus in the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane the Episcopal Cathedral is in Perth; in the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness the Episcopal Cathedral is in Inverness and in the Diocese of Brechin the Cathedral is in Dundee. I wonder if they had hoped that Presbyterianism might fail and they might regain the Cathedrals of St Andrews, Dunkeld, Dunblane, Elgin, Fortrose, Dornoch and Brechin?!

But what was happening in the Church of Scotland? After 1843, clearly one of the priorities was to maintain good relations with the new Free Church. However, there does also seem to have been a concern that 'higher' churchmen in the Church of Scotland might be attracted to Scottish Episcopal Worship. In Edinburgh in 1879 a brand new Cathedral was opened on Palmerston Place which was fifty feet longer than St Giles' Cathedral and might well have competed to be the 'Westminster Abbey' of Scotland. The work to make St Giles' Cathedral fit that role was completed four years later and St Giles' retains that function!

However it is clear that Church of Scotland members did not move *en masse* to the Scottish Episcopal Church. What happened, happened internally. Ministers who were interested in the liturgy and order in worship got together and later founded such organisations as the Church Service Society (1865) and the Scottish Church Society (1892). I am proud that my late father, who was a member of both these societies, was a major contributor to the Scottish Church Society's recent publication *Sharing the Past Shaping the Future*, which was paid for by a legacy from our former neighbour in Aberdeen, Jacko Reid.

My experiences of worship in my father's churches – North Leith Parish Church and St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen – were profoundly influenced by all of the above. My father always wanted to use the building, its furnishings, the liturgy, its music, and the occasion and its resonances to the best possible advantage. At the age of eleven, I was appointed controller of the amplifier for the new sound system in St Machar's and was given an order of service showing which microphones were to be used, in which location and when. The service moved from Prayer Desk for the approach to worship, to Lectern for the reading of

the Word, to Pulpit for the preaching of the Word, back to the Prayer Desk for prayers of intercession and finally to the Table for the receipt of the offering and prayers of thanksgiving and the benediction.

In the absence of a sacristan, I was also enrolled to help change the pulpit falls according to the colours of the Christian year. With this background, continuing my schooling at Glenalmond – The College of The Holy Trinity – was not a big step liturgically. I always thought that the reason I went there rather than anywhere else was that I was awarded a Music Scholarship which helped with the fees but there were probably other ecumenical reasons. After University, I moved to Edinburgh and joined the choir of St Giles' Cathedral where again the minister was using the building to its best advantage. I remember the time when the table moved from the east end to the centre and the choir moved south to make perfect sense of weekly communion at the centre of the church's worship.

As a former theatre and orchestra manager I have often compared worship to concert performances or theatrical shows. This has generally caused some nervousness amongst church folk who, I suspect, connect such things with words like 'theatricality' which have derogatory implications. I, on the other hand, have witnessed the intense rehearsal that goes into an orchestral concert, the weeks of rehearsal that are involved in learning word by word the lines of a play and step by step every movement that is made on stage, and the months of creation and rehearsal of contemporary dance work. The end result of all of this is performances of great sophistication which make sense of all the material at the disposal of the conductor or director. Would we want anything less in church worship?

Moving, as I did, from St Giles' Cathedral to Old Saint Paul's Church, Edinburgh, two years ago was again not a huge step liturgically. The music and much of the liturgy are very similar. Incense, crossing oneself and genuflection, however, are new. When on the Restaurant Committee of St Giles', I once suggested to the minister that incense might be used to cover up the smell of pea and ham soup drifting up from the Lower Aisle. His response was that when he introduced incense it would be for the right reasons!

My coming to Cumbrae makes complete sense with all the background above.

The Cathedral is set up for high Anglo-Catholic worship but the congregation enjoys a more traditional form of worship. I much enjoy the rhythm of the Daily Office and of fixed meal-times to accommodate the guests and the ministry of hospitality that the job entails. Everywhere I go within the College there are symbols of the Holy Trinity and, especially, of the Holy Spirit. Every time I look at the Cathedral I am inspired by the enormous spire that reaches high above the front door and the typical Gothic revival style of increasing the décor as one moves from nave to choir to sanctuary.

I believe that the Church Service Society felt quite at home in the Butterfield library and joining us for Morning and Evening Prayer in the Canons' stalls in the choir of the Cathedral. I certainly felt quite at home at the meeting of the Society and was thrilled to be able to argue against the Rev Principal Doug Gay's paper on 'Uncommon Order? Possible Futures of Worship in the Church of Scotland'. It is my hope that many Church societies may find time to visit the Isle of Cumbrae where they will find an inspirational building, an ecumenical Warden, good homecooking and a warm welcome.